

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND WELFARE

STRATEGIC PLAN IN RESPONSE TO THE

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE PANELS

2003 Statewide Recommendations

June 27, 2003

Idaho's citizen review boards, the *Keeping Children Safe Panels*, issued their formal statewide annual recommendations in January 2003. The Department of Health and Welfare's (DHW) response to the panels' recommendations follows each recommendation.

Recommendation – Community Resource for Families Program (CRFF)

- The Community Resource for Families Program and its funding should be placed under the direction of the DHW rather than the Department of Education.

The CRFF program saw the return of 22 school districts and 30 Community Resource Workers for the 2002/2003 school year. In the upcoming school year, 19 districts have committed to participating with a total of 27 CRW's placed in school districts statewide. Region 2 once again will have the largest number of districts with 7 districts committed and 1 district still undecided. There will be 4 part time CRW's and 5 full time CRW's. Region 3 will see 2 districts returning and 2 part time CRW's, Region 4 has 1 district with 4 full time CRW's, Region 5 will have 2 districts with 2 part time CRW's, Region 6 will have 3 school districts with 3 full time and 2 part time CRW's, Region 7 will have 4 districts returning with 5 full time CRW's.

During this year's legislative session in February 2003, the Senate Education Committee with Chairman Schroeder received an update on the status of the program and a plea to consider restoring full funding for the program when the State's economic outlook improves. The committee heard testimony from Kathy Phelan, president of the IEA, Mickey Harmer, Child Welfare Program Specialist and Liaison to the CRFF Program, Dr. Susan Williamson, principal of Taft Elementary in Boise,

Sandra Stange a Community Resource Worker with the Boise School District and Joan Parsons, a counselor at Jackson Elementary. The Committee was also presented with a program evaluation report and the most current report completed by The Idaho Child Welfare Training Institute for the 2001/2002 school year in Region II. The ongoing strategy is to keep information regarding the effects and impact of the Community Resources for Families Program before the legislature during this upcoming year.

Recommendation – Home Schooling

Assure that all children in Idaho meet educational achievement standards no matter where they are educated or by whom.

A representative of the Keeping Children Safe Panels presented the Panel's Recommendations for 2001 to the Governor's Children at Risk Task Force (CARTF) on March 8, 2002. The Task Force expressed an interest in the recommendation regarding home schooling and offered to explore the issue in future meetings.

September 2002, the Children at Risk Task Force invited the president of the Idaho Coalition of Home Educators to their meeting to enlist the support of home schoolers in setting up a system where parents had some accountability for educating their children. The representatives of the Idaho Coalition of Home Educators strongly support the rights of parents to educate their children and offered many statistics and report findings representing the success of Idaho home schoolers. They refute the idea that some families are using the guise of home schooling but not educating their children. Clearly, they oppose any oversight in home schooling, stating it infringes on their individual rights.

In wanting to learn more about the issue, the Task Force invited a representative from the Idaho Department of Education who oversees the accreditation of private schools and home school associations to attend the Children at Risk Task Force meeting in October 2002. The representative shared the Task Force's concerns that some children are receiving no schooling. She explained prior to 1992, parents had to register if they planned to home school their child. If a parent did not register, law enforcement and/or the Department of Health and Welfare could approach the parents with concerns of educational neglect. The law was amended in 1992 so there is currently no accountability for home education. The representative from the Department of Education described a process she uses when she receives concerns regarding non-schooling. She refers those concerns to a member of the Idaho Coalition of Home Educators who sends a letter to the family that extends an invitation for the family to become involved with the Coalition.

One of the barriers in working to find a solution to educational neglect, is the lack of data that defines the scope of the problem. In reviewing the issue of child neglect, the Task Force became aware of a committee of concerned citizens in Northern Idaho who asked local school administrators to complete a survey to determine the number of children who are not being educated. Twenty-six schools participated in the survey. According to the survey, public school administrators believe 243 children are receiving little or no schooling in Northern Idaho.

March 7, 2003, the Task Force presented their concerns regarding non-schooling to the co-chairs of the Governor's Coordinating Council. They invited CARTF's chairmen to attend their meeting to make others aware of the issue of educational neglect. During 2003-2004, CARTF will continue to gather data to document the magnitude of educational neglect. It will also contact other states who have no minimum educational requirements to see how law enforcement and child welfare agencies respond to referrals alleging a parent is using the guise of home schooling but not providing any education.

- Recommend the establishment of a registry for students who are participating in alternative education programs.

Using Children's Justice Act funds, the Governor's Children at Risk Task Force will be using Children's Justice Act funds, the Governor's Children at Risk Task Force will also submit invitations to Idaho universities and/or a research firm to conduct a study to assess the scope of educational neglect in Idaho. This study will use a credible evaluation design to gather more information regarding educational neglect so it can be used for future legislation and decision-making.

Recommendation – Foster Care/Adoption

Ensure quality foster care for the children of Idaho by:

- Expanding utilization of specialized programs; i.e., Casey TAP, and providing universal training to all case managers.

Casey has provided a good case management model for offering services and will be reviewed as a model for incorporating into the Program Improvement Plan. The Department meets monthly with Mike Scholl, the Director of the Idaho Casey Family Program. Discussion and planning at these meetings is around the partnership and how to increase the number of children being referred to the DHW/Casey TAP.

