



THE FAMILY PRESERVATION APPROACH IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

JANUARY, 1996

THE “COMMUNITY PLAN FOR FAMILY PRESERVATION IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY”

- O GUIDING PRINCIPLES**
- O DEFINITION**
- O GOALS**
- O SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL**
- O COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION**
- O IN-HOME OUTREACH COUNSELING**
- O DIRECT AND LINKAGE SERVICES**

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR FAMILY PRESERVATION

CHILD SAFETY

1. CLEAR SENSE OF CHILD SAFETY/FAMILY SUPPORT MISSION & VALUES
2. FIRM & CONSISTENT COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

FAMILY FOCUS

3. FOCUS & RESPECT FOR THE FAMILY AS A HOUSEHOLD OF MUTUAL RELIANCE AND INTERDEPENDENCE
4. STRIVE FOR SUCCESS: BUILD UPON FAMILY STRENGTHS
5. AFFIRM CULTURAL VALUES OF THE FAMILY
6. VIEW EACH FAMILY IN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR COMMUNITY

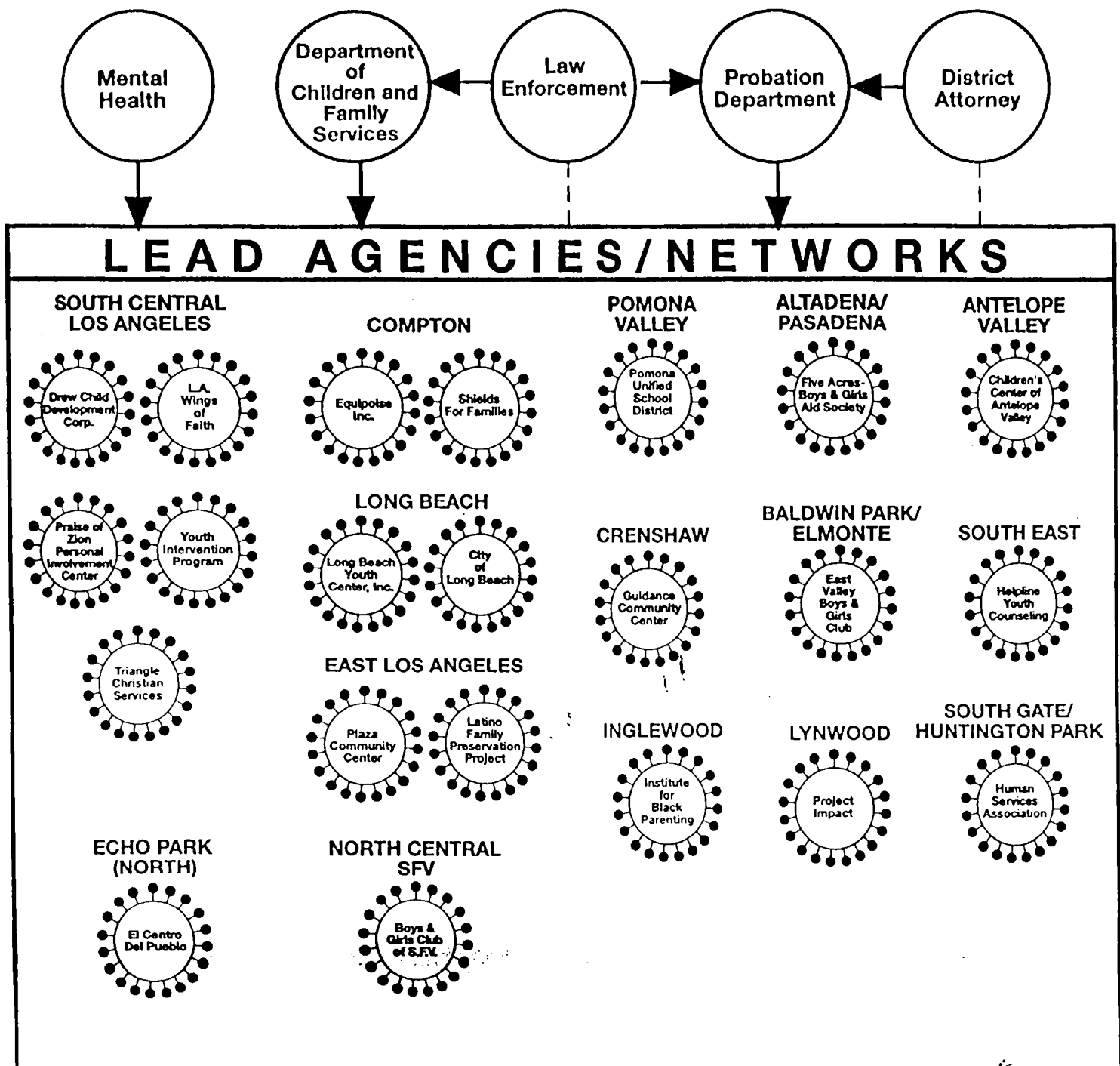
COORDINATED SERVICE PLANNING

7. ENGAGE THE FAMILY WITH SUPPORTIVE PARTNERS IN THE COMMUNITY
8. COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT & UNIFIED SERVICE PLANNING
9. ACCESSIBLE & COORDINATED SERVICES BASED ON FAMILY'S ASSESSMENT
10. ALLOW FOR VARIED INTENSITY & SERVICE OFFERINGS
11. TIME LIMITED PUBLIC INTERVENTION BASED ON FAMILY'S SERVICE PLAN

