

to encourage distance learning and interactive computer programs as part of child care teacher preparation.

- o Support research and demonstrations on child care issues that could benefit other communities.

Families of Children with Developmental Disabilities

The Administration for Children and Families is requesting an additional \$5 million to support families of children with disabilities. This proposal will enhance the Administration's goal of preserving, strengthening and maintaining families and is a critical step to achieve the goals of the Secretary's initiative to move families from welfare to work. An analysis of the 1994 AFDC caseload showed that nearly half of all families receiving benefits had at least one family member with a disability. Nationally, nearly a fourth of all families have children with disabilities.

Under the authority of the "Families of Children With Disabilities Support Act of 1994", competitive grants would be made to expand and modify statewide systems of support for families of children with disabilities. Grants would be given for three years and range from \$200,000-\$500,000. These grants would permit states to address some of those intractable problems which impede self-sufficiency such as inadequate child care options for children with disabilities, missed job training and employment opportunities because of the tendency to not include the heads of households of families with disabilities, loss of medical assistance due to existing state/federal guidelines and regulations and teen pregnancy resulting from a failure to invest in the positive futures of young people with disabilities.

Funding of these developmental disabilities projects would require reauthorization of the Families of Children with Disabilities Support Act of 1994.

Refugee Resettlement

The FY 1999 request for Refugee Resettlement is \$395.7 million, the same as the President's FY 1998 request. However, there will be a redistribution of ORR resources between two of the program's activities. It has been Administration policy to provide eight months of transitional and medical services to newly arriving refugees and entrants. To continue this policy in FY 1999 to an estimated 95,000 refugees will require an increase in funding over FY 1998 of approximately \$11.4 million. ACF will absorb this increase by reducing ORR's Social Services Program by \$11.4

7
Mrs. Gore's office

Families of Children with Disabilities Support Program

The Families of Children with Disabilities Support Act, enacted in 1994, was created to address the many challenges facing families with children with disabilities. Providing \$5 million in the FY '99 budget is good policy. Providing modest funding for this program would also respond to an issue of significant concern in the disability advocacy community.

*It would be the first ever funding for this program at a critical time for families of children with disabilities (while authorized in '94 at a level of \$10 million, it has never been funded).

*The program is designed to empower parents of children with disabilities to develop the support networks and other assistance needed to help them manage the needs of their families and their children with disabilities so that they can live, work and play in their communities.

*Working poor families and those on TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) with children with disabilities are encountering particular challenges in managing care for their children while they are working or trying to move off welfare.

*This program could develop models of support for the thousands of families with disabled children who have lost SSI benefits due to the more restrictive definition of childhood disability resulting from welfare reform legislation. These families are reporting particular difficulties in meeting overall family needs as well as the needs of their disabled children as a result of the reduced income.

*These funds will assist states to work with these families on defining and implementing innovative and cost-effective ways to address such difficult challenges. It is an example of reinventing how public funds support families with disabilities.

*The funding needed to get this program off the ground is very small.

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