

# **Hennepin County Foster Care Review Project FINAL EVALUATION**

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## INTRODUCTION

Federal legislation (PL 96-272) requires that the cases of children in foster care must undergo a review every six months. In 1984, the Minnesota State Legislature enacted legislation (Chapter 534) to provide for a Citizen Review Board Pilot Project, thus providing an opportunity to examine the impact of reviews which include persons external to the service delivery system. This demonstration project was carried out in Hennepin County and was a joint venture of the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Hennepin County Community Services Department and the Hennepin County Juvenile Court. This report summarizes evaluation work completed for the Foster Care Review Project of Hennepin County.

### Project Design

**STUDY POPULATION.** The study population consisted of a sample of 363 children who were in out of home placement and under the supervision of Hennepin County Community Services Department and met project eligibility requirements. Random sampling and random assignment techniques were used to help ensure the comparability of the sample to all cases in out of home placement in Hennepin County. The derivation of the study sample and results of a study examining sample comparability are described in the following sections.

**DESCRIPTION OF MODELS.** The Project consisted of three different models for reviewing cases of children in out of home placement. The primary question to be addressed by the evaluation is what are the comparative advantages and disadvantages in terms of cost and effectiveness of the three review board mechanisms employed during the Hennepin County Foster Care Review Demonstration Project? Briefly, the three models varied according to the composition of review board members as follows:

**Model I-Experimental Citizen Review Board:** was comprised of five citizen members. Scheduling of reviews and notification for this group was completed by project staff assistants. In order to notify interested parties of a scheduled review, project staff contacted the caseworker to obtain a list of persons who should be notified of each review to be conducted. Project staff then produced the letters of notification and returned them to the caseworker for signature and mailing. Project staff assistants were also responsible for producing case summaries from case file information and through discussions with caseworkers to provide background information for board members. The caseworker and the caseworker's supervisor were present, however a citizen board member acted as chairperson at the review. The recommendations in this model were determined by majority vote by the five member board.



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Model II-Experimental Citizen Participation in Review: was comprised of agency personnel (the caseworker, the caseworker's supervisor, and an independent supervisor) with the addition of two citizen members. An independent supervisor is an agency supervisor not associated with the case in terms of the development of the case plan, case management or delivery of services, and is assigned by the department as an objective participant in reviews. Scheduling, notification and case summary production for this group was also carried out by the project staff assistants. The independent supervisor chaired the meeting in this model, and was notified that the project was handling the scheduling. The recommendations in this model were determined by majority vote by the two citizens and the independent supervisor.

Model III-Current Internal Administrative Review: was comprised entirely of agency personnel (the caseworker, the caseworker's supervisor, and an independent supervisor). This group served as the "control" or "comparison" group of the study. Project staff are not involved with this model except to monitor cases due for administrative review via the Administrative Review Summary Form. For this group, there is someone in each division who notifies supervisors which reviews are coming due on a quarterly basis. The caseworker or supervisor will contact the independent supervisor to negotiate the review date. Notification of parents and others to be present are usually handled by the caseworker.

### Project Staff

The project staff consisted of four persons who served throughout the duration of the project. Positions staffed for the project were the Project Coordinator, two project staff assistants, and a project clerk.

PROJECT COORDINATOR. This position was filled by Dianne Dee. This position was hired from outside the agency especially for this project. At the outset of the project the coordinator was responsible for conducting a review of models employed in other states to incorporate citizen involvement. Based on this review, the project coordinator helped to develop the model of involvement to be used at Hennepin County. Other duties included developing strategies for recruitment, selection and training of volunteer board members and participating in these activities. On an ongoing basis the project coordinator helped to coordinate staff activities, provided liaison with the Department of Human Services, and the evaluators. The coordinator helped to produce periodic newsletters and acted as the project contact for persons interested in the project.

PROJECT STAFF ASSISTANTS. There were two project staff assistant positions which were filled by two of the agency's



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senior social workers, Jean Lindgren and Richard Spratt. At the beginning of the project responsibilities included assisting in determining the project protocol, recruitment strategies and, training strategy and content. They also provided outreach to describe the project to other Hennepin County units, and participated in recruitment and training of volunteers. Ongoing duties of the staff assistants included talking to caseworkers to get a list of those who needed to be notified, preparing case summaries for citizen boards through case file review and discussions with caseworkers, presenting case information to boards and clarifying information, scheduling the boards and making physical arrangements for reviews, ensuring confidentiality of participants, and completion of the administrative review summaries.

**PROJECT CLERK.** The project clerk position was filled from within the agency by David North. The project clerk provided all clerical support for the project, including typing notification letters, case summaries, and the training materials; and typing, paste up, layout and mailing of the project newsletter. The project clerk was also responsible for maintaining project files and keeping them current, this included periodic checks of the agency's discharge lists and court lists, and sending notices and tracking cases for Model III. The clerk also ensured that the evaluators received appropriate case materials on a timely basis.

## Project Evaluation

The major components of the evaluation are:

1. A descriptive study of the nature of the three placement review models being examined; and
2. A comparative analysis of the characteristics and permanent placement outcomes of the children whose placements are reviewed by the three study groups.

The following report sections describe activities completed in pursuit of these objectives. Specifically addressed in the attached report are (1) documentation of the sample selection completed by Hennepin County personnel, (2) an analysis which examines the comparability of the study sample to the pool of all cases eligible for the study, (3) an analysis which examines the comparability of cases randomly assigned to each of the three treatment groups, and (4) description of recruitment, selection and training of board members, (5) description of study outcomes, which includes a description and comparison of reviews conducted, information on costs and duration of placements, administrative project costs, the results of a case audit pursuant to section 427 of P.L. 96-272 which was conducted on cases selected for inclusion in the three project models, and the views of key informants on the effectiveness of the study.



#### DERIVATION OF THE STUDY SAMPLE

Before the sample was given to the evaluators, much work in generating a random sample was completed by Hennepin County personnel. Information regarding the procedures followed was gathered in in-person interviews with Larry Olson, who completed the random selection and random assignment procedures and Margaret Lonergan, who completed the replacement procedures. It should be noted that specific data from the initial sample selection were not available to the evaluators and are therefore described in general terms.

#### Eligibility Requirements

According to eligibility requirements developed at the outset of the project, the study population from which the random sample would be drawn included:

1. Child Welfare and Child Protection Cases with children in out-of-home placement as of April 4, 1985 who were included on the Hennepin County computerized extract file (HCCSIS and Placement File data), AND who had been in placement for at least four months, AND were less than 17 1/2 years of age, AND who were currently subject to administrative review. By definition, this excluded children in correctional facilities such as treatment programs, detention settings and forestry camps under the authority of the Department of Corrections. This would exclude delinquent children in the County Home School and the Hennepin County Detention Center.
2. Mental Retardation Cases with children in out-of-home placement as of April 4, 1985 who were listed on a computerized file generated from a survey of the MR Division regarding mentally retarded children in placement (updated from an effective date of March 1, 1985 to April 4, 1985), AND who had been in placement for at least four months, AND were less than 17 1/2 years of age, AND who were currently subject to administrative review, AND who were not in a State Hospital.

The evaluators were later informed that there were indeed children who reside in another county but were financially supported by Hennepin County were included in reviews, as were MR children who were residing in State Hospitals.

The following sections describe (1) how appropriate cases (those meeting the aforementioned eligibility requirements) from the total universe of all cases in placement at Hennepin County were identified, and (2) how these cases were randomly assigned to the three treatment groups.

As described above, data for child welfare and child protection cases were available on Hennepin County's computer system files, while mental retardation cases were not yet integrated into this system.

## The Sample - 5

Because of this difference in recordkeeping methods, cases from child welfare and child protection were selected in a separate, but parallel, process from the mental retardation cases. These processes are described below.

Additionally, it should be mentioned here, that in order to maintain the balance among the number of cases in the three divisions, a type of proportional sampling was used. That is cases were randomly selected from the Mental Retardation division in the same proportion that they existed in the total county placement population.

DRAWING CASES FROM CHILD WELFARE AND PROTECTION CASELOADS. The bases for generating the random samples for child protection and child welfare cases were two files extracted from the Community Service Information System utilized by Hennepin County. The first was an extract of children in out-of-home placement, and the second was an extract of the total system. Two files needed to be used in order to examine all pertinent variables. These two extracts were set up as files for use with the FOCUS program, and were then examined using a FOCUS report routine.

First, the total system extract was examined. All open cases where there were children listed were selected. At the same time, the birthdates of children were picked up in order to ensure that only cases of the appropriate age group were included.

Second, the cases selected during step one were matched with the names on the placement listing. This allowed the selection of cases where the children in the first extract were in placement on the second. Concurrently the type of placement, the continuous placement date, and the current placement date were collected from the file. All of this information was combined into a new extract file. This third file now contained all pertinent variables on children in placement ( $N = 1258$ ), and could now be used to draw cases for the study sample.

After the new file was created, a random number generator was used to assign a random number to each case in the new file. The cases were then ordered according to these random numbers. The cases were then arbitrarily assigned to each of the three models, the first 98 cases were assigned to Model I, the second 98 cases to Model II and the third 98 cases to Model III. The remaining cases were then set up to be utilized for the replacement pool. See Figure 1.

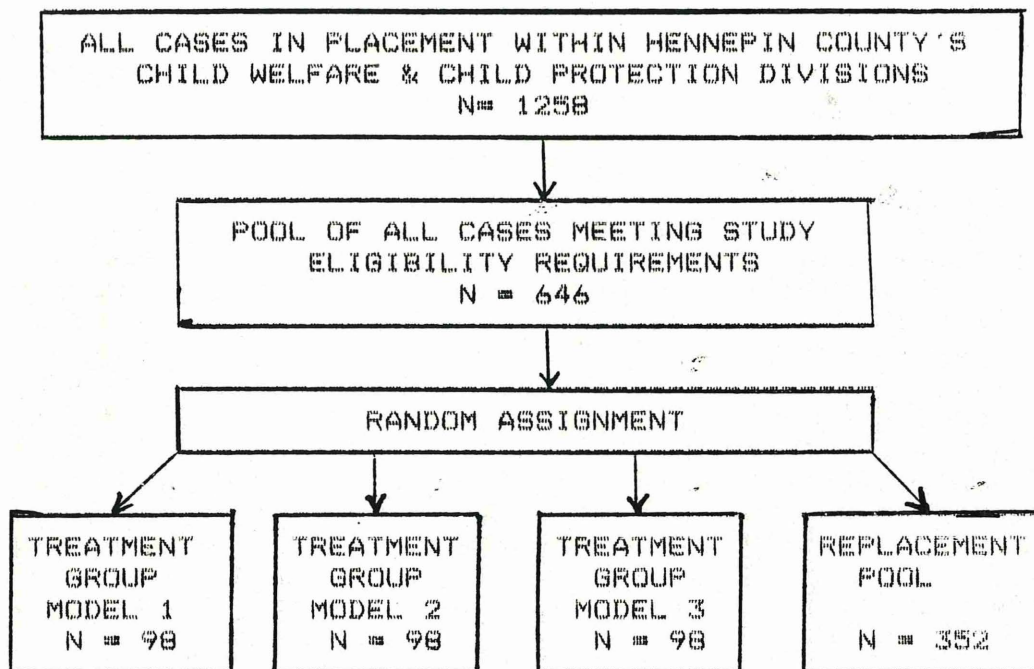
Because there were multiple children in some families, it was necessary to go through the cases again. In this run, the random number generator was used to assign random numbers to each of the children within families. The children in each family were then ordered according to their random numbers. The lowest numbered child became the child which was assigned to the study from within the case. In this way, the second or third randomly numbered child, etc. within a family was not included in the sample, nor were they in the replacement pool. This eliminated the possibility of children in the same family experiencing different review models, and thus confounding



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the results of the study.

Figure 1  
Diagram of the Sampling Process



DRAWING CASES FROM MENTAL RETARDATION CASELOADS. At the time of sample selection, 236 MR children were in placement in Hennepin County. The MR group had to be handled somewhat differently because they were not included on the County's automated database at the time of sample selection. The basis of sample selection for mentally retarded children was a survey of MR children completed by Richard Dettloff of the Management and Planning Office, one month before the sample was drawn. This survey was conducted using paper forms sent to MR caseworkers.

Information gathered via this survey was loaded onto a dBase file on the IBM PC, and was further transformed into a SYMPHONY file. SYMPHONY was then able to assign random numbers to cases in the same manner that FOCUS was used for the child protection and child welfare groups. Cases were then ordered, and selected for the three models in the same proportion (19%) that they existed in the general placement population (23 cases into each model), thus bringing each model's total to 121 cases.

Figure 2  
Diagram of Initial Sample

TREATMENT GROUP  
MODEL 1 (N = 121)  
98 CW & CP Cases  
+ 23 MR Cases

TREATMENT GROUP  
MODEL 2 (N = 121)  
98 CW & CP Cases  
+ 23 MR Cases

TREATMENT GROUP  
MODEL 3 (N = 121)  
98 CW & CP Cases  
+ 23 MR Cases

VERIFYING THE REPRESENTATIVENESS OF THE SAMPLE DRAWN. In order to determine whether the initial samples drawn were representative of the population of children in placement within Hennepin County, statistical tests (t-tests and chi-squares) were run on the Child Protection and Child Welfare samples. The samples were compared to one another and to the general population.

The following variables were used in these analyses: (a) length of current placement, (b) length of continuous placement, (c) age, (d) race, and (e) sex. Analysis of these variables indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between them before any replacement was done. Additionally, the proportion of child welfare and child protection cases in the selected subsample was checked and was found to be comparable to the proportions existing within the general population.

REPLACEMENT OF CASES WITHIN THE SAMPLE. In order to assure an appropriate sample, a further verification process was carried out by Margaret Lonergan. When the sample listing and the replacement table were provided to her, she sent lists of cases to the appropriate workers. The workers were asked to verify that the target child was in fact in placement, and to inform the project when the next administrative review was due. As an outcome of this process, it was found that 87 cases from the Child Protection and Child Welfare caseloads had to be replaced using cases from the replacement pool.

INITIAL SAMPLES:

TREATMENT GROUP  
MODEL 1 (N = 121)  
-----  
TREATMENT GROUP  
MODEL 2 (N = 121)  
-----  
TREATMENT GROUP  
MODEL 3 (N = 121)

VERIFICATION:

MEETS CRITERIA:  
REMAINS IN SAMPLE  
-----  
FAILS CRITERIA:  
DELETED FROM SAMPLE  
CASE REPLACED FROM  
REPLACEMENT POOL

REPLACEMENT SAMPLES:

TREATMENT GROUP  
MODEL 1 (N = 121)  
-----  
TREATMENT GROUP  
MODEL 2 (N = 121)  
-----  
TREATMENT GROUP  
MODEL 3 (N = 121)

The primary reason for replacement was that the child was no longer in placement. The second most common reason for replacement was that the project was not going to be ready to start reviewing cases until June 17, 1985. If the next review was due in June before the 18th, (between the date the sample was finalized and June 17th), the case was replaced - cases reviewed in May were kept in the sample.



## The Sample - B

A few cases were excluded because the County was basically involved only for financial reasons although the child lives in another county or another state and Hennepin County does not do an administrative review - that is done in the county of residence. In any case where the County was not currently conducting administrative reviews and was not required to do so, the case was replaced. Another reason for replacement of cases was the status of cases in State Hospital, or correctional placements, which were specifically excluded.

In addition to the 87 cases replaced from Child Protection and Child Welfare, approximately 12 cases were replaced from the MR caseload. Aside from cases not currently being in placement, there were a number of these cases that could not be identified as MR cases. In these cases a worker number had been assigned that did not belong to them or there was no worker name attached to those cases. This was the major reason for replacement in this group.

Replacement of cases was terminated at the end of May, and the sample was finalized.

MISCELLANEOUS SAMPLING ISSUES. In addition to the replacements described above, there were nine cases which the County's legal section requested that the project not review at the present time because of pending involuntary termination of parental rights trials. These cases do, however, remain in the sample. Rather than risking potential problems, the project followed up on these cases before assigning review dates. The next review would be due six months from the date of termination of parental rights (if this was indeed the outcome of the trial), since placement is considered to have started all over again at that point. The cases would then be included in a later review period. If the child remains in care, the next review would be at most 6 months from the date of the hearing. Additionally, there may be a court order, and that would supersede any other written plan.

## RESULTS OF THE SAMPLE COMPARABILITY STUDY

### Introduction

The next analysis was performed in order to determine the degree to which cases in the replacement samples to be utilized in the Hennepin County Foster Care Review Project were representative of the pool of 646 cases meeting the study criteria which was drawn from the entire population of children in foster care by the staff of Hennepin County.

As discussed in the previous section, Hennepin County personnel had already determined the representativeness of the initial samples of 363 cases (the three treatment groups of 121 each) to the pool of all eligible cases within the County (N = 646). (It should be noted that while the eligibility pool includes only cases from Child Protection and Child Welfare, the replacement samples used in this comparison also include cases from the Mental Retardation Division. This is because data received from the county on the initial sample cases from the MR Division was not available in a format compatible with the initial sample from the other two divisions.)

### Variables Included in the Comparability Study

Assessments of the comparability of the initial samples to the eligibility pool (completed by Hennepin County), and of the replacement samples to the eligibility pool (discussed in detail here) were based on comparisons of the same five variables. Chi-square tests of significance [a test which compares the composition of 2 groups and assesses the likelihood that differences are systematic or due to chance--this test is appropriate for variables to which meaningful numbers cannot be assigned] were conducted for the variables gender, and race; and t-tests [which assess the differences between averages and distributions around the mean of two groups and calculates the probability that differences are systematic or due to chance] were conducted for the variables age, length of current placement, and length of continuous placement. However, for the last two variables, data for the MR portion of the final sample was not available for comparison, and only 294 cases (those cases from Child Welfare and Child Protection) were included in the tests.

A significance level of  $p < .05$  was used in all statistical tests. This significance level can be interpreted as meaning that an observed difference between the groups - in this case the eligibility pool and replacement samples - would occur purely by chance in five out of one-hundred test trials. Thus, only when a test result was significant at a level of less than .05 was the result held to be statistically significant.



ResultsGender

The chi-square test run on the variable gender yielded a chi-square statistic of 5.626, 2 d.f., with a significance level of .98. That is, there was no statistically significant difference found between the eligible and study samples as regards the distribution of gender. Similarities of the eligibility pool and replacement samples can be seen in Table I. Females comprised 44.1% and 44.2% respectively, and males comprised 54.5% and 54.7% respectively. Data were not available in 13 of the cases, 1.4% of the eligibility pool, and 1.2% of the study samples.

Table I

	<u>Eligible Cases</u>		<u>Replaced Sample</u>	
	N	%	N	%
Female	285	44.1%	160	44.2%
Male	352	54.5%	198	54.7%

chi-square = 5.626    2 d.f.,    sig. = .98

Race

As seen in Table II, no significant difference was found in the racial distributions of the eligibility pool and the replacement samples. The reported chi-square was 16.324, 9 d.f., a significance level of .96. It should be noted that 133 cases were not included in this test, because data were not available for 48 cases from the eligibility pool and for 85 cases from the replacement sample.

Table II

	<u>Eligible Cases</u>		<u>Replaced Sample</u>	
	N	%	N	%
Black	117	19.6	51	18.4
White	368	61.5	172	62.1
Indian, N.S.	43	7.2	19	6.9
Chippewa	37	6.2	19	6.9
Sioux	4	.7	3	1.1
Winnebago	2	.3	1	.4
Other Indian	4	.7	1	.4
Hispanic	5	.8	4	1.4
Oriental	3	.5	0	
Other	15	2.5	7	2.5
Total	598		277	

chi-square = 16.3241    9 d.f.,    sig = .96

## Age

A t-test was used to examine the averages of target children's ages. The average ages of the eligibility pool and replacement samples were 11.40 and 11.69, respectively. The resulting significance level of .56, as shown in Table III, indicates that there was no significant difference in the average ages. Data from three cases are missing from the replacement sample because their birthdates were not available.

Table III

	N of cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Eligible Cases	646	11.4021	5.063	.199
Replaced Sample	359	11.5939	5.032	.266

\*\*\*\*\*

Pooled Variance Estimate				
F Value	2-Tail Prob	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob
1.01	.900	-.58	1003	.564

## Length of Current Placement

Length of current placement values also proved to be similar for the eligibility pool and replacement sample, as seen in Table IV. The t-test on this variable resulted in a significance level of .826. This level indicates that there are no significant differences in the length of placement in the current setting between the eligibility pool and study sample cases. As was previously mentioned, the data for this variable was not available for the MR cases in the replacement sample.

Table IV

	N of cases	Mean Years	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Eligible Cases	646	1.8433	4.292	.169
Replaced Sample	294	1.9028	2.636	.154

\*\*\*\*\*

Pooled Variance Estimate				
F Value	2-Tail Prob	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob
2.65	.000	-.22	938	.826



Length of Continuous Placement

Table V shows that the length of continuous placement is also quite similar for the eligibility pool and replaced sample. The t-test conducted on this variable yielded a significance level of .079, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups regarding length of continuous placement. As with the other placement variable above, the replacement sample used in this test includes only those cases from Child Protection and Child Welfare, not those from the MR Division.

Table V

	N of Cases	Mean Years	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Eligible Cases	646	2.1472	2.498	.098
Replaced Sample	294	2.4776	3.007	.175

\*\*\*\*\*

Pooled Variance Estimate				
F	2-Tail	T	Degrees of	2-Tail
Value	Prob	Value	Freedom	Prob
1.45	.000	-1.76	938	.079

Discussion

In conclusion, no statistically significant differences were found between the total eligibility pool and the replacement samples for the variables studied: race, gender, age, length of continuous placement and length of current placement. It can be concluded then, that the replacement sample of 362 cases is a fair representation of the eligibility pool with regard to the five variables utilized.

## COMPARISONS OF MODEL COMPOSITIONS

### METHODS

The next step in the comparability study was to run analyses to ascertain the comparability of the composition of the three treatment group models. Comparison was again based on the five variables of gender, race, age, length of current placement and length of continuous placement. As in the previously described analysis, the purpose of comparison was to determine whether there were any statistically significant differences between the cases in the three models on these five variables, or whether any differences that might exist should be attributed to random chance.

A chi-square test of significance was used for the variables Gender and Race. Each chi-square statistic is associated with a probability factor, i.e. the probability that any difference in the model compositions was due to chance. A probability level of .05 was chosen for the tests. The chi-square statistics were considered statistically significant only if their associated probability level was .05 or less. Such a finding would be interpreted as 5% probability that any difference between the models is due to chance.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for the variables age, length of current placement and length of continuous placement. ANOVA determines the total deviation for all cases from the overall mean and the deviation for cases in each model from the mean for that model. The ratio of these 2 summed deviations is known as an F test and indicates how much of the variations from the mean is due to the effect of the model. As with chi-square, each f statistic is associated with a probability level. Again, .05 was chosen as the critical value. F tests were held to be significant if the value of the associated significance level was equal to or less than .05.



## RESULTS

## GENDER

As stated above, a chi-square test was run on Gender by model. Three, hundred fifty-eight cases were included, gender labels were missing for five cases and these were not included in the test. The chi-square of .95025, 2 d.f., with a significance level of .62 suggested that there were no significant differences in gender distribution among the three models.

Table VI

Gender	Model I	Model II	Model III	Total
Male	67 55.4%	70 56.8%	62 52.5%	199 55.6%
Female	54 44.6%	49 41.2%	56 47.5%	159 44.4%

Chi-square = .95025      2 d.f., Significance level = .6218  
Missing cases = 5

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## RACE

A chi-square test was also computed for the variable race, by model. A probability level of .37 was generated, suggesting that there were no statistically significant differences in racial distribution between models. Two-hundred seventy-eight cases were included in the test, 65 cases were excluded because the data on race were missing.