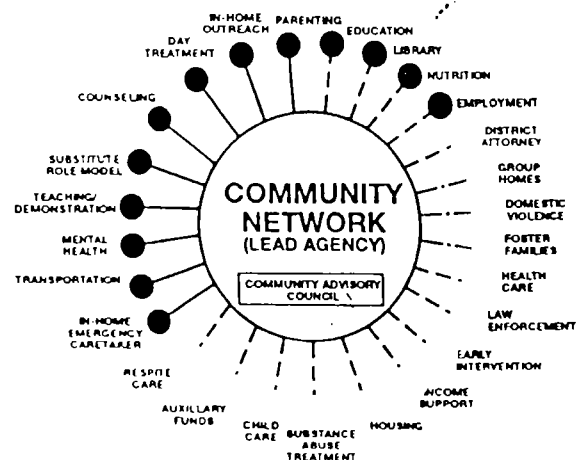
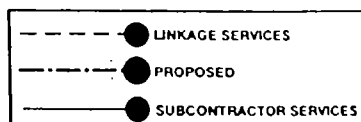
COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY RESOURCES

12. UNIQUE STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
13. RECOGNITION OF COUNTY AS COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION
14. INTERDISCIPLINARY & COLLABORATIVE EFFORT FOR FAMILY
15. POOLED RESOURCES AMONG COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS
16. FLEXIBLE FUNDING HARD, SOFT & LEVERAGED SERVICES
17. ADVOCACY FOR BASIC FAMILY SUPPORTS FOR FAMILIES

COMMUNITY FAMILY PRESERVATION NETWORKS



COMMUNITY NETWORK MODEL
(Services Provided)





THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY FAMILY PRESERVATION PROGRAM FACT SHEET FISCAL YEAR 1995/96

WHAT IS IT?

State legislation (AB 546) allows counties to use a part of their child welfare funding for programs which prevent or limit the unnecessary placement of children and youth in out-of-home care. Since January 1991, Los Angeles County has been establishing comprehensive, community-based networks of service which protect children while they remain with their parents. This is called the Family Preservation approach.

Family Preservation is defined as an integrated, comprehensive approach to strengthening and preserving families who are at risk of or already experiencing problems in family functioning with the goal of assuring the physical, emotional, social, educational, cultural and spiritual development of children in a safe and nurturing environment.



IS THERE FUNDING AVAILABLE?

YES! Within a targeted area, various communities are being grouped together and service agencies are organized into a network of care. This grouping is based on natural working relationships, and funding is formula-based related to the number of children placed out of their homes. In many communities, this formula creates insufficient resources to fund a community network of agencies which can provide the range and breadth of service, unless that community is combined with other nearby communities.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY FAMILY PRESERVATION NETWORK?

A community-based organization, identified as Lead Agency, contracts with Los Angeles County and subcontracts with a network of other community service providers to offer specific services for families. Together, these contracted agencies are called Community Family Preservation Networks (CFPNs). The services required for the program include:

In-Home Outreach Visits
Counseling
Mentoring
Self Help Groups
Therapeutic Day Treatment-
Probation Youth

In-Home Emergency Caretaker
Mental Health Service
Parenting Training
Teaching and Demonstrating Homemaking
Transportation

KEY BENEFITS ---

**EXPANDS YOUR
COMMUNITY'S
ABILITY TO ENSURE
THE SAFETY OF ITS
CHILDREN.**

**ORGANIZES AND
BUILDS THE
RESOURCE BASE
IN YOUR
COMMUNITY.**

**ENCOURAGES
COMMUNITY
COLLABORATION
TO DEVELOP
SERVICE SYSTEMS
TO PROVIDE
HEALTH,
EDUCATION AND
SOCIAL SERVICES
TO STRENGTHEN
FAMILIES.**

**BRINGS FUNDING
INTO YOUR
COMMUNITY.**

**ESTABLISHES A
COMMUNITY
NETWORK OF
SERVICE
PROVIDERS
TO DRAW DOWN
AND COORDINATE
FUNDING FROM
OTHER SOURCES.**

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION FOR FAMILY PRESERVATION

COMMUNITIES IDENTIFIED/PRIORITIZED/FUNDED BASED UPON NEED

- GROUP #1** SOUTH CENTRAL LOS ANGELES; COMPTON; LONG BEACH;
NORTH CENTRAL SAN FERNANDO VALLEY; EAST LOS
ANGELES & ECHO PARK (51 ZIP CODES - \$9 MILLION)
- GROUP #2** POMONA VALLEY; ANTELOPE VALLEY & ALTADENA/PASADENA
(46 ZIP CODES - \$1.9 MILLION)
- GROUP #3** BALDWIN PARK/EL MONTE; PARAMOUNT/BELLFLOWER;
CRENSHAW & LYNWOOD (21 ZIP CODES - \$2.9 MILLION)
- GROUP #4** CENTRAL LOS ANGELS; INGLEWOOD & HUNTINGTON
PARK/BELL/SOUTHGATE (18 ZIP CODES - \$1.7 MILLION)
- GROUP #5** HAWTHORNE/TORRANCE/BEACH CITIES; WILMINGTON/
CARSON/SAN PEDRO; PICO RIVERA/WHITTIER/SANTA FE
SPRINGS & SPECIAL POPULATIONS (38 ZIP CODES - \$2.3 MILLION)
- GROUP #6** COVINA/MONROVIA/SAN DIMAS; SAN FERNANDO & CONEJO
VALLEYS & WALNUT/DIAMOND BAR/LA PUENTE (44 ZIP CODES -
\$1.6 MILLION)
- GROUP #7** ROSEMEAD/ALHAMBRA/MONTEREY PARK/TEMPLE CITY/SAN
GABRIEL; HOLLYWOOD/LOS FELIZ; SANTA CLARITA VALLEY &
SANTA MONICA/WEST LOS ANGELES/CULVER CITY/VENICE (51
ZIP CODES - \$1.3 MILLION)

