DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 413 084 PS 025 941

AUTHOR	Blank, Susan
TITLE	Theory Meets Practice: A Report on Six Small-Scale Two-Generation Service Projects.
INSTITUTION	Foundation for Child Development, New York, NY.
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	129p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Child Health; Children; Day Care; Early Childhood Education; *Employment Services; *Family Programs; *Health Services; Intervention; Low Income Groups; Parent Participation; Parents; Program Descriptions; Program Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS	New York (New York); Program Characteristics

ABSTRACT

This report details the experiences of six two-generation intervention projects in New York City supported by grants from the Foundation for Child Development. The two-generation projects help low-income families gain access to employment-related services for parents, and developmental services such as quality child care and health care for children. Although programs varied, all included voluntary services, used counseling, and had a moderate level of openness to parent input and decision making. Chapter 1 of the report describes recent changes in the welfare system and efforts to develop two-generation programs and incorporate management information systems. Chapter 2, "The Six Sites: An Overview," profiles the sites and their parent agencies. Chapter 3, "The Challenge of Engaging Parents," focuses on how sites defined the target group of parents and the approaches used to sustain parents' involvement. Chapter 4, "Making Connections," discusses how sites linked their services to others within their agencies and with other systems and agencies. Chapter 5, "Tracking Activities and Outcomes," reports on the use of automated systems for tracking participation patterns, use of services, and outcomes. Chapter 6, "Conclusions," provides checkpoints for two-generation projects to help them maintain a focus on the goals of promoting family economic self-sufficiency and child well-being. Four major challenges that emerged from the projects' experiences include: (1) engaging parents in voluntary interventions; (2) maintaining the integrity of the model; (3) making service connections outside the agency; and (4) keeping track of program processes and outcomes. (Appendices describe grant-making interests for new projects, grant periods, and available technical assistance to sites. Contains 14 references.) (KB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 413 084

THEORY MEETS PRACTICE:
A REPORT ON SIX SMALL-SCALE TWO-GENERATION SERVICE PROJECTS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PS 025941

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Claudia Conner
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

SUSAN BLANK
FOUNDATION FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THEORY MEETS PRACTICE:
A REPORT ON SIX SMALL-SCALE TWO-GENERATION SERVICE PROJECTS

SUSAN BLANK
FOUNDATION FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT
1997

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report describes six New York City service projects, and there is no way it could have been written if their managers and staff members had not provided me with the information and insights on which it is based. I thank them, recognizing that what they contributed to this report is only one measure of their committed work on behalf of low-income families.

By giving me exceptionally detailed, thoughtful comments on drafts of the report, Heather Weiss of the Harvard Family Research Project helped me to develop a road map for my material and to formulate my conclusions. I also thank other readers: staff here at the Foundation for Child Development, Anne Kubisch of the Aspen Institute, and Fran Schorr of Metis Associates, who assisted me in thinking through the data issues that were the focus of her own technical assistance to the projects. Sylvia Newman provided expert help in copyediting the manuscript. In typing and proofreading the manuscript, Joann Parker Pinkney and Mary Winkfield were, as always, relentless in tracking down errors and inconsistencies. However, as the report's author, I take full responsibility for its content and analysis.

I thank the foundation's board members for their policy of enabling staff to take on special projects that fit the foundation's overall mission. Also at the foundation, I am grateful for the help of my colleague Sheila Smith, director for research. Her rare combination of analytical intelligence and steadfast support has benefited this project, as it has all my work at the foundation. My deep gratitude also to Barbara B. Blum, the foundation's president for ten years whose encouragement to me on this project is one of many examples of her unflagging interest in service reform issues. Finally, I thank Ruby Takanishi, who assumed the presidency of the Foundation for Child Development at a point when I had completed a near-final draft of the report and generously allowed me to take the time in my work schedule to see it through various stages of preparation into publication.

Susan Blank

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary iii

Chapter 1 ⊖ Introduction 1

Chapter 2 ⊖ The Six Sites: An Overview 12

Chapter 3 ⊖ The Challenge of Engaging Parents 32

Chapter 4 ⊖ Making Connections 54

Chapter 5 ⊖ Tracking Activities and Outcomes 76

Chapter 6 ⊖ Conclusions 90

Endnotes 108

References 110

Appendices 112

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines the experiences of a group of six service projects based in New York City that were supported by modest grants from the Foundation for Child Development for varying amounts of time between 1993 and 1996. Although quite diverse in their auspices, specific objectives, and the particular mix of services they provided, the projects were united by a common approach: All were two-generation interventions; that is, they tried to help low-income families gain access to two mutually reinforcing sets of services: employment-related services for parents, and key developmental services like quality child care and health care for children. (See page at right.)

Over the past seven years, the two-generation approach has been a hallmark of the Foundation for Child Development's grantmaking program. The foundation promoted the development of two-generation interventions in the belief that combining efforts to help low-income parents achieve economic self-sufficiency with efforts to help their children get a good start in life may be a more potent strategy for reducing risks to vulnerable children than attending only to adult employability issues or, conversely, to child development needs. In addition to falling within the larger pattern of revitalized interest in service integration that has been gaining momentum in the 1990s, FCD's focus on two-generation services was central to the foundation's grantmaking program to promote the use of the 1988 federal welfare legislation, the Family Support Act (FSA), to benefit children as well as adults.

To explore the two-generation approach, the foundation made a number of grants to research and policy projects that address issues related to the use of two-generation services and has produced and disseminated reports on the topic. To complement these activities, the foundation decided to offer a group of program development-service grants to agencies in low-income New York City neighborhoods that wished to try the two-generation approach or expand one they were already using. As of this writing, four projects have completed funding cycles and two are still in operation.

In making the grants, the foundation hoped not only to help agencies advance their two-generational services but also to learn about and share insights from their experiences. This report is an effort to distill such insights. Its intended audience includes service

A TWO-GENERATION INTERVENTION

TWO SETS OF SERVICES

ADULT EMPLOYMENT-RELATED SERVICES DESIGNED TO LEAD TO WORK AT A LIVING WAGE

FOR EXAMPLE:

- EDUCATION
- TRAINING
- JOB PLACEMENT
- PRE- AND POST-EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

FOR EXAMPLE:

- HIGH QUALITY CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
- PREVENTIVE HEALTH CARE
- PARENTING EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

PROVIDED TO ONE FAMILY

providers, managers of public and private agencies, policy analysts, and other funders who seek to improve the well-being of low-income families and to strengthen the programs and systems that try to help them. The report is primarily based on information gathered by the program officer and writer of this report involving frequent contact with the sites. It should therefore be read with the understanding that the writer played a dual role with these projects — grant monitor as well as outside observer. Furthermore, because the first role involved the unequal power relationship that is an intrinsic feature of the funder-grantee relationship, it had the potential to color the report's views and opinions.

Besides the writer's observations, another source of information was available data on program processes and short-term outcomes for families served by the sites. The experiences of the sites in trying to develop and use systems for collecting such information is one of the main topics covered in the report. Both the data and reviews of drafts of the report by staff at the sites were used to check the writer's impressions and observations.

The theme of two-generation services played out in different service patterns at the different sites. (See snapshots at right.) Three of the projects offered employment-oriented case management to parents who were involved in programs for young children. (Parents served in all of the sites were mainly mothers, with a scattering of fathers.) Another project added a case management position to a child care center for parents enrolled in prevocational and vocational training programs. One project provided a three-month prevocational and parenting education class to parents in the community, with an emphasis on enrolling parents whose children used child care centers colocated with the program. The project that was most dissimilar from the others introduced child care counseling from a child care resource and referral office into a local government welfare-to-work program and made some outreach efforts to unlicensed child care providers serving families in the office to educate them about the elements of good child care.

Despite differences in services, one important commonality for the projects is that their activities were voluntary for the families who took advantage of them. Another similarity was that all used counseling, and, in all the projects but the one carried out by the child care resource and refer-

SOME SNAPSHOTS FROM THE PROJECTS

A case manager helps a mother with little work experience prepare a résumé. During the meeting, the mother also talks to the case manager about how her toddler is doing.

A group of parents attend a class where they first practice word processing skills and then discuss with a case manager how their children might be affected if the parents found jobs.

A parent on her way out of a Head Start center after dropping off her preschooler is greeted by a vocational counselor, who encourages her to make an appointment to discuss how she can enroll in a GED class.

A welfare recipient who has been called in to participate in the city's welfare-to-work program meets with a counselor from a local child care resource and referral agency. Together they review a packet listing three licensed child care facilities located in the zip code where the parent lives. The counselor suggests that the parent visit the facilities to decide if she wants to apply for a slot in one of them for her child while she participates in the welfare-to-work program.

A welfare recipient attending a state-funded vocational training program arrives for scheduled time as a classroom aide in the child care center located adjacent to her training program where her son is cared for while she attends classes. She's assigned to a different classroom than the one her son is attending, but as she leaves the center, she stops at her son's classroom to talk to his teachers.

ral agency, the counseling relationship consisted of case management that had the potential to be long term and to varying degrees open-ended.

A third shared feature is more difficult to pinpoint, but it can be said that these projects lay somewhere on the spectrum between "providing services" to a client population and empowering families to make their own decisions about what services and activities the intervention would cover. While the projects were open to parent input and decision making, in general they did not rely primarily on parents to shape their services. At the same time, they demonstrated strong interest in respecting parents, building on their personal strengths, and establishing friendly relationships that break down the barriers between professional counselors and their clients.

OBSERVATIONS AND LESSONS

Efforts to integrate employment and training services are not new, but it is only in the past decade that the two-generation approach has been more widely used, and as yet there is relatively little written about the operating experiences of projects that have tried it. The literature that does exist portrays a program genre rich in promise but challenged by the effort to provide more holistic services to children and parents in an environment dominated by large categorical service systems and by hard questions about how to best help low-income parents make sustained efforts to improve their economic outlooks.

This report confirms that view. In part, it shows intimate, caring programs reaching out to low-income families and helping some of them make progress. Through these interventions, some families were able to combine education and training with good child care; some benefited from counseling that helped parents solve practical and personal problems that complicate family life or the effort to find a job; a number of parents were encouraged to think through career goals, and some were helped to improve their parenting skills.

But both the information collected by the sites and the writer's observations leave little doubt that small gains have been hard won. The report shows that pursuing the common-sense and straightforward goal of using the resources of small-scale programs to help families make gains in employment while paying attention to family life and children requires constant planning, managerial oversight, and problem solving to meet a variety of challenges. **For the sites described in this report, four major sets of challenges emerged.**

1. Engaging Parents in Voluntary Interventions

Because case management was central to all but one of these interventions, this report mainly discusses the challenges of engaging parents in terms of sites' efforts to establish and maintain the case management relationship. While the report is not based on systematic interviews with parents, the program officer's interactions with parents during the site visits and her discussions with staff indicated that many parents valued the case management relationship as an important source of support.

At the same time, all of the sites had to work hard to keep parents steadily engaged in the case management relationship. Group work was more difficult to orchestrate than individual counseling, but effort also had to be exerted to attract parents and keep them coming to individual meetings. An aspect of this challenge that was not always recognized at the outset of the projects was simply the question of who was on the caseload — a question that could have a number of different valid answers for projects with relatively fluid and open-ended definitions of how they would interact with families.

Besides the common use of case management for five of the six sites, most shared the aim of using that case management to help parents bridge the worlds of the community agency and work. Success was mixed, with some sites helping parents move into work or training at a faster pace than others. In assessing their progress, project managers cited familiar obstacles that impede low-income parents' movement into the workforce — major family problems like domestic abuse, illness, and inadequate housing that diverted energies from employment issues; the difficulty of matching jobs, training, and child care with parents' schedules; and parents' own personal reluctance and fear in venturing into or back into the world of work.

Under the welfare-to-work rules and practices in effect in New York City during the period covered by the report, parents on welfare were subject to some mandates to engage in work or training as a condition for receiving benefits, but many, especially those with young children, were not in danger of imminent loss of welfare if they remained at home. Toward the end of the period covered by the report, several case managers reported that parents seemed to be seeking them out more energetically as they became aware of the possibility of new welfare rules imposing stricter sanctions for failure to work. While expressing concern that the stringent welfare rules under recently enacted federal legislation will harm families, the report speculates that under rules that do strike a fair balance between concern with family needs and employability mandates, projects like the ones covered in this report might be able to strengthen the rigor and discipline of their efforts to engage parents in work. While some political leaders argue that credible sanctions and time limits will propel welfare recipients into the world of work without the need for the kind of extra encouragement and support offered by case managers at these sites, the report notes that this viewpoint overlooks many immedi-

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ate family problems encountered by case managers in the sites covered by this report — for example, lack of heat, an abusive spouse, or a sick child — that make it difficult for parents to address employment issues even when confronted with the threat of benefit reductions. The report therefore concludes that under a public assistance system of fair work mandates and concern for family well-being, it is worthwhile for community-based agencies to continue to try the bridging approach. In addition, suggestions are made about how sites might plan to adapt the approach to welfare rules under new federal legislation.

2. *Maintaining the Integrity of the Two-Generation Model*

While all the sites began with the intention of combining employment and family services, they were continually challenged by the need to counteract the divisive forces that can separate the two sets of services from one another. Many of the forces were logistical — schedules that did not mesh, problems with co-enrollment in two different facets of a project. Both parents' own circumstances and eligibility rules for public subsidies made it more difficult for sites to help families maintain continuity of child care, an important benefit of a strong two-generation model. Colocation, even in small settings, did not guarantee integration of services. Examples of steps that sites took to keep the two sets of services moving in tandem — arranging school schedules to fit parenting education workshops, setting up an "Express Lane" table with quick morning activities to encourage Head Start parents to get to know the employment case manager, putting together a packet of preplanned information to expedite an application process for licensed child care for welfare recipients — point to the importance of attention to the nuts and bolts of program management for projects that seek to keep services as integrated as possible.

3. *Making Service Connections Outside the Agency*

The report underscores the time-consuming nature of helping families gain access to services outside the agency, especially through large government bureaucracies. Not surprisingly, personal contact between the case manager and practitioners and managers elsewhere facilitated the process. Examples of the interactions with government agencies concerning child care at two of the sites illus-

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

...the small numbers of parents that most sites were serving did not necessarily simplify the definitional questions to be addressed in setting up their tracking systems.

trate the pull that case managers can experience between allocating time to the administrative work of getting systems to mesh and to personal counseling. The report notes, however, that one important by-product of these sites' interactions with government systems was that as they learned of and expressed concerns about problems in the way these systems dealt with the parents on their caseloads, they were able to publicize issues that affected the broader population of welfare recipients.

4. Keeping Track of Program Processes and Outcomes

Over the report period, all of the sites worked to establish systems to keep track of information on characteristics of the families they worked with, participation patterns, and basic outcomes, especially entrance into employment and school and use of child care. In all cases, the efforts involved a transition to a new automated information system, and sites had some technical assistance — primarily consisting of a modest amount of consulting from experts provided through foundation funding — to think through what kind of tracking they needed and to adapt to an automated system. While the pace of progress varied, generally it took a significant amount of time for the sites, including the ones that proceeded most consistently, to make headway. Time to select, install, and acclimate staff to new automated systems had to be factored in, and while staff were making shifts to automation, paper record-keeping could suffer. More intangible concerns, such as the degree of commitment that managers could sustain for the process, especially when it was perceived as taking time away from other activities, also played a role in how fast sites proceeded.

In addition, the small numbers of parents that most sites were serving did not necessarily simplify the definitional questions to be addressed in setting up their tracking systems. There are indications, however, that the work and thought involved helped sites sharpen their conception of their methods and goals of services provision.

CHECKPOINT QUESTIONS FOR TWO-GENERATION PROJECTS

A review of the challenges faced by the sites suggests a series of questions that managers and staff of projects like these may find helpful to ask themselves in planning and setting strong goals.

How can we keep families engaged in the intervention?

Serious questions have been raised about the capacity of many two-generation projects, which have limited resources, to provide both employment and child-oriented services of an intensity sufficient to make a significant difference in the lives of families. While these cautions should certainly give planners and developers of modest two-generation programs cause for concern, it is unrealistic to expect them to wait for an infusion of funds large enough to mount extremely intensive two-generation interventions while they are surrounded by families who need help. But what is more within their capacity is to try to maximize the intensity of their services through their active efforts to maintain steady, consistent participation in the level of activities they do have to offer. Three broad strategies suggested by the experience of the sites in this report are important to consider: (1) as a first step, defining the caseload and keeping careful track of who is served; (2) making certain that in addition to scheduled interactions, staff and especially case managers have many opportunities to be in regular contact with families, even if the contact is brief; (3) keeping on top of logistical problems that can disrupt services.

Are we attending to both employability and family needs?

In discussing the value of these projects with the writer, several parents indicated that they themselves seemed to conceive of benefits from child-oriented and employability parts of the program as part of a single "package." One parent, for example, talked about how a parenting education component built her own self-esteem — confidence-building that could carry over into a search for work. A number of parents described a return-to-school decision encouraged by their case manager as good for their children. These observations

suggest that at least some parents see a kind of synergy between how their children are cared for and how they themselves manage to improve their chances for economic self-sufficiency. In addition to research-based theories on the potential benefits of combining employment and family services, these kinds of reactions from families may help projects sustain the hard work of keeping the two sets of activities integrated. There is every indication that staff at the sites described in the report were genuinely concerned about the family problems and job issues of people on their caseloads. But even in small projects, there is a tendency for one or the other set of services to overshadow its counterpart without vigilant efforts to keep both in focus.

What balance should the project strike between individual and group activities in helping parents address work and family goals?

The most obvious trade-offs between individual and group activities involve tailoring counseling and help to specific needs versus bringing parents together in settings that promote peer support and group spirit. Some of the experiences of sites in this report suggest caution in assuming that parents brought together in groups to explore career goals will all need to start at roughly the same point in their decision making paths, when in fact some may have no work experience while others may intend to pick up a work history where it was left off. Another trade-off is that especially in projects where attending workshops or group discussions is optional, staff will need to weigh the benefits of group activities against the greater logistical difficulties that are involved in bringing groups together in the same place at the same time.

Should "generalist" case managers take on job development responsibilities?

With relatively small caseloads of parents, not all of whom need jobs at the same time, it is not out of the question for case managers to develop jobs. Furthermore, a parent with an investment in her relationship with the case manager may be more willing to follow through with a job developed by that case manager than to work through an unfamiliar job development agency. Nevertheless, expe-

riences from these sites suggest that job development is labor-intensive and that the case managers' time may be invested more wisely in helping parents establish good relationships with specialized job developers than in developing jobs on their own.

Have we dedicated enough staff time to making connections to systems inside and outside our agency? Will staff time used to negotiate bureaucracies impinge on time for personal counseling with families?

While most sites described in the report had caseloads small enough both to give personal help to families and to conduct outreach to other systems, the two with the biggest caseloads experienced more tension over how to allocate time between these two kinds of work. Particularly for these sites, which had to interact regularly with the city's large and complex child care and welfare systems, and to a significant degree for the others, outreach to other systems was an important responsibility that had to be factored into the overall work of the project.

Can we use what we have learned in trying to connect to other systems as a basis for making recommendations about how to improve them on behalf of both the families we serve and others in the community?

For two sites in this report, special efforts like codifying procedures of the welfare-to-work program in a manual, producing testimony, and offering welfare workers group sessions to discuss their approach to clients took time and energy that extended beyond the most immediate concerns of the projects. But managers of similar projects may find that such activities can be justified not only on the grounds of their ultimate practicality in streamlining services for families directly affected by the project but also by their consistency with a vision of making services more user-friendly.

How can we sustain a commitment to developing and maintaining good systems to track activities and outcomes?

The very broad range of possibilities for service provision open to projects focusing on both employment and family goals makes it

especially important for them to keep track of which families they are working with, what kind of help families receive from the project, and what happens to families touched by the intervention. Especially when developing a tracking system means adjustment to automation, projects need to think through ways of renewing the up-front commitment to the task.

One incentive to stay the course is to view the process of developing an automated tracking system as not only a means to the end of generating data but also a way of helping to shape and refine program practice. For example, data on parents' work histories can help a project think through the amount of time it should be devoting to helping participants clarify career goals. Or if a child care center wants to encourage volunteering, information on how regularly parents keep their scheduled appointments can help staff differentiate between parents who should be encouraged to see their steady volunteering as a credential that will help them find a job and those with whom staff should be working harder to encourage appointment keeping. Another incentive for sustaining staff during the transition to a new automated system is to ensure that the same system that collects data also offers staff help in their daily work — for example, by generating standard forms and making them easier to fill out.

How much technical assistance is needed to help us develop and use automated tracking systems?

Technical assistance alone cannot be the determining factor in the success of shifting to automation, but it is important to be as clear as possible about how much outside help is needed. A key consideration, especially at the outset of the work, is whether it is possible to arrange for help that if not continuously on site, is available on a frequent and scheduled basis.

How can we make certain that data analysis promotes genuine understanding of the intervention?

This report period covers only very early stages of data interpretation for the six sites. But indications are that, like the transition to automated systems, this work, too, will require time and patience. First, staff are often faced with the challenge of deciphering unfa-

miliar statistical reports in ways that answer their own questions about the project. Certainly, involving staff in selecting data elements from the outset of the project can give them a sense of ownership of the information that will facilitate interpretation, but once reports are generated, further work is needed to ensure that they are well used. Second, quantitative data must be read in conjunction with qualitative knowledge of program operations. There is the danger when outcome data is taken out of context it could push projects to set priorities at odds with their own goals. However, in contrast to more impersonal programs, intimate projects like the ones described in this report are likely to be in an especially favorable position to cross-check what they learn from outcome data against their own knowledge of the families they serve.

Besides technical assistance in the area of information systems, what other kinds of outside help can and should be drawn on?

In discussing the relationship of the program officer and a few advisers to these projects, this report alludes to the sensitive position of project outsiders. While projects may conclude that consultants and other advisers are not in a position to fully understand the daily pressures of their work, they must weigh this factor against the value of fresh perspectives. Particularly when an effort is being made to introduce a new element into the mainstream of another set of services — for example, by placing an employability specialist in a child care program — it may be very helpful for an outside representative of the service area that is new to the project to reinforce its importance to the project's overall mission.

While the services of the sites described in this report were mainly anchored in community-based agencies, the rules and regulations of the welfare system were an important context for their operations.

While the services of the sites described in this report were mainly anchored in community-based agencies, the rules and regulations of the welfare system were an important context for their operations. This report is being released at a time when new federal legislation is effecting momentous changes in that system, in part by imposing time limits on receipt of benefits and instituting more demanding requirements for participation in work-related activities such as community work experience and job search for welfare recipients. The report therefore presents a set of questions that projects may wish to consider as they think through whether and how they can adapt their services to the new environment. The questions raise such possibilities as taking active steps to ensure that parents understand the new work mandates and receive the benefits they are entitled to, adjusting project schedules to accommodate the needs of parents who will be required to be working sooner and longer hours than many of the families served by the sites described in this report, exploring possibilities for assuming functions formerly carried out by government welfare and welfare-to-work systems, and finding ways to advocate for bigger state investments in child care and other beneficial welfare-to-work policies for the kinds of families served by these projects.

Funders who decide to support two-generation projects will need to answer two hard questions. First, how long must grants extend to give projects a reasonable chance to institutionalize new practices and conceivably to attract alternative support when the foundation funding ends? Second, how can the program officer help the project to steer in the direction of its goals without constricting the capacity of managers to adapt their services to new circumstances? These questions are by no means unique to small-scale two-generation projects, but they merit especially careful consideration when they are asked in connection with this complex, fluid, and demanding program genre.