- Evaluating the impact of decreased media recruitment efforts directed at foster care.

In response to the precipitous decline in funding for foster care recruitment, the agency has taken the responsible action of redirecting available recruitment dollars to more targeted recruitment activities. These activities include:

- Ø Issue of recruitment information packets to 392 Idaho municipalities, 1,855 faith-based organizations, and 727 major corporations.
- Ø Development of fact sheets that accurately represent the current need for foster care and adoption support within Idaho.
- Ø Reorganization and expansion of foster care and adoption content on the agency's Web site.
- Ø Creation of a "mirrored" site on the agency's Web site where all foster care and adoption information is available in Spanish.
- Ø Creation of foster care success stories for distribution via the Web
- Ø Development of a collaborative communications project with members of the Nez Perce tribe.
- Ø Reorganization of the information distribution network involving the CareLine and regional agency staff.
- Ø Development and statewide distribution of a Public Service Announcement (PSA) built around the personal experience of a former foster child.

Conventional media development and placement represent the highest cost per return/response of any communications activity available to the State. By taking a more targeted approach, the Department has actually increased the reach and diversity of its recruitment activities. In addition, by expending dollars on strengthening the information infrastructure, the Department is in a far better position to sustain a consistent communications effort that is less vulnerable to fluctuations in funding.

Historically the Department has relied upon a media mix of broadcast and print advertising to generate interest in the foster care and adoption programs. While this approach has generated results, the cost per recruited family has been difficult to quantify. Research conducted on behalf of the advertising industry indicates it takes upwards of 16 impressions before a target audience will recall a specific communications message. If the message is tied to an action, twice the number of impressions is required. An uncertain funding climate has made it difficult to mount and sustain a consistent public educational/awareness effort. Consequently, recruitment efforts have failed to keep pace with the growing need for foster care providers.

The new strategy extends the communications value of existing distribution channels – such as the Web – while at the same time establishing new information-distribution channels through the creation of public/private partnerships with the faith-based community, businesses, and local governments. By spending the time and dollars to create a broader, more effective information infrastructure, the Department will be able to sustain a significant level of recruitment activity even when recruitment dollars are at a minimum.

Another advantage to building a broader information-distribution channel is the ability to target key audiences with specific messages. When recruitment dollars are available, the Department will have the flexibility to choose the target audience that is most receptive to the recruitment message. Then it is simply a matter of developing the communications tactics that will deliver that message in the most cost-effective and efficient manner possible. This tried-and-true approach has the potential of yielding the maximum results for the dollars expended.

Integral to this new approach is the addition of foster care and adoption information to the Department's Web site. The new look will focus on delivering more information about foster care and adoption to a broader audience. In addition, there will be a greater emphasis on presenting the personal side of foster care and adoption. Personal-interest stories, both text and video-based, will communicate a more candid view of what it's like to be a foster parent in Idaho – the challenges as well as the

rewards. Better utilization of the Web as a communications channel will enable the Department to deliver its message to more people more cost-effectively. It will also provide a valuable means of tracking user activity, collecting feedback from program participants, and directing "leads" to appropriate staff members.

May 30, 2003, the Department partnered with the Casey Family Program to recognize foster families in Idaho. The Casey Family Program provided the Department with a toolkit to use for Foster Care Month activities and provided refreshments for the event. The event was attended by foster families, children and youth currently in foster care and youth who were alumni of the foster care program. Department staff, the Casey Family Program staff and community members. Two youth who represented the Foster Youth/Alumni (FYI) advisory group spoke about their experiences and the important role foster parents play in the lives of children in need of alternate care. The event was covered by The Idaho Statesman and a local television station.

- Utilizing cost efficient community public service announcements for recruitment PSA's

Press releases were created for scheduled events: (1) website kick off, (April 13 news release detailing the completion and contents of website for foster care and adoption. (2) Adoption Month in November and (3) News release prepared and released to Idaho Media for Foster Care Appreciation Month activities in May.

A website was developed to provide information to prospective foster and adoptive parents. The site is in English and Spanish. In April 2003 after months of development the site was launched with a press release to the media. A PSA was filmed and provided to Media with an attached letter asking the stations to help with recruitment efforts by playing the PSA. Enhancements will continue to be made to the Department's Web site to provide visitors maximum information on fostering. The site has a user survey that will solicit valuable feedback to help guide and shape future content in the continued development of the site.

A PowerPoint presentation in English and Spanish was completed and distributed to all 7 regions and Casey Family to be used when making public or targeted presentations. The presentation included both fixed and customizable slides. The slide

presentation utilized a design and layout that is consistent with the Department's Web site and brochure.

A television PSA was produced in May of 2003 using a member of Idaho's new Foster Youth/Alumni (FYI). The young woman gave a plea for fostering with a closing comment of "I know about the need for foster parents, I was a foster child for 5 years." The PSA's were distributed to media statewide with a signed letter by Shirley Alexander, Child Welfare Program Manager, asking that they help us in our recruitment efforts by playing the PSA. Two other existing PSA's were also provided for airing.

Posters were developed using a logo developed by the Casey Family Program. They were tagged with Idaho information, number and website to find out more about being a foster parent. The posters were included in the community partner packets talked about above and are being distributed to regional offices for additional distribution in their communities.

- Continuing to encourage use of incentives for Department personnel recruiting foster parents.

