

CAFIS



CALIFORNIA
STATE LIBRARY
FOUNDED 1850

California Family Impact Seminar
900 N Street, Suite 300
P.O. Box 942837
Sacramento, CA 94237-0001
(916) 653-7653 phone
(916) 654-5829 fax



CALIFORNIA
STATE
LIBRARY
FOUNDATION

Evaluating Welfare Reform Measuring Child and Family Well-Being

September 11, 1998 Seminar Presentations

Introduction by M. Anne Powell, M.S.W.

Sharon McGroder, Child Trends, Inc.

Narayan Sastry, RAND, Santa Monica, CA

Werner Schink & Lois Van Beers, CA Dept. of Social Services

Mary Summers, CA State University, Sacramento and

Jerry Plummer, Sacramento County Dept. of Human Assistance

September 1998

CAFIS-98-02

C A L I F O R N I A F A M I L Y I M P A C T S E M I N A R

Evaluating Welfare Reform

Measuring Child and Family Well-Being

September 11, 1998 Seminar Presentations

Introduction by M. Anne Powell, M.S.W.

Sharon McGroder, Child Trends, Inc.

Narayan Sastry, RAND, Santa Monica, CA

Werner Schink & Lois Van Beers, CA Dept. of Social Services

Mary Summers, CA State University, Sacramento and

Jerry Plummer, Sacramento County Dept. of Human Assistance

September 1998

CAFIS-98-02

COPYRIGHT ©1998. California State Library, Sacramento, California. All Rights Reserved.

This report was prepared for the California Family Impact Seminar (CAFIS) to accompany the September 11, 1998, seminar, "Evaluating Welfare Reform: Measuring Child and Family Well-Being." A related publication from the September 11, 1998, CAFIS Roundtable examines "California Welfare Reform Evaluations," and includes a detailed survey.

The California Family Impact Seminar is a nonpartisan, family policy research and education project, serving government officials and policy makers in California. CAFIS is a joint project of the State Library's California Research Bureau and the California State Library Foundation. CAFIS is part of a network of state Family Impact Seminars. The California Family Impact Seminar is located at 900 N Street, Suite 300, Sacramento, CA 95814, and can be reached by telephone, (916) 653-7653. CAFIS reports are on <http://www.library.ca.gov/CAFIS>.

The CAFIS project, "Welfare Reform and Family and Child Well-Being," is made possible by the generous support of the Zellerbach Family Fund and the Stuart Foundations. The first CAFIS seminar in this series, "Welfare Reform and Family and Child Well-Being: Implications and Opportunities for Child Welfare," was held on January 23, 1998. The background report is available from CAFIS and is on the website.

Copies of CAFIS reports may be obtained by contacting the California State Library Foundation. Portions of the report may be photocopied for educational, teaching, and dissemination purposes, provided that proper attribution is given to the California State Library Foundation and the California Family Impact Seminar.

ISBN: 0-929722-99-X
CAFIS-98-02

California Family Impact Seminar
California Research Bureau
900 N Street, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95814
Telephone: (916) 653-7843
Facsimile: (916) 654-5829

California State Library Foundation
1225 8th Street, Suite 345
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 447-6331

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
Evaluation of TANF and CalWORKs	1
Welfare Evaluation and Child Well-Being	1
Evaluation	2
Evaluating Welfare Reform: Measuring Child and Family Well-Being	3
CHAPTER I: STATE-LEVEL CHILD OUTCOMES AND THE EVALUATION OF WELFARE-TO-WORK STRATEGIES	5
SHARON MCGRODER, PH.D., CHILD TRENDS, INC., WASHINGTON, DC	5
The Federal Family Support Act: Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Training Program	5
JOBS and Child Outcomes.....	5
The Project on State-Level Child Outcomes.....	6
Conclusions	10
CHAPTER II: THE LOS ANGELES STUDY OF FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES	17
NARAYAN SASTRY, PH.D. RAND, SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA.....	17
The Need for the Los Angeles Study of Families and Communities	17
Study Design	18
Study Team	19
Policy Implications of Study	19
Neighborhoods and Welfare Reform.....	20
Child and Family Effects of Welfare Reform.....	20
How Neighborhoods Effect Welfare Program Participation.....	20
Neighborhoods and Transition to Work	21
Closing Remarks.....	21
CHAPTER III: STATE CALWORKS AND RELATED EVALUATIONS.....	23
WERNER SCHINK.....	23
Overview of State Welfare and Related Evaluations	23
LOIS VAN BEERS	27
CalWORKs Evaluation.....	27
CHAPTER IV: THE IMPACT OF WELFARE REFORM ON SACRAMENTO COUNTY.....	31
JERRY PLUMMER.....	31
Study Purpose and Orientation.....	31
MARY SUMMERS, R.N., PH.D.	33
Study Design	33
Ecological Model.....	33
Study Constructs and Variables	34
Study Team.....	36
Study Duration and Time Lines.....	36

APPENDIX A: CALIFORNIA STATUTES RELATING TO EVALUATION OF THE CALIFORNIA WORK AND OPPORTUNITY FOR KIDS (CALWORKS) ACT AND RELATED PROGRAMS.....45

APPENDIX B: FEDERAL PROVISIONS RELATING TO EVALUATION OF THE TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) PROGRAM51

APPENDIX C: BACKGROUND RESEARCH MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED AT SEMINAR.... 55

1. “EVALUATING WELFARE REFORM: WHAT DO WE KNOW? HOW CAN WE LEARN MORE?,” *THE FORUM*, VOL. 1, NO. 2, *RESEARCH FORUM ON CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND THE NEW FEDERALISM*, MAY 1998. 57
2. “HOW TO EVALUATE WELFARE REFORM: GUIDANCE FOR STATES,” BY ANNE GORDON, JONATHAN JACOBSON, AND THOMAS FRAKER, MATHEMATICA POLICY RESEARCH, INC. 64
3. “TRACKING THE WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN WITHIN STATES: THE EVOLVING FEDERAL ROLE IN THE AGE OF DEVOLUTION,” BY BRETT V. BROWN, *NEW FEDERALISM: ISSUES AND OPTIONS FOR STATES*, SERIES A, NO. A-21, THE URBAN INSTITUTE, JUNE 1998. 72
4. “WELFARE REFORM AND CHILDREN: POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS,” BY MARTHA ZASLOW, KATHRYN TOUT, CHRISTOPHER BOTSKO, AND KRISTIN MOORE, *NEW FEDERALISM: ISSUES AND OPTIONS FOR STATES*, SERIES A, NO. A-23, THE URBAN INSTITUTE, JUNE 1998. 85
5. *USING PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WELFARE-TO-WORK PROGRAMS*, BY TIMOTHY J. BARTIK, “ABSTRACT,” UPJOHN INSTITUTE STAFF WORKING PAPER 95-36. 93
6. “WELFARE REFORM: HOW WILL WE KNOW IF IT WORKS?,” *FAMILY IMPACT SEMINAR*, WASHINGTON, D.C. 97
7. “WELFARE REFORM RESEARCH: A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR RESEARCHERS AND ADVOCATES,” *INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN’S POLICY RESEARCH*..... 111
8. “YOUNG CHILD POVERTY IN THE STATES—WIDE VARIATION AND SIGNIFICANT CHANGE,” BY NEIL G. BENNETT AND JIALI LI, NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHILDREN IN POVERTY, 1998..... 129
9. “YOUNG CHILDREN IN POVERTY: A STATISTICAL UPDATE,” PREPARED BY JIALI LI AND NEIL BENNETT, NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHILDREN IN POVERTY, MARCH 1998..... 135

INTRODUCTION

In August 1996, the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) became law. This law restructures the nation's welfare system to focus on the provision of temporary support for poor families. PRWORA replaces the Aid for Dependent Children (AFDC) program and the entitlements to aid and services provided under it with Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF) block grants to states, and institutes caps on federal funding (instead of matched funding) through fiscal year 2002. Parents are required to seek or prepare for employment while receiving assistance. PRWORA also imposes new work requirements, limits SSI, Food Stamps and other means-tested public benefits to legal immigrants, and imposes strict restrictions on services through use of incentives and sanctions.

The stated goal of TANF is to decrease welfare utilization and increase recipient reliance on wages from jobs. Changes include a 24 month time limit for recipients to find work or participate in a work activity, as defined by the state. There is also a lifetime eligibility limit of five years for participants to receive welfare benefits. States must meet a minimum federally-required work participation rate in order to receive full TANF funding. Within general guidelines offered by the federal law, great flexibility is provided for states, and for county administered programs, to design welfare programs based on local concerns and conditions.

In August 1997, the California Legislature passed and Governor Wilson signed into law statutes conforming the state's welfare programs to PRWORA, including the new CalWORKs program (See Appendix C). CalWORKs was implemented in January 1998, and by January 1999, all recipients of welfare are to be enrolled.

Evaluation of TANF and CalWORKs

Both federal and state statutes require evaluation of welfare reform. (See Appendices A and B, which contain the federal and state evaluation requirements, respectively) States must evaluate both the *implementation* of TANF as well as the *impact* of the change in welfare programs and service delivery to families that are enrolled in the program. California law also requires each county to evaluate its local CalWORKs program. According to the statutes, some constructs must be included in CalWORKs' evaluations (i.e. employment, earnings, self-sufficiency, child care, child support, child well-being, family structure, and impacts on local government).

Welfare Evaluation and Child Well-Being

While there is broad support for the notion that welfare should help children, most welfare research has focused on how parents respond to welfare programming, rather than on its effects on children (Currie, 1996/1997).

In recognition of the importance of welfare to child well-being, CalWORKs' statutes require measuring the effects of CalWORKs on child well-being, specifying "(c)hild well-being shall include entries into foster care, at-risk births, school achievement, child abuse reports, and rates of child poverty" (Welfare and Institutions Code Section 11520, et seq.).

Evaluation

Before introducing the seminar presentations, there are several important points that need to be touched upon regarding evaluation in general. Effective evaluation is not an “event” that takes place at the end of a project. Rather, it is an ongoing process which helps decision makers—including policymakers—to better understand the program under study, including the program’s impact on participants, collaborating agencies and organizations and the community, as well as internal and external influencing factors. It is important that evaluations are not conducted simply to prove that a program works, but rather how it works and might be improved.

The original mission of program evaluation in the human services and education fields was to assist in improving the quality of social programs. Program evaluation in the United States began with the ambitious, federally funded social programs of the Great Society initiatives launched in the 1960s and 1970s. During this period, systemic evaluations were promoted as a means of assuring legislators and program architects that there was a sound scientific basis for the programs and to show that the programs were responsive to the needs of the public. Among the many lessons learned from the significant investments made in the 1960s and 1970s, was that there were not sufficient resources to address all of society’s problems, nor would money alone solve those problems. Rather, the investments needed to be targeted, and to decide what was worth doing required program evaluations.

The importance of demonstrating the effectiveness of social programs has now become important to a broad array of constituencies that include program funders, government officials, and the public at large. Limited resources, increasingly complex and layered social problems, the changing political climate, and a seeming shift in public opinion about the extent to which government and other institutions should support disadvantaged or vulnerable populations have further increased the importance of evaluation.

While demonstrating effectiveness and measuring impact are important and valuable, it is equally important to focus on gathering and analyzing data that will help us to improve social initiatives. Welfare reform presents such a need. There are aspects of welfare reform that have been evaluated under previous programs, such as many of the welfare-to-work requirements of the 1988 federal JOBS program (Job Opportunities and Basic Skills). However, there are significant differences between today’s TANF program and programs of the past, like JOBS; these differences have not been tested and their effects are uncertain.

There are also important questions of methodology. Many evaluations have emphasized using scientific methods of evaluation; that is, measuring statistically significant changes in quantifiable terms. This single emphasis has been shown to limit one’s understanding of the richness and complexity of contemporary human services problems and the programs designed to address them, especially the system change and comprehensive community initiatives being tested in many communities as part of welfare reform. The complexities of the circumstances that are now associated with welfare have been found to reach far beyond easily measured indicators such as employment readiness and availability, including such factors as community and domestic

violence, substance abuse, mental illness, and developmental challenges. Further, conventional scientific research methods do not reveal how and why programs work, for whom they work well (or do not work), and under what circumstances programs work best or least effectively. Thus, we are challenged to devise creative evaluation strategies that go beyond measuring quantifiable changes in the numbers and types of families served by CalWORKs, in order to also enable us to understand the complexities of success and failure for both clients and programs.

Another factor that continues to challenge us relates to the amount of time evaluations require, particularly for complex, multi-stage evaluations. This time lag requires, at a minimum, a better dialog about the expectations of policymakers and with the programs and research communities. Policymakers need to be better informed about the realistic limits and requirements of evaluation, about what evaluation can and cannot reveal, and the time frames required to answer often complex questions. Program managers and researchers need to be better informed about the political and other pressures facing public policymakers to ensure that public expenditures are effective. They also need to think more strategically about their role in promoting and creating effective evaluations, and for using evaluation results to reshape programs to better serve the public. This September 11th, 1998, California Family Impact Seminar is a modest attempt to begin this education and dialog by bringing these constituencies together to discuss welfare reform and related evaluations, particularly as they concern child and family well-being.

Evaluating Welfare Reform: Measuring Child and Family Well-Being

The California Family Impact Seminar, as part of its yearlong *Welfare Reform and Child and Family Well-being Program* series, held a seminar on September 11th, 1998, focusing on the question of how to measure the effects of welfare reform on child and family well-being.

Evaluating Welfare Reform: Measuring Child and Family Well-Being presents that discussion, with a goal of developing a greater understanding of the pertinent issues and considerations among state legislative and executive branch officials and staff, and county welfare and child welfare program officials and researchers.

The presentations that follow exemplify the need for creative evaluations that examine both quantitatively and qualitatively the effects of TANF-related changes on the individual, family, and community overall. The work of *Child Trends' Project on State-Level Child Outcomes* illustrates the complexity of exploring what constitutes child well-being and how best to measure it. RAND's newly launched "Los Angeles Study of Families and Communities" represents a long-range effort to define and measure family and community well-being. The CalWORKs statutes provide that the state undertake several evaluation efforts and activities in order to gain a more complete understanding of CalWORKs' impact. Finally, the Sacramento County evaluation reflects a comprehensive attempt to assess the county-level effects of CalWORKs on families and children.