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

A group of mothers from Bushwick, a low-income neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York, gather with their preschoolers for an outing. On a more typical weekday, they would be attending prevocational classes at a local family support center, where some of the children are enrolled in child care and Head Start programs housed in the same building as the program.

In the South Bronx, another group of mothers enrolled in a prevocational program walk a block from their regular classroom building to a bright, up-to-date center where their children are cared for while the mothers are in school. At the center they meet with a case manager for a group discussion on parenting that focuses on positive approaches to disciplining children.

At a Head Start program elsewhere in the South Bronx, a mother has an appointment with a vocational counselor who is part of the Head Start staff. Together they review the mother's résumé and discuss job leads. On her way out, the mother passes a bulletin board that prominently lists all the parents who during the past month have served as Head Start volunteers — the kind of activity that the counselor has told parents she believes is valuable preparation for the paid jobs she works with them to find.

The parents just described and many others — mainly mothers, with a scattering of fathers — were served by one of a group of six projects that received support from the Foundation for Child Development (FCD) for varying amounts of time between 1993 and 1996. Although quite diverse in their auspices, specific goals, and the particular mix of services they provided, the six projects were united by a common approach: All were two-generation interventions; that is, they tried to help families gain access to two sets of mutually reinforcing sets of services: (1) employment-related services for parents, including career counseling, help in finding and keeping jobs, school and training; and (2) key developmental services like quality child care and health care for children.

Although quite diverse in their auspices, specific goals, and the particular mix of services they provided, the six projects were united by a common approach.

Over the past seven years, the two-generation approach has been a hallmark of the Foundation for Child Development's grantmaking program. The foundation has promoted the development and coordination of two-generation interventions in the belief that combining efforts to help parents achieve economic self-sufficiency with efforts to help their children get a good start in life may be a more potent strategy for reducing risks to vulnerable children than attending only to adult employability issues or conversely, to child development needs. In addition to falling within the larger pattern of revitalized interest in service integration that has been gaining momentum in the 1990s, FCD's focus on two-generation services was central to the foundation's grantmaking program to promote the use of the 1988 federal welfare legislation, the Family Support Act (FSA), to benefit children as well as adults.

To explore the two-generation approach, the foundation has made a number of grants to research and policy projects that address issues related to the use of two-generation services. FCD also produced and disseminated two monographs on the use of two-generation services in welfare-to-work programs, and its director of research edited a volume analyzing a variety of two-generation models. (Smith et al., 1990; Smith et al., 1992; Smith, 1995).

ORIGINS AND PURPOSES OF THIS REPORT

In late 1992, the foundation decided to devote resources to a cluster of service-program development grants to agencies that worked in discrete neighborhood areas and that had an interest in developing or strengthening two-generation interventions. (See Appendix 1 for a statement of grantmaking interests used by FCD.) Although the grants were budgeted to be relatively modest (in the range of $50,000 per year), it was felt that they could give providers a margin of resources big enough to allow them to take new directions or fill in gaps so that they would be in a better position to attend to both the child-oriented and employment needs of low-income families.

Four grants were awarded in 1993. In part to build up the "critical mass" of the overall initiative, two more sites, which are still operating under FCD grants, were added in 1995. (See Chapter 2 for a fuller discussion of the sites and Appendix 2 for information on grant periods.)

Besides the goal of helping the agencies advance their two-generational services, a second and closely related reason for FCD's decision to undertake this grantmaking initiative was the foundation's own interest in understanding more about the on-the-ground implementation challenges of integrating two sets of services that have often proceeded on parallel tracks. Indications that the challenges are considerable had reached the foundation from many different sources. These included discussions of two-generation strategies among service providers and public officials at meetings focused on welfare-to-work programs and the emerging research evidence from a wave of multisite demonstrations that seek to combine employability and child-oriented services.

As an institution that had played a leading role in stimulating interest in two-generation strategies, the foundation sought to develop more textured knowledge of how these challenges play out. The knowledge was intended to serve two purposes: It could inform any further FCD efforts to encourage two-generation approaches, and it might suggest lessons that would add to the ongoing dialogue with colleagues in the field on how to better integrate services for low-income families.

This report distills the resulting lessons. Its intended audience includes service providers, managers of public and private agencies, policy analysts, and other funders who seek to improve the well-being of low-income families and the programs and systems that try to help them.

The report is primarily based on information gathered through a "stepped-up" level of foundation program monitoring, involving unusually frequent contact with the six sites on the part of the program officer. While a systematic study of the projects would have yielded even more information on their experiences, the report is based on the assumption that the observations of a program officer engaged in monitoring such projects over a period of several years can produce useful insights and lessons.

As of this writing, two of the six projects continue to operate with FCD grants. Of the four no longer funded by FCD, one project has ceased but plans to seek support to begin another related phase of work, and three others continue to operate, although all with

changed — and thus far reduced — staffing patterns. This report covers project experiences primarily through the end of 1995, with additional information on some project outcomes that became available after that date.

While the projects' general model was to help families gain access to a "package" that combines employability services for parents and services for children, most of the sites chose to use the foundation's grant to add an employability component to complement existing child services. Since the foundation's monitoring entailed following funded aspects of the overall project in the most detail, the report focuses more on activities and services directed to parents than to children.

The writer has sought to acquire and convey a fair and accurate picture of the sites' implementation experiences. But several potential sources of bias should be noted. First, it is arguable that as a funder she was invested in the sites' success, especially because as the work proceeded her original role as program officer committed to "stepped-up program monitoring" came to encompass a second interrelated role — "coach" or "friendly adviser." (This relationship to the sites is discussed in Chapter 4.) A second source of bias, and one that has the potential to counterbalance the first, was the incentive to view problems with a critical eye to ensure that the foundation's funds were wisely spent. Finally, it is important to acknowledge that the coach role did not eliminate the unequal power that is an intrinsic feature of the funder-grantee relationship. Because there is always the possibility that this power imbalance can color interactions and communications between a project and its program officer, it may have functioned as a third source of bias for the report.

In addition to the information gathered by the writer, a second source of information for the report is data on program processes and short-term outcomes for families served by the sites. Serious efforts were made to develop systematic procedures for gathering such information, and these efforts are one topic covered in the report. To date, progress has been mixed, but enough has been realized to permit some observations that draw on what has been learned. Both these data and reviews of drafts of the report by site staff and an expert on management information systems who provided help to the sites were used to verify the writer's impressions of implementation issues.

IN THE BACKGROUND: THE WELFARE SYSTEM

An important stimulus for the foundation's two-generation grantmaking program was the passage of the federal Family Support Act (FSA) of 1988. This legislation created state welfare-to-work programs, generically known as JOBS, and provided for some supportive services such as child care subsidies to facilitate work efforts of welfare recipients.

JOBS programs, designed by states within federal guidelines, consisted of a mixture of education and training, job search activities, community work experience programs, and other activities aimed at helping recipients leave welfare and enter the labor market. With certain exemptions, welfare recipients with children aged 3 and older were required to participate in these programs in exchange for receiving benefits, although in practice, participation requirements were enforced with varying degrees of rigor, depending on a number of considerations at the state and local levels, especially the amount of funds that states were willing to devote to the programs. The law provided for subsidized child care for parents who needed it to participate in JOBS, and it permitted most recipients to continue to receive child care subsidies and Medicaid for a year after they left welfare for work.

Welfare-to-work programs like JOBS have been primarily defined in terms of their capacity to provide employment and training services to parents, and thus to transform the welfare system from one that "writes benefit checks" to one that promotes economic self-sufficiency. In assessing the potential of JOBS to help welfare families, FCD pointed out yet another direction in which JOBS could take the welfare system: It could also strengthen the capacity of the system to benefit children — for example, by promotion of the use of JOBS subsidies to ensure that children received quality child care or of co-enrollment of JOBS participants in programs like Head Start that foster children's development. Thus, FCD viewed welfare-to-work programs as a way to use FSA to leverage the development of two-generation interventions, and over the years that FSA was in effect, FCD sought to identify JOBS programs that used

...these projects were sensitive to the environment created by welfare and welfare-to-work rules.

innovative practices to further that goal (Smith et al., 1992).

Probably largely because the foundation's statement of grantmaking interests for its two-generation service projects was circulated to private nonprofit, rather than government, agencies, the JOBS program — known in New York City as BEGIN — was not the primary mechanism used by the sites covered in this report to develop two-generation services. With one exception, which involved a resource and referral agency partnering with BEGIN, the interventions that the sites developed were anchored in their own private nonprofit agencies, rather than in BEGIN. But through activities such as helping parents gain access to BEGIN child care subsidies or investigating possibilities for stipended work experience positions at their agencies through BEGIN, almost all of the sites did interact with the program. More broadly, in seeking to improve the employment outlooks of a population of parents almost all of whom were either on public assistance or at risk of becoming dependent on welfare, these projects were sensitive to the environment created by welfare and welfare-to-work rules. Thus, the welfare system was an important context for the implementation stories of all of the sites.

As of this writing, the context has changed dramatically, as FSA has been replaced by a new federal welfare law that ends the 60-year-old guarantee of public assistance to eligible families, replacing matched federal entitlement payments to needy families with block grants to states. In general, these funding streams greatly increase the states' discretion over what obligations they will assume to provide for children in poverty. At the same time, some federal restrictions on how the block grant funds can be expended — for example, a requirement that most recipients must participate in work within two years of receiving aid — significantly tighten welfare eligibility rules. Also, while the new law provides funds for child care that can be used to help welfare recipients go to work, it ends the FSA entitlement to child care subsidies for welfare recipients who would otherwise be unable to take part in work-related activities.

These changes are virtually certain to reshape the conditions under which projects like the ones described in this report operate. While it is too early to predict these effects with any precision, the report does contain some speculation, especially in its concluding section, on the implications of these changes for two-generation projects.

RECENT ANALYSES OF TWO-GENERATION PROGRAMS AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS: WHERE THIS REPORT FITS

Efforts to integrate employment and training services with child- and family-oriented supports are not new. Head Start, for example, has traditionally considered economic self-sufficiency as a goal for the families whose children it serves. But it is only in the past decade that the two-generation approach has become more widely used, and as yet there is relatively little written on the operating experiences of projects that have tried it. The existing literature paints a picture of a program genre rich in promise but challenged by the effort to provide more holistic services to children and parents in an environment dominated by large categorical service systems and by questions about how to engage low-income families in sustained efforts to escape poverty.

Golden (1992) presents case studies of seven projects around the country that sought to have public welfare agencies respond more fully to family needs. She raises cautions about the capacity of such agencies to expand their missions in this direction, but concludes that under the right conditions — for example, a good fit between the agency's core mission and its expanded work with families and a willingness to take advantage of opportunities for collaboration at the state and local level — two-generation interventions rooted in the welfare system are feasible.

Smith et al. (1992) also present case examples of projects that take advantage of opportunities in the welfare system to promote child and family well-being. Like Golden's case studies, these project descriptions highlight the diversity of practices and service mixes that practitioners can draw on in trying to help families move ahead on both employment and child rearing fronts — for example, co-enrollment of parents in Head Start and welfare-to-work programs, use of full family assessments in JOBS programs operated by the welfare systems, and provision of health screenings to children of participants in publicly sponsored welfare-to-work programs. However, the profiles do not provide an in-depth portrait of operational experiences of the projects.

A fuller discussion of two-generation projects — and of projects that are themselves considerably more ambitious in scope than those discussed in Smith et al. (1992) — can be found in Smith (1995). This edited volume presents information on a group of leading national programs, mainly multisite and subject to systematic evaluations, that combine self-sufficiency and family-oriented services. Besides providing overviews of service constellations and of available outcome data for programs like the Even Start Family Literacy Program, the New Chance program for young mothers, and the Comprehensive Child Development Program, the writers consider a variety of issues raised by the sites' operational experiences — for example, how to strike a useful balance between concentrating on parents' needs for employment and training services and social service needs, the minimum levels of intensity with which different services can be provided, the timing of service provision, and factors that help or limit families' engagement in the projects. The editor also sets out questions for further research on two-generation programs.

Covering a group of six programs that overlap substantially with the ones considered in Smith (1995), St. Pierre et al. (1995) review their short-term outcomes, concluding that so far they indicate "modest and mixed results in promoting the development of children and improving the economic self-sufficiency of parents." In assessing the results, the authors recommend that two-generation programs try to work directly with both parents and children, rather than attempting to benefit children indirectly through services to parents and vice versa. Like the authors in Smith, they also reflect on the question of the threshold level of services that two-generation projects must offer to make a difference for children and families and conclude that "intensity matters."

This report contributes to the discussion of two-generational approaches by focusing on the implementation issues and lessons of a group of small-scale community-based projects. By drawing on comparatively detailed knowledge of a few projects, it seeks to shed light on "what it takes" to operate two-generation interventions.

Efforts to help programs develop and use management information systems to examine their practices and track outcomes are relatively new, and by analyzing the experiences of sites in this report in undertaking these efforts, the report also is intended to contribute to

knowledge about the use of information systems in comprehensive family service programs. Comparatively little has been written on this subject. Marzke et al. (1994) contains ten valuable case studies of existing and planned efforts around the country to use information technology to support the delivery of comprehensive services. Olson and Herr (1989) describe the groundbreaking accomplishments of Project Match, an experimental welfare-to-work program, in using month-by-month tracking of participants' placement and status change over a period of years to understand their progress in finding and keeping jobs. However, the field of family and children's services could clearly benefit from further analyses of the challenges and opportunities that confront service providers as they try to adapt to the use of technology to track progress and outcomes.

The way in which this report is intended to further knowledge about the use of information systems is — as with other topics it considers — by providing a reasonably detailed picture of the experiences of a small number of sites. The focus of the discussion is not, as it is in Marzke et al., on specific plans and procedures used by different projects to collect information. Instead, the report tries to capture some of the reactions of selected neighborhood service providers to the tasks involved in the use of technology. By looking at the early information that the sites have collected and their experiences in collecting it, this report also addresses the issue of what kind of added value community-based family service projects can hope to acquire from the use of information systems.

The key questions that guide the analysis of this report include:

- How easy or hard is it for these two-generation projects to engage parents and sustain their participation? What strategies seemed to facilitate participation?

- Given that case management was an important feature of all but one of the projects, how did this role play out at the sites? In particular, do the sites' experiences give clues to the value of the model of using a case manager based in a "user-friendly" neighborhood agency to serve as a bridge between that agency and the more impersonal systems and procedures that many low-income parents must confront as they try to enter the labor market?

- How easy or hard was it for the projects to ensure that families were taking advantage of both employability and child-oriented services?

- How did these sites negotiate relationships with outside agencies and systems? To what extent did the need to interact with government bureaucracies affect their capacity to assist families? In particular, how did relationships with the child care and welfare systems that are pivotal to parents' efforts to work unfold for these projects?

- How did these sites use technical assistance from outside their agencies and how important was that help for their operations? What was the nature of their relationship to the foundation's program officer?

- To what extent did these projects develop the capacity to collect and use systematic information to improve their services and understand their outcomes? What factors have so far promoted or impeded their success in this area?

- What does the early experience of the sites tell us about the kinds of questions that can be addressed through analyzing data on program processes and outcomes?

- What are the implications of the federal welfare legislation of 1996 for the capacity of sites like the ones described in this report to assist low-income families?

The next chapter provides an overview of the six sites. Chapter 3, covering the challenges of engaging families in services, especially in case management designed to help families bridge the worlds of the agency and of work, focuses on the first two sets of questions in the preceding list. It includes some speculation on how more mandatory welfare-to-work policies than the ones in effect in New York City during the period covered by the report might affect the capacity of projects like these to serve families.

Chapter 4 begins with a discussion of the third question on the sites' degree of success in combining employment and family-oriented services primarily within their own agencies. The chapter also discusses the relationships with other systems and agencies that are the focus of the fourth set of questions and the use of outside technical assistance and relationship to the program officer raised by the fifth set of questions.

The questions on the development and use of automated systems to track progress and outcomes are the focus of Chapter 5. The concluding chapter frames the major lessons of the report by providing a list of queries that the experiences of the six sites indicate may be helpful for managers, staff, and funders to ask to guide the development and operation of these kinds of interventions. Included among the queries are a group designed to stimulate thought about how these projects can adapt to the new environment of welfare rules created by the federal welfare legislation of 1996.

CHAPTER 2.
THE SIX SITES: AN OVERVIEW

At the point that the sites described in this report received funding for two-generation projects, all were first-time grantees of the foundation. They established their funding relationships with FCD by responding to the foundation's inquiry about whether there was a fit between the foundation's interest in supporting two-generation projects and their own needs. The inquiry was made in the form of a written statement of grantmaking interests for service projects. (See Appendix 1.) From 1993 through early 1995, the foundation routinely sent the statement to New York City agencies that approached the foundation for service grants. FCD staff also circulated the statement on an informal basis to a few agencies that it was thought might have a particular interest in this kind of funding and to others in the field in order to solicit suggestions of agencies that would be good candidates for the grants.

In their applications for FCD funding, the six sites that were awarded grants all subscribed to the broad goal of *strengthening family self-sufficiency through an intervention that combined employment and training services for adults and key developmental services for children.* However, in understanding the sites' experiences, it is also important to note that this is not the only goal that claimed their attention. All six projects came under the umbrellas of larger agencies pursuing a variety of goals and service strategies — and indeed this broader agency agenda was one factor that made them attractive grantees to FCD. At a time when funds for service projects are both scarce and tied to a wide and changing variety of issue areas, agencies like the ones that received FCD grants must continually piece together funds from different sources in new ways. As a result, one part of the story of these sites' implementation experiences is the degree to which the two-generation goal actually shaped their services once the projects were under way.

The following profiles provide basic background information on both the sites and their parent agencies. Grant periods began in 1993 for the four original sites and in 1995 for the two newer sites.

PROFILES OF THE ORIGINAL SITES

BRONX EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER CHILD CARE CENTER

Parent Agency: Bronx Educational Opportunity Center (BEOC)

In Operation Since: 1987.

Budget: Core operating budget of $3.4 million for FY '96; operating budget of the child care center, serving children of some BEOC students, approximately $600,000.

Service Population: Approximately 1,000 low-income adults, most of whom are recipients of public assistance.

One of nine New York State EOCs administered by the State University of New York's Office of Special Programs, BEOC provides academic, occupational, and remedial instruction. Offerings include courses to prepare students to work as emergency medical technicians, medical receptionists and coders, secretaries, and bookkeepers.

The Two-Generation Project

Objective: To provide parenting education, counseling, and practical help to participants and graduates of BEOC employment and training programs whose children are enrolled in its child care center.

FCD Grant Period and Funding Levels: From 7/93 through 8/96, grants totaling $153,958.

Site Location: East Tremont-Morrisania section of South Bronx; part of an industrial park established to strengthen economic development of the South Bronx.

Service Population: Families with children enrolled in the BEOC child care center. The center has the capacity to serve 78 children ranging in age from six months to five years. Parents of children must be BEOC students or graduates. A subset of parents using the child care center, 10-15 BEOC prevocational students, were a special focus of attention for the project. As part of their BEOC school schedules, they attended biweekly parenting education classes and peer group discussions and were expected to

serve as classroom aides for two hours a week.

Background: Open since late 1993, the BEOC child care center is an attractive state-of-the-art facility licensed by the city's day care bureau and operated in accordance with standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). It is located only a block from the main BEOC academic building. Core funding for the center provides for a director and teaching and support staff.

Core Activities Supported by FCD Grant: The work of a *case manager* at the center. Some of her functions resembled those of a Head Start family worker — counseling parents, referring them to outside services, and advising them on parenting issues. Other responsibilities included serving as a liaison with the BEOC training programs, arranging orientations on child care and enrolling parents in the center and ensuring that they were receiving the welfare department subsidies that are the primary source of funding for the center's operations. For a small group of prevocational students, she ran parenting education classes and peer group discussions.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT CORPORATION (DIVISION OF DAY CARE)

Parent Agency: Child Development Support Corporation (CDSC)

In Operation Since: 1973.

Budget: $12 million for FY '96.

Service Population: Approximately 350 families, primarily living in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn.

Established as a self-help group to provide child care for families in Bedford-Stuyvesant, CDSC has evolved into a multiservice agency. In addition to providing child welfare preventive services and managing a foster boarding home program, CDSC operates a family day care network, with services including provider recruitment, training, licensing, and monitoring of day care homes. CDSC is also one of the city's five child care resource and referral agencies — an agency that helps parents find licensed child care.

The Two-Generation Project

Objective: To use counseling, training, and outreach to improve child care options for parents enrolling in a local office of the BEGIN welfare-to-work program.

FCD Grant Period and Funding Levels: From 4/93 through 6/96, grants totaling $142,854.

Site Location: CDSC is located in Bedford-Stuyvesant. The two-generation project is centered on the nearest office of BEGIN, New York City's welfare-to-work program, located in downtown Brooklyn.

Service Population: Welfare recipients enrolling at the Brooklyn BEGIN program, most mandated to participate. Over the grant period, CDSC provided child care counseling to 919 parents out of approximately 1,800 who learned about CDSC services at BEGIN orientations. Other groups with which CDSC interacted or reached out to as part of this project: welfare workers in the Brooklyn BEGIN office; providers of unlicensed child care serving BEGIN parents; and, during the last year of the grant period, a small group of welfare recipients enrolled in a BEGIN work experience project who were trained by CDSC to conduct outreach to unlicensed child care providers.

Background: Before the grant was awarded, CDSC had had minimal contact with New York City's BEGIN program, the welfare-to-work program that required parents receiving public assistance to participate in some form of employment activity — job search, work experience, education, or training — in exchange for benefits. BEGIN enrollees, who were entitled to child care subsidies if they needed them to participate in the program, mainly received counseling on how to find child care from their welfare workers. It was known that most parents were using what in New York City is called "informal care" — care that is exempted from licensing because the provider claims to serve fewer children than the number that officially triggers an expectation that she must become licensed.

Core Activities Supported by FCD Grant: Child care counseling for BEGIN parents on site

at the local BEGIN office; *advice and training to BEGIN welfare workers* on how to help parents get access to good child care; *outreach to informal providers*, primarily via a newsletter and, in the last stages of the grant period, through some home visits, to give them information on how to become licensed and on how to ensure the health and safety of the children in their care, and on activities to strengthen children's development; in the last stages of the grant period, *training to a small group of BEGIN parents enrolled in a work experience program to make home visits to informal providers.*

GRAHAM-WINDHAM PROJECT WELCOME HOME

Parent Agency: Graham-Windham

In Operation Since: 1806. (Graham-Windham is the oldest nonsectarian child welfare agency in the United States.)

Budget: Over $33.7 million for FY '95.

Service Population: Approximately 6,000 families throughout New York City.

Graham-Windham's many family services include a variety of foster care programs, residential treatment centers, four child care centers, a family day care network, and a medical services center. In two neighborhoods, Crown Heights, Brooklyn, and Central Harlem, the agency operates centers that offer a range of community-based support services to families.

The Two-Generation Project

Objective: To provide case management with a focus on employment and training to parents involved in Project Welcome Home, a family support program for formerly homeless families.

FCD Grant Period and Funding Levels: From 7/93 through 9/95, grants totaling $102,000.

Site Location: The agency's Manhattan Center in Central Harlem.

Service Population: Potentially 65 formerly homeless families who were living in a

housing project near Graham-Windham's Manhattan Center located in Central Harlem and who were participating in or had graduated from the Parents as Teachers program.