In the past year between June 2002 and June 2003 **twenty-two** (22) incentives were provided to foster parents for their recruitment efforts that resulted in a family being licensed to provide foster care. Regional staff have been educated in the past year on use of the "finders fee" and are sharing this information with existing foster parents.

- Increasing reimbursement rates to match the national average.

A Decision Unit for an increase in foster care rates was submitted during the 2003 legislative session. The legislature passed a 4% increase for foster parents which resulted in the following changes effective July 1, 2003: putting in a decision unit for increase next year

<u>Ages</u>	<u>Old</u>	<u>New</u>
0-5	\$251	\$261

6-12	\$275	\$286
13-18	\$394	\$410

The Department will continue to advocate for additional increases to raise the rates to be competitive with national standards.

- Actively recruiting bilingual and bicultural foster homes.

Idaho has a large Hispanic population and 6 Indian tribes. There continues to be a need for additional homes for placement of Indian and Hispanic children. An existing brochure titled, "Fostering Idaho's Future," printed in English and Spanish has had wide distribution and will be updated before during this before the spring of 2004. Recruitment activities for 2002/2003 were released in April. On June 3, 2002 the contract awarded to PBZ included incentives for increasing the number of Hispanic and Indian homes. Recruitment messages will continue to reflect the diversity of Idaho's population. Any new recruitment materials will be translated into Spanish to ensure message for fostering reaches out to Idaho's large Hispanic population.

In April 2003 the Department ICW Specialist provided training to the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe on the Indian Child Welfare Act and its relationship to the need for tribal foster parents. Training a regional foster care licensing specialist also participated in the training. The department and PBZ designed an Indian foster home recruitment flyer which was distributed to the Shoshone Bannock tribal members at the training and also at their August 2002 Pow Wow.

Additionally in June 2003, recruitment of Indian homes was on the agenda and discussed at the Indian Child Welfare Committee meeting. The tribal committee members were given information on statewide and regional recruitment efforts

The Department with their contractor PBZ is working with the Nez Perce Tribe in the design and production of a calendar that will be distributed to Nez Perce families for 2004. The calendar will carry messages on fostering and will include cultural events, symbols, Pow Wows, Nez Perce celebrations, anniversaries of battles and will have pictures depicting the Nez Perce Tribal members and culture. During the June 2003 meeting with the ICW Committee this recruitment tactic was shared with representatives from the other state tribes and offered to them as a potential recruitment effort.

To attract an increased number of Hispanic families PBZ met and interviewed a Region III Hispanic Foster Family and from the interview wrote the families success story on their experience as foster parents. The story is being featured on the foster care website. A recognition ceremony and reception was held in the Capitol Rotunda in May of 2003 with a region 3 Hispanic foster family spotlighted. The foster father read the proclamation in Spanish and the foster mother spoke to the attendees and the media with a challenge to Idaho citizens to open their ears and homes to children in crisis.

This same family was also highlighted and recognized at the May Foster Parent Appreciation and Proclamation event. The family read the proclamation in Spanish and made a plea for additional Hispanic homes.

- Increasing funding for therapeutic treatment homes and increased utilization of therapeutic treatment homes.

An increase in funding could not be obtained this year due to the poor economic conditions. However, clarification has been made regarding the utilization of therapeutic foster homes with the development of Therapeutic Foster Homes Standards that go into effect July 1, 2003. Currently every region is receiving training on these standards prior to implementation.

- Expanding recruitment and retention efforts for quality foster parents.

In December of 2003 a select committee of DHW staff, foster parents, Casey Family staff, University partners, tribal representatives and an FYI alumni came together and heard presentations on 3 nationally accepted curriculums. The committee selected PRIDE as the curriculum and model of practice. PRIDE includes 27 hours of pre-service training that involves a separate but concurrent family assessment whereby a Family Resource Development Specialist conducts 2 –3 home consultations as the families participates in the 27 hours of training. During this process the families who will be selected in, will need to meet the criteria of 5 competency categories. Those who don't or can't meet the competency categories will hopefully self-select out or will be counseled out by the Specialist. The trainers include 1 DHW staff, 1 foster parent and 1 university partner. The PRIDE model is currently being piloted in Region 5 and started with 21 families with 1 family dropping out after the first session and a second family self-selecting out after attending 3 sessions. Both families left expressing positive feelings about the process and the Department. At the conclusion of the training the families that choose to continue towards licensure will have a good understanding of what they will be experiencing as foster parents and their role as a member of the foster care team. We are seeing this process as one that can identify potential therapeutic treatment home foster parents and also those who may decide to provide respite care.

- Encouraging and facilitating foster parent networking and provide incentives for foster parents taking optimal advantage of training opportunities.

The Department has been actively supporting the development of the Idaho Foster and Adoptive Parent Coalition. Members have been funded for participation at the National Foster Parent Association Conferences in April of 2002 in Las Vegas Nevada and this year in Des Moines, Iowa. Several of the regions have very active regional associations where the Department assists in mailings and newsletters. Regions are providing financial incentives for foster parent's attendance at training while also assisting in paying for travel related costs and day care.

In September 2002 a Statewide Foster Parent Conference was held. Foster parents participated in the planning for the conference. October 24, and 25, 2003 a second conference will be held with the theme of the conference to focus on foster parents as critical members of the team in building a strong foster care program. The Department is providing financial and training assistance to the conference and will eliminate barriers for foster parent attendance by reimbursing them for any travel or day care costs.

