Historical Evolution of Child Welfare Services

The major forces shaping the provision of child welfare services in this country—the size and composition of the population at large and the child population at risk; social, economic, and technological demands on families; prevailing ideologies regarding the proper relationships among children, parents, church, and state; dominant views about the causes of poverty, illness, and crime; and the political influence of different interest groups—have all shifted significantly since early colonial days. Yet many of the issues that plague the child welfare field today reflect the unresolved tensions and debates of the past. These tensions include:

- Parents’ rights vs. children’s needs;
- Saving children vs. supporting families;
- Federal vs. state vs. local responsibility;
- Public vs. voluntary financing and service provision;
- Developmental vs. protective services;
- In-home vs. foster family vs. institutional care;
- Appropriate boundaries between the child welfare, family service, juvenile justice, mental health, and mental retardation systems vs. comprehensive, integrated services;
- Individualized, pluralistic modes of interventions vs. uniform standards and treatment;
- Specialized professional services vs. informal, natural helping networks; and
- Social costs vs. benefits of providing varying levels of care.

All of these issues appear repeatedly in the major historical documents on the American child welfare system.

The one theme that never disappears is the search for a panacea, a solution to the problems of children whose parents are unable to provide adequate care. The proposed solution of today is the concept of permanency planning, but a careful reading of history suggests that the implementation of this concept is no more likely to eliminate the need for extensive, ongoing public provision for children who are poor, neglected, unwanted, socially deficient, or disabled than the infanticide, warehousing, banishment, and foster home programs of the past. The earliest biblical accounts of Moses, Abraham, Isaac, and Jesus all refer in different ways to the problems of dependent and maltreated children. Therefore, although the concept of permanency planning seems to offer the most promising route for service provision in the next decade, it would be naïve to assume that movements in this direction will meet all the needs of the child welfare population without creating or drawing attention to still other problems.

In this chapter, I provide a broad overview of the historical evolution of the child welfare system via examination of the major trends and shifts in service provision for dependent, neglected, and troubled children. This historical overview will give readers a clearer understanding of the sources of some of the current dilemmas and strains in the child welfare field, thereby providing an analytical base for address-
ing problematic issues that are likely to arise in the future.

Social trends seldom fit into neat lines of demarcation. Unlike historical events, the beginnings of social movements can rarely be traced to a single action or a specific date. They are the result of numerous forces that come together over an extended period of time. Although century boundaries are used as the organizing framework for this chapter, such intervals should not be taken too literally. To do so poses the risk of historical distortion, for social movements and social changes often span more than one century.

**Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries**

The early American settlers were preoccupied with issues of freedom and survival for themselves and their new country. The demands of exploring, settling, and cultivating vast expanses of land were enormous, and because of the small size of the population, contributing members of society were at a premium. The family was the basic economic unit, and all members were expected to contribute to the work of the household.

The concept of childhood, as it is currently understood, was unknown except for very young children. Although there was a high birth rate, approximately two-thirds of all children died before the age of four. Those who lived past this age were expected to start contributing labor as soon as possible by helping with household and farming chores, caring for younger siblings, and so forth. Hence, children moved quickly from infant status to serving essential economic functions for their families. Children were perceived as a scarce and valued resource for the nation, but little attention was paid to individual differences or needs, and the concept of children’s rights was nonexistent. As Hillary Rodham (1973:489) commented:

> In eighteenth century English common law, the term children’s rights would have been a non sequitur. Children were regarded as chattels of the family and wards of the state, with no recognized political character or power and few legal rights.

Although there was no child welfare system as such in those early days, two groups of children were presumed to require attention from the public authorities: orphans and the children of paupers. Because of the high maternal mortality rates and high adult male death rates caused by the vicissitudes of life in the New World, large numbers of children were orphaned at a relatively young age and required special provisions for their care. Children of paupers were also assumed to require special care because of the high value placed on work and self-sufficiency and the concomitant fear that these children would acquire the "bad habits" of their parents if they were not taught a skill and good working habits at an early age. Parents who could not provide adequately for their children were deprived of the right to plan for their children and were socially condemned. To illustrate, a record of the selectmen's meeting in Watertown, Massachusetts, on March 3, 1671, describes the following incident (Watertown Records, as cited in Bremner 1970–1974:68):

> There coming a complaint to us the Selectmen concerning the poverty of Edward Sanderson’s family: that they had not wherewith to maintain themselves and children either with supply of provision or employment to earn any, and considering that it would be the charge of the town to provide for the whole family which will be hard to do this year, and not knowing how to supply them with provisions, we [are] considering if we should supply them and could do it, yet it would not tend to the good of the children for their good education and bringing up so they may be useful in the commonwealth or themselves to live comfortably and usefully in time to come; we have, therefore, agreed to put out two of his children into some honest families where they may be educated and brought up in the knowledge of God and some honest calling or labor.
Social provisions for dependent children during this early period derived from the English Poor Law tradition. Children and dependent adults were treated alike and were generally handled in one of four ways:

1. Outdoor relief, a public assistance program for poor families and children consisting of a meager dole paid by the local community to maintain families in their own homes;
2. Farming-out, a system whereby individuals or groups of paupers were auctioned off to citizens who agreed to maintain the paupers in their homes for a contracted fee;
3. Almshouses or poorhouses, institutions established and administered by public authorities in large urban areas for the care of destitute children and adults; and
4. Indenture, a plan for apprenticing children to households where they would be cared for and taught a trade, in return for which they owed loyalty, obedience, and labor until the costs of their rearing had been worked off.

In addition to these provisions under the public authorities, dependent children were cared for by a range of informal provisions arranged through relatives, neighbors, or church officials. A few private institutions for orphans were also established during the early colonial period. The first such orphanage in the United States was the Ursuline Convent, founded in New Orleans in 1727 under the auspices of Louis XV of France (Folks 1978). However, prior to 1800, most dependent children were cared for in almshouses and/or by indenture, the most common pattern being that very young children were placed in public almshouses until the age of eight or nine, and then they were indentured until they reached majority.

Thus, the social provisions for dependent children during the first two centuries of American history can be characterized as meager arrangements made on a reluctant, begrudging basis to guarantee a minimal level of subsistence. The arrangements were designed to insure that children were taught the values of industriousness and hard work and received a strict religious upbringing. Provisions were made at the lowest cost possible for the local community, in part because of the widespread belief that indolence and depravity should not be rewarded. Parents who were unable to provide for their children were thought to have abrogated their parental rights, and children were perceived primarily as property that could be disposed of according to the will of their owners—parents, masters, and/or public authorities who assumed the costs of their care. The goal was to make provisions for dependent children that would best serve the interests of the community, not the individual child.

Nineteenth Century
Massive social changes occurred in the United States during the nineteenth century, all of which influenced the nature of provisions for dependent children. The importation of large numbers of slaves and the eventual abolition of slavery first reduced the number of requests for indentured white children and later created opposition to a form of care for white children that was no longer permitted for blacks. The emergence of a bourgeois class of families in which the labor of children and wives was not required at home permitted upper-income citizens to turn their attention to the educational and developmental needs of their own children, as well as those of the orphaned, poor, and delinquent. The large-scale economic growth of the country after the Civil War helped to expand the tax base and to free funds for the development of private philanthropies aimed at improving the lives of the poor. The massive wave of immigrants from countries other than England created a large pool of needy children, primarily Catholic and Jewish, from diverse cultural backgrounds. Finally, the Industrial Revolution changed the entire economic and social fabric of the nation. New industries required different, more dangerous types of labor from parents and youth and created a new set of en-
environmental hazards and problems for low-income families.

The Rise of the Institution
Perhaps the most significant change in the pattern of care for dependent children during the early nineteenth century was the dramatic increase in the number of orphanages, especially during the 1830s. These facilities were established under public, voluntary, and sectarian auspices and were designed to care for children whose parents were unable to provide adequately for them, as well as for true orphans. Two reports issued in the 1820s contributed heavily to the decline of the earlier system of indenture and outdoor relief and to the expansion of congregate care facilities. The 1821 Report of the Massachusetts Committee on Pauper Laws concluded that "outdoor relief was the worst and almshouse care the most economical and best method of relief, especially when it provided opportunities for work" (Abbott 1938:121). The other report, known as the Yates Report of 1824, was issued by the secretary of state for New York following a year's study of poor laws. This report took an even stronger position against outdoor relief and indenture and advocated the care of dependent children and adults in county-administered almshouses. Mr. Yates concluded (Annual Report 1900, as cited in Thurston 1930:68):

1. Removal of human beings like felons for no other fault than poverty seems inconsistent with the spirit of a system professing to be founded on principles of pure benevolence and humanity.
2. The poor, when farmed out, or sold, are frequently treated with barbarity and neglect by their keepers.
3. The education and morals of the children of paupers (except in almshouses) are almost wholly neglected. They grow up in filth, illness, ignorance and disease, and many become early candidates for the prison or the grave.

A major expansion in almshouse care occurred in the years succeeding the publication of these reports. But what was not foreseen by the early advocates of the use of almshouses were the physical and social risks to children posed by housing them with all classes of dependent adults. Although facilities in some of the larger cities established separate quarters for children, most were mixed almshouses caring for young children, "derelicts," the insane, the sick, the blind, the deaf, the retarded, the delinquent, and the poor alike.

By mid-century, investigations of the living conditions of children in poorhouses had started, creating strong pressure for the development of alternative methods of care. For example, a Select Committee of the New York State Senate (New York State Senate 1857, as cited in Bremner 1970–1974:321) reported on a study conducted in 1856, just 32 years after the publication of the Yates Report:

The evidence taken by the committee exhibits such a record of filth, nakedness, licentiousness, general bad morals, and disregard of religion and the most common religious observances, as well as of gross neglect of the most ordinary comforts and decencies of life, as if published in detail would disgrace the State and shock humanity... They are for the young, notwithstanding the legal provision for their education, the worst possible nurseries; contributing an annual accession to our population of three hundred infants, whose present destiny is to pass their most impressionable years in the midst of such vicious associations as will stamp them for a life of future infamy and crime.

State after state issued similar reports, characterizing almshouses as symbols of human wretchedness and political corruption and calling for special provisions for the care of young children in orphanages under public or private auspices. But reform came slowly, in part because public funds had been invested in the poorhouses and in part because there were no readily available alternatives for the large number of children housed in these facilities. Therefore, laws prohibiting the care of children in
mixed almshouses were not passed until the latter part of the century (Abbott 1938).

Black dependent children who were not sold as slaves were cared for primarily in the local almshouses. They were explicitly excluded from most of the private orphanages established prior to the Civil War. Consequently, several separate facilities for black children were founded during this period, the first of which was the Philadelphia Association for the Care of Colored Children, established by the Society of Friends in 1822. To insure the survival of these facilities, their founders attempted to separate the orphanages from the abolitionist movement, with which they were identified. However, the shelter in Philadelphia was burned by a white mob in 1838 and the Colored Orphan Asylum in New York was set on fire during the Draft Riot of 1863 (Billingsley & Giovannoni 1972).

**Beginnings of “Foster” Care**

With the recognition of the condition of children cared for in mixed almshouses, the stage was set for a number of reform efforts. One such effort began in 1853, with the founding of the Children’s Aid Society in New York by Charles Loring Brace. By the end of the century, Children’s Aid Societies had been established in most of the other major eastern cities.

Loring Brace was strongly committed to the idea that the best way to save poor children from the evils of urban life was to place them in Christian homes in the country, where they would receive a solid moral training and learn good work habits. Consequently, Loring Brace recruited large numbers of free foster homes in the Midwest and upper New York State and sent trainloads of children to these localities (for an excellent review of the mission of Loring Brace, see O’Connor 2001). By 1879, the Children’s Aid Society in New York City had sent 40,000 homeless or destitute children to homes in the country (Brenner 1970–1974).