Background: Since 1990 Graham-Windham's Manhattan Center has been operating Project Welcome Home, a family support program designed to help a group of formerly homeless families make the transition to apartment living and to improve their own prospects and those of their children. The project includes counseling and practical help to parents. As part of the project, parents were invited to participate in Parents as Teachers (PAT), a nationally recognized program designed to improve school readiness. PAT at Graham-Windham included monthly home visiting and group meetings.

Core Activities Supported by FCD Grant: The work of a *case manager focusing on employability issues,* an area that staff felt they had not had time to address in their work with families. The case management involved peer group activities, individualized counseling, and some job development.

PHIPPS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LAMBERT HOUSES

Parent Agency: Phipps Community Development Corporation (PCDC)

In Operation Since: 1972.

Budget: $4.7 million for FY '96.

Service Population: Over 3,000 families and individuals living in low-income housing developments throughout New York City.

PCDC is an arm of an organization called Phipps Houses, which develops low-income housing and manages the properties through a separate for-profit branch. PCDC's mission is to provide social support to tenants in Phipps-managed housing.

The Two-Generation Project

Objective: To provide case management with a focus on employment and training to parents living in a low-income housing development who were participating in or had graduated from the HIPPY (Home Instruction for Preschool Youngsters) program.

FCD Grant Period and Funding Levels: From 7/93 through 6/96, grants totaling $157,067.

Site Location: Lambert Houses, managed by Phipps Houses and located in the West Farms neighborhood of the South Bronx.

Service Population: Potentially 91 families, the majority living at Lambert Houses and a few in an adjacent Phipps-managed housing project, who were participating in or had graduated from HIPPY, a project operated by PCDC.

Background: Under the auspices of PCDC, families living at Lambert Houses have access to a variety of services and programs designed to help them improve their lives and their community. PCDC is one of five South Bronx community development corporations (CDCs) participating in the Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program (CCRP), a privately funded project to strengthen the capacity of the CDCs to help residents both rebuild their communities and address health and human service needs. Another program that PCDC has brought to Lambert has been HIPPY, a nationally recognized model that involves home visits from trained paraprofessionals to improve children's school readiness.

Core Activities Supported by FCD Grant: The work of a *case manager focusing on employability issues* at Lambert Houses. She was expected to help HIPPY participants and graduates make progress in finding work or returning to school, to guide children who had already benefited from the HIPPY intervention to good-quality child care when it was needed, to help parents sustain the progress they had made on parenting issues in HIPPY, and to seek jobs for parents. Her work with parents involved mainly individualized counseling.

PROFILES OF THE NEWER SITES

FAMILY DYNAMICS PROJECT ESTEEM

Parent Agency: Family Dynamics

In Operation Since: 1975.

Budget: Over $2.1 million for FY '96.

Service Population: Annually, between 2,000 and 3,000 low-income families throughout New York City.

Family Dynamics is a multi-service agency operating a variety of programs, including two family support centers, an early childhood center, and a program for victims of domestic violence and child abuse.

The Two-Generation Project

Objective: To provide family-oriented case management and follow-up to participants in the agency's preemployment and parenting education program, Project ESTEEM.

FCD Grant Period and Funding Levels: From 4/95 through 3/97, grants totaling $102,840.

Site Location: Family Dynamics family support center in the Bushwick neighborhood of Brooklyn. The center is colocated with a number of other service providers, including child care centers.

Service Population: Low-income families with parents enrolled in Project ESTEEM. The project goal is to graduate approximately 60 parents annually from the program. Particular efforts are made to recruit parents who have at least one child attending a child care program located in the same building as ESTEEM.

Background: Family Dynamics began operating Project ESTEEM in 1993 at its Manhattan Center, which serves families throughout the city. This class — originally 12 weeks and recently expanded to 14 — focuses on employment preparation and includes a parenting education component, with an emphasis on parenting issues related to work outside the home. The program is scheduled to operate three hours a day

every weekday. In fall 1994, ESTEEM was moved to the Bushwick center, in large part because it was thought the project would be strengthened by a neighborhood focus.

When the program was operated in Manhattan, parents had been able to use the Manhattan Center's drop-in child care center. Staff thought this arrangement enriched the overall program both because it was convenient for parents and because staff were able to get to know at least some of the participants' children and could draw on that knowledge for the parenting education component. The Bushwick project's recruitment of parents whose children are enrolled in one of the eight child care and Head Start programs colocated with ESTEEM represents an effort to continue the arrangement of keeping preschool children of ESTEEM parents in close proximity to the class.

ESTEEM staffing originally was limited to one teacher. When she determined that students needed counseling or referrals, she called on counselors from other programs on site, but it was felt that this help was too episodic.

Core Activities Supported by FCD Grant: The work of a *case manager* with time dedicated to ESTEEM. She co-teaches the class with the ESTEEM teacher, provides individualized counseling and referrals, and follows up with students after they graduate.

MID-BRONX SENIOR CITIZENS COUNCIL HEAD START PROGRAM

Parent Agency: Mid-Bronx Senior Citizens Council, Inc.

In Operation Since: 1970.

Budget: Exclusive of housing, over $5.2 million for FY '97.

Service Population: Residents of six community districts that make up the South Bronx.

A community development corporation with an original focus on the needs of the elderly that has been expanded to cover a range of age groups, Mid-Bronx provides housing and a variety of human services, including nutrition and preventive health care programs, after-school tutoring and adult education programs, and a new Head Start program, to South Bronx residents.

The Two-Generation Project

Objective: To provide vocational counseling to parents with children enrolled in the Mid-Bronx Head Start program; to encourage Head Start volunteering and to help parents view volunteer activities as part of their overall efforts to become more economically self-sufficient.

FCD Grant Period and Funding Levels: From 4/95 through 3/97, grants totaling $111,680.

Service Population: Families served by the Mid-Bronx Head Start program. The program currently enrolls over 60 families.

Background: The Mid-Bronx Head Start program opened in early 1995. An important feature of the program is that it contains full-day as well as half-day classrooms, thus opening the possibility that parents who begin by enrolling their children in the program for a half-day can shift to a full-day schedule if they find a job that necessitates more child care. As is the rule for Head Start programs, which have a commitment to address the needs of Head Start families, the Mid-Bronx program is staffed to include family workers. However, salaries for these staff members, as determined by a collective bargaining agreement with the Head Start union, meant that most would be new or relatively recent entrants to the labor market, and it was felt they would have neither the expertise nor the time to develop a strong employability component for Head Start parents.

Core Activities Supported by FCD Grant: A *vocational counselor* added to the Head Start program staff. She has been using individualized counseling, workshops, and job development to help parents improve their employment outlooks. From the outset, her work has also involved efforts to encourage parents to volunteer in Head Start and to affirm and value the work they do as volunteers as a way of acquiring and exercising skills they can use in paying jobs. This emphasis on Head Start volunteering as an early "rung on the ladder of self-sufficiency" grows out of efforts of the Two-Generation Head Start Self-Sufficiency program operated as a new initiative associated with the Chicago-based Project Match, an innovative welfare-to-work program. Mid-Bronx staff have consulted with the director of Project Match in developing this component of their program.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS SHARED BY THE SITES

As suggested by the preceding profiles, two-generation projects can be carried out within a range of settings and service strategies. To set the stage for the discussion in the chapters that follow, it may also be useful to highlight a few general characteristics shared by some or all of the sites.

The use of services and supports in all of the projects was voluntary.

All of the sites — including CDSC, which focused on participants in a mandatory welfare-to-work program but offered them optional child care counseling — faced the challenge of actively recruiting parents to take advantage of services. In connection with the employability help that was an important part of the optional services offered at most of the sites, it should be noted that during the period covered by the report, the mandatory New York City BEGIN welfare-to-work program typically exempted an important part of the population served by these projects — parents with preschool-aged children. Thus, for many of the parents served in these projects, the prospect of having their welfare benefits cut if they failed to look for work or go to school was not an immediate stimulus for taking advantage of the employability help that a number of the sites had to offer.

Case management was a central feature of all but one of the six projects. For four of the sites, an important role for the case manager was to create a "bridge" for parents to move between the community-oriented setting of the agency and the world of more formal education, training, and work.

Applicants for the two-generation program planning grants, which could have been used to support a number of approaches to connecting employment and training services to services for children, almost all chose to request grants to hire a counselor to work with parents. Two of the case managers (at BEOC and Family Dynamics) were brought into projects that already offered employment or preemployment services and were expected to help parents primarily in other areas. The other three sites that used funds for case management (Graham-Windham, Mid-Bronx, and PCDC) all expressed a need for the case manager to introduce a focus

on employment and training into the overall intervention. These projects — and arguably Family Dynamics where the case manager took on more employment and training functions than anticipated — all saw the case manager as a kind of "coach," who would get to know parents in a friendly agency and then help them find their way into the more impersonal institutions — for example, employment agencies, workplaces, schools, and training programs that many of them would need to negotiate to become more economically self-sufficient.

Case managers were professionals, though not necessarily with backgrounds that fully matched the roles they were asked to play. Like most of the families served by these projects, they were African-American and Hispanic.

The sites that hired case managers could have chosen to use paraprofessionals to counsel families and to help parents pursue employment and training goals. For example, in applying for FCD funds, the Mid-Bronx Head Start project made a conscious decision to move outside the Head Start "family worker"model. BEOC, which hired a case manager who was expected to serve many of the same functions as a Head Start family worker, also selected a more experienced staff member. To a degree, such decisions may have been driven by the availability of foundation funding for higher salaried staff members, but since sites had considerable latitude in defining the needs to be met with the grant, they could have requested funds for lower salaried paraprofessionals and applied the balance of the grant to other purposes. Their decision to do otherwise speaks to their judgments that the tasks case managers were expected to perform seemed to require the skills and qualifications of more professional workers.

Nevertheless, sites did not always hire case managers whose professional training and past work experience exactly fit their new responsibilities. For example, one case manager expected to focus on family counseling had primarily worked as an ESL teacher; another, with responsibility for employment and training help, had a background in the child welfare system.[1] The fact that sites could not easily find professionals with backgrounds ideally suited to their openings in part reflects the challenges of recruiting staff members, even at reasonably good salaries, to work in very disadvantaged neighborhoods, where personal safety can be a concern, and in agencies where supports and amenities are typically fairly limited.

Adding to the open-ended nature of the intervention at all five sites was the possibility of following up with families after they had left the project.

Case managers shared the African-American and Hispanic backgrounds of most of the families on their caseloads. In addition, the case manager at the Mid-Bronx site is herself a former welfare recipient, and both the Head Start director and the case manager believe that this past experience has helped her establish a good relationship with parents.

Rather than serving a set group of participants for a definite time period, most of the interventions were more "open-entry, open-exit" in approach.

As noted, the contact of CDSC counselors with parents was brief — typically, two or three meetings devoted to child care counseling. At the five other sites the use of case management opened the door to more extended relationships. Of those five sites, only one, Family Dynamics, expected to begin working with a definite number of parents on a given date and to "graduate" them from the project on another set date. The BEOC project also operated with some timelines for the caseload. "Waves" of parents entered and left the child care center on specific dates coinciding with the beginning and end dates of various training programs, but because a number of different programs were involved, this site also experienced a great deal of "rolling enrollment" on the caseload. At the other three sites, enrollment had the potential to be still more fluid; parents might begin and end a relationship with the project and the case manager at any point in time. Adding to the open-ended nature of the intervention at all five sites was the possibility of following up with families after they had left the project.

To a degree, all of the sites followed the model of "providing services" to a "client population." But typically their interpretations of that model reflected an interest in minimizing the hierarchy between professional and client that it can entail.

It is common to categorize interventions for low-income groups as adhering to one of two different models: a model of a professional ministering to a client or one that places priority on empowering poor people to make their own decisions about what services and activities the intervention will cover. Like many projects serving children and families, the sites discussed in this report

fit neither of these prototypes completely.

While the projects were open to parent input and decision making, in general they did not rely primarily on parents to shape their services. At the same time, they demonstrated strong interest in respecting parents, building on their personal strengths, and establishing friendly relationships that break down communication barriers between professional caseworkers and their clients. Also most of the sites did not operate in bureaucratic settings walled off from the community. One project was part of the housing com-

IMPRESSIONS FROM SITE VISITS

The Family Dynamics ESTEEM graduation takes place in the large classroom where parents have been holding discussions, meeting with the case manager, and practicing computer skills for the past three months. Today the room is decorated and a number of the 15 graduates have brought along boyfriends, relatives, and children. The ceremonies are slow in getting under way; people drift in and out of the room for about half an hour past the starting time, but once everyone is settled, the group is attentive and claps enthusiastically for each graduate. Two of the graduates give speeches about how much the program has meant to them and helped them set their goals for the future. One observes that it was helpful to go on trips into other areas of the city and otherwise get encouragement for leaving the familiar neighborhood. As the second speaker sits down, it's clear from her expression that the speech has been a source of great pride to her. Afterwards, during the potluck buffet and snapshot taking, she says she's never done anything like that before.

The cramped Graham-Windham Project Welcome Home office is overflowing with mothers, children, and staff. When a guest speaker from a local community college talks about his school to interested parents, the room can barely hold the group. The phone rings constantly. The project director needs to make a trip between this office and another located several blocks away. On her way, she chats with several people on the street and stops to ask a young woman sitting on a stoop near the program office if she doesn't want to come in to join a workshop. A bit further on, she sees a boy whose mother had just brought him into the office to show off his sixth grade graduation outfit. "I thought you looked upset there," she says. "No, it's okay, I was just hot." She invites him to return to the office.

...most of the sites did not operate in bureaucratic settings walled off from the community.

plex where families lived; several were marked by informality and home-like atmospheres. The projects most closely intertwined with larger more bureaucratic systems were the two that involved a case manager stationed at a child care center and the one that stationed a child care counselor at a local welfare office. Even in these instances, however, the thrust of the projects was to humanize and open up whatever bureaucracy parents encountered.

The sites tried to improve employment outlooks for a group of parents who typically faced significant challenges in this area.

The sites are located in very disadvantaged communities in a city that has lagged behind many others in recovering from a recession. According to the Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (1993), New York City lost over 450,000 manufacturing jobs between 1980 and 1990. Many were replaced by jobs in the services and information-processing industries, but these jobs "require basic skills and literacy levels that many New Yorkers lack," putting people without high school educations "at a greater economic disadvantage than they were in the past" (p. 25). Compounding the difficult economic outlook for low-income families served by this project is the city's overall high rate of unemployment. In late 1993, the city's official unemployment rate of 10.5 percent was considerably higher than the national rate of 6.7 percent (New York City Workforce Development Commission, 1994, p. 6).

There is evidence that finding jobs in this environment is not impossible for the kinds of parents served by the sites. According to a recent report from New York University's Taub Urban Research Center (O'Neill, 1996), "While most of the jobs in New York City require higher skills, there are still many jobs that do not. By one recent estimate, about 20 percent of all private-sector jobs in New York City are held by people who lack high school diplomas, and for many of these jobs turnover is fairly high, meaning that openings occur regularly. Many other entry-level jobs are open to people who have completed high school" (pp. 22-23). Of course, as suggested by the high turnover rates for these jobs, the fact that they may be available to low-income, low-skilled parents does not mean that they will pay a living wage, provide health insurance, or give families much margin of income for child care.

In measuring success for adults, the sites assessed whether parents found jobs or enrolled in school or training. Overall, the sites made less progress in tracking outcomes for children, but in reviewing how children were doing, they focused on whether young children cared for outside the home were placed in licensed child care facilities. While these outcomes were not automatically seen as a "plus" for every family in every situation, sites were on the whole comfortable with using them as rough indications of families making progress.

As sites tried to help parents find jobs, managers and staff often expressed concern about the limitations of the low-wage labor market just cited. To a lesser degree, they also saw the education-training route as problematic for some parents, especially those with low literacy skills who could acquire educational credentials only with great difficulty. Similarly, staff were aware that child care outside the home by a relative or neighbor without a child care license was not necessarily a negative. And they knew that a licensed facility was not a guarantee of high-quality care.

Still, in the aggregate, sites viewed movement toward paid work, school, training, and licensed child care as accomplishments. Their assumptions have reasonable theoretical underpinnings. Research indicates that family poverty is correlated with a wide range of risks to children's development (see Smith and Zaslow, 1995; National Commission on Children, 1991, p. 79), and if a parent finding a low-paying job does not immediately lift the family out of poverty, there is reason to hope that the transition to work could eventually help the family earn a decent living. Research also shows that high-quality child care — which is in part defined by the kinds of measurable characteristics like teacher-student ratios, that are called for by the regulations — is beneficial to children, especially children from poverty backgrounds (see Hayes et al., 1990; Galinsky et al., 1994). Thus, it can be argued that in focusing on these two sets of outcomes, the sites were looking at goals that made sense for their efforts and the families they were working with.

[As indicated by examples from site experiences that follow, most of the projects underwent significant changes over the time period covered by this report.]

EXAMPLES FROM SITE EXPERIENCES

FAMILY DYNAMICS

Responding to Emerging Needs

The ESTEEM class offered by Family Dynamics was, as defined in the proposal submitted to FCD, structured to help parents set career goals and discuss parenting. But as the project developed, the class was modified to allow parents to spend approximately half of their classroom time on learning word processing. The case manager hired under the FCD grant, who first was expected to concentrate only on personal counseling, began to team-teach the class, so that half the parents could work on available computers while the other half followed the employability and parenting education curriculums.

The shift to computer training came about because parents who were first taught word processing applications to produce résumés expressed strong interest in learning more. Staff, too, saw reason to expand computer training. In addition to the probability that many parents would become more marketable for jobs if they knew word processing, there were the more intangible benefits of the sense of accomplishment parents felt as they mastered computer skills and the possibility that the skills might be useful when they helped their children with schoolwork. But because staff also believe in the value of their original conception of the project, recruitment emphasized that ESTEEM is not primarily a computer training course but a class to help parents set career goals and think about parenting.

CDSC

A New Phase of Work

In the last year of funding, the CDSC project shifted most of its attention from providing on-site child care counseling to welfare recipients and training of welfare office staff to arranging home visits to informal child care providers and training a small group of participants in the welfare-to-work program's community service project to assist in that outreach. The change was based on a judgment that it was time for CDSC to "hand off" the main responsibility for child care counseling to the welfare

office and to concentrate on the outreach to unlicensed child care providers that had so far been a secondary activity for the overall project.

GRAHAM-WINDHAM

Decisions About How to Deploy Staff

In the Graham-Windham project for formerly homeless families, the FCD-supported case manager, who was expected to focus on employability issues, was part of a team of staff members, including an outreach worker, an early childhood specialist, a part-time staff member to help parents on micro-enterprise business projects, and other counselors, who shared responsibility for the caseload. Over the course of the grant period, considerable energy was spent in defining and modifying definitions of staff roles. For example, staff tried to work through procedures to minimize overlap between the work of the micro-enterprise staff member and that of the case manager supported with the FCD grant. Staff turnover complicated these decisions. During the grant period, three different individuals held the position of case manager, and by the end of that time, it was decided that the project director would herself assume the responsibility for vocational counseling.

BEOC

Moving Closer to Original Intentions

For the first 18 months of her work at the BEOC child care center, the case manager found that approximately one quarter of her time — considerably more than had been anticipated — was being spent on developing and monitoring systems to ensure that parents using the child care center were correctly registered with the local welfare-to-work program and thus receiving the child care subsidies that are the mainstay of the center's funding. The center ultimately was able to hire an accounts specialist to relieve the case manager of this work, and at that point she could devote more attention to counseling.

ERIC

As a funder of service projects engaged in program planning, FCD had to balance the need to maintain accountability to the terms of the original grant agreement and the need to respond flexibly to new circumstances. The foundation's response to the staff arrangements at the BEOC child care center illustrates some of the dynamics involved. BEOC's proposal to the foundation did not anticipate that the case manager would have major administrative responsibilities for child care payments. Once it became clear how much time this work was consuming, foundation staff became concerned about the shift. Because BEOC managers indicated that they, too, recognized that finding additional funds for administrative staffing was a priority and because the case manager seemed to be making an important contribution to the development of a promising two-generation project, FCD adjusted its expectations for the project during the period when the case manager had main responsibility for handling child care payments. However, throughout this time, the issue of how to bring the project closer to its original intentions was an active topic of discussion between site and funder.

Often in confronting changes like unexpected work responsibilities at BEOC and the ones that occurred at the other sites, the program officer's goal was not so much to approve or disapprove a change, but to be sure that both she and the grantee had explicitly acknowledged it and thought through its rationale. In keeping with this goal, she worked with the sites to produce written documentation of significant changes. She viewed these efforts not only as a program monitoring mechanism but also as a way to help both herself and the sites understand unfolding developments. Her work with the sites to pinpoint changes by putting them in writing is one illustration of the coach role for the program officer alluded to in Chapter 1.

ERIC

CHAPTER 3.
THE CHALLENGE OF ENGAGING PARENTS

As noted in the previous chapter, one of the most important challenges that sites faced was the need to engage parents in voluntary interventions. In reviewing these efforts this chapter focuses first on two issues: (1) how sites defined the "target group" of parents they hoped would take advantage of their help and (2) which approaches they used to sustain parents' involvement in their services. After a brief review of how parents viewed the case management relationship, the chapter concludes with a set of observations about the challenges of engaging parents in case management interventions designed to help them bridge the worlds of the community-based agency and work.

ENGAGING PARENTS: WHO?

As noted previously, all but one of the sites made case management a central feature of services. Thus, an important question for them to answer was: Who is on the caseload? Should the case manager try to work with all the parents who came into contact with the project? Or should she be more selective? Not surprisingly, the answers that sites arrived at were related to their overall service constellations.

Everyone is on the caseload (BEOC and Family Dynamics)

Stationed at a child care center linked to an education and training institution, the BEOC case manager made herself available to all of the approximately 75 parents using the center (although she had special responsibilities for a much smaller group of parents who attended her parenting education workshops and peer group discussions). She offered all of the parents using the center two main kinds of assistance. First, she helped them negotiate the three major systems — school, child care center, and welfare office — that had to mesh in order for them to acquire training credentials and keep their children enrolled at the center. Second, she was available to counsel them on a variety of family issues and guide them to services.

The universal coverage model confronted the case manager with difficult choices. With a large caseload — and one that changed frequently as children enrolled in and left the center — the case manager had to wrestle with the question of how often and how long to provide in-depth counseling to parents as opposed to crisis intervention to those with the most pressing needs. She also had to allocate time between personal counseling, whether crisis or more ongoing, and interactions with parents designed to solve problems about their status in school, at the child care center, and with the welfare system. An early three-month report from an automated information system used to track the counseling activities suggests that a great deal of effort was required to track eligibility and attendance of parents and children in this linked school-child care program. The report, which shows a very active counseling schedule, indicates that most of the case manager's interactions with individual clients were used to solve problems related to school status, attendance at the center, and other similar issues, while a smaller amount of time was devoted to helping parents solve individual problems that were more peripheral to the BEOC system — for example, a search for housing, health care problems, family counseling needs, and legal needs.

Family Dynamics also expected the case manager to counsel all parents involved in the program, but at this site the challenge was less formidable because the size of the caseload was much smaller. (For example, for one 12-week cycle reported on by the site, 27 parents began the program and 15 graduated.) Also, in contrast to BEOC, where time for individual counseling was not included in school schedules, the Family Dynamics prevocational class made room for this activity.