Support of foster parents is a critical piece for retention of foster parents as research has proved that foster parents are the best recruiters. To show appreciation for our foster parents many activities have been planned and held around the state during this reporting period. Dinners and picnics have been held community businesses and citizens partnered by donating food and prizes.

- Developing a North Idaho version of a Wednesday's Child type program for viewing on public television to recruit adoptive parents.

Radio stations and newspapers in Northern Idaho have been contacted regarding the need for adoptive parent recruitment through the Wednesday's Child Program in northern Idaho. Periodically as children's audio tapes are available, several radio stations will run these public service announcements featuring children in that area of the state. Periodic discussions continue with Boise Channel 7 anchorwoman Dee Sarton, regarding the ability to use Northwest Cable News for Wednesday's Child. Channel 7's old production director is now in charge of production at Northwest Cable News in Seattle, Washington and may be more receptive to the idea of broadcasting the program. TV stations in Spokane, Washington have been contacted, but declined to participate. The most recent contact has been with news writer Diana Klybert, at the Coeur d'Alene Press, a weekly newspaper in northern Idaho seeking the paper's sponsorship for the Wednesday's Child column. Earlier media recruitment efforts have been with the McCall Star, another of the state's weekly newspapers. It has been learned that financing the Wednesday's Child column in small local newspapers is an issue. These media sources need a funding source for the program in order to include it in the paper. This creates a conflict with all other media partners who donate both column space and air time without cost to Wednesday's Child or the Department. To date, only one weekly paper has been recruited as a Wednesday's Child media partner, the St. Marie's Gazette. This paper runs the column as space is available. Unless volunteer sponsors can be found for the Wednesday's Child column in the small weekly papers, these sources may not be able to sponsor the partnership so badly needed in northern Idaho. The director of Special Needs Adoptive Parents, Inc. (SNAPS) will contact local public television stations in Lewiston and Coeur d'Alene to present the Wednesday's Child program and the success achieved over the last four years in recruiting adoptive families for waiting children. The basis of the contact will be to ascertain interest and capacity in airing the current Wednesday's Child broadcasts from the Boise and Idaho Falls stations. Idaho also will be partnering the listing of the state's waiting children on the new national AdoptUSKids.org web site with the Idaho Wednesday's Child program.

Though currently there is no public television station participating as a media partner with Idaho Wednesday's Child, current statistics are reporting record numbers to the Idaho Wednesday's Child web site which is accessible anywhere via the worldwide web and a national toll free phone number for interested families to call. In April 2003, the Wednesday's Child website documented 8048 visits to the web site (these are visitors actually staying and reviewing the profiles of waiting children). In May 2003, there were 7747 visits to the website. As of June 5, 2003 there were 289 visits to the Wednesday's Child website. The visitors are routing from over 4,300 different internet locations including the national adoption web site, AdoptUSKids.org. These visitors are logging onto the web page and are staying to read profiles on many of the children who are waiting. The web page access helps provide Wednesday's Child

coverage not only in northern Idaho but across the country. The Wednesday's Child Director will provide information at each of the regional Adoption Academies to help increase awareness of the program in northern Idaho.

Recommendation – Well Being of Children

- Seek avenues to address the medical, dental and vision needs of children such as local health districts.

Regarding physical health services, Rules Governing Family and Children Services IDAPA 16.06.01.443 state: “Children in alternate care shall receive the Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment services allowable under Medicaid. Those children already receiving Medicaid at the time of placement shall be screened within thirty days after placement. Children not receiving Medicaid at the time of placement shall receive a screening within thirty days from the date Medicaid eligibility is established.”

Regarding dental care, Department IDAPA rules 16.06.01.445 state, “Every child age two who is placed in alternate care shall receive a dental examination as soon as possible after placement but not later than 90 days and there after according to a schedule prescribed by the dentist.”

Regarding medical examination upon entering alternate care, Department IDAPA rules 16.06.01.447 state, “Within thirty days of entering alternate care, each child will receive a medical examination to assess the child’s health status, and thereafter according to a schedule prescribed by the child’s physician or other health care provider.”

Currently immunizations are not addressed in Department rules. During the fall of 2003, a standard for immunizations will be established in rule, by protocol or policy.

In using the CFSR instrument as part of Idaho’s new Continuing Quality Improvement Process that was implemented in January 2002, the Well Being Outcome number 3, “Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs,” the Child Welfare Subcommittee has started to gather data from the cases that are being reviewed to monitor compliance with the standards for child well-being and evaluate progress on our Program Improvement Plan. The following

information regarding the physical needs of children was provided through the review of fifty-nine CQI instruments between January 1st and October 2002:

- Ø Initial Health Screening - An initial health screening was provided for foster care upon a child's most recent entry into foster care in 76% of the cases. It was provided in accordance with the time frame specified in the state's guidelines in 79% of the cases.
- Ø Preventive health care -- Preventive health care was addressed in 77% of the cases, partially addressed in 12% of the cases, and not addressed in 12% of the cases.
- Ø Preventive dental care -- Preventive dental care was addressed in 58% of the cases, partially addressed in 19% of the cases, and not addressed in 22.6% of the cases.
- Ø Immunizations -- Immunizations were current in 78% of the cases, partially complete in 10% of the cases, and not addressed in 12% of the cases.
- Ø Treatment of health needs -- Treatment for identified health needs was provided in 67% of the cases, partially provided in 17% of the cases, and not addressed in 16% of the cases.
- Ø Treatment of dental needs -- Treatment for identified dental needs was provided in 46% of the cases, partially provided in 8% of the cases, and not addressed in 46% of the cases.
- Ø Health records to foster parents -- Health records were provided to foster parents in 65% of the cases, some but not all records were provided in 16% of the cases and records were not provided to foster parents in 19% of the cases.