A somewhat parallel development was the establishment of the Children’s Home Society movement. These societies were statewide child-placing agencies under Protestant auspices, also designed to provide free foster homes for dependent children. The first such society was established by Martin Van Buren Van Arsdale in Illinois in 1863. His idea spread rapidly, and by 1916, there were 36 Children’s Home Societies, located primarily in midwestern and southern states (Thurston 1930).

The free foster home movement was not without its critics for several reasons. First, although Brace and Van Arsdale viewed their programs as conceptually quite different from the indenture system of the past, in practice, it was difficult to make such a distinction. Their arrangements involved essentially the same three-part contract between the family, the child, and the agency officially responsible for the child. Children were expected to pay for their bread and board through their labor. Investigations of the receiving families were minimal, and many reports were received of children who received poor treatment and were exposed to bad influences during their placement.

A second concern voiced was that foster families, almost by definition, did not have the structure and specialized resources necessary to insure that children received a formal education and thorough training in the tenets of their own religion. Finally—and perhaps most significantly—a number of Roman Catholic leaders opposed this movement on the grounds that children were placed primarily in Protestant homes and were likely to lose their religious faith if they were not given the opportunity to be raised in Catholic settings.

**Care of Delinquent Youth**

Parallel to the recognition that children are different from adults and need different forms of care came the realization that not all children should be cared for in the same way. Although it had long been recognized that there were differences between dependent children who needed care because their parents could not
provide for them and children who needed to be "punished" because they had committed criminal acts, early nineteenth-century America often cared for both groups in the same way—the almshouse. This had not been the case in colonial America; hence, reformers during this later period sought to reestablish differences in the care of these two groups of children.

Under English Common Law, children over the age of seven who committed criminal offenses were treated the same as adults and subjected to harsh, cruel punishments, such as whipping, mutilation, banishment, and even death. The early American colonies adopted very similar procedures and continued to use various forms of corporal punishment for children until the concept of confinement was introduced in the eighteenth century. The predominant mode of punishment shifted to various types of confinement, and by the beginning of the nineteenth century, many of the public almshouses and workhouses held a mixed population of juvenile and adult offenders, as well as the dependent children and paupers for whom the institutions were originally intended. This situation created pressure to establish special facilities for child offenders, and in 1824, the Society for the Reformation of Juvenile Delinquents established the New York City House of Refuge, an asylum for vagrant youth and juvenile offenders designed to provide work training and some formal education (Abbott 1938).

Other cities quickly followed the New York example, and Lyman School, the first state reformatory school in the United States, opened in Massachusetts in 1848. Numerous other states established separate institutions for delinquent children in the years preceding and following the Civil War, all of which emphasized rigid discipline and hard work. Although many of these facilities were designed as experimental efforts in the reformation of troubled youth, they were forced to derive much of their income from the contracted labor of the juvenile inmates. This inevitably resulted in institutional corruption, exploitation, and brutal treatment of the youths. For example, one of the leading juvenile authorities of the day, William Letchworth, commented (Letchworth 1882, as cited in Bremner 1970–1974:321):

While flogging has long been abolished in the Navy and the use of the "cat" in the state prisons, it is still thought necessary in order to realize a fair pecuniary return from the children's labor, for the contractor to inflict severe corporal punishment for deficiency in imposed tasks. One institution in the state, in order to meet the expectation of contractors, was forced in a single year to inflict on the boys employed ... corporal punishment two-thousand-two hundred-and-sixty-three times.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, there was a number of investigations and exposés of institutional abuse in reform schools, and many public officials and concerned citizens made valiant attempts to improve the quality of life for youngsters in these facilities. But these reform efforts had little impact. Attention gradually turned to developing voluntary institutions for juvenile offenders and finding alternative, community-based means of caring for these youth. Massachusetts and Michigan passed laws permitting the appointment of state probation officers for delinquents, and several other states authorized voluntary aid societies to represent youth in court and supervise their probation. The passage of the first juvenile court law in 1899 represented what Bremner termed "the culmination of various efforts to reform children without committing them to reform schools" (Bremner 1970–1974: 440).

The development of the juvenile court has long been viewed by authorities in the child welfare field as a landmark event in the history of services to dependent and delinquent children. As suggested above, it did not represent a major shift in orientation; the reform efforts of the nineteenth century had been moving in the direction of an approach that emphasized
the concept of treatment rather than punishment for youths who had committed delinquent offenses and of separate, individualized services for different groups of children. However, the passage of this law did signal a significant change in the degree to which courts would sanction state intervention in the lives of children.

The first juvenile court law in Illinois resulted from the efforts of a coalition of middle-class reform groups representing a range of civic, feminist, and children's interests. Two of the best-known leaders of this coalition were Julia Lathrop and Jane Addams. Frustrated by their inability to effect any basic reforms in the institutions caring for delinquent youth, they decided that more fundamental changes were necessary to insure that youngsters could be removed from corrupting influences. But they needed to find a constitutionally acceptable basis for intervening in the lives of children considered at risk. After much effort, a bill was worked out with a committee from the Chicago Bar Association giving the Illinois courts of equity jurisdiction over juvenile offenders. These noncriminal courts of equity derive from the English chancery courts that exercise the privilege of the state as parents patriae and do not require the application of rigid rules of law to permit state intervention designed to protect the interest of children (Abbott 1938:330–332):

It was believed that if children were separated from adult offenders and the judge dealt with the problems of “erring children” as a “wise and kind father”—as the statute creating the juvenile courts sometimes directed—wayward tendencies would be checked and delinquency and crime prevented or reduced. Under these laws the child offender was regarded not as a criminal but as a delinquent, "as misdirected and misguided and needing aid, encouragement, help, and assistance." The challenging and seminal idea underlying the establishment which was the lack of the juvenile court, was that its function was to cure, rather than to punish, delinquency—a very much more difficult task. (For a more detailed discussion, see Abbott 1938:331–332; Bremner 1970–1974:440–441.)

The concept of the juvenile court took hold quickly, spreading rapidly throughout the United States and to various European countries during the early twentieth century. It had a major impact on the development of children's services in the twentieth century. In fact, the debates engendered by the actions of the juvenile court regarding punishment vs. treatment of juvenile offenders and children's rights vs. children's needs, persist to this day.

Expansion of Services

Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, state intervention in a child's life occurred, for the most part, only when the child threatened the social order. Dominant members of society feared that dependent children would grow up without the moral guidance and education necessary to enable them to become productive members of society. Children violating the law posed not only an immediate threat but also the fear that, without intervention, they would grow up to be adult criminals.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, the focus of concern began to change. Voluntary organizations founded during this period recognized that families had an obligation to provide for their children's basic needs. If they did not, it was argued, society had the right and obligation to intervene. Thus, the concept of minimal social standards for child rearing was introduced.

The founding of the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in 1874 signaled the beginning of this broader concept of societal intervention on the child's behalf. Similar societies were quickly established in other areas of the country, and by 1900, there were more than 250 such agencies (Bremner 1970–1974). The New York society was established in the wake of the notorious case of "little Mary Ellen" (for a full discussion of this event, see Shelman & Lazoritz 1998). A friendly
visitor named Etta Wheeler from the child's neighborhood was horrified by the abusive treatment the child had received from her caretaker and sought help from several child welfare institutions to no avail. Finally she turned to Henry Bergh, president of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, who promptly brought the case to court, requesting that the child be removed from her caretaker immediately. As reported in *The New York Times* (1874, as cited in Bremner 1970–1974:190), "the apprehension and subsequent conviction of the persecutors of little Mary Ellen . . . suggested to Mr. Elbridge T. Gerry, the counsel engaged in the prosecution of the case, the necessity for the existence of an organized society for the prevention of similar acts of atrocity."

Newspaper accounts of the early meetings of the society indicate that the founders saw their primary function as prosecuting parents, not providing direct services to parents or children; in fact, the society was denied tax-exempt status by the State of New York in 1900 because its primary purpose was defined as law enforcement, not the administration of charity (Bremner 1970–1974). However, this agency, as well as the other early child protection societies, quickly turned their interests to all forms of child neglect and exploitation, not confining their activities merely to the prevention of physical abuse of children in their own homes.

The establishment of the Charity Organization Society movement, starting in 1877, also contributed to the expansion of services to children. Founded as a response to unorganized outdoor relief and indiscriminate giving, these societies set out to rationalize charity. Initially their leaders perceived poverty as the fault and responsibility of the individual, and their programs were designed to help the individual correct the situation. They were opposed to monetary giving and to any public sector involvement in the relief of destitution; government was not to be trusted or to provide a "dole," which would encourage laziness and moral decay.

To accomplish this mission, the societies enlisted the aid of "friendly visitors"—the forerunner of the modern social worker—whose responsibilities were to seek out the poor, investigate their need, and certify them as worthy for private help. They were to provide a role model, advice, and moral instruction to the poor so that the latter could rid themselves of poverty. These ideas had a profound influence on the orientation of the early social workers in the family service field.

However, what the friendly visitors discovered was that much poverty was the result of societal forces far beyond the individual's control. Many children were destitute not because their parents were lazy or immoral, but because jobs were not available, breadwinners were incapacitated by industrial accidents, or parents had died. Although the friendly visitors continued to minister to the poor on a case-by-case basis, their recognition of the social roots of poverty converged with the philosophy underlying the establishment of the first settlement houses at the end of the nineteenth century.

The Settlement House movement was a middle-class movement designed to humanize the cities. It emphasized total life involvement, decentralization, experimental modes of intervention, and learning by doing. Although the early leaders shared the Charity Organization Societies' suspicion of public institutions, they were influenced by the concepts of philosophical idealism and pragmatism that shaped the Progressive Era. Consequently, they had a more communal orientation, were concerned about environmental as well as individual change, and placed a strong priority on empirical investigation of social conditions. Their programs included "developmental" services, such as language classes, day-care centers, playgrounds, and family life education. Convinced of the worth of the individuals and immigrant groups they served and the importance of cultural pluralism in America, they saw the causes of many social problems in the environment and sought regulations to improve.
Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century, services were expanded to protect children and provide for some of their developmental needs within their own homes and communities. Such services were further developed and expanded in the twentieth century.

Administration of Services
By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, two distinct systems of out-of-home care for children had evolved to replace the care of children in mixed almshouses: free foster homes and children's institutions. Four different models were eventually adopted to administer these systems, each typified by the respective provisions of the laws enacted in Massachusetts, New York, Michigan, and Ohio (Abbott 1938).

In Massachusetts, almshouse care for children was abolished in 1879, and legislation was passed in 1887 requiring that city overseers place dependent children in private homes. If cities failed to comply, the State Board of Charities was authorized to place them at the expense of the local communities. Although some private institutions had been established in the state earlier in the century, there was little public subsidy for these facilities. Hence, the Massachusetts solution was primarily a system of state and locally funded foster home care for dependent children (Abbott 1938).

A very different approach was followed in New York State after the care of children in almshouses was prohibited in 1875. Local communities were given the responsibility of planning for these children and had the option of providing either subsidies to private agencies or developing a county-based system of public care. However, an earlier law required that children be placed in facilities under the auspices of the same religious faith as their parents, and sectarian agencies were pressing hard for subsidy. Consequently, a system developed whereby local communities paid a per capita subsidy to voluntary, primarily sectarian, agencies for the care of dependent children (Abbott 1938).

Michigan adopted still another approach after almshouse care for children was prohibited in 1881. A state school for dependent children had been established in 1871, which included a program to investigate and supervise foster homes for children placed by the school. This facility became the major resource for dependent children, although local counties were permitted to provide their own care and a few elected to do so (Abbott 1938).