The caseload is a subset of the entire group of project participants (Graham-Windham, Mid-Bronx, and PCDC)

In contrast to the case managers just discussed, those at Graham-Windham, Mid-Bronx, and PCDC had primary responsibility for encouraging parents to find work or return to school. These three sites also tended to think more along the lines of identifying a "core caseload" to work with the case manager. In part, this interest probably reflects the sense that if low-income, mostly welfare-depen-

Parents who demonstrated that they were willing to participate regularly were considered part of the core caseloads, regardless of what the assessments indicated about their employment readiness.

dent parents are to make progress in becoming more employable, they must make a commitment to ongoing work with the case manager, as opposed to the more episodic contact that occurs when a case manager offers help to parents only if they seek her help on employability issues (the approach used at BEOC).

Two of the sites (Graham-Windham and PCDC) that thought in terms of core caseloads began with the intention of assessing all parents in the pool of participants — that is, all participants and graduates of their parenting education programs — to determine which were most ready to take on the challenge of preparing themselves for employment, and indeed both projects did develop assessment forms and administer them to parents. Graham-Windham also relied on team meetings where staff discussed parents' suitability for different activities. In the end, though, the designation of parents as part of the core caseload was not determined by information in the assessments. Rather, the assignment to the core caseload was much more opportunistic. Parents who demonstrated that they were willing to participate regularly were considered part of the core caseloads, regardless of what the assessments indicated about their employment readiness. Another site (Mid-Bronx) moved directly to the conclusion that the most appropriate parents to be on the caseload were those who wanted to be there.

In fact, ***willingness to meet with a case manager to work on employment-related issues may be as reliable an indicator of employment readiness as meeting any more formal criterion in an assessment.*** Thus, moving away from the idea that parents needed formal screening to enter the component proved to be a practical approach for these sites.

Although all the sites with case managers did give some thought to the question of caseload composition, they differed in the extent to which they made it a focal point for early planning. Their experiences suggest that while decisions about caseload composition need not be fixed once they are made in a planning phase, ***it is very useful to try to answer the question of who is on the caseload explicitly during start-up.*** As will be discussed in Chapter 5, development of an automated client tracking system can be an important impetus for encouraging these decisions.

ENGAGING PARENTS: HOW?

The following discussion highlights techniques that sites used to engage parents in their services. Like the previous section, this one focuses primarily on efforts to establish a useful relationship between parent and case manager, but it also touches on other kinds of services and activities.

Encouraging Group Activities

One way to encourage parents to take advantage of case management with a focus on employment is to bring them together for ***workshops or peer discussions*** that create a group spirit that encourages them to make progress toward a shared goal. Three of the sites have experimented with this approach, but with fairly limited success.

In Voluntary Settings

Graham-Windham worked to engage parents in an employment preparation class offered by the case manager. Several times, however, attendance dwindled and the class was halted and reorganized only after a hiatus. In the later stages of the project, the site relied more on individualized counseling. At an early stage in the Mid-Bronx project, the vocational counselor had success with a series of half-day employability workshops at the center, offered to parents on a more or less drop-in basis, but was unable to get parents to commit to a more demanding schedule of four consecutive days of a second workshop series held five blocks from the Head Start program. The PCDC case manager organized some workshops, especially in the early stages of her work, but ultimately, as at the Graham-Windham site, concentrated almost exclusively on individualized counseling.

In connection with group activities, it is interesting to note that this site gave a name to the core caseload — Road to Success — in part to encourage parents working with the case manager to identify as a special group with special goals. But in what was very possi-

bly a reflection of the minor role that group activities played at this site, the name evoked very little recognition from a small group of parents on the caseload who met with the program officer during a site visit. Instead, parents identified themselves as part of HIPPY, the home visiting program from which they had been recruited to work with the case manager.

In Quasi-Voluntary or Mandatory Settings

Parents participating in the Family Dynamics prevocational program, ESTEEM, were technically under no more compunction to participate in this 12-week class than parents recruited to attend workshops at the other sites just discussed. But because the class was at the heart of the program, rather than an add-on to other activities, attendance requirements were more structured than was the case for workshops at the sites just discussed. At the beginning of the project period, staff planned to have students sign an agreement saying they understood that they could not have more than three absences from class over a 12-week period.

In fact, attendance patterns fell considerably short of this standard. For example, for parents in the fifth and most recent cycle of the program, attendance averaged 56 percent for the morning class and 36 percent for the afternoon session. (Since these figures include attendance for students who ultimately dropped out, average attendance for completers was probably higher.)

In response, the site's attendance rules have become much more flexible. Parents with problematic attendance who nevertheless complete the full cycle of classes have not been officially asked to drop out of the program; in fact, they take part in graduation ceremonies, although they do not receive the same certificate as students with acceptable or better attendance. The site is now trying *attendance incentives* — for example, gift certificates for good attendance — and a *buddy system*, under which a parent calls a partner who has missed class and reminds her to attend. Thus far, neither practice has had a marked effect on participation patterns. An analysis for the fifth cycle of the class did hint at a relationship between attendance and the content of classes: Attendance was stronger for a morning session of the class, which tended to mix topics covered each day, than for the afternoon session, which much more often devoted each day to one topic. However, staff believe that this difference may have been explained as much by the greater receptivity of the

particular group of parents in the morning session to shifting from topic to topic as to the actual structure of the curriculum.

At the BEOC linked school-child care program, a small group of parents were subject to a requirement to participate in group activities that, while officially mandatory, is best described as quasi-voluntary. Students in one of BEOC's programs, a prevocational course, who had children at the child care center were expected, as part of their regular school schedules, to attend parenting and peer group sessions led by the case manager stationed at the center. Notwithstanding this requirement, it would have been difficult for the case manager to recommend that a parent who was doing well in her schoolwork and whose child was benefiting from the center to be disenrolled in the entire program for a poor attendance record at the workshops. Against this background, records over a two-month period show that the site did manage to keep parents engaged in these sessions, but that attendance varied. In a group of nine parents followed over a two-month period, two missed most of the workshops. The other seven attended from 67 to 89 percent of the required sessions.

During most of the period covered by this report, CDSC, the child care resource and referral agency, focused on short-term counseling to parents about child care. However, as noted earlier, in the last year of its grant, CDSC began working to train a group of welfare recipients in a community service component of the city's welfare-to-work program to become home visitors to informal child care providers. Because their welfare grants were subject to sanctions if they did not participate, these parents were under a formal mandate to attend CDSC training and work experience activities.

Despite these rules, CDSC found that a number of parents dropped out of the program or did not attend consistently. To a degree, these challenges likely reflected the fact that while mandatory, the welfare-to-work program had a number of rules and procedures that allowed parents to switch from one component to another, or simply had lags in processing attendance information that gave parents latitude to ignore some of the participation rules without running a significant risk of facing immediate curtailment of their grants. In addition, in addressing the problem of parents who maintained community service participation but missed or came late to specific ses-

For sites with more open-ended structures for group participation, it is yet harder to count on a ready-made unfluctuating caseload.

sions, CDSC faced a problem similar to one confronted at BEOC: Should the program recommend a full welfare grant sanction if a parent missed a few sessions or several hours of a session? Or was the appropriate response to encourage the parent to maintain better attendance? Seen in this context, it may be more accurate to describe the CDSC component as quasi-voluntary than mandatory.

The mixed attendance patterns registered by even the more mandatory projects as they tried to engage parents consistently in group activities throw the challenges of sustaining participation in voluntary group activities for low-income parents into sharper relief. Family Dynamics and BEOC had clear structures and attendance policies for their group activities; CDSC's work experience component was part of a mandatory welfare-to-work program. For sites with more open-ended structures for group participation, it is yet harder to count on a ready-made unfluctuating caseload.

Encouraging Parents to Work On-Site

Both the BEOC and Mid-Bronx projects include efforts to have parents assist in work at the child care center. For BEOC, the main rationale for this activity is to allow parents serving as classroom aides to improve their parenting skills in a setting where they interact with teachers and have a chance to observe the development of children other than their own. Mid-Bronx focuses more on volunteering in Head Start — in the classroom or elsewhere in the program — as a way for parents to acquire work skills (a naturally somewhat less important concern at BEOC where the parent classroom aides have already taken the step of enrolling in a prevocational program to prepare for work).

BEOC used essentially the same structure for volunteering as for peer group sessions: A subset of parents using the child care center, those in the prevocational program, were scheduled to serve as classroom aides as part of their regular school schedules. As with the peer discussions for these parents, the site seems to have had reasonably good but not outstanding success in maintaining regular attendance for classroom aide work. For the same nine parents followed over a two-month period for participation in the workshops, the

records show that two missed virtually all their classroom aide sessions. For the other nine, attendance ranged from 58 to 70 percent.

Mid-Bronx has been trying several interesting techniques to engage parents in volunteering. Two were first used by Project Match, the welfare-to-work program in Chicago that has been a model for many of the program's efforts in this area: (1) recognizing all parent volunteers by listing their names and the number of hours they worked on a bulletin board and in a newsletter; and (2) asking parents to fill out, with the vocational counselor's help, monthly parent accomplishment forms, which list volunteer and other activities that build job skills.

A third technique has been pioneered by Mid-Bronx: "Express Lane" tables, set up twice weekly in the hallways between classrooms and staffed by the vocational counselor, that feature a 15-20 minute activity for parents. Sometimes these are craft or learning activities that can be repeated at home with children. Parents have also filled out voter registration and driver's license applications, and have written letters to political leaders to advocate for child care funding. Stopping by the table is seen as one way of acclimating parents to the idea of Head Start as more than a place to drop off their children, thus encouraging them to make bigger time commitments to Head Start volunteering.

Currently, Mid-Bronx keeps track of how many hours a month each parent volunteers (with volunteering defined broadly to include not only help in the classrooms or elsewhere in Head Start but also the time spent at the Express Lane tables, class trips, fundraising activities, and attendance at Head Start meetings and other functions). Eventually, the site hopes to develop a more detailed tracking system that shows exactly which activities parents carry out and whether they meet scheduled commitments for volunteering — for example, agreeing to help out in the office with a specific task.

At this point, however, the site has some clues that its techniques for encouraging volunteering are making a difference. Through the summer of 1995, before the vocational counselor was actively working at the site, total monthly volunteer hours for the Head Start pro-

gram ranged from 50 to 280. For subsequent months, when the volunteer incentive activities she managed were under way, total volunteer hours grew, ranging from 204 to 448. More specifically, 62 percent of the parents who worked with the vocational counselor volunteered for Head Start activities at least once between September 1995 and June 1996, and 39 percent of those who worked with her volunteered at least one hour per week (exceeding the benchmark the site had set for itself of having 25 percent of the group volunteer with this degree of regularity).

Encouraging an Individualized Counseling Relationship

On the whole, the sites had better success in engaging parents in one-on-one counseling than in group activities. ***Parents did seek out case managers. But, especially when the case managers wanted to establish consistent relationships with parents to encourage them in their employment goals, they had to conduct active outreach to parents to engage them in individual counseling.***

Although Family Dynamics now makes room for individualized counseling as part of its scheduled class time with parents, originally it was expected that the sessions would be an add-on to parents' class time. The site soon discovered, however, that this arrangement was not practical since many parents felt they had to leave the building as soon as the class ended. Ultimately, the site devised a system of holding group classes four times a week and reserving the fifth day for one-on-one sessions with the case manager and with her partner, the classroom teacher. It was expected that parents would meet once monthly with each staff member. This system seems to be working reasonably well. Data on the fifth cycle of the project show that over 14 weeks, graduates met an average of 3.5 times for such sessions, with some attending as many as eight.

As is the case for group work, the challenge of engaging parents in individual counseling sessions was arguably even greater for sites that did not routinely bring them together for classes but had to "find" them. For most of the tenure of the case manager at the PCDC site, parents had already graduated from HIPPY, the home visiting program from which they were originally recruited to work with

her. Although HIPPY paraprofessionals initially introduced the case manager to the parents, as HIPPY became a more distant experience for them, she had to rely almost exclusively on her own outreach via telephone calls and reminder letters to bring parents in to discuss employment and other goals with her. She also made some home visits, but the danger of traveling through the housing complex on her own kept them to a minimum.

Of the five sites that used case management, PCDC, as of this writing, has some of the most complete information on counseling patterns because its automated tracking system contains records of "encounters" between parents and the case manager. For the purposes of this report, the writer reviewed a sample of 15 records (with names and identifiers deleted) for 1995 through February 1996. They show a fairly high level of contact between the parents and case manager, but with mixed intensity and consistency. Five of the 15 parents were in contact with the case manager much more than once a month. Four had regular monthly contacts (but for three of these parents the list of contacts only began in late 1995). Six mostly were in contact once or twice a month, but with one or more gaps of months with no contacts recorded. For no case, however, was there a record of a parent not seeing or talking to the case manager over this period.

A sample of the individual case records for these 15 parents was also reviewed. The records indicate that parents consulted the case manager on a wide range of issues, including legal matters, housing problems, domestic violence problems, child care needs, and family counseling and mental health service needs. Consistent with the conception of PCDC case management as an intervention that could cover many areas but that made a special effort to help parents pursue employment goals, all but one of the records showed that at least one contact (and often more) was indeed focused on these goals.

In its planning, Mid-Bronx had set a goal of having parents on the "core caseload," — that is, Head Start parents working with the vocational counselor — meet with her individually at least twice a month. Automated records for the project show that thus far for most parents, meetings have been less frequent. A June 1996 report on the 61 parents who had worked with the vocational counselor

...the newsletter seemed to stimulate an additional 10 parents to commit themselves to the vocational counseling.

at any point since she came on staff the previous August indicated that only 10 had averaged two or more monthly meetings with her, while most averaged between close to one to slightly more than one meeting per month.

But for this site, and perhaps for others, information on the number of meetings between the case manager and parents may not tell the whole story of the case management relationship. A consultant on information systems to the Mid-Bronx project, who has observed the vocational counselor at work, notes that the kind of quick, casual encounters she has with parents at the Express Lane tables can also move a relationship along: "Maybe it's just five minutes, but those five minutes can be packed with information — about a job opening, about what's needed to follow up on it." As will be discussed in more detail later, this site has so far registered very promising employment and training outcomes for parents, and it may be that its early success rests not only on more extended meetings with parents but also on ***the development of a strategy that allows the case manager to be a regular presence in the parents' daily schedules. In addition, the insight that what counts as a contact may underestimate the actual interaction between case manager and family raises interesting questions about the trade-offs between efforts to be precise about all contacts between staff and families and the time it takes for staff to record such information.***

The fact that the case manager was a regular presence for the parents who attended the ESTEEM classes at Family Dynamics should also be taken into account in considering what individualized counseling sessions meant for parents at this site: It may well be that a parent who met with a case manager three or four times during the course of the project — in other words, for about the average number of sessions that the site's data thus far indicate parents are using — was in fact given more individualized counseling during informal interactions with the case manager during, before, and after classes.

One experience of the Mid-Bronx site in trying to connect parents with the vocational counselor points to the ***inevitable tensions that programs experience when they try to use external motivators to engage participants.*** In the first issue of its newsletter focused on Head Start volunteering and other parent activities, Mid-Bronx published a list of parents who had volunteered in any capacity in the program. However, the list cited only volunteers who had made a commitment to working with the vocational counselor. The Head Start

director and vocational counselor expected that this restriction might give rise to resentment on the part of parents who had not been engaged with the counselor but who had nevertheless volunteered, and their predictions were accurate. But in underscoring the distinction between parents working and not working with the vocational counselor, the newsletter also seemed to stimulate an additional 10 parents to commit themselves to the vocational counseling. For the second edition of the newsletter, staff chose to list volunteer activities for all parents, whether or not they were on the caseload. "We thought it was a good idea to list only parents on the caseload in one newsletter — to give everyone a little push," says the center director. "But we decided once was enough." In this series of decisions, the site was coming to grips with ***questions about how much to recognize parents engaged in the intervention in order to prod others to follow suit.***

STAYING IN TOUCH WITH PARENTS

All of the sites using case management have expressed interest in following up with parents once they leave the immediate orbit of the project — that is, when they find jobs or attend school with schedules that lessen the chances for interaction with the case manager. Follow-up poses time problems for both case manager and parent — for case managers because they must take time out from working with their more active caseloads and for parents because they may be too busy to easily make room for consulting with the case manager. Sites have tried a few different strategies to overcome these constraints. One case manager shifted her schedule to cover some hours when parents could meet with her after work; another has made calls to working parents from her home. The Family Dynamics project predicted that the fact that other services for graduates were available to them in the building would bring them back for contact with the case manager after graduation, and follow-up with one group of 15 graduates indicated that a number of them were indeed in that position because they were either attending other classes in the building or had children still in child care. To facilitate follow-up, this site has also recently instituted a system of asking parents who have completed the ESTEEM course to fill out a contract listing goals for work, school, and child care and then sending staff evidence of the progress they have made — that is, a copy of a com-

pleted job application or first paycheck. Still another follow-up strategy being tried is inviting past graduates to reunions. Recently, 25 ESTEEM graduates returned to the site for a successful reunion.

REACTIONS TO CASE MANAGEMENT: IMPRESSIONS FROM SITE VISITS

While the program officer followed the progress of the projects quite closely, she did not interview parents systematically at each site. But observations about how some parents responded to case management emerged from individual and group conversations that occurred in the course of site visits.

A number of parents expressed appreciation for the personal contact with a case manager and particularly for the open-ended nature of the service. In one group discussion, parents cited with approval different ways in which the case manager had helped, ranging from encouragement for applying to college to guidance in leaving an abusive marriage to counseling for a spouse on a job search to help in finding better housing.

Parents also seemed to value the case manager's willingness to be proactive. One parent described meeting with a case manager to review a résumé. "But she knew I was feeling bad about other things, so she drew me out and helped me out with a difficult personal situation." Another parent described how she was visited at home by the case manager for the first time and by a paraprofessional she had known much longer. The case manager, according to this parent, was able to "pick up" on a family problem that the paraprofessional hadn't recognized and subsequently worked with the parent to help solve it. Another parent recalled how she was about to be dropped from a training program because of a poor attendance record. The case manager questioned the parent about the record and learned that the absences were related to illness and other problems with children at home. She then intervened with the training program and was able to help the parent re-enroll. Two parents described how the case manager "went the extra mile" by not only advising them how to get a payment problem straightened out with their welfare-to-work program but personally driving them to the office to help them with the paperwork.

Some parents also noted that it took time to trust the case manager. "At the beginning I thought, 'Oh God, here she comes again,'" recalled one parent. "But after awhile, I got to rely on her." Another parent said that initially she was reluctant to take advice on parenting from a case manager who herself had no children. Gradually, however, she continued, she came to see that the case manager "knew what she was talking about." Several parents noted that it was only over time that this case manager had persuaded them to re-examine methods of disciplining their children.

ENGAGING PARENTS IN EMPLOYABILITY EFFORTS: CASE MANAGEMENT AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN COMMUNITY AND WORK

As discussed in Chapter 2, four of the sites (Family Dynamics, Graham-Windham, Mid-Bronx, and PCDC) have tried to serve as a "bridge" between the daily neighborhood lives of parents and either jobs or more formal education and training programs. Primarily the sites have viewed the case management relationship as forming the foundation of this bridge, although Family Dynamics combines case management with a prevocational class.

The rationale for the bridging approach is grounded in the difficulties facing low-income unemployed parents when they try to find jobs or return to school. According to this rationale, obstacles like lack of skills and affordable child care, a tight labor market, and perhaps especially the way in which these obstacles erode self-confidence, mean that many parents will not connect easily to training programs, schools, and job search opportunities. Support from a counselor whom parents come to know in an intimate setting and who is aware of the full range of their life circumstances is seen as a way of helping them overcome the obstacles that keep them out of the labor market.

How well did the bridging approach work for these sites? As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, most of the projects have been able to produce some data on employment outcomes for parents but it is far from definitive. (For example, the only post graduation follow-up yet available from Family Dynamics is based on one telephone survey; Graham-Windham, at the point that information was collected for this report,

...four of the sites have tried to serve as a "bridge" between the daily neighborhood lives of parents and either jobs or more formal education and training programs.

was not keeping systematic automated records that would show monthly changes in status of participants so instead tallied "ever working" or "in school" status for a six-month period.) Moreover, across the sites, the outcomes do not tell an unambiguous story about the limits and potential of the approach. Still, highlights from the data that the sites have collected give some sense of the kind of headway they have been able to make.

	DATA	OBSERVATIONS
FAMILY DYNAMICS	Of 15 parents who graduated from a 12-week cycle of the pre-vocational program ending 10/95, three months later, 11 were either in school or working and one was actively job hunting. Of 37 parents enrolled in a 14-week cycle of the program beginning 2/96, 19 graduated. At graduation, 8 enrolled in some kind of education or job preparation program and 8 planned to look for jobs.	Results suggest that participation and retention are important issues for this site, but that parents who do stay the course seem to move ahead on career pathways.
GRAHAM-WINDHAM	Between 6/95 and 12/95, 39 formerly homeless families were involved in some kind of employment activity, group or individual, at the site. During this period, 17 enrolled in community college, and 5 in other kinds of educational programs; 6 worked, with 4 moving on to jobs after having worked at the agency as interns receiving small stipends. *(No recordkeeping on whether schooling and employment outcomes were attributable to staff efforts, but anecdotally staff report they were instrumental in helping parents achieve most of them.)*	Graham-Windham's employment component underwent a number of changes during the report period. These changes, combined with the relative sketchiness of the data, and the fact that they come from a period following the grant when the site was no longer using the practice for which the grant had been made — assigning employability responsibilities to a case manager — all make it difficult to relate what the site did to outcomes. Assuming that most of the positive outcomes were prompted by the intervention, it appears that by the middle of 1995, the program, without a vocational counselor but with the program director's attention to vocational issues, was making good progress in engaging parents in school and some headway in helping them move into jobs.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

	DATA	OBSERVATIONS
MID-BRONX	After 9 months on staff, the vocational counselor had worked with a total of 61 parents (at any one time, working with a caseload of 40 out of a potential pool of approximately 65). Of the 61, 18 found jobs with her help, about half full time and half part time; almost all were still working three months after they began work; 25 enrolled in some form of school or training between 8/95 and 6/96; as of 6/96, 10 were in school or training or waiting to start, 8 had successfully completed some kind of educational program, 14 had dropped out (3 because they had moved). *(Records do not indicate whether educational outcomes were attributable to the project, but based on case notes, the vocational counselor estimates that she facilitated at least three quarters of them.)*	Given the short time this intervention had been operating, its early education and work results seem extremely promising.
PCDC	As of 2/96, 29 out of 53 parents on the core caseload were working: 18 found their jobs with the help of the case manager; half found jobs during 1994, and the rest during 1995; 6 were employed at PCDC. As of 2/96, 7 out of 53 were parents in school, all with help of the case manager.	For the parents who find work at PCDC, there are advantages: convenience and proximity to children. Still, PCDC managers believe that ultimately many residents should be encouraged to venture beyond the familiar world of the housing complex into a broader employment arena. To the extent that that has not happened, the site's case management "bridging" can be viewed as incomplete. As of this writing, PCDC had compiled some information on outcomes for parents, but more needed to be done to pinpoint patterns of movement into jobs or school. So far, at this time, the fairest interpretation seems to be that the site has realized some solid accomplishment in helping parents move into work or school, but that the pace of change has been relatively slow.

wide variety of family issues can and should develop jobs for parents. The case managers have used a variety of strategies for getting information on jobs. Several have sought to develop jobs individually; one describes "pounding the pavement," much as a job seeker would. One case manager routinely visited the Department of Employment and brought back job listings for parents. She also ran a successful community job fair for the agency's catchment area. Although the immediate payoff for the parents directly on her caseload was small — three parents found jobs through the event — the site credits the fair with intensifying parents' interest in employment. But the fair was very labor-intensive, requiring a great deal of the case manager's time for several months, and it was not repeated.

