



Child Welfare Practice, Theory, and Major Legislation

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Introduction

- In 2003, an estimated 906,000 children were victims of abuse or neglect in the United States
- 63.2% were neglected, 18.9% were physically abused, 9.9% were sexually abused, and 4.9% were emotionally abused
- Of the children reported abused and/or neglected, 1,500 died as a direct result of the abuse or neglect they experienced



Child Welfare History

- The orphanages of the 1800's
- The 1875 Mary Ellen Child Abuse Case
- The Children's Bureau Establishment



The Child Support Enforcement Act of 1972

- Through the act, increased support, child care, and medical support was collected from absent fathers for the direct support of their children
- It is estimated that 2.5 million children benefited in 1973 from the program that is still in force today



Juvenile Protection and Adult Corrections Act of 1974

- In 1974 Congress enacted the Juvenile Protection and Adult Corrections Act to provide comprehensive juvenile justice program to the states
- Provided for the development of the National Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect
- Enhanced child welfare programs including runaway shelters and hotlines, and funding to conduct research and provide child abuse and protection training



Child Abuse Prevention & Treatment Act of 1974

- One out of every ten children brought to hospital emergency rooms were victims of physical abuse
- Provided assistance to states to develop child abuse and neglect identification and prevention programs
- Enhanced the Federal Government's Role
- Created the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect within the Department of Health & Human Services
- Created the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information
- Established basic state grants for training of child welfare personnel
- Has been amended in 1984, 1988, 1992, 1996, & 2003



The Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978

- Indian children were being removed from their families and placed in foster care at a rate six times higher than children in non American Indian homes
- The act provided that the tribe could take jurisdiction over the child and place them in Indian home
- Through the act, states are required to contact Indian tribes when they take an Indian child into foster care



The Child Welfare Act of 1980

- Provided additional funding and regulations to attempt to alter the pattern of children removed from their parents and placed in foster care
- It was estimated at the time that over 500,000 children were in foster care in the United States at the time (Day, 2003).



Child Abuse Prevention, Adoption and Family Services Act of 1988

- Provided for increased coordination of programs, data collection, maintenance, and dissemination
- Established a national data collection database
- Expanded adoption opportunity programs for minority children, recruitment, post-legal adoption services for families who have adoption special needs children, and to increase permanent placement of children through adoption.
- Reauthorized in 1996



Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) of 1994

- A growing number of children in foster care were waiting for adoptive homes to excessive periods of time.
- Minority children were over-represented in out-of-home care. (5-1 currently as an average)
- Goal is to decrease the time children wait to be adopted and...
- To prevent discrimination on the basis of race, color and/or national origin when making foster care and adoptive placements.



The Adoption & Safe Families Act of 1997

- Focuses on “Reasonable Efforts” by states to reunify children with families
- Provides for Title IV-E grant funding guidelines for “Best” child welfare practice
- Sets timelines and promotes permanency for children in foster care.
- Enhanced timelines/15 of 22 months for termination of parental rights
- Looks to Kinship care providers as preferred placement
- Requires states to evaluate and report outcome measures
- Children and Family Services Reviews & Program Improvement Plans



John H. Chaffee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999

- Provided grants to states to provide enhanced support for independent living services for foster children “aging” out of care until age 21
- Can include vocational training, living support, educational vouchers, and continued Medicaid coverage
- Idaho opted out on the Medicaid coverage option



Keeping Children & Families Safe Act of 2003

- Reauthorized CAPTA through 2008
- Addresses the needs of infants born effected by parental drug use
- Provides for enhanced training of CPS workers
- Implemented programs to increase foster/adoptions
- Provides for enhanced child protection and family treatment programs



Current Policy Implications

- It disheartens me that the Congress has proposed cutting foster care funding to states by nearly \$577 million over five years and \$1.3 billion over ten years which also includes funding to support kinship caregivers (Trupin & Turetsky, 2005) even though there has been a steady increase in child abuse and neglect cases nationally. The Urban Institute reports that over 405,000 children are supported through child welfare programs in kinship caregiver foster placements who need more ongoing support by the child welfare system (Ehrle, Geen, & Main 2003).
- Christenson, B.L. (2006).

Current Policy Implications

- **Congress Approves Cuts To Foster Care**

- The U.S. House of Representatives today gave their final approval, by a vote of 216-214, to a budget reconciliation bill (S. 1932) that cuts services and supports to abused and neglected children and families. With the Senate granting approval on December 21, the bill now goes to the President for his signature.

The final bill reduces federal spending by nearly \$40 billion and does include \$600 million reduction in federal foster care. This cut will primarily impact the ability of abused and neglected children to be cared for by their grandparents or other relatives. This devastating bill will also result in less health care for children and low income people, fewer children receiving child support, students paying more for school loans, parents facing harsher rules and receiving less help with child care as they move from welfare to work.

A Current Call for Advocacy

- www.cwla.org (click on legislative alerts)
- Enmesh yourself into the literature and get to know legislation and “best” practice. Hot links from www.lcsc.edu/bchristenson

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