Finally, instead of developing a state program of care as Michigan did, the Ohio legislature authorized the establishment of children's homes or orphanages in each local county (Abbott 1938).

Each of the remaining states adopted a slightly different model of care following the abolition of almshouse care for children. However, these tended to cluster around the example of one of the four state plans described above, and remnants of these patterns of service provision can be seen in the ways child welfare services are organized in different states today. The major distinctions are related to the allocation of responsibility between state, county, and local governmental units; the relative emphasis given to foster home vs. institutional care; and the degree of public reliance on and subsidy of voluntary agency services.

Related to the development of state systems of child care was the introduction of state policies and procedures for licensing and regulating child care facilities. As Grace Abbott (1938: 15) noted in her classic documentary history, The Child and the State:

Most of the states drifted into the policy of aiding private institutions because they were unwilling to accept responsibility for the care of the dependent, and because it seemed to be cheaper to grant some aid to private institutions than for the state to provide public care. . . . Private agencies increased and expanded when public funds became available, and as the money was easily obtained, they accepted children without sufficient investigation of the family needs and resources and kept
them permanently or long after they could have been released to their families. This was costly to the taxpayer, but even more important, large numbers of children were deprived of normal home life by this reckless policy.

Later she goes on to say (Abbott 1938:17–18):

The responsibility of the state to know how its dependent children are cared for was not recognized and was little discussed until the end of the nineteenth century. . .

At the meetings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction, discussion of the need and the results that might be expected from state supervision of child caring agencies began during the nineties. The case for state responsibility was well put at that time although the administrators' problems were not fully appreciated. . . . It was pointed out that the state should know where its dependent children are, its agents should visit and inspect institutions and agencies at regular intervals—including local public as well as all private agencies—and both should be required to make full reports to the State. Usually welcomed and even demanded by the best private agencies, state supervision was opposed by the poorer agencies and by many individuals who thought a private charity sponsored by a church or one which included the names of leading citizens on the list of board members was, of course, well-administered.

What is important about these comments from a historical perspective is that by the turn of the nineteenth century, leaders in the child welfare field had begun to recognize (1) the state's responsibility for all dependent children; (2) the potential conflict between agencies' needs for ongoing funding and support and children's needs for permanency planning; and (3) the importance of instituting strong regulatory systems, including licensing, service monitoring, and case accountability to protect the interests of children in the child care system.

Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century, the roots had been laid for a complex system of child care. Dependent children were cared for by one group of agencies providing institutional and foster care services. Child offenders were being cared for in a different system. And a third set of agencies, characterized by the Charity Organization Societies and the settlement houses, had started to care for children in their "own homes" in organized ways.

**Twentieth Century**

The developments at the end of the nineteenth century set the stage for what were to become the hallmarks of the child welfare field during the twentieth century: bureaucratization, professionalization, and expanded state intervention in the lives of families and children. The social status of children was elevated, but this came at the price of some loss of individual freedom and some diminution of voluntary involvement and community control. Brenner (1970–1974:117) notes:

As the state intervened more frequently and effectively in the relations between parent and child in order to protect children against parental mismanagement, the state also forced children to conform to public norms of behavior and obligation. Thus the child did not escape control; rather he experienced a partial exchange of masters in which the ignorance, neglect, and exploitation of some parents were replaced by presumably fair and uniform treatment at the hands of public authorities and agencies. The transfer of responsibilities required an elaboration of administration and judicial techniques of investigation, decision, and supervision.

Some of the very factors contributing to the current dilemmas in child welfare are directly related to these shifts in responsibility (table 1).

**Children's Bureau**

The first major event affecting the development of child welfare services in this century was the establishment of the U.S. Children's Bureau in 1912, 3 years after the first White House Conference on Children. The movement to create a federal agency representing
TABLE 1. Time Line: Evolving Federal Role in Children, Youth, and Family Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>First White House Conference on Children</td>
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<td>1912</td>
<td>Creation of U.S. Children's Bureau</td>
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<td>1935</td>
<td>Social Security Act, Title IV, ADC; and Title V, Child Welfare Services Program</td>
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<td>1961</td>
<td>Social Security Amendment, AFDC (foster care)</td>
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<td>1962</td>
<td>Social Security Amendment (75%/25% match for funding social services for current, former, and potential welfare recipients)</td>
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<td>1967</td>
<td>Social Security Amendments: Title IV-B (Child Welfare Services Program, originally authorized under Title V); authorized use of Title IV-A funds for purchase of service from voluntary agencies</td>
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<td>1975</td>
<td>Title XX of the Social Security Act</td>
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<td>1980</td>
<td>Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act, P.L. 96-272 (Title IV-B)</td>
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<td>1993</td>
<td>Family Preservation and Support Services Program (enacted as part of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, P.L. 103-66 and amended Title IV-B)</td>
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<td>1994</td>
<td>Multietnic Placement Act, P.L. 103-382, Title V-B</td>
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<td>1996</td>
<td>Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Act, P.L. 104-193 (eliminated financial assistance entitlement under AFDC and replaced this with TANF)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), P.L. 105-89 (amended Title IV-B)</td>
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<td>1999</td>
<td>Foster Care Independence Act, P.L. 106-169</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>Child Abuse Prevention and Enforcement Act, P.L. 106-177</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendment (amended Title IV-B), P.L. 107-133</td>
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Children's interests was led by Jane Addams and Lillian Wald and included a coalition of leaders from the state boards of charities and corrections, voluntary social service agencies, settlement houses, labor and women's groups, and the National Child Labor Committee. Although the initial funding for the Children's Bureau was very small, restricting the number and range of activities it could undertake, it was given a very broad mandate to (U.S. Statutes 1912, as cited in Parker and Carpenter 1981:62):

"Investigate and report . . . upon all matters pertaining to the welfare of children and child life among all classes of our people, and . . . investigate the questions of infant mortality, the birth rate, orphanage, juvenile courts, desertion, dangerous occupations, accidents and diseases of children, employment, legislation affecting children in the several states and territories.

What was most significant about the passage of this law was that it represented the first congressional recognition that the federal government has a responsibility for the welfare of children. It also introduced the concept of public responsibility for all children, not just the groups of poor, neglected, disturbed, and delinquent children served by public and private agencies. Julia Lathrop was appointed the first chief of the Children's Bureau, and under her skilled leadership, the office gained widespread public support and multiplied its annual budget rapidly, enabling its staff to undertake a wide range of investigatory, reporting, and educational activities (for a detailed discussion, see Lathrop 1919, June 1–8). The Sheppard-Towner Act of 1921 gave the bureau responsibility for administering grants-in-aid to the states for maternal and child health programs, thereby expanding its influence even further and introducing the concept of federal payment for direct service provision.

The entry of the federal government into the field of child welfare did not occur without conflict. The initial bill authorizing the establishment of the bureau was opposed by some of the leaders in the voluntary social welfare sector who feared governmental monitoring and scrutiny, and by others who viewed the creation of such a federal agency as an unnecessary intrusion on states' rights. The debate on the Sheppard-Towner Act was more vitriolic, per-
haps because of the early successes of the Children's Bureau, and perhaps because by 1921, the country had again entered a more conservative social era. For example, a senator from Kansas commented (Congressional Record 1921, as cited in Bremner 1970–1974:1017–1018):

Fundamentally the scheme of the bill amounts to this: We are asked to select from all the millions of women of the United States four or five spinsters, whose unofficial advice would probably not be sought by a single mother in the land . . . we are asked to confer upon these inexperienced ladies a title and salary, whereupon it is assumed they will immediately become endowed with wisdom and be qualified to instruct the mother, who has been with her baby before it was born and after it was born, how to take care of that baby. Also it is assumed that this band of lady officials can perform that function in the homes of a hundred and ten million people.

To what purpose do we make this revolutionary change? Why do we create this new army of government employees? . . . If it is claimed that the Children's Bureau is to devote its attention chiefly to the poor, my answer is that the poor are entitled to the best as well as the rich . . . But this is not the purpose of the bill. I repeat that its basic idea is that the American people do not know how to take care of themselves; and that the state must force its official nose into the private homes of the people; that a system of espionage must be established over every woman about to give birth to a child and over the child, at least until it arrives at school age.

Despite periodic attacks such as these, the Children's Bureau continued to serve as the primary governmental agency representing the interests of children for many years. The activities of the Children's Bureau changed considerably over the years as the leadership shifted from those concerned with broad economic and social issues affecting the welfare of children to those who focused more narrowly on issues and problems in the child welfare field. But despite differing emphases and varying levels of influence, it has continued to carry out its primary functions of investigation, advocacy, standard setting, public education, research, and demonstration. Presently the Children's Bureau is a division of the Administration for Children and Families, a subdivision of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS; see www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ch/ for information about the Children's Bureau).

**Early Developments in the Organization and Provision of Services**

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, many of the trends in child welfare initiated during the late nineteenth century continued. In part because of the leadership of the Children's Bureau, notable progress was made during the early part of the century in improving the administration of child welfare services. An increased number of public child welfare agencies was established, and separate children’s bureaus or divisions within the department of public welfare were created in some of the more progressive states. Many states moved to county-based rather than local systems of service provision, and state departments of welfare assumed increased responsibility for setting standards, licensing, and regulation of public and voluntary child care facilities.

Before 1935, the states had little leverage for influencing service provision at the local or county level, but Alabama assumed the lead in developing a coordinated system of state and county child welfare services, in part via the use of state grants-in-aid to counties for administration of the state truancy law. As additional state grants-in-aid were made available, other states followed this model.

Significant progress was also made in establishing civil service standards for the hiring and promotion of personnel in child welfare positions, insuring that more qualified persons were available to carry out what were increasingly being recognized as professional tasks (Abbott 1938).
Two major national voluntary organizations concerned with standard setting, coordination, agency accreditation, research, and knowledge dissemination in the field of family and children's services were established during this period: the American Association for Organizing Family Social Work (later, the Family Service Association of America) in 1919 and the Child Welfare League of America in 1920. Both of these organizations have had a long and continuing record of influence on the nature of family and child welfare services, especially in relation to the role of the social work profession in this service arena.

Also during this era, the long, rather notable history of child welfare research was initiated with the publication in 1924 of Sophie Van Thiel's (1924) outcome study of 910 children placed in foster care by the New York State Charities Aid Association. Although it is never certain what combination of facts, values, and external social circumstances contribute to the shaping of public policy in a specific service domain, it is clear that the extensive research on child welfare services conducted since this first study has contributed greatly to the various ongoing debates regarding the goals and models of service provision.

The scope and level of juvenile court activities also increased considerably during this period, in spite of the concerns expressed by some immigrant and minority groups about excessive state intervention in their children's lives. By 1919, all but three states had passed juvenile court legislation, and the jurisdiction of the court had been extended in many locations (Abbott 1938). Also related to increased court intervention in family life were the expansion of court services, the assignment of the work of the courts to specialists trained in social investigation, the establishment of the first court clinic in Chicago in 1909 by psychologist William Healy, and the initiation of the child guidance movement a few years later with the founding of the Judge Baker Clinic in Boston. These developments both reflected and contributed to a different understanding of the causes and solutions for juvenile delinquency, leading to a greater emphasis on individual treatment of children in the community and a blurring of the distinctions between delinquent, disturbed, and dependent youth.

Protective services for children were also expanded during this period, especially after 1912, when public agencies began to be charged with responsibility for this population (Brenner 1970–1974). These agencies gradually moved away from their earlier emphasis on law enforcement, focusing on providing casework services to parents to permit children to remain in their own homes.