As suggested by these experiences, one drawback of making job development one of a number of responsibilities of a case manager may be that the search may be somewhat scattershot and "retail." The problem is alleviated by the relatively small numbers of parents available to take jobs at any one time; nevertheless, the approach has built-in inefficiencies.

Still, in the site where parents were less likely to pursue jobs developed by an unfamiliar agency there is the possibility that they will be more responsive to opportunities presented through a case manager whom they already know than to an opening through an unfamiliar job developer. This difference in responsiveness, speculates the site's agency director, is partly a result of parents' reluctance to "let down" the case manager whom they know as a friend and partly, the drop in comfort level at having to work through an unknown agency. She concludes, however, that it is probably preferable for the case manager to invest time in trying to encourage the parents to establish a stronger relationship with the job development specialist than to spend time developing jobs herself.

In connection with the job development issue, it is interesting to note that the CCRP project for five community development corporations in the South Bronx, which covers two of the sites discussed in this report, is developing concentrated job development and information services for the community development corporations in its network. This service, intended to increase the efficiency and expertise of job development services available to residents of the community development corporations, could possibly alleviate some of the slippage that occurs when parents who begin by working with a case manager who does not develop jobs are referred to an outside

agency: To the extent that the CCRP project can convey the message to parents that the case manager and the job developers are part of a close-knit team, parents may have less anxiety about availing themselves of the job-seeking help.

This chapter presents mixed evidence of the viability of using friendly neighborhood based case management and associated services to encourage parents to pursue employment goals. Its conclusion is that there has been enough promise from the work of these sites — and enough reason to believe that the approach could take on more rigor under more vigorous but humane welfare-to-work policies — to justify its continued exploration.

The focus of the chapter has been on the challenges of engaging parents in case management and related services. In examining how sites managed to forge connections between services, both within and outside their agencies, the next chapter provides further detail on what those services looked like.

CHAPTER 4. MAKING CONNECTIONS

As established in Chapter 1, an important feature of the projects discussed in this report was their interest in service integration. This chapter looks at the sites' capacity to translate that interest into practice from several different angles. First, it considers their experiences in trying to link the different elements of the two-generation model of services, primarily through efforts within their own agencies. Next, it looks at their work in establishing connections with other systems and agencies. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of another set of site relationships — their interactions with consultants and with the program officer.

MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY OF A TWO-GENERATION MODEL

The two-generation strategy means that a family simultaneously receives help and support on two fronts — employability services for parents and key developmental services for children. But as suggested by the changes at the sites reviewed in Chapter 2, once constructed, a two-generation intervention is unlikely to be static. In fact, one of the major challenges of operating such an intervention is the need to counteract the divisive forces — for example, the problems in scheduling activities, the rules and regulations that limit families' eligibility for certain services, hesitations of staff of other programs to collaborate with the site in service provision — that can separate the two sets of services from one another. The following experiences from the sites illustrate some of those challenges.

Timing Issues

Ideally, a two-generation project should be ensuring that as parents are moving toward economic self-sufficiency, their children are continuously receiving good developmental services. But often conflicting time frames for parents and children make it hard to realize that goal.

BEOC

An Ideal for Integrated Two-Generational Services. Given their commitment to high-quality developmental care for young children, staff of BEOC's on-site child care center wish to ensure that the continuity of children's care is disrupted as little as possible while parents proceed through training and go on to other educational programs and find jobs.

Obstacles. BEOC's policy allows children of BEOC students and graduates eligible for subsidies to remain in the center for up to 18 months, a policy ensuring considerable continuity of care. But parents are seldom enrolled in BEOC training programs for that long, and once they graduate there are many reasons why they wish to move their children from the center. For example, they may enroll in schools or find jobs not located conveniently near the center. Also, as will be discussed in more detail later, it has been very difficult for graduates to gain access to the subsidies that are in theory available to support their children's continued stays at the center.

Another set of circumstances speaks to obstacles that can occur when parents and their case managers must negotiate complicated rules of city agencies. Even though BEOC graduates are allowed to keep their children at the center after they graduate, the case manager has often encouraged them to seek a slot in a child care facility managed by the city's Agency for Child Development (ACD). Waiting lists for ACD care are long, but once a family is accepted into the system, its funding arrangements are structured so that in most cases the child is usually able to remain in an ACD-sponsored center even if the parent's work, income, or educational status changes. This "seamless care" is harder to negotiate if the child remains in the BEOC center, where the kind of welfare subsidies more easily available to a parent using the facility can be abruptly terminated if she changes her status in school, training, or work.

It should be noted that ACD-sponsored centers are held to the same standards of quality that characterize the BEOC center and that, in any event, the convenience factors might incline a BEOC graduate to move her child to an ACD facility. Thus, in many instances, the case manager might have chosen to help a prospective BEOC graduate apply to an ACD center elsewhere even in the absence of the funding or eligibility considerations that were in effect during this period. Still, these considerations did play a role in some decisions to move.

It was clear to CDSC counselors that some of their investment in referral help could be lost as the mothers whom they helped to find licensed care slots might for various reasons delay or never complete enrollment in the welfare-to-work program, thus surrendering their right to the placement.

Site Responses. As the child care director and the case manager have become more familiar with the complexities of the subsidy systems involved in keeping children at the center once parents have graduated, the number of children remaining after graduation has gradually risen. For children who do leave, staff also have growing confidence that even when continuity of care is disrupted, the experience of the program as a whole and the child care counseling of the case manager in particular help parents make informed decisions about the quality of care they look for when they do seek a new care provider.

CDSC

An Ideal for Integrated Two-Generational Services. CDSC's plan for serving parents and children was premised on a model of parents proceeding through the BEGIN welfare-to-work program while some of the children were guided into licensed — and therefore presumably good-quality — child care settings and while the quality of care for other children was improved because of CDSC's outreach to informal providers.

Obstacles. It was clear to CDSC counselors that some of their investment in referral help could be lost as the mothers whom they helped to find licensed care slots might for various reasons delay or never complete enrollment in the welfare-to-work program, thus surrendering their right to the placement. Staff also recognized that their goal of improving the quality of care in the homes of informal providers could be frustrated by the very short-term involvement of many of these caregivers, who were apt to see themselves as providing a temporary favor or service to a mother in a welfare-to-work program as opposed to making a long-term commitment to providing child care.

Information that CDSC gathered on its outreach and counseling to informal providers shows some of these forces at work. Most of the outreach consisted of a newsletter. While CDSC staff do not know how many providers read and benefited from it, it is likely that its readability and practical information made it useful to at least some of the caregivers who received it. Still over the two years that it was published, only a handful of providers took the more proactive step of responding to its invitation to contact CDSC (with the

incentive of a free gift) to get help in improving the safety and quality of their care.

The possibility that a number of these providers did not see their care for children as a long-term commitment is borne out by CDSC's experience, at the end of the project period, of making home visits to some of them. Starting from an initial list of 150 providers serving parents at the welfare-to-work office involved in the project, CDSC staff were able to contact 96 but visit only 21. According to CDSC, the drop-off indicates both the short-term nature of the care giving for many providers — many who were contacted were no longer caring for children — and reluctance to engage with an outside agency for advice. Of the providers who were visited, only about a third showed interest in the kind of help on child care that CDSC offered. Interestingly, almost all of the providers welcomed other information about social services in the community that CDSC was able to give them in the course of the home visit.

Results from a survey of 202 parents three months after they received child care counseling from CDSC confirm some of the site's concerns about the fluidity of child care needs of participants in welfare-to-work programs. At that point, one quarter of the parents said they were no longer active in BEGIN, New York City's welfare-to-work program (and thus presumably would no longer be eligible for the subsidies that would be used to enroll their children in the facilities CDSC had helped them find). To put this slippage in perspective, however, it should be recognized that a three-month 75 percent retention rate in the welfare-to-work program meant that CDSC had nevertheless counseled a sizable number of parents still in a position to have access to the licensed care the agency was encouraging them to consider.

Site Responses. CDSC worked hard to streamline the application process for licensed care to close the time gaps between the onset of parents' work and training assignments and the point at which they were entitled to a child care slot. But as an agency in contact with parents mainly in the initial stages of their relationship with the welfare-to-work program, CDSC had little or no control over their subsequent decisions about participation. Similarly, the agency could not realistically hope to have much influence over decisions of informal caregivers about whether they would commit themselves to long-term caregiving. Thus, the agency found itself working with-

...simply having a child nearby in care makes attending the class easier for parents.

in these constraints — and hoping that its intervention would nevertheless make a positive difference for the child care of some families. In one respect, however, the intervention did include an effort to strengthen the local BEGIN welfare-to-work program itself. As will be discussed later in this chapter, CDSC's training on child care referral techniques initially offered to staff in the welfare-to-work program was gradually expanded to include more generalized training on how to establish good relationships with clients — training that may have promoted a more positive experience for parents in the program and that arguably at the margins could have encouraged them to stay connected to its activities.

The Limits of Proximity

Clearly, offering family and employability services in close proximity to one another makes it easier to keep them synchronized. But as suggested by the following examples, colocation does not guarantee integration.

Family Dynamics

An Ideal for Integrated Two-Generational Services. As noted earlier, Family Dynamics, the agency that offers parents the ESTEEM prevocational program, has tried to ensure that as many ESTEEM parents as possible have a child enrolled in a child care center located in the building where the class is held. One reason for this policy is simply that having a child nearby in care makes attending the class easier for parents. But a second reason is to enrich the project's child-oriented services. It is felt that if children are in the building, Family Dynamics staff will be able to find out more about their behavior and progress — information that will, in turn, feed into the parenting education sessions that are offered as part of the prevocational training. Staff initially reasoned that they would find out more about the children not only by serving them when they were dropped off and picked up but also by talking to their teachers about how they were doing.

Obstacles. Despite efforts to recruit parents already using child care centers in the building, the degree of "overlap" of parents in

ESTEEM and children enrolled in colocated centers has varied for different cycles of this 12-week class. For the fifth cycle for which the site thus far has the most complete information from its automated system, only 11 children of ESTEEM participants fell into this category. One important reason why ESTEEM parents do not have children in the center is that some have children of school age; others have already made alternative care arrangements for their preschoolers.

For children who have enrolled in the various colocated programs in the building, another obstacle to integrated services has emerged. According to Family Dynamics, there has thus far been considerable reluctance on the part of the child care directors and teachers in these programs to share information on children with Family Dynamics staff. While some are receptive, others seem to think that divulging what goes on in their classrooms could reflect negatively on their work or simply is not the business of another agency that happens to share the same building. Family Dynamics staff also note that so far there has been no coordination on how to share responsibilities for *parent* counseling among the Family Dynamics case managers and the family workers on staff in some of the child care centers.

Site Responses. To some extent, Family Dynamics has seen the monthly parent-child cultural and recreational outings it organizes for participants in the prevocational class as an alternate way of getting to know the children when their teachers hesitate to discuss their behavior and progress in the child care programs. But the agency also continues to seek a more collaborative relationship with the teachers. Staff now believe their best opening for realizing such a relationship is the possibility that all the agencies located in the building will receive common funding under a New York State grant initiative to undertake collaborative work over the next several years.

While ESTEEM parenting education is not a substitute for the more intimate contact with children that could develop when they are cared for in the building, this component of the ESTEEM prevocational class does help the intervention maintain its two-generational focus. In responding to a questionnaire soliciting their opinions of the program, three quarters of the graduates of its fifth cycle agreed or strongly agreed that the classes had increased their knowledge of child development.

Mid-Bronx and BEOC

An Ideal for Integrated Two-Generational Services. Both the Mid-Bronx and BEOC programs look to the fact that parents are on the premises of the child care program as a way of connecting them to other important services. As discussed in the previous chapter, Mid-Bronx conceives of this proximity as a way of engaging parents with the vocational counselor and with Head Start volunteering. BEOC envisions students having an opportunity to improve their parenting skills as they observe the kind of care their children receive at the center, talk to other parents, and watch how other children behave and develop. To promote these opportunities, this project began with the plan of having all parents who use the center spend time in the classrooms as aides. Also to help students further reflect on parenting, the site planned for them to take part in parenting education workshops and peer group discussions.

Obstacles. For these sites, as for many child care centers that try to engage parents in other services, an important challenge is the fact that parents do not necessarily remain on site after dropping off their children. For example, in the early months of the child care center's operations, BEOC discovered that many students had no time after their regular classes to act as classroom aides.

Site Responses. The previous chapter has already discussed Mid-Bronx's efforts to engage parents with the case manager and with volunteering via the Express Lane activity tables, the newsletter, and parent accomplishment forms. Also noted were the early indications that these strategies are paying off.

BEOC has been unable to provide classroom aide time for all students, but, as mentioned earlier, the site did manage, through joint planning with academic staff at the training program, to set aside time in the school schedules of a small group of parents in the pre-vocational program to allow them to take part in this activity, as well as in parenting education workshops and peer group discussions. BEOC staff believe that collectively these students have benefited most from the entire two-generation intervention; that is, that they seem most attuned to parenting issues, most aware of the value of high-quality child care, and possibly most focused on career goals. Although early and far from conclusive, information on student retention patterns for the three-month period between November 1995

and January 1996 collected by the site provides some confirmation of that impression. During that time, all of the 21 prevocational students and graduates with children at the center stayed enrolled in BEOC training programs and all of their children remained in the center. Among the other 43 parents using the center, there was more turnover, with 15 children leaving the center during this time because parents either dropped out of school or were asked to leave. These data hint that BEOC's efforts to maximize integration of the prevocational students' school and child care experiences is encouraging them to stay the course in a school that also offers their children quality early childhood education.

One insight about service integration suggested by the examples just cited is that often ***it is everyday circumstances like schedules that impinge on the full realization of a two-generational intervention that a site might ideally wish to operate. Similarly, as suggested by some of the steps that sites have taken to reduce these obstacles, many solutions involve nuts and bolts planning to solve logistical problems.***

The rationale for persisting in these service integration efforts rests on the premise, discussed in Chapter 1, that children's well-being is best promoted by simultaneous attention to one set of services directed to them and a complementary set aimed at helping their families escape poverty. This report cannot make definitive statements about the validity of this premise. But it is interesting to note that several conversations this writer held with parents at site visits indicated that they themselves seemed to conceive of benefits from the child-oriented and employability parts of the programs they took part in as a single "package." One parent, for example, talked about how a parenting education component built her own self-esteem — confidence-building that could carry over into a search for work. And a number of parents described the decision to return to school that their case managers had encouraged as good for their children. Such observations suggest that at least some parents see a kind of synergy between how their children are cared for and how they themselves manage to improve their chances for economic self-sufficiency.

...a number of parents described the decision to return to school that their case managers had encouraged as good for their children.

MAKING SERVICE CONNECTIONS OUTSIDE THE AGENCY

One of the most important activities for case managers and other staff members involved in the six projects was establishing relationships to external systems and services and referring families to them. This section reports on some of their experiences in carrying out this work and presents a few lessons and insights based on those experiences.

Connecting to Large Bureaucratic Systems: Experiences from Two Sites

Two sites covered by this report, BEOC and CDSC, were heavily engaged in establishing connections between their own child care services and the New York City BEGIN welfare-to-work program. One important fact to take into account in understanding their efforts is the sheer complexity of both the city's subsidized child care system and the BEGIN program. The child care system involves a bewildering array of regulations, rates, and funding streams. Funds attached to the BEGIN program are in theory available for a wide variety of child care settings, including Head Start, regulated care in other centers and in family day care settings, which may or may not be managed directly by the city's Agency for Child Development (ACD), and unregulated "informal" care, which in theory is limited to two non relative children in a setting. The BEGIN program's participation rules for parents and its procedures for carrying them out add another layer of complexity to the effort at these sites to link child care to the welfare system.

The BEOC Experience

The funding situation for BEOC child care is highly unusual, if not unique, in New York City in that, aside from the FCD grant for the case manager that was in effect during this period, daily operations have been supported almost entirely by child care subsidies to welfare recipients participating in BEGIN. This means that the center's revenues depend upon parents' receiving their correct subsidies from BEGIN, which, in turn, depends on the BEGIN offices recording and taking action based on accurate information on parents' eligilibility for BEGIN training. In addition, much of the help the case manager wished to extend to parents personally to ensure

that they were receiving benefits to which they were entitled required her to interact with the BEGIN system. The workload imposed on the case manager by the need to give and receive accurate information to BEGIN has already been discussed in Chapter 2. Following are two examples of what the work involved.

Transitional Child Care. During the period covered by this report, almost all recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) were entitled to child care subsidies for up to a year after they left welfare for work. The case manager advised employed and about-to-be employed BEOC graduates, both those who wished their children to remain at the center and others making new arrangements, to be sure that they received this subsidy. But she found that welfare workers at the BEGIN office were often unaware of the subsidy. As a result, she often had to intercede personally with BEGIN workers or instruct parents how to intercede on their own behalf. Since BEGIN's procedural mechanisms for triggering payment of the benefit were complicated, she also had to give parents a clear set of instructions about when and how to have their cases closed in order for the benefit to be paid without weeks of delay. As of November 1995, the case manager had helped approximately a dozen parents secure transitional benefits, but only with extensive effort.

Reregistration for Benefits. During a hiatus when the center was waiting for a routine renewal of its license, BEGIN stopped subsidy payments to the center, informing staff that parents would have to return to their welfare offices to reapply for benefits — a procedure that could take as long as a day — under the center's renewed license. The center instead was able to arrange for help from a liaison to BEOC connected to the welfare office, who came directly to the site and worked with parents to complete all of the necessary paperwork.

As shown by these examples, the center used *personal contacts* — with BEGIN workers and with the liaison — to try to cut through the red tape involved in securing subsidies. But *maintaining contacts was not easy.* Welfare workers would change; once the liaison who helped with the reregistration moved on to another position, the welfare office did not hand over her responsibilities for work with the

center to anyone else, even though BEOC requested the help.

The CDSC Experience

Of all the projects discussed in this report, a relationship to BEGIN was most important to the CDSC project, which was built around staff of the resource and referral division going on site to a local BEGIN office to help parents secure child care and to educate BEGIN workers about how to provide that help. Following are some observations and lessons from the experience.

CDSC's work benefited from the support of the local BEGIN manager. From the outset, the manager was enthusiastic about the help that CDSC could provide and she welcomed the training sessions offered to her workers.

Finding that initially many BEGIN workers were not well attuned to the personal considerations involved in helping parents find licensed child care, CDSC used both informal interactions and training sessions to help them see the full complexity of the issues involved. In the estimation of CDSC workers, some BEGIN staff members were dismissive of parents' anxieties as they began a search for licensed care, often for the first time. One tendency — apparently common in welfare-to-work programs around the country — was to assume that parents should find informal care without exploring the pros and cons of their choices and to suggest licensed care only as a fallback position. "A worker would say to a parent, 'Don't you know no-one?'" observes the CDSC counselor. To illustrate BEGIN workers' attitudinal problems surrounding child care, she describes how a worker might walk over to her with a parent in tow, hand a sheaf of forms to her brusquely, with the instruction, "Here, she needs child care." "I would go over to the worker later," the counselor recalls, "and say, 'Hey, that wasn't nice, don't be so insensitive.'" Asked whether this kind of behavior was insensitive to the parent personally or to the importance of CDSC's work, the counselor answers, "Both."

The training sessions that CDSC conducted for BEGIN workers not only covered the mechanics of finding licensed care but also invited workers to reflect on the psychological aspects of searching for care for young children. Some of the workers were encouraged to

remember their own struggles in finding care. "One worker thought back to the time when her mother was babysitting her kids and then got sick and had to stop," said the CDSC counselor. "The classes were 'back to earth,' a reality check."

By the last year of the project, CDSC concluded that child care counseling had become institutionalized enough in the BEGIN office to hand most of the responsibility for this function to the welfare workers. At that point, CDSC limited its work at the office to occasional observations, workshops, and troubleshooting. CDSC concluded that the project had transferred new skills and responsibilities from one agency to another.

In counseling parents, CDSC continually had to balance the needs to address procedural versus personal or psychological issues related to child care. CDSC counselors, who were on site at the BEGIN office twice weekly, first had an opportunity to address parents during a brief presentation that was part of the overall BEGIN orientation. In the time allotted to them, they tried to give parents a picture of the different kinds of child care settings and subsidies that were available to them, the steps they needed to take to get the subsidies, the characteristics of high-quality care and how to identify it, and the way that CDSC counselors could help parents find licensed care. Following the orientation, parents interested in finding licensed care were invited to meet individually with the counselor.

Counselors found that many parents were reluctant to consider licensed care. Some of the reasons had been predicted from the outset of the project: Parents were concerned about the safety of leaving their children with strangers; they preferred using their subsidies to pay friends or relatives as opposed to licensed providers to care for their children. And they began with questions about how "real" the BEGIN participation process would be for them. Especially before they were convinced that they would truly be expected to engage in activities away from home for an extended period of time, they hesitated to look for licensed care. Other patterns of resistance became clearer for counselors as they came to know more about the parents and their reactions to the program. For example, according to the project director, many parents seemed to be projecting onto a child care search their anxieties about giving up some of the familiar role of caregiver and trying on the less comfortable ones of student, job seeker, or worker. Such feelings could reinforce the

decision to use informal babysitting, which might feel less disruptive of the parental role than a child care center or licensed family day care provider.

CDSC's goal was not to insist that parents put aside their doubts and search for licensed care but to expand their sense of options beyond informal care, in part by giving them more information to consider — for example, pointing out that child abuse is rare in licensed centers or asking them to reflect on what would happen if their informal care arrangements broke down. But presentations on these issues had to compete with the need to address the mechanics of finding care. An observation of a CDSC child care orientation presentation and counseling early in the project found that most of the time was devoted to procedural issues. Only with the redesign of the orientation in the second year of the project to allow for parent discussion was more time set aside for open-ended consideration of parents' feelings about child care.

For CDSC counselors, working on the mechanics of helping parents find licensed care entailed not only time spent on this issue in the individual counseling sessions but also work to expedite procedures for the entire caseload. For example, CDSC streamlined the counseling process by developing a system of prepared packets with listings of potential caregivers, based on parents' zip codes, that were given to parents as soon as they arrived at the counseling sessions. In the initial stages of the project, when the Agency for Child Development (ACD) required BEGIN participants to travel to a separate ACD office to establish their eligibility (become "certified") for ACD child care, CDSC initiated a process of collecting parents' documentation for certification at the BEGIN office and transmitting it to ACD — a process that required the CDSC counselor to transport batches of the paperwork in her car from the BEGIN office in downtown Brooklyn to an inconvenient location near the Brooklyn Bridge, using up approximately an hour of her time each day.

Potential Benefits of Interactions with Large Systems

Both BEOC's and CDSC's interactions with the city welfare and child care systems underscore the *time-consuming demands facing a*

service agency when it tries to make connections with large government bureaucracies. These sites' experiences also point to a potential benefit of such interactions: As *the private agencies learned of and expressed concerns about problems in the way these systems dealt with the parents on their caseloads, they brought to light issues that affected the broader population of welfare recipients and in some instances became engaged in efforts to improve the systems.*

As BEOC directors acquired experience with the BEGIN system, they sought to transmit their knowledge to others. The case manager produced a booklet, praised by the BEGIN child care director, that took parents step by step through the complex procedures involved in applying for the BEGIN child care subsidy. The center director testified at public meetings about the center's frustrations in receiving payments from the welfare system. In her opinion, the public airing of these problems eventually resulted in system managers paying more attention to welfare offices' relationships with child care centers. She adds, however, that change was slow. Citing testimony delivered in the fall of 1995, she reports that it was not until late in the following spring that solving the problems alluded to in the testimony seemed to become a priority for the welfare system.