The four presenters include:

- **Sharon McGroder, Ph.D., of Child Trends, Inc., in Washington, D.C.** Dr. McGroder provides an overview of their ten-year, five-state effort to develop effective measures of child well-being, and the application of this work to welfare reform evaluation.
- **Narayan Sastry, Ph.D., of RAND Corporation.** Dr. Sastry discusses RAND's path-breaking "Los Angeles Study of Families and Communities" and its implications for assessing the impact of welfare reform on families and communities. This effort is of particular importance to welfare reform as a portion of this new research will be replicated as part of the statewide evaluation of CalWORKs.
- **Werner Schink and Lois Van Beers of the California Department of Social Services.** These presenters review the various state-supported welfare reform and child and family well-being evaluation efforts under way, and give an overview of the CalWORKs evaluation, including components to measure child and family well-being.
- **Mary Summers, R.N., Ph.D., of the Department of Nursing at California State University, Sacramento, and Jerry Plummer, Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance.** These presenters provide details about the comprehensive Sacramento County CalWORKs client evaluation now under way.

CHAPTER I: STATE-LEVEL CHILD OUTCOMES AND THE EVALUATION OF WELFARE-TO-WORK STRATEGIES

SHARON MCGRODER, PH.D., CHILD TRENDS, INC., WASHINGTON, DC

I am happy to be able to share with you today our experience in designing and evaluating the impact of welfare-to-work policies on children and families. I am pleased to see that this issue is squarely on California's policy agenda. In my remarks today, I will describe for you the Project on State-Level Child Outcomes, whose goal is to ensure comparable information across numerous states on the impact of children and families of welfare-to-work programs implemented under the AFDC waivers. The United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) initiated this project with further financial support coming from additional government agencies and private foundations.

The Federal Family Support Act: Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Training Program

Let me begin by providing some background information on this project, and you can refer to the middle box of the first handout (the handouts appear immediately following the presentation, beginning on page 12). In 1988 the Family Support Act was enacted, and, among other things, authorized funding for the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) Program. The law required states to implement mandatory welfare-to-work programs and funded necessary support services, like child care in order to facilitate recipients' movement from welfare to work. The Family Support Act marked the first time that mothers with children as young as age three (or at state option age one) were required to participate in training activities as a condition of their receipt of public assistance. The legislation also required that the JOBS Program be evaluated using an experimental design. (It also was one of the first times that legislation dictated the kind of evaluation that had to be done.) The experimental design being a very rigorous one, they clearly wanted a good evaluation of this program. The Manpower Demonstration and Research Corporation, or MDRC, who is a leader in evaluating welfare reform, was awarded the contract. The name of the evaluation is the National Evaluation of Welfare Works Strategies or NEWWS

JOBS and Child Outcomes

Given that the JOBS Program would affect families with preschool aged children, officials at DHHS wanted to ensure that requiring mothers to participate in these activities, at the very least, did no harm to these children, especially since low-income children are already at elevated risk for poor developmental and educational outcomes. Consequently, DHHS funded a substudy of this NEWWS evaluation to assess the impact of the welfare-to-work strategies implemented under the JOBS Program on these children. This was the first time that children's outcomes were being examined in detail and as a primary focus of evaluations of welfare-to-work programs. This Child Outcome Study is now in its tenth year, and was designed and is being conducted by my organization, Child Trends, under subcontract to MDRC. The first impact report should be out early next year.

The Project on State-Level Child Outcomes

Let's fast-forward a little bit. In the '90s, the states began requesting waivers from AFDC provisions to experiment a little bit more with varying requirements and different ways of providing services to clients. As a condition of receiving a waiver, DHHS required states to put in place an experimental evaluation of these waiver provisions. Officials at DHHS recognized this as an opportunity to once again take a look at the implications of welfare reform for children, this time via state level reforms, which would compliment what they were learning from the national evaluation of welfare reform and children's development. DHHS solicited proposals from states that were interested in augmenting their existing waiver evaluations with measures of child well-being in order to examine the impact on children and families, and the "Project on State-Level of Child Outcomes" was born. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), which eliminated AFDC, was signed into law the month before we started this project. I will discuss the implications of this a little bit later.

In September 1996, the Project on State-Level Child Outcomes awarded 12 states one-year planning grants to begin work on identifying a common core of constructs on child outcomes to be added to their existing waiver evaluations. The map in your handouts shows you the 12 states that were awarded planning grants: California, Connecticut, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Oregon, Michigan, Minnesota, Vermont, Virginia and Wisconsin. (I have also identified the five states that were subsequently awarded an operational grant, which I will talk about later.) Largely because of our previous experience in designing the Child Outcome Study for the JOBS evaluation, Child Trends was funded to provide technical assistance and to facilitate the development of the common core of constructs.

Common Constructs of Child Outcomes

Let me describe for you a little bit about how this process worked. In November 1996, representatives from these 12 states came to Washington, D.C., along with the researchers who were evaluating the waivers, in November of 1996, to begin collaborative work on identifying the common core of constructs important to measure evaluations of the impact of welfare reform on children and families. Child Trends formed a technical assistance team for the overall project, which first sought to clarify key concepts and establish a common language for our discussions. For example, given the task of coming up with a common core of constructs, we thought it prudent to begin with a definition of the word "construct," which means a topic for study, like behavioral problems in children. This turned out to be an invaluable first step as illustrated by the following example.

The technical assistance team asked the state representatives to identify key aspects of child well-being they were concerned about. They identified poverty and health insurance as primary concerns. Researchers who study children and families do not consider poverty and health insurance, per se, as measures of child well-being. Poverty is a household or family-level variable indicating resource availability. Health insurance coverage is a resource that has implications for children's health but is not a measure of child well-being, per se. While acknowledging states'

concerns about these issues, we tried to expand the states' notions of child well-being to include such things as behavioral problems, physical health and safety, and educational progress.

This is a good example of how this collaborative process worked. The technical assistance team relied on states to articulate their concerns related to welfare reform and children, and we in turn sought to translate these concerns into concrete constructs and measures for use in their evaluations. In order to do this, we first presented states with a general model for how the waiver policies might affect children (see the top of handout 2, page 13). While the specific waivers granted often varied from state to state, Child Trends staff developed the typology that grouped the waiver provisions (see the left-hand side of handout 2, page 13):

- Waivers that “Make Work Pay,” which include more generous income disregards and expanded transitional child care and Medicare benefits;
- Waivers that seek to increase work, including job search activities and a work requirement;
- Waivers that promote responsibility, including provisions like the family cap and school attendance and immunization requirements.

Child Outcome Domains and Intervening Mechanisms

We then identified three general domains of child outcomes. By domain I mean a broad, substantive topical area, such as cognitive skills and education, health and safety, and social and emotional adjustment which includes both problematic as well as pro-social behaviors. The next task was to come up with specific constructs, or variables, in each general domain of child outcomes. We found this general model useful to begin to think about ways in which specific waiver policies could affect specific aspects of children's development.

As this general model indicates, we introduced the concept of an “intervening mechanism.” We hypothesized that impacts on children would most likely be indirect and operate through these intervening mechanisms. By intervening mechanism, I mean aspects of families' lives that might be affected by welfare policies and in turn affect child well-being. As we began differentiating this general model, we encouraged states to think about what specific child outcomes they were concerned about and the ways in which they believed, hoped or even feared that the waiver policy might have an impact on those outcomes. In the words of Bob Lovell from Michigan, we asked them to tell stories about how waiver policies might change adult outcomes and what goes on in the family, and then how these changes might affect children.

Let me give you a few examples. First, examining income as a primary intervening mechanism: all state representatives believed that more generous income disregards would improve families' economic circumstances. They also acknowledged that sanctions could reduce family income. Nonetheless, they felt that even if there were no net gains in family income, an increased emphasis on employment might mean a greater percentage of income coming from work than welfare, which not only has obvious implications for state budgets, but could also result in a positive outcome for children who see their parents working rather than receiving welfare. This is something we wanted to measure in order to test this hypothesis.

In terms of the implications for children, state representatives noted that increased income could provide families greater access to necessary goods and services—such as health care, child care and food—which could bode well for children’s health and development (see the middle of the right-hand side of handout 2 page 13). But they also acknowledged that a decrease in income, say through a sanction, could decrease access to these necessities, perhaps even leading to an increase in doubling up in housing and the use of food banks and homeless shelters, which could have detrimental consequences for children. A decrease in income could also lead to an increase in parental stress, which has been shown in basic research to be related to behavior problems in children. I would like to point out that state representatives recognized that the affects on children could be positive or negative. In fact, the technical assistance team noted that the affects could be both positive and negative. Let me give you an example. Increased income may in fact lead parents to purchase better food, which would have positive implications for children’s health. But if the increased income came from earnings, the mother is more likely to be employed and spending time away from home, this could have negative implications for children’s behavior as the family adapts to new roles and responsibilities.

Another example: the technical assistance team raised the possibility that welfare-to-work programs could affect maternal depression (see the bottom of handout 2, page 13). Depression, we know, is higher for women, for single parents, for parents with young children, and for low-income individuals. Not surprising then, clients of welfare-to-work programs tend to have higher rates of depression than the general public. Welfare policies may increase or decrease depression, or have no effect. An increase might occur, for instance, if the mothers are working in low-paying jobs, reaching grant time limits, or getting sanctioned. On the other hand, working toward becoming self-sufficient could mean progress toward that goal and might decrease depression. We know from basic research that mothers with more depressive symptoms tend to be more harsh and hostile and less supportive in their parenting. Also, children of depressed parents show poorer physical health, problems in the area of social and academic competence and higher levels of both externalizing behaviors and aggressive behaviors as well as internalized behaviors like anxiety and depression. I hope these two examples give you a sense of how welfare-to-work policies might affect children and families. Of course there was a long discussion and many more intervening mechanisms were discussed, as I will mention in a little while.

I would like to point out that effects on children could differ for various subgroups of families. For instance, it may be that favorable outcomes are generally concentrated in lower-risk families, say where the mothers have had some work history, and perhaps the detrimental outcomes are generally concentrated in higher-risk families, say where mothers are functionally illiterate or even clinically depressed. Examining whether welfare-to-work programs are differentially effective for different families can help case managers target services, for example basic education to those with lower levels of literacy, or counseling services for clinically depressed clients. It can even help to identify which multi-problem families may need exemptions from or extensions to the time limit.

From a study design perspective, in order to examine whether welfare-to-work programs have differential effects for different families, key information like literacy, work history and depression

must be obtained at random assignment, or at the beginning point of the evaluation. This way you can identify families who are at relatively higher and lower risk before being exposed to the program and then track each separate group's progress over time. This has proved a useful strategy in examining the economic impact of the JOBS Program, and we are using it to evaluate the impact of JOBS on children. It is fortunate that the state waiver evaluators collected a lot of baseline information, so that we are able to examine differential impacts for different subgroups.

Identifying Key Child Outcomes

Let me now describe how the 12 states began to identify key child outcomes and intervening mechanisms. In a set of concurrent working groups, the technical assistance team members facilitated a brainstorming session with representatives from the 12 states and their waiver evaluators. Each working group then presented a summary of their discussions to the full group, after which the technical assistance team drafted a comprehensive list of candidate child outcomes and intervening mechanisms. We then grouped these nominated constructs into domains and we further differentiated the range of intervening mechanism constructs, and came up with a conceptual framework. (These appear on handout 3, page 14.)

In grouping the intervening mechanisms, we distinguished domains that are explicitly targeted by welfare policies, such as employment and income, from additional domains that while not targeted may nonetheless be affected by welfare policies, such as a mother's psychological well-being, and the stability or turbulence of children's lives. We then identified domains of children's immediate environments, namely, childcare and the home environment, that may also be affected directly or indirectly by waiver policies (these appear in the fourth column of handout 3, page 14). It was this conceptual framework and a long list of nominated constructs that emerged from that first state meeting back in November of 1996.

Over the next couple of months, state representatives were asked to prioritize the specific constructs in each domain, and through majority rule, a final list of child outcome and intervening mechanism constructs was created. At the next meeting in February of 1997, states selected the final common core of constructs that each state agreed to measure should they be awarded an operating grant (see handout 4, page 15). This core set of constructs was the major product of the planning phase. Child Trends has subsequently put together a binder of recommended measures. The five states funded to collect data on child well-being have all agreed to use these measures, which will enhance the comparability of findings across the states.

We are getting many requests from researchers and evaluators for copies of these measures, which we are happy to distribute for a nominal fee to cover the cost of copying. We are also finalizing a guidebook for states that are interested in examining child and family well-being in the context of welfare reform. The set of recommended measures will be included in the guidebook. The guidebook should be available by the end of 1998, and Child Trends will distribute it free of charge. Anyone interested in receiving a copy should contact Child Trends at (202) 362-5580, or visit our website (www.childtrends.org) to download the order form and fax [(202) 362-5533] it to us.

Operations Phase

The planning phase ended in May of 1997, with 11 of the 12 states submitting applications for an operating grant to augment their existing waiver evaluations with measures of child and family well-being. In September of 1997, five states were awarded a three-year operating grant: Connecticut, Florida, Iowa, Indiana and Minnesota. Minnesota has already completed collection of child outcome data, with findings regarding the impact of Minnesota's waiver policies on children and families. The findings should be available as early as 1999. Iowa is currently in the field, and Florida should be in the field collecting data beginning September 1998. Connecticut will be in the field most of next year, and Indiana plans to begin data collection by early-to-mid 2000.

Conclusions

In summary, the Project on State-Level Child Outcomes has yielded a detailed list of constructs that the five operational states are currently using in their evaluations, and that many other evaluators or projects have requested for use in their evaluations. Also, this collaborative process turned out to be a useful vehicle for states to come together and engage in thoughtful conversations about how welfare reform might affect children and families. These state representatives really appreciated having the opportunity to tell their stories, for it allowed them to articulate their hopes and fears about welfare reform and forced them to be concrete in their thinking—something they had precious little time and money to do on their own.

The project will enable policy makers, researchers and service providers to assess whether and how state welfare policies affect children and families. This information will supplement what we are currently learning about the impacts on children and families of welfare programs implemented over ten years ago under the JOBS Program. Child Trends, as I mentioned earlier, expects to release findings regarding the two-year impact of the JOBS Program in early 1999.