At the same time, foster boarding homes and child care institutions for dependent children continued to expand. And the debate regarding the relative merits of foster homes vs. institutions, a debate that traditionally had strong religious overtones because of the lack of sufficient foster homes for Roman Catholic and Jewish children, continued well into the 1920s (Brenner 1970–1974).

Another significant development of the 1920s was the establishment of adoption as a child welfare service. Informal adoptions had, of course, occurred since early colonial days, and laws providing for public record of the legal transfer of parental rights from biological parents to adoptive parents were passed in the mid-nineteenth century in a number of states. But public recognition of the need to protect the interests of children in these transactions did not develop until the early twentieth century. Minnesota in 1917 was the first state to pass a law requiring that judges refer nonrelative adoption cases to a voluntary or public welfare agency for investigation prior to approval of the petition to adopt; by 1938, 24 states had passed similar legislation (Abbott 1938:64–66).

Note that although these investigations were designed to insure that the biological family ties had been appropriately terminated and that the adopting parents could provide adequate care and would accept full parental responsibilities,
adoption at the time was viewed primarily as a service for couples unable to have children of their own, not as a service for dependent children in need of care. Adoption was provided only for young, healthy, white children, most of whom were born out of wedlock to middle-class women. This service was seldom planned for children of the poor. Moreover, although public agencies carried out many of the court-ordered investigations of adoptive parents, separate adoption services were established only under voluntary auspices. Adoption was not considered a right or even a need of dependent children in care of public agencies (Billingsley & Giovannoni 1972).

Expansion of In-Home Services
In reviewing various developments in the organization and provision of children’s services during the early twentieth century, special emphasis must be given to Bremner’s comment (1970–1974:247–248): “The great discovery of the era was that the best place for normal children was in their own homes. This idea conflicted with the widespread dislike of public relief but coincided with the philanthropic desire to preserve the integrity of the family.” Delegates to the first White House Conference on Children in 1909 went on record as supporting the following principles (Letter to the President 1900, as cited in Bremner 1970–1974:365):

1. Home life is the highest and finest product of civilization. . . . Children should not be deprived of it except for urgent and compelling reasons. Children of parents of working character, suffering from temporary misfortune, and children of reasonably efficient and deserving mothers who are without the support of the normal breadwinners should as a rule be kept with their parents, such aid being given as may be necessary to maintain suitable homes for the rearing of the children.

2. The most important and valuable philanthropic work is not the curative, but the preventive; to check dependency by a thorough study of its causes and by effectively remediating or eradicating them should be the constant aim of society.

Progress was made in the succeeding years toward the goal of maintaining children in their own homes by the institution of mothers’ pensions or public aid to dependent children in their own homes. Illinois provided leadership in this direction by passing a Fund to Parents Act in 1911, and 20 other states passed similar legislation within the next two years. By 1935, all but two states had passed some type of mothers’ aid laws (Abbott 1938). These funds were provided on a very limited and somewhat arbitrary basis. But even this small improvement in public assistance provisions for children in their own homes did not take place without controversy. For example, in 1912, Mary Richmond, author of the first basic text on social casework, is quoted as saying (Almy 1912, as cited in Abbott 1938:232):

So far from being a forward step, “funds to parents” is a backward one—public funds not to widows only, mark you, but to private families, funds to the families of those who have deserted and are going to desert.

Edward Devine, director of the New York School of Social Work, took a similar position, challenging the proposal for mothers’ pensions (Devine 1913, as cited in Abbott 1938:232):

as having no claim to the name of pension and no place in a rational scheme or social legislation; as embodying no element of prevention or radical cure for any recognized social evil; as an insidious attack upon the family, inimical to the welfare of children and injurious to the character of parents.

However, other leading social reformers and social workers of the time vigorously supported the concept of maintaining children in their own families, and by 1923, “the number of dependent children being maintained in their own homes was approaching the number of those in institutions and far in excess of those in foster homes” (Bremner 1970–1974:248). A statement
from the annual report of the New York Children's Aid Society for 1923 conveys the consensus that was gradually emerging among professional child welfare workers (New York Children's Aid Society 1923, as cited in Thurston 1930:138):

There is a well-established conviction on the part of social workers that no child should be taken from his natural parents until everything possible has been done to build up the home into what an American home should be. Even after a child has been removed, every effort should be continued to rehabilitate the home and when success crowns one's efforts, the child should be returned. In other words, every social agency should be a "home builder" and not a "home breaker."

The nature of services provided to dependent children was modified still further during the 1920s by the growing preoccupation of leading social work educators with psychoanalytic theory and individual treatment. In conjunction with an expanded professional knowledge base about the developmental needs of children and adolescents, this trend led to widespread adoption of the goal of providing individualized services to dependent children and attending to their emotional needs, as well as to their needs for economic security. For example, Henry Thurston (1930:199) commented:

What religion and theology have told us of the further needs of children to whom bread alone has been given, we have often failed to understand; but we are slowly learning to understand it as it is being restated for us in terms of the new psychology of the emotions and of behaviors. Dr. Herman Adler, of the Juvenile Psychopathic Institute of Chicago, says that to answer the question fully as to what a child needs, we must understand "a total personality in a total situation."

This expanded understanding of children's emotional needs contributed greatly to the development of improved child welfare services, but it had two unfortunate consequences. First, it led to increased emphasis on individual psychopathology rather than on social conditions as the source of family and child dysfunction and hence to the expansion of psychological rather than environmental services in the voluntary child care sector. Second, it contributed to the increased separation of voluntary family service and child welfare agencies, as the former were more likely to be staffed by professional workers interested in providing pure "casework," that is, counseling, whereas workers in the latter were required to provide a broader range of services.

These early twentieth-century developments in the field of family and children's services had a major impact on the nature and scope of programs designed to help American families cope with the economic and social problems experienced in the aftermath of the depression that began in 1929. The trends that had special significance for subsequent policy and program development were:

- Expansion of public sector involvement in the lives of families and children;
- Intensification of the traditional separation between the public and voluntary service sectors, especially in the eastern and midwestern states, where the voluntary agencies were firmly entrenched;
- Increasing preoccupation with psychological modes of treatment, especially among professional workers in the voluntary sector as they relinquished responsibility for traditional forms of alms giving and concrete service provision; and
- Crystallization of the boundaries between voluntary child welfare and family service fields due to increasing emphasis on specialization in out-of-home vs. in-home treatment.

Special Arrangements for the Care of Black Children
The history of child welfare services prior to the passage of the Social Security Act in 1935 is essentially a history of services for white chil-
children. Standard texts on the history of child welfare provide little information on services for black children; in fact, because of the middle-class white bias that has pervaded most studies of American history, relatively little was known about services for black families and children until the publication in 1972 of a text by Billingsley and Giovannoni (1972) on black children and American child welfare.

Because black children were systematically excluded from the child welfare services that developed for white children in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—sometimes by explicit exclusionary clauses, sometimes by more subtle forms of discrimination—the black community developed what was essentially a separate system of care for their dependent children. During the period after the Civil War, black children were cared for through a variety of informal helping arrangements and a range of orphanages, homes for old folks and children, day nurseries, and homes for working girls (Billingsley & Giovannoni 1972; see also Peebles-Wilkins 1995).

This picture remained relatively constant until the 1920s, when several converging factors led to changes in the child welfare system's response to black children. One was the establishment in 1910 of the National Urban League, an organization that took a vocal, active role in pressing for more equitable distribution of child welfare services as part of its broader mission to achieve freedom and equality for all blacks. Another major impetus for change was the large-scale migration of blacks to urban areas during and after World War I, a development that forced increased recognition of the needs of black children. Finally, the changes taking place in the child welfare system itself created greater openness to black children: the number of public facilities increased; many of the voluntary agencies changed their exclusionary intake policies; and the shift from institution to foster home as the predominate form of care permitted agencies to recruit black foster homes for black children, thereby avoiding potential racial tensions (Billingsley & Giovannoni 1972).

Thus by 1930, there was a general expectation, strongly supported by the participants at the White House Conference on Children, that black children were entitled to the same standards of care as white children and that they should generally be served through the existing child welfare system. This changed perception of the needs of black children had obvious benefits in relation to the goal of racial integration. But it also had several unfortunate consequences, as it halted the growth of the black child care system, limited the possibility of blacks assuming leadership roles in agencies caring for black children, and served to hide some of the subtler but ongoing forms of discriminatory treatment of black children in the child welfare system (Billingsley & Giovannoni 1972).

Passage of the Social Security Act
It has often been suggested that the legislation introduced in the first 100 days of the Roosevelt administration in 1933 changed the entire social fabric of the country by redefining the role of the federal government in addressing social welfare problems and moving the United States reluctantly, but inexorably, toward becoming a welfare state. Certainly the Social Security Act, passed in 1935, had a major impact on the structure and financing of child welfare services; in fact, some of the deficiencies in the current service system can be traced directly to the provisions of this law (see the introduction to Section I by Mallon and Hess). Yet the roots of many of the current policy dilemmas and service delivery problems were present before the passage of this law.

To summarize, the emerging issues in the child welfare field prior to 1935 can be characterized as follows:

1. The goals of child welfare services had begun to shift, in principle, from rescuing the children of poor families and providing them a
minimal level of sustenance, moral guidance, and work training via the provision of substitute care to providing the supports necessary to enable parents to care adequately for children in their own homes, arranging substitute care only on the basis of individualized assessment of case need.

2. The concept of state intervention in family life to protect the interests of children was gaining increased acceptance, and efforts had been made to expand societal provisions and protections for all children via the establishment of free compulsory education, child labor protections, the development of limited homemaker services, day nurseries, maternal and child health programs, mothers’ pensions, and child guidance clinics.

3. As a consequence of the establishment of the juvenile court, juvenile offenders were receiving more individualized treatment, a larger number of youths were coming under the purview of the legal system, and the boundaries between the child welfare and criminal justice systems were becoming blurred.

4. The increasing bureaucratization and professionalization of the child welfare field, although improving standards for service and highlighting the goal of providing equal treatment to all, also functioned to increase the social distance between service providers and consumers and to deepen the gap between the goals and realities of service provision.

5. Large numbers of children continued to be placed in substitute care arrangements with little individualized case planning.

6. Black children continued to receive inferior, more punitive treatment than did whites; and poor families and children served through the public sector were less likely to receive the intensive individualized treatment available to those served by some of the voluntary, primarily sectarian, agencies.

7. Adoption was viewed as a service designed primarily for adoptive parents, and white, healthy infants of middle-class unmarried mothers were the only children likely to be placed in adoptive homes.

Two components of the Social Security Act of 1935, both stemming in large measure from the recommendation of the Children’s Bureau, had a significant impact on the subsequent development of child welfare services. Title IV, Grants to States for Aid to Dependent Children, sought to extend the concept of mothers’ pensions by providing federal matching funds for grants to fatherless families, requiring a single state agency to administer the program, and mandating coverage of all political subdivisions in each state. It was designed as a federal grant-in-aid program and permitted state autonomy in setting eligibility standards, determining payment levels, and developing administrative and operational procedures. The program, later named Aid to Families of Dependent Children (AFDC), was eventually extended to families with a permanently and totally disabled parent, and, at state option, to families with an unemployed parent. Although the AFDC program became increasingly expensive and controversial, it undoubtedly contributed more than any other social program to the goal of enabling children at risk of placement to remain with their own families.

The other major component of the Social Security Act affecting the provision of child welfare services was Title V, Part 3, Child Welfare Services. This program was designed not only to help children in their own families, but also to benefit those in substitute care by “enabling the United States, through the Children’s Bureau, to cooperate with State public welfare agencies in establishing, extending, and strengthening, especially in predominantly rural areas, public welfare services . . . or the protection and care of homeless, dependent, and neglected children, and children in danger of becoming delinquent” (Title V, Social Security Act 1935, as cited in Brenner 1970–1974: 615). Although the funding for this program
was quite modest, states quickly took advantage of this relatively permissive legislation to obtain federal funding for child welfare services. To illustrate, prior to the passage of the Social Security Act, the organization of child welfare services at the state and county was in relative disarray in most jurisdictions. However, by 1938, all but one state had submitted a plan for the coordinated delivery of child welfare services (Bremner 1970–1974). This component of the Social Security Act, later subsumed under Title V-B, has had continuing influence on the development of child welfare services.

The Decades from 1940 to 1960
The period from the late 1930s to the late 1950s was a time of relative quiet, consolidation, and gain for the child welfare field. The total number and rate of children placed in foster homes and institutional care declined substantially after 1933 (Low 1966, as cited in Bremner 1970–1974), whereas the proportion of children receiving services in their own homes, the total public expenditures for child welfare, and the total number of professionals in public child welfare increased significantly during this period (Bremner 1970–1974; Richan 1978). Major strides were made by the Children's Bureau and the Child Welfare League of America in formulating and monitoring standards for service provision. Every state made significant progress in developing comprehensive, coordinated public child welfare services, insuring equal access to children of different social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds, and expanding professional educational opportunities for child welfare staff (Bremner 1970–1974). And because of the growing emphasis in the social work profession on the development of clinical knowledge and skills, the quality of individual services provided to families and children was greatly enhanced during this period.

The only significant shifts in service provision during these years took place in the voluntary sector, partly as a consequence of the public sector’s assumption of many of the functions formerly assumed by private agencies and partly as the result of demographic changes. The Child Welfare League of America published its first standards for adoption practice in 1938, and many agencies initiated and expanded adoption services in the years after World War II. More elaborate procedures were instituted for studying potential adoptive couples, “matching” children and families, and monitoring the adoptive families during the period preceding legal adoption. Adoption studies were frequently assigned to the most experienced staff, and adoption workers began to acquire special status in the child welfare field. Although the emphasis shifted from viewing adoption primarily as a service for parents to seeing the child as the primary client, in most settings, healthy white infants continued to be considered the only real candidates for adoption. However, as the number of adoptive applicants increased, a few agencies began to experiment with intercountry and interracial adoptions. Also, the National Urban League sponsored a major project on foster care and adoption of black children from 1953 to 1958, and a 5-year interagency demonstration adoption project was established by 13 adoption agencies in the New York City area in 1955 to develop and implement methods of recruiting adoptive families for black and Puerto Rican children (Billingsley & Giovannoni 1972).

During the 1940s and 1950s, increased emphasis was also given to services for unmarried mothers. Although illegitimacy is a centuries-old social problem and special programs for unwed mothers were developed in this country early in the twentieth century, the historical concern was for the protection of the child and the punishment of the mother. It was not until the late 1930s that social workers started to focus attention on the needs of the unmarried mother. During the next two decades, there was a great upsurge in social work publications on such issues as the psychodynamic causes of unwed motherhood, the meaning and potential
benefts of surrendering a child for adoption, and the role of the caseworker in working with unmarried mothers (see Bernstein 1960; Young 1954). As the illegitimate birth rate began to increase following World War II, many voluntary child welfare agencies established special services for unwed parents incorporating these new theoretical insights (Costin 1969).

During the same period, there was also a marked shift in the types of institutional care provided to dependent youth, as many of the traditional child care facilities began to be converted into various types of residential treatment centers. For example, in 1950, 45% of the white children in residential care were in institutions for dependent children, and 25% were in institutions for the mentally disabled. By 1960 only 29% were in child care institutions, and 36% were in facilities for the mentally disabled. Although the distribution of nonwhite children showed a similar trend, in 1960, over half of the nonwhite children (54%) were confined in correctional facilities compared to only 25% of the white children (Billingsley & Giovannoni 1972:89), suggesting that the trend toward individualized treatment planning was not strong enough to counter patterns of racially discriminatory treatment.

The relatively slow pace of change in the child welfare field during the 1940s and 1950s can be explained in part by the need for social workers to deal with other, more pressing problems—the aftermath of the depression and World War II. They then needed time to implement, refine, and expand existing services before turning their attention to new service requirements. Much professional energy during this period was also devoted to exploring psychological problems, improving casework methods, and enhancing professional status by providing service to clients above the poverty line. Most child welfare workers during this period tended to view the provision of individual casework services as the most prestigious and critical of their professional tasks. Having been relieved of their earlier public assistance functions, social workers were endeavoring to provide high-quality therapeutic services to the clients who requested help from their agencies. They raised few questions about what was happening to the families and children not referred for casework services or to those who were unable to benefit from the types of service offered in the established family service and child welfare agencies.

Although the problems of the poor were brought to the attention of the profession again in the 1950s with the publication of several studies discussing efforts to work with "multiproblem," "disorganized," and "hard-to-reach" families (See Buell 1973; Geisman & Ayers 1952; New York City Youth Board 1958), these developments served primarily to stimulate workers to seek more effective ways of providing existing modes of casework service to this population. Even though it was clear that this subgroup of poor families was demanding a disproportionate amount of attention from public assistance, family service, child welfare, and public health agencies, direct service providers gave relatively little thought to their inability to work effectively with this population. Questions that should have been raised about the organization of services and the effectiveness of prevailing intervention strategies were rarely discussed.

The 1960s
Early in the 1960s, child welfare agencies began to be severely criticized for their failure to attend to the changing needs of the child welfare population. The first major challenge to the field was the publication of Maas and Engler's (1959) study, Children in Need of Parents. This study of children in foster care in nine communities posed many of the questions raised repeatedly since that time about children in "limbo": children who had drifted into foster care, had no permanent family ties, and were not being prepared for adoptive placement. The field has been attacked repeatedly in succeeding years—both from within and without—for

The juvenile court has also come under attack. Several recent histories of American child welfare have challenged the traditional view of the juvenile court as protecting the interests of children and representing a radical change in their treatment. For example, in their analysis of the impact of the American child welfare system on black children, Billingsley and Giovannoni (1972) suggest that the labeling process by which black youth were described as "delinquent" in order to remove them from what were considered the less acceptable nineteenth-century forms of child care forced them to accept a more socially deviant label and to enter a less desirable system of care than that available to white youth. And Anthony Platt (1969:176-177) concludes his study of the movement to create the juvenile court in the late nineteenth century as follows:

The child savers should in no sense be considered libertarians or humanists. ... The child-saving movement was not so much a break with the past as an affirmation of faith in certain aspects of the past. Parental authority, home education, domesticity, and rural values were emphasized because they were in decline as institutions at this time. In a rapidly changing and increasingly complex urban society, the child-saving philosophy represented a defense against "foreign" ideologies and a preservation of cherished values.

These attacks have done much to refocus attention on the problems in the field and to set a number of internal reform processes in motion. But the more significant determinant of changes in the child welfare field during the two decades prior to 1960 had been the external environment: political events and the changes in demographics, economic and social conditions, interest groups, and belief systems that shape the context in which child welfare services operate.

The inauguration of the Kennedy administration in 1961 ushered in an era of tremendous social ferment and change. The major issues and themes of the subsequent two decades are probably well known to the reader, at least in broad strokes. But to recap briefly, in the 1960s, we witnessed the rediscovery of poverty as a public issue; the ill-fated War on Poverty under the Johnson administration; the expansion of the Civil Rights movement, leading to the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the subsequent shocking realization that the guarantee of civil rights alone could not insure justice; the emergence of the concept of black power and the racial conflicts of the late 1960s; the development of the Welfare Rights Movement and the establishment of other related types of clients' rights groups; the burgeoning of a youth culture that symbolized many challenges to traditional American values and mores; and the perpetuation of an unpopular war that contributed to the growing distrust and alienation of large segments of the population from governmental institutions (Ryan & Morris 1967).

The child welfare field of the early 1960s was a relatively small, self-contained service system with limited staff and resources. It maintained rather rigid system boundaries, making it difficult for many children and families to gain access to services and equally difficult for other clients to be discharged from care. Quality and coverage were very uneven; whereas some agencies, primarily in the voluntary sector, were providing intensive, highly specialized, professional services to a small number of select clients, other public and voluntary agencies struggled
to provide minimum care and protection to large numbers of needy youngsters. Services were geared almost entirely toward placement, and individual casework was the primary intervention modality. Concepts of community control and clients' rights were essentially non-existent (for a review of this period, see Kahn 1969).

Although the Children's Bureau attempted to provide leadership and direction via the promulgation of standards and the administration of small research and demonstration grants, until the late 1960s, overall federal participation in the child welfare field was minimal. Organizational and funding arrangements varied from state to state, but some combination of state and local responsibility for service provision was utilized in most areas. The participation of the public sector in the financing and direct provision of child care services had increased steadily since the turn of the century, but control of program planning and development, service priorities and policies, and program monitoring and evaluation remained primarily in the voluntary sector, under the auspices of local coordinating councils and welfare planning bodies. Consequently, there were minimal efforts to insure case integration or program coordination within the child welfare system, boundaries and linkages between child welfare and other social service systems were frequently haphazard and often dysfunctional, and agency accountability mechanisms were minimal.

The findings of a study by Ryan and Morris (1967) of the child welfare networks in metropolitan Boston in 1964 illustrate quite graphically the nature of the child welfare services in this era. Although there were obviously some idiosyncratic factors in the way services were organized in Boston, the consequences for families and children seeking help within the existing service network were not atypical of the experiences of similar clients in other areas of the country at the time. The study consisted of an examination for five weeks in 1964 of the total intake (N = 683) of thirteen public, voluntary, and sectarian agencies constituting the basic child welfare network for the metropolitan area and an intensive case reading analysis of the 263 cases ultimately accepted for service (Ryan & Morris 1967).

The study revealed that the child welfare network consisted of two relatively independent systems, one serving the suburban, white-collar, unmarried mother-adoptive family population; and the other, the urban-poor "child-in-family-in-trouble" population. Approximately 29% of the service inquiries could be categorized as unmarried mothers, 21% as child problems, and 50% as parenting problems. The agencies responded very differently to the requests for help, accepting about 65% of the unmarried mother cases, 34% of the child problem cases, and 29% of the parental problem situations. Moreover, the data suggest that intake decisions were made on a very stereotypical basis, largely unrelated to individual case need (Ryan & Morris 1967).

The agency network dealing with the unmarried mother population seemed to provide relatively efficient and effective services, helping women to plan for the birth of their children and arranging a significant number of adoptions. However, this population represented only about one-third of the total number of illegitimate births in the metropolitan area that year; little was known about the much larger number of unmarried mothers who did not approach the child welfare network for help and/or were not accepted for service if they did request assistance (Ryan & Morris 1967).

The other child welfare network attempted to serve a very different population of parents and children, many of whom were low-income urban residents, had long-standing familial difficulties, and presented a range of environmental, parent-child relationship, and mental health problems. For these clients, the child welfare system was clearly viewed as the end of the line. They were usually referred by the community after other attempts at service provision had
failed and placement was seen as the only solution. Yet only about one-third of these cases were actually accepted for services. Little is known about what happened to the other potential clients, all of whom were apparently in need of intensive child welfare services (Ryan & Morris 1967).

Based on their findings, the authors concluded that the concept of a comprehensive child welfare service network in metropolitan Boston was essentially a myth. The lack of flexibility in intake policies and decisionmaking processes, combined with the lack of resources necessary to deal with the magnitude of the problem, made it impossible for the participating agencies to accept and serve many of the clients appropriately referred for services. Ryan and Morris's recommendations reflected the thinking of many other leaders in the field at the time: the development of a comprehensive, public family and children's service system; joint planning between the public and voluntary child welfare sectors; development of rational policies on specialization by voluntary agencies; expanding resources, financing, and staff; development of joint planning, coordinating, and accountability mechanisms for subsystems within the child welfare network; decentralization of program operations; closer coordination at the local level with other major public service systems; and expansion of preventive service and social action efforts.

The study has been described in some detail because it conveys clearly the nature of concern about family and children's services in the early 1960s that precipitated and accompanied many of the subsequent changes in the organization and delivery of social services. Forces for reform were in ascendancy again during these years, and several advisory committees and task forces composed of leading social welfare experts and key policymakers in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations were formed to study public welfare policy and consider needed changes in public assistance and social service programs. The 1962 and 1967 amendments to the Social Security Act reflected the recommendations of these advisory bodies, particularly in relation to the expansion of provisions for public social services, and set a policy framework for subsequent developments in this sphere (Lindhorst & Leijninger 2003).

What is important from a historical perspective is that the clear intention of the social welfare leaders involved in the deliberations that resulted in these Social Security Act amendments was to develop a comprehensive public service system that would meet the needs of low-income families. Furthermore, it was their intention in passing these amendments to diminish the dysfunctional separation between child welfare and family service programs and to guarantee children in families receiving AFDC the services and benefits available to children in foster care. In other words, it was hoped that the development of comprehensive public social services for families and children would help to alleviate many service delivery problems and inequities.

Unfortunately, this goal was essentially doomed from the start because of the unrealistic expectations and conflicting objectives, hopes, and fears that quickly developed among advocates and skeptics alike around the concept of expanded public social services. Social welfare leaders, envisioning a grand new scheme of service provision, failed to anticipate the degree to which legislative intent and rational social planning could be undermined by restrictive federal and state administrative regulations; political, bureaucratic, and staffing constraints within the public sector; and the intransigence of established interest groups in the family and children's service field. Political and civic leaders, concerned about the escalating costs of public assistance, supported the concept of expanded social services on the assumption that they would help to reduce welfare rolls. They were then sorely disillusioned when welfare costs continued to multiply as a consequence of changing demographic patterns, relaxed eligibility requirements, and increased
“take-up” among potential AFDC recipients. Direct service providers and consumers were led to believe that the expansion of public funding would enhance the quality and quantity of service provision, and they were frequently frustrated, often enraged, when these expectations were not fulfilled. Civil rights and consumer groups, concerned about the potential for social control and invasion of privacy inherent in any effort to tie public assistance to service provision, became increasingly wary of efforts to expand state intervention in family life, no matter how well intentioned the motivation. And welfare rights activists and leaders of the War on Poverty, committed to the concept of maximum feasible participation of the poor, disparaged the so-called “service strategy” as a naïve attempt to solve the problems of poverty via the provision of casework services; instead, they argued that organizing efforts should be directed toward placing more resources in the hands of the poor, deprofessionalizing services, and challenging the policies and practices of established agencies (Wickeuden 1976).

Despite this tremendous ambivalence about the potential costs and benefits of an expanded role for the public sector in the provision of services to families and children, federal and state investments in social services escalated rapidly during the 1960s, especially after the 1967 amendments to the Social Security Act, which permitted the purchase of service from voluntary agencies. Community and professional expectations regarding the social good and social reform that might be achieved through these investments expanded equally rapidly.

Many established child welfare agencies responded readily to the demands and opportunities posed by this changing perception of public responsibility for service provision. They expanded their range of service provision, increased efforts to insure better coordination of services, initiated demonstration projects aimed at reaching newly defined populations at risk, developed more specialized foster home and group care facilities, and invested heavily in efforts to enhance the general level of staff training and program administration. But during the very period that the field was attempting to improve the quantity and quality of its service provision, it was also being exposed to new challenges and expectations.

Foster parent and adoptive parent groups began to organize, demanding more equitable treatment for themselves and the development of new types of adoption and foster care programs for children with “special needs” within the existing child welfare population. The movement toward de-institutionalization of youngsters confined in correctional facilities, mental hospitals, and schools for the retarded yielded whole new populations of children and youth that child welfare agencies were expected to serve. The emergence of the child advocacy movement in the late 1960s created pressure for child welfare workers to engage in social action efforts aimed at improving the quality of services provided by schools, hospitals, mental health facilities, and other community agencies impinging on the lives of children. Legal reformers concerned about parents’ and children’s rights began to challenge established agency policies and procedures regarding the movement of children in and out of care, as well as the quality, accessibility, and appropriateness of substitute care provisions. And renewed concern about the problems of child abuse and neglect led to the passage of state mandatory reporting laws, a dramatic increase in the number of cases of alleged child abuse and neglect that agencies were required to investigate, and expanded requests for assistance from police and hospital personnel attempting to provide protective services to children who were being defined as a new population at risk.

As a consequence of these various forces emerging in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the child welfare field was pressured to expand its
boundaries in three basic directions: (1) to enhance and expand in-home services for families and children, especially for those of low-income, minority backgrounds; (2) to establish more specialized substitute care resources for children formerly channeled to other service systems; and (3) to develop opportunities for adoptive placement of the formerly "unadoptable" special needs children in long-term foster care.

Yet these demands were exploding at a time when established child welfare agencies were losing their preeminence in the social welfare field; social work, long the dominant profession in the welfare field, was under attack for its failure to solve the problems of poverty; the medical and legal professions were redefining critical policy and service delivery issues in the children's field; and community groups were demanding increased consumer participation in agency decision-making. In addition, agencies were being expected to develop new funding sources and new patterns of service coordination; and the distribution of power among voluntary, state, and local service planners was shifting. Finally, the Child Welfare League of America, the primary research, standards-setting, and accrediting body in the voluntary sector, was being challenged for defining its organization's priority as membership services, not social action (Steiner 1976); and the Children's Bureau, the only federal agency with an established record of commitment to improving the delivery of child welfare services, was decimated by the reorganization of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare in 1969. In other words, the child welfare field was attempting to respond to new demands and expectations by expanding its service boundaries and resources at the same time that the very underpinnings of the field were under attack. The result was an inevitable system overload.

The 1970s and 1980s
The forces for change began to shift slightly in the 1970s. The women's liberation movement exploded on the American scene; blacks and other minority groups organized to develop political and economic power; the call for affirmative action and equal treatment replaced the push for civil rights and equal opportunities; self-help and advocacy groups representing a wide range of interests, such as children, prisoners, homosexuals, mental patients, physically disabled and retarded citizens, and single parents began to recognize the sources of their constituencies' oppressions and to organize more effectively to secure their rights. Quite inevitably, "middle America" began to react. Concern was growing about the national economy, rampant inflation, and unemployment; the United States seemed to be losing its status as a world power and leader of the forces for good; fear of crime was becoming universal; the role of the churches was declining; the problems of divorce, delinquency, illegitimacy, and drug abuse could no longer be viewed solely as the province of the poor; historical allocations of power and resources were changing; and traditional values, beliefs, and modes of behavior no longer seemed to bring the promised results.

In some ways, all of these pressures seem very far removed from recent developments in the child welfare field, but unfortunately, they are intimately related. The children served by this system—poor, often minority, neglected, dependent, abused, delinquent, and disturbed—constitute the very populations that should have benefited most from the broad social reform efforts since the 1960s. Yet these youngsters and their families continue to be troublesome to the larger community, and their very visibility and vulnerability make them convenient scapegoats for the inadequacies and failures of these recent reform efforts and for the discomfort and alienation experienced by so many families today.

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act
The first important federal legislative action of
the 1970s in relation to child welfare services was passage of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1974 (CAPTA). This law (which was revised in 1996, 2002, and 2003) provided a small amount of funding to states for research and demonstration projects dealing with child maltreatment. The law stipulated that to qualify for funding, states had to pass child abuse and neglect laws requiring mandated reporting of suspected and known cases of maltreatment, immunity for reporters, confidentiality, and a number of other minor provisions. Unfortunately, the law did not specify how child abuse and/or neglect was to be defined or operationalized. This lack of clear operational definitions has created innumerable problems over time for clients as well as for social service and court personnel. The law has served to focus enormous public attention on problems of child abuse and led every state to pass a mandatory child abuse reporting law. However, CAPTA has consistently been funded at low levels, leading to many unfulfilled expectations; and despite the title of the law, its focus has consistently been child abuse reporting, not child abuse prevention or treatment.

In addition to the mandates imposed by CAPTA, emerging directions in social service provision during the 1970s began to create still different expectations for child welfare services. As Wickenden (1976:581) has suggested, “it is difficult to fix an exact year or month when the goal of a ‘comprehensive public welfare system’ . . . began to be replaced by its opposite, the ideal of separation of services and money payments.” Nor is it possible to determine precisely when the basic concepts underlying the structure of service provision in this country began to be reformulated. But early in the 1970s, it was clear that the winds of change had again arrived. Congress imposed a $2.5 billion ceiling on funding for social services in 1972, and Title XX of the Social Security Act was passed in 1975, redefining historical concepts regarding the appropriate decisionmaking responsibility, objectives, intervention strategies, and organizational and funding patterns for social services in this country.

The basic shifts in the policies and patterns of service provisions reflected in this legislation can be summarized as:

- Greater state responsibility for social service planning and program development;
- Public participation in service needs assessment and review;
- Sharp reduction in the range and extent of federal regulations governing service provision;
- Development of comprehensive, integrated service plans;
- Creation of complex and varied funding packages among the various levels of government and public and private provider agencies;
- Diversification of the range of service provision;
- Diminished provisions for categorical programs aimed at special populations at risk;
- Expansion of joint public-voluntary programs;
- Increased emphasis on the objectives vs. the process of service delivery;
- Diminished role for social workers in the administration and delivery of services;
- Expansion of opportunities for provision of services to families above the poverty line;
- Democratization and decentralization of funding decisions and allocations; and
- Increased emphasis on fiscal and program accountability.

Commenting on the implications of Title XX for social services, Austin (1980:19) suggested that “the financing, regulation and management of human service programs has become a major domestic policy issue in the United States.” This development had enormous implications for the child welfare field because it placed on the public agenda the issue of appropriate responsibility and care for dependent, neglected, troubled, and troublesome children.
It transferred the awesome responsibility for shaping the lives of children—a responsibility formerly entrusted only to parents and/or persons with professional expertise in child welfare—to contending forces in the political arena, and it created increased emphasis on rationality, efficiency, and control in the exercise of that trust (see also Gilbert 1971; Miller 1978; Schram 1981; Urban and Social Change Review 1980).

In the 1970s, child welfare agencies started to be attacked for their failure to keep children out of placement, minimize costs while maintaining appropriate resources for children who must be placed in temporary substitute care, and move children back into their own families or into permanent adoptive homes as quickly as possible (e.g., see Bernstein, Snider, & Meezan 1975; Billingsley & Giovannoni 1970, 1972, 1975; Fanshel & Shinn 1972; Knitzer, Allen, & McGowan 1978; Persico 1979; Strauss 1977). The tenor of these critiques contrasted markedly with the concerns raised by earlier commentators regarding the need to broaden the base of service delivery, reach underserved populations, and expand economic and social supports for all families (Billingsley & Giovannoni 1972; Kenniston 1977; Schorr 1974). In essence, earlier visions of using public funding to stimulate the development of child welfare services designed to enhance the development of all children at risk were replaced by the expectation that the child welfare field should serve only those children for whom state intervention is essential to insure a minimal level of care and protection. In addition, it was assumed that these children should be cared for in as rational, time-limited, and cost-efficient a manner as possible.

This redefinition of the expectations and potentials of the child welfare system significantly diminished the priority given to children's services within the human service sector and led to some marked changes in the way child welfare services are organized and delivered. To illustrate, a study of child welfare in 25 states provided some interesting insights regarding changing patterns of service provisions in the 1970s (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare 1976). The researchers observed that the development of child welfare service delivery systems in various states was very uneven and that the structures and organization of these delivery systems were constantly changing. As a consequence of widespread reorganization of state human services departments and frequent redefinitions of the client groups and services falling within the province of “child welfare,” child welfare services seemed to be losing their organizational visibility and coherence.

Another concern raised by this study and echoed in the findings of a related study focused on clients seeking services from public social service agencies was the competency of staff now providing child welfare services (Jenkins 1981). The merger of public welfare and child welfare staff in many states, combined with the general trend toward lower educational and experience requirements for social service personnel and reduced opportunities for workers to receive advanced training and specialized consultation, resulted in a gradual deprofessionalization of child welfare services. This raised serious question about the capacity of staff to provide the quality and range of services required by the families and children entering the child welfare system.

Despite the concerns raised about organizational viability and staff competency, efforts to reform the delivery of child welfare services during this period were directed primarily toward revising the statutory base governing state intervention in family life and increasing the requirements for public accountability of service providers. For example, by 1977, 20 states plus the District of Columbia had instituted some type of formal judicial, court-administered, or citizen review (Chappell & Hevener 1977). Many others states followed, and the trend toward developing increasingly complex systems for internal case monitoring and program review became virtually universal.
Three other developments of the late 1970s also contributed the major shift in child welfare policy that occurred in 1980.

The first was one of the most significant legislative events of the 1970s, the passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) of 1978. The ICWA described the role that Native American families and tribal governments must play in decisions about the protection and placement of their children. It strengthened the role of tribal governments in determining the custody of Native American children and specified that preference should be given first to placements with extended family, then to Native American foster homes. The law mandated that state courts act to preserve the integrity and unity of Native American families.

The second was a new focus on the concept of permanency planning, precipitated by the theoretical writings of Goldstein, Solnit, Goldstein, and Freud (1973, 1979) on the concept of psychological parenting and the reports of successful demonstration projects designed to prevent placement and/or promote permanence for children in foster care through reunification or adoption was a major theoretical and practice shift in the field of children, youth, and family services (Burt and Balyeat 1974; Emlen, L'Ahti, & Downs 1978; Pike 1976; Pike, Downs, & Emlen 1977).

The third significant development was a series of Senate subcommittee hearings focused first on issues of adoption, and later, on broader foster care issues (Allen & Knitzer 1983:119).

The concerns embodied in the reform efforts discussed above were translated into explicit public policy with passage of the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Reform Act of 1980. Had this act been adequately funded and properly implemented, it had the potential for greatly enhancing the quality of traditional child welfare services. It essentially reversed the trend toward a diminished role for the federal government in the funding and structuring of social service provision, and it addressed directly many of the most frequently documented problems in the child welfare system. However, it sharply underlined the thrust toward viewing the child welfare system itself, rather than the children and families this field was developed to serve, as the primary object of concern—the essential target for social reform.

Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act. Hailed as the most important piece of child welfare legislation enacted in three decades, the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-272) required states to establish programs and make procedural reforms to serve children in their own homes, prevent out-of-home placement, and facilitate family reunification following placement. The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Reform Act officially introduced the concept of permanency planning as a primary objective of federal child welfare policy. The specific components of the bill were aimed at redirecting funds from foster care to preventive and adoption services, providing due process for all individuals involved, decreasing the time children spend in foster care, insuring placement for children in the least detrimental alternative setting, and insuring state planning and accountability. Perhaps most important for later developments in child welfare services was the law's requirement that states make "reasonable efforts" to prevent children from entering foster placements. The bill adopted what has been termed a "carrot and stick" approach (Allen and Knitzer 1983) by:

1. Amending Title IV-B to create new funding for preventive services;
2. Setting a cap on funding for foster care services that was to become effective once funding for Title IV-B reached a specified level;
3. Requiring state inventories of all children in foster care longer than 6 months;
4. Requiring development of state plans for foster care and adoption services and routine collection of aggregate and case data
to monitor implementation of these state plans;
5. Requiring individual case reviews of all children in placement after 6 months and judicial reviews of all children in care longer than 18 months; and
6. Providing open-ended funding for adoption subsidies for children defined as "hard to place."

No effort was made in this legislation to address inherent conflicts with the provisions of CAPTA.

After President Reagan was inaugurated in 1981, there were a number of congressional battles to eliminate funding for the CAPTA and to fold funding for the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act into a block grant for social services. These efforts failed, but the effects of the conservative Reagan administration were felt in other ways in the child welfare arena. In 1981, Congress passed a social services block grant as part of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Bill of 1981. This bill compounded all the drawbacks of Title XX by decreasing social service funding, federal monitoring and regulation, reducing service standards, and decreasing emphasis on equity within and across state lines. The cut-backs in federal funding for social services did not impact directly on child welfare because funding for the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act was kept out of the block grant. However, child welfare agencies experienced serious indirect results related to an increased need for services among families at risk and to increased family poverty created by cut-backs in such entitlement programs as AFDC and Medicaid. States, localities, and voluntary agencies struggled to respond to these needs, primarily by emphasizing provision of last-ditch, crisis services. Consequently, families at risk tended to defer routine, early intervention services and to present at child welfare agencies in greater need than they might have in earlier years.

Although the number of children in foster care leveled off briefly after passage of the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act, reports of child abuse and neglect increased markedly, as did foster placements, during the later 1980s. There is no consensus as to the reasons for these trends. Some argued that these increases were the result of increased reporting, suggesting that there was no real increase in the problem of child maltreatment, simply an increase in the degree to which suspected cases were reported. Others attributed these trends to increases in maternal substance abuse, family homelessness, or poverty. Still others blamed the dramatic increase in kinship foster care that occurred following the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Miller vs. Youakim (1979), stating that children living in relatives' homes are entitled to the same level of foster care payments as children living with non-kin.

Despite these increases in child abuse reporting and foster placement, a number of programs were initiated during this period designed to demonstrate "reasonable efforts" to prevent placement of children in foster care. There were many variations in the type and duration of family-centered services offered, but they all were generally described as family preservation services. Homebuilders, started by the Behavioral Sciences Institute in Tacoma, Washington, was the program that ultimately received the most attention. The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation became very invested in this program model, called "intensive family preservation services," and formed a loose coalition of national organizations to work on developing materials that would assist in policy implementation at the state level. The foundation provided funding in the late 1980s for a group of states to engage in strategic implementation of Homebuilder-type services.

The 1990s
By 1992, this group of states had made progress in implementing intensive family preservation
services as a significant aspect of state child welfare policy and had generated widespread support among professionals, state administrators, and legislators for family preservation as an important component of child welfare policy. Thus, a significant coalition of national organizations was ready to advocate federal legislation that would provide federal support for intensive family preservation services (Farrow 2001).

Family Preservation and Support Services Program. In 1993, Congress passed the Family Preservation and Support Services Program (FPSSP; P.L. 103-66), which earmarked federal funds for family support services and increased the funds available for family preservation services. The intent of this law was to help communities build a system of family support services to assist vulnerable children and families in an effort to prevent child maltreatment. Family preservation services were designed to help families experiencing crises that might lead to the placement of their children in foster care.

This law provided some funding for family preservation and family support services, officially recognizing the practice of family preservation, although the implementing regulations defined family preservation much more broadly than did the original model of Homebuilders-type services. States were to use the new funds to integrate preventive services into treatment-oriented child welfare systems, to improve service coordination within and across state service agencies, and to engage broad segments of the community in program planning at the state and local levels.

More importantly, the FPSSP stipulated that the planning process should include parents and consumers of services, community-based service providers, representatives of professional and advocacy organizations, and child welfare agency line staff, administrators, and supervisors. The intent was to make child welfare systems more responsive to families and communities by involving a broad range of stakeholders. Although family preservation programs continued to expand during the 1990s, providing many high-risk families with the help they needed to maintain their children at home, several forces converged to raise concern about the value of these services (McGowan & Walsh 2000). These included, first, the continued rise in child abuse and neglect complaints, leading to increased foster care placements. Second, in contrast to earlier reports of the success of intensive family preservation services, carefully designed studies began to document some of the limitations of this model of service (Nelson 1997; Schuerman, Rzepnicki, & Littell 1994). Third, conservative lay commentators began to stir public anger about the dramatic rise in kinship foster care and the possibility of relatives of “bad” parents receiving money from the state to care for the children of their relatives (MacDonald 1999; Weisman 1994). Fourth, the resurgence of the conservative political forces began to legitimate public attacks on families in poverty dependent on AFDC who may have difficulty providing proper care for their children (MacDonald 1999). Finally, public exposes about a few isolated cases in which children in families that received family preservation services were later abused by their parents precipitated widespread debate about the relative value of family preservation vs. child protection and the need to give priority to children’s safety (Farrow 2001).

The legislation that followed passage of the FPSSP in 1993 essentially reflected this shift away from the concept of preserving families toward protecting children.

Multietnic Placement Act and Interethnic Placement Act. The Multietnic Placement Act (MEPA; P.L. 103-382) also known as the “Howard M. Metzenbaum Multietnic Placement Act of 1994,” prohibited delaying or denying the placement of any child on the basis of race, color, or national origin. MEPA required states to diligently recruit prospective adoptive and foster care families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in need
of foster and adoptive homes and required the federal government to impose fiscal penalties for states not in compliance with the anti-discrimination provision.

MEPA was designed to decrease the length of time that children wait to be adopted; prevent discrimination in the placement of children on the basis of race, color, or national origin; and facilitate the identification and recruitment of foster and adoptive families who can meet children’s needs.

MEPA was amended in 1996 by the Interstate Placement Act (P.L. 104-10). This legislation strengthened the provisions of MEPA to ensure that adoption and foster placements were not delayed or denied on the basis of race, color, or national origin.

Many child welfare practitioners and policymakers (Brooks, Barth, Bussiere, & Patterson 1999) have expressed concern that the policies of racial matching and the ethics of transracial adoptions were indeed controversial; however, the passage of this legislation has done little to reduce the controversy (for a more detailed discussion, see the chapter by Groza, Houlihan, and Wood on adoption).

**Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act.** The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-193), commonly known as the “welfare reform law,” eliminated the concept of financial entitlement under AFDC and replaced this with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. Passed with no real consideration of its potential impact on families in need of child welfare services, the law has a number of provisions that may make it more difficult for high-risk families in poverty to maintain their children safely at home. As Courtney (1997) commented, “the passage of P.L.104-193 marks the first time in U.S. history when federal law mandates efforts to protect children from maltreatment, but makes no guarantee of basic economic supports for children.” To illustrate, the law imposes a 5-year lifetime limit on receipt of TANF funds, imposes strict work requirements on parents receiving TANF, prohibits individuals convicted of drug-related offenses after passage of the law from receiving TANF or Food Stamp benefits for life, and permits states to establish a family cap that denies cash benefits to children born into families already receiving TANF.