Like BEOC, CDSC prepared a document based on its experience with the welfare system — in this case, a widely distributed booklet that explained to welfare recipients and workers the procedures for finding child care. During the project, CDSC was also moved to address issues surrounding parents' reactions to their introduction to a mandatory welfare-to-work program that staff had observed while on site at the BEGIN office. The CDSC project director broadened the purview of her workshops on child care for BEGIN workers to considerations of the impact of the entire BEGIN experience on parents. Evaluation forms from two of these workshops register a very positive response from BEGIN workers.

Overall, the director believes that the CDSC project brought a new systemic attention to child care at the BEGIN site and to some of the other managers who oversaw its operations. "It's my impression," she says, "that when we first came into BEGIN, child care wasn't given the kind of priority it deserves. It's interesting that after we had been there awhile and done some training, BEGIN man-

The case manager produced a booklet, that took parents step by step through the complex procedures involved in applying for the child care subsidy.

agers asked me to conduct other trainings in the system. I think that BEGIN managers more came to see the child care piece of the program as an important topic in its own right."

Reserving Services for Clients

From the perspective of agencies operating two-generation projects, which by definition try to engage families in a mutually reinforcing set of services, it makes sense that the families the agency is already working with should have easy access to other complementary services that it manages. But as illustrated by the following experiences from the sites, realizing that goal may mean that the site has to negotiate eligibility policies of large government bureaucracies that are not structured to assign priority to certain groups of clients.

The Mid-Bronx Head Start program applied to the BEGIN welfare-to-work program to become a site at which welfare recipients participating in BEGIN's community work experience program could participate as interns, helping out either in classrooms or in other capacities at Head Start. For the Head Start director, the purpose of this arrangement was to offer a useful preemployment experience to parents in her program who were subject to BEGIN work mandates. However, when the application was accepted it became clear that BEGIN procedures would permit assignment of any BEGIN participant, whether or not she was a Mid-Bronx Head Start parent, to the program's community work experience slots. Ultimately, the director was able to reserve a slot for a parent in her own program.

In the spring of 1994, Graham-Windham, the site serving formerly homeless parents through its Project Welcome Home, opened a new child care center subsidized by the city's Agency for Child Development (ACD) and located just a few blocks from the project office. Graham-Windham takes great pride in the program, which operates in a newly renovated building and offers a developmentally appropriate program to children. Since Graham-Windham manages the center, staff initially assumed that they would be able to enroll children of Project Welcome Home parents in it, thereby providing important help for parents who wanted to enroll in school or look for work as well as a strong complement to the Parents as Teachers intervention already provided for the children.

In fact, staff discovered that the center was to be filled according to citywide priority lists established by ACD. The problem was eventually eased when staff learned that the fact that Project Welcome Home participants were formerly homeless automatically gave them priority for ACD services. Thereafter, the agency was able to have confidence that the Welcome Home parents who were encouraged to enroll their children in its center would find spots there, and by early 1996, 21 preschool children of 34 Welcome Home participants involved in some kind of employment effort were enrolled in the center, with an additional four children taking part in the center's after-school program.

As described in the previous section, a significant part of CDSC's work in the FCD-funded project was focused on expediting procedures to make it easier for parents in the local BEGIN program to obtain slots in ACD-managed child care facilities. Like the efforts of the other two sites just discussed, these, too, can be viewed as ways of ensuring that out of the potential pool of parents who could take advantage of particular government subsidies or opportunities, the parents directly served by the site would step to the front of the line.[2]

An agency that manages to reserve or expedite the use of places in service programs for its own clients — and thereby often succeeds in offering them a more integrated service package — is almost inevitably confronted with equity issues: Does helping these particular clients find slots make the best use of them? An agency like CDSC that sought to help welfare recipients find places in government-subsidized child care programs can be asked a question often raised in the current environment of very limited resources for subsidized child care: Does helping parents on welfare take advantage of subsidies undercut efforts of other deserving families, particularly the working poor, to get child care help? Graham-Windham, too, is confronted with a similar question with respect to formerly homeless families. One Welcome Home participant interviewed in early 1995 said that her three-year-old was in center-based care and that she was interested in looking for work because it would get her out of the house, but hadn't yet begun to do so. Even if she continued to stay at home, the child care center experience was very likely beneficial for her preschooler. However, there remains the issue of whether the child care slot might have been better allocated to a working mother with no connections to Welcome Home. ***Realistically, individual agen-***

Does helping parents on welfare take advantage of subsidies undercut efforts of other deserving families, particularly the working poor, to get child care help?

cies like CDSC and Graham-Windham cannot be expected to continually weigh all the equity issues raised when they actively seek out spaces for their own clients. But as suggested by CDSC's efforts to strengthen the BEGIN welfare-to-work experience for parents and by Graham-Windham's to help formerly homeless parents find work, their efforts to reserve slots in one system are best served when the site also works simultaneously to ensure that clients are moving ahead on complementary fronts.

Finding Licensed Child Care

Because efforts to secure licensed child care for families often involved interactions with large government bureaucracies, many of the sites' experiences with this service have been covered in the previous section — and additional experiences have been covered in this chapter's initial discussion of integrating services in the two-generational model. Beyond what has already been reported, it is possible to make a few additional observations about sites' success in managing this important function, although data on child care placements are quite sparse.

The two sites that began with preschoolers involved in parenting education and home visiting programs and tried to ensure that they were involved in licensed care appeared to have made good progress in doing so. In addition to the 25 children of 34 families that Graham-Windham reported having placed in its center, 12 were in other licensed facilities. Of 46 children of the parents of the "core group" working with the PCDC case manager as of January 1996, 31 were in licensed child care.

As has already been discussed, several sites had structured interventions that made it easier for parents not *to need to connect with another agency to get access to child care when they found work or enrolled in school. Evidence on the efficacy of these arrangements is mixed.* At first glance, BEOC appears to be such a site, since children already enrolled in its center could remain when parents graduated. But as been discussed, keeping children at the center in fact entailed extensive procedural interactions with the city welfare and child care bureaucracies. Graham-Windham's good results in enrolling children in its child care center have already been discussed. Family Dynamics'

success in keeping children enrolled in centers colocated in its building once parents graduate from the prevocational class is still unclear. Results from one cycle of the ESTEEM class show five children of graduates remaining in care at the building, but information on other classes will be needed before it can be seen how well this strategy is working. The Mid-Bronx Head Start program, which offers parents who enroll in school or find work a chance to shift their children from half-day to full-day classrooms, has early evidence that this may be an attractive option. As of July 1996, 6 parents out of a caseload of approximately 40 working with the vocational counselor had moved their children from half-day to full-day places within the program.

Other Services

Sites' job development experiences have been discussed in Chapter 3. Sites also sought to make connections with a variety of service agencies, usually local, such as clinics, legal aid offices, and drug treatment programs, to which they could refer families. For case managers, setting up these relationships have often involved "scouting" the neighborhood. Not surprisingly, they found that ***personal contact expedited the help that families received.*** The case manager at one site (BEOC), for example, found one health clinic in the neighborhood particularly receptive to parents because the facility had a community liaison whom the case manager had come to know and who was invited to conduct a workshop at the site's child care center. If the case manager informed the liaison that a parent from the child care center was coming to the clinic on a particular day, the liaison provided an escort — the "red carpet treatment," as the case manager describes it.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH CONSULTANTS

The way that the sites connected to sources of outside help is another important facet of their implementation stories. One of the most consistent sources of such assistance to the sites — consulting on information systems — is discussed in the next chapter. But in addition to this help, two sites had relationships with other consultants during the period covered by the report. The case manager at the

BEOC child care center, who has a background in human services and education but had not conducted family counseling at a child care center, had several consulting sessions with a Head Start director with extensive experience in supervising family workers. This consultant reviewed some of the case manager's procedures and gave her advice and feedback. The consultant also conducted two workshops for teachers at the center.

In contrast to the consulting help at this site, which was quite limited and introduced into the project after it was under way, the Mid-Bronx Head Start project made provision for more extensive consulting in its original proposal for the project. Two very experienced staff members of a New York City employment project were included in the project as trainers and mentors of the vocational counselor and as general consultants to the child care director in her planning for the two-generation project.

The consultants attended initial planning meetings with Mid-Bronx managers to discuss the responsibilities of the vocational counselor and the criteria for hiring her. At one of these meetings, they arranged for the director of the Chicago-based Project Match, a nationally respected innovator in the welfare-to-work field, to meet with Mid-Bronx staff to describe her own efforts to mesh vocational services with Head Start child and family services. As noted, several of the ideas developed at Project Match were later adapted for use at Mid-Bronx.

Once the vocational counselor came on board, she was given a week's training at the employment program of the consultants. During that time, she discussed her plans with the consultants, observed and talked to vocational staff about their procedures, and reviewed materials. Subsequently, the consultants met with her and with the Head Start director periodically to review the progress of the project.

Both this consulting arrangement and the more modest one at BEOC seemed to be very successful, with the site staff expressing appreciation for the extra advice and support they were given. At Mid-Bronx, where the consulting has been an integral part of the project from its inception, it may be that it has contributed to some of the early promise of the intervention. For example, by virtue of need-

ing to concentrate only on the vocational "piece" of the program — as opposed to the responsibilities of all aspects of Head Start that fall to the director — the consultants may have helped the Mid-Bronx Head Start keep employment goals in focus, and ***this kind of external targeting of one facet of a program may be especially beneficial to small, busy agencies with many different priorities.*** It must be added, though, that ***the contribution the consultants have made to the project is heavily dependent on the fact that the child care director and vocational counselor share their strong interest in promoting parents' employability.***

The consultants who worked with both sites were aware that their positions were sensitive. They tried to convey that they were coaches, not supervisors, and frequently weighed when to give advice and when to be certain that sites were taking the lead.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE PROGRAM OFFICER

Serving in a different but not entirely dissimilar role with the sites, the program officer contended with some of these same issues. As noted in the introduction to this report, the work of the sites involved a high level of contact between the program officer and site staff. At the Foundation for Child Development, the minimum requirement for monitoring a grant is to review a progress report — one final report for a grant of a year or less, supplemented by one or two reports for a project of longer duration. In practice, program officers are in contact, via telephone and meetings, with staff of many projects far more often, typically every two to six months.

For the six sites described in this report, the monitoring relationship was still more intensive. The program officer made two to five site visits to each project each year, consulted by telephone with staff at least once a month — and in many cases, much more often — and communicated with sites frequently via memos and letters.

As noted in Chapter 1, the initial rationale for this stepped-up level of monitoring was to allow the program officer to probe the sites' experiences in enough detail to document them. But also in following the sites' progress, she was often moved to go beyond inquiry

The consultants who worked with both sites were aware that their positions were sensitive. They tried to convey that they were coaches, not supervisors, and frequently weighed when to give advice and when to be certain that sites were taking the lead.

and information gathering to make suggestions. For example, memos to the sites covered such topics as sorting out staff responsibilities for other areas of the project with the staff member supported by the FCD grant, suggestions for following up on a job fair, suggestions for motivating parents to remain engaged with the case manager, and feedback on various workshops and orientations observed.

The program officer also worked closely with the consultants responsible for technical assistance on data collection and analysis, attending some of the meetings involved with this work and following up on its progress. She took the initiative to help sites on several special issues: for example, arranging a meeting to discuss a licensing problem for a drop-in child care center that the welfare-to-work program working with the CDSC site wished to operate and searching for the consultant who worked with the BEOC site. Finally, she organized two all-site meetings, developing agendas and producing summary reports in consultation with the sites.

A number of the staff members at the sites expressed appreciation for the program officer's active role, observing that they valued the feedback and information sharing provided by the foundation. But because the funding relationship inevitably involves inequalities of power, these endorsements must be interpreted with caution. Clearly, there are important reasons why sites might not choose to disclose their disapproval of "meddling" or "second guessing" from a foundation. Providing some support for the theory that sites might sometimes — or often — prefer a more "hands-off" approach is the fact that a number of recommendations made by the program officer were never followed. And indeed, persuasive arguments can be made for funders to stand back from projects like these, leaving sites as free as possible to develop their own strategies since it is they who know best the families they work with.

But at least from the foundation's vantage point, there are reasons to choose the more engaged stance. The stepped-up program monitoring used for these projects did indeed provide the foundation with a fuller picture of the challenges involved in translating the two-generation approach into practice than would have been the case if the projects had been reviewed only once every two or three months. And once the decision is made to gather information more intensively, refraining from recommendations while espousing the princi-

ple of giving grantees maximum independence could withhold useful insights of someone who has the advantage of not being immersed in daily operations and thus being in a good position to ask new questions.

This chapter and the preceding ones have made reference to some of the data that sites collected on participation patterns and outcomes. The issue of how sites addressed the tasks of gathering and analyzing this kind of information is the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5
TRACKING ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

When the projects covered in this report were awarded grants from the Foundation for Child Development, a precondition of funding was that the sites would try to track their participation patterns, use of services, and outcomes. All expressed willingness to do so, with responses ranging from relatively neutral agreement to enthusiasm about generating information that would help both the agencies themselves and their funders understand their work. Previous chapters have drawn on this kind of site information; this chapter reports on "what it took" for sites to gather and analyze it.

At the inception of the grants, none of the sites had automated systems in place for tracking data of interest to their FCD-funded projects, although some work on automating had started at one site. Also, while the sites had a general understanding of the kinds of information they wished to acquire, none had formulated plans for exactly what data would be collected, and in fact over the first year of the funding, the four sites originally awarded grants made only fitful progress in developing such plans. Instead, they tended to generate occasional reports on participation patterns without very clear blueprints of what questions they wished to address systematically with consistent data. Viewed from the outside, it may seem surprising that projects that took their missions seriously and had committed themselves to data collection did not make more headway in this area. But from the on-the-ground perspective of sites caught up in the tasks of hiring staff, planning services, and recruiting participants, the lack of sustained attention to data collection becomes more understandable.

After the first wave of FCD-funded projects had been in operation for a year or less, the foundation decided to engage the services of a consulting firm with expertise in evaluation and information services, Metis Associates, to help the sites clarify their definitions of what they wished to track and to develop and put systems in place for doing so. A similar arrangement was developed for the Mid-Bronx site at the inception of the FCD grant in 1995. The Family Dynamics site, too, worked with Metis, but here the arrangement was somewhat different because the site elected to use part of its FCD grant as well as other funds to engage Metis directly for a full evaluation of the ESTEEM prevocational project. It should also be noted that at two of the five sites, PCDC and Mid-Bronx, the Metis consulting time made available through FCD funds was used in conjunction with additional technical assistance on the use of an automated system common to the five South Bronx community development corporations participating in another special initiative, the CCRP project. (See Appendix 3 for a summary of different forms of tech-

nical assistance on data collection and analysis provided to the sites.)

The foundation's consulting budget did not allow for full-scale technical assistance from Metis, involving very intensive on-site help. The Metis-FCD consulting contract — which covered two years except at one site [3] — was for a fixed-rate amount contingent on the completion of certain tasks, but it estimated the number of hours involved, roughly the equivalent of five days per year for each site. It should be added that most often the technical assistance stretched well beyond the time estimated. For example, Metis consultants made approximately 20 visits, many lasting a full day or a significant part of a day, to CDSC.

Because of Graham-Windham's staffing shifts and the fact that the agency had its own information systems expert on staff, Metis ultimately spent minimal time working with this project, and the writer did not follow its automation experience closely enough to include observations on it for this discussion.[4] At the five remaining sites, work is at various stages, but in all cases has encompassed active efforts of staff and consultants to develop systems for tracking activities and outcomes.[5] Over the period covered by this report, it became clear that these staff-consultant efforts were an important part of sites' implementation stories. What follows are observations on how these processes played out.

MAIN FEATURES OF THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

While the work of Metis[6] with the sites varied considerably depending on their needs and services, it is possible to give a generic description of what was involved.

Technical assistance began with a ***consultation with site staff to determine what information should be collected for the FCD-funded project, a review of existing recordkeeping procedures, and the development of a plan for how the site would collect and keep relevant information.*** Each site made somewhat different decisions about what data would be kept, but generally sites sought to find out basic demographic infor-

One important feature of the automation process was that the technical assistance was designed to leave staff with a system that not only produces data for monitoring and evaluation purposes but also helps the agency in its daily work.

mation about families, information on the number of families served, and, at the sites with greater capacity for tracking, some information on the intensity of service. As noted earlier, sites also were interested in basic information on employment and schooling outcomes for parents and, in some cases, child care placements used by the family.

At the two sites that had additional technical assistance through the CCRP project, a determination had already been made that an automated system — called FACTORS — would be used to collect data. At the other sites, initial reviews led to recommendations that ***staff either move from paper recordkeeping to use of an automated system or, in one case, shift to an automated system better suited to the purposes of follow-up than the one in use for other tasks.*** At two of these sites Metis recommended that a much less expensive system than FACTORS — called Goldmine — could be customized to serve some of their purposes. At another site, the work began with Goldmine but shifted to FACTORS when the site was able to afford it.

For sites that did not have systems in place, ***Metis helped them with installation and in most cases with at least initial data input.*** One important feature of the automation process was that the ***technical assistance was designed to leave staff with a system that not only produces data for monitoring and evaluation purposes but also helps the agency in its daily work.*** For example, at one site, the system installed could be used not only to track outcomes through a survey but also to generate both a reminder report on tasks concerning individual clients and mailing labels for a newsletter generated by the project.

Finally, help was given to sites to produce and analyze a minimum of one report using their automated systems.

OBSERVATIONS AND LESSONS

The pace of progress for developing systems for tracking activities and outcomes has varied both by site and by different time periods within sites. Over the report period, progress was made in producing automated reports that have the potential to help projects clarify their goals and

definitions and understand their operations and outcomes. Generally, however, it has taken a significant amount of time for the sites — including the ones that have proceeded most consistently — to make headway.

In general, the pace of work of the first wave of three sites with Metis was slow during the first year and picked up momentum during the second. At the point when data were being collected for this report, no site had reached the point of making automated monitoring a fully institutionalized and routinized part of program management.

For the two sites funded at a later point, the pace of work seems to have been steadier from the outset, and to a degree their experiences may be a better measure of what can be achieved. In each case, it took approximately six months for the site to generate a report on its project from an automated tracking system. Mid-Bronx, which kept track of how the case manager was allocating her time, reported that overall approximately 30 percent was spent on using the automated system for recordkeeping. Clearly, this amount of time spent — and, for both sites, the number of months required to get to the point of producing a reliable report — was heavily influenced by the fact that the sites were not only undertaking a new process of program monitoring but also adjusting to new technology. At Family Dynamics, for example, one of the early tasks that Metis worked on with staff was rearranging and reconfiguring the agency's computers to make them easier for both staff and parents to use. ***But given the current state of technology at many community agencies, it seems likely that time for selection, installation, and acclimatization to new automated systems will often need to be factored into calculations of when the agency can begin to produce reliable reports on activities and outcomes.*** Of course, there is no reason why sites that are not automated at the outset cannot generate reports based on paper recordkeeping in the interim before the automated system is functioning, and some covered in this report did so. But it should be recognized that the time investment needed for staff to adjust to the automated system may in fact compete with whatever attention can be devoted to keeping and analyzing paper records.

It should be noted that both of the sites that made steadier progress had access to additional technical assistance time beyond what was specified in the Metis-FCD consulting contract. One had contracted separately with Metis for a fuller-scale evaluation, and the other

had access to additional technical assistance through the CCRP initiative. *To a degree, these circumstances raise questions about the limits of bringing in a consultant unable to be a continuous or near-continuous presence on site in the early stages of helping an agency develop a new system for tracking activities and outcomes.* While Metis did, as mentioned, often spend far more time at sites than estimated in its contract with the foundation, the time elapsed between one contact and the next could create problems. At one site, for example, Metis reviewed a follow-up survey that staff had developed and suggested modifications. Later, however, it was discovered that staff had begun fielding the survey without the suggested changes. Because the site did wish to incorporate the changes, it was decided to use a revised version of the instrument, and in the end results from both versions were analyzed separately. It seems likely that a consultant in a position to be on site a minimum of two or three times a week during the period when the survey was being developed and fielded could have headed off widespread use of the original version. *One general problem related to the fact that Metis was not under contract to be a regular presence at the sites was that meetings and consultations had to be scheduled on an individual basis to fit the calendars of staff and consultants, leading to the typical delays associated with setting up specific appointments.*

Still, there are many other cross-cutting factors that seem at least as important as the amount of time spent by the consultants in influencing the pace of progress at the sites. For example, of the two sites that were given extra help beyond what was available from Metis (via the CCRP project for community development corporations) one proceeded with the automation process much more slowly than the other, suggesting that a relatively generous investment of technical assistance time did not guarantee rapid results.

It is also important to bear in mind that *the first wave of sites that worked with Metis had already been operating their projects for nine months to a year when the technical assistance began. In contrast, for the two sites that made steadier progress, the onset of technical assistance corresponded with the onset of the funded project.* Clearly, the latter situation is preferable. Sites where projects were under way worked at the time-consuming task of entering a certain amount of retrospective data into new automated systems. Perhaps more important, they had already established a rhythm of work and activities that had to be changed to make time for consultations with the technical assistants. *Yet it would be a mistake to conclude that just because a project is already under way, it is too late for technical assistants to help staff*

devise a better system of collecting and analyzing data. The sites covered in this report that did begin working with Metis more "midstream" still made headway in their monitoring activities.

Across all the sites and all the different arrangements for technical assistance, ***the commitment of managers and staff to developing and using good automated tracking systems was a critical factor in the degree of progress that was made.*** As noted, all of the sites had agreed to monitor their work through data collection and analysis. But once the projects were under way, there were a number of reasons why the day-to-day commitment might flag, including:

Competing Demands on Time. The previous discussion has already touched on the issue of the sheer amount of time needed to get automated systems up and running, to enter data — including retrospective data for sites starting "midstream" — and to generate and analyze reports. But to have a full picture of the possible impediments to steady progress, it is also important to take into account — as noted in the discussion of why sites moved ahead so slowly during the year before they were given technical assistance — the other tasks that claim the attention of staff and managers. Several case managers, for example, expressed concern that time entering data — and most typically, agencies did not have extra clerical staff for this work — was time away from clients. Also, while it is possible to weave data work into the pattern of regular interactions with families, in practice not all case managers seemed to move easily between one focus and the other.

Discomfort with Automation. For a number of the staff members at the sites, work with computerized records was a new or relatively new activity, and there were differences in how readily they adapted to it. In addition, conditions at community-based agencies like the ones covered in this report are seldom ideal for adjusting to automation; wiring may be inadequate; staff may have to go to inconvenient locations to use scarce computers; or, as noted above, case managers may have to perform much of the clerical work of entering data themselves rather than relying on support staff.

Wavering Conviction About the Benefits of Automated Recordkeeping. As alluded to earlier, all of the sites articulated, at least at the out-

Staff must become comfortable with reading the data in ways that yield useful lessons about progress.

set of their projects and most with some frequency, a strong belief in the benefit of tracking activities and outcomes. But there is naturally a difference in seeing the value of a demanding set of activities in the abstract and believing in their importance strongly enough to give them priority as they unfold. Thus, some managers and staff members seemed to seize the opportunity to analyze reports to understand more about how their projects were functioning, while others appeared to view the generation of reports as a chore to be accomplished without a clear payoff. It should also be borne in mind that making the connection between a dense report studded with numbers and categories and a clear analysis of how the project is doing is far from automatic. Staff must become comfortable with reading the data in ways that yield useful lessons about progress.