In closing, I would like to say that even though there is often a lag time between the initial design and the final release of findings in these evaluations, the issue of welfare reform and children's well-being is not likely to go away any time soon. In fact research findings can often propel an issue into the public arena and promote policy debates. For example, we may find that approaches implemented under JOBS, which included a heavier emphasis on skills training than does the current law, may be worth revisiting should they prove beneficial to families' long-term economic circumstances as well as to children's developmental outcomes.

Similarly, while it may appear as though the findings from the Project on State-Level Child Outcomes are less relevant, with the passage of PRWORA and TANF, it is important to point out that many of the provisions that ended up in the new law were already being evaluated under state reform waivers, such as work requirements, time limits and income disregards. However, there are clearly differences between these policies and the new law, the largest one of course is the elimination of guaranteed support. So we cannot extrapolate identically from what we find in these waiver evaluations to what we might find under the new law.

Nonetheless, the timing of the design of the child outcomes piece of the waiver evaluation has proven serendipitous given the passage of TANF, as many groups are now in the midst of designing evaluations and are considering adding measures to examine the well-being of children. In addition, because experimental evaluations of TANF are not possible (given that TANF policies are population-wide), these waiver studies provide the best opportunity to evaluate policies similar to TANF in an experimental setting. In short, there are many lessons to learn regarding the impact of a variety of welfare-to-work approaches. I hope that I have made a case for why we should be considering children's well-being when evaluating the impact of welfare reform.

Handout 1

**ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF WELFARE-TO-WORK POLICIES ON CHILDREN:
THE PROJECT ON STATE-LEVEL CHILD OUTCOMES**

*Sharon M. McGroder, Ph.D.
Child Trends, Inc.
Washington, D.C.*

Background to the “Project on State-Level Child Outcomes”

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| <u>1988</u> | Family Support Act signed into law; authorizes the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Program; the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (NEWWS), and a substudy on Child Outcomes, put into place |
| <u>1990s</u> | “1115” waivers granted to allow states to experiment with welfare-to-work strategies; evaluations put in place |
| <u>August, 1996</u> | Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act signed into law |
| <u>September, 1996</u> | U.S. DHHS initiates the “Project on State-Level Child Outcomes” to augment existing waiver evaluations with measures of child well-being |

**THE PROJECT ON STATE-LEVEL CHILD OUTCOMES
PARTICIPANT STATES IN THE ONE-YEAR PLANNING PHASE**



Handout 2

THE GENERAL MODEL

Waiver Provisions



Intervening Mechanisms



Child Outcomes

“Make Work Pay”
Encourage Work
Promote Responsibility

o Cognitive skills/Education
o Health and safety
o Social/emotional adjustment

EXAMPLE #1

“Make Work Pay”
+ Increased income disregards
+ Increased earnings from employment

⇔ Increased Income

“Make Work Pay”
- Decreased income due to sanctions
- Decreased income due to hitting time limits

⇔ Decreased Income

Increased ⇔ Better Access ⇔
Income to Goods, Services

Child Outcomes
+ better health
+ better cognitive development

Decreased ⇔ Doubling up/shelters ⇔
Income Use of food banks
⇔ Increased Parental
Stress

⇔ Child Outcomes
- compromised health
⇔ - more behavior problems

EXAMPLE #2

Encourage Work ⇔
+ Employment in low-wage jobs
+ Hit time limits
+ Financial sanctions
+ Increased parental stress

Maternal Depression

Make Work Pay/
Encourage Work ⇔
- Increased income
- Increased well-being

Maternal Depression

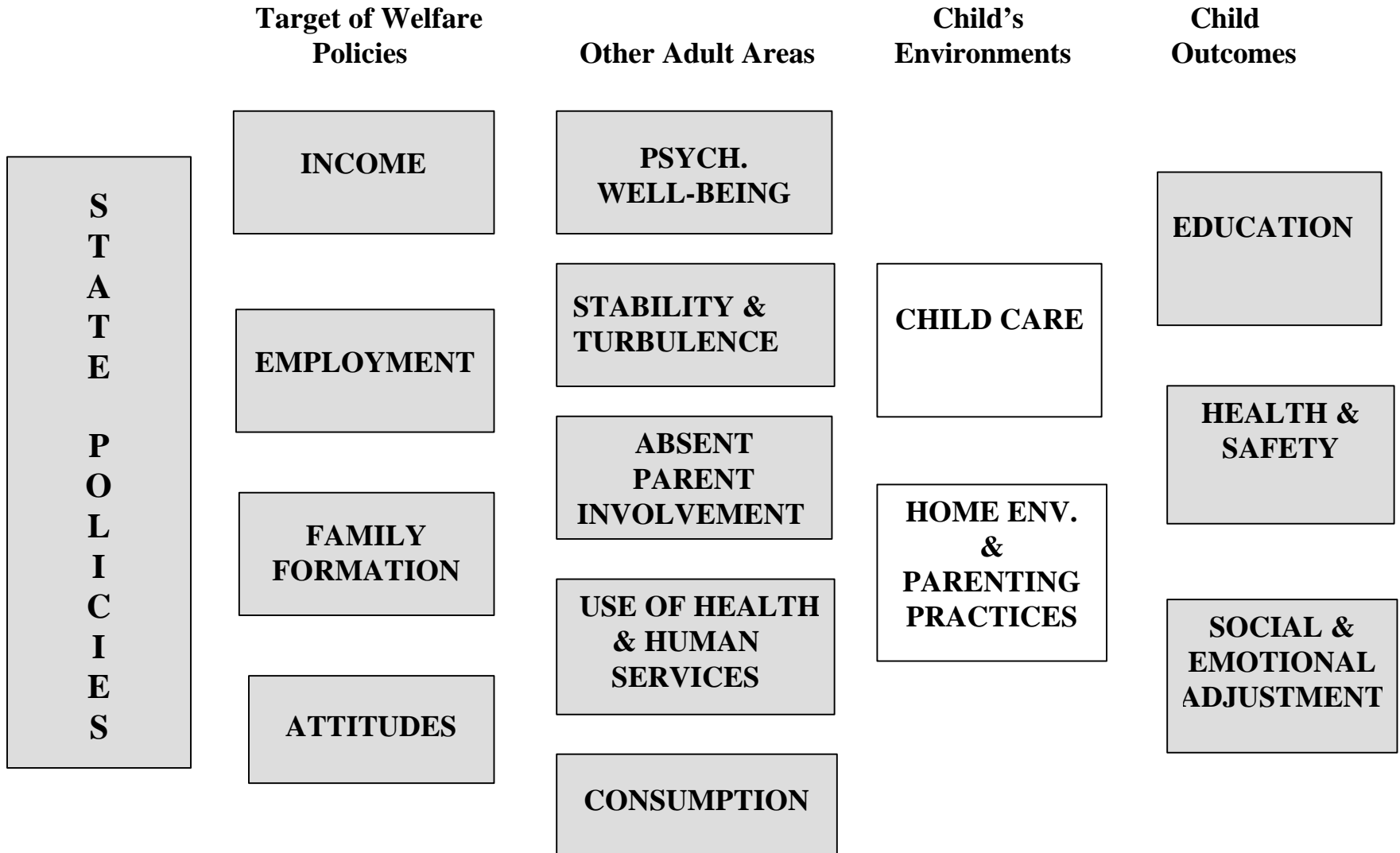
Increased Depression ⇔

Child Outcomes
+ poorer health
+ problems in social and
academic competence
+ more externalizing and
internalizing problems

Decreased Depression ⇔

Child Outcomes
- better health
- fewer behavioral problems;
better social and academic
competence

Conceptual Framework



TARGET OF WELFARE POLICIES	OTHER VARIABLES LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED BY STATE POLICIES	ASPECT OF CHILD'S ENVIRONMENT LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED BY PREVIOUS COLUMNS	CHILD OUTCOMES
<p><u>INCOME:</u> Total income</p> <p>Sources of Income (mother's earnings, father's earnings, child support, AFDC, food stamps, SSI, Foster Care/Adoption)</p> <p>Stability of Income</p> <p>Financial Strain/Material hardship</p> <p><u>EMPLOYMENT:</u> Any vs. None</p> <p>Health benefits through employment</p> <p>Wages (hourly)</p> <p>Hours of employment</p> <p>Stability of employment</p> <p>Education/Licenses</p> <p>Hard job skills</p> <p>Multiple jobs concurrently</p> <p><i>Barriers to Employment</i></p> <p><u>FAMILY FORMATION:</u> Nonmarital birth/Marital birth</p> <p>Child/Family living arrangements</p> <p>Marital Status, whether married to biological or non-biological father</p>	<p><u>PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING:</u> Maternal depression</p> <p><u>STABILITY AND TURBULENCE:</u> Foster care</p> <p>Stability in child care</p> <p>Stability in income</p> <p># of moves of residence</p> <p>Change in marital status or cohabitation</p> <p>Reason child not living with family</p> <p><u>ABSENT PARENT INVOLVEMENT:</u> Whether child support provided</p> <p>Paternity establishment</p> <p>Frequency of contact with child</p> <p><u>USE OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES:</u> Food stamps</p> <p>Medicaid (awareness, use, eligibility)</p> <p>Child care subsidy (awareness, use, eligibility)</p> <p>Access to medical care</p> <p><u>CONSUMPTION:</u> % of income spent on child care and rent</p>	<p><u>CHILD CARE:</u> Type</p> <p>Extent</p> <p>Quality (group size, ratio, licensing, parent perception)</p> <p>Stability</p> <p><i>Child care history for last several years</i></p> <p><u>HOME ENVIRONMENT AND PARENTING PRACTICES:</u> Child Abuse/neglect (Admin. Data)</p> <p>Domestic Violence/Abusive Relationships</p> <p>Family Routines</p> <p>Aggravation/stress in parenting</p> <p><i>Emotional support and cognitive stimulation provided to child</i></p>	<p><u>EDUCATION:</u> Engagement in school (ages 6-12)</p> <p>School attendance (All Child)</p> <p>School Performance (All Child)</p> <p>Suspended/expelled (All Child)</p> <p>Grades (ages 6-12)</p> <p><u>HEALTH AND SAFETY:</u> Hunger/nutrition (ages 5-12)</p> <p>Child health status (ages 5-12)</p> <p>Regular source of care (ages 5-12)</p> <p>Teen Childbearing (ages 14-17) (All Child)</p> <p>Accidents and injuries (All Child)</p> <p><u>SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT:</u> Behavior problems (ages 5-12)</p> <p>Arrests (All Child)</p> <p>Social Competence (ages 5-12)</p>

CHAPTER II: THE LOS ANGELES STUDY OF FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

NARAYAN SASTRY, PH.D. RAND, SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA

I am here to talk about the Los Angeles Study of Families and Communities (LASFC). Let me start by giving you a brief overview of what I want to talk about today and to provide some background for the study. I will talk first about the study's motivation and background, and then tell you some specifics about the study design, which involves two components: one is a household survey and the other is the collection of community data. Finally, I will spend some time discussing the likely policy implications of this study and this type of research more generally.

The Need for the Los Angeles Study of Families and Communities

Let me begin by giving you some background to the study, focusing on the research and policy questions that the study was designed to address. The central issue that led us to design this study was to try and understand the effects that neighborhoods have on families and children. This is no longer a really neglected topic in research, as it has been growing in emphasis and importance over the last 10 to 15 years. Our research team is really interested in studying how the context in which families and children live affects their behavior and affects their choices and ultimately effects a set of important child and family outcomes. There is also a very real policy dimension to this study in that a lot of our policies are targeted towards neighborhoods, not just towards families. Also, there are important interactions between the policies that are targeted towards families and the characteristics of neighborhoods themselves, and I will mention a few examples today. These are the main questions that led us to this study and really underlie its design.

There are a variety of other research and policy questions that also shaped the study. The general issue we are interested in is the well-being of children and families, and how to improve the plight of children. Another question is understanding urban change and patterns of residential segregation, as well as the process of residential mobility and migration. I think these also have important effects on children and family. A third issue is the status of immigrants and various race and ethnic groups. This is of particular importance in California and especially in Los Angeles. And finally, the passage of welfare reform has played a role in our designing the study at this time and we will be able to examine the changes in program participation and study the role of neighborhoods on welfare use.

Given that these were our general interests, why did we need to design a new study? The main reason is that the existing data has some important shortcomings. Probably the biggest shortcoming was the presence of "selection effects" in existing data sets. Let me just explain this briefly because you may not be familiar with this concept. When we are studying the effects of neighborhoods on families and on children, the key issue to understand is that neighborhoods are not "exogenously" determined. That is, people are not assigned at random to a particular neighborhood as in a clinical trial or an experiment. Rather, families choose which neighborhoods they want to live in and they may choose those neighborhoods on the basis of the services which

are provided there, how close it is to their place of work, the availability of child care, and the types of neighborhood support for raising children or dealing with crises. It is understanding this process of how families choose where to live that is really key in understanding how neighborhoods will effect families and child well-being, and also how people may move in response to some of these changes and as a response to welfare reform. Do people move a lot, do they move to better opportunities? How do neighborhoods change in the process? Are they strengthened or hurt by this process of people moving in and out?

Another reason for our trying to collect these new data was that existing data was inadequate or incomplete in certain measures we were interested in looking at. For example, a lot of the existing data was cross-sectional. What we were really interested in is following children and families over time to look at how changes affect the outcomes we are interested in. So, why now? Mainly two reasons. One is the passage of welfare reform, and related to that is a set of other studies that I think ours complements very well. For example, there is an ongoing study in Chicago by a team of researchers from Harvard and the University of Chicago that looks at neighborhood effects on human development, and in particular, youth development and behavioral problems and crime. That study also focuses on the role of communities and how communities affect these youth and child outcomes of interest.

Another new study is the “Three Cities Study,” being conducted by researchers at Johns Hopkins University and other institutions. This study is collecting data in Boston, Chicago and San Antonio. Although the Three Cities Study includes a site in the West, San Antonio, Los Angeles is otherwise the only western city in this current crop of studies. The majority of current and past studies has focused on the East Coast and the Midwest. However, these cities are very different from the types of cities in the west, in particular, Los Angeles. Los Angeles is important because it represents a large part of the country, it is very diverse and it also leads the nation in many important trends.

Study Design

Let me tell you briefly about our study design, starting with the design of the household survey. We are going to take a random sampling of 65 neighborhoods within Los Angeles, where neighborhoods would be census tracts or maybe all groupings of a small number of census tracks. We will over-sample poor neighborhoods, selecting about 40 poor neighborhoods and about 25 non-poor neighborhoods. We will interview about 50 households in each neighborhood, making sure that we get a large number of households with children. In the first wave of this study, we expect to have a sample of about 3,250 households and to have information on about 3600 children within those households.