UNPRECEDENTED COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY - IN-HOME/OUTREACH

PROVIDES VARIED INTENSITY OF SERVICE BASED ON LEVELS OF RISK

**CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORKERS AND DEPUTY PROBATION OFFICERS
DETERMINE SERVICE INTENSITY LEVELS:**

- LEVEL 1:** 4 IN-HOME/OUTREACH CONTACTS + SERVICE PACKAGE \$ 856/MONTH
- LEVEL 2:** 8 IN-HOME/OUTREACH CONTACTS + SERVICE PACKAGE \$1,114/MONTH
- LEVEL 3:** 16 IN-HOME/OUTREACH CONTACTS + SERVICE PACKAGES \$1,460/MONTH
- DAY TREATMENT:** PROBATION SUPERVISION/EDUCATION PACKAGE \$1,000/MONTH
- TRANSITION:** 1 IN-HOME CONTACT + SELF HELP GROUP \$333/MONTH

**FAMILY PRESERVATION / COMMUNITY - BASED WRAPAROUND REFERRAL
AND SERVICE AUTHORIZATION FORM****A. CASE INFORMATION** (PRINT INFORMATION IN THE BLANK SPACES PROVIDED)

CASE NAME LAST		FIRST		INITIAL	
CASE NUMBER		SF		LANGUAGE	☐ ENGLISH ☐ SPANISH ☐ OTHER
CSW NAME: LAST		FIRST		CSW FILE NO.	
CSW PHONE: ()		-		CSW FAX: ()	
REGION: (CIRCLE ONE)	I	II	III	IV	V VI VII ADOPTIONS SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS
OFFICE:					ETHNICITY:

B. FOCUS OF FP SERVICES NO. 1:

NAME: LAST		FIRST		INITIAL	
ADDRESS: STREET					
CITY		STATE		ZIP	
PHONE: ()		-		RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD(REN)	

C. FOCUS OF FP SERVICES NO. 2:

NAME: LAST		FIRST		INITIAL	
ADDRESS: STREET					
CITY		STATE		ZIP	
PHONE: ()		-		RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD(REN)	

D. CHILD'S INFORMATION:

PERS. ID	LAST	FIRST	AGE	SEX	OPEN DCFS	PLACED VISITS
					(Check)	

E. ACTION (CHECK ACTION YOU WANT TO TAKE, INDICATE ACTION START DATE, COMPLETE APPROPRIATE SECTIONS)

☐ START ☐ EXTEND SERVICES - OR - ☐ TERMINATE EFFECTIVE DATE: ☐ 1 MONTH ☐ 2 MONTHS ☐ 3 MONTHS ☐ 6 MONTHS	☐ CORRECTION ☐ CHANGE SERVICE LEVEL EFFECTIVE DATE:
---	--

F. SERVICE LEVEL: ☐ I (4xs/MONTH) ☐ II (8xs/MONTH) ☐ III (16xs/MONTH)☐ TRANSITIONAL (1x/MONTH) ☐ WRAPAROUND SERVICES**G. LEAD AGENCY:** **H. REFERRED FROM:** ☐ ERCP ☐ DI ☐ ER ☐ FM ☐ FR ☐ PP OTHER SECTION**I. COURT STATUS:** ☐ NONE ☐ DETENTION / ARRAIGNMENT ☐ ADJUDICATION ☐ POST DISPO ☐ LEGAL GUARDIAN

FAMILY PRESERVATION / COMMUNITY - BASED WRAPAROUND REFERRAL AND SERVICE AUTHORIZATION FORM: Page Two

J. CASE INFORMATION (PRINT INFORMATION IN THE BLANK SPACES PROVIDED)

CASE NAME: LAST		FIRST		INITIAL	
CASE NUMBER		CSW FILE NO.			

K. PRELIMINARY FAMILY FUNCTIONING ASSESSMENT: (IF APPLICABLE, CHECK BOX, IF NOT APPLICABLE LEAVE BLANK)

	FAMILY	PRIMARY CAREGIVER(S)	CHILD(REN)
STRENGTH	☐ RELATIVES/FRIENDS NEAR AND INVOLVED	☐ EMPLOYED/JOB SKILLS	☐ AGE APPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS
	☐ ADEQUATE/STABLE HOUSING	☐ INCOME (AFDC, SSI, GR, ETC.)	☐ OPEN/NON- FEARFUL INTERACTION
	☐ UTILITIES OPERATING	☐ TRANSPORTATION BUS PASS/TOKEN	☐ GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS
	☐ FOOD/CLOTHING	☐ FRIENDLY/COOPERATIVE	☐ ADEQUATE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE
	☐ CLEAN/ORDERLY HOME	☐ ENGAGES IN RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES WITH CHILD(REN)	☐ HAS DEVELOPED FRIEND(S)
	☐ FREE FAMILY CHILD CARE	☐ APPEARS HEALTHY	☐ APPEARS HEALTHY
	☐ RELIGIOUS/COMMUNITY AFFILIATION	☐ APPEARS EMOTIONALLY STABLE	☐ LONG TERM RELATIONSHIP WITH CAREGIVER
	☐ APPROPRIATE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES	☐ WANTS/LOVES CHILD(REN)	☐ WANTS TO REMAIN WITH CAREGIVER
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐

L. PRELIMINARY FAMILY FUNCTIONING ASSESSMENT: (IF APPLICABLE, CHECK BOX, IF NOT APPLICABLE LEAVE BLANK)

	FAMILY	PRIMARY CAREGIVER(S)	CHILD(REN)
PROBLEM	☐ PREVIOUS FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES	☐ ILLNESS/DISABILITY	☐ LEARNING DISABLED
	☐ CURRENT CASE OPEN OVER 24 MONTHS	☐ CRIMINAL INVOLVEMENT	☐ MINOR PARENT
	☐ CASE WAS OPEN BEFORE	☐ APPEARS EMOTIONALLY UNSTABLE	☐ ILLNESS/DISABILITY
	☐ UNABLE TO ACCESS SERVICES	☐ DRUG/ALCOHOL ABUSE	☐ SCHOOL TURANCY
	☐ LOW MOTIVATION TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS	☐ UNEMPLOYED/NO JOB SKILLS	☐ CRIMINAL INVOLVEMENT
	☐ PREVIOUS/CURRENT COUNSELING CLASSES	☐ UNDER AGE EIGHTEEN	☐ GANG INVOLVEMENT
	☐ CONFLICTING WORK/SCHOOL OBLIGATIONS	☐ SINGLE PARENT	☐ DRUG/ALCOHOL ABUSE
	☐ CHILDREN PREVIOUSLY PLACED	☐ LEARNING DISABLED	☐ APPEARS EMOTIONALLY UNSTABLE
	☐ PREVIOUS CALLS TO CHILD ABUSE HOT LINE	☐ VIOLENT BEHAVIOR	☐ SOCIALLY ISOLATED
	☐ DEMONSTRATES UNDEPENDABLE BEHAVIOR(S)	☐ INAPPROPRIATE CHILD DISCIPLINE	☐ RUNAWAY/INCORRIGIBLE
☐ DEMONSTRATES UNCOOPERATIVE BEHAVIOUR(S)	☐ SUBSTANTIATED ☐ ABUSE ☐ NEGLECT	☐ POSITIVE TOXICOLOGY INFANT	

M. PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES NEEDED: (CHECK SERVICES YOU ARE REQUESTING)

☐ AUXILIARY FUNDS	☐ SUBSTITUTE ROLE MODEL	☐ HEALTH CARE*
☐ DCS - CHILD SEX ABUSE UNIT (CSAP)	☐ TEACHING/DEMONSTRATING HOMEMAKER	☐ HOUSING*
☐ IN-HOME EMERGENCY CARETAKER	☐ SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT*	☐ INCOME SUPPORT SERVICES*
☐ PARENT SELF-HELP GROUP	☐ CHILD CARE*	☐ MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES*
☐ PARENT TRAINING	☐ COUNSELING OUT OF HOME*	☐ PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES*
☐ RESPITE CARE	☐ DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES*	☐ SPECIAL EDUCATION*
☐ TRANSPORTATION	☐ EMPLOYMENT TRAINING SERVICES*	☐

N. PRELIMINARY PRIORITIZATION OF SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED BY CFPN PRIOR TO MCPC:

SERVICE(S)	GOAL(S)
1. IN-HOME COUNSELING	
2.	
3.	

O. TERMINATION NOTES a) PROGRESS? b) GOALS ACCOMPLISHED? c) FAMILY REUNIFIED? d) CHILD(REN) PLACED?

FOLLOW-UP SERVICES NEEDED: ☐ YES ☐ NO	CASE REMAIN OPEN IN DCFS? ☐ YES ☐ NO
AGENCY NAME:	

P. SIGNATURES

SIGNATURE	DATE	FAX NO.	PHONE NO.
CDC SIGNATURE		()	()
CSW SIGNATURE		FILE NO.	PHONE NO. ()
SCSW SIGNATURE		FAX NO. ()	PHONE NO. ()
DRA SIGNATURE			PHONE NO. ()
RA SIGNATURE			PHONE NO. ()

PROVISION OF SERVICE TO THE FAMILY
DIRECTLY WITH FAMILY PRESERVATION FUNDING

- O IN-HOME/OUTREACH COUNSELING CONTACTS**
- O TEACHING & DEMONSTRATING HOMEMAKER**
- O IN-HOME EMERGENCY CARETAKER**
- O INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY & GROUP COUNSELING**
- O PARENT TRAINING**
- O MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT (MATCHED WITH MEDICAL & STATE CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH FUNDING)**
- O SUBSTITUTE ADULT ROLE MODEL/MENTORING**
- O TRANSPORTATION**
- O THERAPEUTIC DAY TREATMENT (PROBATION APPROACH)**
- O AUXILIARY/FLEXIBLE FUNDING**
- O SELF HELP GROUP**