WHAT WAS LEARNED FROM TRACKING EFFORTS

Despite the many difficulties involved in producing and analyzing data, sites on the whole were able to gain considerable knowledge about their successes and failures from their tracking efforts.

Earlier sections of this report have drawn from some of the information generated by the sites to support observations about their work. The following comments on key questions that sites were able to address using the data they had collected:

Who are the participants in this project?

Information on such characteristics as ethnic background, family size and composition, and educational and welfare status helped to answer this question. Given the employment focus of these projects, information on parents' past work experience was obviously important to their work. For example, information from the fifth cycle of the Family Dynamics project that most participants had had some work experience can be used by the site in planning its prevocational classes. Unfortunately, two of the sites did not initially collect detailed information on participants' past work experience; they plan to address that problem in future data collection.

ERIC BEST COPY AVAILABLE

What are the participation patterns for the project?

As noted in earlier discussions in this report, the sites were able to use data to answer questions about attendance in group sessions, frequency of contact with case managers, and dropout and retention rates. It should be recognized, however, that pinpointing this information is challenging. When school systems calculate attendance and dropout rates, they must find a way to factor in student turnover — for example, enrolling in or leaving school in the middle of a term. The problem is compounded for community agencies with open-ended or variable enrollment periods. For example, in calculating attendance rates for the BEOC workshops, it was necessary for the site to keep track of not only how many sessions each parent attended but also how many each one *could have attended*, given the dates at which the child enrolled in the center.

What happens to people after they leave the project?

As noted, most sites have made minimal progress in answering this question. However, CDSC, which had only initial brief contact with parents, did focus its data collection efforts on fielding a survey to find out what kind of child care arrangements parents had made two weeks and three months after they had been counseled about child care by CDSC. As discussed earlier, the surveys were useful in showing the number of parents using licensed care. They also gave CDSC good feedback on how parents viewed the intervention. For example, almost two thirds of respondents said that CDSC had been either helpful or very helpful to them in their search.

It should be added, however, that conducting a survey was an entirely new and "learning-by-doing" activity for this relatively small, community-based agency, and while Metis provided a great deal of help, many problems were never ironed out. For example, in addition to the previously noted problem of the use of two different versions of the survey, the instruments had question patterns that required staff to use skip patterns, that is, depending on which answers they were given to a certain question, to know whether to proceed to the next one or to skip over it because it was irrelevant. The survey had been set up on the automated system to guide them through that process, but because only one computer was available for this use, some surveys were conducted on paper, leading to inconsistent use of skip patterns. Another shortcoming of

the data was that the final results of the surveys were tallied from a mix of mailed and phone surveys. Finally, the most important limitation on the surveys — and one largely out of the control of a single agency like CDSC — is that there are no reliable data for comparing the child care outcomes of parents served by the intervention with outcomes for parents in the city welfare-to-work program who did not have access to a child care resource and referral agency for help in finding child care.

When case managers met with parents, what was the focus of the meetings?

When the FACTORS system was installed at PCDC, the agency and the consultants agreed on a series of codes that would cover the kinds of issues the PCDC case manager would cover in her counseling sessions, and she subsequently was able to input such codes following meetings with parents. This task added time to her recordkeeping, and the information produced obviously should be read with caution, since it is unlikely that codes can adequately capture the range of topics covered in an intimate, often open-ended discussion. Still, when records for a sample of parents were found to include a solid concentration of codes indicating that employment issues had surfaced in the counseling sessions, the information did speak to an important concern for this site — whether the case manager could successfully use the sessions to help parents to maintain a focus on job and schooling goals that could easily be overlooked in the midst of more immediate personal and family crises.

How much time are the case managers spending on particular parts of their jobs?

Although all sites initially said they were interested in answering this question, not all kept track of time use. This is not surprising, since the very reason one would want to answer the question — the multifaceted nature of the case managers' roles — is the same one that makes pinpointing information about it so difficult.

One site that did keep track of time, Mid-Bronx, was able to report that nine months into the case manager's tenure, she was spending, as already noted, about 30 percent of her time on recordkeeping, as well as approximately 25 percent of her time on meeting with parents individually and

about 30 percent on other parent-related activities — for example, job development, encouraging volunteering and workshops. Clearly, this breakdown can be very useful to the site in understanding what it takes for the case manager to do her job.

Another site, PCDC, used the FACTORS report to aggregate the number of hours spent per month on "encounters" — either face to face or by telephone — with parents. Initial reports suggested that the proportion of time spent seemed quite low. Subsequently, after questions were raised about the meaning of this data, the amount of time registered increased appreciably. But in a syndrome that undoubtedly surfaces in the analysis of many such reports, especially early ones, it is not clear whether better recordkeeping, that is, more careful tabulation of time spent, or an actual shift in the case manager's time allocations accounted for the change in results.

What are the employment and child care outcomes?

Previous sections of this report have alluded to a number of the most salient short-term outcomes that sites were able to track. It should be noted that the capacity of the sites using FACTORS to indicate whether a particular job or child care placement can be attributed, in whole or in part, to the intervention of the case manager is an especially valuable tool for understanding the accomplishments of projects using case management.

One intriguing question about sites' analyses of outcome data is to what extent they "drive" or change activities. The experience of sites covered in this report in using such data has thus far been mainly too limited to speak to that issue. One site's early experience, however, is interesting to note: After the project had generated several reports showing essentially flat employment outcomes for parents, the next two monthly reports showed an increase in the total number of parents employed with the help of the case manager. The timing of this change following on the heels of the site's beginning to generate regular "bottom-line" monthly reports on outcomes may have been coincidental, but it also may be that having in hand several months of data showing no movement on the employment front may have encouraged the site to intensify its job placement efforts.

...for the case manager, the director of the center, and the consultants, the initial report seemed to raise almost as many questions as it answered.

THE CHALLENGES OF TRACKING

While superficially it may seem that to track activities and outcomes merely calls upon a site to collect data systematically, the definitional work involved is far more challenging and far-reaching, often encouraging staff to sharpen their conceptions of their methods and goals of service provision.

Previous sections of this report, especially the discussion of how sites defined their caseloads, have touched on these challenges. The following more extended example from the experience of the Mid-Bronx project aims to convey a somewhat fuller picture of the demands on sites that are serious about data analysis.

In the first months of the project, the case manager at Mid-Bronx worked many hours to generate the first report from the automated system. But for the case manager, the director of the center, and the consultants, the initial report seemed to raise almost as many questions as it answered. It indicated that the caseload for the project numbered 36. But did the 36 represent the total of all parents the case manager had ever worked with or only those currently active? A few of the 36 turned out to be not Head Start parents, but relatives, such as adolescent siblings of Head Start children: Should they be considered part of the caseload? And what distinguished these 36 individuals from the other 40-odd parents with children at the center? Some parents had availed themselves of the services of the case manager by attending her workshops or consulting her individually. But another facet of her job was to encourage parents to volunteer regularly at Head Start. Parents who stopped by the Express Lane table to practice a 15-minute learning activity were told that they were taking a fuller step toward Head Start volunteering. The case manager was in charge of the table, but did a parent whose sole interaction with her was to see her once or twice a week in this setting "count" as part of her caseload?

Another related set of questions concerned a set of goals that had been established for the project when the proposal for funding was first submitted, covering early estimates of parents who, with the case manager's help, would reach such goals as enrolling in vocational training classes, getting a job, or maintaining one. But what was the base number against which these proportions should be mea-

sured? The number of parents who had worked with the case manager with some regularity? The rationale for selecting this base is that positive outcomes could be expected only for parents truly involved in the intervention. But on the theory that it would be interesting to know what proportion of all Head Start parents who were offered a voluntary vocational service component both took advantage of it and used it to move ahead on employability, should the entire Head Start parent body be counted as the base?

At a three-and-a-half hour meeting with the case manager, the Head Start director, and two consultants, resolution was reached on many of these questions: For example, family members could be considered part of the caseload but friends and neighbors could not; the caseload was defined to consist of parents engaged with the case manager at two different levels of intensity, those who had more intensive contact with her than the Express Lane table at least every other week, and those who expressed interest in working with her but saw her less often.

This kind of decision making is standard for research projects. But for program staff for whom detailed tracking of a caseload may be either a new activity or one to which they would normally devote only limited attention, these processes are more unusual. Also, as noted, definitional questions are especially difficult to answer for voluntary, open-ended interventions that offer several different kinds of help to families. And the small size of caseloads does not seem to simplify the analytical problems involved.

At the same time, the experience illustrates how the process of working through early definitional questions can help thoughtful staff members reflect on their goals and how they wish to reach them. Arguably, it is more likely that projects caught up in the press of daily problems that do not pause to go through exercises like the one just described never come to grips with such questions as: What do we mean when we say we serve family members? What is a meaningful level of contact between case manager and parent? How often do we expect the case manager to interact with parents?

...definitional questions are especially difficult to answer for voluntary, open-ended interventions that offer several different kinds of help to families.

CLARIFYING PROCEDURES

Adjusting to an automated system can also sharpen questions about procedures for managing the caseload.

One of the experiences of the PCDC site in making the transition from paper recordkeeping to an automated system illustrates this observation. The FACTORS client tracking system used by the site allows a case manager to work with each person on the caseload to fill out an individualized service plan, which lists in outline form the Problem the client faces, her Goals for achieving it, and the Objectives she and the case manager agree are needed to realize the goal. Goals and Objectives can be coded to indicate how near they are to completion and that information can be linked to other records in the system. The entire service plan, which can be updated at any time, has been viewed by the consultants as an important basis for work between the parent and the case manager, and with the endorsement of the site it was incorporated into the initial plan for tracking clients.

As the PCDC case manager and her supervisors became familiar with this component of the automated system, it became clear that they were less certain than the consultants that it would be helpful. The case manager found it difficult to determine how to define different issues that parents raised to fit categories on the outline. Sometimes the statements she entered under Problems, Goals, and Objectives sounded nearly identical: for example, "I.[Problem] Client needs referral to child care," "A. [Goal] "Client will accept referral to child care," "1. [Objective] Case manager will refer child to child care," leading the case manager to conclude that she was required to enter superfluous information.

In a more serious disagreement over use of the service plan, neither the case manager nor her supervisors were convinced that it would be helpful to share it with parents and work with them jointly on formulating and updating it. In their estimation, many parents would prefer to talk directly with the case manager without any paper intervening. They predicted that some parents — for example, immigrants or parents who feared intrusion from the child welfare system — would be intimidated by the paperwork. In response to points raised about the potential of the service plan to increase parents' comfort levels about forms that could become "their" own documents,

rather than ones imposed on them by impersonal bureaucracies, and about the value of reducing the intimidation associated with paperwork for parents interested in finding office jobs, PCDC staff agreed to try the plans with parents who they thought would be most receptive to the system. Subsequently, the case manager reported that a few parents had worked jointly with her on the plans, while others were indeed intimidated and seemed to draw back from the relationship, at least temporarily. Most were uninterested, and the use of the plans with parents never became a focal point of activity for the project.

It should be acknowledged that PCDC might have addressed the question of whether and how to use a service plan regardless of whether the case manager's recordkeeping was automated. But the agency's adaptation of the FACTORS system did seem to force the issue of service plans to a degree that might not have happened with paper recordkeeping: The fact that the service plan was a feature of FACTORS, and one that the consultants and the site initially valued, certainly increased the likelihood that it would be on the table for consideration as a case management tool. An additional reason to consider whether and how to use the plan was that it could be coded in ways that linked it to other FACTORS records. More generally, the assumption that automation would ultimately ease the recordkeeping burden for the case manager made it more feasible to consider adding this tool to her repertoire of case management techniques. All of these considerations suggest that as service projects automate their information, questions about what kinds of forms and documents to use to communicate with clients will proliferate.

The sites described in this chapter all found themselves working through a process of trying to collect and analyze data that could be frustrating, demanding, and time-consuming, and that required great patience on their part and on the part of the consultants who worked with them. As of this writing, all of the sites have acquired some degree of mastery over important information about their interventions. But the fact that progress has been hard won and uneven has been an important lesson about this overall effort.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS

This report has looked at the implementation challenges facing an eclectic group of projects that tried to help low-income families become more employable and to promote the healthy development of their children. All of the projects were small, and with the partial exception of the CDSC child care counseling project, which interacted with a relatively large number of parents for brief time periods, all were intimate in their approach to families. While all began with plans and proposals, their implementation style was often — in the words that policy analyst Heather Weiss used to describe many of the country's family support programs — to "invent the plane as you are trying to fly it." This fluid approach to program operations is not accidental; it fits the landscape in which these projects operate — a landscape of changing logistical problems for service provision and integration, volatile situational problems in the lives of families, not to mention steady funding pressures.

Given this landscape, managers of other similar two-generation projects should — and most undoubtedly do — undertake their work with the expectation that their services will be characterized by adaptations and mid-course corrections. But despite the changing nature of the projects — or more accurately because of it — it is important for them to maintain a strong sense of direction.

To help projects as they map out their directions, this chapter presents a list of questions distilled from the experiences of the six sites covered in the report. The questions are intended to provide some checkpoints to two-generation projects as they try to maintain a clear focus on the demanding goals of promoting family economic self-sufficiency and child well-being.

When they try to pursue these main goals in the midst of upcoming changes in the welfare system, two-generation projects are likely to face unprecedented challenges. As a way of promoting reflection on the nature of those challenges, the chapter follows the broad checkpoint questions for sites with a discussion of possible implications of the new welfare environment for operations of two-generation projects and a second list of questions for sites to consider as they adapt to new conditions. The chapter concludes with brief observations for funders.

CHECKPOINT QUESTIONS FOR TWO-GENERATION PROGRAMS

Who is on the caseload?

The experience of the sites in this report indicates that case management is an important feature of two-generation projects. But for these sites and probably for many others, the answer to the question of how to define the caseload is far from obvious. Projects must consider whether the case management should be expected to touch all or only some of the families in their orbits. Having staff available for fairly intensive work with families may waste resources when parents miss appointments or otherwise fail to take advantage of services. But making the assumption that staff can therefore handle large caseloads runs the risk of spreading staff too thin, leaving them to make difficult decisions about triage. Thought must be also given to the even more difficult question of what is a meaningful level of contact between case manager and families in order to consider them active participants in the intervention.

How can we keep families engaged in the intervention?

Much of the experience of sites covered in this report suggests that families in low-income neighborhoods struggling to make better lives for themselves value the intimacy and concern of small family-oriented programs. But it is also clear that the projects have faced major challenges in maintaining steady, consistent participation in their activities, including case management.

In their review of larger two-generation demonstrations, St. Pierre et al. (1995) raise important questions about whether in the absence of high-intensity direct services to both parents and children, two-generation projects will be potent enough to effect positive changes in the lives of families. Realistically, many modest two-generation projects of the kind described in this report will find it difficult, if not impossible, to marshal the resources needed to provide services of the intensity of research demonstrations like the Infant Health and Development Project (IHDP), with its full-day, year-round center-based services that have been shown to have a positive impact on child development. (And compounding the problem, as the authors note (p. 20), is the fact that thus far much less is known about exactly which interventions, regardless of

funding levels, have the same kind of impact on adult employability as an intervention like IHDP has on children.)

While these cautions should certainly give planners and developers of small-scale, modestly funded two-generation projects cause for concern, it is unrealistic to expect them to wait for an infusion of funds large enough to mount extremely intensive two-generation interventions while they are surrounded by families and children who need help. What is more within their capacity is to try to maximize the intensity of their services *through their active efforts to maintain steady, consistent participation in the level of activities they do have to offer.* Three broad strategies suggested by the experience of sites covered in this report are important to consider: (1) keeping careful track of the caseload; (2) making certain that in addition to scheduled interactions, staff and especially case managers have many opportunities to be in regular contact with families, even for short time periods; and (3) keeping on top of logistical problems that can disrupt services.

Are we attending to both employability and child needs?

As described in this report, all of the sites began with the intention of maintaining the dual focus of the two-generation model, but all contended, with different degrees of success, with forces that caused the two broad sets of services to drift apart from one another. As with the problem of how to engage parents, the importance of careful logistical planning to keep services integrated cannot be minimized. Just as important, if not more so, is the need for managers and frontline staff to maintain a commitment to working on both fronts despite the vicissitudes that projects are likely to experience. There is every indication that staff at the sites described in this report were genuinely concerned about both the family problems and the job issues of people on their caseloads. But even in small projects, there is a tendency for one set of issues to overshadow the other without vigilant efforts to keep both in focus.

What balance should the project strike between individual and group activities in helping parents address work and family goals?

The most obvious trade-offs between individual and group activities involve tailoring counseling and help to specific needs versus bringing parents together in settings that promote peer support and group spirit. Some of the experiences of sites in this report suggest caution in assuming that parents brought together in groups to explore career goals will all need to start at roughly the same point in their decision making paths, when in fact some have little or no work experience while others may intend to pick up a work history where it was left off. Another trade-off is that especially in voluntary or quasi-voluntary settings the benefits of group activities will need to be weighed against the greater logistical difficulties involved in bringing groups together in the same place at the same time.

Should "generalist" case managers take on job development responsibilities?

With relatively small caseloads of parents, not all of whom need jobs at the same time, it is not out of the question for case managers to develop jobs. Furthermore, a parent with an investment in her relationship with the case manager may be more willing to follow through with a job she has developed than to work through an unfamiliar job development agency. Still, experiences from these sites suggest that job development is labor-intensive and that the case manager's time may be invested more wisely in helping parents establish good relationships with specialized job developers than in developing jobs on her own.

Are we prepared for the time and effort required to make connections both inside and outside our agency?

Because they tended to be experienced managers, directors of the projects described in this report were by and large not surprised by the amount of time that was required for outreach to other systems and for coordination of services under their own control. But clearly the magnitude of effort involved has been considerable and has required continual rethinking and planning. Moreover, planning often involves attention to mundane details that if left unaddressed can undermine the loftiest goals for collaboration. To a degree, a few of the sites described in this report pursued the strategy of seeking allies in government bureaucracies to help them cut through red tape. A full-blown version of this strategy that projects might wish to consider would be to persuade city officials to appoint an

ombudsperson within city government to intervene on behalf of the agency, including its two-generation project or projects, at sufficiently high levels of power to make a decisive difference in the pace at which decisions are made.

Can we use what we have learned in trying to connect to other systems as a basis for making recommendations about how to improve them on behalf of both the families we serve and other families in the community?

Site experiences discussed in Chapter 4 suggest that while troubleshooting to solve red-tape problems that families experienced in relationship to bureaucratic systems proceeded to a degree on a family-by-family basis, sites were also moved to make broader suggestions for improvements in practices and procedures — or simply to translate such procedures into more understandable terms for parents, which is one way to begin the process of systemic reform. Special efforts like codifying procedures of the welfare-to-work program in a manual, producing testimony, and offering welfare workers group sessions to discuss their approach to clients took time and energy that extended beyond the most immediate concerns of the sites that undertook them. However, they could be justified not only on the grounds of their ultimate practicality in streamlining services for families directly served by the project but also by their compatibility with a vision of making services more user-friendly.

How can we sustain a commitment to developing and maintaining good systems to track activities and outcomes?

In the narrowest sense, the two-generation model is defined by the kinds of services it covers, not by how they are monitored and assessed. But as emphasized at several points throughout this report, the very broad range of possibilities for service provision open to projects focusing on both employment and family goals makes it especially important for them to keep track of who they are working with, what they are doing, and what happens to families touched by their intervention. While paper recordkeeping is feasible — and in fact in the short run may yield information on a more regular schedule than what sites can first gain from automated systems —

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

computerization ultimately seems to offer a far more efficient and reliable way to keep track of the caseload.

As also indicated by this report, the current state of technology in many modestly funded service agencies means that they will need to develop and install new automated systems rather than use ones that are already in place and to develop a viable plan for using them. Upfront commitment to this effort — and to the equally demanding ones of entering data into the system and analyzing it — is necessary but not sufficient. Sites must be prepared to renew the commitment as the significant amounts of time required to carry out sometimes unfamiliar procedures associated with data work create cross-pressures on staff responsibilities to attend to family needs. They must also stay committed, as they wait — as suggested by the experience of the two sites in this report that seemed to make the most successful transition to automation — at least a period of many months for a new system to take hold in their projects. One possible incentive to sites to stay the course, suggested by discussion of the automation experience in Chapter 5, is to view the process of developing an automated tracking system not only as a means to the end of generating data but as a way to give projects valuable help in clarifying goals and definitions. Another incentive is for the same automated system that collects data to offer staff help in their daily work: for example, by generating standard forms and making them easy to fill out.

How much technical assistance is needed to help us develop and use automated tracking systems?

While the sites' experiences with automation discussed in Chapter 5 did not yield clear-cut guidelines for answering this question, they did suggest that enthusiasm for data collection and analysis seemed to be at least as important as the particular arrangements for technical assistance made by the sites. Beyond that, some cautions were raised about arrangements that do not provide for regular technical assistance, including a set and frequent schedule of visits to sites, as they make the transition to an automated system.

How can we make certain that data analysis promotes genuine understanding of the intervention?

This report period covers only very early stages of data interpretation for the six sites. But indications are that, like the transition to

automated systems, this work will require time and patience. First, staff are often faced with the challenge of deciphering unfamiliar statistical reports in ways that answer their own questions about the project. Certainly, involving staff in selecting data elements from the outset of the project can give them a sense of ownership of the information that will facilitate interpretation; but once reports are generated, further work is needed to ensure that they are well used. Second, quantitative data must be read in conjunction with qualitative knowledge of program operations. For example, an early observation suggested by the discussion of some of the data considered in Chapter 3, is that, for more than one reason, data on staff "inputs" (for example, how staff time is allocated to different activities and what topics and issues are covered by case managers) can miss nuances of the project's work. Still, for these relatively open-ended and changeable kinds of interventions, such data seem especially valuable in at least "getting a handle" on what services look like, especially if they are cross-checked with staff's own impressions of the case management relationships. Finally, as is the case with the use of process and outcome data in all kinds of enterprises, there is the danger that two-generation projects could be "pushed" by the numbers rather than guided by information on how to steer their activities. However, in contrast to more impersonal programs, intimate projects like the ones described in this report are likely to be in an especially favorable position to assess the value of what they learn from quantitative data against their own knowledge of the families they serve.

Besides technical assistance in the area of information systems, what other kinds of outside help can and should be drawn on?

In discussing the relationship of the program officer and a few advisers to these projects, this report has alluded to the sensitive position of project outsiders. While projects may conclude that consultants and other advisers are not in a position to fully understand the daily pressures of their work, they must weigh this factor against the value of fresh perspectives. Particularly when an effort is being made to introduce a new element into the mainstream of another set of services — for example, by placing an employability specialist in a child care program — it may be very helpful for an outside representative of the service area that is new to the project to reinforce its importance to the project's overall mission.

UPCOMING CHANGES IN THE WELFARE SYSTEM: IMPLICATIONS FOR TWO-GENERATION PROJECTS

As of this writing, the question of how the welfare system will operate under the new federal welfare legislation, the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Act, is shrouded in uncertainty. Very likely it will take several years, during which time states and localities develop responses to the new block grant structure, before the situation clarifies. Still, as two-generation projects and their parent agencies plan for the future, it is worthwhile to begin highlighting features of the new law that are likely to affect their capacity to assist poor families. While this complex legislation contains numerous provisions that could shift the ground of operations for projects, it is already quite clear that the following basic features will be important:

- TANF ends the guarantee that families eligible for welfare will receive cash benefits. States also now have latitude to determine whether assistance will be in the form of cash or direct services.