There are many qualifiers on the results of these data and the data should be accepted as an indicator and not as a true measure. Many of the self-assessment advisory committee members indicated that they believe the percentage of children receiving health screenings, preventive health care, dental care and immunizations from the CQI data was higher than the data above revealed.

In an effort to continue to collect CQI data, eighty-one instruments were collected from regions not directly involved in the on-site review portion of the CFSR from November 1st 2002 to May 1st 2003. Below are the well-being results from those instruments:

- Ø Physical health of the child:
Did the child have a medical examination within 30 days of entering care?
71% had medical examinations within the required time frame
- Ø Did the child have an EPSDT Screening?
86% had EDSPT Screening according to IDHW required time frames.
- Ø Were there periodic dental exams?
56% had periodic dental exams within required time frames.

Several IDHW regions have initiated partnerships with medical providers in an effort to ensure that foster children have access to health care services. One example is a partnership between Region IV and the ST. Luke's Hospital's "Children at Risk Emergency Services Program," (CARES). Through this partnership, children receive a medical, dental, and trauma assessment upon entering foster care. A second example is a contract with District Health Departments, by Region I, Region II, and VI, to provide medical assessments, health screening, preventative health care, and medical treatment for foster children.

We will continue to monitor Idaho's compliance with initial health screenings, preventive dental care, immunizations, and follow through with services for identified health service needs.

Seek methods to encourage medical, dental and vision professionals to become private providers for children needing services.

Due to the lagging economy and budget hold backs that have occurred in 2002 and 2003, it is doubtful that Idaho will be able to offer medical, dental, and vision professionals' additional financial incentives to encourage them to provide for children's needs. However, many medical and dental professionals will serve a certain percentage of pro bono clients. During 2002, in many areas, dentists offered "free dental days" where they opened their offices to families who needed dental services but were unable to pay. This is the type of thing that communities should organize and promote.

Recommendation – Safety for Children

Ensure the safety and well being of Idaho's children by developing enforceable rules and binding service agreements and/or licensure for psychosocial rehabilitation and partial care providers that:

- Require background checks be successfully completed on all service providers and their employees prior to unsupervised involvement or direct contact with children.

According to Idaho IDAPA 16.06.02.109.01 all foster homes, residential care facilities and children's agencies, anyone providing direct care or working on-site under these rules is required to participate in a criminal history check as set forth in IDAPA 16.05.06 "Rules Governing Mandatory Criminal History Checks." These individuals are actually finger printed through IDHW with the results being returned to the facility administrator. Each facility and agency must reapply annually for licensure that includes the hiring of any new employees and verification of their criminal history background check. Idaho has three central office staff who license residential care facilities and children's agencies statewide. Individuals who do not pass the background checks cannot be employed. Rule compliance is monitored through regular personnel file reviews of individuals working in childcare positions.

Although the federal history check may take from four to six weeks, local history background checks can be conducted, pending results from the federal history check. Rule changes, mandating no direct or unsupervised involvement with children pending the federal criminal history background checks, may also pose a safety threat for children by creating a lack of supervision when vacancies arise and the service provider is waiting for results of the federal background check. If a facility has numerous openings, it may be unsafe for the facility to operate with a fewer number of employees while waiting for the results. The Department recommends that facilities closely supervise new hires until background checks have been verified.

- Prohibit aversive treatment of children (i.e., inappropriate timeout, cold showers, inappropriate police involvement, etc.)

In response to the 2003 recommendations of the Keeping Children Safe Panels, Children and Family Services met with the Medicaid unit to discuss joint concerns regarding inappropriate use of discipline with children who were being served through PSR and partial care programs. This meeting resulted in clarification that child safety issues occurring as a result of the provider's behavior or those employed by the provider would be addressed by law enforcement with assistance from Children and Family Services.

Childcare licensing rules establish standards for acceptable disciplinary methods that prohibit cruel or harsh treatment of children. Rules require training staff in alternative and acceptable methods of discipline. Annual and semi-annual on-site visits of programs include a review of program policies and daily practices and youth interviews to ensure compliance. Failure to comply with licensing rules can result in suspension or revocation of department license. Harsh or adverse treatment which results in injury to a child will constitute a child protection response.

- Establish initial minimum standards for facility (i.e., building type, layout and occupancy load, number of restrooms, play areas, learning areas, "counseling" rooms, eating areas, adult-to-child ratio, cleanliness, etc.)

Minimum standards do exist in regional communities and are enforced by local fire and health departments.

- Address minimum standards for facility's provider and employees (training and qualifications to provide specific services; i.e., social workers performing education duties) and that job descriptions fit the qualifications.