PROVISION OF SERVICE TO THE FAMILY
THROUGH LINKAGE WITH OTHER HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES

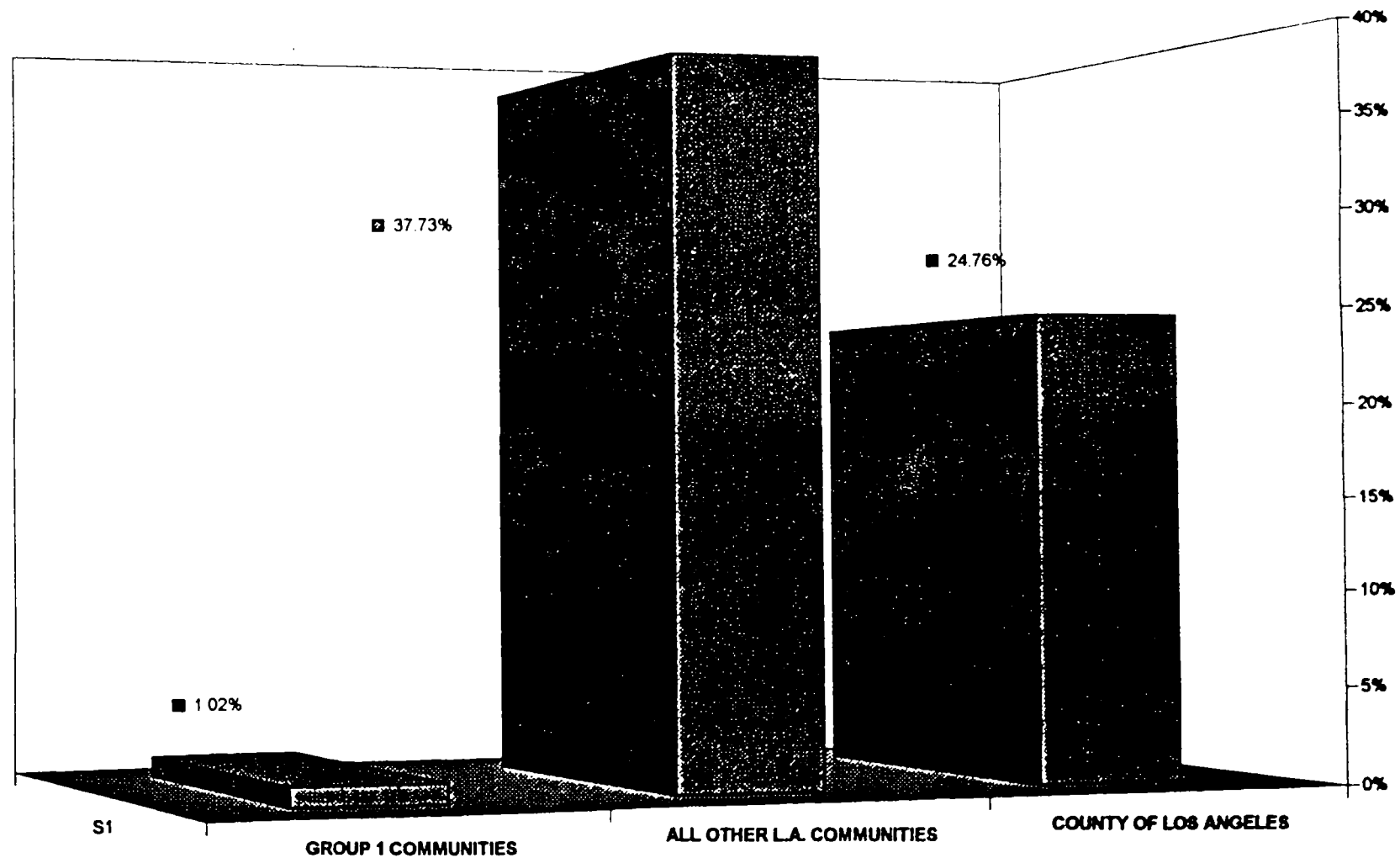
- O EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT**
- O HEALTH CARE (MEDICAL & DENTAL)**
- O CHILD CARE & DEVELOPMENT**
- O EDUCATION (ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY & HIGHER)**
- O LIBRARY & LITERACY**
- O PUBLIC INCOME MAINTENANCE (WELFARE & SOCIAL SECURITY)**
- O HOUSING ASSISTANCE**
- O DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICE**
- O SUBSTANCE ABUSE TESTING & TREATMENT**
- O LAW ENFORCEMENT/PROSECUTION**
- O FOSTER CARE**

THE FAMILY PRESERVATION APPROACH IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

**PRELIMINARY OUTCOMES OF THE USE OF THE FAMILY PRESERVATION
APPROACH BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY
SERVICES IN THE AREAS OF CHILD SAFETY, PLACEMENT PREVENTION
AND COST AVOIDANCE IN THE SIX COMMUNITIES OF LOS ANGELES
COUNTY (REPRESENTING 35 PERCENT OF NEED) AS COMPARED WITH
ALL OTHER COMMUNITIES OVER 44 MONTHS**