Table VII

RACE	Model I	Model II	Model III	Total
Black	19 19.8%	13 13.5%	19 22.1%	51 18.3%
White	57 59.4%	66 68.8%	50 58.1%	173 62.2%
Indian, n.s.	7 7.3%	8 8.3%	4 4.7%	19 6.8%
Chippewa	5 5.2%	6 6.3%	8 9.3%	19 6.8%
Sioux	1 1.0%	0 0.0%	2 2.3%	3 1.1%
Winnebago	1 1.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 .4%
Other Indian	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 1.2%	1 .4%
Hispanic	1 1.0%	1 1.0%	2 2.3%	4 1.4%
Other	5 5.2%	2 2.1%	0 0.0%	7 2.5%

Chi-square = 17.20      16 d.f., Significance level = .3728  
Missing cases = 65



## AGE

The mean (average) age for the entire sample was 11.606 years. The means for models I, II, III were 11.53, 11.72, and 11.56 years, respectively. The probability level of .953 strongly indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the average ages of the models. Three-hundred, sixty-one cases were included in the test, 2 were missing data on age and were not included.

Table VIII

## AGE BY MODEL

	MEAN	STD. DEV	N OF CASES
Entire sample	11.606	5.025	361
Model I	11.538	5.241	122
Model II	11.722	4.938	121
Model III	11.557	4.926	118

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

	D.F.	SUM OF SQS	MEAN SQ	F-RATIO	F PROB
Between groups	2	2.46	1.23	.048	.953
Within Groups	358	9089.21	25.39		
Total	360	9091.67			

Table IX illustrates that the children in the sample tended to be older children (12 years or older). In all three models, over one half of the children fell into this age group.

Table IX  
Ages of Children in the Project

AGE	Model I	Model II	Model III	Total
5 or Less	21 (17.8%)	19 (16.1%)	20 (17.4%)	60 (17.1%)
6 to 11	28 (23.7%)	28 (23.7%)	23 (20.0%)	79 (22.5%)
12 or More	69 (58.5%)	71 (60.2%)	72 (62.6%)	212 (60.4%)

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Additionally, the median age (the age that divides the distribution in half, or the middle age) for each model is close to 13 years old. Median age for models I, II and III are 13.00, 13.06 and 13.22 respectively. The modal age (that age category which appears most frequently in a distribution) is still higher. The modal ages for models I, II and III are 16.00, 15.00 and 16.00 years respectively.

Since MR placements may be influencing this higher age, they were removed and data were again examined. Overall, 58% of the children were 12 years of age or older, the proportion in the 6 - 11 year old range did not change, and the percentage in the 5 year or less group increased only slightly.

### COURT ORDERED AND VOLUNTARY PLACEMENTS

Table X below shows the status of placements in each model. As can be seen type of placement is fairly evenly divided between voluntary and court ordered status. While Model III has slightly more court ordered placements, a chi-square test indicated that there was no significant differences between models.

Table X  
Court Ordered Versus Voluntary Placements

Care Status	Model I	Model II	Model III	Total
Court Ordered	58 (47.2%)	55 (45.8%)	64 (54.2%)	177 (49.0%)
Voluntary	65 (52.8%)	65 (54.2%)	54 (45.8%)	184 (51.0%)
Chi-square = 1.944      2 d.f.,      Significance level = .3783				



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## LENGTH OF CONTINUOUS PLACEMENT

The average number of years of continuous placement for all cases was 3.17. The average years in continuous placement for models I, II, and III were 3.6, 2.9, and 2.9 respectively. The difference in means between models was not found to be significant at the .05 level. Data were included in the test for 360 cases, 3 cases had missing data and were not included.

Table XI

### CONTINUOUS PLACEMENT LENGTH BY MODEL

	MEAN	STD. DEV	N OF CASES
Entire sample	3.177	3.592	360
Model I	3.638	3.901	123
Model II	2.929	3.732	120
Model III	2.946	3.049	117

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

	D.F.	SUM OF SQS	MEAN SQ	F-RATIO	F PROB
Between groups	2	39.80	19.90	1.547	.214
Within groups	357	4591.63	12.86		
Total	359	4631.43			

The majority of cases (54.7%) had been in placement for more than 18 months at the time the project started. The cases in placement for more than 18 months were distributed as follows: 74 (60.7%) in model I, 57 (47.9%) in model II, and 65 (55.6%) in model III.

Table XII  
Length of Continuous Placement

Case Status	Model I	Model II	Model III	Total
18 Months or Less	48 (39.3%)	62 (52.1%)	52 (44.4%)	162 (45.3%)
More Than 18 Months	74 (60.7%)	57 (47.9%)	65 (55.6%)	196 (54.7%)

Chi-square = 4.002      2 d.f.,      Significance level = .1352

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Since MR placements could again influence placement duration, they were removed and data were again examined. The cases in placement for more than 18 months were distributed as follows: 53 (54%) in model I, 39 (40%) in model II, and 47 (50%) in model III.

### LENGTH OF CURRENT PLACEMENT

The overall average of years in current placement for the entire sample was 1.9. In comparison, the average years in current placement were 2.02, 1.69, and 2.004 for models I, II, III respectively. As seen in Table XI below, the associated probability level of .606 indicates that these differences between these models is not statistically significant. Two-hundred four cases were included in the test, while the other 69 were not included because the data was missing.

Table XIII  
CURRENT PLACEMENT LENGTH BY MODEL

	MEAN	STD. DEV	N OF CASES
Entire sample	1.903	2.635	294
Model I	2.022	2.780	99
Model II	1.688	2.782	100
Model III	2.004	2.314	95

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

	D.F.	SUM OF SQS	MEAN SQ	F-RATIO	F PROB
Between groups	2	6.98	3.49	.501	.606
Within groups	291	2027.00	6.97		
Total	293	2.33.99			

### DISCUSSION

Upon examination of the data available for the criterion intake variables of gender, race, age, length of continuous placement and length of current placement we find that a comparison by model yields no statistically significant differences. On these five variables therefore the composition of the three treatment group models is not significantly different.



## RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND TRAINING OF BOARD MEMBERS

### Introduction

Recruitment did not occur until procedures, forms and training components had been established by the project. Minnesota Statute, Chapter 534, Subdivision 3 required that citizen review boards represent the various socio-economic, racial, and ethnic groups of Hennepin County. It further specified that at least one member should be a foster parent, and that no more than one person be employed by the Department of Human Services, a child welfare agency, or the juvenile court.

### Initial Identification of Interested Parties

In order to comply with these specifications, the Project Coordinator began the recruitment process by focusing initial contacts on several specific groups, including civic groups, minority groups, social service agencies, professional groups, corporations, persons who had expressed a specific interest in the project and persons who were recommended within the various racial and ethnic groups identified. In-person contacts were made with some groups, and many times, personal telephone calls were used to contact the various individuals who had been identified. These calls often led to the identification of additional individuals who might be interested in serving on the citizen review boards.

Appropriate individuals within corporations were identified and contacted by telephone. When interest was expressed, a packet of information which included brochures describing the project and applications for consideration for the Foster Care Review Boards were sent to corporations. In some cases, these calls were followed-up by the publication of articles in corporate newsletters.

In order to target efforts for the inclusion of foster parents, a special mailing which included 2 brochures outlining the project was sent to foster parents in Hennepin County. For those foster parents expressing an interest, additional materials, including the application were sent.

Several newspapers were also contacted in order to publicize the project as a means to recruit interested persons. As a part of the recruitment effort, announcements, editorials and/or articles appeared in the following publications:

Minneapolis Star and Tribune  
The Spokesman  
The Courier  
The Sun Newspapers  
Newsletter of Association of Retarded  
Citizens of Hennepin County  
Retired Senior Volunteer Program Newsletter  
Essentials (The Foster Parent Newsletter  
for Hennepin County)

Having through these means identified interested individuals, a mailing which included brochures describing the project, volunteer board member job descriptions and applications for consideration as foster care board members were sent. As a result of the recruitment process, 59 applications were received.

### Screening

Before being interviewed by the selection committee, each applicant underwent a criminal records check in order to identify any felony problems. No individuals were screened out at this point. Eight individuals did not schedule appointments to be interviewed, which resulted in a total of 51 individuals who were subsequently interviewed by the selection committee.

A six member selection committee was responsible for interviewing the applicants and was comprised of the following individuals:

Jody Baldwin	Marketing Representative, Pitney Bowes
Jim Kodadek	Psychologist, Association of Retarded Citizens of Hennepin County
Elizabeth Moore	Assistant Director, Bryant Glenwood Community Center
Emily Peake	Director, Upper Midwest American Indian Center
Peggy Studaker	Citizens' Coalition on Permanence for Children, Inc.
Ralph Willenbring	President, Minnesota Foster parent Association

Interviews were conducted by the selection committee in teams of two. As a basis for the interviews, a predetermined list of questions was used. The questions were developed initially by the project staff, and before the interviewing process started, selection committee members had the opportunity for input/suggestions on the questions they would be asking. After the final list of questions had been determined, committee members were asked to adhere to them during interviews. They



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were also asked to bear in mind the requirements of the law regarding the need to include minority members, foster parents, lay persons, social service professionals, etc. during the interviews in order to represent a well-balanced cross-section of the community in their recommendations.

As a result of this process, the selection committee recommended 21 persons to serve as board members and 10 to serve as alternates. Two persons selected as alternates declined to participate. Additionally, one individual selected as a board member failed to attend the mandatory training session, and was therefore replaced by an alternate, and a second individual selected as a board member suffered a heart attack and requested to be placed on the alternate list, and was replaced.

The following groups are represented on the boards and list of alternates:

8	Members of Minority Communities
4	Males
24	Females
7	Lay persons
7	Social Service Professionals
7	Foster Parents

The resulting list of board member and alternate suggestions was sent to Michael Weber, Director of Hennepin County Community Services Department and to the Honorable Allen Oleisky, Chief Judge of the Juvenile Court of Hennepin County. Subsequently, the list was submitted to Leonard Levine, Commissioner of Department of Human Services, State of Minnesota, who made the formal appointments.

### Board Composition

Persons who were appointed were then assigned to one of six boards. Utilizing the selection categories detailed above, appointees were assigned to boards to ensure appropriate representation of these groups on each board to the extent possible. A brief description of the resulting board composition follows:

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Board IA

Jerome Eggert

A 54 year old retired white male, formerly employed by AT&T, and a foster parent for 26 years.

Willie Bridges

A 37 year old black male who is a Legal Services Advisor for the Office of the Hennepin County Attorney and an adoptive parent.

Ellen Lepinski

A 34 year old white female who is a self-employed personnel consultant.

Janet Conley

A 57 year old white female homemaker and former foster parent.

Sandra Humphrey

A 48 year old white female who is employed by Anoka State Hospital as a Clinical Psychologist.

Board IB

Mark McLain

A 34 year old white male who is employed by the Sperry Corporation as an Engineering Specialist and is also a foster parent.

Judith Odegaard

A 37 year old white female who is Budget and Operations Manager for Northwestern National Life Insurance Company.

Myrna Emmons

A 34 year old black female who is a nurse and currently working on a degree in Human Services Administration.

Leslie Marcus

A 42 year old white female who is a social worker for St. Joseph's Home for Children.

Judith Willenbring

A 42 year old female who has been a foster parent for 15 years.



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Board\_IC

Linda Zuidema

A 32 year old white female who is a contract analyst for Northwestern National Life Insurance Company.

Marvin Hanson

A 32 year old American Indian male who is a social worker/coordinator for the Upper Midwest American Indian Center.

Marna Dahlgren

A 34 year old white female who is Personnel Director for the Minneapolis Girl Scout Council and a foster parent.

Catherine Heupel

A 30 year old white female homemaker who has had experience in the field of mental retardation.

Diane Landry

A 38 year old white female who has had 15 years experience with foster care and adoption with the Massachusetts Department of Social Services.

Board\_IID

Joanna Fladwood

A 37 year old white female who is a case manager for A.I.D. Homes.

Norma McDuffie

A 54 year old black female who is a foster parent.

Board\_IIE

Ella Gates-Mahmoud

A 24 year old black female who is an assistant editor for the Twin Cities Courier.

Vicki Rosholt

A 41 year old white female who previously served as a Guardian ad litem.

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Board IIF

Barbara Kaufman

A 51 year old white female who is a social worker/administrator for the Minnesota Association of Voluntary Social Service Agencies.

Cynthia DeSonnere

A 55 year old black female who is self-employed as a beautician.

Alternates

Syrile Ellison

A 53 year old white female who is self employed.

Connie Kirby

A 39 year old white female who is a foster parent.

Victoria Lewis

A black female who is a retired social worker for the Minneapolis School system.

Laura Pfeifer

A 22 year old white female who is a Resident Care Worker at Homeward Bound.

Jean Tatam

A 63 year old white female who is a retired social worker.

Daisy Young

A 55 year old black female who has been a day care provider. (This individual was never able to participate due to medical problems.)

Training of Board Members

Board members and alternates were required to attend fourteen hours of training before they were asked to conduct actual reviews. Training sessions were held on May 29 through May 31, 1985. Training was conducted using lecture formats, videotapes and role playing, and allotted time for discussion and questions. Also developed as an accompaniment for the in-person training was an extensive training manual, which covered several topics in detail, and could be utilized as a reference by board members. The training component was designed to provide the new board members with a framework in which to make decisions and to provide a clear presentation of what their role would be.



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All new board members attended a general session on May 29. This session followed a lecture format, and was designed to provide basic information regarding such topics as confidentiality, placement facilities, permanency planning, the role of the Court, the Indian and Minority Child Welfare Acts, adoption and the special needs child.

For the second part of the training, board members were broken into two groups with one group attending on May 30 and the second on May 31. This second session incorporated the use of videotapes. These tapes had been recorded by project staff and showed administrative reviews being conducted by Hennepin County personnel. The viewing of these tapes served as the basis for discussions, illustrated how reviews are conducted, familiarized trainees with the forms that would be used, illustrated types of cases that they would be reviewing, and sensitized them to various issues with which they were likely to come into contact.

An informal evaluation of training sessions conducted by project staff indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the training session by the new board members. Approximately 90% rated the sessions and the training manual as "extremely helpful."

### Additional Inservice Training

Project staff were always available to answer questions from board members. Additional training needs were identified throughout the course of the project. Ongoing training was expected to be a part of the project, and in response to frequently asked questions, in January 1986 additional inservice training was provided. Topics included in this session were: an overview of citizen review and how it citizen review is being conducted in other states, child advocacy, additional information on the role of the court, termination of parental rights, the special needs child. Additional written materials (supplementary information for the manual) were also provided for board members at this time. For those persons who could not attend the session it was videotaped for later viewing. Two videotape sessions were arranged by project staff to provide an opportunity for viewing by board members.

### Orientation of County Staff

Project staff met with the individual county units in order to orient them to the study. After describing the study, what was about to take place and how any changes might affect them, the staff answered questions that individuals had about the study. After a few months of project operation, a second series of meetings was conducted by a representative of the Department of Human Services and the Project Coordinator with unit supervisors of each division. These meetings further clarified the study procedures and addressed additional questions and concerns of the supervisors regarding the study. In addition to

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these meetings, project staff were available to answer questions on an ongoing basis.

In addition to these in-person contacts with Hennepin County staff, a brief article describing the Foster Care Review Project appeared in "The Family," the Community Services Department newsletter.

## Discussion

The board members selected seem to well reflect the desired board member criteria to provide a good mix of citizens. It is evident that an attempt was made to engage persons with a demonstrated interest in the welfare of children and who represented the socio-economic, racial and ethnic background of Hennepin County in the citizen review process. The commitment of these volunteers is evidenced by the fact that all 26 who started the project remained active throughout the project.



## FINDINGS

The following section will summarize information concerning the process and outcomes of administrative reviews in the three models as collected on the Administrative Review Summary (See Appendix A). Included is information comparing (1) number of reviews conducted in each model, (2) modifications of case plans in each model, (3) barriers to permanency identified in each model, (4) type of participants attending reviews in each model and (5) case resolution in each model.

## NUMBER OF REVIEWS CONDUCTED IN EACH MODEL

Table 1 shows the number and percent of reviews reported in each model of foster care administrative review. As can be seen, although more reviews occurred in Models I and II, the number of reviews in each model do not differ importantly.

Table 1

## NUMBER OF REVIEWS IN EACH MODEL

MODEL	N	%
Model I	143	38%
Model II	121	33%
Model III	108	29%
TOTAL	372	100%

Evaluators also examined the number of reviews conducted per child. Table 2, below, summarizes the number of reviews per child by model. The numbers of first, second and third reviews are roughly similar for the three models.

Table 2

## NUMBER OF REVIEWS PER CHILD BY MODEL

# REVIEWS/CHILD	MODEL I	MODEL II	MODEL III	TOTAL
1 Review	39 (45%)	50 (60%)	41 (58%)	130 (54%)
2 Reviews	37 (43%)	28 (34%)	23 (32%)	88 (37%)
3 Reviews	10 (12%)	5 (6%)	7 (10%)	22 (9%)

## MODIFICATION OF CASE PLANS

Frequency of Modifications. Data concerning modifications of case plans was available for 239 (64%) cases. In 134 cases (58%), the plans were accepted without modifications. In the other (42%) cases, the plans were accepted with modifications. No cases were not accepted.

Table 3 compares frequency of modifications in case plans across the three models for first reviews. As can be seen, changes in the plan were much more likely in Model I and Model II: For model I cases, the plan was accepted without modification in thirty-one (40%) instances. For model II cases, the plan was accepted without change in forty-three (54%) instances. For Model III cases, the plan was accepted without change in sixty (83%) instances.

Table 3

## ACCEPTANCE OF CASE PLAN BY MODEL: 1ST REVIEW

	I	II	III	TOTAL
Accepted, as is	31 (40%)	43 (54%)	60 (83%)	134 (59%)
Accepted, with modifications	47 (60%)	36 (46%)	12 (17%)	95 (42%)

Chi Square = 30.13. Sig. = .0000

Table 4 shows the number and frequency of case plan modifications for those cases which were reviewed a second time during the project. The total frequency of plan modification is slightly smaller than for first reviews: a decline from 42% to 33% of cases modified. Comparison of models shows that acceptance of plans without modification in second reviews, as in first reviews, is least frequent in Model II (44%) and Model I (61%), compared with Model III (97%).

Type of Modifications: Information as to the nature of the case plan changes was available for 125 (93%) of cases that were modified. Types of change in each model are summarized in Table 5. Percentages do not total to 100% because more than one change was possible in each plan.

Case plan modifications occurred significantly more often in three areas: services to child, services to parent and visitation rights. Case plans were more frequently modified with respect to services to the child in Model I cases (63%) and Model II (54%) cases, as compared with Model III cases (19%). Case plans were



more frequently modified with respect to services to the parents in Model I cases (53%) and Model II (39%) cases, as compared with Model III cases (14%). Changes in visitation plan were more frequent in Model I (31%) and Model II (42%) than Model III (14%). There were no significant differences among the models concerning services to foster parents.

Table 4

## ACCEPTANCE OF CASE PLAN BY MODEL: 2ND REVIEW

	I	II	III	TOTAL
Accepted, as is	23 (61%)	12 (44%)	30 (97%)	65 (67%)
Accepted, with modifications	15 (39%)	15 (56%)	1 (3%)	31 (33%)
Chi Square = 19.6	Sig. = .0001			

Table 5

## TYPE OF CASE PLAN MODIFICATIONS BY MODEL

	MODEL I	MODEL II	MODEL III	TOTAL	CHI SQ SIG.
Services to child	31 (63%)	21 (54%)	7 (19%)	59 (48%)	.0002
Services to parent	26 (53%)	15 (39%)	5 (14%)	46 (37%)	.0011
Services to foster parent	3 (6%)	4 (10%)	6 (17%)	13 (11%)	.2951
Visitation plan	15 (31%)	16 (42%)	5 (14%)	36 (29%)	.0276

Numbers do not total 100% because more than one change was possible.

## BARRIERS TO PERMANENCY

Number of case plan barriers: There were differences among the models in the number of case plan barriers identified. Across the entire sample, the average number of case plan barriers was .51. In Model II the average was .81 and in Models I and III, the average was .21 and .53 respectively. This difference in average number of case plan barriers was highly statistically significant ( $p=.001$ ).

Type of case plan barriers: Types of case plan barriers identified in the reviewed cases are summarized in Table 5. The percents do not total 100% because more than one barrier may have been identified in each case.

In twenty-nine (13%) of all cases, lack of clarity in permanency goals was found to present a barrier to permanency. In twenty-five (11%) of all cases, lack of clarity in the time frame for goal accomplishment was a barrier. In seven cases (3%), goals/expectations for the child were not clear. In seventeen cases (7%), goals/expectations for the parent were not clear. In twelve cases (5%), major issues were not addressed. In four cases (2%), placement was not seen as meeting the needs of the child.

Table 5  
CASE PLAN BARRIERS TO PERMANENCY BY MODEL

	MODEL I	MODEL II	MODEL III	TOTAL	CHI SQ SIG.
Permanency goals not clear	4 ( 5%)	15 (20%)	10 (14%)	29 (13%)	.0221
Time frame for goals not clear	5 ( 6%)	15 (20%)	5 ( 7%)	25 (11%)	.0123
Goals for child not clear	0 ( 0%)	6 ( 8%)	1 ( 1%)	7 ( 3%)	****
Goals for parents not clear	4 ( 5%)	10 (13%)	3 ( 4%)	17 ( 8%)	.0717
Major problems not addressed	1 ( 1%)	6 ( 8%)	5 ( 7%)	12 ( 5%)	****
Placement doesn't meet needs of child	2 ( 3%)	2 ( 3%)	0 ( 0%)	4 ( 2%)	****
Other	0 ( 0%)	7 ( 9%)	14 (20%)	21 ( 9%)	****

\*\*\*\* Not appropriate for statistical test of differences.

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There were a two interpretable differences among the models. "Permanency goals not being clear" was reported in 20% of Model II reviews, 14% of Model III reviews and 5% of Model I reviews. "Time for accomplishing goals not clear" was reported in 20% of Model II reviews, compared with 7% of Model II reviews and 6% of Model I reviews. Other cell frequencies are too small to permit calculation of significance tests.

Total number of client barriers: There were differences in the number of client barriers to permanency identified. The average number of client barriers found was .94. In Model II, the average was 1.21 and in models I and III the average was .78 and .81 respectively. An analysis of variance of the difference between models was moderately significant at a level of .0337.

Type of client barriers to permanency: Table 6 shows the frequency with which possible client barriers to permanency were mentioned in the reviews. The most frequently mentioned client barrier to permanency was the inability of the parent to make progress toward goals, mentioned in one-third (32%) of the reviewed cases. Also commonly cited was the lack of cooperation from parents, indicated in about a quarter (27%) of the reviewed cases. Inability of the child to make progress toward goals, lack of cooperation from the child and lack of parent/child contact were mentioned less often.

Examining the six client barriers across model type does not reveal any differences in the pattern of client barriers. Only in the category of 'other' client barriers to permanency does any difference among the models appear.

Table 6  
CLIENT BARRIERS TO PERMANENCY BY MODEL

	I	II	III	TOTAL	SIG.
Lack of parent progress toward goals	21 (27%)	31 (41%)	20 (28%)	72 (32%)	.1112
Lack of child progress toward goals	7 ( 9%)	4 ( 5%)	3 ( 4%)	14 ( 6%)	.4608
Lack of cooperation from parents	19 (24%)	26 (35%)	15 (21%)	60 (27%)	.1635
Lack of Cooperation from child	1 ( 1%)	2 ( 3%)	4 ( 6%)	7 ( 3%)	****
Lack of parent child contact	6 ( 7%)	10 (13%)	9 (13%)	25 (11%)	.4723

\*\*\*\* Not appropriate for statistical test of differences.



## Review Process - 33

Total number of agency barriers to permanency: The total number of agency barriers to permanency was .25 for the entire sample. The average for Model II was .41. The averages for Models I and III were .13 and .15 respectively. The ANOVA F value of 6.3392 was statistically significant at a level of .002

Legal system barriers to permanency: Legal system barriers were reported in relatively few cases. The average for Models I, II and III were found to be .17, .31 and .30 respectively. The F value of 1.1185 is not statistically significant.