We will initially select two people to interview in each household, one an adult and another a child. For the child we select, we will also interview their primary caregiver, if that primary caregiver isn't the adult we selected. In Addition, we will interview the caregiver's partner. We plan to track the two main respondents over time. We are currently planning to conduct three follow-up interviews, each one year apart. We will follow the main respondents, within Los Angeles or if they move around the country or even internationally. We really want to see what happens to those people over time.

Another key feature of the study is to understand who lives in the neighborhood in each year of the survey. To do this, we will not only track who moves out of the neighborhood, but we will also get a sample each year of the new households that arrive in the community. In addition to the household information, we are also assembling neighborhood data for each of our selected communities. There are three main sources for this data. The first is neighborhood characteristics that are assembled from administrative data, and we are working closely with Los Angeles County government agencies to develop this database. We are also assembling a neighborhood inventory of services and programs that are available to residents. These two components of the neighborhood database will be assembled for all of Los Angeles. We will also conduct a survey within the neighborhoods that we select for our sample and talk to service providers and key informants about specific issues within those communities.

Study Team

The principal investigator for this project is a colleague of mine, Anne Pebley, and Robert Reville and I are two key collaborators. There are a very large number of collaborators involved in the study. There are other RAND collaborators as well as a number of collaborators at other institutions around the United States. Many are at UCLA; there are also people at Columbia University, University of Michigan, Penn State and a couple of other places that are participating in the design of this study. We also have an advisory group meeting of national and local experts to guide the study. Two Los Angeles agencies with which we are working closely are the Los Angeles County Children's Planning Council and the Los Angeles County Urban Research Group. Finally, the RAND Survey Group will be conducting the fieldwork.

Policy Implications of Study

Let me now turn to some of the policy implications of this study, beginning with a general overview of the types of relevant information that we expect this study to provide. First, the study will provide some interesting information on interventions and policies to improve child and family well-being in a very general sense, by providing an understanding of the factors (such as race, income and education) that determine behavior and outcomes very broadly, but are not necessarily tied to any particular programs or policies. The study will also provide some interesting information about halting the decline and promoting the revitalization of communities, especially poorer communities in Los Angeles. In addition, it will provide some interesting and useful insights into the status of immigrants and various race and ethnic groups.

Finally, an important issue that I am going to be talking a bit more about is the insights the study is likely to provide about how we can mitigate the negative effects and enhance the positive effects of welfare reform on families and children. Toward this last point, there are actually three ways in which the study will be useful. The first is in tracking the impact of welfare reform over time and over the four waves of the study. The second, is in investigating how neighborhoods affect welfare program participation. The third, is how neighborhoods impact the transition to work.

Neighborhoods and Welfare Reform

Let me go through each of these in a little more detail. The insights for monitoring the impact of welfare reform from this study is the unique focus on the role of neighborhoods and how neighborhoods themselves, not just the individuals, respond to welfare reform. I think what will be useful here is the information on public and private sources of aid that we are assembling. For example, one of the things we will be able to look at is what is the extent to which private organizations emerge to try to fill the needs that are no longer being met by formal government programs. The study will also allow us to look at informal networks and the role that friends and family play in providing assistance to families and to children. These are both broad areas on which the study will provide some key insights.

Child and Family Effects of Welfare Reform

The study will also provide some basic information in tracking the impact of welfare reform on children and families. We plan to collect detailed information on health outcomes of children, health insurance status, children's cognitive development and school performance, and the detailed information on family income and assets. We will also track family structure and living arrangements over time, as well as a variety of other child and family outcomes.

One important outcome that we will measure and track is the extent of children's behavioral problems. We are placing quite a bit of emphasis in the study on collecting detailed information on effects of behavior problems that we might see in children. We will consider not just young children, but also older children, looking at rates of teenage pregnancy, crime, rates of school dropout, and so forth, and seeking to understand how these have changed over time.

How Neighborhoods Effect Welfare Program Participation

There are a couple of perspectives on this issue area. One set of studies examines the roles that neighborhoods have in influencing people's participation in welfare. The idea that welfare may be a stigma in certain neighborhoods where very few people are on welfare. There may be a sentiment against welfare use and this perhaps influences whether an individual family decides to participate in a formal welfare program or goes to other sources of support.

Understanding the characteristics of neighborhoods and their attitudes has importance in this research approach. Neighborhoods also effect welfare participation by providing information to families on the services that are available to them. So although there are all sorts of formal programs that disseminate information about welfare programs or other sources of aid, a key source of information on the programs themselves and in negotiating the bureaucracy and so forth is provided by friends and family. Understanding the networks that families have and whom they turn to for information about these programs is an important issue.

The Los Angeles survey will provide us with an excellent opportunity to study both these issues. For example, stigma towards welfare participation may be affected by the number of people on receiving welfare assistance in the neighborhood. We will know how prevalent welfare participation is in each neighborhood in the study, based on administrative data we will be

assembling. We also plan to collect detailed information on social ties and we will be able to describe the networks through which families find out about programs.

Neighborhoods and Transition to Work

Many aspects of the welfare-to-work transition have a neighborhood dimension. For example, job opportunities, the availability of day care, whether there are job-training programs, and transportation in order to get to job opportunities or day care if they are not located in the neighborhoods themselves are all important features which vary by neighborhood. Being able to study these aspects of neighborhoods is important for understanding who succeeds in leaving welfare and who does not. The Los Angeles survey will provide detailed information on service use by household as well as the types of services that are available and it will allow researchers to study the link between the two. More generally, the Los Angeles Study will allow us to understand how characteristics of children and families and neighborhoods affect welfare participation and the lives of children and families. It will not only enable us to evaluate welfare reform but also to design better policies and programs in the future.

Closing Remarks

Let me end by telling you briefly about what stage we are at with this study. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, one of the agencies of the National Institutes of Health, has funded the study. It formally begins in November 1998. We are now in the process of designing the questionnaire. We plan to begin fieldwork operations between March and June of 1999. The data collection period will go on for a period of about ten months, after which we will start getting results. It will be about a year or so before any results will be ready from the study and even longer before we can look at some of these changes over time, for which we need longitudinal data.

CHAPTER III: STATE CALWORKS AND RELATED EVALUATIONS**WERNER SCHINK****Overview of State Welfare and Related Evaluations**

There are a couple of items that I would like to talk about today. First Article 9 of the new CalWORKs statute establishes the evaluation of the CalWORKS program and its implementation (see Appendix B). I consider this to be one of the most important accomplishments of my career. We worked hard to get this language in the law. It really is important language and it drives a lot of what is happening now. It states that “(t)he State Department of Social Services shall initiate a comprehensive independent statewide evaluation of the CalWORKS Program, undertaking an accurate evaluation of information that will be made available to the legislature in a timely fashion.” The evaluation has the potential to include, but not be limited to, employment, earnings, self-sufficiency, child care, child support, child well-being, family structure, and impact on local government. Child well-being shall include foster care, child abuse reports and rates of child poverty. There is supposed to be a process study impact and analysis of cost effectiveness of the CalWORKS Program.

Additionally, Section 11520.7 provides that county demonstration projects and other available county approaches to CalWORKS program implementation will be independently and rigorously evaluated and the findings reported to the legislature in a timely fashion.

These provisions represent a real mandate to obtain good, objective research and evaluation of various aspects of welfare reform, so that when we revisit this public policy, we will have a solid basis for making new decisions. As a researcher, to me success is when you see the administration sitting right next to the advocates, and they are both referencing the work-pay studies, putting their own interpretations on things, certainly, but both believing that the facts represented in the studies are essentially a sound basis upon which to develop public policy. That is what we are interested in accomplishing with the CalWORKs evaluations.

There are a number of Department-sponsored studies that are going on in one phase or another. Child well-being and welfare-to-work are core issues that permeate the whole CalWORKS evaluation. Lois will speak more directly to that. I will briefly describe the Department’s other on-going evaluations. For each evaluation, we have in place an independent unbiased investigator who has strong scientific credentials.

CalLEARN

CalLEARN is a teen parent stay-in-school program. It is a combined effort between the State Department of Health Services, California Department of Education, and the State Department of Social Services. It is operated at the local level by all these parties too. Its major evaluation began before CalWORKS and is referenced in that law.

Child Support Assurance

We are looking at undertaking an administrative implementation project of change reporting in Sacramento County. For those of you who may be familiar with the work of Irv Garfinkle and others, there is a provision for specific demonstrations in the CalWORKs law, one of which relates to child support assurance. We will have that in place, hopefully, by the beginning of 1999.

Employment Readiness

At some point the Legislature and the Administration are going to have to come back together and decide what to do about very hard-to-serve welfare recipients. Are they exempted from the time limits? Moved off aid? What should happen to them? The Employment Readiness project is directed at evaluating aspects of that question. The evaluators are RAND, the CalLEARN evaluation team at UC Berkeley, UCLA, and CSU Sacramento.

MerCAP

There is a full attendance project in Merced County with a child support enforcement component. The noncustodial parent enlists in an employment and training program if the child is on aid, a court order is in place, and if there is a delinquency of child support payments.

Youth Pilot Project

We have two domestic violence programs. One is a community alternative to violence, and the other is a family violence response team, where you have a team approach. This is similar to the San Mateo County program, which has its own well regarded comprehensive program. That is being evaluated by Sphere (Tom McCurdie and others).

Other Evaluations

- The final reports School Attendance Demonstration Project in San Diego County are almost complete.
- We are also looking at eligibility simplification.
- Some of you are familiar with the San Diego home visiting project. Home visiting is a really successful income assistance intervention that basically helps deal with problems in the home.
- We are just starting up a foster care independent living project and evaluation. That is for kids that are exiting foster care about age 16 or 17—kids who are eligible for some independent living, to give them the skills they need so that when they leave foster care they can successfully manage their own lives.
- There is a new program that will extend the services up to the age of 21, and we are looking at doing a formal evaluation of that.

- We are in the process of meeting with Solano County about an administrative simplification project.
- There is the Family Preservation Project, which I believe is being evaluated by a team of researchers from USC and UCLA.

Closing

As you see, the State of California is very heavily involved in a whole range of research efforts. They all have certain components. For the most part we are looking for best practices, how to do things the best way, and which county operators can do those. We are looking for program impact to assist the public policy makers, legislators and the administration, to formulate sound policies. Finally we are looking to serve families, women and children in the best manner possible.

LOIS VAN BEERS**CalWORKs Evaluation**

I am here to talk specifically about the CalWORKS evaluation. We have just gone through quite an extensive process to write the request for proposal, and to enter into contract negotiations with RAND. We expect to have that completed in October or November 1998. If you want to know more about the scope of work in the request for proposal, it is on the Department's web page, at <http://www.dss.ca.gov/>.

Werner (Schink) pointed out that there are several studies that are required in the CalWORKS legislation. There is going to be a lot more information about welfare families and their children as a result of the legislation. The key component is children, since they comprise the largest part of the population of welfare families. The law requires we conduct a process study, an impact analysis, and a cost benefit analysis.

Evaluating County Implementation and State Coordination

In the process analysis, this will be a descriptive study of what is going on as far as county implementation and state level coordination to implement CalWORKS programs. There will be many interviews with the program managers. There will be on-site observations to see what is going on in the job search workshops, the child care referrals, interviews, the assessments for mental health, and substance abuse treatments. There are also going to be some surveys of the case workers, the recipients and the program managers and county welfare directors, as well as program managers in other areas that are related to welfare and providing of welfare services. These would include the program managers and service delivery people for community-based organizations, mental health organizations, job training organizations, and all the other organizations that are really key to implementing CalWORKS. In the process analysis we will be getting some answers to questions such as:

- Are families and children getting the services that they need?
- Is there adequate child care?
- Are people getting the substance abuse or mental health treatment that they need?
- Are we spending the dollars that we provided for these services?
- What have the county or the state level organizations done to promote or to hinder the delivery of these services?

County Program Analysis

We will also have a county level analysis and we have chosen six counties to examine in detail. These counties are Butte, Sacramento, Fresno, San Diego, Los Angeles, and Alameda. They represent a variety of geographic areas in the state. We also wanted to get representations of different kinds of employment levels, different ethnic groups and different kinds of industries. For example, there is very high unemployment in Fresno County; it has been in double digits for quite a few years. But San Diego has fairly low unemployment. Most agricultural areas are in the

Central Valley, but you have the entertainment industries of Los Angeles. So I think we have a pretty good representation of different communities in the state.

County Implementation Survey

We will also have a state level analysis of what is going on in the implementation of CalWORKS. We will survey all 58 counties so that we can get a broad overview of what is going on in the implementation of CalWORKS. Specific to child and family well-being, we will get information on the integration of local child welfare services and welfare departments, the county and child support programs, and the actions taken to ensure that we have child care and other support services such as transportation, alcohol and drug treatment and mental health services. For ten of these counties, we have requested that the evaluator conduct some on-site interviews and observations so that we can get more information to flesh-out the survey responses. The tentative choice for these ten counties are Contra Costa, Santa Clara, San Francisco, Monterey, Yolo, Sutter, San Joaquin, Tulare, Riverside and San Bernadino. We are will receive some early results because we want to have information for the 1999-2000 legislative session that can be used in the next round of policy discussions. This is very ambitious, but we are planning on having our first report released in February 1999, and followed with reports in February 2000 and February 2001.

CalWORKs Process Studies

The process studies will give us some information about intermediate outcomes for children and their families, and a good description of what is going on in the implementation of CalWORKS. But the impact analysis is where we will actually find out the impacts of CalWORKS, after accounting for the effects of the changing economy, the number of jobs that are available, changing demographics, and the different programs that are being implemented. For example, I know that in our children's welfare service area there are a number of changes going on, including changes of philosophy and types of services. There is a special concern that the CalWORKS legislation may increase the rates of child abuse or the number of children in foster care. This second type of analysis, this impact analysis, will provide some answers to these concerns. Here, too, we are going to have a state-level focus and a county-level focus. The state-level analysis will have more information on the broader indicators like welfare dependency, family earnings, family structure, and foster care rates. The county level will get into more detail about what is going on with the children and the families. So we expect to get more information on the child and family well-being through county administrative records as well as through the surveys.