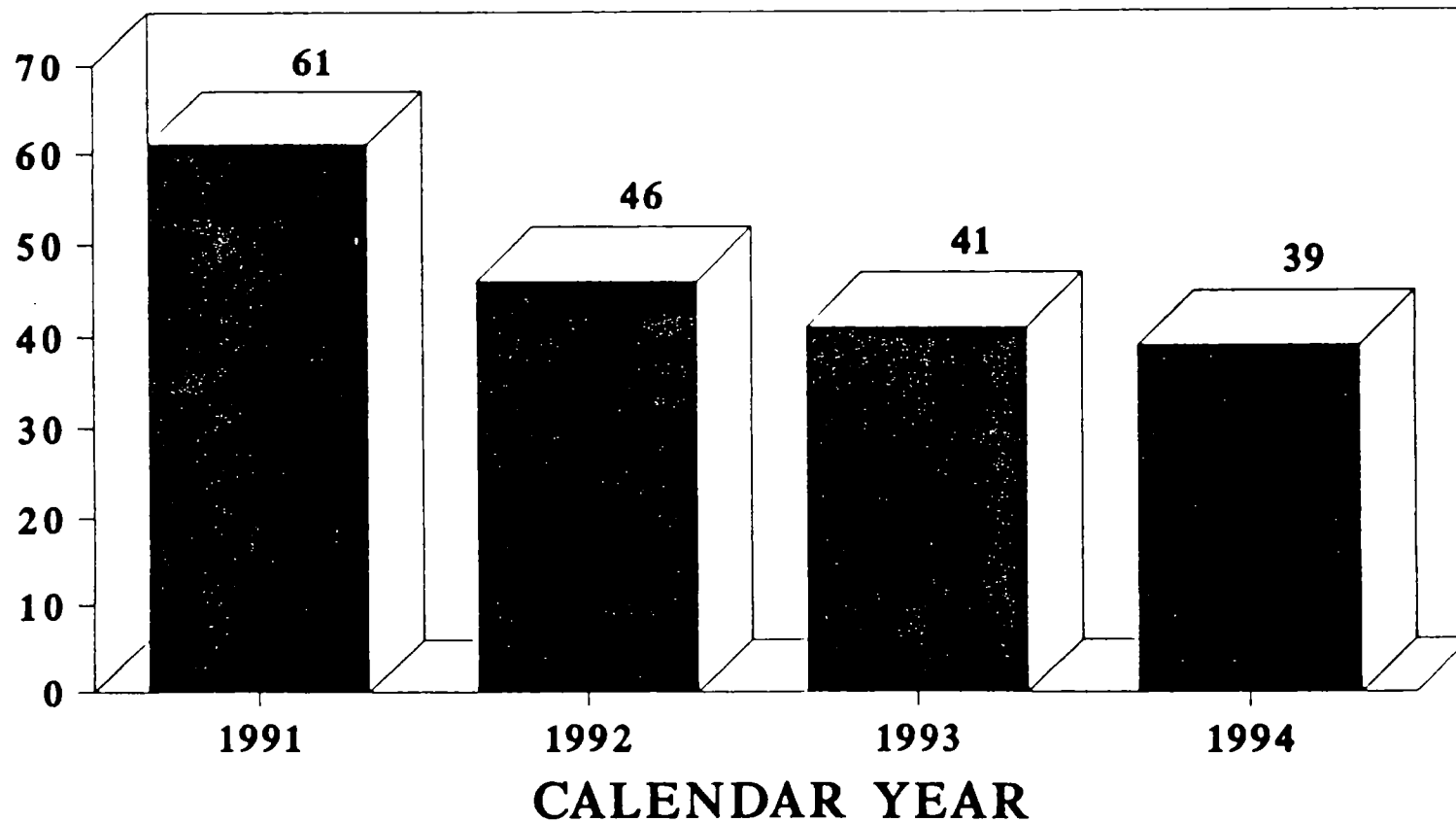
**NOVEMBER 1995
BRUCE RUBENSTEIN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR
LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY
SERVICES**

**GROWTH RATE: PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN INTO FOSTER CARE - GROUP 1 FAMILY
PRESERVATION COMMUNITIES VS. ALL OTHER L.A. COMMUNITIES
44 MONTHS (MARCH 1992 - OCTOBER 1995)**



Family preservation networks have been operational in Group 1 communities (Long Beach, Compton, South Central, East L.A., Echo Park, Pacoima) since January of 1993 and represented 35% of all children in placement status in March 1992.

IMPACT OF FAMILY PRESERVATION 1991-1994 HOMICIDES BY PARENTS/CAREGIVERS



While not directly attributable to the family preservation approach, child homicides by parents/caregivers in L.A. have decreased each year since its inception, while over 10,000 children have been reunified or their foster care placement prevented.

Aug. 6, 1993

Program to Preserve Families Draws Child-Welfare Debate

By CELIA W. DUGGER

Over the last decade, New York City and 30 states have turned to a social program that seemed to offer remarkable results. With just a brief but intensive dose of counseling and social services, proponents said, the appealingly named "family preservation" program would keep families together and children out of expensive foster care.

The Clinton Administration has embraced the approach. But as Congress considers a budget package this week that would pour more money into such programs, researchers say a growing body of evidence suggests that family preservation has not lived up to its name.

The largest and most rigorous study of the program, a three-year evaluation of 1,600 Illinois families that was completed last week, found no evidence that the program saved money or prevented the splintering of troubled families in which parents have been reported for mistreating their children.

Researchers with the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago concluded that the Illinois' family preservation program helped some families cope with concrete problems related to poverty, like an eviction notice, a collapsing ceiling or a balky welfare department, but did not fundamentally change family relationships.

Several influential child-welfare experts from both liberal and conservative camps say the vaunted notions of what family preservation can accomplish should be sharply scaled back.

"It's a matter of hubris to expect that a program is going to remedy the damage done by extreme poverty running across several generations and compounded by widespread alcohol and drug abuse," said Peter H. Rossi, a sociologist who wrote an exhaustive paper in 1991 assessing the various studies of family preservation for the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation.