Child care licensing rules address minimum personnel standards for facilities, providers, and employee(s) to assure that job descriptions fit qualifications and that staff are trained and regularly evaluated to maintain the highest quality of services. Regular on-site program reviews monitor compliance with rules. In situations where the Department is involved through a children's mental health or a child protection referral, the Department will work closely with parents and providers to assure all parties understand the implications of providing educational services through home schooling clients in partial care or psychosocial rehabilitation centers.

- Establish systemic methods and standards for investigation of complaints of mistreatment of children in these facilities.

A response to complaints of mistreatment of children in facilities will be made according to the information in the referral. Concerns regarding building type, layout and occupancy load, number of restrooms, and ratio of adults to children will be handled by local health and fire districts. Concerns regarding abuse and neglect will be handled by law enforcement and Children and Family Services.

- Establish written, enforceable sanctions for non-compliance

Since the last annual Keeping Children Safe Panel meeting, representatives from Medicaid, licensing, and child protection met to discuss protocols and sanctions for violation of any Departmental regulation. This group worked together to send letters to several providers, mandating compliance or face the loss of their provider agreement.

- Child care licensing

Encourage legislators to help ensure the safety of all children under care within the state of Idaho and to change existing law to include licensure for anyone who provides child care for a fee within the state of Idaho rather than just childcare centers as the current law now reads. In doing so the Legislature can ensure that all personnel working within the child care system will have background checks and that all child care facilities receive both health and safety, and fire inspections either annually or biannually, not just childcare centers.

Legislators ask themselves, "How much intervention or authority should the State have in the lives of Idaho's citizens?" The majority of legislators value individual rights with minimal rules. A change in legislation to include licensure for anyone who provides childcare for a fee would take not only encouragement from the Department of Health and Welfare, but a great deal of constituent support.

Recommendation – Courts

- Through the direction of the state Attorney General and the Court Improvement Committee, ensure all foster children have eligibility and access to Title IV-E funds by continuing training and education to implement standardized court forms that include the appropriate language required to be compliant with federal guidelines for title IV-E eligibility.

Children and Family Services partnered with the Supreme Court Committee to Reduce Delays in Foster Care (court improvement project committee) to provide training in 6 of the 7 judicial districts in Idaho. The training was primarily conducted by judges, but in addition, law enforcement, child welfare program specialists, and attorneys each presented a topic to share a broad range of perspectives and model multidisciplinary team cooperation. The same curriculum was used in each training to encourage standardization around the State. The curriculum included:

- Ø The importance of making reasonable efforts to prevent a child from being removed from his/her home.
- Ø Language that must be included in the first court order, ("contrary to the child's best interest") in order for a child to be IV-E eligible.
- Ø Conducting planning hearings, six-month review hearings, and permanency hearings. Revisions to Idaho's Child Protective Act in July 2001 mandated these hearings be held by the court.
- Ø Noticing Foster Parents and their right to be heard.
- Ø The importance of permanency in a child's life.
- Ø Working together, using a multidisciplinary team approach.

At the trainings, a new bench book, complete with standardized forms that include the appropriate language required to be compliant with federal guidelines for title IV-E eligibility were distributed. Child protection social workers, law enforcement officers, prosecuting attorneys, deputy attorney generals, defense attorneys, juvenile probation, Guardian-ad-litem, tribal representatives, and magistrates, participated in

the training. Following are the regions that were trained and the number of participants.

Region I	Training in Region I to occur in the Fall of 2003
Training Region II	85 participants
Region III	150 participants
Region IV	115 participants
Region V	75 participants
Region VI	70 participants
Region VII	65 participants

To monitor compliance of language being used in court hearings and included in court findings regarding "reasonable efforts to prevent the placement of the child," "reasonable efforts to reunify a child," and "reasonable efforts to finalize a permanent plan," the central office Resource Development Unit has developed a monthly eligibility report that is sent to each program manager. The report lists the child's name and lets the manger know if there have been missing IV-E requirements. This report assists in training the judicial system to make findings and hold hearing within the required time frames. Results of the monthly reports are also shared with the Court Improvement Project Committee.

- The Department is encouraged to develop a policy and procedure that would trigger action to defer any pending termination of parental rights to the Attorney General if the Prosecuting Attorney fails to sign and file on the petition for the termination of parental rights within 60 days.

Currently this policy/procedure has not been written. However, in November 2002, the Department reviewed the role of regional deputy attorney generals to prioritize their assignments. After reviewing their duties they were instructed to give top priority to interfacing with the courts in cases involving Children and Family Services. Although the 60 day time frame has not been established to defer termination of parental rights to the regional deputy attorney general, the

Departmental expectation is they will file a petition and represent the Department if the need arises.

Although Idaho's data for the Child and Family Services Review meets the national standard of ensuring that a child receives a permanent home within twenty-four months of entering foster care, the cases reviewed during the on-site review showed delays. Therefore, Idaho was found not to be in compliance with this item. The program improvement plan will address delays in achieving permanency and will consider the option of establishing a protocol for termination of parental rights.

- KCS panels recommend the DHW commits to the use of local representation of the Deputy Attorney General in CP cases to promote safety and timely permanency for children in Idaho.