- TANF provides for no more than five years of federal public assistance to a family during a lifetime. States may give hardship exemptions to up to 20 percent of their monthly welfare caseloads; otherwise, families are subject to the limit regardless of their circumstances. States may draw on other federal funding streams, for example, the Social Services Block Grant, to provide vouchers to families that meet the five-year limit.

- In order to receive their full block grant allocations from the federal government, states must ensure that a certain proportion of their welfare caseloads are participating in work-related activities.

- Welfare recipients must participate in work-related activities within two years of receiving aid. Unless states request an exemption, recipients must participate in community service within two months of receiving aid.

ERIC Full Text Provided by ERIC

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

...as two-generation projects and their parent agencies plan for the future, it is worthwhile to begin highlighting features of the new law that are likely to affect their capacity to assist poor families.

- "Work" for recipients in single-parent families must consist of a minimum of 20 hours per week in 1997, rising to 30 hours in 2002. However, parents with children under age 6 are required to work no more than 20 hours a week.

- Only 20 percent of the caseload may use vocational training to count toward work requirements, and for each recipient only 12 months of vocational training can count.

- States may (but are not required to) provide child care assistance to recipients in work or training. They are prohibited from ending assistance to a family if a single parent with a child under age 6 refuses to comply with work requirements on the basis of a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care. However, the time that the parent spends on welfare without working counts toward the five-year lifetime limit. According to estimates of the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), there are enough federal funds available under the new welfare legislation for states to provide child care subsidies to the number of recipients who must be working to fulfill the bill's work requirements. Some states, however, are likely to be unable or unwilling to provide the amount of funding required to draw down the full amount of federal funding they are entitled to. In addition, CBO estimates that if all states meet the bill's work requirements for welfare recipients over the next six years, state and federal child care funds for the working poor will fall $1.4 billion short of need.[7]

- Generally, states must continue to provide Medicaid to families that were eligible for public assistance under the previous federal welfare system.

- TANF allows states to subcontract welfare functions formerly carried out by the public sector to private agencies.

- Legal immigrants who enter the United States after the bill's enactment are barred from receiving most non emergency means-tested federal help, including welfare and food stamps for five years. Overall funding for the food stamp program is cut by $23 billion over five years.

ADAPTING TO NEW CONDITIONS

As project managers and planners examine the provisions of new federal welfare legislation, they may find it useful to consider the following questions:

How can we reach out to parents least able to respond to tough new work mandates?

It is reasonable to predict that the parents least likely to be mobilized to improve their employment status by the threat of benefit cutoffs will be the very parents whom two-generation projects have already found most difficult to reach. Projects may now wish to devote even more effort to making contact with reluctant and hard-to-serve parents, particularly to make certain that they fully grasp the provisions of the law that make it important for them to take steps quickly to become more employable. In time, two-generation projects may also feel a special obligation to identify families at risk of homelessness, losing children to foster care, or other severe hardships brought on by benefit cessation in order to help them find ways to stave off these crises.

Because TANF allows states to exempt 20 percent of parents from the five-year lifetime limit on receipt of benefits, projects may wish to identify and reach out to any families living in their catchment areas who managers think might be good candidates for the exemption. Similarly, since states are allowed to use their own funds or other federal funding streams to assist families who have reached the limit, projects may wish to identify needy families in this situation to help them get vouchers or other kinds of help provided by the state.

Are there steps we can take to increase the chances that the families we serve receive the supports they need to go to work?

Because TANF ends the federal guarantee of child care subsidies for welfare recipients who need it to go to work, case managers in two-generation projects may wish to place a priority on determining what sources of child care help are available in their states and communities for welfare recipients and to assist eligible parents to negotiate the procedures needed to avail themselves of it.

TANF does provide that the families with income that entitled them to public assistance under previous legislation continue to receive Medicaid, even if they lose eligibility for public assistance under current rules. But case managers in two-generation projects may wish to investigate whether the families they serve who meet these qualifications are indeed receiving this help. Doing so may be particularly important because depending on what kind of eligibility procedures a state decides to use, welfare recipients are likely to find that they must take many more steps to get access to Medicaid than was the case under the old welfare system, which as a rule allowed them to count on automatic coverage by virtue of their eligibility for cash assistance.

If states add on steps for families to gain access to Medicaid, providers may find that the guarantee for services exists only on paper, not in practice. An experience that some sites covered in this report had with the so-called transitional child care subsidies that were in effect under the old welfare system may provide an analogy: Before the enactment of TANF, parents who left welfare for work were guaranteed these transitional child care subsidies for up to a year if they applied for them. Several case managers soon discovered that this official guarantee did not mean that parents, or even welfare workers, were aware of it, and thus case managers had to work very proactively to try to ensure that the benefits that parents were eligible for on paper were in fact available to them.

What adjustments do we need to make in our operations to accommodate the schedules of parents who will be moving into the labor market or community work experience slots more rapidly and/or will be working longer hours as a result of the new legislation?

In many cases, the sites described in this report reached out to mothers of preschoolers in Head Start or home visiting programs who were just beginning to think about looking for jobs; and in many other cases, sites came into contact with parents via prevocational and vocational training programs. In the future, many fewer welfare recipients may find themselves in these positions, as new welfare rules make it more and more imperative that they quickly find work or take part in community work experience projects.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

But these shifts in parents' schedules by no means erase the need for the kinds of help offered by two-generation projects. First, developmental needs of young children do not disappear, and in many cases may intensify, when low-income parents are away from home working at low-wage jobs. Second, it is well established that many welfare recipients who do become employed have trouble staying in the labor market, suggesting that the employability emphasis of two-generation interventions need not and should not be limited to "upfront" help before parents find jobs (the main focus of sites covered in this report).

To continue to help families in the important areas of child development and employment at a time when many more parents are subject to work requirements, two-generation projects will need to find and use those windows of opportunity that remain open to them under the new law. Two possibilities include:

(1) *Focusing more employment services on helping working parents keep their jobs, find the next ones, or find better ones.* As noted in Chapter 4, the logistical hurdles involved in out reach to working parents far exceed the considerable outreach challenges already facing sites that concentrate on parents before they are employed. But meeting those challenges could take projects into an area of postemployment services badly in need of more attention.

(2) *Exploring possibilities for helping parents who work 20 hours a week find time for career exploration activities, vocational training, parenting education, individualized counseling, and other beneficial services.* Twenty hours a week in a job or community work experience slot — the amount of time that parents with children under age 6 will be required to spend under TANF — leaves little time for parents to take advantage of other services. But sites committed to working through logistical problems with parents — for example, by trying to facilitate transportation between work and the agency, by arranging for meals or child care while parents are onsite, by making home visits — may find that they can identify a core group of parents willing and able to combine part-time work with other activities. To the extent that projects are successful in reaching these parents, they may find that for some part-time work energizes them to make other kinds of progress toward personal and family-oriented goals.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Is there more we can do to help the parents we serve gain access to good jobs?

Given that the long-term goal of two-generation projects is to help families escape poverty, their managers and staff members are certain to recognize — as was the case for all the projects covered in this report — the importance of parents finding jobs that pay a living wage and that have prospects for advancement. In the new welfare environment of more stringent work requirements and the likelihood of a significantly weaker safety net for families with unemployed parents, there are reasons for two-generation projects to strengthen their efforts to help parents get a secure foothold in the mainstream labor market. While the difficulties of pursuing this goal are great, two possible directions that sites may wish to consider are:

(1) *Making efforts to identify parents who might qualify for vocational training under welfare rules.* Especially in states that provide little or no funding for vocational training for welfare recipients beyond what is available under federal block grants, only a small number of recipients will be able to have such training "count" as work. But two-generation projects with good knowledge of families in their neighborhoods could be in a particularly strong position to pinpoint parents who fit any eligibility guidelines for such training that are based on evidence of need, motivation, and likely success.

(2) *Identifying local labor market needs, approaching employers with openings in these areas, and "marketing" parents on their caseloads to these employers in part by assuring them that the two-generation project's case management and other supports will "backup" the new employees, giving them significant help to perform well in their work.* A few large training and placement agencies, such as the Center for Employment and Training (CET), have pursued this strategy of very focused job development combined with follow-up. The approach was reflected in a minor way in job development work at some sites covered in this report but was not central to any of their efforts. Two-generation projects operating in the new welfare environment may wish to consider if more explicit attention to this approach would give them the capacity to function as small-scale versions of agencies like CET for select groups of families. For sites that choose not to expend staff resources on job development, an alternative would be to intensify efforts to seek agencies that are able to find such jobs for families and to partner with them by

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

either assuming or sharing responsibilities for following up with parents once they are employed.

Are there any opportunities for our project to improve services for families in our community by assuming functions formerly carried out by government welfare and welfare-to-work systems?

TANF allows states to subcontract welfare functions formerly carried out by the public sector to private agencies. The difficulties experienced by some sites covered in this report in trying to connect to government bureaucracies in order to gain access to funding streams and services to benefit the families they worked with indicates that it may be worthwhile for private agencies to take on a more direct role in these areas. In particular, sites may wish to explore the possibilities of receiving government contracts to take on the "bridging" activities just discussed — developing jobs for parents either independently or in conjunction with other agencies and following up with them via case management and other supports to help them stay employed.

Are there ways that we can successfully advocate to minimize harm and maximize benefits to families in this new era of welfare policy?

As managers and staff members of two-generation projects survey the new welfare landscape, they are virtually certain to find patterns of need among the families they serve that are created or intensified by TANF, and they may wish to speak out on what they find. For example, if the level of child care subsidies fails to meet demand as more parents go to work, two-generation projects like the ones described in this report are in a strong position to bring unmet needs to the attention of state and local political leaders, the business community, and others who can bring some influence to bear to increase child care funding — and in the process to minimize counterproductive struggles about whether scarce funds should be allocated to working poor families or families on welfare. Similarly, projects may have an interest in advocating for the continuation of cash benefits, as opposed to an overly heavy use of vouchers and services, as the main strategy for protecting children against poverty. And they may wish to call for generous use of state funds to sup-

ERIC
Full Text Provided by ERIC

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

port families who have reached the five-year limit on welfare benefits but are unable to provide a decent level of support for their children. Projects that do decide to address such issues will naturally need to move beyond their direct service role to cooperate with others to solve a public policy problem. As illustrated by the experience of several sites covered in this report, interactions with small groups of families can indeed be an impetus for projects to weave advocacy and public policy activities into their more individualized work with families. While these activities increase demands on program managers, they have the long-range potential to increase the efficacy of their services. It seems likely that the immense challenges that the new welfare environment poses to two-generation projects can only be met if they do sustain and increase their efforts to venture into the arena of public policy.

Can we strengthen our capacity to use outcome data to demonstrate that our work with families is beneficial?

In an era in which the new welfare legislation and other related trends and developments transmit a message of significant political support for relying primarily on work mandates rather than making generous public investments in family services like case management as a means of addressing childhood poverty, two-generation sites that wish to continue to help families negotiate the world of work must make a convincing case that there is "value added" in their help. In this environment, maintaining and intensifying the commitment to the kinds of information-gathering work described in this report becomes more critical than ever.

QUESTIONS FOR FUNDERS

Since this report has been written from the perspective of a program officer, it seems appropriate to conclude with issues that funders ought to consider as they make decisions about supporting two-generation projects. Given the mutual interest of funder and practitioners in the success of these models, many of the questions that program officers should ask mirror the suggestions the report has already made to managers and planners. But two additional questions special to foundations should be added. Rather than being unique to small-scale two-generation projects, they are generic questions that apply to many different kinds of initiatives. However

when they are asked in connection with this complex, fluid, and demanding program genre, they merit especially careful consideration.

How long should grants to the projects extend to give them a reasonable chance to institutionalize new practices and conceivably to attract alternative support when the foundation funding ends?

Funding periods for the projects covered in this report varied, but the working expectation was that three years would be the outer limit for continuing the grant. The expectation fit with FCD's practice — common among many foundations — of restricting most program development and service grants to limited time periods. Underlying this practice are the assumptions that the foundation's mission should be stimulating and learning from a series of innovative projects and that at the end of the funding period the grantee that has successfully developed such a project should be in a position to attract more permanent funding to continue the intervention.

Under these assumptions, it seems reasonable to have tried to seed small two-generation projects within the relatively brief grant periods offered to the sites covered in this report. If it is understood that the foundation will not be a permanent funding source for the project, a site eventually must seek new support for the innovation, and there is little reason to believe that a project that has successfully used the foundation grant to develop a promising intervention will be in a dramatically stronger position to attract such support after a very long period of foundation funding — for example, seven or eight years, rather than three.

There is, of course, the issue of whether a relatively brief funding period gives a site enough time to develop a strong innovation. Looking back over the amount of planning that has taken place for the projects covered in this report, it is fair to say that the grant periods were not so restricted that sites only had time to put services in place but not to adjust them.

At the same time, it should be recognized that, as is often true for private agencies supported by foundation and government funding, these sites had to weigh the advantages of relatively modest seed grants against the resources they had to expend to apply for the funding, develop new services, and shift to trying to attract new funding sources within a few years. This decision might be difficult in any

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

funding environment, but it is especially so at a time when there are serious questions about whether many projects that merit continuation can realistically expect to make a transition to more permanent funding. While it is not impossible to do so — and here it should be noted that three of the four sites that have ended their FCD grants have managed to continue at least some of the work carried out under the grants — it is far too common today for even very strong projects to find no other source of support when a foundation grant has ended, and regardless of what the site and its funder have learned from the experience, the fact remains that the site no longer has the option of offering a promising set of services to families.

Given foundations' very limited overall capacity to support ongoing services in this country, it would be highly desirable for private agencies that have successfully developed models combining employability and family-oriented services to be able to turn to a very long-range, generous, and dependable public funding stream to continue promising innovations. Thus, while this report concludes that relatively short-term funding is feasible for two-generation projects of the kind described here, it does so with the important reservation that the whole notion of foundations' seeding innovative practices is shot through with the problems that can only be resolved by the institution of policies that commit the public sector to far more consistent support of successful interventions than the kind of investments that are currently available.

How can the program officer help the project steer in the direction of two-generation goals without treading on the autonomy of the project managers and staff who work with the families served on a daily basis?

Funders need to question themselves before they insist that conditions in a project be changed to fit the original grant agreement. Before they offer advice, they need to make certain they are not communicating an unwarranted lack of faith in the problem-solving capacities of staff and managers. But with these cautions, this report concludes that funders should generally expect to play an active role in helping to shape community-based partnerships. Program officers with distant relationships to such projects miss opportunities for productive grantee-funder partnerships. It is only through engagement with the complex and changing realities of two-gener- ojects that funders can learn the lessons that their practitioners have to teach.

ENDNOTES

1 By shifting responsibility for vocational counseling to the overall project director toward the end of the grant period, one of the sites, Graham-Windham, was able to gain the capacity of a staff member with training in this area.

2 It should be noted that in an effort to diversify as much as possible the choices available to BEGIN parents, CDSC not only worked to expedite their applications for ACD-managed child care but also gave them information on slots in licensed facilities outside the ACD system — a source of child care well known to this child care resource and referral agency but seldom tapped by the city's welfare-to-work programs when they did counsel parents on how to gain access to licensed care.

3 Mid-Bronx, where it was agreed that the CCRP consultant's help was adequate after the first year of the Metis contract had ended.

4 During the period covered by this report, the specialist had worked with staff of Project Welcome Home to install an automated client-tracking system, into which they began to enter data. However, as of this writing, the staff had not yet reached a point of using the system to generate regular reports on the project, although some information was produced.

5 The three sites that are ending their FCD grant periods have completed their technical assistance work with Metis. At Mid-Bronx, consulting work continues under the CCRP project; and at Family Dynamics, Metis is working with staff to produce an evaluation to be completed by summer, 1997.

6 As just discussed, Metis was not the only technical assistance consultant working with the sites; at the two covered by the CCRP initiative, Metis worked in conjunction with a CCRP consultant. However, for simplicity's sake, this section focuses on practices used by Metis.

7 "Total Costs to Meet Work Requirements Under H.R. 3734 As Passed by Congress," CBO memorandum to "Interested Parties," August 14, 1996, and telephone communication with Justin Latus, Congressional Budget Office.

REFERENCES

Citizens' Committee for Children. *Keeping Track of New York's Children, 1993.* New York: Citizens' Committee for Children, 1993.

Galinsky, E.; Howes, C.; Kontos, S.; and Shim, M. *The Study of Children in Family Child Care and Relative Care.* New York: Families and Work Institute, 1994.

Golden, O. *Poor Children and Welfare Reform.* Westport, CT: Auburn House, 1992.

Hayes, C.; Palmer, J.L.; and Zaslow, M. *Who Cares for America's Children? Child Care Policy for the 1990s.* National Research Council. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1990.

Marzke, C.; Both, D.; and Facht, J. *Information Systems to Support Comprehensive Human Services Delivery: Emerging Issues, Approaches, and Opportunities.* Falls Church, VA: National Center for Service Integration, 1994.

National Commission on Children. *Beyond Rhetoric: A New American Agenda for Children and Families.* Final Report. Washington, DC: National Commission on Children, 1991.

New York City Workforce Development Commission. *The New Workforce: Investing in New York City's Competitiveness.* New York: New York City Workforce Development Commission, 1994.

Olson, L., and Herr, T. *Building Opportunity for Disadvantaged Young Families: The Project Match Experience.* Evanston, IL: Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University and Olivet Community Center, 1989.

O'Neill, H. *New Directions in Welfare Policy: Issues and Opportunities for New York.* New York: Taub Urban Research Center, Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, New York University, 1996.

St. Pierre, R.G.; Layzer, I.; and Barnes, H. Two-Generation Programs: Design, Cost and Short-term Effectiveness. In *The Future of Children: Long-Term Outcomes of Early Childhood Programs. Future of Children*, vol. 5, no. 3, (Winter 1995): 94-114.

Smith, S., ed. *Two-Generation Programs for Families in Poverty: A New Intervention Strategy. Advances in Applied Developmental Psychology,* vol. 9. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1995.

Smith, S.; Blank, S.; and Bond, J.T. *One Program, Two Generations: A Report on the Forum on Children and the Family Support Act.* New York: Foundation for Child Development, in partnership with the National Center for Children in Poverty, 1990.

Smith, S.; Blank, S.; and Collins, R. *Pathways to Self-Sufficiency for Two Generations: Designing Welfare-to-Work Programs that Strengthen Families and Benefit Children.* New York: Foundation for Child Development, 1992.

Smith, S.; and Zaslow, M. Rationale and Policy Context for Two-Generation Interventions. In S. Smith, ed., 1995.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: FCD GRANTMAKING INTERESTS FOR NEW YORK CITY SERVICE PROJECTS*

The Foundation for Child Development is a grantmaking organization that focuses on childhood poverty. The foundation has been promoting the use of two-generation strategies to improve the long-term prospects of poor families. These are strategies to help families gain access to two sets of services simultaneously:

- services to support the healthy development of young children, e.g., high quality child care and early childhood education, parenting education, and preventive health care, and
- education and training services for their parents.

In addition to publishing reports on the two-generation strategy, the foundation has made a number of grants to further the use and understanding of this approach.

To further this grantmaking interest, the foundation is making modest planning grants ($25,000 to $50,000) to a small group of neighborhood service programs in New York City to help them develop two-generation community-based services. Grantmaking will focus on service agencies that:

1. Serve a discrete New York City neighborhood.
2. That provide either directly or through referrals two sets of services to the same low- income families:
    - services to support the healthy development of young children,
    - and education and training services for their parents.
3. Would like to expand their work with these families in the following directions:
    - development or strengthening of a family needs assessment;

- development or strengthening of an employment and training component for families now receiving child care, parenting education, or other family-oriented services;
- development or strengthening of a family case management system;
- improvement of the quality and coordination of child care and early childhood services, preventive health care, and parent education services offered to families;
- securing public funding to improve coordination of child development and adult self-sufficiency services.

Because the foundation is interested in learning from programs about the challenges involved in developing two-generation services, grantees would be asked to provide information to be included in a multi-site documentation of projects supported under these grants.

*circulated 1992-95.

ERIC

APPENDIX 2: FCD GRANT PERIODS FOR THE SITES

SITE	GRANT PERIOD
BRONX EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER	July 1, 1993 - June 30, 1994 July 1, 1994 - June 30, 1995 extended July 1, 1995 - August 31, 1995 September 1, 1995 - August 31, 1996
CHILD DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT CORPORATION	April 1, 1993 - March 31, 1994 July 1, 1994 - June 30, 1995 July 1, 1995 - June 30, 1996
FAMILY DYNAMICS	April 1, 1995 - March 31, 1997
GRAHAM-WINDHAM	July 1, 1993 - June 30, 1994 July 1, 1994 - September 30, 1995
MID-BRONX SENIOR CITIZENS COUNCIL, INC.	April 1, 1995 - March 31, 1997
PHIPPS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION	July 1, 1993 - June 30, 1994 July 1, 1994 - June 30, 1995 July 1, 1995 - June 30, 1996

APPENDIX 3: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO SITES ON DEVELOPING AUTOMATED TRACKING SYSTEMS

SITE	METIS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	OTHER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	DATES	PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES
BRONX EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER	Yes		10/94-1/96	Tracking system focused on case management
CHILD DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT CORPORATION	Yes		10/94-1/96	Survey
FAMILY DYNAMICS	No, more intensive evaluation conducted by Metis provided for in the FCD grant		3/95-2/97	Tracking system focused on case management and evaluation of Project ESTEEM
GRAHAM-WINDHAM	Yes	Computer specialist on staff	Some work in '94 and early '95, minimal thereafter	Tracking system focused on case management
PHIPPS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION	Yes	Additional assistance through CCRP project	10/94-1/96	Tracking system focused on case management
MID-BRONX SENIOR CITIZENS COUNCIL	Yes	Additional assistance through CCRP project	3/95-2/97	Tracking system focused on case management

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

FOUNDATION FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT
345 EAST 46TH STREET ROOM 700
NEW YORK, NY 10017

T COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

REPRODUCTION RELEASE
(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: Theory Meets Practice: A Report on Six Small-Scale Two-Generation Programs

Author(s): Susan Blank

Corporate Source: Foundation for Child Development

Publication Date: 1997

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic/optical media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS) or other ERIC vendors. Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following two options and sign at the bottom of the page.

☑ Check here
For Level 1 Release:
Permitting reproduction in microfiche (4" x 6" film) or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic or optical) *and* paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Level 1

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Level 2

☐ Check here
For Level 2 Release:
Permitting reproduction in microfiche (4" x 6" film) or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic or optical), but *not* in paper copy.

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but neither box is checked, documents will be processed at **Level 1**.

"I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic/optical media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries."

Sign here→ please

Signature: Claudia Conner

Printed Name/Position/Title: Claudia Conner, Grants Associate

Organization/Address: Fdn. for Child Development, 345 E. 46th Street, New York, NY 10017-3562

Telephone: 212/697-3150

FAX: 212/697-2258

E-Mail Address:

Date: 10/14/97

(over)

ED 425 941

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, *or*, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:

Address:

Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:

Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

KAREN E. SMITH
ERIC/EECE
CHILDREN'S RESEARCH CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
51 GERTY DRIVE
CHAMPAIGN, IL 61820-7469

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to: