Welfare Reform and the Need for a Two-Generational Approach: A Wisconsin Perspective

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One particular challenge of welfare reform, according to Corbett (1993), is the difficulty of achieving two important but oftentimes conflicting goals—reducing family dependency on welfare while enhancing the well-being of children. Reaching either goal alone would be relatively simple, but attempting to reach both goals at the same time has proven extraordinarily complex.

For example, dependency on welfare could be eliminated by simply ending support programs like Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC); this might well increase the number of children in poverty, however, thereby jeopardizing children's well-being and their prospects for becoming self-sufficient and caring adults. Conversely, we could enhance child well-being in the same way we have removed many elderly from poverty—by increasing benefit levels; making welfare more attractive, however, runs the risk of increasing the number of welfare recipients and the likelihood that they will become dependent on government assistance. Thus, the crux of welfare reform hinges on balancing society's concern about the condition of poor children, who are perceived as not being responsible for their plight and having little control over it, against society's mixed feelings about the parents in welfare families who bear some responsibility for the family's economic situation (Corbett, this volume).

When it was first developed in 1935, AFDC was child-centered, but has become increasingly adult-centered (Blum, 1994). The current debate on welfare reform has been primarily one-generational, focusing on enhancing parents' employability. Improving parents' earning capacity may benefit children; these same policies, however, if not carefully designed, could also have adverse side-effects for children (Hernandez, 1994).

Thus, an equally important target for policymakers, and one that is often overlooked, is the children in welfare families and their future prospects for becoming self-sufficient. Studies suggest that young women who experienced long bouts of poverty as children are twice as likely to be welfare recipients as adults (Smith & Zaslow, in press); moreover, nearly two-thirds of first-time teenage parents on welfare have mothers who also gave birth during their teen years (Maynard, this volume). Findings like these suggest that welfare reform might benefit from what is known as a two-generational approach that addresses the needs of both parents and their children (Smith, Blank, & Collins, 1992; Smith & Zaslow, in press; St. Pierre, Layzer, & Barnes, 1994).

In this paper, I first examine the well-being of children in welfare families. Then I describe two-generational approaches and why welfare reform initiatives might benefit children by focusing on both parents' breadwinning and caregiving capacity. Finally, I identify several important influences on child well-being that policymakers may want to consider when designing welfare policies, as well as two approaches for establishing two-generational programs.

How Do Children in Welfare Families Fare?

AFDC benefits are not generous enough to lift families out of poverty (Corbett, this volume). While many factors underlie developmental problems among the young, the most profound and pervasive is poverty. Almost every form of childhood damage is more prevalent among the poor—malnutrition, childhood injuries and death, recurring and untreated health problems, child abuse, low achievement, early pregnancy, alcohol and drug abuse, aggression, delinquency, and failure to become economically self-sufficient (Huston, 1994).

Of those children whose families receive AFDC, only about one-third could be considered in excellent health compared with almost half of nonpoor children (Zill, Moore, Smith, Stief, & Coiro, 1991, cited in Smith & Zaslow, 1992). By adolescence, 36% of AFDC children have repeated a grade, and 23% of AFDC adolescents have been suspended or expelled from school (Smith et al., 1992). A study of poor children in the Milwaukee Public Schools revealed that 82% did not graduate from high school in 4 years; of those in alternative schools, 97% did not graduate on time. These graduation rates were virtually identical for teenagers from families on AFDC and teenagers from families of former AFDC recipients (Pawasarat, Quinn, & Stetzer, 1992).

Poverty and AFDC receipt, while not harming all children and families, do place them at greater developmental risk. Poverty's legacy for children and families provides compelling evidence of the need for two-generational approaches to welfare reform.

What Are Two-Generational Approaches to Welfare Reform?

In a nutshell, the goal of two-generational programs is to promote the general functioning of both parents and children with special attention to two types of strategies (Smith et al., 1992; Smith & Zaslow, in press; St. Pierre et al., 1994; Zaslow, Moore, Coiro, & Morrison, 1994):

- "Breadwinner" Strategies—Self-sufficiency programs designed to improve parents' employability with education, literacy, job skills, and career training

- "Caregiver" Strategies—Child development programs which include high quality child care and parenting education; some definitions also require early childhood education (St. Pierre et al., 1994) and preventive health care (Smith et al., 1992; Smith & Zaslow, in press)

To date, many of our programs and polices have been one-generational. For example, "breadwinner" policies designed to improve self-sufficiency among welfare recipients have virtually ignored any steps to reduce the likelihood of welfare dependency in the next generation. Very few state welfare programs have family goals not tied directly to employment of adults in welfare families (Bruner, Berryhill, & Lambert, 1992). The federal Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS) program of the Family Support Act also concentrates primarily on building employment skills with little attention to how children's development may be influenced by the social and psychological well-being of parents.