Despite the reservations of experts,

Agency Halts Giveaways of Surplus U.S. Planes

■ **Government:** The Agriculture Department's program had become mired in controversy. The aircraft were used to fight forest fires.

By DOUGLAS FRANTZ
TIMES STAFF WRITER

WASHINGTON—A senior Agriculture Department official said Thursday that the agency has ended a controversial program that provided surplus military aircraft to a handful of private companies to fight forest fires.

James R. Lyons, assistant secretary of agriculture, told a congressional panel that the department wants the Defense Department to sell surplus aircraft through competitive bids to companies that will use them to fight fires.

"Our policy will provide for an air tanker and firefighting program which is legal, maintains necessary controls and is cost-effective," Lyons said.

The previous program was marred by allegations that \$67-million worth of surplus C-130 airplanes were given to five private companies in exchange for aged aircraft worth far less. A private businessman who negotiated the transactions made \$1.1 million.

The program, which started under the George Bush Administration, was suspended this year after an investigation by the Agriculture Department's inspector general. Lyons said earlier that the matter is also under criminal investigation but no one has been charged with wrongdoing.

The new program would require passage of legislation enabling the Defense Department to sell surplus aircraft to private companies. Lyons said that the Agriculture Department would retain a lien on the aircraft to help ensure that they were used solely for firefighting. Some of the earlier aircraft were used to transport freight in the Middle East.

John Marcus, a Defense Department procurement official, said that the department would be willing to participate in the new program if legislation is passed.

preservation.

For years, the foundation played a catalytic advocacy role on behalf of family preservation programs, and has championed a particular family preservation model, Homebuilders, that was developed in the 1970's in Washington State.

Caseworkers in Homebuilders programs generally work with two families at a time, rather than the four to eight aided by caseworkers in Illinois. And the Homebuilders assistance is typically shorter, lasting only four to six weeks, instead of three months as in Illinois.

In both programs, the caseworkers may counsel parents about how to discipline a child without resorting to violence, or guide a depressed mother into drug treatment, or simply pick up a broom and help a demoralized family clean up a dirty apartment.

New York City officials believe they have found another way to choose families that are truly on the verge of disintegration. An investigator makes the initial judgment, but that decision must also be approved by a supervisor, a manager and a lawyer for the agency.

Robert Little, who heads the city's Child Welfare Administration, said the program has already prevented more than 2,000 children from entering foster care and saved \$18 million since its inception in December 1991.

In less than two years, the city has deployed about 148 "family preservationists," as well as 134 supervisors, managers, community workers, family mentors and clerical workers to 15 new offices scattered across the five boroughs. The city's \$8 million version of the program is one of the most enriched and expensive in the nation. The cost of the six-to-eight-week service to a family is \$11,700, two-and-a-half times as much as most programs typically spend.

But researchers say there is still no substantial evidence that the new approaches to targeting needy families being tried in Michigan and New York will work, and there is debate about its future place in the nation's child-welfare system.

Mr. Rossi, the sociologist hired by the Clark Foundation to evaluate the current state of the research, is far less optimistic about the program's potential than Mr. Bell, the foundation's president, and says there should be more evidence it works before society spends a lot more money on it.

"I know there is political pressure to do something," he said. "And this program really looks good. But it isn't. It's benign. It won't hurt. But I don't think it will do the job it's advertised to do."

But other experts, including the researchers who evaluated the program in Illinois, say that even though family preservation services have not prevented foster care, they are still an important tool for helping families that are struggling to cope in blighted, drug-infested neighborhoods across the country.

Continued From Page A1

a program that promised to save not only families, but money, too, has taken on a powerful political momentum in an era of fiscal austerity.

The program drew support across the political spectrum. "Family values" conservatives and government officials struggling to close budget gaps liked it, as did advocates for poor, black and Hispanic families who believe child-welfare agencies have too often pulled children unnecessarily from their families without first offering them help.

President Clinton singled out the program for praise earlier this year in a speech to the Children's Defense Fund, and the compromise Federal budget plan that Congressional negotiators forged this week includes \$1 billion for family preservation and a range of other child-welfare services over the next five years.

Flaw in the Program

Programs vary from state to state, but generally workers investigating reports of child abuse and neglect are charged with deciding whether a family can be saved with a strong, one-time injection of social services offered through family preservation. If the answer is yes, the worker refers the family to the program.

And therein lies the program's Achilles' heel. Researchers say the investigators are not able to predict

How to predict which children are at risk of foster care?

accurately which children are at risk of foster-care placement, and may in some cases deliberately refer families to the program who need the extra help the program provides, but are not on the verge of breakup.

The result is that a program developed to prevent families from breaking up serves families that were not going to break up anyway. Researchers who have studied programs in New Jersey, California and now Illinois discovered this flaw in the program by studying troubled families.

In the Illinois study, the largest yet conducted, researchers randomly assigned 1,600 families that had been referred for family preservation services to one of two groups — one that received family preservation services and another that received only the usual, far less-intensive child-welfare services.

It turned out that families served by family preservation had almost exactly the same likelihood of losing their children to foster care as did families who received regular, run-of-the-mill child-welfare services. In both groups, less than one third of the

families ended up with children placed in foster care a year after the service ended.

So proponents of the program were right to say that the vast majority of children served by family preservation did not end up having their children placed in foster care, but wrong to say the program produced the result, researchers say.