Assessing Child Well-Being

There is data from a number of sources that we can use to assess child well-being. We have historical data for foster care children, so we can see the effects of this legislation on the rates of foster care use. We have birth certificates from the Department of Health Services, showing the number of low birth weight babies and other indicators. Then there is tax data, Medi-Cal data and AFDC data to show family income, welfare receipt, and family structure. The child welfare services case management system has recently been implemented in all 58 counties. This automated system has information on all children touched by children's welfare services. So through this we will get a lot more information about what is going on with children statewide. The Children and Family Services Division of our department is planning to extract key data from

this database on a continuing basis so that we can track what is happening with the children that are touched by the welfare system.

We will be looking to primarily county administrative data for indicators of school achievement. In addition to administrative data, there are going to be surveys of welfare recipients. The first survey will be in the fall of next year, 1999, followed up with a second wave about 15 months later. That would be about November 2000. Of course there are national surveys that could be used. California has a pretty good representation in the Current Population Survey, so we can actually develop some detailed indicators about California.

CalWORKs Impact Reports

All AFDC recipients are expected to be converted to CalWORKS by the end of this year. It is going to take some time for any effects to show up and time for the data to be collected and measured and analyzed. So we are planning on having our first impact report released October of 2000, and then follow up a year later with another impact report in October of 2001. Any data collected for this evaluation will be made available to researchers for their own studies. We have done this already with our CalLEARN evaluation project and our California Work Pay demonstration project. UC Data has archived these data files and makes them available to other researchers. These public use data sets do not have any confidential identifiers on them or anything that would allow you to identify the individuals. Then there are some confidential data sets that are available under certain restricted circumstances to researchers. We will also be releasing data to the University of California archives from the CalWORKS evaluation.

CalWORKs Evaluation Contract

All the key features of the CalWORKS request for proposal were negotiated with staff from the Legislature, the counties, and key state departments like the Department of Education, Department of Mental Health, Employment Development Department, and others that have a part in the implementation of CalWORKS. We will have ongoing input on the CalWORKS evaluation through an advisory committee. We will meet about twice a year to provide input on survey design and methodology issues. In addition, academics specialized in welfare research will join us.

We are in contract negotiations right now with RAND [since completed] to conduct the CalWORKS evaluation and our contract term is for just three and a half years. We specifically made it for that short of a time frame because we expect that the questions and the issues will change as we learn more about the CalWORKS implementation. We want to give ourselves the flexibility of creating a new evaluation that would reflect those changing concerns.

CHAPTER IV: THE IMPACT OF WELFARE REFORM ON SACRAMENTO COUNTY**JERRY PLUMMER****Study Purpose and Orientation**

I will introduce the purpose of the study, and then Mary will talk about the study itself. Our interest is straight forward. We came to this idea from two different avenues: first from our experience working with distressed neighborhoods and families, and second looking at a lack of information in previous studies on the impact of welfare reform on families.

For some time we have had a strategy in Sacramento of working to improve neighborhoods. I have also personally worked with preventive services to child welfare clients looking at intervention earlier in the lives of families to prevent child abuse and neglect. We have noticed that a lack of connection to the workforce was a key part of the downward spiral both in neighborhoods and in individual families. If welfare reform was going to influence recipients' connection to the labor force, we wanted to be able to measure both positive and negative impacts directly on families.

Second, when we started planning welfare reform in Sacramento County, we looked at a lot of the studies, that had been done. A primary focus of many studies was on whether or not work increased, earnings increased, and welfare caseload decreased. But when we looked at other departments that had success in decreasing welfare rolls or had success in increasing earnings, it was striking that in many cases they had families who would drop off the welfare rolls and from the standpoint of the people who studied them, would disappear from view. We thought it important to know what happened to those families precisely because we have often had the experience of people leaving our caseload and coming back, particularly in child welfare, a few years later, much worse off.

So it seemed to us important from the outset to keep track of what was happening to the families and neighborhoods of Sacramento County as we went forward with welfare reform. We also had the idea that if we could get some key data on what was working, what was not working, and what we might need to do to improve our programs.

We have a long and productive relationship with CSUS (California State University, Sacramento), our local university. They are a major source of many of our social workers as well as being a community resource in many other ways over the years. So we turned to them and to Mary Summers in particular, who is the lead investigator, to put this project together. We went before our Board and obtained funding for this two-year evaluation project. So I will let Mary tell you about the details of the study. With that, I will turn it over to Mary.

MARY SUMMERS, R.N., PH.D.

Our partnership with the Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance is an important aspect of this study. We are held accountable to our local community and we will be scrutinized by our local community, so we feel it is very important to work collaboratively with all those involved in evaluating the impact of welfare reform on our county. The design that we are sharing with you today is still in progress. We will be finalizing it in the next week or two. It will then go before a local advisory board to see if it is acceptable, and we will refine and finalize the design based on their input. We are very appreciative of the opportunity to be here today and certainly very open, particularly at this point, to any suggestions that any of you have for improving what we are doing.

I work in the CSUS College of Health and Human Services, which is a multidisciplinary college. Two of the college's departments, Social Work and Nursing, will be working on this particular study. Several members of our team are here with me today. Afterwards, if any of you wish to meet them, I will be glad to introduce them. We have been working very hard to ensure that we come up with the best possible design for our local community.

Study Design

Figures 1 through 4 (pages 35-40) summarize the purpose of the study, and provide a list of the research questions. Please refer to Figure 1 (page 35), which shows how we are conceptualizing our approach to evaluating the effect of welfare-to-work on families in Sacramento County. The outcomes, which are listed on the right side of the page, were developed by looking at the county's CalWORKS plan and then reviewing our findings with members of the Department of Human Assistance. The first outcome listed is "self-sufficiency," which we define as meaning "no longer welfare dependent." We are developing a scale for levels of self-sufficiency ranging from zero, which indicates ongoing welfare dependence, to ten, which indicates no use of any government support services.

Employment status is the second outcome we will examine. How have all of the county welfare-to-work activities affected employment status? If people are no longer using any government support services, what is their employment status?

Finally, Sacramento County has been very concerned about the impact of welfare reform on family well-being. As previous speakers mentioned, there are two points-of-view about family well-being. One view is that families will do a lot better with more routine in their lives, that their children will attend school more regularly, or if not in school, their children will be in good child care programs. Another point-of-view is that welfare to work will result in adverse child and parent outcomes. We plan to monitor welfare reform's impact on families over time.

Ecological Model

We used an ecological theoretical framework for our design since it allowed us to view families in the context of their environment. How are families influenced by efforts of the welfare office and

community programs, and how do these families affect these systems? We know that welfare-to-work activities are going to effect, as well as be affected by a family's own characteristics.

We are beginning by looking at general family demographic characteristics. We also want to look at important characteristics of the families such as their knowledge, values, and beliefs about working about welfare and about the welfare-to-work program.

We also plan to examine intrafamily relationships. All of us in this room know that intrafamily relationships can impact how people function and that people do not always act rationally. For example, yesterday morning at 5:15 A.M., the smoke alarm in my house went off. I could smell something burning, like the toaster. I ran through the house, but I could not see a fire. My daughter got up and she said, "Mom, what should we do?" Now, I am a registered nurse—a well-trained health care provider. I should have thought of safety first. I should have said, "Honey, grab the cats, grab the dogs, grab the photo albums and get out of the house!" But instead, as our smoke alarms were blaring, I said to my daughter, "My god, get in the kitchen and help me clean up this mess before the firemen get here!"

I think we always have to remember that the families with whom we are working are going to have issues that may counterbalance all of the wonderful help they get from welfare-to-work. CalWORKS is trying to train people to overcome far worse disasters than smoke in kitchens. But when push comes to shove, people may regress back to older patterns and we want to understand what they are experiencing.

Family and community resources and other factors that we know are going to influence the welfare-to-work program. Sacramento County DHA has done a wonderful job of drawing together all relevant community agencies to plan how to deal with changes due to welfare reform.

The major limitation of ecological theory is that it is very general. To help narrow and define our focus, we have combined ecological theory with access theory, a framework designed to examine what factors influence people's use of health care services. It is a theoretical framework that is highly compatible with ecological theory, since it examines individual family factors, as well as the influence of institutional and community systems. One key aspect of access theory is the examination of the influence of "need" as an influence on use of services. One of the underlying philosophies of the welfare-to-work initiative is that we can force people to go to work by withdrawing financial resources. There is always an underlying threat, "You only have a time limit and if you don't do things the right way, these services will be withdrawn from you." We want to see how need influences outcomes; does the threat of, or actual withdrawal of funds, produce the predicted outcome? So, this is our overall framework.

Study Constructs and Variables

Figure 2 (pages 36 & 37) displays the family characteristics we are examining. The family characteristics were developed by representatives of the county and the CSUS research team. We first identified all of the constructs that we were interested in examining, and then at individual concepts. We then found the Child Trends webpage, which was very exciting because we realized we were moving in the right direction. Child Trends listed the results of national meetings

focusing on welfare reform. Their information helped us refine our approaches. We also hope that our data will be useful, not only to us, but as part of the growing body of data on this topic.

As you can see in Figure 2, (pages 36 & 37) we have focused on traditional demographic characteristics. We are taking a different approach in surveying for single and dual parental status. We know from clinical work, as well as previous research, that how families describe their structure to eligibility workers when they sign up for TANF may be very different than their actual structure. A few studies have found that many poor women are not single parents, but that there are unreported males living in their homes. We plan to carefully document the family structure of the families participating in our study.

The next block in Figure 2 (pages 36 & 37) includes knowledge, values, attitudes, and beliefs. Like many others, we are concerned about how TANF recipients are informed about the welfare-to-work program, as well as what they are told about the program is opportunities. Attitudes of clients about working and being on welfare will be documented.

The final box delineates intrafamily relationships, which is a construct near and dear to our hearts because we are very interested in looking at the child in the context of the family. There are some effective measures of family relationships, like the Caldwell HOME Inventory and behavioral checklist. Others, like measures of domestic violence, are sensitive, and may evoke feelings when administered. We also know that family routines and family resiliency are important predictors of success. Child well-being measures have been better predictors of outcomes than measures of family well-being. We are really interested in suggestions about effective family assessment instruments. I had a very disappointing experience using Olson's FACES II. I do not know if any of you are acquainted with it, but I thought "This is so cool because we'll be able to identify chaotic, multi-problem families." Half of our respondents refused to fill out the forms. They found them offensive. I have no idea why, I thought they were fairly innocuous. We had another instrument that asked if anyone was abusing the interviewee, if anyone was on drugs, in jail, and so forth, which the respondents seemed to like. So we are looking for any suggestions that you may have.

Also, under psychological well being, we will use the same depression scales that other welfare-to-work studies are using. We know that stress and aggravation, self-esteem and confidence, and goal setting, are important factors to measure, but we are still looking for standardized ways to measure these concepts.

Finally, we will assess child health and developmental status. For those of you who are not acquainted with child health, children do not get reportable illnesses very often and they rarely die. Therefore we must monitor their health status differently than the way we monitor the status of other age groups. The way children show illness or poor health is different from an adult. They show it by developmental changes, behavioral changes, and/or growth status changes. So we are going to monitor for growth retardation. Fortunately, the schools monitor the growth status of older children. Nursing students will weigh and measure children who are five and under, and plot their heights and weights on growth grids, so we can assess their growth status.

Figure 3 (pages 38 & 39) displays the aspects of Sacramento County's CalWORKS Program we will evaluate. The family resources we are assessing include income and expenses. We also want to know what community resources the families are using.

Finally, Figure 4 (page 40) displays the needs we are evaluating. One is perception of the need to work: are recipients driven by personal motivation to try and work or are they responding to pressure from the welfare system and time-limited grants.

Study Team

As I mentioned earlier, we have an interdisciplinary team that includes county representatives and representatives from our campus. We also have been able to secure an epidemiologist, a statistician, and a sociologist from UCFS, all of whom have lots of years of experience in research as consultants, because we want our study to be as strong as possible. CSUS offers clinical training for social work and nursing students, and we will be using second-year graduate social work students and graduate nursing students who are trained in interviewing and making home visits to contact families. We will be conducting in-home interviews and some telephone surveying, but certainly with regular contact with families in their home settings. All of the students who applied to participate in this study have gone through an interview process and reference and background check. We feel very hopeful that they will do a good job of helping us gather information from the families in our communities. We will also be using undergraduate nursing students who are in their community health rotation to help us document health and developmental status.

Study Duration and Time Lines

We will follow families over two years. (We are funded by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, and you know how dear that type of money is.) The study ends officially in June of the year 2000 and we are just starting; it is in progress now. Our next step is to present our instruments and design to the community advisory board. Like everyone else, today, we will be oversampling, hoping for a final sample of 350 families.

Thank you very much.

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
CENTER FOR HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

THE IMPACT OF WELFARE REFORM ON SACRAMENTO COUNTY FAMILIES

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of welfare reform on families. There are two key areas being investigated: factors that are predictive of level of self-sufficiency and employment status; and the impact of welfare reform on family well-being. In August 1996, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act became law (Larner, Terman & Behrman, 1997). This law restructures the nation's welfare system to focus on the provision of temporary support for poor families. Parents are required to seek employment or to prepare for employment while receiving assistance. In addition, this law allows States to design their own welfare programs. State welfare programs are funded by federal block grants entitled Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). CalWORKS is California's TANF program, and Sacramento County is implementing a state-approved CalWORKS plan designed to decrease welfare dependence and support self-sufficiency. To facilitate transition of clients to self-sufficiency, Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance (DHA) is attempting to reduce personal and organizational barriers to work by increasing resources for needy families. To enhance the county's ability to assist families to become self-sufficient, this study will evaluate how family characteristics, job and community resources, and pressure to work influence employment status (see Figure 1). This information will be used to improve service delivery, increase access to needed resources, and support services to augment family capacities for self-sufficiency. The second area addressed in this study is the impact of welfare policy and practices on families. There are two major points-of-view on the impact of welfare reform on family well-being. One contends that families will demonstrate improved functioning due to increased self-sufficiency. Another point-of-view is that welfare reform will increase adverse child and family outcomes. Key aspects of child and family functioning will be monitored to identify changes following the implementation of welfare reform.