Total number of barrier to permanency: The mean number of barriers to permanency reported for the whole sample was 1.94. Barriers were most likely to be reported in Model II and least likely to be reported in Model I. The average number of barriers for Model II was 2.75. The average number of barriers for Models I and III were 1.28 and 1.80 respectively. The ANOVA F value of 7.9380 is significant a level of .0005.

## PARTIES PARTICIPATING IN REVIEWS

Number of Participants. The average number of participants reported for first administrative reviews for the the entire sample was 3.7. The average number of participants in Model II was greater than in Models I and III. In Model II the average number of participants was 4.17. This compares to means of 3.27 and 3.68 for Models I and III respectively. The ANOVA F value of 9.9456 is significant at a level of .0001.

There were also differences in number of participating parties in the second review hearings which were held. The overall average number of participants for all cases having a second review was lower than for first reviews: 3.28 for first reviews, compared with 3.7 for second reviews. For second reviews, the greatest average number of participants was in Model III (3.58), the next greatest in Model II (3.06) and the smallest in Model I (2.59). The ANOVA F value of 10.2767 is significant at a level of .0001.

Type of Participants. Table 7 shows the number and percent various kinds of participants attended reviews, based on the 241 cases where this information had been recorded. The percents do not total to 100% because more than one type of participant was represented at each review.

There are a number of differences in the types of participants represented in the three administrative review models. As would be expected, independent reviewers are much more likely to be represented in Model II (95%) and Model III (95%) than Model I (5%). Foster parents are more likely to participant in Model I reviews (38%) than either Model II (20%) or Model I (11%). Unspecified "other" types of participants are more likely in Model II (21%) than Model I (14%) or Model III (4%).

Table 7

## TYPE OF PARTICIPANTS BY MODEL

	I	II	III	TOTAL	SIG.
Social Worker	81 (94%)	77 (95%)	73 (99%)	231 (96%)	.78000
Supervisor	72 (84%)	70 (86%)	70 (95%)	212 (88%)	.0945
Independent reviewer	4 ( 5%)	77 (95%)	68 (92%)	149 (62%)	.00000
Mother	21 (25%)	30 (37%)	18 (24%)	69 (29%)	.1286
Foster Parent	32 (38%)	16 (20%)	8 (11%)	56 (23%)	.00002
Child	23 (27%)	14 (17%)	11 (15%)	48 (20%)	.1200
Father	13 (15%)	8 (10%)	7 (10%)	28 (12%)	.4493
Guardian ad litem	7 ( 8%)	10 (12%)	4 ( 5%)	21 ( 9%)	.3016
Group Home Staff	3 ( 4%)	4 ( 5%)	8 (11%)	15 ( 6%)	.1396
RTC staff	5 ( 6%)	5 ( 6%)	1 ( 1%)	11 ( 5%)	****
Attorney	2 ( 3%)	4 ( 5%)	3 ( 4%)	9 ( 4%)	****
Indian Advocate	3 ( 4%)	4 ( 5%)	1 ( 1%)	8 ( 4%)	****
Therapist	4 ( 5%)	2 ( 3%)	1 ( 1%)	7 ( 3%)	****
Other	12 (14%)	17 (21%)	3 ( 4%)	32 (13%)	.00079

\*\*\*\* Not appropriate for statistical test of differences.

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Number of Participants Excluding Agency Personnel. When agency personnel (social workers, supervisors and independent reviewers) are removed from this analysis, the average number of participants reported for first administrative reviews for the entire sample falls to 2.05 for 146 cases. The average number of participants in Model III was greater than in Models I and II. In Model III the average number of participants was 2.09. This compares to means of 2.02 and 2.07 for Models I and II respectively. The ANOVA F value of .088 is not significant indicating no differences between models. The number of reviews which persons other than agency personnel attended does differ however, with 62 cases in Model I, 55 cases in Model II and 31 cases in Model III.

## TIME TAKEN BY ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS

The average number of minutes required for the administrative review for the entire sample was 51.08. Reviews in Model I were slightly longer than for Models II and III. The mean for the Model I cases in the sample was somewhat higher, at 59.1 minutes. This compares to sample means of 46.4 and 44.8 for models II and III respectively. The greater length of time needed to complete Model I reviews may be a function of the larger number of persons involved in reviewing the case.

## CASE RESOLUTION:

Table B shows the number and percentages of children leaving or remaining in placement among the three models. There are no differences among the models.

In interpreting this finding it should be noted that a generally higher level of leaving placement may have occurred overall due to a county reorganization of the Child Welfare Department. Social workers in this division went from handling generalized to specialized caseloads. At the time this reorganization took place, many workers sought to close cases before their caseloads were redistributed to the specialized units. It is unclear what impact this may have had on the project findings.

According to a record review conducted by project staff at the time of the project's conclusion, 7 cases in Model I, 3 cases in Model II, and 6 cases in Model III who had been reported as leaving placement had returned before the end of the project.



Table 8

## CASE RESOLUTION BY MODEL

MODEL	I	II	III	TOTAL
Case Left Placement	40 (33%)	43 (34%)	53 (46%)	136 (36%)
Case Remained in Placement	84 (67%)	79 (66%)	64 (53%)	227 (62%)

Chi Square = 5.1927, Not Significant

A summary of children who left placement by unit can be found in Table 9. The largest proportion of children leaving placement were child welfare cases in all models.

Table 9

## CASES LEAVING PLACEMENT BY UNIT AND MODEL

UNIT	I	II	III	TOTAL
Child Protection	14 (35%)	20 (47%)	22 (41%)	56 (41%)
Child Welfare	24 (60%)	23 (53%)	28 (53%)	75 (55%)
Mental Retardation	2 (5%)	0 (--%)	3 (6%)	5 (4%)

The number of cases who left placement before a project review was quite large. As seen in table 10, nearly three-fourths of all cases leaving placement did so before a review was conducted. This did not vary across models.

Table 10

## CASES LEAVING PLACEMENT BEFORE A PROJECT REVIEW

UNIT	I	II	III	TOTAL
Child Protection	11 (79%)	13 (65%)	18 (82%)	42 (75%)
Child Welfare	18 (75%)	18 (78%)	20 (71%)	56 (75%)
Mental Retardation	1 (50%)	0 (--%)	1 (33%)	2 (40%)
Total	30 (75%)	31 (72%)	39 (73%)	100 (74%)

Table 11 shows information on the disposition of cases who left placement. Such data were only available for 56 (43%) of those 136 cases who left placement. As can be seen, the majority of children were returned to their parental homes.

Table 11

## DISPOSITION OF CASES LEAVING PLACEMENT

MODEL	I	II	III	TOTAL
Parental Home	11	9	16	36
Placed with Relative	3	3	1	7
Placed for Adoption	2	0	2	4
Correctional Placement	1	0	0	1
Turned 18 Years Old	2	2	2	6
Moved Out of County	0	1	3	4

There were a total of 21 cases for whom the evaluators did not have information. This total includes 6 cases from Model I, 6 from Model II and 7 from Model III. Several of these cases were mentioned in pending Termination of Parental Rights reports, no further information is available however regarding final disposition of these cases.

## COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH PLACEMENT

Introduction

In order to provide information on the costs associated with placement in each of the models, Hennepin County's Accounting Office provided the evaluators with a bookkeeping listing for each child in the project. This listing provided information for each child regarding the type of placements, the cost per placement, and the duration of each placement. Additional data were provided regarding other costs incurred during placement, such as medical treatment costs, pharmaceutical costs, therapy costs, transportation costs and clothing costs; to the extent that these costs could be identified by the evaluators, these costs were removed in order to provide consistency in the data to be analyzed.

Data were not available on the Hennepin County Accounting System for placement costs for those children who were in Intermediate Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded (ICFMR) when these costs were paid for by the State of Minnesota Medical Assistance Program. In order to derive a best estimate of costs for the 31 mentally retarded children to whom this applied, it was assumed that these children were likely to have remained in placement for the duration of the project, and that their placements did not change. A per diem rate for the facilities was obtained, and this rate was multiplied by the total number of days in the project (457 days) in order to obtain the cost estimates for this group. Table 1, below, shows the rates used for these calculations.

TABLE 1  
COSTS USED FOR ICFMR FACILITIES

Facility	Per Diem Rate	Total Cost
Rolling Acres	\$ 75.92	\$34,695.44
Dakotas Children	\$ 96.57	\$44,132.49
Hammer Residence	\$ 73.17	\$33,438.69
Homeward Bound	\$112.48	\$51,403.36
Demar Childrens Home	\$108.73	\$49,689.61
New Oak Logan	\$112.26	\$51,302.82
Vasa Childrens Home	\$ 71.52	\$32,684.54
Laura Baker	\$ 54.25	\$24,792.25
Northwood Childrens Home	\$ 88.19	\$40,293.69
Trevilla of Robinsdale	\$ 90.73	\$41,463.61
Home for Creative Living	\$104.99	\$47,980.43

The following listing defines the placement types as they are defined in the listing of placement codes used by the accounting system, and will be used throughout the body of this section.



PLACEMENT CODES

- A. Hennepin County Foster Home: A private family home in the county licensed through Hennepin County Community Services Department and not included in categories B & C or L & M listed below.
- B. Group Family Foster Home (Agency Group Home): Licensed foster home in Hennepin County in which adolescents are placed and which use a group philosophy of treatment.
- C. Foster Care for MR/Physically Handicapped: Licensed foster home in which only mentally retarded and physically handicapped children are placed.
- D. Other Agency Foster Homes: A family foster home licensed through another county in Minnesota or through a private Minnesota agency.
- E. DPW Rule 8 Group Home (Treatment Group Home): A privately operated and sponsored group home in the community licensed directly by the Department of Public Welfare.
- F. DPW Rule 5 Residential Treatment Center (Emotionally Disturbed): A state licensed facility for children with emotional or behavioral problems that preclude their placement in family care or group homes.
- G. DPW Rule 34 Residential Treatment Center (Mentally Retarded): State licensed facilities that are usually privately operated and sponsored that provide 24-hour care for mentally retarded adults or children.
- H. Unlicensed Placement: Foster home or facility which is not licensed, but to which a child has been court ordered, or which is pending licensure.
- I. Independent Living Arrangement: Emancipated minor not living at home of parent(s) or guardian(s).
- J. Treatment Foster Home: Licensed foster home with specially trained foster parents used as an alternative to residential treatment centers for disturbed children who would benefit from a homelike setting.
- K. Restricted License: A home licensed for one or more specific children, with the understanding that the home will not be available for placement of other children.
- L. Correctional Facilities: Facilities operated or certified by the Department of Corrections or Court Services for children who have been adjudicated delinquent or who are awaiting adjudication (includes Juvenile Detention).
- M. Other Type Vendor
- N. Residential Treatment for the Chemically Dependent
- O. County

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#### Average Placement Costs

First, costs for placement were examined to compare costs between each of the three models. The statistical test 'Analysis of Variance' was used as the means to compare the average cost of placement for each model and to determine whether these differences were statistically significant. Table 2, below shows that both Models I and II exhibited a higher average placement cost than Model III. The F probability indicates that these differences were not statistically significant (again compared to  $p =$  or less than .05 as the chosen level to achieve statistical significance).

TABLE 2  
AVERAGE COSTS FOR PLACEMENT BY MODEL

MODEL I	\$13,149.61
MODEL II	\$13,258.29
MODEL III	\$12,233.05

F Ratio = .150      F Probability = .860, ns

These costs were further examined to determine if the composition of each of the models by unit type (Child Protection, Child Welfare or Mental Retardation) affected costs reported for each model, e.g., did a disproportionate number of longer duration MR placements affect any of the models? Table 2A summarizes the results of cost analyses for each unit by model.

While some variation in average costs across models for each unit are apparent (most notably, a higher cost is associated with MR placements), significance tests using analysis of variance indicated no statistically significant differences in unit costs among models.

TABLE 2A  
AVERAGE COSTS PER UNIT BY MODEL

UNIT TYPE	MODEL I	MODEL II	MODEL III	TOTAL
CHILD PROTECTION	\$ 6,924.65	\$10,053.34	\$ 7,393.36	\$ 8,276.40
CHILD WELFARE	\$10,808.78	\$ 9,309.23	\$ 8,951.20	\$ 9,809.25
MENTAL RETARDATION	\$28,891.10	\$28,574.09	\$29,654.40	\$29,028.80

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Table 2B, summarizes the average costs for each type of placement by model. Several differences arise, and are primarily due to a small number of placements within a category, together with widely differing lengths of placement.

TABLE 2B  
AVERAGE COSTS PER PLACEMENT TYPE BY MODEL

	MODEL I	MODEL II	MODEL III
Hennepin County Foster Home	\$ 7,882.88	\$ 7,286.83	\$ 7,330.66
Group Family Foster Home (Agency Group Home)	\$12,980.51	\$ 9,354.68	\$ 6,981.96
Foster Care for MR/Physically Handicapped	\$11,632.23	\$14,441.53	\$10,489.91
Other Agency Foster Homes	\$ 9,481.32	\$ 5,578.52	\$ 6,979.26
DPM Rule 8 Group Home (Treatment Group Home)	\$12,654.35	\$10,543.39	\$13,684.43
DPM Rule 5 Residential Treatment Center (Emotionally Disturbed)	\$22,053.95	\$22,788.62	\$19,094.24
DPM Rule 34 Residential Treatment Center (Mentally Retarded)	\$46,192.65	\$38,149.34	\$46,056.11
Unlicensed Placement	\$ 4,151.88	\$ 5,657.54	\$11,610.75
Independent Living Arrangement	-----	\$ 4,842.62	-----
Treatment Foster Home	\$18,194.37	\$15,411.07	\$10,308.78
Restricted License	-----	\$ 5,797.62	\$ 6,488.18
Correctional Facilities	\$ 4,722.02	-----	\$21,371.30
Other Type Vendor	\$11,891.01	\$ 6,187.57	\$ 7,319.30
Residential Treatment for the Chemically Dependent	-----	\$11,767.91	\$14,970.96
County	\$ 4,084.55	\$ 8,822.38	\$ 6,077.98



The Effects of Mental Retardation Placements on Cost

Since it was noted that the costs of mental retardation placements were higher than for either Child Welfare or Child Protection cases, an analysis of costs with these MR cases removed was conducted in order to determine if this would effected any model differently. Table 2C, below, shows the costs for the entire sample in each model, and the costs with the MR cases removed. As expected, average costs dropped. As can be seen the removal of these cases seemed to effect all models equally, and again, there is no statistically significant differences in costs between models when examined using analysis of variance.

TABLE 2C  
AVERAGE COSTS FOR PLACEMENT BY MODEL

MODEL #	FOR ALL CASES	WITH MR REMOVED
MODEL I	\$13,149.61	\$9,092.52
MODEL II	\$13,258.29	\$9,700.00
MODEL III	\$12,233.05	\$8,751.84
F Ratio = .590		F Probability = .555, ns

Average Days in Placement

Next, the average number of days in placement associated with each model were examined to determine how the three models compared. Again, 'Analysis of Variance' was used as the means to compare the average number of days in placement for each model and to determine whether these differences were statistically significant. Table 3, below shows that both Models I and II exhibited a higher average number of days in placement than Model III. The F probability indicates that these differences were not statistically significant however.

TABLE 3  
AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS IN PLACEMENT BY MODEL

MODEL I	323.83
MODEL II	293.25
MODEL III	287.32
F Ratio = 1.321	
F Probability = .268	

The duration of placement was further examined by unit type (Child Protection, Child Welfare or Mental Retardation) for each model. Table 3A summarizes the results of these analyses for

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each unit by model.

Again, while some variation exists across models for each unit, significance tests using analysis of variance indicated no statistically significant differences in duration within units among models. As would be expected, because of the disability involved, the mental retardation unit displays the longest placement duration overall.

TABLE 3A  
AVERAGE DAYS IN PLACEMENT PER UNIT BY MODEL

UNIT TYPE	MODEL I	MODEL II	MODEL III	TOTAL
CHILD PROTECTION	270.514	283.135	274.417	276.672
CHILD WELFARE	311.333	238.660	231.043	265.763
MENTAL RETARDATION	438.875	427.652	433.136	433.384

The average number of days in each placement type by model was also examined. Table 3B on the following page, summarizes this information. For all models, we find that mental retardation placements exhibit the longest average duration. While several differences in the average days per placement type occur, there is no consistent pattern among the models regarding duration of placement.

#### The Effects of MR Placements on Days in Placement

Because MR placements tended to be of longer duration, an analysis was run to determine whether removing these cases would have a differential effect among models. Table 3C shows the average days in placement by model with and without MR cases.

As expected, the average number of days decreased with the exclusion of mental retardation cases. This exclusion seemed to effect all models equally, and again, using analysis of variance, we find no significant differences between models.

TABLE 3C  
AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS IN PLACEMENT BY MODEL

MODEL #	FOR ALL CASES	WITH MR REMOVED
MODEL I	323.83	296.23
MODEL II	293.25	262.02
MODEL III	287.32	253.19
F Ratio = 1.577		F Probability = .208, ns

TABLE 3B  
AVERAGE DAYS PER PLACEMENT TYPE BY MODEL

	MODEL I	MODEL II	MODEL III
Hennepin County Foster Home	372.20	365.70	323.91
Group Family Foster Home (Agency Group Home)	338.00	294.67	218.50
Foster Care for MR/Physically Handicapped	415.50	457.00	386.00
Other Agency Foster Homes	327.82	410.55	362.50
DPW Rule 8 Group Home (Treatment Group Home)	248.73	155.67	244.87
DPW Rule 5 Residential Treatment Center (Emotionally Disturbed)	274.11	218.71	204.87
DPW Rule 34 Residential Treatment Center (Mentally Retarded)	457.00	434.27	457.00
Unlicensed Placement	245.50	381.67	298.67
Independent Living Arrangement	-----	457.00	-----
Treatment Foster Home	407.73	353.60	325.00
Restricted License	282.25	313.69	362.83
Correctional Facilities	140.50	-----	172.00
Other Type Vendor	435.25	195.25	206.33
Residential Treatment for the Chemically Dependent	-----	140.50	188.00
County	393.80	334.67	121.25



Number of Placements Per Child

The number of placements experienced by the children in the project was also of interest. Table 4, shows that the number of placements per child did not vary greatly among the three models. The majority of children in the project (80.3%) were in only one placement during the project, while 15% were in two different placements during the project. A total of 413 placements took place during the project period.

TABLE 4  
NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS BY MODEL

# OF PLACEMENTS	MODEL I	MODEL II	MODEL III	TOTAL
1 PLACEMENT	91 (79.8%)	91 (81.3%)	83 (79.8%)	265 (80.3%)
2 PLACEMENTS	15 (13.2%)	17 (15.2%)	18 (17.3%)	50 (15.2%)
3 PLACEMENTS	6 ( 5.3%)	4 ( 3.6%)	2 ( 1.9%)	12 ( 3.6%)
4 PLACEMENTS	2 ( 1.8%)	0 (-----)	1 ( 1.0%)	3 ( .9%)

Table 4A shows the number of placements in each placement type by model. The most frequently used placement for all models was the Hennepin County Foster Home. Placements for all three models exist in roughly the same proportion.

TABLE 4A  
NUMBER OF CHILDREN EXPERIENCING EACH  
PLACEMENT TYPE BY MODEL

	MODEL I	MODEL II	MODEL III
Hennepin County Foster Home	44	33	35
Group Family Foster Home (Agency Group Home)	6	3	4
Foster Care for MR/Physically Handicapped	8	8	6
Other Agency Foster Homes	11	9	12
DPW Rule 8 Group Home (Treatment Group Home)	11	12	15
DPW Rule 5 Residential Treatment Center (Emotionally Disturbed)	18	21	15
DPW Rule 34 Residential Treatment Center (Mentally Retarded)	12	15	12
Unlicensed Placement	2	3	3
Independent Living Arrangement	--	1	--
Treatment Foster Home	11	10	6
Restricted License	12	13	12
Correctional Facilities	2	--	1
Other Type Vendor	4	4	3
Residential Treatment for the Chemically Dependent	--	2	1
County	4	3	4

### Conclusion

In examining the number of placements, duration of placements, and costs of placements, there are no significant differences observed between the models. There is no apparent effect on number, type, duration or cost of placements associated with project participation. This observation of lack of observed effects may be actual, or may be based on one or more factors:

(1) The duration of the project was not amenable to examining long term effects of citizen participation on placements, (2) the role of the citizens was strictly advisory in nature with no actual ability to effect these variables, and (3) communication of the results of the citizen review boards was not done in a consistent manner, i.e., the results did not become an official part of the case record. Given these constraints on the project, it was not surprising to find no effects on these placement variables.



## COSTS OF THE PROJECT

The question posed in the original data analysis plan regarding costs of the project was stated as follows: "What are the costs (both for placements and operational administrative costs) associated with each model?" Defining the administrative costs for the project has been somewhat problematic based on the data available. The primary problem of dealing with the issue is the fact that no information is kept regarding the amount spent on standard agency administrative review procedures. Since these data are not available, the assumption was made that the amount of time needed to prepare for administrative reviews would be similar for all three models. We have seen in a previous section that the time spent in the actual review was somewhat longer in the experimental models, however this amount of time should be offset by the fact that project staff have taken over the notification duties from caseworkers.

Although a fairly complete breakdown of total administrative costs was made available as follows, it should be noted that the costs of executing this project would not be the costs of duplicating the citizen review concept. The following is a listing of costs associated with the project and a description of each.

Description	Total
Project Staff-Salaries	\$192,000.00*
-Fringe	30,452.00**
Volunteer Reimbursement	\$ 2,094.00***
Other Charges	\$ 27,002.00****
Department Administration	\$ 69,664.00*****
TOTAL	\$321,520.00

\*Project staff salaries are based on the following rates:

Project Coordinator	\$2,475.00/month
Project Staff Assistants	\$3,022.00/month
Project Clerk	\$1,550.00/month

\*\*Fringe benefit rates vary from approximately 15-18%, variation is dependent upon factors such as the type of hospitalization plan chosen by individuals.

Both salaries and fringe benefits were based on expected full time employment through October 31, 1986, however project workers reported that after February 1986, part of their time was allocated to other projects. Only 25-50% of time was spent on

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project related duties.

\*\*\*Actual reimbursement expenses were as follows:

-Food	\$ 217.00
-Bus Fare/Mileage	\$ 721.00
-Parking	\$ 509.00
-Child Care	\$ 647.00

\*\*\*\*Other Charges were defined by Hennepin County as meeting/office space, utilities, staff mileage, postage, printing, supplies and other County Services.

An assumption is made that meeting/office space, utilities, staff mileage, supplies and other County Services would remain constant regardless of the type of review being held. Costs that were directly related to the project operation however included the following:

Printing of Stationery/Brochures	\$565.00
Costs of Sending the Newsletter	\$528.00
Costs of Printing Training Materials	\$485.00

This accounts for only \$1600.00 of the amount allocated in this category.

\*\*\*\*\*Department Administration represents allocation of Department level administration as reflected in the Community Services Department Cost Allocation Plan, i.e., Department Director, Planning & Evaluation, Data Processing, etc. This is a standard amount allocated on projects.

### Discussion

Based on our assumptions, the costs of actually conducting reviews did not vary much across models. One enlightening comment was received from a unit supervisor who had attended several reviews. This supervisor stated, "I suspect that our social workers have had to spend more time in preparing the Project Workers on case background than they can generally spare. Time spent in actual review is probably 20% more than reviews prior to the Project, which is not bad for accomodating for formal review process and the inevitable questions from reviewers."

Project staff indicated that special staff were probably not necessary to carry out citizen review if an adequate tracking system for when reviews are due is in place. The additional costs which may be incurred are in the areas of volunteer reimbursement and in the production of materials and time spent in training reviewers. This would result in an expenditure of approximately \$3,700 plus the costs of personnel supplying the training. The amount for personnel could vary widely depending on whether agency staff or outside consultants were used to

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provide this training. Based on Hennepin County salaries, agency staff could probably provide 3 days of training for between \$400-\$500. Another cost would involve the development of the training curriculum, again, this could vary depending upon whether materials were developed within each agency, by the state for distribution to all counties, or if materials are borrowed from already existing projects.