"We need to be more modest in our hopes for what social services can do," said John Schuerman, one of the principal researchers on the Illinois study, which was financed by the state. "Major changes will not come about until we do something about poverty, the education system and the availability of drugs."

But some proponents of the program say the Illinois study is irrelevant to other, even more intensive models of family preservation used in New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Michigan, Missouri, Iowa, Tennessee and other states. Peter D. Bell, president of the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, contends that the more intensive programs can save money if they are provided to enough families on the verge of breakup.

From Guidance to Cleanup

The foundation is now helping to pay for a Michigan study that is trying to determine whether judges and family court officers, who are directly involved in deciding whether to place a child in foster care, can better predict which families are actually at risk of breakup and in need of family

Clinton Reverses Reagan in More Ways Than One

However Congress votes in public, the best insight into President Clinton's tax bill is what members say would happen on a secret ballot: About 80% of Republicans would vote for it, while as many Democrats would oppose it.

"I want this thing to pass," chirps a strategist at the Republican National Committee.

"The best outcome for Bill Clinton now is for his plan to fail, then have him call Bob Dole's bluff and divide Republicans over taxes," adds a veteran House Republican.

Oklahoma's David Boren, a Jeremiah banished for his brave opposition, is one of the few Democrats who will say this publicly. But plenty of others admit it privately. "People can't agree if this is good policy," says one well-known liberal Democratic strategist, "but everyone agrees it's bad politics."

That background candor reveals the fearsome price Mr. Clinton has paid for this bill, even if he ekes out a victory. This White House has invited comparisons to Ronald Reagan's first year, so here goes: Mr. Reagan emerged from his 1981 budget battle enhanced in stature for having put his stamp on a Congress controlled in part by the opposition. Win or lose, Mr. Clinton emerges diminished, having let a Congress controlled by his own party put its stamp on him.

Mr. Reagan's approval rating in late July 1981 was 60%, 10 points higher than in

Potomac Watch

By Paul A. Gigot

January. Mr. Clinton's is now 43% or less, 10 points lower than his January rating. Mr. Reagan went on TV to persuade voters to roll Congress. Mr. Clinton went on TV this week so a single, unrenowned senator, Arizona's Dennis DeConcini, could persuade doubting voters that he had rolled Mr. Clinton.

Cast your mind back to Feb. 18, the day after the State of the Union. The Clinton strategy was to "reverse Reaganomics" by raising taxes to reduce the deficit and to "invest," both to jolt the economy and to make government activism credible again. First the "stimulus" spending died, in part a victim of Mr. Clinton's own deficit rhetoric.

But the big blowup was the energy tax, which was supposed to be the stealth revenue stream for the 1990s. Its demise, replaced only by a measly gas tax, has left Mr. Clinton with the worst of both worlds: He gets the blame for taxing the middle class—68% in the latest CNN-USA Today poll—but he doesn't get the revenues to spend. (This may be why, in a forthcoming *Fortune* magazine interview, he once again floats a value-added tax, another way to soak the middle class.)

In the end, his program has been reduced to raw pain, "deficit reduction" for its own sake. The tribune of the "forgotten middle class" has somehow become a spokesman for rich bondholders who might raise interest rates if taxes aren't raised on everyone. Reaganomics is indeed gone, but so is any Clinton vision.

It's especially revealing that the Democrats most upset with this budget are the Borens, the Dave McCurdys and the other New Democrats who were his natural allies. They wonder what happened to the growth Democrat of the campaign. "We feel that we elected him and the liberals stole him," says Louisiana Rep. Billy Tauzin, who supported the budget once but now opposes it.

Moreover, the way Mr. Clinton fell into this trap has only reinforced public cynicism about government and his own trustworthiness. The "outsider" has become an insider, a hostage to Senate logrolling that has made him seem weak and malleable. And the candidate who kept Congress at arm's length has become the president who answered to its every beck and call.

The conceit of his supporters, of course, is that Mr. Clinton is suffering because he was forced to sell castor oil while Mr. Reagan was selling snake oil. But even if this were true, that is no consolation to Democrats hoping to restore the political luster of government. Their man has taken a beating big enough to throw their entire agenda—health care, labor—into doubt. Certainly Bob Dole will now be in the room before any health bill passes.

"If he passes this, he'll be like Roger Bannister after he finished the four-minute mile, collapsing at the finish line," says the liberal strategist. Mr. Bannister was never the same again.

Mr. Clinton has, albeit unintentionally, also given an opening to Republicans. He has begun to smudge their fingerprints off George Bush's 1990 budget deal, replacing them with his own. And he has resurrected the tax issue.

It's true that Republicans are being called "obstructionists," but by the same critics who used to fret that no one in Washington was accountable. This time, thanks in part to Bob Dole's finest hour, voters will know who's responsible. Republicans will have helped themselves if they can now move on to show that they stand for something other than opposition, e.g., economic growth.

Democrats will have to find solace in the fact that Mr. Clinton has 3½ years to recover, even if Congress has only 15 months. They can also wait for the boom he promised, which will presumably be better than the boom Mr. Bush promised. And Mr. Clinton does retain his power to appoint ambassadors, which is a good thing for Mr. DeConcini, who may need work after 1994.



President Clinton

Family Preservation

—

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a publication.

Publications have not been scanned in their entirety for the purpose of digitization. To see the full publication please search online or visit the Clinton Presidential Library's Research Room.

June 1995

CHILD WELFARE

Opportunities to Further Enhance Family Preservation and Support Activities