Research Questions

1. Which of the CalWORKS Welfare-to-Work (WtW) program components are the most predictive of level of self-sufficiency and employment status?
2. To what extent do family characteristics, family resources, and community resources influence level of self-sufficiency and employment status?
3. What combination of family characteristics, family resources, community resources, program activities, and needs have the greatest influence on level of self-sufficiency and employment status?
4. How does the need to work influence the WtW program's effectiveness in moving recipients toward self-sufficiency and improving their employment status?
5. How is family well-being influenced by the CalWORKS WtW program?

If you have any questions, please call Mary Summers, RN, Ph.D., Director, Center for Health and Human Services, (916) 278-5278.

Figure 1: Ecological Access Framework

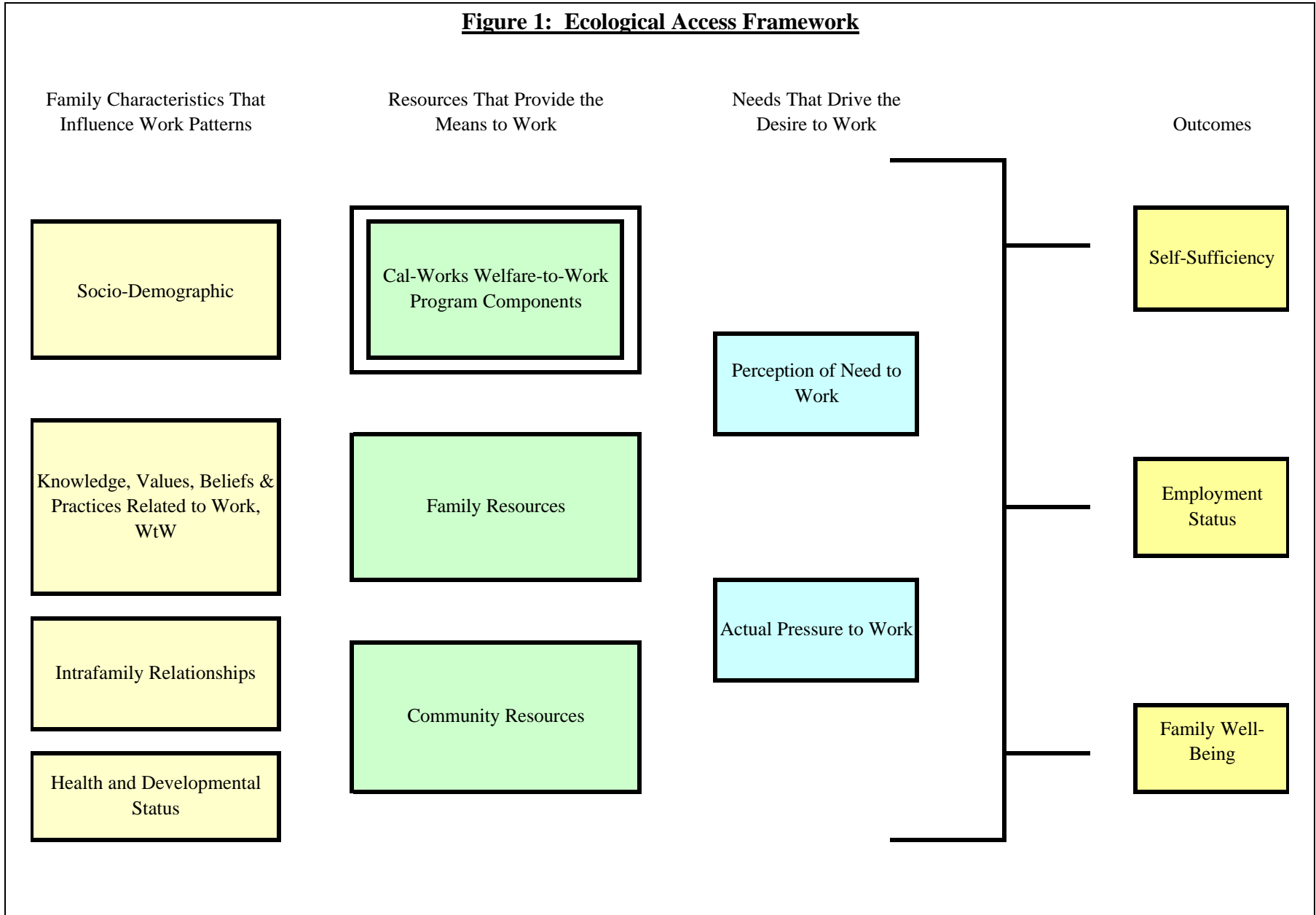


Figure 2, Aspects of Constructs to be Measured Following Family Characteristics That Influence Work Patterns

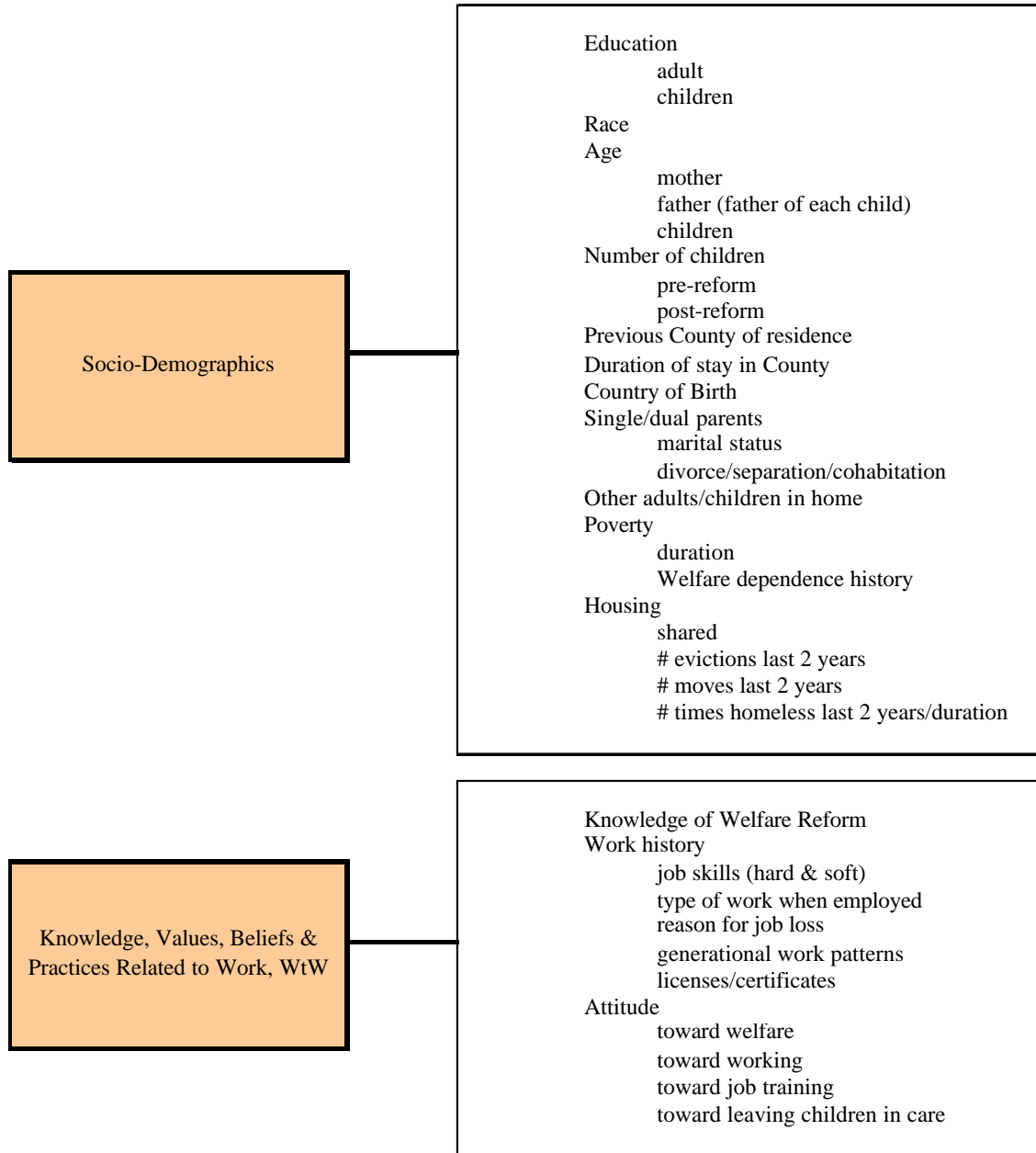


Figure 2, Aspects of Constructs to be Measured Following Family Characteristics That Influence Work Patterns

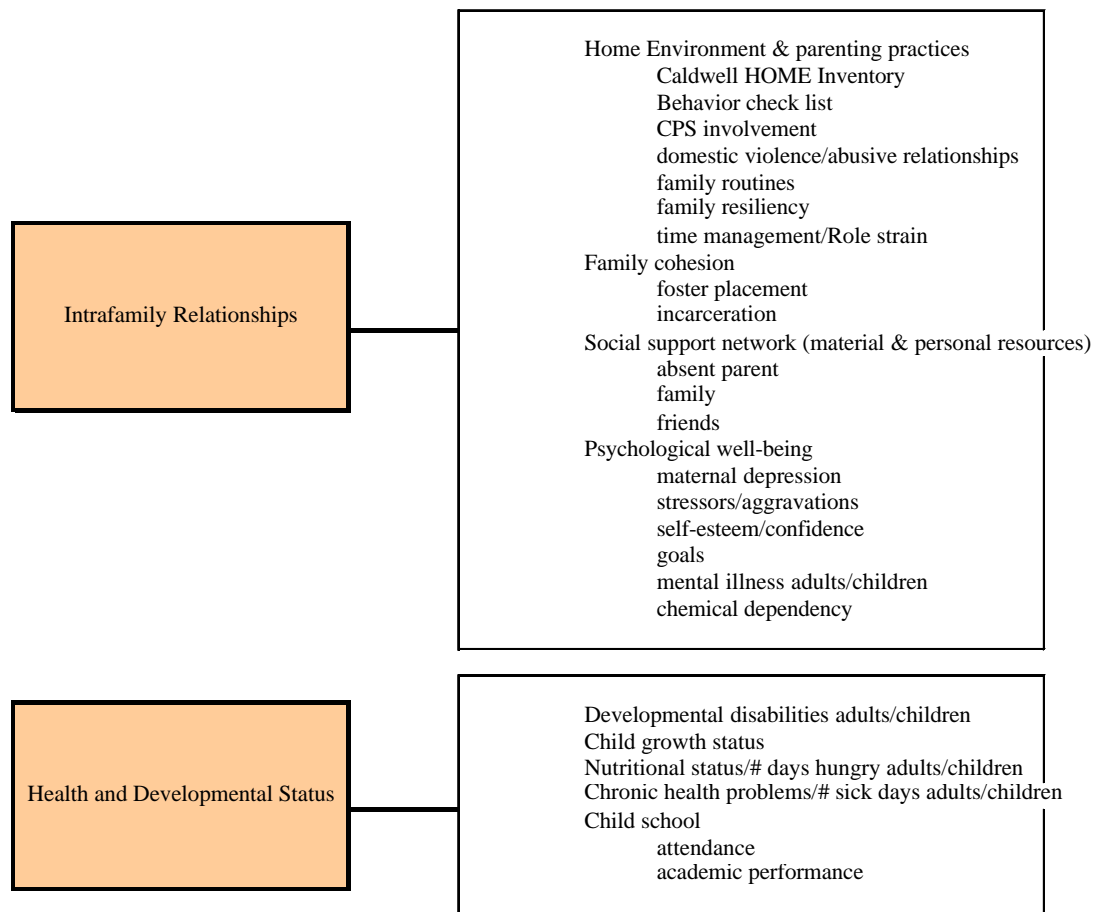


Figure 3: Aspects of Constructs to be Measured Following Resources That Provide the Means to Work

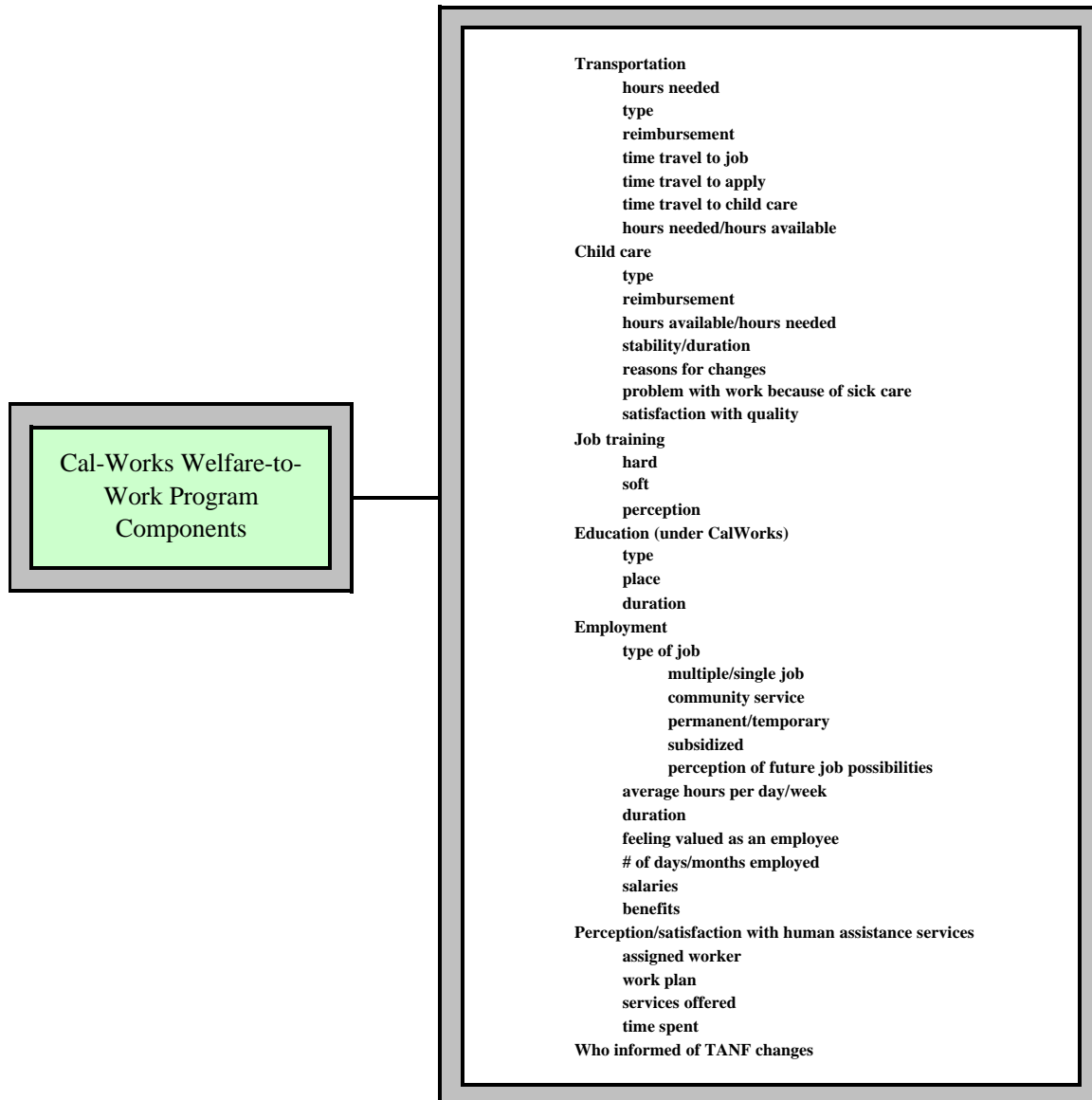


Figure 3: Aspects of Constructs to be Measured Following Resources That Provide the Means to Work