The real question is whether there is a positive benefit in expending an additional sum of money to institute review. One agency supervisor stated, "The presence of the review panels has encouraged the social workers I have observed to prepare well for the review; I think anything that has that effect is positive...A public restatement of the case plan forces a careful rethinking prior to the review, and generally reinforces the social worker's plan."



## COMPLIANCE WITH P.L. 96-272

Another question to be addressed by the evaluation was "To what extent are cases in compliance with 96-272, section 427?" A series of two audits using the criteria used to judge case acceptability was undertaken to address this issue.

### RESULTS OF THE 427 CASE REVIEW SURVEY

#### Introduction

This report summarizes the findings of a survey of 218 cases which are included in the sample of cases being utilized in the Foster Care Review Project. Cases were reviewed twice during the lifetime of the project. The results of these two audits will be discussed consecutively.

**WHAT IS A 427 REVIEW?** These cases were reviewed in order to determine the extent to which case files were in compliance with Rule 427, a Section of Public Law 96-272 which pertains to compliance with federal standards. Specific variables comprising the review instrument included: existence of a written case plan, timely periodic review, timely dispositional hearings, number of the remaining 18 protections and whether or not the case was acceptable overall. A copy of the face sheet of this instrument which was utilized by the evaluators is found in Appendix B.

**DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE.** The case surveys were completed by an independent reviewer. This reviewer was a former Hennepin County Child Protection worker, who was trained in audit procedures by Jan Brennan, Program Evaluator, County Administration Unit, who conducts statewide monitoring for the Department of Human Service (DHS) staff person. The 427 review instrument used for this review was the same one used by Department of Human Service (DHS) reviewers in monitoring statewide compliance. During training, DHS staff and the reviewer both reviewed some of the same cases to ensure comparability of results.

**TIME FRAMES.** The first audit period covered the time period from October 1, 1983 to October 1, 1984. The second audit period covered the next year, from October 1, 1984 to October 1, 1985.

**CONFOUNDING FACTORS.** It was an hypothesis of the project that citizen review would result in a higher level of compliance than was currently the situation at Hennepin County. Discussions held between State, County, and evaluation staff in early February concluded that the citizen review project was not responsible for compliance because it had no authority to change current agency practice. The manner in which the project was structured limited the influence of the project on compliance to only one of the five criteria listed above, that of timeliness of reviews, and even this was not the case in several instances. Because of the policy allowing court hearings to replace citizen

reviews, many reviews did not take place because they were "due for court review." Often times these court reviews did not take place within the prescribed time frames, thus removing the case from compliance. Additionally, at the outset of the project, several incorrect dates of last review were given to the project, and thus were already out of compliance at the time that the first project review was conducted. In some ways the project also influenced timeliness of the reviews in the Model III comparison group when it sent out evaluation forms to be completed in that group. Since the forms were sent out a week or more in advance of the date that reviews were due to be completed, they served to remind this group of impending review dates as well. Margaret Lonergan, then the project director, also felt that the duration of the project was not long enough to measure compliance.

**ADDITIONAL HISTORICAL FACTORS.** The above mentioned hypothesis was also based on the assumption that agency operations would remain static throughout the rest of the agency. This was not the case, however. Beginning in February 1986, in order to increase compliance with P.L. 96-272, a Hennepin County staff person began serving as the independent reviewer for the majority of administrative reviews which were not a part of the Foster Care Review Project. This was done with the expectation that greater consistency in the plans/reviews would result. In addition, another staff person was assigned to complete a full audit of each placement record prior to each administrative review using a checklist provided by DHS. Results of his review were used to advise the ongoing supervisor of any missing elements. Since these changes took place outside of the timeframes specified for the 427 audits, timeliness of the administrative or in-court reviews was unaffected. It was possible, however, for revised placement plans for changes in placement to be inserted in the case file. This may have served to increase the number of cases in compliance with written case requirements. Since the second audit took place from June to August of 1986 it is possible that the outcome of the second audit was affected by these changes.

#### Cases Reviewed

As noted above, all cases in the Foster Care Review Project were subject to the 427 review. A total of 218 cases which had been in placement during the specified time period, were in placement long enough to qualify for review, and were audited during both audits were selected from the project roster. The cases represented the three social service units, Child Welfare, Child Protection, and Mental Retardation, and were distributed as follows:



Sample Distribution Among Departments

Child Protection	N = 68	(31.2%)
Child Welfare	N = 78	(35.8%)
Mental Retardation	N = 65	(29.8%)
Unspecified	N = 7	(3.2%)
TOTAL	N = 218	(100%)

Information regarding type of placement (voluntary, court-ordered and state wards) was also collected. The sample is distributed along that variable as follows:

Sample Distribution by Placement Type

Voluntary Placement	N = 65	(29.8%)
Court-Ordered Placement	N = 120	(55.0%)
State Wards	N = 44	(20.2%)

Percentages do not total to 100% because some cases belonged to more than one category.

Methods

A comparison was made among the cases selected from the three project models in order to determine if there existed differences between them in frequency of compliance. A chi-square test of significance was calculated for each of the comparisons made. Each calculated chi-square has a corresponding level of significance which suggests the probability that any difference between the cases from the three program areas occurred simply by chance. The level of significance chosen was .05, which can be interpreted as a 5% probability that any differences between the comparison groups occurred by chance, and not because there exists any real difference between the program areas from which the subsamples cases were drawn. When the probability level corresponding to any comparison was found to be greater than .05, the difference was deemed to be not statistically significant.

It should be noted that for some of the cases, data were not available for some of the variables. When data was missing on any of the compliance variables, those cases were not included in that comparison. For that reason, the total number of cases may differ from table to table. The number of cases missing for each variable is included below the respective table.

RESULTS OF THE FIRST AUDIT

Written Case Plans

In order to be considered acceptable, a case must first have a written case plan. Table A, shows that 162 or 83.5% of cases



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did have a written case plan. Differences between the program models in this finding were not statistically significant.

Table A  
Existence of a Written Case Plan

MODEL	I	II	III	TOTAL
YES	72 (88%)	57 (81%)	53 (80%)	182 (84%)
NO	10 (12%)	13 (19%)	131 (20%)	36 (16%)
Chi-Square = 1.80935      Significance = .4047 D.F.      2      Missing cases 0				

## Periodic Reviews

In order to be found in 427 compliance, all periodic reviews must be conducted within prescribed timeframes. As seen in Table B, one hundred and fifty-four cases (70%) were found to have conducted all periodic reviews within prescribed time limits. In another 12 (6%) of cases, such reviews were not yet due, and 53 (24%) cases had not complied with this standard. Differences in this finding were not statistically significant between the models.

Table B  
Periodic Reviews Within Prescribed Timeframes

MODEL	I	II	III	TOTAL
YES	53 (65%)	56 (80%)	45 (67%)	154 (70%)
NO	23 (28%)	12 (17%)	18 (27%)	53 (24%)
NONE DUE	6 ( 7%)	2 ( 3%)	4 ( 6%)	12 ( 6%)
Chi-Square = 4.95708      Significance Level = .2917 D.F.      4      Missing cases 0				

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### Dispositional Hearings

A third criteria for compliance with major safeguards is dispositional hearings within prescribed timeframes. As seen in Table C, one hundred and thirty-six cases (62%) were found to have conducted all dispositional hearings within prescribed time limits. In another 46 (21%) of cases, dispositional hearings were not yet due, and 36 (16%) of cases had not complied with this standard. Again, differences in this finding were not statistically significant between the models.

Table C  
Dispositional Hearing Within  
Prescribed Timeframes

MODEL	I	II	III	TOTAL
YES	47 (57%)	47 (69%)	42 (62%)	136 (62%)
NO	19 (23%)	8 (12%)	9 (13%)	36 (17%)
NONE DUE	16 (20%)	13 (19%)	17 (25%)	46 (21%)
Chi-Square = 5.12243 D.F. 4                      Significance Level = .2750 Missing Cases 0				

### Remaining 18 Protections

One hundred and fourteen cases were found to be in compliance with with the first three major safeguards. Of these remaining cases, all were also found acceptable regarding the 18 remaining protections. Cases must have 13 or more to be acceptable. As can be seen below, the number of remaining protections ranged from 17 to 18, with the majority 99 (87%) having all 18.

Table D  
Number of Remaining Protections

Eighteen	99 (86.8%)
Seventeen	15 (13.2%)

### Overall Acceptability

Of the 218 cases surveyed, 114 (52%) were found to be in compliance, meeting all of the criteria previously examined. As seen below, this finding did not differ significantly between the models. Fifty-two percent of the cases from Model I, 59% from Model II, and 48% from Model III were found to be acceptable.

TABLE E  
CASES IN COMPLIANCE WITH RULE 427  
BY MODEL

MODEL	I	II	III	TOTAL
YES	42 (52%)	40 (59%)	32 (48%)	114 (53%)
NO	38 (48%)	28 (41%)	35 (52%)	101 (47%)

Chi-square = 1.67204      Significance level = .4334  
D.F. 2      Missing observations = 0

#### RESULTS OF THE SECOND AUDIT

The same cases were again examined in a second audit covering the period from October 1, 1984 to October 1, 1985. Cases were again examined for their compliance with the three major safeguards of written case plans, timely periodic reviews and timely dispositional hearings. A case must comply with all three of these safeguards in order to be acceptable. In this second audit, one hundred eighty-six cases (87%) were found to have a written case plan. In one hundred ninety cases (85%) periodic review were held within the prescribed timeframes (in one case, there was no periodic review due.) Finally, dispositional hearings were held within the prescribed timeframes in 149 (69%) of cases, another 9 (4.2%) indicated that dispositional hearing was not yet due.

One hundred and thirty-one cases were found to be in compliance with with the first three major safeguards. Of these remaining cases, the number of remaining protections was not reported for 11 cases. For those one hundred and twenty cases where data were available, all were also found acceptable regarding the 18 remaining protections. As can be seen below, the number of remaining protections ranged from 16 to 18, with the majority 93 (77%) having all 18.

Table F  
Number of Remaining Protections  
Second Audit

Eighteen	93 (77.5%)
Seventeen	22 (18.3%)
Sixteen	5 ( 4.2%)



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## Overall Acceptability

One hundred and thirty-one (60%) of the cases examined were found to be acceptable, that is, they were in compliance with all three of the major safeguards and at least on 15 of the additional 18 remaining protections.

The percentage of acceptable cases was also examined across the three models to see if any differences in frequency of compliance could be found for this second audit. As Table 6, below indicates, no statistically significant differences in compliance with the was found among the three models, nor were the cases of any model found to be more frequently acceptable.

TABLE 6  
CASES IN COMPLIANCE WITH RULE 427  
BY MODEL AT SECOND AUDIT

MODEL	I	II	III	TOTAL	CHI-SQUARE SIG.
WRITTEN CASE PLAN	70 (91%)	61 (87%)	55 (85%)	186 (88%)	.3974, n.s.
TIMELY PERIODIC REVIEWS	67 (86%)	65 (93%)	57 (86%)	189 (88%)	.4708, n.s.
TIMELY DISPOS- ITIONAL HEARINGS	50 (62%)	49 (72%)	49 (73%)	148 (69%)	.5595, n.s.
ACCEPTABLE OVERALL	46	43 (43%)	41 (62%)	130 (61%)	.7630, n.s. (60%)

## KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS AND SURVEYS PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS

### Introduction

In order to better describe each of the three models, and their impacts, information was collected from key participants and observers of the process through the use of questionnaires and interviews. Data collection was undertaken in order to assess how key informants viewed the effectiveness, advantages and disadvantages of each model in terms of their effects on children, families, workers and the agency?

Gathering of the subjective data was undertaken from the following groups of individuals: social service personnel (project staff, social workers and administrators), court personnel (judges and referees), foster children (when this is appropriate), natural parents, foster parents or care providers, advocates (as identified), and review board members. The majority of data collection activity took place from July through September of 1986 after most of the project had been completed.

### Strategy for Instrument Development

Working with representatives of the Hennepin County Community Service Department, the State of Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Project's Advisory Board, key questions regarding the perceived usefulness and effectiveness of the various models were identified. This process resulted in a listing of 138 different items (See Appendix C). From these items, targeted interviews and questionnaires were devised for each identified group. Questionnaires focused on the particular review type experienced, and in those cases when this included more than one model (as may be the case for social workers, foster parents, supervisors, and review board alternates), statements regarding direct comparisons were sought. Perceived strengths and weaknesses of each review method were delineated and comparisons will be made to identify differences in model functioning.

### TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

#### Information from Board Members

Information from board members and alternates was sought regarding their training and comfort with their role. They were also asked to assess their impact on the review process. A written questionnaire was used to gather some basic information from all board members, and this was followed up by group interviews to further clarify and expand on the information collected (see Appendix D). Written questionnaires were distributed in June, with the follow-up interviews taking place in August.

### Interviews with Social Service Personnel

A combination of a brief written questionnaire administered July was sent to all persons having project contact. Focus group interviews with a sample of this group (9 supervisors and 9 caseworkers from each of the three social service units were invited to attend) was used to collect information from social service personnel (see Appendix E). These persons included social workers, supervisors, and independent panel members. These persons were asked to compare and contrast the various models with which they have had contact.

### Interviews with Judicial Personnel

Information was also elicited from Judge Olienky and one court referee (who have had involvement with 96-272 trials), as representatives of the court. They were interviewed to examine their views of the project, and provide recommendations for future implementation of such a project on a statewide basis (see Appendix F for interview schedule).

### Interviews with Primary Caregivers

Interviews (see Appendix G) with primary caregivers (natural or foster parent) took place at the time the interviews with children were conducted. Since so few administrative reviews were scheduled during the months of July and August, this data was supplemented with telephone interviews with randomly selected parents and foster parents who had attended reviews.

### Interviews With Children

Since it is extremely important when gathering information from children to be able to establish a one-to-one rapport, in-person interviews (see Appendix H) were conducted at the time of reviews with the children who (1) participated in the review process, (2) were age 12 or more, (3) consented to be interviewed, and (4) had the appropriate cognitive ability to respond to questions were interviewed.

### Survey of Other Interested Parties

Advocates (as identified by the project), and others who participated in reviews (such as facility personnel, guardian ad litem and attorneys) were sent brief mail questionnaires (see Appendix I) to complete. The focus of these questionnaires was on their specific interaction with the review boards.

### Information from Project Staff

Debriefing interviews (see Appendix J) were held with all project staff at the conclusion of the project in August. Interviews were taped by the evaluators. Input was sought regarding their project experiences, acceptance of the project, implementation and other



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contextual factors, and suggestions for future use of the citizen's review model.

#### FINDINGS

The following sections detail, in turn, the information gathered from each of the processes described above.

## RESULTS OF BOARD MEMBER DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES BOARD MEMBER SURVEY RESULTS

### INTRODUCTION

This section recounts the experiences and opinions of citizen review board members. Twenty-six board members were mailed a questionnaire (Appendix D). A total of 25 members (four board chairs, 16 board members and five alternates) responded to the survey. The overall response rate was 96%.

The board member questionnaire consisted of three major sections: (1) Initial Training, (2) Board Operations, and (3) Recommendations for Future Implementation. There was also an auxiliary section, to be discussed later, for board members who participated as alternates.

### RESULTS

This section summarizes board member's responses in each of the three major parts of the questionnaire. A complete listing of board member's comments can be found in Appendix D.

#### INITIAL TRAINING

The first set of questions had to do with board member initial training. Respondents were asked to rate the training program, the training manual, and the project staff and also to comment on training topics and the amount of time expended for training. The final part of this section of the questionnaire gave informants an opportunity to provide additional comments regarding their training experience.

**TRAINING HELPFULNESS.** Table 1 shows the respondents' evaluations of specific aspects of initial training. The overall response is favorable, with 88% of informants rating the program as "very helpful" or "somewhat helpful". As one board member remarked, "if nothing else, it [helped make] me a concerned and caring advocate of citizen boards." Several respondents mentioned how "well-planned," "well-prepared and meaningful" their initial training was. For one of the board chairs, the most useful parts "were getting acquainted with the other reviewers, the county staff and procedures and the resources available to Hennepin County." While still another board member mentioned "the explanation of duties and expectations of a board member - which I had not been previously - as [being] the most helpful."

Of the twenty respondents who had additional comments, nine (45%) made remarks on the value of the speakers in the training program. Many found "[the] speakers to be a resource of knowledge and skill." In the words of one, "the individual presentations was the most instructive as far as [obtaining] background information." One of the board chairs commented: "the speakers in the later training were very helpful, especially since I knew more about what was being discussed." There were many positive comments concerning the session on permanency planning and the session on the role of the court.

Another respondent identified the "discussions, which frequently followed a speaker's presentation [as being] the most helpful [aspect of training]."

TABLE 1

BOARD MEMBER RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS CONCERNING INITIAL TRAINING  
(N=25)

	VERY HELPFUL	SOMEWHAT HELPFUL	NEITHER VERY HELPFUL	NOT VERY HELPFUL	NOT AT ALL HELPFUL	NO ANSWER
1. Overall, how helpful was training in preparing you to serve as a board member?	60%	28%	4%	-	8%	-
2. How helpful was the initial training in teaching you about foster care?	40%	48%	8%	-	4%	-
3. How helpful was the training in teaching you about the legal system as involved in foster care issues (TPRs, court ordered goals, 18 month reviews)?	32%	44%	12%	8%	4%	-
4. How helpful was the training manual?	52%	40%	4%	4%	-	-
5. Was the amount and type of information in the training manual helpful?	44%	48%	-	8%	-	-
6. How helpful were the video-tape presentations?	36%	40%	12%	-	4%	8%
7. How helpful were the speakers in your training?	48%	44%	8%	-	-	-
8. How helpful were the role playing situations?	28%	56%	12%	-	4%	-

Four of the board members (20%) mentioned the written materials as being very useful. One respondent specifically noted the value of the manual on issues of TPR, court ordered goals, and the 18 month reviews [in] trying to get families together. Another found the manual was extremely useful "In linking concrete resources, since



most, if not all, concerns about meanings and terminology were answered." Appreciation was expressed for the availability of reference material, even though, in the words of one board chair "I never seemed to have it when it was needed." The written materials were praised by four informants for the information provided on the legal system. Information on the Indian Child Welfare Act and Minority Act was the most useful for one of the board members.

Two of the respondents (10%) mentioned the usefulness of role playing when commenting on their initial training. As one member indicated "the playing we learned help to see real life situations of how important our position as board members were in helping families broken to be made whole again in some cases." Another member, however, thought that the "Biggest waste of time was the role playing." In fact, "[she] had forgotten all about it, which indicates how useful it was." Only one of the respondents mentioned the videotape as being "most instructive (in the beginning) as to how a board would operate [and] the attitudes and problems that would be presented."

One respondent thought "a few extra sessions of training, after the first few cases might reinforce or clarify certain problems. Problems and cases have more meaning after experiencing being on the boards. Getting board members together with staff ventilates problems and increases sharing knowledge with everyone's experiences." Another member, however, suggested that "more initial training, group discussions, as well as actually going through several mock reviews would be very helpful, as it is very difficult time wise to come back for additional training."

**MANUAL USEFULNESS.** A majority of the respondents found the manual to be useful. Ninety-two percent indicated that they had used the project training manual as a reference. One respondent wrote that "the manual was marvelous. [I] hope it has further use considering staff time expended and expense." Knowing that the manual was available was most helpful for two of the board members. As one member reported, "[it was] not so much [that] particular sections stood out, but knowing the manual was always there as a reference/refresher during the time I was a board member [was very comforting]."

For a number of members the manual was useful only during training, especially to review the laws and glossary. In fact, one member suggested that, "it may be a good idea to read and refer to them during the training and then return them afterwards." Another respondent cautioned, "I am sure all the sections are very useful, [but] there was too much information to absorb before the reviews began."

Table 2 shows the respondent's rating of the chapters in the training manual. All of the chapters were rated "very useful" or "somewhat useful" by more than three-quarters of respondents. A

TABLE 2

BOARD MEMBER RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS CONCERNING CHAPTERS IN  
TRAINING MANUAL  
(N=25)

	VERY USEFUL	SOMEWHAT USEFUL	NEITHER USEFUL	NOT VERY USEFUL	NOT AT ALL USEFUL	NO ANSWER
Ch 1 - The Review Process	52%	32%	4%	8%	-	4%
Ch 2 - Permanency Planning	44%	36%	12%	4%	-	4%
Ch 3 - Child Welfare Laws	36%	52%	8%	4%	-	-
Ch 4 - Services Provided Resources Use	24%	52%	8%	4%	-	-
Ch 5 - Forms	20%	60%	8%	4%	-	4%
Ch 6 - Organizational Structure	16%	60%	8%	4%	4%	4%
Ch 7 - Glossary	40%	36%	4%	12%	-	4%
Ch 8 - Recommended Reading	24%	64%	4%	4%	-	-

number of informants commented on the usefulness of the chapters, focusing particularly on chapters one through four exhibited the most comments. According to one, "initially, the information of the project and the actual process were most valuable. As I became familiar with the process of reviews, the sections on permanency planning and laws became important." Another respondent was particularly impressed with Chapter 2: "[the] why and implications [of] permanency planning were adequately dealt with [and] excellent examples were given." A third respondent commented on the usefulness of "Chapter 4: Services Provided/Resources Used": "What's available in our community is necessary information for a person making recommendations." The chapter on Child Welfare Laws was also mentioned as being of particular use: "Listing of the laws applicable to permanency planning and the Indian Child Welfare Act were very helpful in deciphering a mission."

**ADDITIONAL TRAINING TOPICS.** Board members were also given a series of questions relating to their training topics. First, board members were asked to identify subjects for which they would have liked to have received additional training. One of the participating board chairs indicated the desire to have had "more training on [the] differences in child welfare/child protection and the regulations



[that] relate to each. [In addition], it would have been helpful to have received information regarding the differences in the type of people that might be seen, particularly in child protection cases." In order "to learn how to get the most out of the review process," another board chair mentioned that, "it would "have been helpful to work with the welfare department." Moreover, while one respondent indicated that "far more information about the dynamics of sexual abuse should be included [in the training sessions]" another respondent mentioned that training in "The emotionalism (the human aspect of reviews), [as well as] mental retardation options was needed." There was also mention of the need for more information on "services provided and resources used, [along with information on] laws" such as "Indian rights, [in terms of] what is the law that pertains to placement in foster home."

Another expressed concern from a board member was the need for "more information on what other states were doing in [the] area of citizen review. Video tapes from various citizen reviews done in other states [would have been helpful]." One member expressed the desire to have had more training in the psychology of dealing with people." Additionally, "The realities of what happens in court and court hearings and the way the county is side-stepped and the county attorney can sidestep recommendations" was an area for which one of the members requested additional training. Finally one respondent raised two concerns by asking "(1) [If there] can be some objective psychologist present to try and explain certain situations, [that is] help us understand the situation better and (2) Can boards demand the court to follow through quicker - maybe call certain cases priority ones?"

**UNNECESSARY TRAINING TOPICS.** Board members were also asked to identify subjects they would have deleted from the initial training. Although nine members responded to this question, none identified any subjects as needing to be dropped from the current training program. However, one member was critical of the training program for "not covering the vital areas"; another thought there was "too much to absorb in [a] short length of time"; and a third argued that "all day sessions were too much information for one day." A possible solution to the time problem, according to one respondent, would be to allow "people [to] leave early if [they] had to [while] those with extra questions could stay." Only one member indicated the need for "more intensive [focus on] specific areas, [since] the amount of time spent on training was somewhat too short."

**AMOUNT OF TRAINING TIME.** Two-thirds of respondents (68%) felt that the amount of time accorded to training was "about right." Sixteen percent thought that too much time was devoted to training and sixteen percent that there was too little time.

**TRAINING FOR BOARD CHAIRS.** Respondents were asked to identify topics that should have been included in additional training for board chairs. One informant doubted that additional training was needed, commenting that "[my] board chair was very organized and knowledgeable and helpful." Other members, however, identify topics to be included



in training for board chairs.

The four board chairs responding to the survey suggested the following: (1) "information on examples of difficult situations that might arise, questions to or not to risk," (2) "how to better interpret the questions on the form that was filled out at the meeting," (3) "more practice on running hearings and filling out the forms," and (4) how to solicit comments and get the group involved and work more on the options that were available for placement."

Some of the needed topics mentioned by board members were: (1) "[to become] more familiar with the law," (2) "more training on how to conduct a meeting - [i.e.,] move things along, elicit response from all present, etc.," (3) how to manage the meeting - [i.e., utilization of] conflict theory," and (4) "a little more in depth of the already chosen topics."

TRAINING IN GENERAL. Table 3 shows respondents' overall rating of training. As can be seen, around a quarter (28%)

TABLE 3  
BOARD MEMBER OVERALL RATING OF TRAINING  
(N=25)

	N	%
Excellent	7	28%
Very Good	12	48%
Good	6	24%
Fair	0	-
Poor	0	-
TOTAL	25	100%

thought training was "excellent", about half (48%) thought it was "very good" and about a quarter (24%) saw it as "good."

In their general comments on training, most informants chose to reiterate their views on the most useful aspects of their training and/or highlight areas needing improvement with suggested solutions. Many comments were positive in terms of the usefulness of training. One respondent, for example, felt that the training was "satisfactory [given that] there was nothing to compare it to," another thought the training "was excellent, even though much of the information was already known." It was emphasized that the information was "given clearly, [as well as] the manual for review and references."

Several of the board member's comments pertained to the speakers. For example, although one respondent mentioned that the manual [was]

very impressive in detail and staff presentation on the whole very worthwhile and professional, several other board members found the speakers to be a bit "long winded," causing some scheduling problems for participating board members. As one board member reported, "I feel the training was useful but that it would have been just as effective if speakers would have been less winded. This would have made the sessions shorter [since] it is difficult for full-time employees to take two days out for training. ...the sessions could possibly be reduced to one day." Another board member suggested that "Some, I think could have been a little more personable and down to earth, not talking in initials but spelling out what the initials meant."

A number of suggestions were made for improving the initial training. As one member noted, "some psychology training would have been helpful [since] no training was provided in the areas of how not to be intimidated by irate parents and children, how to be at ease in a confrontational setting, how to make others feel comfortable in the presence of board members, and how to be and not to be compassionate." Another board member said "I would have liked more opportunity to have defined [the] role of board more and to have met as a board (5 member) prior to doing reviews [in order to] have some more role playing, discussing appropriate responses, etc." However, this member also "felt at times that board members got into personal stories, etc, which took away from the overall 'professional' type atmosphere [that] should have been created. ...training in the area of appropriate things to talk about, etc. would have been helpful."

Other suggestions related to types of needed training subsequent to participating on review boards. As one member noted, "you can only teach so much. The rest will be learned in the process of doing." Yet for another member, "more training after a few reviews, and less initially would [have been] helpful, [since] it's difficult to relate to [the] process until you've done reviews." In expressing a similar concern, another board member found "all of the information [to be] a bit overwhelming at first, especially when [board members] had no idea [of] how reviews would go. Small groups discussing MR/CP/CW would have been helpful. CP cases were most difficult for me, while I knew others felt that way about MR cases."

Additional suggestions to improve the training experience were to: (1) "[make] the legal aspect by the attorneys more specific", (2) refer difficult cases to psychologists for advice (one respondent "felt some parents were pathological liars but [I] wasn't 100% sure"), (3) "have [training] either on a continuous basis - once a month - [with] a different area of reviewing covered or more intensive initially," and (4) "have alternates meet maybe twice yearly to discuss mutual experiences and problems."

#### HELPFULNESS OF PROJECT STAFF

The final question in the training section of the questionnaire asked board members to comment regarding the project staff and how they provided guidance and assistance in during the project. As can



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be seen in Table 4, the overall reaction was positive, although many informants did not answer the question.

There were many favorable comments concerning the relationship between board members and the project staff, particularly with the project coordinator and project social workers. According to one respondent, "The reception we received from Hennepin County staff was fairly positive [and] much more so as the project progressed." The general terms used to describe the project staff were "helpful," "friendly," and "supportive." According to one board chair "...[the] staff were excellent." I [not only] value[d] their opinions [but] appreciated [their]

TABLE 4  
BOARD MEMBER RATINGS OF PROJECT STAFF  
(N=25)

	VERY HELPFUL	SOMEWAT HELPFUL	NEITHER VERY HELPFUL	NOT AT ALL	NO ANSWER
Project Manager 1	-	8%	20%	8%	- 64%
Project Manager 2	-	28%	4%	- 8%	60%
Project Coordinator	60%	8%	4%	- 4%	24%
Project Social Worker 1	52%	8%	-	- 4%	24%
Project Social Worker 2	56%	12%	4%	-	28%
Project Clerk	8%	12%	8%	- 8%	64%

assistance and morale boosts. The information provided at reviews were invaluable..." Another respondent commented, "[They] ... were excellent and supportive in every way. I feel they listened to me and shared their ideas. [And], I enjoyed working with them." A third board member said, "The coordinator and two project social workers were always professional and cooperative. I was very impressed with this staff and enjoyed my association with them. They were helpful but not intimidating with lay board members." The only criticism came from the a board chair who "would have liked more updates on cases [board members] had reviewed, i.e., court results, returning home, etc., [for] it seemed as if many cases just disappeared."

## BOARD OPERATIONS

In the second section of the mailed questionnaire, respondents were asked a variety of questions regarding board operations. These



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focused on time commitment and scheduling, feedback, financial costs, components of the review process, factors in permanency planning, persons who should attend reviews, the review format, benefits of time utilized, purpose(s) of citizens on review boards, obstacles to effectiveness, and the impact of citizen involvement on review boards. Board member's reactions to these issues will be briefly described below.

### TIME COMMITMENT AND SCHEDULING

**TIME COMMITMENT** Concerning their original time commitment of 8 hours per month, four (16%) thought this was "more than enough" time, sixteen (64%) thought it was "about right", 3 (12%) thought it was "too little" in terms of fulfilling their actual monthly commitments. Two board members did not answer this question.

Of the fifteen members providing comments, three members said that had it been necessary, they could have committed more of their time to the project, particularly since, "people who are able to volunteer their time often have more time available than was required." One member even "wished [she] had been scheduled for more reviews." Another board member, however, felt that, "the time commitment was not honestly communicated [since] it was often more than 8 hours a month, particularly in the beginning."

Being board chair added considerable hours to the original monthly time commitment. As one board chair noted, "after keeping fairly detailed records, the project took an average of 16 hours per month," therefore, indicating that the time committed was too little. This, according to one of the board chairs, "caused quick burn out."

**RECOMMENDED TIME COMMITMENT.** The proposed time of two years for an individual to serve as board member was thought "too long" by two informants (8%), "about right" by eighteen members (72%) and "too short" by 4 members (12%). One informant did not answer this question.

Thirteen respondents gave recommendations concerning board member length of term. Six specifically recommended a two year commitment. "It takes 2 years to learn and understand the process and to be able to see some changes, ... but is not so long that you could possibly lose some of your objectivity." Others thought a two year term "at an 8 hour per month commitment is difficult" and "any thing longer may cause burn out." One of the board chairs believed that a minimum commitment was necessary to justify training, but also argued that time commitment "varies from person to person, depending greatly on other commitments."

**SCHEDULING ISSUES.** Board members were asked to express their feelings regarding the way their time was scheduled for training and conducting reviews. Of the twenty-five respondents, a large majority (88%) were quite satisfied with the way their time was scheduled. The primary factor contributing to this satisfaction was timely notice of reviews (48%). One board chair noted, "I was always informed about

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meetings two weeks prior to each, and that was after the board had already set times and days 6 months ahead." Other factors contributing to board member satisfaction with scheduling included the "availability of alternates," "staff support in letting the board choose the schedules", and "reminder letters".

A few problems with scheduling were also noted by members participating as alternates and two of the regular board members. Two of the regular board members reported reviews had interfered with either their schooling or work. Short notice of reviews was mentioned as a problem by all five alternates. One alternate suggested that perhaps, "more planning [with] longer notices probably could be helpful in scheduling [reviews]." Another alternate, however, believed that short notices were "unavoidable, because notice from a regular board member might have been short."

## ADEQUACY OF FEEDBACK

Table 5 shows how respondents rated the feedback they received from varying sources. Highest ratings were received by staff assistants (72% "very" or "somewhat" adequate) and the project coordinator (48% "very" or "somewhat" adequate) [it should be noted that no specific mechanisms were set up for feedback from the project coordinator]. Lowest ratings were given to the court (28% "somewhat" or "very" inadequate) and to agency case social workers/supervisors (28% "somewhat" or "very" inadequate).

TABLE 5  
ADEQUACY OF FEEDBACK FROM VARYING SOURCES  
(N=25)

	Very Adequate	Somewhat Adequate	Neither	Somewhat In- adequate	Very In- adequate	No Answer
Staff assistants	48%	24%	8%	-	4%	16%
Project Coordinator	32%	16%	24%	4%	4%	20%
Court	16%	-	36%	4%	24%	20%
Case social worker/ supervisor	16%	20%	20%	20%	8%	16%

Some respondents were satisfied with the type of feedback received. One member "felt well informed for each case reviewed [because], a general update from the staff assistants and a detailed one from the case social worker/supervisor was on hand before every review," another board member revealed that "both as



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a board and individually, the feedback received was excellent [and] greatly enhanced our performance."

Others informants were a critical. One member was critical of some social workers because, "they were very arrogant and felt as though they were doing me a favor by being there." Several other respondents indicated that they either did not receive much feedback (which according to one member "meant that not enough progress had been made since [the] last review") or received it only when it had been asked for specifically.

Examples of the type of feedback that that would have been considered helpful, included "updates," "information regarding [the boards] success/failure rates in permanency planning," and examples of cases with good and bad permanency planning by review boards."

Several of the members lamented the absence of feedback. According to one member, "More feedback would have been helpful [not only] as a learning tool, but in reviewing a case for a second time." This same theme was echoed by a board chair: "It was difficult to make recommendations when we did not have information from the past, especially relating to reasons for court findings (i.e., TPR denied, etc.)." "Without feedback, you are always wondering if the board has made an impact or not." "[Knowing] that suggestions or recommendations were followed through, reinforces the purpose of the review board." There was specific concern about lack of feedback regarding court proceedings.

## FINANCIAL COSTS OF PARTICIPATION

Board members were asked to comment on the financial burden (e.g., taking off time from work, using vacation time, etc) of participating as a review board members. Of the twenty-five respondents, slightly over half (52%) indicated that there were no costs to their participation in the project, although one member remarked that "had I not been in the position I currently hold, I feel it might have been different." Various board members pointed to their retirement, the structure of their work schedule, and the expense coverage by the project as reasons for lack of costs. Two board remarked that their employers considered board membership as part of their job. A board chair responded "I never really measured the financial cost or thought of it in that way. I was giving back something for all I've received from the county over the years."

Financial cost for other members typically resulted in having to take some time off work, missing school, using vacation days, arranging for child care, paying for parking and transportation and/or buying lunch. One meticulous board member reported the loss of "four hundred dollars in wages and one-hundred and twenty-five dollars in transportation."



Many members thought that the costs involved were not important. One commented, "the costs were not as important as having a review board," and another argued "the results outweighed the cost." One member concluded, "I gladly would donate [that time] again."

#### IMPROVING REVIEW COMPONENTS

Table 6 shows board member ratings of nine review components as being either "very good," "adequate" or "needs improvement." Members who found that a component less than adequate were asked to indicate how it needed to be improved. These comments are summarized below.

**BACKGROUND CASE MATERIALS.** Twenty percent of board members found that background case materials needed improvement. According to one member, the quality of information "varied from case to case. Some of the cases needed more information [and] some of the county workers needed to update themselves." Another member found that the boards "frequently didn't have psychologist/psychiatric reports on clients who were seeing someone regularly.... Reports from schools, group homes, etc. would have often been helpful but were not available." A third member asserted, "There were several cases where we were not made aware of certain vital circumstances, usually because the case social worker didn't want us to know."

**TIME ALLOCATED FOR REVIEWS.** Only one board member found that the amount of time set aside for reviews was inadequate: "There wasn't enough time to get involved as I'd like to have."

TABLE 6  
BOARD MEMBER RATING OF NINE REVIEW COMPONENTS  
(N=25)

	Very Good	Adequate	Needs Improvement	No Answer
Background case materials	48%	32%	20%	0%
Amount of time allocated for reviews	44%	52%	4%	0%
Information presented at reviews	24%	56%	20%	0%
Board member attendance	44%	52%	4%	0%
Board member participation	56%	36%	8%	0%
Attendance of parents and children affected	8%	16%	76%	0%
Board recommendations	52%	36%	8%	4%
Project social workers' participation	68%	24%	8%	0%
Agency social workers participation	28%	36%	36%	0%

INFORMATION PRESENTED. Twenty percent of informants found that the information presented at the reviews needed improvement. One member commented, "depending on the attitude of [the] social workers toward [the] board, it was either very good or real poor." Other members described agency social workers as "not too well prepared" and "knew very little about the cases." Sometimes this seemed to be the result of large caseloads and high rates of turnover. For example, although one board chair found the information to be presented "generally good, it was inadequate if social workers were absent, very new, etc." Other times information was inadequate due to lack of cooperation: "Most plans seemed prescribed prior to review, [which was] frustrating."

BOARD MEMBER ATTENDANCE. There was only one negative response concerning board member attendance. The problem was that all board members were seldom present at reviews. The suggested remedy was to eliminate five member boards and replace them with three member boards.



**BOARD MEMBER PARTICIPATION.** Board member attendance was seen as a problem by only two members. One noted that "more guidelines on appropriate responses, etc. would have been helpful in this regard." The other commented the "[board] need[s] to be better prepared to make suggestions for cases and the county [since] suggestions didn't start until approximately 5 or 6 months [into] the program."

**ATTENDANCE OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN.** More than three quarters of the board members (76%) expressed concern with the lack of attendance by parents and children. As one member reported, "Many times they are just not there..." According to a board chair, "[All] children should be there except in those cases where it would be damaging to them, and in most instances I would also except mentally retarded children" as well.

Several of the members found it to be helpful when parents and children did attend the reviews. In the words of one board chair, "having the child there does a number of very positive things: (1) it brings home the reality of dealing with a real live human being to board members, (2) it allows the child to participate in what is undoubtedly a very important event..., (3) it makes the reviews much more than perfunctory - which they can get when there's only county staff and regular reviewers there, and (4) for both parents and children, it affords the forum where needed confrontation can occur."

Informants argued, "The county needs to stress the review more emphatically," and "Social workers (in some cases) did not appear to realize [the] importance of parents and children participating [and consequently], should be more aggressive in this area." One member "questioned whether all social workers encouraged parents and children to attend." A board chair suggested that "some sort of 'polite mandate' on such attendance" would resolve the problem. Others asserted a need to "Try to obtain more commitment from parents/children to attend and [to] give group homes/foster parents/etc. more pressure to attend or send reports at least."

**BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS.** Two board members found that board recommendations needed improvement. One member was "not very clear [as to] exactly how or if board recommendations [were] really used" and another reported that, "in six months time our recommendations weren't implemented." There was also some concern that "board members [were] hesitant to be constructively critical or otherwise of [the] county's performance because of the county's presence."

**PROJECT SOCIAL WORKERS' PARTICIPATION.** Two members thought that the performance of the project social workers needed improvement. One of the board chairs thought "the project leaders ... need group dynamic skill training." An other informant remarked that the project social worker "Rarely said much, other than reading what she had written."

**AGENCY SOCIAL WORKERS' PARTICIPATION.** Thirty-six percent of informants found the performance of agency social workers to need improvement. The general sentiment was that agency workers "ran the



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spectrum" from being "often excellent or good, and well-informed to very poor." This often depended according to one member, "on [their] attitudes toward citizen boards. We need to improve the Boards importance and/or positive involvement for [the] county." Poor preparation also seemed to be a problem. According to one member, "Some seemed to be unaware of pertinent information [and] wait[ed] until the day of reviews to make [necessary] calls." A board chair thought this could be remedied by "lower case loads and less turnover."

## PERMANENCY PLANNING

In this section of the questionnaire respondents were also asked a variety of questions relating to permanency planning for children in foster care. Tasks consisted of (1) rating six factors in permanency planning, (2) recommending means to overcome perceived problem areas, and (3) identifying the greatest barrier to permanency planning for children in foster care.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION. When asked, "Do you think you were given enough information to have a firm grasp of permanency planning?" eighteen (72%) replied yes, three (12%) replied no and four (16%) did not answer.

RESOLUTIONS TO PERMANENCY PLANNING. Table 7 shows the respondents' ratings of six potential problems in permanency planning. Members who described a potential problem as "large" or "slight" were asked to indicate how it could be resolved. These comments are summarized below.

VAGUENESS OF PLANS. All but one of informants (96%) found that vagueness of plans was a problem. Critical comments included the following: "not enough thought going into [the plans]", "some plans were just holding patterns waiting for judgments," and "it didn't seem like the worker was using community services available to the child".

A variety of recommendations for overcoming this problem were offered. A third of the members believed more effort

TABLE 7

BOARD MEMBER RATING OF SIX POTENTIAL PROBLEMS IN  
PERMANENCY PLANNING  
(N=25)

	Large Problem	Slight Problem	Not A Problem	No Answer
Vagueness of plans	48%	48%	4%	0%
Worker turnover	52%	40%	4%	4%
Lack of timelines for TPR	76%	16%	0%	8%
Initiation of court action	44%	40%	8%	8%
County policy regarding holding pattern	24%	40%	16%	20%
Vagueness of court orders	32%	24%	36%	8%

was needed in making the plans very specific and concrete. "More specificity [is needed] with regard to each separate element of the plan" is required. A quarter of members recommended firmer adherence to timelines: "Plans for a child should be very specific and time limits placed and adhered to." Some of the less frequently mentioned solutions were: "get supervisor, court and all involved in the making of the plans [so that] each understands what is required to meet the plan," "use MBO standards for writing plans," and "more supervision on cases, with lower caseloads and social workers and supervisor [to] review in between 6 month reviews."

One board chair suggested that perhaps, "Training in specific planning and setting more guidelines within the 6 month plan" would help in resolving this problem. Parents would certainly benefit from more easily understood goals."

**WORKER TURNOVER.** Ninety-two percent of informants thought that worker turnover was a problem. In the words of one: "One of the greatest problems and where [the] review board is needed so the child does not fall between the cracks." Another rewarded, "Most children have problems with changes, and "[since] different personal philosophies affect or effect different needs definitions [it] must be hard on the family."

A frequently mentioned means to overcome the problem of high worker turn over is to provide time where the "outgoing" and "incoming" social worker can discuss the case(s) at hand. Others informants suggested lowering caseloads and providing "perks" such as

Appendix G - Parent/Foster Parent Information

Parent/Foster Parent Interview Schedule

Foster Parent Open-ended Interview Responses

Parent Open-ended Interview Responses

Appendix H - Children's Interview Schedule

Appendix I - Interested Party's Information

Interested Party's Survey

Open-ended Survey Responses

Appendix J - Project Staff Interview Schedule



"allow[ing] promotions and raises for working with the same children" might aid in resolving this problem. A board chair argued there is a need to "Change [the] county policy about re-organizing every week and shifting caseloads," and another member suggested, "Perhaps, some sort of rotation system or stress and burn out management," might help the problem of high worker turnover.

**LACK OF TIMELINES FOR TPR.** Ninety-two percent of informants thought that lack of timelines for TPRs is a problem. Many specifically criticized the reluctance of the court, agency, and social workers to pursue TPR and the amount of time that passes before action is considered. Some members noted that children had been cases for many years, when "No child should be in limbo for more than 1 year." One member questioned the agency's philosophy of protecting parental rights, especially when (as several members noted) "second chances are given and re-given to parents not meeting their goals." "TPR seemed," according to one board chair, "to be dirty work. [I wonder if] the goal of sending the child home was always realistic." Social workers were specifically criticized for their "unwillingness to address TPR or present [it] to the county attorneys office."

The most frequently recommended means to resolve this problem was to set definite timelines and adhere to them. One member suggested that the "County should pursue TPR within 2 years of child being in foster care." A board chair recommended that "timelines be set at the time of first placement, so parents know they must move NOW to get kids back." It was also suggested that in addition to setting dates for TPR early on, that there be follow-through with check points prior to TPR."

**INITIATION OF COURT ACTION.** Eighty-four percent of respondents perceived initiation of court action to be a problem. Many lamented the amount of time that is lost before court action is initiated, and complained that this was thought to be the result of the reluctance on the part of county attorneys and social workers to initiate court action, as well as the backlog of the court dockets. Others thought there are "Too many legal complications in TPR."

It was widely believed that the process should begin sooner. One member argued, "[we need] to speed up court dates [and] once action is taken, to go for TPR [we] need to improve court flow somehow." One of the board chairs recommended use of "written criteria by [the] court system on what cases will be accepted, what evidence is sufficient, etc." Another board chair identified the need for a "More receptive court system (D.A.'s) so social workers are not so reluctant to pursue TPR's."

**COUNTY POLICY REGARDING HOLDING PATTERN.** Two thirds of informants (64%) found the county policy regarding holding pattern to be a problem. One member said, "I am not sure just what this means but, if it means holding decisions about children, too much time is taken." According to a board chair, "...it should never be used where children are involved [for] a little progress every 6 months for years is not enough."

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"More concrete guidelines and [the] concise steps to be taken" was the perceived resolution for many board members. According to a board chair, "If this means the county's tendency to sit on a case where no movement is noticeable, then I think the answer is strict adherence to the use of MBO standards for writing plans, commitment by the county to act when certain goals aren't met, and written criteria by the court system on what cases will be accepted, what evidence is sufficient, etc." Another member asserted, "The legislature needs to enact new laws that limit the holding pattern - put timelines to TPR - [and] become advocates for the child not parents."

**VAGUENESS OF COURT ORDERS.** A little over half (56%) of respondents found vagueness of court orders to be a problem. "Too many court orders were not specific enough for workers to have something substantiated to go on," said one member. Another commented that the 'Goals as outlined [were] sometimes not specific.'

The most frequently mentioned remedy was to be more specific in court orders. One of the chairs suggested, "Be more specific in initial orders or in case plans based on court orders." Another member suggested, "Clarify court orders [on] how long parents have to do specific things listed in order to meet the court order (e.g., remain sober - 1 week, 1 month, 6 months?)." In feeling that "... these orders are just a holding pattern," another member suggested, "perhaps experts could be involved sooner to expedite situations."

## BARRIERS TO PERMANENCY PLANNING

Board members were asked to identify the greatest barrier to permanency planning for children in foster care. More than half (58%) mentioned the length of time required to terminate parental rights. As one board chair reported, "...the greatest barrier is the reluctance of pursue TPRs on children. A baby may be placed and parents make minimal progress every six months for years until the child is too old and unlikely to be adopted. It often seems so obvious looking from the outside, but we are told it's too early, not enough evidence, too late, not in the best interest of the child, etc. [which] is very frustrating..." Many respondents criticized the lack of timelines for TPRs and the reluctance of courts and social workers to pursue them.

Many respondents (29%) also criticized the system - courts, agency and social workers - for emphasizing parental rights over the rights and best interest of the child. According to one board member, "The court system focus[es] on parental rights and [the] rights and protection of the child gets short shifted in Hennepin County." Suggested solutions to these problems include, "... judging timelines against the child's time frame," "enacting stricter laws that limit the holding pattern" and "becoming advocates for the child, not parents."

Another frequently mentioned barrier to permanency planning is vague permanency plans. Many board members emphasized the need for the development of clear, concise long range plans. One board chair mentioned that, "No long range goals are looked at. It felt like



everything is done in terms of 6 months rather than a lifetime."

Worker turnover was also perceived to be a barrier. As one member noted, "Trust in a worker is hard to come by and extremely important to the successful conclusion of a placement." The kids are troubled enough without a different worker coming in every few months."