Although it would be advantageous to have the deputy attorney general represent the Department of Health and Welfare in all court cases, the Attorney General's office is not resourced to provide that service. Additional regional deputy attorney generals would have to be hired. It is estimated that an additional one million-dollars would be needed to fully staff the regional deputy attorney general positions. This money would need to be allocated from general funds. The current economy and recent holdbacks is a barrier to fulfilling this recommendation.

- Have DHW and the courts explore the establishment of child protection drug courts.

Drug Court is one of the strategies that has received national recognition for being successful in monitoring the progress of parents who are abusing alcohol or other drugs. In September 2002, Idaho held its first statewide "Drug Court Institute." Over 240 participants including judges, prosecuting attorneys, probation officers, public defenders, law enforcement, Department of Health and Welfare social workers, and treatment specialists met for three days to discuss challenges and share best practices in working with families who abuse substances. Michael Nerney, Executive Director of Nerney and Associates, was the Institute keynote speaker. Mr. Nerney has extensive experience training on addictions, brain development, and juvenile and adult treatment. His plenary session and two break out sessions were very well received. Additional workshops were conducted by faculty from the National Drug Court Institute as well as scholars nationally recognized for their work in treatment,

drug testing, sanctions and incentive. The Institute concluded with a "Breakfast with Legislators" where Wes Huddleston, Director of the National Drug Court Institute, presented important information on the national movement and the promise of drug courts. Dr. Edward Latessa, University of Cincinnati, engaged the legislators with his discussion of national research and evaluation results and the application to Idaho's drug courts.

A representative from the Department of Health and Welfare has been appointed to Idaho's Drug Court Coordinating Committee by the Idaho Supreme Court. The Department has worked with the committee to develop a substance abuse treatment component of the drug courts for both adolescents and adults. Additionally, the Department approves alcohol/drug abuse treatment programs to provide the treatment for drug courts and monitors the treatment delivered by those programs. In 2002, the Department shifted 1.2 million dollars from community-based non-drug court treatment to drug court treatment to assist the Supreme Court in treating 525 participants statewide in drug court for at least a year, at a cost of \$3,481 per participant.

A child protection drug court has been established this year in the Seventh Judicial District which comprises most of the counties of DHW in Region VII. A drug court team of approximately twenty individuals was developed. The team includes judges, prosecuting attorneys, defense attorneys, a drug court coordinator, DHW staff, substance abuse treatment providers, CASA, adult mental health staff, CMH staff, BYU Idaho staff, and others. This team completed intensive training and has been able to visit successful family or child protection drug courts in other states. They held their first court in Bonneville County on October 8, 2002. The Seventh Judicial child protection drug court is being reviewed by other judicial districts for future consideration.

- KCS panels recommend courts ensure that if children are tried as adults they will be housed in facilities consistent with safety standards for juveniles.

This recommendation can best be addressed by the Department of Corrections. Therefore, the concern has been forwarded to them for their consideration.

Recommendation – Substance Abuse

- Acknowledge and address substance abuse as a primary issue affecting the safety and well being of children in Idaho by increasing substance abuse funding for prompt, appropriate, locally accessible treatment.

In working towards assessing child safety in homes where substance abuse is present, the Department of Health and Welfare, Regions III and V, piloted a project designed to increase professional collaboration between addiction treatment and child welfare staff and to expedite reunification or permanency planning. Each region contracts with a substance abuse specialist to help remove barriers to assessment and treatment for parents who abuse or are addicted to substances and are involved in child protection issues. The pilot proved so successful, this year it was expanded to all seven regions of the state. Currently every region has or is in the process of hiring a substance abuse specialist to work along side child protection workers to do the following:

- Ø Provide motivation encouragement to clients who need a substance abuse assessment and possible treatment;
 - Ø Facilitate gate keeping calls to access substance abuse services;
 - Ø Provide initial substance abuse assessments for clients and report results to the child protection social worker who is assigned to the family;
 - Ø Facilitate referral to appropriate treatment for clients, including working with the social worker to overcome barriers of transportation, child care, housing, etc.;
 - Ø Consult with staff on cases;
 - Ø Facilitate family meetings;
 - Ø Train staff;
 - Ø Attend court hearings;
 - Ø Function as a liaison between Department of Health and Welfare staff and referral sources for substance abuse treatment.
- Increase resources by seeking grants and encouraging community collaboration.

To assist families who come to the attention of the child welfare system in accessing treatment, the Department of Health and Welfare, Children and Family Services applied for and received a grant from the Rocky Mountain Quality Improvement Center. In Idaho as throughout the nation, 80% of the parents of children referred to child protection are involved with alcohol and other drugs. Also in Idaho, our publicly funded substance abuse treatment services are at capacity. Due to the demand for treatment services there is a resulting waiting list, making it impossible for child protection-referred clients to enter treatment in a timely manner. The Rocky Mountain Quality Improvement Center Grant will pay for additional services of substance abuse specialists who are currently located in regional offices. It will allow them to engage parents while parents are waiting for a treatment slot and assure that they enter treatment as well as improve parent's readiness for treatment. A major goal will be to maintain the child safety in the home (avoid out-of-home placement) or if out-of-home placement occurs to return the child successfully to the home. This will be done through a "pretreatment education and support program" made up of group and individual contact. This program is currently being initiated in Regions I, III, and IV.

Recommendation – Continuous Quality Improvement

Create a system of evaluation to gather input and information regarding the family's experience once the case is closed. Consider the use of KCS panels to assist in the role of gathering input and information.