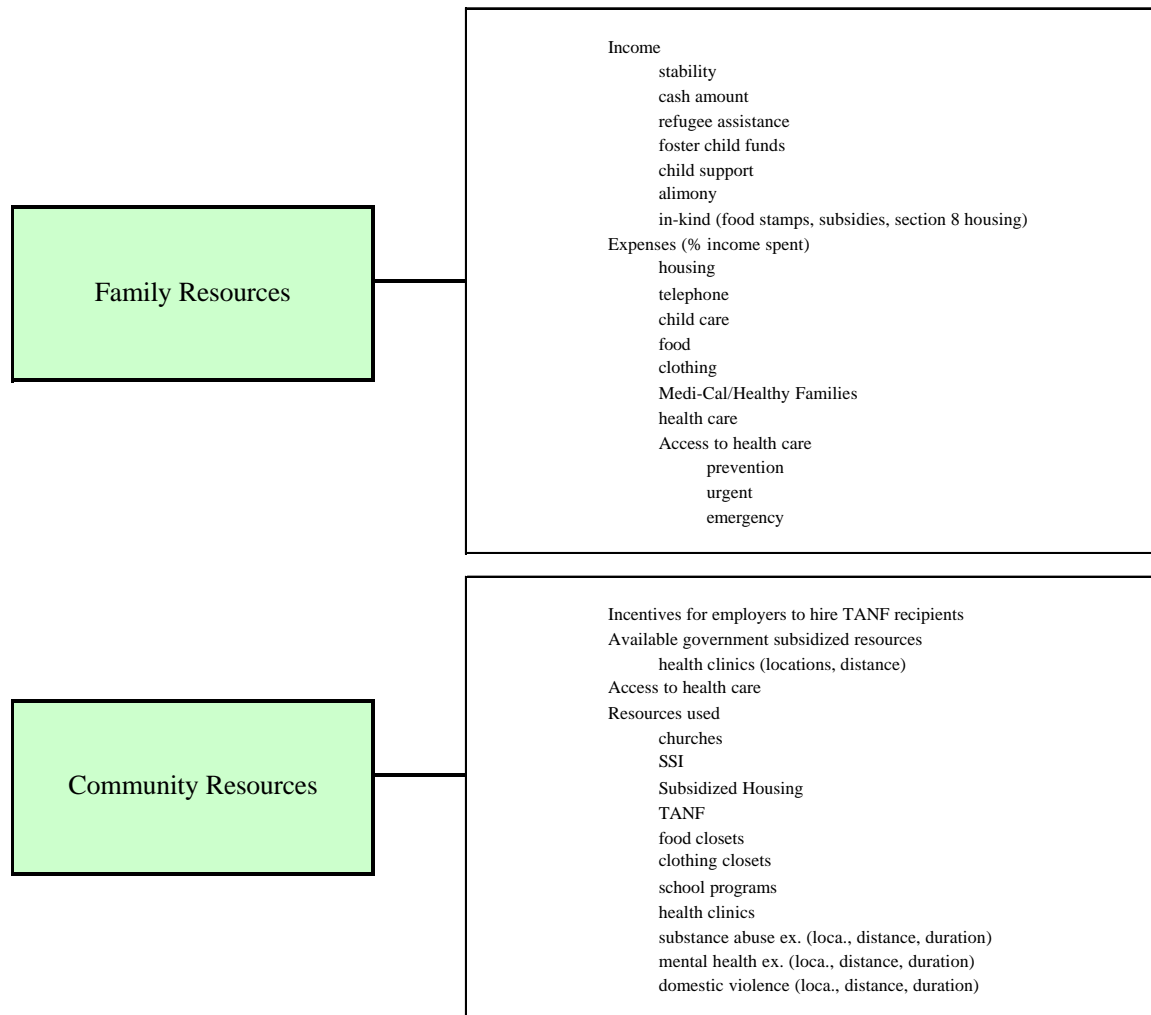
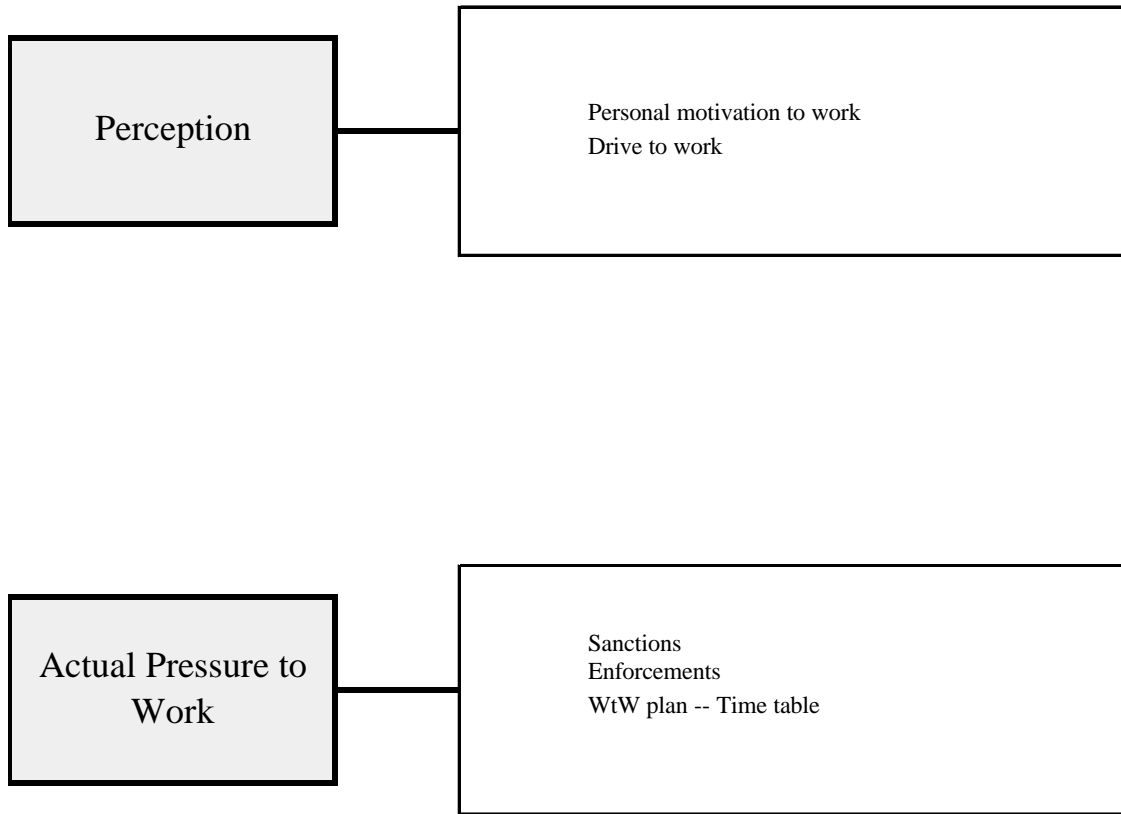


Figure 4: Aspects of Constructs to be Measured Following Needs That Drive the Desire to Work



APPENDIX A: CALIFORNIA STATUTES RELATING TO EVALUATION OF THE CALIFORNIA WORK AND OPPORTUNITY FOR KIDS (CALWORKS) ACT AND RELATED PROGRAMS

Appendix A: California Statutes Relating to Evaluation of the California Work and Opportunity for Kids (Calworks) Act and Related Programs
(From Chapter 270, Statutes of 1997)

CHAPTER 1.5. PERFORMANCE OUTCOME INCENTIVES MONITORING

10540. (a) It is the intent of the Legislature to implement Public Law 104-193 in such a manner as to do all of the following:

- (1) Reduce child poverty in the state.
- (2) Achieve the goals of Public Law 104-193, which include reducing dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; reducing out-of-wedlock births; and encouraging the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.
- (3) Meet the requirements of federal law.

(b) It is further the intent of the Legislature to ensure that the implementation of Public Law 104-193 does not result in unanticipated outcomes that negatively affect child well-being, the demand for county general assistance, or the number of families affected by domestic violence.

10540.5. The department shall ensure that performance outcomes are monitored at the state and county levels in order to do all of the following:

- (a) Identify the extent to which the state and counties achieve the goals of Public Law 104-193.
- (b) Identify the extent to which unanticipated negative outcomes do or do not occur.
- (c) Meet the requirements of federal law.
- (d) Assist counties in tracking the effect of CalWORKs program implementation on aided families and on local communities.
- (e) Assist counties, the Legislature, and state agencies in determining what adjustments are required in the program.

10541. The department shall consult with experts in monitoring and research, and representatives of counties, the Legislature, and appropriate state agencies in the development and implementation of the system of performance outcomes, which shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) Success of welfare-to-work, including the rate of movement to employment, earnings for CalWORKs recipients and those who have left the CalWORKs program, and job retention rates. This shall include the extent to which recipients have obtained unsubsidized employment in each of their years on aid.
- (b) Rates of child support payment and collection.
- (c) Child well-being, including entries into foster care, at-risk births, school achievement, child poverty, and child abuse reports.
- (d) Changes in the demand for general assistance.
- (e) Supply, demand, and utilization of support services by CalWORKs recipients, including child care, transportation, mental health services, and substance abuse treatment.
- (f) The number of identified families affected by domestic violence.

10541.5. The department, in consultation with experts in research and program evaluation and representatives of counties, the Legislature, and appropriate state agencies, shall do both of the following, by March 1, 1998:

- (a) Identify methods by which to collect data on the outcomes set forth in Section 10541, using, to the extent possible, data that is available and does not require the establishment of new data collection processes at the county level.
- (b) Develop consistent data collection standards.

10541.7. Each county shall participate in monitoring performance outcomes by collecting and reporting data in the manner established by Section 10541.

10542. (a) Each county shall, as part of its CalWORKs plan, identify outcomes to be tracked on the local level that are in addition to any required to be tracked statewide. These outcomes shall be identified through a collaborative process that includes all local agencies and stakeholders concerned with the implementation of the CalWORKs program and its effects on local communities. The outcomes identified may reflect goals for CalWORKs implementation established by the local community, possible negative outcomes the local community wishes to monitor, or both.

(b) The process of local identification of outcomes shall be designed to contribute to greater collaboration among county public and private agencies that serve current and former CalWORKs recipients. The outcomes

identified shall be those that can be tracked in a cost-effective manner. To the extent counties identify the same outcomes, the department shall provide technical assistance to ensure consistency among the counties.

(c) The outcomes that each county plans to monitor shall be included in its county CalWORKs plan. The plan shall identify the outcomes, the data the county intends to collect to monitor the outcomes, and the method of data collection the county intends to use.

10543. (a) Within six months of CalWORKs implementation, each county, in conjunction with the department, shall determine a baseline for the data to be collected to meet both state and local need. The baseline shall be used in subsequent years to determine whether or not the county's outcomes are improving.

(b) If a county fails to meet outcomes required by federal law, the county, in consultation with the department, shall develop and implement a corrective action plan.

(c) If outcomes have not improved over the baseline, the county and the department shall evaluate the reasons. To the extent the county and the department determine that county and state actions could positively influence the outcomes, they shall mutually develop and implement a corrective action plan.

(d) In both cases, the corrective action plan shall identify actions that shall be taken by the county and by appropriate state agencies.

Article 9. Evaluation of CalWORKs Program Implementation

11520. The State Department of Social Services shall ensure that a comprehensive, independent statewide evaluation of the CalWORKs program is undertaken and that accurate evaluative information is made available to the Legislature in a timely fashion.

11520.3. The department shall develop a research design to ensure a thorough evaluation of the direct and indirect effects of the CalWORKs program. Effects shall include, but not be limited to, employment, earnings, self-sufficiency, child care, child support, child well-being, family structure, and impacts on local government. Child well-being shall include entries into foster care, at-risk births, school achievement, child abuse reports, and rates of child poverty.

11520.5. The statewide evaluation shall be conducted by an independent evaluator or evaluators. It shall represent a clear delineation of the research questions and shall, through discrete reports issued at regular intervals, provide information regarding process, impacts, and analyses of the costs and benefits of the CalWORKs program.

11520.7. The department shall ensure that county demonstration projects and other innovative county approaches to CalWORKs program implementation are independently and rigorously evaluated and that findings are reported to the Legislature in a timely fashion. The evaluation of a county-specific program shall be developed in conjunction with the county and other appropriate agencies responsible for the local program.

11521. By July 1, 1998, the department shall revise data collection procedures used for quality control and caseload characteristic studies in order to respond to the data collection requirements of Public Law 104-193 and state law. The department shall develop common data definitions to be used by the counties, design common identifiers, and, to the extent possible, standardize state and county data collection infrastructure. The department shall accomplish the requirements of this section in consultation with experts in monitoring and research, representatives of counties, the Legislature, and appropriate state agencies.

11521.3. Evaluation of CalWORKs program implementation conducted or commissioned by the department shall, to the extent practical, use or build upon existing welfare data archives, including, but not limited to, the data bases and research completed to date as part of the Work Pays Demonstration Project authorized pursuant to Chapter 97 of the Statutes of 1992.

11521.5. The department shall have access and authority to obtain for tracking, monitoring, research and evaluation purposes to data collected by counties on recipients receiving cash aid, in-kind payments, or supportive services.