Less frequently mentioned barriers to permanency planning include: "lack of homes for adolescents, especially minority children," "court backlog," "serious lack of minority workers for minority kids," and "the ineffectiveness of our legal system that ties the hands of social workers."

#### WHO SHOULD ATTEND REVIEWS?

Board members were asked to identify person who should be encouraged to attend administrative reviews (Table 8). The overall sentiment of the board members was that everyone who is currently involved or concerned with the child and/or has significant knowledge of the case, should be encouraged to attend administrative reviews.

Both natural and foster parents were viewed by the majority of board members as needing to be encouraged to attend, even though "many workers have discouraged foster parents from attending." The importance of inviting foster parents was emphasized as "they are the ones that live with the child" and can "add information about children we cannot get in any other way, especially when children are shy and quiet." One member expressed concern for having natural parents who are mentally ill attend the reviews: "on a number of occasions when such parents came to reviews, all participants in the review seemed unable to deal with this situation."

Children were also seen as needing to be encouraged to attend the reviews. Some respondents favoring the presence of children did, however, indicate that only children old enough should be allowed to attend. This usually meant being 8 to 10 years and older. A board chair, however, noted that "the child, even if very young, could be introduced and then go to a play area. It would help a lot to meet each child."

Social workers were the next most frequently mentioned source that should be in attendance, followed by supervisors, board reviewers, group home staff and counselors. According to one member, a report from some sources, such as psychologists and counselors, would be sufficient.

#### THE ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW FORMAT

About half of informants (52%) thought that the administrative review format is simple enough for all persons participating to understand. Forty-four percent indicated it is not simple enough and one person (4%) did not answer the question.



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A commonly suggested change was "language simplification" (45%). Many respondents agreed that professional language used is

TABLE 8

## PERSONS ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW (N=25)

SOURCE	N	%
Natural Parents	20	80%
Foster Parents	17	68%
Children	14	56%
Social Worker	10	40%
Supervisors	5	20%
Board Reviewer	5	20%
Group Home Staff	5	20%
Psychologist/Counselors	4	16%
Guardians Ad litem	3	12%
Extended Family Members	3	12%
Grandparents	2	8%
Child Protection Workers	2	8%
School Teacher	2	8%
Child Advocate	1	4%
Public Defender	1	4%
Service rendering people	1	4%
Doctors	1	4%
Day Program Representative	1	4%
Minister	1	4%

too confusing and difficult for the many involved, particularly lay persons. One member recommended "spelling out the initials so everyone knows what each one is talking about. Another felt that forms are "not well worded" and need to be "made more to the point, [since] too many could be taken in different ways." A third felt that, "the checklist is cumbersome and often stifles discussion."

A substantial number of the board reviewers (45%) expressed concern about the inappropriateness of the review process for MR cases. Most agreed with the comments of a board chair: "The format is misleading and threatens the biological parents." It was widely recommended the MR cases be reviewed differently or that "the review form and be revised. One member suggested that the "format be changed to suit various special needs groups - [i.e.], MR should have a separate form, children where TPR has taken place should have a modified form, etc."

Less frequently mentioned changes in the current review format included: "more intensive efforts to involve parents, etc.," "filling out forms should not be treated just as a routine matter," "understanding the meaning and rationale for asking questions and the

impact it has on each case," (4) the review should be a synopsis of the past six months, not a guessing game," and "the reviews should be done in the same room each time for each child [and] the room should take on less of a sterile institutional feeling."

#### BENEFITS OF TIME UTILIZED

When asked, "Was the time spent beneficial to social workers, families and particularly the children involved in the program?" 84% answered "yes," 4% answered "no," and 13% did not answer at all.

A number of general benefits were noted. The most common were "the provision of new ideas, perspectives, and suggestions from the outside" (53%) and "the provision of support and the feeling that someone else cared and listened was an often stated benefit" (57%). One member summarized it this way: "parties involved knew someone other than the system were committed."

Most informants felt that children benefited the most. This was particularly true when suggestions made by the board resulted in changes in the way a case was handled. Another benefit was, "[The review] gave the child a chance to talk on his/her own behalf, to say what they would like to see happen in their life regarding placement." Also, "it often gave children supportive feedback from someone besides the social worker."

Families were also seen as benefiting from the support and concern of board members. Reviews provided families with a chance "to publicly address their concerns" and also "gave families support at times, feedback other times and probably a push sometimes." According to one informant, "families felt there was someone there who represented their needs, wants and wishes."

Social workers were also seen as benefiting from the administrative reviews, particularly from feedback the reviews offered. As one member noted, "[it] gave social workers a sounding board, varied ideas, [and] feedback." It was also argued that social workers benefited from the support they received, particularly to those wanting to take action, but thwarted by system."

#### PURPOSE OF CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT ON REVIEW BOARDS

When asked what they perceived the major purpose of citizen participation on review boards to be, four out of five respondents identified "the provision of new ideas, perspectives, suggestions and objectivity to the problems of children". Among the specific comments were "open up a somewhat closed system so that all of the possibilities for children in foster care are explored," "bring community values to the whole picture....", "offer suggestions to the plan from a lay perspective," "bring a new perspective ...., especially on cases that seem to be stuck-in-place," and "contribute valid suggestions as the citizens are not so close to the situation."

Also frequently mentioned was ensuring for permanency planning



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for foster care children. According to one member, "I hope we question the professionals to speed up permanency plans." Another argued, "[citizens] are more concerned about time frames and permanency than [the] agency. [Since] plans were subject to [the] support or criticism by the boards, the county was also challenged to provide good and thorough plans."

Less frequently mentioned as purposes of the board were, "provision of support to children and families," "serving as a resource to social workers," and "helping the agency see some points in the case they have overlooked." Many informants agreed with the spirit of the statement: "Citizen participation keeps the county agency on top of each and every case so that kids not 'presently' causing problems aren't lost in the shuffle."

## OBSTACLES AND BARRIERS TO BOARD MEMBER'S EFFECTIVENESS

Board members were asked to comment on obstacles to having citizens involved in the review process and barriers to their effectiveness as board members. About a quarter of those responding (22%) reported that they were not aware of any obstacles to having citizens involved in the review process.

A number of obstacles were mentioned by others. Three board members identified staff attitudes as a difficulty. One argued that, "The biggest obstacle may be attitudes of staff" and another thought "Some supervisors and their units are overtly resistant as indicated by their attitudes and verbal/behavioral responses, [which] hinders the process." A third member questioned the role of the supervisor: "Sometimes the supervisor of the social worker tried to influence the board about how they were to handle cases, [which consequently] could be an obstacle."

Learning and knowledge of the information was also perceived to be an obstacle for some members. One board chair, argued, "The laws, policies, etc.. are so numerous [that it] might help to have each board member have in-depth knowledge of a different area, i.e., Minority Child Welfare, Native American legislation." Another member expressed concern for families of MR clients: "these families feel uncomfortable with 'outsiders,' especially a large group, as with the five member board." According to another member, "too many opinions would inhibit the already questionable productivity of the system and too many options seem to not get prioritized which could prolong the process even longer." Some of the other obstacles mentioned included: "time commitment," "getting time off from work and parking," "the cost of the system," and "heavy case loads."

There were a number of other, less frequently mentioned, barriers to the effectiveness of board members. For example, one of the board chairs mentioned that the "Greatest barrier was lack of information in some cases [and] also not seeing cases consistently due to court reviews. Another member believed that "Too long periods of time may cause burn out, therefore causing a decrease in effectiveness. Some of the other barriers mentioned included: "getting time off work and



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having a baby," the initial learning curve of board members," and "feelings of inadequacy in an overwhelming situation."

### CONTRIBUTIONS OF CITIZENS INVOLVEMENT

Informants were asked to identify the largest impacts of citizen involvement on review boards, three areas were frequently mentioned. The first major, noted by about two thirds of the sample (64%), is the provision of fresh, objective perspectives. As one member said, "...sometimes having an objective, non-professional viewing the situation from a greater distance and possibly a slightly different perspective can be helpful." Another commented, "[Citizens] enter the reviews fresh, without 'burn out', and may perhaps enhance case plan by filling in the gaps and adding new perspectives.

Enhancing case plans was also a contribution mentioned frequently (41%). A number of specific contributions of this type were suggested: "questioning the plans," "getting social workers to think and work harder on permanency planning," "serving as an unbiased observer/participant in addressing the direction of permanency planning for children" and "getting people to cooperate with plans."

The support and concern of citizens was another major contribution mentioned (27%). It was noted in several instances that citizens, in contributing their time and effort and in demonstrating that the larger community cares about children, can be a large support to everyone concerned. In short, as one board chair mentioned, "It shows commitment and concern for the situation and the children."

Also mentioned as a contribution was the provision of "an additional external (extra-agency) check on the services provided by the professionals." As one member indicted, citizens "push the system to keep on top of all cases." Another member argued that "if used effectively, board[s] may be helpful in bringing about pressure for change."

### BOARD MEMBER'S PARTICIPATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE

When asked whether their "own participation has made a difference?" ninety-two percent said "yes", one said "no" and one did not answer. The one member who responded in the negative did so because many reviews were missed due to work conflicts.

The majority (67%) spoke of their objectivity, ability to raise pertinent questions and identify system problems and, to consequently make recommendations, both on individual and systems level, as the many ways in which their participation made a difference in helping those involved. As one member said, "...sometimes someone from the outside can see the 'ideal and encourage people to work towards it - even if it can't be obtained completely. [For] sometimes people within the system know the ideal will never be reached so [they] don't try for it."

For others (29%), what made a difference, was the added benefits

of the different perspectives they were able to bring to the reviews. These included prior or current experience as a social worker, foster parent, parent, and/or minority group member.

Several members (17%) commented on their ability to get children and families to respond or participate in the reviews as a result of the care shown towards these families. One member "insisted that shy or quiet children, parents and foster parents comment when process was moving too fast." A board chair believed that [she] was "able to make participants feel comfortable and often glad they came."

#### PROBLEMS RESULTING FROM CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

About a third of the sample (36%), saw problems resulting from citizen involvement on review boards. One of the more frequently mentioned problems again centered around the attitudes of the staff and the potential that has for creating problem when citizens participate on review boards. A board chair reported that the "personality conflict or opposition from social workers could interfere with effective planning." While another member mentioned "some initial uncomfortable feeling from staff regarding our knowledge..." as potentially causing problems.

Another potential problem addressed by board members focused on the citizen review board members themselves (36%). As one member suggested, "I suppose some people could be overbearing or so quite as to be ineffective." Another member believed that "there is a risk of untrained citizens asking inappropriate questions."

Problems with breach of confidentiality or "data privacy" was another issue for about a quarter of the sample (27%). As one board chair mentioned, "In smaller communities confidentiality might be a problem (although coming from a very small community it seems everyone knows that's going on anyway)." Several members expressed concern with this potential problem because of the possibility of liability suits. As two members questioned: "What could liability be if recommendations were followed with negative results?" or "If a family were to sue for a decision made by a review board, who is responsible?"

#### ATTITUDINAL CHANGES BY AGENCY SOCIAL WORKERS

Although nearly two thirds of informants thought that the attitude of agency workers was "negative" or "very negative" (Table 9), 84% thought that their attitude became more positive over time (Table 10).

#### ATTITUDE CHANGES IN BOARD MEMBERS

Four out of five informants reported that their own attitudes had changed as a result of their participation as a review board member. Most of these changes were quite favorable. According to one, "I went from participating to enthusiasm for getting involved." Many informants came to a more understanding view of social workers, particularly in terms of having a better understanding of their work



load. One of the board chairs, "gained a great deal of admiration for volunteers as well as county staff, struggling against overwhelming case loads and a system that often gets in the way of doing what they're hired to do."

Several of the board members mentioned their increased dissatisfaction with the foster care system. A board chair "became acutely aware of some system problems - especially between social service and [the] court system," one of the board members became "more aware of the problems in obtaining TPR's."

#### GENERAL COMMENTS ON OPERATIONS

The final questions in this section of "Board Operations" provided respondents with the opportunity to reveal any

TABLE 10

#### PERCEIVED INITIAL ATTITUDE OF AGENCY SOCIAL WORKERS

	N	%
Very Positive	0	---
Somewhat Positive	4	16%
Neutral	4	16%
Somewhat Negative	14	56%
Very Negative	2	8%
No answer	1	4%
TOTAL	25	100%

TABLE 11

#### PERCEIVED CHANGE IN ATTITUDE OF AGENCY SOCIAL WORKERS

	N	%
Became More Positive	21	84%
Remained the Same	4	16%
Became More Negative	0	---
TOTAL	25	100%

additional comments or suggestions they would like to make regarding citizen participation on review boards, or the current review process.



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Of the fifteen board members, the majority chose to reiterate reasons for mandating citizen review board (60%) and/or provide suggestions for improving reviews (53%). Many of the members believed that the inclusion of citizen reviewers had a positive impact on the system for all those involved, particularly "where the plan is not clear and the case is carried on for years." One member believed that "...citizen review boards could have the ability to foster a positive link between those needing services and those providing services."

Several members expressed concern for or confusion with their role in making recommendations. As one member expressed, "[we] need to determine if citizen review boards are "recommending" boards or "decision-making" boards. Another suggested that "Citizen review boards should operate at the advisory level of authority and have the opportunity to follow the case and to be heard if there continue to be objections or questions."

A concern about the "timing" and lack of court action was also expressed. It was believed that "the courts should be called in to [act] sooner so the young client the child can be placed in the best permanent situation for his mental and emotional development" and that "the court system should be more involved as there seemed to be a wide gap between what we [board] felt and what the court's actions were."

There were also questions about the relationship between agency social workers and the board. One member believed that it is, "Important to educate all staff/social workers with respect to purposes of citizen review and try to make them less threatening." According to another member, "In some cases the agency and social workers involved already know that permanent arrangements cannot be made, [so] Going through the review process may not be necessary."

One member expressed disappointment that, "most of the people on the review board were social service in background - i.e., ex-social workers, teachers, etc., [and suggested that] some caring, sensitive, corporation management would have helped give the program a different slant."

did make a significant difference." Another pointed to the "objections of staff in some instances, expenses and privacy problem in rural counties" as reasons for not advocating the mandate. A board chair commented, "...it is something that can be done on a voluntary basis. When the successes are seen, ...it will become adopted in most areas."

**SHOULD MANDATE.** Some of the more frequently mentioned explanations for favoring the mandate included the provision of (1) fresh ideas and objectivity, (2) community involvement, (3) "safety valves," (4) protection for the child and (5) aid to county workers.

Many respondents favored the mandate because it would "open the review process up to new ideas" and "bring objective community values to the board". A board chair remarked, "...the system is better off for their added input in reviews."

Several board members believed that the proposed mandate would be a means to get the community involved. According to one, "It gets citizens involved with community problems," and "proves to parents, children, families, [and] social workers that the larger community is concerned about the welfare of children."

Another reason for favoring a mandate is belief that citizens provide checks and balances on the system ("at least in large counties") and "to county administration interpretation of legislation," as well as acting as a "safety valve to ensure the best plan possible for children" and "in establishing quality assurance." According to one member, if mandated, "the accountability is there." Furthermore, "...the system," as one of the board chairs argued, "is better off for the added public awareness for the system."

Several members stated a need for someone "outside" to be concerned with the best interest of the child, especially for "children who are not yet involved in the court and consequently do not have guardian ad litem." Citizens on review boards are seen as being able to fill this need. Citizen inclusion, according to one member, "decreases the possibility of children being lost in the shuffle."

Some members advocated a mandate because of the perceived assistance citizens can provide social workers. One argued, "It's a means of establishing both support and devils advocate roles for agency social workers." Or, as another member noted, "A citizen may well say what a county social worker may feel like saying but because of the politics of the system can't."

#### HOUSING FOR CITIZEN REVIEWS

Board members were also asked to comment on where citizen review boards should be housed. Two thirds (37%) believed that Hennepin County Government Center was a reasonable place to house the review boards. Or, as one member suggested, "In the facility for which most of the cases are heard - Government Center, Sabathani, etc." Some



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members thought reviews should be sited "[within the] same building as social service staff for convenience and time saving of social work staff." Others emphasized the need for a "comfortable setting away from the institutional setting which now prevails" where persons involved could "feel a part of the reviews, and not in and a part of the agency." A board chair specifically rejected the notion of housing reviews in the court system, since "that would just promote greater rivalry."

### BOARD CHAIRS

When asked, "If citizen review is mandated, who should chair the boards? 44% suggested a citizen member, 12% suggested a social service supervisor, 28% suggested someone else and 16% did not answer the question.

Each board member was also asked to comment on the effect of rotating board chairs. About half (48%) responded favorably, or at least neutrally, toward the idea. Several believed that rotating board chairs would promote a diversity of perspectives, "provide others with the opportunity to enhance their leadership abilities," and distribute more fairly the onerous task of filling out the review forms.

About a quarter of informants (24%) opposed rotation of chair responsibility. Most were concerned about maintaining the consistency and continuity of reviews. According to one board chair, "[although] it would give the chair a break, [it] would probably be disruptive." Furthermore, as noted by another member, "not everyone is willing to chair."

A few informants saw the issue both ways: "It was nice to have the same one so [you] work well as a team, on the other hand, that can get too comfortable and [therefore] it might be good to have [a] revolving chair."

### IMPLEMENTATION FACTORS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Informants were asked to comment on how civilian review boards should be implemented if they are eventually mandated. Their ideas are summarized below.

**BOARD MEMBER DIVERSITY.** Many emphasized the need for a review board that was diverse both in "experiences and exposure to social services" and in demographic characteristics as "age, ethnicity, sex, etc." One member indicated "liking the mix of foster parent, MR experience, minority experience, past social worker and caring citizens" on the review board, while another member emphasized the importance of including minority representatives.

**SIZE OF BOARD.** There was disagreement concerning the necessary size of the review boards. As one board chair noted, "I think having 5 people gave our board a variety of backgrounds and experiences that really made us effective." Other informants thought "two or three



members was enough to brain storm and discuss facts."

**TRAINING REQUIRED.** The training of staff and volunteers was viewed by many members as being essential. As one member noted, "They should be required to attend comprehensive training." Another member identified the need to provide "a review of experiences among volunteers in the beginning, after the first one or two board [reviews, in order] to be able to ask general questions and listen to other points of view." Also, as another member suggested, "[having] evaluations after each case hearing" would be helpful.

**SELECTING REVIEWERS.** A number of board members mentioned the importance of selecting reviewers who have a strong concern for the process: "Board members should have a high degree of interests in the welfare of children and knowledge of how the system works." "This means," according to one member, "careful screening of each board member."

**SMALLER COUNTIES.** There were many comments and suggestions with respect to the implementation of citizen review boards in smaller counties. Suggestions included: "either have a traveling board or review cases in county where [a] board is available," "look at multi-county boards and/or swapping citizen volunteers between counties," and "have 1 or 2 citizens on a board supervised from a staff in [a] larger county."

**RECOMMENDATIONS** Only eight board members stated recommendations they would like to see instituted if citizen review boards are implemented. The following are their recommendations:

1. "All citizen review boards should be implemented."
2. "There should be a staff assistant at all meetings."
3. "Social workers attendance should be required."
4. "Boards not be advisory [in nature] but have decision-making authority."
5. "Have all information available to citizens and all involved parties at reviews."
6. "[Boards] should be geographically dispersed to cover equal services to all county residents and the forms should be designed by the state and consistent across the state."
7. "If [the] review is mandated, it [should] apply to only 5 counties - Hennepin, Ramsey, St. Louis and also St. Cloud and Rochester."
8. "I don't think we did anymore towards obtaining permanency than has been previously done. The system is stuck in a rut. Everyone talks big but no one takes

action. Have long range planning that looks at as many permanency goals for each situation as possible. The real problem is not citizen review or not its permanency planning!"

#### SPECIAL POPULATIONS AND THE NEED FOR CITIZEN REVIEWS

The final questions in this section pertained to special populations and reviews by citizen boards.

**VOLUNTARY VS INVOLUNTARY PLACEMENT.** Twenty-two of informants (88%) thought that both voluntary and involuntary placements should be reviewed by citizens. The primary reasons for this opinion were: (1) the benefits provided by citizens involvement in reviews and (2) lack of perceived differences in the kind of children involved in both types of placement. As one member argued, "[it is] vital to protect the welfare of children in all instances." Furthermore, in either type of placement, "citizens could provide useful information," such as "to check out facts," and "being able to see some things that the workers may not feel is important."

Only two of the twenty-one board members responding (10%) were in opposition to both types of placements being reviewed by citizens. One of the members argued "a voluntary placement is probably done with a great deal of care and concern." The other member, although believing that citizen reviews should not be mandated for voluntary placements, felt that they could still serve a valid purpose."

**REVIEWING THE MENTALLY RETARDED.** Twenty-one informants (84%) did not believe mentally retarded children in placement should be reviewed in the same manner as other children. Most felt that this population is entirely different from the others, and consequently should be treated differently, both in terms of the process and forms rendered. According to a board chair, "In this process the MR Social Service Unit has their act together better than any other. This area is very specialized and few citizens can step in and offer help." Other members believed MR reviews were unnecessary since: "their problem is more or less cut and dried [in that the ] child is evaluated by professionals and their foster care is special," "[they have] basically clear, understood, agreed upon case plans," which "remain about the same," "[their] parents [are] heavily involved," and "there are already many safeguards for this community of people, there is no need for similar reviews."

One of the reasons mentioned for believing MR cases should be reviewed has to do with the "rights" of children. One informant noted "a retarded child should have the same rights and protections as any other child," another member argued "even a rubber stamp review affords the MR person with the same rights as non-MR persons." Moreover, thought other members, "some of these people are not serviced to the extent of what is available through existing programs. A point in case would be Title 19 waivers." The conclusion of another informant was "the community at large needs more understanding of the



issues involving MR population and such a review "gives the community at large a citizen review person with more understanding of the struggles of families connected with MR relatives."

#### VIEWPOINTS OF THE ALTERNATES

Before completing the questionnaire, all board members participating as alternates were asked to address three additional questions.

**TWO VS FIVE MEMBER BOARDS.** Alternates were asked to compare their experiences on 2 and 5 member citizen boards. Of the five board members participating as alternates, two members (40%) recommended a three person review board. According to one, "The smaller boards seem to move along faster, [although] the discussions on the larger boards [were] more interesting." The other alternate thought "five members is too heavy [and] sometimes overwhelms the foster care providers and an agency supervisor takes over with two member boards."

**DIFFICULTY IN MOVING FROM BOARD TO BOARD.** Two alternates found moving from board to board "very easy", one found it "neither" easy nor difficult and one found it somewhat difficult. According to one, "[since] the focus of helping the child is the priority and everything [else] falls into place," this particular alternate did not find the move to be difficult.

**ONE BOARD VS ROTATING BOARDS.** Of the four alternates providing comments in regards to their preference, two identified serving on one board as their preference, while the remaining two alternates chose rotating boards. One noted the "considerable differences in attitudes and skills of the boards" as reason for preferring the rotation of boards, while another argued "serving on one board would provide more opportunity for an alternates to become a better functioning member of one group of individuals by (a) getting to know group members better and (b) hopefully to function better as a group because of increased knowledge of how and why members of [the] group respond in a certain manner."



## RESULTS OF THE BOARD MEMBER FOCUS GROUPS

### INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the results of a series of Foster Care Project board member focus group discussions. All twenty-six participants were invited to attend one of three focus groups. A total of twenty (77%) board members and alternates participated in this phase of the evaluation by attending one of the sessions. The purpose of the discussions was to obtain feedback from the members concerning the project's effectiveness. Meetings lasted about ninety minutes and took place during the last two weeks of August, 1986. This was slightly more than a year after project reviews started. Participants were commenting on fifteen months of experience as board members. The sessions were led by an independent evaluator and were audiotape recorded to ensure accurate reporting of participant comments. Each group addressed the same series of questions (Appendix D).

### RESULTS

Participant comments are summarized below. Each section summarizes participant reaction to a specific topic question. The "illustrative comments" in each section do not exhaust the discussion, but are intended represent the scope and richness of what was said, with special attention to the most frequently mentioned comments.