- Gather input from regional youth advisory boards regarding their foster care experience.

As Idaho was preparing the Self-Assessment for the Child and Family Services Review, each region interviewed children in foster care, age 10 and older. Ninety-two children participated in the interviews. The average age of youth being interviewed was fourteen and a half. The following questions were asked?

Ø How did it help you to be in foster cares?

Over 50% of the children responded that foster care helped them to get out of a neglectful or abusive situation. Approximately 30% of the children stated that foster care helped them improve their own behavior, school attendance or to deal with their own “problems.” Approximately 16% of the children stated that foster care did not help, that it was just a place to live or that it made things worse. The remaining children said they “didn’t know” or that their being in foster care had helped their parent in some way.

Ø What is the hardest part of being in foster care?

Approximately 50% of the children stated the hardest part of being in foster care was missing family or friends. Over 25% of the children stated it was difficult following rules in the foster home and not being treated like a “normal” kid. Approximately 14% of the children referenced adjusting to living in a foster home and getting along with the foster family. Several of the children stated it was difficult not knowing what was going to happen to them and said it was embarrassing to be known as a foster child.

Ø How many foster homes have you stayed in? Why do you think you had to move from one home to another?

Well over half of the children responded they were moved from one foster home to another as a result of their behavior. Other responses were somewhat equally distributed amongst responses including the following: foster parents didn’t want me, returned to foster care after reunification with family was not successful, mistreated in the foster home, and moved from a shelter home to a foster home.

Ø Do you know why you are in foster care? Has anyone ever explained it to you?

Approximately 83% of the children reported that they did know why they were in foster care. The remaining 17% stated they did not know why they had been placed in alternate care.

Ø Are you living with any of your brothers/sisters? How often do you see them?

Fifteen percent of the foster children reported their siblings were living with them in the same foster home. Of those foster children with siblings living elsewhere, approximately 37% reported they either see their siblings seldom or were not specific in the frequency. Sixteen percent reported having no contact with their siblings, 32% reported contact at least monthly, and the remaining children reported contact with their siblings one to four times per year.

Additionally, Children and Family Services continue to support Foster Youth Alumni in Idaho (FYI), the youth advisory boards. Wanting to share their valuable input with social workers, this year our new worker academy was revised to include a presentation from youth who have emancipated from the foster care system. A presentation from FYI will be an on-going feature of academy.

Representatives from FYI also shared their experiences in foster care with the Supreme Court Committee to Reduce Delays in Foster Care. The information they presented was well received and the committee asked the FYI representatives to return to present annually.

- Gather information from foster parents, legal system, and community partners regarding their experience with the foster care system.

To gather additional input for Idaho's Self-Assessment, in August 2002, surveys were mailed to stakeholders throughout the state. A total of 1544 surveys were sent to foster parents, magistrate judges, prosecuting attorneys, public defenders, Court Appointed Special Advocates/Guardian-ad-litem, Keeping Children Safe panel members, and Children and Family Services staff. These surveys provided an opportunity for stakeholders to provide input on IDHW practices and processes.

During the winter of 2003, the Child Welfare Subcommittee will develop parent satisfaction surveys to be used as part of the IDHW's continuing quality improvement process. The subcommittee is also considering holding annual community stakeholder focus groups to gather input regarding what Children and Family Services is doing well and what areas need improvement.

Recommendation – DHW Image

- Continue to enhance awareness of the Department's positive community contribution by developing a system of recognizing outstanding service by DHW and its employees.

The Department for several years has recognized the outstanding work of its employees through the Employee Recognition Awards. Co-workers, supervisors or citizens may nominate a Department of Health and Welfare employee, or team of employees, for exemplary service to the state. Four categories for nominations exist:

- Ø **Distinguished Service Award** – the Department's highest honor recognizes those employees for extraordinary service.
- Ø **Director's Award of Excellence** – recognizes employees for exceptional service, above and beyond normal work/expectations.
- Ø **Director's Customer Service Award** – recognizes employees for exemplary service to customers, above and beyond normal customer service expectations
- Ø **Extra Mile Award** – recognizes employees for a pattern of outstanding work.

Employees are recognized in quarterly recognition ceremonies held in the local/regional offices. Awards are presented by an employee's supervisor, manager, and sometimes by the Director himself. Quarterly recipients of these awards are recognized in "Headline News" the e-newsletter publication of the Department of Health and Welfare.

- Continue local/regional recognition awards and traditions.

Each local office or region also many times recognizes the contentious work of its employees. Regions and Central Office both strive to promote the positive image of its employees, the outstanding work they do, and their leadership role within the community. **"Every employee of the Department of Health and Welfare is considered a leader."**-Karl Kurtz, Director, IDHW.

Other important events occur at both the statewide and regional levels are the recognition the Department pays to our foster and adoptive parents. Though they are not salaried employees, these volunteers are the lifeblood of the Department's foster care and adoption programs. Each May, National Foster Parent Month is celebrated around the state with numerous activities recognizing the importance of foster parents in the work we do. November is National Adoption Month with celebrations, activities and workshops occurring in numerous areas. Idaho's Governor also publicly acknowledges the importance of foster and adoptive families in public proclamation signings at the State Capitol. These activities allow the Department to recognize the extraordinary love, work and commitment these families give to the children in their care.