11521.7. The department shall continue the evaluation of Cal-Learn and issue a final report to the Legislature by July 1, 2000.

SEC. 159. Article 9.5 (commencing with Section 11525) is added to Chapter 2 of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

Article 9.5. Interagency Data Development and Use

11525. (a) The department shall establish procedures to provide timely access to information on CalWORKs families to counties and researchers in a manner that maintains confidentiality of data while making it possible to undertake ongoing monitoring, research, and evaluation.

(b) (1) The department, with the cooperation of the University of California, shall establish a project to link longitudinal administrative data on individuals and families who are receiving benefits under the CalWORKs program, or have received benefits under the program within the last 10 years.

(2) All data shall be made available to a university center with the capability of linking it with other appropriate data to allow for ongoing assessment of program impact.

(3) The department shall ensure that information identifiable to individuals and families is removed so as to maintain strict confidentiality.

(4) The State Department of Health Services, the Employment Development Department, the Franchise Tax Board, the State Department of Education, and any other state or local governmental agency that collects information on aided families shall provide the department with the necessary data, if legally available.

SEC. 160. Article 9.7 (commencing with Section 11526) is added to Chapter 2 of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

Article 9.7. Role of the University

11526. (a) The Legislature hereby requests the Regents of the University of California to establish and administer a program or programs to support welfare research and evaluation of the CalWORKs program.

(b) It is the intent of the Legislature that the program or programs established by the University of California:

(1) Establish a sponsored grants program to provide funding for interested researchers to undertake studies on important welfare-related issues. These grants shall be applied only to research projects requested by representatives of state and local government entities.

(2) Establish one or more Bureau of the Census secure data sites to link census and administrative data bases for ongoing research purposes.

(3) Use existing data archives to develop data sets appropriate for monitoring and evaluating the impacts of CalWORKs program implementation in California.

(4) Create and maintain public use data sets and make data available to researchers and members of the public to support welfare research and related human services research.

(5) Provide an ongoing capacity for supporting, conducting, and disseminating welfare policy research.

(6) Produce and maintain lists of researchers working with California welfare data or conducting research on public assistance in California.

(7) Review, edit, publish, and disseminate research and evaluation reports to state and local policymakers.

(8) Provide forums for the presentation of research findings and the discussion of research on welfare.

(9) Provide a location for welfare data archives and monitor ongoing funding for their upkeep.

Article 5. Child Support Assurance Demonstration Project

18241. It is the intent of the Legislature, in implementing federal welfare reform, to create a Child Support Assurance Demonstration Project that is consistent with the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-193) and that maximizes cost effectiveness while lifting children out of poverty. It is the intent of the Legislature that the program will secure financial stability for California's children through a guaranteed minimum level of financial support for the children of participating families, while at the same time encouraging custodial parents to be employed and noncustodial parents to financially support their children.

18242. (a) Upon application by a county board of supervisors, the department may approve demonstration projects in up to three counties to test models of child support assurance. One of the projects shall conform to the design contained in Sections 18244 to 18246, inclusive. The other two projects shall either test different models of child support assurance or may test the same model if the two counties in which that model is tested involve counties with different demographics.

(b) It is the intent of the Legislature that the purpose of the demonstration projects authorized by this article is to test child support assurance models as alternatives to welfare under which families with earnings and a child support order receive a guaranteed child support payment, in lieu of a grant under the CalWORKs program, from funds continuously appropriated for the CalWORKs program.

(c) A county may determine the maximum number of participants in that county, but not more than five percent of the county CalWORKs caseload or 8,000 persons, whichever is greater.

18243. The department shall develop research designs to ensure thorough evaluations of the child support assurance demonstration projects that shall include, but not be limited to, the impact of work participation rates of custodial parents, CalWORKs participation rates and costs, paternity and child support order establishment, and any other relevant information the director may require.

18244. (a) A family shall be eligible to participate under this article only if, at the time of application to participate in the child assurance program, the family is receiving, or has been determined to be eligible to receive, an aid grant under Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11200) of Part 3.

(b) A family's participation under this article shall not affect its eligibility to receive Medi-Cal and child care benefits under Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11200) of Part 3, if otherwise eligible.

18245. (a) A family shall be eligible to receive a child support assurance payment on behalf of a child only if the child's custodial parent has done all of the following:

(1) Assigned the child's right to collect child support to the state.

(2) Established paternity, obtained a child support order, and is using the services available under the state plan approved under Part D (commencing with Section 651) of Chapter 7 of Title 42 of the United States Code.

(3) Opted to participate in the child assurance program in lieu of cash assistance under this chapter or its successor program.

(b) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), as a condition of receiving a child support assurance payment under this article, a custodial parent shall also be required to do both of the following:

(A) Continue to provide all other relevant information that the applicant has that may be requested by the county. (B) Appear at required interviews, conference hearings, or legal proceedings, if notified in advance and an illness or emergency does not prevent attendance.

(2) A custodial parent shall not be required to comply with paragraph (1) when compliance would make it more difficult for a domestic violence victim to escape physical abuse or when cooperation would increase the risk of further violence or unfairly penalize the victim.

(c) In order to be eligible under this article, a child shall meet all of the following conditions:

(1) The child resides in the county.

(2) The child has a noncustodial parent living in the United States, or if not living in the United States, is subject to service of process by a state or territory of the United States.

(3) The child is under 18 years of age or, if enrolled in high school, under 19 years of age.

(4) The custodial parent is employed.

18246. (a) A child or children shall be eligible to continue to receive a child support assurance payment under this section only if the family's income is not more than 150 percent of the federal poverty level. For family income below the federal poverty level, the earned income disregard shall be 90 percent. For income between 100 percent and 150 percent of the federal poverty level, the earned income disregard shall be incrementally decreased until the assistance benefit reaches zero at 150 percent of the federal poverty level.

(b) In any month, the child shall receive the greater of the child support paid by the noncustodial parent or the assured amount as defined in subdivision (d) of Section 11535. In any month in which the noncustodial parent pays an amount of support less than the assured amount, the county shall retain the payment as reimbursement for the assured amount.

(c) For purposes of this article, the child support assurance payable to the custodial parent of one or more eligible children shall be the amount by which the support assurance payment exceeds the dollar value of the child support, if any, received on behalf of the family during the month from the noncustodial parent for the support of any eligible child or children.

(d) The monthly child support assurance payment shall be the sum of all of the following:

(1) Two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) for the first eligible child.

(2) One hundred twenty-five dollars (\$125) for the second eligible child, if any.

(3) Sixty-five dollars (\$65) for each subsequent eligible child, if any.

18247. (a) The state share of child support assurance payments under this article shall be paid in accordance with Section 15200.

(b) The county administrative cost for the operation of a child support assurance program shall be paid from the county's allocation provided under Sections 15204.2 and 15204.3.

**APPENDIX B: FEDERAL PROVISIONS RELATING TO EVALUATION OF THE
TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) PROGRAM**

Appendix B: Federal Provisions Relating to Evaluation of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program

(From P.L. 104-193, the Personal Responsibility and Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996)

“SEC. 413. RESEARCH, EVALUATIONS, AND NATIONAL STUDIES.

“(a) RESEARCH- The Secretary shall conduct research on the benefits, effects, and costs of operating different State programs funded under this part, including time limits relating to eligibility for assistance. The research shall include studies on the effects of different programs and the operation of such programs on welfare dependency, illegitimacy, teen pregnancy, employment rates, child well-being, and any other area the Secretary deems appropriate. The Secretary shall also conduct research on the costs and benefits of State activities under section 409.

“(b) DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO REDUCING WELFARE DEPENDENCY AND INCREASING CHILD WELL-BEING-

“(1) IN GENERAL- The Secretary may assist States in developing, and shall evaluate, innovative approaches for reducing welfare dependency and increasing the well-being of minor children living at home with respect to recipients of assistance under programs funded under this part. The Secretary may provide funds for training and technical assistance to carry out the approaches developed pursuant to this paragraph.

“(2) EVALUATIONS- In performing the evaluations under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall, to the maximum extent feasible, use random assignment as an evaluation methodology.

“(c) DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION- The Secretary shall develop innovative methods of disseminating information on any research, evaluations, and studies conducted under this section, including the facilitation of the sharing of information and best practices among States and localities through the use of computers and other technologies.

“(d) ANNUAL RANKING OF STATES AND REVIEW OF MOST AND LEAST SUCCESSFUL WORK PROGRAMS-

“(1) ANNUAL RANKING OF STATES- The Secretary shall rank annually the States to which grants are paid under section 403 in the order of their success in placing recipients of assistance under the State program funded under this part into long-term private sector jobs, reducing the overall welfare caseload, and, when a practicable method for calculating this information becomes available, diverting individuals from formally applying to the State program and receiving assistance. In ranking States under this subsection, the Secretary shall take into account the average number of minor children living at home in families in the State that have incomes below the poverty line and the amount of funding provided each State for such families.

“(2) ANNUAL REVIEW OF MOST AND LEAST SUCCESSFUL WORK PROGRAMS-

The Secretary shall review the programs of the 3 States most recently ranked highest under paragraph (1) and the 3 States most recently ranked lowest under paragraph (1) that provide parents with work experience, assistance in finding employment, and other work preparation activities and support services to enable the families of such parents to leave the program and become self-sufficient.

“(e) ANNUAL RANKING OF STATES AND REVIEW OF ISSUES RELATING TO OUT-OF-WEDLOCK BIRTHS-

“(1) ANNUAL RANKING OF STATES-

“(A) IN GENERAL- The Secretary shall annually rank States to which grants are made under section 403 based on the following ranking factors:

“(i) ABSOLUTE OUT-OF-WEDLOCK RATIOS- The ratio represented by—

“(I) the total number of out-of-wedlock births in families receiving assistance under the State program under this part in the State for the most recent fiscal year for which information is available; over

“(II) the total number of births in families receiving assistance under the State program under this part in the State for such year.

“(ii) NET CHANGES IN THE OUT-OF-WEDLOCK RATIO- The difference between the ratio described in subparagraph (A)(i) with respect to a State for the most recent fiscal year for which such information is available and the ratio with respect to the State for the immediately preceding year.

“(2) ANNUAL REVIEW- The Secretary shall review the programs of the 5 States most recently ranked highest under paragraph (1) and the 5 States most recently ranked the lowest under paragraph (1).

“(f) STATE-INITIATED EVALUATIONS- A State shall be eligible to receive funding to evaluate the State program funded under this part if—

“(1) the State submits a proposal to the Secretary for the evaluation;

“(2) the Secretary determines that the design and approach of the evaluation is rigorous and is likely to yield information that is credible and will be useful to other States, and

“(3) unless otherwise waived by the Secretary, the State contributes to the cost of the evaluation, from non-Federal sources, an amount equal to at least 10 percent of the cost of the evaluation.

“(g) FUNDING OF STUDIES AND DEMONSTRATIONS-

“(1) IN GENERAL- Out of any money in the Treasury of the United States not otherwise appropriated, there are appropriated \$15,000,000 for each fiscal year specified in section 403(a)(1) for the purpose of paying—

“(A) the cost of conducting the research described in subsection (a);

“(B) the cost of developing and evaluating innovative approaches for reducing welfare dependency and increasing the well-being of minor children under subsection (b);

“(C) the Federal share of any State-initiated study approved under subsection (f); and

“(D) an amount determined by the Secretary to be necessary to operate and evaluate demonstration projects, relating to this part, that are in effect or approved under section 1115 as of September 30, 1995, and are continued after such date.

“(2) ALLOCATION- Of the amount appropriated under paragraph (1) for a fiscal year—

“(A) 50 percent shall be allocated for the purposes described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (1), and

“(B) 50 percent shall be allocated for the purposes described in subparagraphs (C) and (D) of paragraph (1).

“SEC. 414. STUDY BY THE CENSUS BUREAU.

“(a) IN GENERAL- The Bureau of the Census shall expand the Survey of Income and Program Participation as necessary to obtain such information as will enable interested persons to evaluate the impact of the amendments made by title I of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 on a random national sample of recipients of assistance under State programs funded under this part and (as appropriate) other low income families, and in doing so, shall pay particular attention to the issues of out-of-wedlock birth, welfare dependency, the beginning and end of welfare spells, and the causes of repeat welfare spells.

“(b) APPROPRIATION- Out of any money in the Treasury of the United States not otherwise appropriated, there are appropriated \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002 for payment to the Bureau of the Census to carry out subsection (a).

(g) GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE REPORT- Not later than July 1, 1997, the Comptroller General of the United States shall prepare and submit to the committees described in subsection (b)(3), a report concerning the determinations made by each Secretary under subsection (c). Such report shall contain an analysis of the determinations made by each Secretary under subsection (c) and a determination as to whether further reductions in full-time equivalent positions are appropriate.

APPENDIX C: BACKGROUND RESEARCH MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED AT SEMINAR

1. “Evaluating Welfare Reform: What Do We Know? How Can We Learn More?,” *The Forum*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Research Forum on Children, Families, and the New Federalism, May 1998.....57
2. “How to Evaluate Welfare Reform: Guidance for States,” By Anne Gordon, Jonathan Jacobson, and Thomas Fraker, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.65
3. “Tracking the Well-Being of Children within States: The Evolving Federal Role in the Age of Devolution,” By Brett V. Brown, *New Federalism: Issues and Options for States*, Series A, No. A-21, The Urban Institute, June 1998.....73
4. “Welfare Reform and Children: Potential Implications,” By Martha Zaslow, Kathryn Tout, Christopher Botsko, and Kristin Moore, *New Federalism: Issues and Options for States*, Series A, No. A-23, The Urban Institute, June 1998.....87
5. *Using Performance Indicators to Improve the Effectiveness of Welfare-to-Work Programs*, By Timothy J. Bartik, “Abstract,” Upjohn Institute Staff Working Paper 95-36.95
6. “Welfare Reform: How Will We Know if it Works?,” Family Impact Seminar, Washington, D.C.....99
7. “Welfare Reform Research: A Resource Guide for Researchers and Advocates,” Institute for Women’s Policy Research.113
8. “Young Child Poverty in the States—Wide Variation and Significant Change,” By Neil G. Bennett and Jiali Li, National Center for Children in Poverty, 1998.....131
9. “Young Children in Poverty: A Statistical Update,” Prepared by Jiali Li and Neil Bennett, National Center for Children in Poverty, March 1998.137