*Adoption and Safe Families Act.* The most significant change in child welfare policy since the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Reform Act of 1980 is the passage of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA; P.L. 105-89), which amends Title IV-E of the Social Security Act. ASFA requires that child safety be the paramount concern in making service provision, placement, and permanency planning decisions. Reflecting some of the same conservative sentiments that led to the passage of the welfare reform act the preceding year, the enactment of this law makes the safety of children the priority in all decision-making, diminishes the emphasis on family preservation, and promotes speedy termination of parental rights and adoptive placement when parents cannot quickly resolve the problems that led to placement. Although the law reaffirms the concept of permanency planning and reauthorizes the FPSSP, renaming it the “Safe and Stable Families Program,” it specifies a number of circumstances under which states are not required to make “reasonable effort” to preserve or reunify families. It mandates a permanency hearing after a child has been in care for 12 months and every 12 months thereafter and requires states, with certain exceptions, to file a termination of parental rights petition in cases in which a child has been in care for 15 of the past 22 months. Thus parents who cannot resolve the problems that led to placement and may require longer treatment (e.g., substance abusers) are at risk of having their rights terminated, no matter what the age of the child or the degree of parent-child attachment.

In some ways, this law seemed designed primarily to promote adoptions, providing
additional funding for states that increase their number of completed adoption and authorizing HHS to provide technical assistance to states and localities to help them reach their adoption targets. As Halpern (1998) commented, this law indicates that "Congress believes adoption is the new panacea for the problems of foster care." States that do not comply with its provisions risk losing a portion of their Title IV-E and Title IV-B funds.

On a positive note, ASFA signals a willingness to increase the federal role in child welfare services and to demand state accountability by mandating HHS to develop outcome measures to monitor state performance. The department, in response, developed national standards with benchmark indicators of success to measure performance on six statewide data indicators. These standards are identified as recurrence of maltreatment, incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care, foster care re-entries, stability of foster care placements, length of time to achieve reunification, and length of time to achieve adoption.

The law reaffirms the importance of making reasonable efforts to preserve and reunify families, but also specifies that states are not required to make efforts to keep children with their parents when doing so places a child’s safety in jeopardy. ASFA includes provisions that shorten the time frame for making permanency planning decisions and establishes a time frame for initiating proceedings to terminate parental rights. This law also requires a focus on results and accountability and makes it clear that it is no longer enough to insure that procedural safeguards are met. It is critical that child welfare services lead to positive outcomes for children.

John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP), Title I of the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (P.L. 106-169), provides funds to states to assist youth and young adults (up to age 21) in the foster care component of the child welfare system in making a smoother, more successful transition to adulthood. This program replaces and expands Section 477 of the Social Security Act and allows states to use these funds for a broader array of services to youth "aging out" of the foster care system, including room and board. This legislation revises the program of grants to states and expands opportunities for independent living programs, providing education, training, and employment services, and financial support for foster youth to prepare for living on their own. The legislation requires the development of outcome measures to assess state performance in operating independent living programs and mandates a national data collection on services, the individuals served, and outcomes. In addition, the legislation provides states with the option to extend Medicaid coverage to 18- to 21-year-olds who have been emancipated from foster care. CFCIP emphasizes permanence for youth and increased funding for adoption incentive payments.

Most importantly, CFCIP enables states to expand the scope and improve the quality of educational, vocational, practical, and emotional supports in their programs for adolescents in foster care and for young adults who have recently left foster care.

Twenty-First Century

Child Abuse Prevention and Enforcement Act

As an outgrowth of the concern about inadequate responses to reports of child maltreatment, the Child Abuse Prevention and Enforcement Act (P.L. 106-77) was enacted at the start of the twenty-first century. This legislation authorizes the use of federal law enforcement funds by states to improve the criminal justice system. The intention was to provide timely, accurate, and complete criminal history record information to child welfare agencies, organizations, and programs that are engaged in the assessment of activities related to the protection of children, including protection against child sexual abuse, and placement of children.
in foster care. It allows the use of federal grants by law enforcement to:

- Enforce child abuse and neglect laws, including laws protecting against child sexual abuse;
- Promote programs designed to prevent child abuse and neglect; and
- Establish or support cooperative programs between law enforcement and media organizations to collect, record, retain, and disseminate information useful in the identification and apprehension of suspected criminal offenders.

**Intercountry Adoption Act**

In response to the need to ratify the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect to Intercountry Adoption, the U.S. Congress enacted the Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-279). As background history, the Hague Convention set minimum standards and procedures for adoptions between implementing countries that prevent abuses, such as abduction or sale of children; ensured proper consent for the adoption; allowed for the child's transfer to the receiving country; and established the adopted child's status in the receiving country. This legislation makes clear that the U.S. central authority is established within the Department of State with general responsibility for U.S. implementation of the Hague Convention and annual reports to Congress. The State Department is responsible for:

- Monitoring each accrediting entity's performance of its duties and their compliance with the Hague Convention, the Intercountry Adoption Act (IAA), and applicable regulations; and
- Issuing certificates to cover Hague Convention adoptions/placements for adoption made in the United States necessary for their recognition, so long as the department has received appropriate documentation to establish that the requirements of the Convention, IAA, and other regulations have been met. In addition, the Immigration and Nationality Act is to be amended to provide for a new category of children adopted under the Hague Convention and designed to meet other requirements to qualify for immigrant visas.

**Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments**

Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments were passed in 2001 (P.L. 107-133), in an effort to:

- Encourage and enable states to develop or expand programs of family preservation services, community-based family support services, adoption promotion and support services, and time-limited family re-unification services;
- Reduce high-risk behavior by children with incarcerated parents by providing one-on-one relationships with adult mentors; and
- Continue improvements in state court systems, as required by ASFA.

The most significant part of this legislation is the amendment of the definition of family preservation services to include infant safe haven programs. The legislation added strengthening parental relationships and promoting healthy marriages to the list of allowable activities. There was a new focus added to the research, evaluation, and technical assistance activities. The legislation additionally created a matching grant program to support mentoring networks for children of prisoners, reauthorized funds for the Court Improvement Program, and authorized a vocational/education voucher program as part of the CFIP.

**Child and Family Services Reviews**

Although the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) actually began in 2000, Congress directed HHS in 1994 to develop regulations for reviewing state CFSR programs administered under Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. Prior federal reviews proved to be
disappointing for both the states and the federal government, which at least in part led to the passage of the legislation. Although previous reviews had been effective in promoting state accountability for meeting requirements associated with state foster care programs, they were less worthwhile in insuring positive outcomes for the children and families served by state child welfare agencies, especially those outside the foster care program.

In consultation with the experts in the child welfare field, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within HHS developed and field-tested the new CFSRs in 14 states prior to implementing the reviews officially in FY2000. Using the statutory and regulatory underpinnings of the Title IV-B Child and Family Services Plan, including the principles that guided the development of the plan, ACF developed measures that reflect the substance and intent of those requirements through actual casework with children and families.

The CFSRs have as a goal to examine child welfare practices at the ground level, capturing the actual practice among caseworkers, children and families, and service providers, and determining the effects of those interactions on the children and families involved. The emphasis is on child welfare practice, based on a belief that, although certain policies and procedures are essential to an agency's capacity to support positive outcomes, it is the day-to-day casework practices and their underlying values that most influence such outcomes.

The CFSRs are also a primary mechanism for promoting the federal government's agenda of change and improvement in services to children, youth, and families nationally. With a clear focus on program improvement planning, these CFSRs aim to provide an opportunity for the states and the federal government jointly to implement reforms at a systemic level that will realize and sustain improved outcomes for children, youth, and families. Furthermore, the CFSRs offer opportunities to frame policy and practice solutions clearly within the context of child welfare practice principles that reflect the mission and intent of federally funded CPS programs and state-of-the-art thinking on the most effective approaches to serving children and families.

As of 2004, ACF had conducted 52 CFSRs of state performance based on the national child welfare outcome standards (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2004b). Although an admirable start to improving outcomes for children, youth, and families, as the reviewers from HHS concluded in their Annual Report to Congress in 2004, "there is much room for improvement with regard to State performance on the seven national child welfare outcomes" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2004a:21).

Other recent investigators and observers of the child welfare system have arrived at similar conclusions. To illustrate, in their report released on January 28, 2004, the U.S. General Accounting Office (2004:2) concluded that "child welfare agencies face a number of challenges related to staffing and data management that hinder their ability to protect children from abuse and neglect." More specifically, the report notes that low salaries hinder staff recruitment and retention, and lack of adequate numbers of trained staff limit the capacity of remaining staff to develop relationships with families and make decisions that insure safe and stable placements for children.

A report issued by Fostering Results, a non-partisan group of child welfare experts, raised serious question about the ways in which federal financing rules stifle innovation and restrict funding of programs that could reduce the number of children in foster care. Based on an analysis of data from the state performance reviews as well as from the 39 states that had completed CFSRs at the time the study was conducted, the authors concluded that "every state failed to achieve substantial conformity in enough areas to demonstrate compliance with
federally mandated performance expectations” (McDonald, Salyers, & Shaver 2004:221). As a means to improve state performance, Fostering Results argues that states must be allowed to move out of the “straightjacket” created by federal financing rules that prohibit use of federal funds designated for foster care on the services that could give children safer, more permanent homes. The report indicates that some states that have received waivers to use federal Title IV-B funds for purposes other than foster care have demonstrated improved performance on critical indicators. Therefore, this group recommends that HHS be permitted to give more state waivers to insure more flexible state use of federal funding.

The Pew Commission, another national, non-partisan group of child welfare experts, reached similar, troubling conclusions after a year of study (Pew Commission 2004). The chair, a 20-year veteran of Congress, is quoted as saying, “The nation’s foster care system is unquestionably broken.” To address the many problems identified, the commission made strong recommendations designed to strengthen accountability in the child welfare agencies and the juvenile courts. More specifically, the commission highlights the ways in which current federal funding mechanisms encourage an over-reliance on foster care and recommends giving states more flexibility in the use of federal monies to insure that they can offer a range of service options that might encourage maintaining children at home safely or facilitate swifter adoption or legal guardianship. To strengthen the performance of courts in child welfare decisionmaking and case review, the Pew Commission recommends a series of court performance measures and incentives for effective collaboration between juvenile courts and child welfare agencies (Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care 2004b).

Two long-time scholars of child welfare (Whittaker & Maluccio 2002:108) have recently written about “the troubled state of current child welfare services,” pointing out that many of the leaders in the field have begun to call for radical change. These include Waldhofel’s (1998) recommendations for redesigning child protective services, the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s support of family-to-family initiatives and community partnerships, and their own recommendations for blurring the boundaries between in-home and placement services by offering respite care, whole-family group care, multiple forms of kinship care, and so forth (Whittaker & Maluccio 2002:127–128). These are all promising practice approaches, and the reports cited above suggest promising policy directions. However, it would be a mistake to think that any of these initiatives will “fix” all the current problems in the child welfare system. As I first wrote over 20 years ago (McGowan 1983:44):

We are writing in the midst of a rapidly changing social climate. It would be foolhardy, if not impossible, to predict the ultimate impact of current political forces on reform efforts in the child welfare system. But the history of American child welfare suggests that many of the dilemmas confronting the field today reflect the solutions devised to address the problems of the past, and we can anticipate that although current proposals for change will resolve some issues, they will create still others. Henry Thurston (1930), writing fifty years ago about the history of child welfare, quoted Lowell’s couplet:

New occasions teach new duties;
Time makes ancient good uncouth.

Certainly these comments are equally applicable today. Only a few lessons seem clear from the child welfare history reviewed in this chapter:

- Child welfare services are shaped primarily by social forces and trends in the larger society;
- Individuals and groups engaged in the design and provision of child welfare service can contribute—modestly and imperfectly,
but consistently—to improving the quality of life for children;
• The inherent tensions between the interest of children, parents, and the community at large can never be perfectly resolved;
• American society’s willingness to invest in programs designed to enhance the welfare of families and children is meager and begrudging at best; and
• The nature and definition of children’s needs may shift over time, but social responsibility for the provision of supports and services responsive to these needs remains constant.

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