#### FEELINGS ABOUT BOARD MEMBERSHIP

The first question addressed by each groups was "Overall, how do you feel about the time you spent as a board member? Was it worthwhile?"

Most members of the group felt board membership was a worthwhile experience. Many reported increases both in knowledge and in personal growth. Others felt that by advocating for disadvantaged children they were forcing a generally unresponsive bureaucracy to function more effectively. Some ambivalence was expressed concerning the capacity of the board to actually bring about much change.

#### ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- It was a learning experience. It was interesting to see how the system works and doesn't work.
- Definitely worthwhile. Both from my own point of view and in terms of value of project.
- Learned about things I otherwise wouldn't have known about in my own life.
- As a previous foster parent I felt too many kids were getting lost in the system. I feel this project will help stop that.
- I especially enjoyed working with the minority people.
- It was an eye opener. A lot of people were not looking out for the kids ... particularly minority kids.
- We brought new ideas to the system.
- There was a gamut of people involved. Some were very concerned, but others were not. In one review the social worker fell asleep.
- We made some recommendations that resolved some problems. It made me feel good.
- Time was worthwhile. We didn't have enough time to follow kids all the way through.

#### PROBLEMS WITH BOARD OPERATION

The second question in the discussion was, "What kinds of problems, if any, were there in the operation of the board? Where were the barriers to your effectiveness? Was the relationship with the agency satisfactory?"

A number of problems with operation of the boards were identified. Many board members had complaints about agency social workers and supervisors. Some felt that many social workers were unprepared and lacked interest (one fell asleep during a board meeting). Others felt that agency workers were defensive and seemed intimidated by the board. Exacerbating the problem was frequent turnover of social workers. This meant that the workers did not know enough about their cases to help the board make useful recommendations. Also a consistent problem was lack of full

attendance at meetings. It was strongly emphasized that foster care children need to attend. Board meetings where parents and children did not attend were felt by many to be a waste of time.

#### ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- The inter-relationships of the system don't work well. The social workers, child protection workers and the laws don't work together to get the kid into a permanent setting.
- A major barrier is lack of training for board members to deal with parents who come to the meetings.
- Not enough parents and kids were there. County workers were lukewarm. Letters of invitation really didn't encourage people to attend.
- Some social workers that really got involved and really did their job. Others didn't care.
- Social workers and supervisors were too protective of family --- not willing to push and make waves. Specific goals should be set for families and there should be consequences if the goals are not achieved.
- Too often a social worker would come in with a thick case file and say, "I just got this case."
- Supervisors need to be more active. Some just sat through the meeting until it was time for them to sign the form.
- Some social workers went out of their way to work with the board and seriously sought our help. Others wanted us to ratify what they had already decided to do.
- Clients need someone to advocate for them and guide them. The system is very complicated and there are many services available. Social workers didn't always seem up on this.
- When all the players were in the room --- the child and the parents --- I could evaluate the situation much better.
- Some social workers were intimidated by board. Supervisors often seemed like they wanted to be in control. If the board recommended something



## Effectiveness - 95

they didn't like, they didn't write it down.

- Board lacks power. I'm not sure it should have power, but it was frustrating not to see things get done.
- Feedback is important. In some cases we would as for monthly updates to make sure things moved along. This seemed to work.
- Board sometimes too large. Five members is too many. Three would be enough.
- Often too many people in the room. This can intimidate the family.
- [It was] frustrating when parents were obnoxious and disruptive. They should not be allowed in the meeting if they behave like this.
- Some social workers were not prepared. Meetings were too long because we had to try to sort things out.
- Some workers were intimidated and defensive.
- Goals were not specific enough. Plans often had no timeline.

## EFFECT ON KIDS

The third question was, "How, if at all, did the project affect the kids whose cases were reviewed?"

Board member response to this question was wide ranging. Many members commented that children who attended the meetings seemed pleased that someone was concerned about them. Other board members felt that at least some reviews had stimulated progress in cases that were stagnating. A few board members were not able to make a judgment on the effect of the project on kids because of the relatively short time they were involved and because of the absence of feedback on cases. Most board members felt that children must attend their reviews if it is to have much effect on them.

ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- A lot of kids liked it. There were people there who cared what happened to them.
- Some went home early because they had a review coming up.
- I know we got two TFRs started that wouldn't have gotten started otherwise.
- Older kids (eight and over) should be at the reviews. Some workers didn't push to get the kids there. It's [the kids and family's] opportunity for input and we learn more about the case if they attend.
- It's important for minority kids placed in non-minority settings to attend. We can pick up on things not apparent to those not tuned in to the child's culture.
- If kid is there, they may need support to deal with and understand the things said about them.
- Also, for some kids it is not appropriate to be in same room with crazy parents.
- Need to attend to cultural needs of minority kids. Particularly if they are placed in white families.
- Many kids left the reviews with smiles on their faces.
- Review can force communication among those concerned if they are all brought together in the same room.
- I don't know if we had a beneficial effect. You'd need a control group to judge that.

KIDS REMAIN IN PLACEMENT TOO LONG?

The fourth question was: "Does it seem to you that some kids remain in placement too long? If yes, what can be done about it?"

There was nearly universal agreement that some kids are in foster care placement too long. Many board members felt that the legal system puts too much emphasis on maintaining parental rights and that social workers are reluctant to challenge this. There was also concern that about lack of specificity in goals and planning for

cases. This was felt to encourage inaction.

#### ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- We could all go on with stories. It's just awful.
- My last case was a girl who entered foster care when she was thirteen months and is now fifteen years old.
- The system is designed to preserve parental rights rather than act in the best interest of the kids.
- Court recommendations are not backed up. If a parent shows the slightest sign of being interested in the child, they start all over at square one. There needs to be more accountability.
- Parents are given too much power.
- Workers are reluctant to start TPRs. They don't feel they will be backed up by the court.
- Some social workers do not want to rock the boat. They are scared of the court.
- Courts won't do TPRs. The laws must change.
- There are some problems with minority children. Indian Child Welfare Act needs revision. Children are passed from family member to family member. Indian advocates do not want Indian children adopted by white families.
- Ideal families are not available for minority children. Some people refuse to consider less than ideal options.
- Expectations for social worker performance not clear. When there is a change in social worker there is a change in philosophy of providing services.
- Some kids need long-term care, but this should be something other than foster care. Foster care should not be a long-term option.
- Criteria not clear for making decisions about cases. This means that many kids just drift along in the system.



## Effectiveness - 98

- There are other ways to provide permanent care and still have foster care, but Hennepin County chooses not to do this.
- There should be a push for open adoption where biological parent can still see the child. Older children particularly still have ties with their family. These should be respected.

## KIDS SENT HOME TO AVOID REVIEWS?

The fifth question was: "Did it seem that some kids are sent home to avoid reviews?"

Most board members felt that kids often were sent home to avoid reviews. Others didn't know if this was true or not. It was widely suspected that this practice was a way to avoid having to deal with difficult cases. A suggested remedy is to hold scheduled reviews whether a child has been returned home or not.

## ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- About 1/3rd of the cases that were scheduled for us were sent home just before the reviews
- Review should take place whether child goes home or not.
- Kids sent home should be followed-up to see if they re-enter the system.
- We need criteria. Permanency plans are not spelled out well enough to make decisions.
- Boards should be part of the process that decides if kids go home.

## BEST TIME TO SCHEDULE REVIEWS

The sixth question was: "What would be the best way to time reviews? Should they be every six months even when a court review is done?"

Most board members felt that reviews should be held every six months whether or not a court review is to be conducted. Some, however, were concerned about unnecessary duplication of effort between the two reviews and suggested that they be held together. It was recommended that there should be flexibility to schedule reviews more often than six months in cases where greater attention is needed.

#### ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- They should be done whether there is a court review or not
- It would be nice to receive feedback on court decisions.
- Court reviews are often perfunctory. Administrative reviews should be held when scheduled.
- Some should be done oftener than six months. This would depend on the individual case. Younger children may need to be followed more often; also children in crisis situation.
- Two reviews would be too much paperwork. If two reviews are necessary they should be held together.
- Older children feel they have too much county involvement. Case goals need to be clear. Intent of judges needs to be specified. There should be better coordination.

#### FEEDBACK

The seventh question was: "What about feedback? Did you receive adequate information concerning the effect of your recommendations on kids whose cases you reviewed?"

Although there were numerous comments on the efforts of the liaison workers to keep the boards informed, many members commented that feedback was adequate only when it was specifically requested. The relatively short duration of the project was also cited as a problem. Presumably more information would be available on cases reviewed a number of times.

#### ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- Its frustrating when you don't know what happened to a kid.
- Feedback occurred only if you saw a kid again. If case when home or to the court, we didn't find out what happened.
- If we asked what happened, then we found out. I learned to do this.

## Effectiveness - 100

- The liaison workers were very good. They kept us informed. They tried hard to answer our questions.
- Restricted scope of project limited potential for feedback. We would have gotten more feedback and it would have been more important if this were a permanent institution.
- We got feedback only if we pushed. The court ignored us. It would be a bad idea to move this system to the courts. Better to remain in human services --- with buffer for citizen input.
- Feedback was weak. Should be automatic. We got good feedback only when we asked for it.
- Training of social workers should emphasize importance of feedback.
- Liaison workers really tried to give us feedback. There was not enough time to see real effects on the kids.
- Documentation of board deliberations is crucial. Some social workers denied that we made recommendations that I know we made.

## DEFINITION OF SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL REVIEWS

The eighth question was: "How would you define 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' reviews?"

Most board members had clear views concerning the attributes which distinguished successful from unsuccessful reviews. There was wide agreement that cases were most likely to be successful if there was adequate information to guide deliberations. Information was most likely to be adequate if everyone concerned with the case attended the meeting, if social workers were prepared and if there was a spirit of cooperation in the meeting. Many also felt that the reviews were most likely to be successful if they were goal oriented and if criteria for decision-making were concrete.

## ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- [Reviews were successful] when everyone really understood the situation. This happened only when everyone was present and when everyone participated --- including social worker, child and foster parents.



## Effectiveness - 101

- We were successful when we had background information. It is important that board members keep their objectivity.
- I felt most successful when something concrete came out of the process (when we made some decision that would help the child more along) and least successful when it was just a bureaucratic exercise.
- I was least successful when social workers were not prepared.
- Reviews more most successful when they were goal oriented. When criteria were tangible.
- Important for foster parents to be there. Then they can ventilate. Also, when many people are present a kid's anger is distributed and not focused just on one person.
- Needed enough information to make recommendations.
- Reviews couldn't be successful without cooperation from agency social workers and supervisors.
- Everyone needs to be there; particularly the child.
- A successful review was when things were accomplished. When everyone was there and there was understanding.
- Where goals are clear and there is open sharing among everyone. Sometimes workers and supervisors had a hidden agenda --- this hindered things.

## CASES WHERE BOARDS WERE EFFECTIVE AND INEFFECTIVE

The ninth question was: "What factors were characteristic of cases where the boards seemed most effective and least effective?"

A number of factors were identified that board members felt contributed to ineffectiveness. Many board members suggested that the citizen review format is inappropriate for mentally retarded kids. Their comments are discussed in the following section. Other board members felt that older children were difficult because they were about to leave the system. There was also a suggestion that there are barriers to helping minority children because of most board members

lack of understanding of other cultures.

#### ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- Older kids were difficult. Many had been in placement a long time. There probably were not going to be a lot of changes.
- Consistency of board is important. Some board members didn't show up enough.
- If minority kids are being reviewed, I want to know what kind of home they are placed in or what kind of treatment facility they are in. I want to make sure that relevant laws are followed.
- Some parents were really crazy. If they are disruptive they shouldn't be at the reviews.
- There is social pressure on parents to try to get their kids back. There should be some way for them to say that they don't want the responsibility of being parents.
- Board was most effective when workers were least threatened and confident. These were same workers who talked about the families with genuine respect.
- Boards were least effective when workers were defensive, hostile, guarded.

#### PROBLEMS WITH MR CASES

The tenth question was: "Some problems have been reported in reviewing MR cases using the current format. What do you think should be done in reviewing these cases differently?"

A number of suggestions were made for changes in the review format for MR cases. The most common suggestion was to discard or revise the review form. It seems to suggest a capacity for change that most MR children do not possess. It was also suggested that MR cases do not need to be reviewed so often and do not require a full five member board.

#### ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- MR cases were difficult. Form does not apply to the profoundly retarded.
- MR cases are different from the others. But process is still useful. Many parents came in angry and left pleased that we were interested.
- Had less impact MR cases. Nor should we have. MRs are a whole different case. Frequently change is not a part of the plan. Intent was to find a secure place for them. Very often parents are heavily involved and so these kids are less likely to be neglected.
- MRs need to be reviewed, but not in this way. Maybe just a single citizen to check on them every now and then.
- It is tough on MR parents to face five people.
- Forms not appropriate. Questions don't fit the cases.
- Process doesn't work for MR cases. For the most part are they are long-term and nothing is really going to change. An administrative review every six months is redundant.
- Reviews are mandated, but don't need to be so often; maybe a year or even every eighteen months.
- Reviews seem bad for MR parents. Makes them guilty.
- Reviews are needed for MRs when there are problems with placement. Maybe parents should have authority to ask for reviews.

#### RECOMMENDED LEVEL OF BOARD AUTHORITY

The eleventh question was: "What level of authority should citizen review boards have ... advisory or something else?"

There was some disagreement concerning the proper level of authority for citizen review boards. A majority of members felt that the board should remain advisory, although it was emphasized that the board needs the authority to receive follow-up information on cases. Others felt that an advisory capacity is not enough and that the board



should have power to enforce its recommendations. A appeals mechanism was suggested where social workers would have to request permission not to follow-up on recommendations with which they disagreed.

#### ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- We represent the community and the social workers represent the bureaucracy. It is our job to educate the social workers concerning community needs.
- Boards should be advisory, with power to monitor and follow-up cases. Social workers should have the real authority.
- With more training, board would have more impact if it had some more authority.
- It would be neat if there were guardian ad litem for everyone. If they were at the reviews they would put more pressure on the system to follow through on recommendations.
- Burden should be on social workers to provide proof as to why board recommendations were not followed. Give them a chance to appeal board recommendations. Administration would review the appeal and enforce recommendations that are upheld. As it is now, social workers can, and often do, ignore the board.
- Many social workers respected our suggestions and incorporated them into the plan.
- [The board] should be advisory, but should have power to make recommendations --- to add things to the plan.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The twelfth and last question offered board members was: "What are your suggestions for changing the way the board operates?"

Many suggestions were offered. Most of these highlight and summarize issues raised in the previous discussion. Specific recommendations concern the size and composition of the boards, training for board members, length and amount of time committed to being a board member, scheduling of review sessions, and the role of staff assistants to the board.

## ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

### SIZE AND COMPOSITION

- Boards could be smaller, but with an odd number of participants to break tie votes.
- Two member panel was sufficient to do the work.
- Members of boards need to respect differing values and cultures of families. Selection of board members should pay attention to this.
- My board was too homogeneous. Too many human service types. We need more administrative people and people with business experience.
- There should be more effort to mix up types of people on the board. To do this it might be necessary to have larger boards.
- Not enough minority members. More should be recruited. Make sure the board is representative of community.
- Too many professionals and people with foster care experience were on the board. We need more "normal" people.
- Professionals should chair the board. It is primarily an administrative task. Use someone not connected with the case.

### TRAINING

- Training for the boards is critical. The manual was excellent. You need something to take away with you.
- Training needs to be on-going. When you start out you don't know what you are getting into.
- There should be more training in mechanics of running the board. Role play and practice would have helped.
- Chairs of five member boards should have more training.
- There should be more training in minority concerns. Without knowledge of the law, particularly the Indian Child Welfare Act, the board could make a mistake that would result

in court intervention.

- There should be more training in mental illness and sexual abuse. Even the social workers were quite ignorant.

#### TERM OF COMMITMENT

- Should attend to board member burnout. People should stay on board for a while and then get off (about 18 months). This should be staggered so there are always experienced members. Also, have option for members to serve longer or to return at later time.
- Board members should have staggered appointment so there are always experience members. Continuity with child should be stressed. They shouldn't always be seeing new faces.
- People on board should have lengthy commitment but not too long (say two years.) Avoid institutionalization of volunteers.
- There was a problem with absenteeism. Board members who can't honor their commitments should be discharged.
- Need to be flexible. Good people have busy schedules and can't always attend. Use alternates when regular members can't attend. Maybe more alternates are needed.
- The time commitment of board participation was much more than expected. Need to keep that manageable.
- You need to be on it more than six months to see if it will really work.
- Need to keep the boards together. You develop constructive relations with other members.

#### MEETING SCHEDULE

- Scheduling of meetings should be flexible. The project was very considerate about that.
- There should be flexibility in timing of reviews. Board should have power to ask for 3 month reviews. Should also have the power to ask for mini-reviews to check on interim progress.



## Effectiveness - 107

- Evening review meetings for parents who work during the day would be helpful.

### ATTENDANCE

- I Don't know if the supervisor should be there. On the other hand, reviews may improve communication between social worker and supervisor. Sometimes the board resolves conflict between social worker and supervisor.
- It is important for everyone to be there. Attendance must be emphasized.

### PROJECT STAFF ASSISTANTS

- Facilitators were excellent. They knew what they were doing; were objective and informative.
- Liaison is very important. Liaison workers were very good.

### OTHER

- Board members should have opportunity to ventilate. Summary at end of session was good.
- Need more informal and social events to build morale and cohesion. Give recognition to board members. We need strokes.
- Overall, people should have more feelings for people. Should focus on family and not just the child.
- Citizens ask questions that parents are want to ask but are afraid.
- The role of the board should be made clearer to the social workers.
- Child protection cases should be reviewed as well as child welfare.
- Board should have power to remove crazy and disruptive people from the meetings.
- Need to pay attention to rights and views of parents. Emphasize that in volunteer placements natural parents do not surrender all control.



## SURVEY OF HENNEPIN COUNTY PERSONNEL

Introduction

In order to gather information on the opinions of Hennepin County social workers and supervisors who had attended reviews, at the conclusion of the project, a survey (see Appendix E) was sent to all personnel who had attended at least one review. A total of 140 questionnaires were sent, 104 to social workers and 36 to supervisors. See Appendix E for open ended comments. Table I shows the breakdown of persons sent surveys by unit.

TABLE I  
TOTAL SAMPLE BY UNIT AFFILIATION

UNIT	WORKER	SUPERVISOR	TOTAL
CHILD WELFARE	43	11	54
CHILD PROTECTION	35	18	53
MENTAL RETARDATION	26	7	33
TOTAL	104	36	140

Reminder notices were sent to those who had not returned their completed surveys after three weeks. The final response rates were quite good, resulting in the following percentages of return by unit. As can be seen, the child welfare and mental retardation units exhibited a very high response rate for a mailed questionnaire.

TABLE II  
PERCENT OF AGENCY PERSONNEL RESPONDING BY UNIT

UNIT	WORKER	SUPERVISOR	TOTAL
CHILD WELFARE	86%	100%	88%
CHILD PROTECTION	51%	72%	58%
MENTAL RETARDATION	96%	86%	94%
TOTAL	77%	83%	78%

Table III on the following page shows the final composition of questionnaires received by unit.



TABLE III  
RESPONDENTS BY UNIT AFFILIATION

UNIT	WORKER	SUPERVISOR	TOTAL
CHILD WELFARE	37 (47%)	11 (45%)	48 (44%)
CHILD PROTECTION	18 (23%)	13 (36%)	31 (28%)
MENTAL RETARDATION	25 (31%)	6 (21%)	31 (28%)
TOTAL	80 (100%)	30 (100%)	110 (100%)

Respondents were asked to indicate how long they had been employed in their current capacity. The results of this question are shown below. Responses ranged from less than one year to 28 years, with the majority of responses falling in the 1 year or less category.

TABLE IV  
YEARS EMPLOYED IN CURRENT CAPACITY

	WORKER	SUPERVISOR	TOTAL
1 year or less	21 (26%)	14 (47%)	35 (32%)
2 - 5 Years	18 (22%)	6 (20%)	24 (22%)
6 - 10 Years	15 (19%)	2 ( 7%)	17 (15%)
11 - 15 Years	7 ( 9%)	2 ( 7%)	9 ( 8%)
16 Years or more	19 (24%)	6 (20%)	25 (23%)
Total	80 (100%)	30 (100%)	110 (100%)

Respondents were also asked to indicate how many reviews which included citizen members that they had attended. Table V indicates that supervisors attended significantly more reviews than individual social workers, since they may have supervised a number of cases selected for the project. The majority of social workers (75%) reported attending one or two reviews, while 88% of supervisors reported attending more than 2 reviews.

Twenty-one (81%) of the supervisors responding had acted as board chairs in Model II reviews.

TABLE V  
SELF-REPORTED NUMBER OF CITIZEN REVIEWS ATTENDED

	WORKER	SUPERVISOR	TOTAL
1 Review	27 (35%)	1 (4%)	28 (28%)
2 - 5 Reviews	50 (65%)	7 (28%)	57 (56%)
6 or More Reviews	0 (---)	17 (68%)	17 (17%)

## FINDINGS

Initial Reaction to Citizen Involvement

Table VI summarizes agency personnel's initial attitude toward the idea of citizen inclusion on review boards. The largest proportion of both social workers (47%) and supervisors (50%) indicated that they were unsure of the idea. Only 14 (13%) indicated that they were initially positive toward the idea of citizen review, however a larger proportion of supervisors indicated a positive initial reaction.

TABLE VI  
INITIAL REACTION TO THE IDEA OF CITIZEN REVIEW BOARDS

	WORKER	SUPERVISOR	TOTAL
Positive or Very Positive	8 (10%)	6 (20%)	14 (13%)
Unsure	37 (47%)	15 (50%)	52 (48%)
Negative or Very Negative	34 (43%)	9 (30%)	43 (39%)

The majority of negative comments explaining initial negative reactions centered around problems with MR reviews, problems accommodating additional requirements, expected criticism and non-integration of the project into case functioning.

**PROBLEMS WITH MR REVIEWS.** Many of the more negative initial reactions centered around the review of MR cases. One respondent stated, "my initial reaction was more in terms of MR clients than clients from other programs. I do not think this type of review is needed or appropriate for the MR program. Our families are put through so much as it is and have problems other families do not face, so additional reviews just add to their burden." Another MR worker commented, "it was a questionable use of time. MR placements are generally voluntary, these are long term placements, and it is rare



that they change." Similarly, "All of my MR placements are already over reviewed by administration, etc., court advocates, MR guidelines, health department, state MR reviews."

**ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.** Some respondents felt that the addition of citizen participants only added to the problems of case management. One social worker commented, "when there is not time to do all of the necessary work to meet practical needs, it is particularly distracting to do things that do not seem to meet a practical need." Another stated, "their [CRB's] attitudes inevitably only add more pieces to the already complex questions. They have their own biases, they are not neutral, each having their own ax to grind, so to speak."

**EXPECTED CRITICISM.** Another aspect related to initial negative reaction was the feeling that citizens would criticize and second-guess worker's decisions. One respondent stated, "my initial reaction was that the boards were in place to monitor the caseworker and to hold the worker accountable (which isn't unreasonable), but I wanted the focus to be on how to better serve the client and the child in placement. I was concerned the focus would be on "coming down" on the worker for not providing sufficient services (as in reprimanding). My experiences, while not extremely helpful, were certainly not demeaning in any way." Similarly another worker said, "originally I felt it was a question of my integrity as to why I placed a child."

**NON-INTEGRATION OF THE PROJECT.** One problematic aspect of the project was that it was not perceived as a part of the ongoing system, but rather as an additional external requirement. This was clearly shown in one worker's comment, "they are not an integral part of the system, do not learn or understand the ultimate responsibility of the social worker. The system is cumbersome enough without this addition. Checks and balances need to stop somewhere - and again - the assigned social worker is ultimately responsible anyway."

#### Opinion of CRB's After the Project

Agency personnel were also asked if their opinion of Citizen Review Boards changed after they had experience with the project. Table VII shows that many persons did change their attitudes based on their experience with the project. While 51% of workers opinions remained the same, 40% became more positive. Among supervisors, 59% became more positive. Only 10 persons (9%) said their opinion was more negative at the conclusion of the project.