Similarly, "caregiving strategies," as found in most child development programs, have made few attempts to improve parents' employability and the families' chances of escaping poverty (Smith & Zaslow, in press). For example, family resource centers, Right from the Start initiatives, and the majority of Head Start programs focus primarily on enhancing child development, parent education, and family support to the exclusion of parents' literacy and job skills.

Some definitions of two-generation programs require that activities must be included for the direct benefit of each generation. These definitions require early childhood education for children, and adult education, parenting education, and job training for adults (St. Pierre et al., 1994). If the adult component is only parenting education, this is not enough to qualify a program as two-generational; even though parent education is directed at adults, the intent is primarily to benefit children.

A number of pioneering welfare-to-work programs that encompass both breadwinning and caregiving strategies have been reviewed by Child Trends in Washington, D.C. (Zaslow et al., 1994), the Foundation for Child Development (Smith et al., 1992), and ABT Associates, Inc. (St. Pierre et al., 1994). These two-generational programs recognize that families need more than money to do a good job of raising their children (Jacobs & Davies, 1994); furthermore, if we don't pay attention to children's basic needs, the investment in parents' self-sufficiency may well be squandered (Blum, 1992):

> *Neither society nor individual families will be better off if parents are helped to move from welfare to employment, but children fail to attain the competencies they need to become productive adults. (p. 2)*

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The next two sections turn to how children might benefit by investing in parents' breadwinning and caregiving capacities. Since much of the public debate has focused on increasing parents' earning capacity, this paper focuses on how these welfare reform efforts may inadvertently impact children.

How Might Children Be Affected by Focusing on Improving Parents' Self-Sufficiency?

Welfare recipients with little education or few job skills may remain dependent on welfare and unable to achieve even limited economic self-sufficiency (St. Pierre et al., 1994). Welfare approaches that provide education and job training for parents clearly have the potential to improve child well-being, since investments in the earning capacity of parents have the potential to lift the family out of poverty.

Family poverty and low levels of maternal education are two of the most powerful predictors of children's poor social adjustment and failure in school; for example, when children live under conditions of poverty for several years, it substantially lowers their chances of succeeding in school and escaping poverty as an adult (Smith & Zaslow, in press). Thus, welfare approaches that improve a family's earning potential may well benefit children; too little is known, however, about the ways in which these programs may harm or help children:

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- Participation in work or training responsibilities are demanding and may take time away from other activities, such as parenting (Bruner et al., 1992). The effect of participation in welfare-to-work programs on children may depend on the tradeoffs among several important influences on children's well-being. For example, if the mother copes well and the child is placed in high quality child care, the child may benefit. Conversely, a child may be harmed if the mother is overwhelmed by her new responsibilities and worried about the care her child is receiving.

- Little is known about the amount of additional family income that is needed to benefit children and whether the source of income matters, specifically, whether it stems from parental earnings or an AFDC check. In a recent review of two-generational programs aimed at welfare families, three of five programs increased family earnings; none of the programs reported any increase in total family income, however, since earning gains were offset by declines in AFDC receipts (Zaslow et al., 1994).

- While mother's education is a proven predictor of children's development, little is known about whether completing a GED will benefit children, especially when education is mandated rather than freely chosen (Smith & Zaslow, in press).

How Might Children Be Affected by Focusing on Improving Parents' Caregiving Capacity?

While poverty affects children directly, it may also affect children indirectly through its detrimental impact on the caregiving capacity of parents. For example, researchers have studied the home environment by assessing factors such as the

quality of parent/child interaction, the reading materials available in the home, and the safety of the home. Studies suggest that only about one-third of welfare homes provide a supportive home environment, while one-fourth provide care for their children that is clearly deficient (Ooms, 1992). Since a myriad of studies suggest that parents are the first and foremost influence on child development (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Riley, 1994), do we know how to improve the caregiving skills of parents and, thereby, improve outcomes for children?

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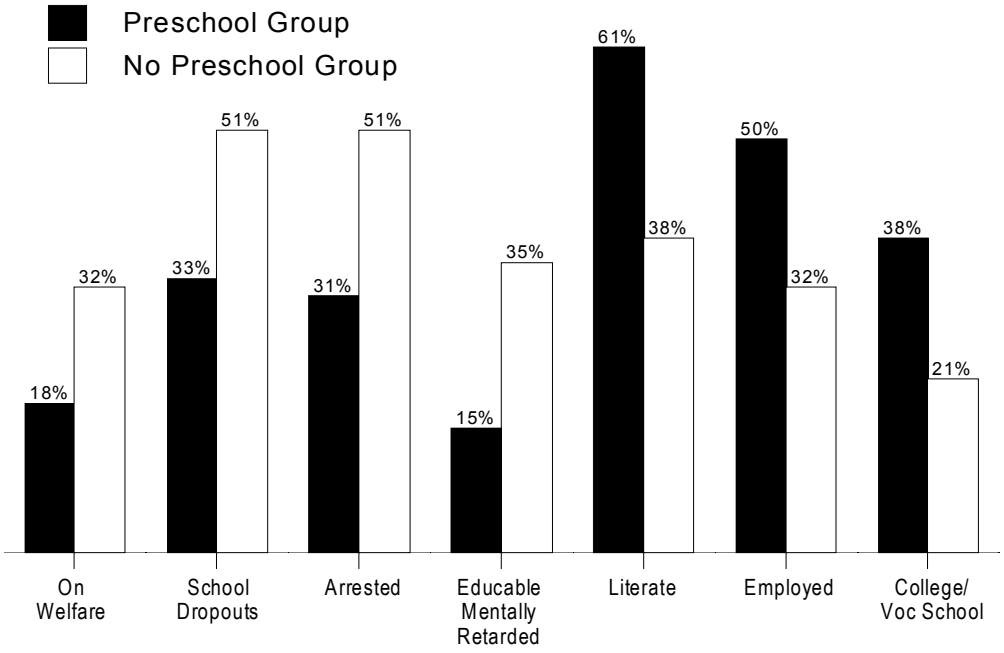
Do We Know Enough to Mount Effective Programs to Improve Parental Caregiving and Enhance Children's Well-Being?

Much of the research on parent education and family support comes from careful longitudinal studies of a few early intervention programs for low income families (Zigler, Taussig, & Black, 1992). While the primary intent of these programs was to promote children's social competence, one of these programs examined children's future welfare use. The Perry Preschool Program at the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation in Ypsilanti, Michigan (Weikart & Schweinhart, 1991), provided a daily, high quality preschool program for low income 3 and 4 year olds, frequent home visits to parents, and monthly parent meetings. At age 19, program participants were less apt to be welfare recipients, school dropouts, in trouble with the law, or enrolled in programs for the educable mentally retarded (see Figure 1). At the same time, participants were more apt to be literate, employed, and attending post-secondary education. Results were similar when program participants were studied again at age 27 (Schweinhart, Barnes, & Weikart, 1993).

Figure 1. High/Scope Perry Preschool Study: Age 19 Findings



Note: All group differences are statistically significant, $p < .05$, two-tailed.

The long-term success of early childhood education programs is thought to be due, in part, to the high quality of the preschool component (Zigler et al., 1992). Intervening at an early age may help develop skills and behaviors that can prevent the development of traits associated with adult dependency. For example, better preparation of children for school may contribute to later school success. Children's school success is an important consideration for welfare reform, since each year of high school education decreases the likelihood of welfare dependency in adulthood by 35% (Lerner, Bogenschneider, & Wilcox, in press).

The long-term benefits resulting from short-term early childhood education programs suggest the importance of other continuing influences on the child such as improved parenting. One component of any early childhood education program with demonstrated long-term benefits for children is home visiting (Weiss, 1993). Home visits and parent education appear to benefit parents, which enables them to help their children function better (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Ramey, Bryant, Sparling, & Wasik, 1985). Furthermore, improved parenting practices equip parents to benefit all children in the family long after the formal program ends (Zigler & Styfco, 1993).

One of the reasons Perry Preschool has received so much public interest is because of a cost-benefit analysis. The investigators estimated the savings to society from lowered usage of the welfare and criminal justice system, reduced grade retention, and increased tax revenues from higher employment rates. They reported that for every dollar spent on the preschool program, taxpayers received a savings of $3 to $6 by the time the participants reached 19 years of age and $7 by age 27 (Schweinhart et al., 1993; Zigler & Styfco, 1993).

What Factors Will Influence the Effect of Welfare-to-Work Programs on Children?

The effectiveness of programs that combine both self-sufficiency for parents and services to promote children's well-being is not well studied. Whether children will be hurt or helped by encouraging poor single mothers to enter the labor force is yet to be seen. The consequences for children may hinge on the tradeoffs among several important influences on child well-being including the following (McLanahan & Sandefur, in press; Zaslow et al., 1994):

- *The level and security of family income.* Poverty is the most powerful predictor of negative outcomes in children (Huston, 1994; Zaslow et al., 1994); the longer children are exposed to poverty, the more damaging its effects.

- *The parents' educational attainment.* Parents' education turns out to be the best predictor of the attainments of the next generation; it also has the largest impact on those children most at risk (Haveman & Wolfe, 1994). Moreover, parental education determines, to a large extent, whether parents can secure decent-paying jobs (Blum, 1994).

- *The quality of out-of-home child care.* High quality child care stimulates a child's development and improves the child's life chances (Blum, 1994); children participating in low quality child care, as measured by poorly trained teachers, large classes, and poor adult to child ratios, are less socially competent and more unhappy than children attending higher quality programs (Vandell, Henderson, & Wilson, 1988; Zaslow et al., 1994).

- *The mother's psychological state.* Studies suggest as many as half of low income mothers exhibit clinical depression; depression interferes with competent parenting, placing children at risk of behavior problems and impaired psychosocial development (Longfellow, Zelkowitz, & Saunders, 1982; Smith & Zaslow, in press; Weissman & Siegal, 1972; Zaslow et al., 1994).

- *The parents' social network.* When parents are connected to other parents in the community, their children benefit. Larger, stronger social support networks improve parents' ability to deal with stress, mothers' perceptions of themselves and their children, fathers' involvement in childrearing, and children's school success (Carnegie Corporation, 1994; Cochran & Brassard, 1979; Crockenberg, 1981; Riley & Cochran, 1987).

- *The quality of parenting and the home environment.* Children benefit from a rich home environment, measured by such factors as competent parenting and age-appropriate books and play materials (Desai, Michael, & Chase-Lansdale, 1990; Ramey, Farran & Campbell, 1979; Riley, 1994; Zaslow et al., 1994).

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How children will be affected by self-sufficiency programs for their parents depends upon the tradeoffs among these factors. For example, if child care is good and the family income is higher and more stable than while the family was on welfare, the children are likely to be better off. If child care is poor, however, and the mother has less time and energy for parenting, the child may be worse off (Blank, 1994; McLanahan & Sandefur, in press). By considering these important influences on child development, policymakers may be able to develop policies to promote parents' breadwinning ability without inadvertently diminishing their caregiving capacity.

What Models Exist for Designing Two-Generational Welfare Programs?

Across the country, a couple different models have arisen for designing two-generational welfare programs that simultaneously attempt to strengthen parents' self-sufficiency and caregiving skills: (a) new program models that entail substan-

tial reform of service delivery systems, and (b) collaborative efforts that attempt to reach the goals of welfare reform by building on existing programs and policies for at-risk children and their families.

New Two-Generational Program Models. Since the 1970s, reformers have criticized the patchwork of federal social welfare programs. For example, there are 154 job training programs, 71 social service and welfare programs, and hundreds of nutrition, housing, and health programs (Besharov, 1994). Each comes with slightly different eligibility rules and services, yet substantial overlap, resulting in inefficiency and considerable staff time coordinating funding and documenting eligibility (Besharov, 1994). New systems of service delivery are needed, according to proponents, because attempts to categorically respond to the social problem of the moment have resulted in a "thin veneer of programs and policies, layer on layer of categorical services, none of which accumulate in what is a decent set of policies and programs for kids and families" (Weiss, 1994).

New systems of service delivery are needed to develop decent programs for kids and families.

A paper by Zaslow and colleagues (1994) identifies five new program designs that serve families on welfare or predominantly low income families: the Comprehensive Child Development Program (CCDP), the Even Start Family Literacy Program, New Chance, Project Redirection, and the Teenage Parent Demonstration Project. The Teenage Parent Demonstration Project, in particular, may hold unique implications for welfare reform, since it is the only program that mandated participation.

The five programs discussed in this paper were selected for review by Zaslow and associates (1994), in part, because of the rigorous evaluation; in each, the evaluation compares an experimental group, which received the program, with a randomly assigned control group. They are classified as two-generational because they attempt to promote the economic self-sufficiency of parents and enhance the development of children. Interestingly, St. Pierre and colleagues (1994) did not categorize the Teenage Parent Demonstration Project and Project Redirection as two-generational programs; while these programs provide components like education and job training as well as workshops on nutrition, family support, and life skills, they do not include early childhood education. Other programs, often considered two-generational, that are not described in this paper include the Iowa Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Demonstration Grant Program (see Bruner and associates, 1992), and Avance, the Child and Family Resource Program, Head Start Family Service Centers, and the Kenan Trust Family Literacy Program (see St. Pierre and associates, 1994).

Consistent with other reviews (St. Pierre et al., 1994), the evidence regarding short-term effects of the 5 two-generation programs discussed by Zaslow and associates (1994) are mixed. None of the programs were effective in all the domains of influence on child development cited in the previous section; these programs provide some important lessons for welfare reform, however, because each was effective in at least one domain (see Appendix B for details.)

- *Family Income.* Project Redirection and the Teenage Parent Demonstration Project increased earnings and decreased AFDC receipt; none of the programs reported any increase in total family income, however, since earnings gains were offset by declines in AFDC receipt. Surprisingly, CCDP resulted in an increase in the number of families receiving AFDC, presumably because of families' increased access to services.

- *Educational Attainment.* All of the programs except Project Redirection increased educational participation and three (CCDP, Even Start, and New Chance) led to completion of a higher level of education. Of the three programs that examined achievement, there were no impacts on basic skills or literacy.

- *Quality of Child Care.* All five programs increased the use of formal child care arrangements. In the only study that assessed the quality of care, the Teenage Parent Demonstration Project found some evidence that program mothers were pushed toward care of lesser quality, although most measures of quality showed no differences.

- *Mother's Psychological State.* Of the four programs that offered mental health services, all showed increased participation, yet none showed effects on maternal depression or stress.

- *Parents' Social Network.* Of the four programs that examined social support and social relationships, two programs (New Chance and CCDP) showed improvements; specifically, program mothers were more likely to be living with a partner or husband than control mothers.

- *Quality of Parenting and the Home Environment.* At the 5-year follow-up, Project Redirection improved both socioemotional and cognitive aspects of the home environment; for example, mothers provided more language stimulation and were warmer, more accepting, and more affectionate. Four programs (CCDP, New Chance, Project Redirection, and Teenage Parent Demonstration Project) improved only the socioemotional climate of the home, while two (Even Start and Project Redirection) improved the cognitive environment.

These new models have the potential to develop into more comprehensive, coordinated, humane, and holistic approaches for dealing with at-risk families (Cohen & Ooms, 1994). The main barriers are categorical funding, turf issues (Cohen & Ooms, 1994), and cost. The direct costs of the programs (excluding the value of referrals to existing services) vary widely. At the upper end of the spectrum, CCDP costs about $10,000 per family per year. New Chance costs about $7,646 per family for an intervention that averaged about 6 out of 18 possible months. Programs like Even Start cost between $2,000 and $2,500 per family (St. Pierre,

1994), while the Teenage Parent Demonstration Project cost only $1,992 per year per participant (Maynard, this volume). The high costs of some of these new programs have prompted some policymakers to turn to another model of two-generation programs—collaborating with existing child and family services (Smith et al., 1992).

Two-Generation Collaborations of Existing Programs and Services. According to Corbett (this volume), the basic challenge for policymakers is not to dream up new solutions, but rather to package and implement existing strategies in a more integrated and effective manner. As an example, two-generational approaches have been forged by combining the self-sufficiency and support of JOBS with the child and family services of Head Start (Smith et al., 1992). The Foundation for Child Development has reviewed how JOBS has collaborated with other employment, education, and training programs (Smith et al., 1992); profiles are given of two-generation JOBS programs in Kentucky, Hawaii, and Illinois as well as Denver, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Tampa, and Portland. The Minnesota JOBS programs has also collaborated with the Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) services operated under Medicaid; Minnesota's JOBS program mandates outreach to enroll children of JOBS participants in EPSDT (Smith & Zaslow, in press).

Integrating welfare reform into existing programs may reduce costs by tapping into other funding streams; in addition, collaboration may also avoid duplication, allow for faster and more efficient implementation, and foster public understanding and support of new welfare initiatives. The child development and family support component of welfare reform could be provided through existing programs in Wisconsin including the following:

Integrating welfare reform into existing programs may reduce costs, avoid duplication, speed implementation, and foster public support.

- *Head Start* is a well-respected national program that has been in existence since 1965 (Carnegie Corporation, 1994); the program received an additional $550 million in the FY 1994 federal budget, with a promise of full funding to accommodate all eligible children by FY 1999 (Jacobs & Davies, 1994). In Wisconsin, Head Start currently receives $49,155,000 of federal dollars and $4,950,000 of state dollars (Haglund, Mapp, Babula, Roman, & Adams, 1994). Wisconsin has over 400 licensed centers with at least one classroom and oftentimes more (V. Roman, personal communication, January 10, 1995). Almost 12,000 children aged 3 to 5 are funded with federal dollars and almost 1,300 with state dollars. Of the current enrollees in Wisconsin, 80% are enrolled in Medicaid, which is a fairly accurate marker of the proportion of AFDC families (V. Roman, personal communication, January 10, 1995). One strength of collaborating with Head Start is its track record, specifically, its experience operating four Family Service Centers which address education, literacy, and substance abuse of parents. One barrier for collaboration is that Head Start is primarily a half-day, part-year program; while not insurmountable, this does restrict its usefulness as a child care option for parents involved in educational activities or job training.

- *Child care programs* in Wisconsin are administered by over 32 different governmental funding sources. For example, the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services currently receives about $71,331,000 for child care programs. Federal funds total about $44,131,000 for such child care programs as low income, AFDC, JOBS, AODA, crisis respite, migrant care, resource and referral, early intervention Birth to Three, M-Teams for cocaine families, and grants for child care start-up and expansion, quality improvement, and technical assistance. The state contributes approximately $27,200,000 for child care for low income families, AFDC, JOBS, family support, early intervention Birth to Three, M-Teams for cocaine families, and children in crisis (Haglund et al., 1994).

- *Chapter 1* is an educational program for economically and educationally deprived children in preschool through Grade 12 in the majority of the nation's schools. In Wisconsin, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) receives $102,114,000 of federal funds (Haglund et al., 1994).

- The Wisconsin Children's Trust Fund has been providing funding for child abuse prevention programs since 1983 and *family resource centers* since 1990; currently, nine family resource centers are funded at $75,000 annually for a total of $675,000 ($600,000 of state money and $75,000 of federal revenue). The majority of funding comes from a $5 charge on duplicate Wisconsin birth certificates (M. Snyder, personal communication, January 10, 1995).

- Through legislation passed in Wisconsin in 1994, four comprehensive *Right from the Start Programs* are funded at $100,000 annually; each includes the services of a family resource center, additional sustained outreach, and/or home visiting. In addition, two $30,000 supplemental Right from the Start programs were granted to two existing family resource centers for sustained outreach/home visiting (M. Snyder, personal communication, January 10, 1995).

- The Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services will receive about $900,000 for planning from the federal *Family Preservation and Support Initiative* in the first of four years with amounts expected to rise from $2 million to $3.7 million to $5 million. This funding aims to serve as a catalyst for establishing prevention (family support) programs and services to families at-risk or in crisis (family preservation) at the local level.

- *Goals 2000* provides funding to local school districts to improve the educational system in ways that enhance children's learning (e.g., family involvement, school to work initiatives); an estimated $1.6 million is available for planning through July 1995 with $4 to $6 million available the following year for local grants.

Limited research is available on the effectiveness of these collaborative approaches, although some evidence does exist on the effectiveness of individual programs. The Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program, for example, has proven cost-effective by providing early treatment of health problems that can be costly if not identified early (Zigler & Styfco, 1993). While studies are limited, students enrolled in Chapter 1 do not exhibit a meaningful gain in achievement (Zigler & Styfco, 1993). Little evidence is available on the effectiveness of family resource centers, although studies suggest that family support alone is not as effective as family support in combination with preschool education (Ramey et al., 1985).

More research is available on Head Start and how it compares to other early childhood education programs such as the Perry Preschool Program described earlier. Head Start is a much more comprehensive program than Perry Preschool. Both programs serve primarily children whose income falls below the poverty line, although Head Start is required to include six components: early childhood education, health screening and referral, mental health services, nutrition education and hot meals, social services for the child, and family and parent involvement.

Perhaps Head Start's strongest benefits have been in physical health and well-being. Head Start children have better health, immunization rates, nutritional status, and social competence (Zigler & Styfco, 1993). Head Start is a major provider of health services to poor children with a high percentage of enrolled children receiving medical screening, immunizations, and dental exams. Head Start participants have higher IQs and school readiness skills, but these gains fade after children enter school. Some lasting effects are found, however: Head Start participants are less likely to be held back a grade in school and are less likely to be assigned to special education classes.

Perhaps Head Start's strongest benefits have been in physical health and well-being.

Head Start is thought to be less effective, however, on outcomes such as welfare use, future employment, delinquency, and teen pregnancy, although some contend that the definitive studies have not been done. These weaker results in improving long-term outcomes may be because parent involvement and family support have been the most neglected component of Head Start (Yoshikawa, 1994; Zigler & Styfco, 1993). Currently, service delivery to families is hampered because most family service workers have caseloads triple that recommended, according to a report by the Inspector General (General Accounting Office, 1993, cited in Zigler & Styfco, 1993). Staff training on parent involvement is limited; between 1987 and 1991, training was held in every component of Head Start except parental involvement. The ability of staff to involve parents also varies substantially from site to site (Zigler & Styfco, 1993).

Head Start has a good track record in tailoring services to local community needs. For example, in one study the opening of a Head Start center in 48 communities brought about almost 1,500 institutional changes in the health care and educational systems (Kirschner Associates, 1970, cited in Zigler & Styfco, 1993). A recent General Accounting Office report praised Head Start's track record for linking families with local services, which was judged to be far more effective than efforts to create new services or delivery mechanisms (General Accounting Office, 1993, cited in Zigler & Styfco, 1993).

Which of these two-generation approaches is best—collaborations of existing programs and services or new program delivery models? The evidence isn't all in. The optimum model may depend, in part, on funding streams. If funding for welfare reform is primarily categorical, then collaboration of existing programs may be the most viable alternative. If the funding is largely block grants to the states, some political observers contend this may provide an opportunity to develop more holistic and comprehensive services (Weiss, 1994); others contend, however, that block grants are not forwarded in the spirit of experimentation, but rather as a political ploy to justify deep cuts in social spending (Besharov, 1994).

Conclusions and Implications for Policy

How can policymakers overcome the inherent difficulty of attempting to reduce family dependency on welfare, while, at the same time, enhancing the well-being of children? What conclusions can be drawn that might benefit the welfare reform debate?

- Welfare reform might benefit from a two-generational approach—breadwinner strategies designed to improve parents' employability and self-sufficiency, and caregiving strategies which improve parents' abilities to promote children's well-being. Policymakers concerned with the "effectiveness of future citizens, future workers, and future parents, should focus explicitly on the development and well-being of today's children" (Hernandez, 1994, p. 21).

- Improving parents' education and employability may benefit children if parents' employment lifts the family out of poverty. Moreover, the evidence suggests that early childhood education programs combined with family support have the potential to benefit children's well-being and reduce welfare dependency in the next generation.

- When designing new welfare policies and programs, policymakers must take into account those family circumstances which influence children's development—family income, the parents' education, the quality of child care, the mother's psychological state (e.g., depression), the parents' social network, and the quality of parenting and the home environment (Zaslow et al., 1994).

Early childhood education combined with family support may reduce welfare dependency in the next generation.

- Among the models for designing two-generational approaches are new models that substantially reform service delivery systems and the less costly collaborations of existing programs and services for at-risk children and families. Which of these models will best promote self-sufficiency in parents and their children is not yet known. Findings to date caution against drawing conclusions based on preliminary results. The benefits of educational attainment, earnings, or improved parenting skills may not be immediately apparent, but may emerge over time (Zaslow et al., 1994).

- The next issue on the agenda may be three-generational models which focus on the needs of children, parents, and grandparents. Children who face multiple risks but overcome the odds often have the opportunity to establish a nurturing relationship with at least one other person; in high risk families, this nurturing often comes from grandparents (Werner, 1990). Also two-generational models may need to be defined broadly to include whoever cares for the child. For example, mothers on AFDC often have men in their lives who can be a powerful untapped force for family improvement (Bruner et al., 1992).

- Helping ensure that children and their families get a fair shot at becoming responsible, contributing members of society cannot be solved through piecemeal efforts or through government or business alone. All Americans must assume responsibility in their communities to help ensure that children and their parents get the decent chance they deserve (Carnegie Corporation, 1994).

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