TABLE VII  
HOW OPINIONS CHANGED OVER TIME

	WORKER	SUPERVISOR	TOTAL
Became More Positive	32 (40%)	17 (59%)	49 (45%)
Remained the Same	41 (51%)	9 (31%)	50 (46%)
Became More Negative	7 ( 9%)	3 (10%)	10 ( 9%)

Five primary reasons for more positive feelings toward Citizen Review Boards were given, these included, support for social workers, support for families and children, appropriate board operations, community education, and inclusion of outside perspectives.

**SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL WORKERS.** As a reason for change to a more positive opinion, several social workers voiced similar sentiments in that they were surprised that the boards were supportive of their work. One stated, "Citizens weren't as judgmental or critical as I anticipated. In fact, most of the time they were very supportive of how the case was being handled." Another said, "I feel the citizens review board generally supported me and also it let me know that they understood the needs of placement in some circumstances." Yet another commented, "I was impressed with the concern and sensitivity of board members. By and large they were nice people. they offered positive feedback to social workers and generally were supportive of their work."

**SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES.** Several personnel expressed the opinion that the boards helped to facilitate the review process for children and families. For example, "The citizens were well trained and really seemed interested in the children in placement and what was best for them." Another stated, "Can be a good process to help us keep focus on child's needs as well as families." Additionally, one worker felt the citizens could perform in ways different from agency personnel, "The board was able, in one instance, to advocate for my client/child in a way that I and other service providers could not do in giving direct feedback to child and commenting on this particular situation." Another commented, "it gave parents, who are coping with the idea of placing their child, a chance to get a sympathetic hearing."

**APPROPRIATE BOARD OPERATIONS.** Several respondents were complimentary in their remarks concerning board operations. Workers made the following comments, "...I feel the persons involved were all quite sensitive to the issues and confidential nature of this review;" "People on the boards were generally genuinely concerned, asked relevant questions and were not 'a pain in the posterior' - by asking not picky irrelevant questions - this was much appreciated;" "...members were more sincere and sophisticated in their input than I anticipated." Finally, "All participants attempted to understand the

individual case, the issues and dilemmas involved, to take into consideration the perspectives of the clients and worker rather than imposing their own views on the case initially. The boards operated in an effective problem solving mode."

Supervisors also had many positive things to say regarding board operation. One stated, "Boards were knowledgeable of their charge. Prepared prior to starting assignment, i.e., learned about agency, courts, resources. Approached assignment with best interests of children in mind, but also aware of limitations and barriers in moving toward permanency." Another stated, "Sensible, informed participation. Where continuity of involvement was experienced, the consistency of insight was very good."

**EDUCATION OF THE COMMUNITY.** Several agency personnel also commented on community education being a positive outcome of the project. One social worker stated, "I see some positives in that citizen participation improves communication between our agency and the community. It makes us sensitive to the ideas and concerns of the community and it helps the community gain a certain comfort with our agency by dispelling myths and educating." Another stated, "I think it's important for citizen to know what their money is being spent for and the quality of workers in this agency, and the work done. Citizens need to know the difficulties we face as social workers and the high rate of success we experience - usually the negatives hit the press."

**INCLUSION OF OUTSIDE PERSPECTIVE.** The inclusion of an outside perspective was seen as valuable by several agency personnel. One supervisor stated, "Internal reviews are often not very meaningful in that co-professionals tend to endorse each other's work for a variety of reasons. I feel the public sector needs to be informed and educated about the cases we deal with and that is important for us to get their feedback." Another supervisor said, "At first I thought citizen board members might not understand what problems we deal with and would be another administrative hurdle rather than a help. I quickly discovered they did understand and wanted to help clients and us! Having someone from outside the system either validate your thinking or offer suggestions for changes proves valuable (and welcomed)." A social worker stated, "I enjoyed sharing the experience and, at times, the responsibility of planning for children in out of home placement. Like the education aspect of the process (citizens came to see how social workers made decisions) and also the citizens' perspectives from outside the system."

When attitudes were reported to remain the same or to become more negative, other themes were identified. These included problems with MR reviews, amount of time needed for these reviews, a perceived lack of knowledge on the part of board members, and a lack of impact.

**PROBLEMS WITH MR REVIEWS.** MR workers continued to feel that this type of review was unnecessary for their clients. One worker stated, "I felt just a general non-relevance regarding MR cases - considering beyond my case and speaking to other workers - not a real meaningful



formality." Specifically, "The model, in most cases, did not fit MR."

**CRB's TIME CONSUMING.** Both workers and supervisors felt that the process was too time consuming. One social worker state, "The reviews are time consuming and seldom helpful in determining what direction in which to proceed." In a similar vein a supervisor commented, "There is considerable concern about the amount of time the review process takes and this is a reality. Placement units do between 10 to 20 reviews per month (60 are listed for CW services -approx.) with the involvement of 3 county staff people and others and with an average of more than an hour per review, it is costly. This time must be balanced against other ways time should be spent."

**LACK OF KNOWLEDGE.** Some workers felt that the review board members did not have enough knowledge to adequately review cases. One worker stated, "I feel inexperienced people have a narrow view of the foster care system." Another stated, "Competent board members were selected. they were qualified to review plans but were not qualified or experienced enough to make casework suggestions."

**LACK OF IMPACT.** Several felt that the process did not yield concrete results. A social worker said, "I didn't see where it made any difference in case plan or goals," and similarly, "Saw no difference in outcome or much in progress." Another felt that the process resulted in rubber stamp endorsement, "Another hoop for workers, don't feel it was useful, felt like another way my judgment was being questioned, invasion of my privacy for clients; a time consuming, anxiety producing process to rubber stamp an already developed plan."

#### Ratings of Citizen Review Boards

Agency personnel were asked to rate Citizen Review Boards on seven aspects of functioning on a five point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. These areas of functioning included: (1) CRB's demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the administrative review process, (2) CRB's demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the substitute care system, (3) CRB's demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the legal system, (4) CRB's asked questions that were relevant to the case, (5) CRB's demonstrated sensitivity toward involved persons, (6) CRB's demonstrated a respectful attitude toward attending parties, (7) CRB's suggestions were relevant and practical.

Table VIII shows the percentage of respondents indicating that they either somewhat or strongly agreed with each of the areas of functioning. Ratings of the functioning of the review boards were generally high, with the majority of responding agency personnel reporting that they either agreed or strongly agreed that performance criteria were met for each of the seven areas.



TABLE VIII  
RATINGS OF CITIZEN REVIEW BOARDS (CRB's)  
(PERCENT WHO SOMEWHAT OR STRONGLY AGREE)

	WORKER	SUPERVISOR	TOTAL	SIG.
CRB's demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the administrative review process	73 (92%)	30 (100%)	103 (94%)	ns
CRB's demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the substitute care system	67 (86%)	28 (93%)	95 (88%)	ns
CRB's demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the legal system	45 (58%)	24 (80%)	69 (64%)	**
CRB's asked questions that were relevant to the case	62 (79%)	27 (90%)	89 (82%)	ns
CRB's demonstrated sensitivity toward involved persons	69 (88%)	28 (93%)	97 (90%)	ns
CRB's demonstrated a respectful attitude toward attending parties	73 (95%)	28 (93%)	101 (94%)	ns
CRB's suggestions were relevant and practical	52 (68%)	23 (77%)	75 (70%)	ns

\*\*Chi-square difference significant at the  $p < .01$  level

While some differences in magnitude of ratings did occur between social workers and supervisors, these differences were not statistically significant except regarding the demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the legal system. In almost all cases, supervisors exhibited a higher level of endorsement than did social workers. One respondent qualified his responses saying, "I responded 'somewhat agree' to the majority [of items], but it should be noted that when participants did not fully understand our complex system, people were very eager to learn, and ask question in a very appropriate, kind and respectful manner."

**RESPECT FOR PARTIES INVOLVED.** The highest rating for all respondents was given in the area of respect for involved parties. For this item, 65 persons (59%) strongly agreed and another 36 (33%) agreed that CRB members demonstrated a respectful attitude toward the parties attending the reviews. One informant related "they, in general, extended great sensitivity and respect, both for the client and his/her situation and for me as a worker." A few agency personnel reported isolated bad experiences with citizen participants. "One citizen on the panel did not seem to have an understanding of the client's situation and made what I thought were inappropriate comments

and questions (other two citizens seemed to understand).

UNDERSTANDING OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PROCESS. This item tied for the highest overall rating. For this item, 47 persons (43%) strongly agreed and another 56 (51%) agreed that CRB members demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the administrative review process. A supervisor noted that there was "good management and training of volunteers." Another supervisor adds, "Citizen reviewers seem to have been adequately trained for their task in the important aspects of placements services and laws. They also seem to have prepared adequately for individual reviews, which is a compliment to the Staff Assistants."

UNDERSTANDING OF THE LEGAL SYSTEM. The lowest ratings were given in regard to understanding the legal system. While 63% either agreed or strongly agreed that an adequate understanding of the legal systems as it applies to substitute care was demonstrated, another 22% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 13% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. One respondent commented, "Citizen Review Boards seem to assume legal remedies where none exist."

UNDERSTANDING OF THE SUBSTITUTE CARE SYSTEM. Twenty-eight (26%) informants 'strongly agreed' that citizen participants demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the substitute care system. Another 67 (61%) were somewhat in agreement, 8 (7%) neither agreed nor disagreed, and five (4%) somewhat disagreed. One person suggested, "their knowledge of our options in case planning was limited by their lack of experience due to not working in the field." Another stated, "board members seemed to understand the foster care placements but no the guardianship-adoption process (with some notable exceptions.)"

RELEVANCE OF RECOMMENDATIONS. This area also received a relatively low endorsement. One agency respondent explained, "I found the review board members to be generally supportive of the child, but not experienced enough to offer new information for planning and reviewing the placement." On the other hand, one respondent commented "I was pleasantly surprised to find that citizens were not offensive, seemed understanding but mad suggestions in the areas they though warranted it." Another stated, "I felt supported by their judgments and recommendations."

RELEVANCE OF BOARD'S QUESTIONS. One third of the responding parties strongly agreed that the question of the Citizen Review board members were relevant to the handling of the case, 54 (50%) somewhat agreed, twelve neither agreed nor disagreed, and seven disagreed somewhat. As one informant related, "review board members seemed to improve over the months in their knowledge and understanding of placement issues, as indicated by their questions." Another said, "I cannot respond [on this item] because there were hardly any questions asked on the guardianship cases. They were all very nice and very respectful but had little to add to the work being done with state wards."



Scheduling of Reviews

For the most part, little difficulty was reported in the scheduling of reviews with Citizen Review Boards (see Table IX). The majority of respondents (78%) reported that scheduling was easy or very easy (40%) or were neutral on this item (38%). One supervisor reported, "The difficulties presented by the Project relate largely to logistics. The scheduling is complicated; removing it from our control has been a frustration and, at times, a major inconvenience. Communication regarding scheduling was not adequate for the first few months, but Project staff made concrete efforts to improve in that area."

TABLE IX  
DIFFICULTY IN SCHEDULING REVIEWS WITH CRB's

	WORKER	SUPERVISOR	TOTAL
Difficult or Very Difficult	14 (19%)	9 (31%)	23 (22%)
Neutral	29 (39%)	10 (35%)	39 (38%)
Easy or Very Easy	31 (42%)	10 (35%)	41 (40%)

Perceived Benefits of Citizen Involvement

INCREASED COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING. Agency personnel were also asked to enumerate what they felt were the benefits of citizen involvement on review boards. The most commonly mentioned benefit was the increased understanding of placement issues gained by the citizen participants, and in turn, by the community as a whole. One respondent stated, "I feel the more information (knowledge) the average non-involved citizen has about social services, the better off we all are." Another agreed, "the public may become more 'enlightened' about the difficulties involved in the foster care system."

INCREASED INTERACTION WITH THE COMMUNITY. Some felt that the increased community involvement in the substitute care system might result in long-term benefits to the providing agencies. One respondent suggested, "...the general public will have a better understanding of the difficulties we sometimes face in dealing with the issue of permanency. They could in some way assist in getting funding, additional resources, or staff to do a 'better' job." Another said that citizen involvement would provide for, "understanding of the complexity of the placement process and the many difficulties that can be encountered - wider exposure of social worker competence, and better interaction with the community in general."

AN OUTSIDE PERSPECTIVE. Another frequent theme was that citizen involvement provided a new, sometimes different perspective on



placement alternatives. As one respondent said, "...it's important to view the placement process from many perspectives - qualified persons from the community certainly represent one perspective. It helps keep the workers within the system from developing a narrow view on how the placement process should operate."

**GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY.** More than one agency staff member suggested that citizen involvement would result in greater agency accountability; "the parents and social workers are accountable more directly to representatives of the community." Another pointed out the value of, "other 'heads' to challenge need for placement and way to resolve [the] need for placement - but only if volunteers are very astute and know our system and children's families needs well."

#### Problems with Citizen Involvement

**CONFIDENTIALITY.** Agency personnel were also asked to enumerate what they felt were the negative aspects of citizen involvement on review boards. The most commonly voiced concern was that of maintaining client confidentiality. One respondent stated, "questioning of client-family values, decisions, lifestyles, especially in a voluntary placement of a handicapped child, [is a] confidentiality/privacy violation for families. Another agreed, saying, "confidential [is a problem] and the difficulty of appearing before a group of strangers to discuss one's life problems. Also there is the possibility that a citizen reviewer would know or be aware of a client in another context."

**TOO MANY PARTICIPANTS.** Some respondents objected to the larger number of review participants. One said, "the larger number could be overwhelming to clients who may already feel overpowered by the 'system.' Having only 1-2 would be preferable to 5." Similarly, "[a] large number of people - at time limits client participation."

**TIME REQUIRED FOR REVIEWS.** Another negative issue raised by agency staff was the amount of time required by citizen review boards. One staff person stated, "Overall, citizen reviews took much more time than regular reviews and the outcome doesn't appear to be different." Another said, "the most problematic thing would be time consumption, as our ordinary reviews have basically been a paper process, and if we were to team each case, it would take a lot of time." Still another informant agreed, "in general it seemed a lot of time to spend with little result - that is, no placements were changed as a result of being in the review."

**UNDERMINING AGENCY DECISIONS.** Some agency personnel were concerned that the citizen review boards might work to undermine the position or the decision of the agency. One individual said, "it would be a problem if the board operated to criticize the system in Child Welfare Services - the board needs to work cooperatively with the system to devise more helpful ways to serve clients - the focus needs to remain on the client and what their needs are." One respondent raised the problem of, "resentment from agency personnel that an 'outsider' is telling them how to do their jobs. If the

review is in a locked format there may be no opportunity to dialogue over points of disagreement."

QUALIFICATIONS OF BOARD MEMBERS. One person suggested, "[the] potential to get uninformed citizens not familiar with the foster care process who may ask irrelevant questions, or lack understanding to be sensitive..." was a possible problem. Another stated, "one 'lemon' could create quite a stir with media, etc. On the other hand, a respondent said, "as long as their role is clearly defined and they do not become 'policy setters', lines of accountability are clear, training and clarity of expectations adequate, and board members make [a] commitment for at least 1 year to ensure continuity and reduction of people involved for [the] client - I can't think of any major problems."

#### Recommendations for Implementation

SHOULD CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT BE MANDATED? In response to this question, only 18 respondents (18%) felt that citizen involvement in reviews should be mandated. The proportion of supervisors who endorsed this was somewhat higher than social workers (26% versus 15%), but not at a statistically significant level. One respondent said, "don't know," and ten persons did not respond to this item.

TABLE X  
SHOULD CITIZEN REVIEW BE MANDATED?

	WORKER	SUPERVISOR	TOTAL
YES	11 (15%)	7 (26%)	18 (18%)
NO	61 (85%)	20 (74%)	81 (82%)

WHO SHOULD ACT AS BOARD CHAIR? The largest percentage of both workers and supervisors felt that a social service supervisor should serve as board chair. Twenty percent of respondents responded to this item using the 'other' category. Many of these were respondents who indicated that either a citizen or a social service supervisor would be acceptable. Thirty-one persons did not respond to this item.



TABLE XI  
IF MANDATED, WHO SHOULD CHAIR BOARDS?

	WORKER	SUPERVISOR	TOTAL
A CITIZEN	12 (21%)	9 (39%)	21 (27%)
SOCIAL SERVICE SUPERVISOR	32 (57%)	10 (44%)	42 (53%)
OTHER	12 (21%)	4 (17%)	16 (20%)

HOW MANY CITIZENS SHOULD BE INCLUDED? The inclusion of 2 citizen board members was by far the most frequently endorsed suggestion, with over half of the total persons responding to this item indicating this option. Approximately a third of respondents indicated that the inclusion of three citizen members would be preferable. Thirty-four respondents (31%) did not answer this item.

TABLE XII  
IF MANDATED, HOW MANY CITIZENS SHOULD SERVE ON THE BOARD?

	WORKER	SUPERVISOR	TOTAL
1 CITIZEN MEMBER	5 (10%)	3 (11%)	8 (10%)
2 CITIZEN MEMBERS	27 (53%)	12 (46%)	39 (51%)
3 CITIZEN MEMBERS	16 (31%)	10 (38%)	26 (34%)
MORE THAN 3 CITIZENS	3 (6%)	1 (4%)	4 (5%)

SHOULD VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY PLACEMENTS BE REVIEWED? The majority of respondents (59%) indicated that both voluntary and involuntary placements should be reviewed by citizen boards. Forty respondents (36%) disagreed. Thirteen (12%) refused to answer.



TABLE XIII  
SHOULD BOTH VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY PLACEMENTS  
BE REVIEWED BY CITIZENS?

	WORKER	SUPERVISOR	TOTAL
YES	36 (53%)	21 (72%)	57 (59%)
NO	32 (47%)	8 (28%)	40 (41%)

Among those who thought both should be reviewed, many said simply, "I don't see any reason to treat them differently." The opinions of other was represented by the respondent who said, "[it's] probably important to review all aspects of how a child gets into placement - and how long [he/she] stays in placement - how placement progresses, regardless [of] whether [the placement] is voluntary or involuntary." Similarly, another said, "I had both types reviewed and did not see any reason to exclude involuntary. In practice we have to work for the cooperation of clients. Court orders do not hold placement together and seem to impress kids only the first time around." And another said, "limbo in placement (voluntary or involuntary) is still limbo - [it's] detrimental to kids." Similarly, one respondent stated, "I fail to see what difference there is between a court-ordered and voluntary placement with regard to assessing appropriateness, length of stay, involvement of family, case plan, etc. The providers are the same, and services should be meeting the need of the client and family regardless."

Some respondents felt that involuntary placements were special cases that did not lend themselves to review by citizens. One respondent said, "In involuntary placements, parents are often hostile - resistant. More people escalates things." Others felt that the review of involuntary placements duplicated the services provided by the court. One respondent said, "[the] court already reviews involuntary placements - additional reviews are cumbersome; additional work for overworked staff." Another stated, "I see no point in having long-term court-ordered placements reviewed by citizen panels. The situation is spelled out, plans of action are clear-cut and nothing beneficial would be gained." Another added, "Involuntary placements are already reviewed by the court and in this county the children also have guardian ad litem to represent them -- in addition the social worker must deal with the parents, treatment resources, parents attorneys and often minority advocates - to have another set of people to oversee the process from "outside" the system seems to me excessive."

On the other hand, some agency respondents suggested that voluntary placements were not appropriate for administrative review by citizens. One staff member reasoned, "because clients who are voluntarily placed generally are in long term placements, there are

not goals for the family, and the object is not to return home." In contrast, another agency worker suggested, "voluntary placements are often more problematic than court ordered placements. Foster care 'drift' is more likely to occur in voluntary placements."

SHOULD MR PLACEMENTS BE REVIEWED BY CITIZENS? Forty-three (51%) of agency respondents felt that MR cases should be reviewed in the same manner as other children in placement. Forty-one persons (49%) of those responding disagreed. Twenty-six individuals did not answer this question.

TABLE XIV  
SHOULD MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN BE REVIEWED  
IN THE SAME MANNER AS OTHERS IN PLACEMENT?

	WORKER	SUPERVISOR	TOTAL
YES	26 (43%)	17 (71%)	43 (51%)
NO	34 (57%)	7 (29%)	41 (49%)

Among those who did not feel that the same review process was appropriate were those who felt that it was a difficult and unnecessary hardship for parents. One agency staff member reported, "parents seem to feel they're being held responsible for their child's condition, guilty or suspect of something. They experience enough pain and complications in regard to their children's conditions." This opinion was echoed by another respondent who said, "the majority of these placements are voluntary and done by parents who are caring and concerned and totally involved with their children's health and welfare. Most parents will resent the involvement of 'strangers' in dealing with the private, personal affairs of their families."

Some respondents felt, "[the] issues are different - usually there are not 'goals' for parents/children. Forms don't apply to both cases - many questions are not applicable for voluntary placement situations." Similarly, "[the] case plan is generally long-term out of home care due to the child's needs. [The] current emphasis of administrative reviews on reuniting family is usually misplaced. I believe case situations certainly bear regular reviews (maybe yearly) but with an emphasis on appropriateness of placement and auxiliary services."

In contrast, many agency respondents felt that the range of available services for MR clients warranted the same review as other placement types. As it was put by one respondent, "with all the in-home services and other support services available for MR children, out of home placements should be monitored as closely as other placements." Another suggested, "alternatives to placement can be reviewed for their appropriateness - if alternatives are not

available, this deficit can be documented and other services can be developed and implemented to correct this situation."

It was pointed out by one respondent that "some MR children are placed for similar reasons that other children are in placement. There should not be the assumption that being retarded automatically equals placement. There are already many review mechanisms but they look at different things for different reasons - perhaps some coordination of these efforts would be most effective." Another agency staff member related, "I am working with a couple of borderline retarded, and the same review process makes sense for them."



## RESULTS OF WORKER AND SUPERVISOR FOCUS GROUPS

### INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the results of two focus group sessions: One with Supervisors, and another with Caseworkers, both groups being involved in the Foster Care Review Project. Nine individuals were invited to attend each session. The criterion used to select those to be invited was attendance at the greatest number of review session. Social workers had participated in 4 to 6 boards, and supervisors had attended 11 to 23 sessions. Attending both sessions were representatives of Child Protection, Child Welfare, and the Mental Retardation divisions. Three representatives from each unit were invited to each session. The purpose of the focus groups was to obtain feedback from social workers who had had cases reviewed under the project and Supervisors who had participated in reviews where citizens were present. The meetings lasted a little more than one hour, and were conducted the second week in October, 1986 by an independent evaluator. Although in different order, each group was asked the same series of questions (Appendix E). The meetings were audiotape recorded to insure accuracy in recording comments.

### RESULTS OF CASEWORKER GROUP

Each topic area is presented in three parts: (1) the actual question posed to the focus group members, (2) a brief synopsis of what was said, and (3) some representative comments from participants. The two groups are here separated for comparison purposes, with the Caseworkers presented first.

#### DIFFERENCE IN TIME BETWEEN CITIZEN AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

The first question addressed by Caseworkers was "From your experience, was the amount of time that you needed to prepare for reviews where citizens were involved any different from the amount of time needed to prepare for the agency's administrative review?"

Most of those responding stated that it took more time to prepare for reviews where citizens were involved. The additional time was needed for preparation, organizing the meetings, and scheduling those involved. Two Caseworkers reported that the reviews where citizens were involved did not take more time than usual.

### ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- For me it took more time, because first an organizer came to me and wanted a file, but then would also discuss with me who to invite to the meeting. They wanted a verbal case summary from me, even though I had administered it at the time of the review.

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- More time. I would spend more time working with the coordinator, just trying to organize the meetings.
- Spend a lot more time with the the citizen review. Spend more time scheduling everyone involved. It's not routine and not worth the time.
- Would also say more time consuming. Scheduling was real arbitrary...I was told when, and that was usually inconvenient.

## EASE OR DIFFICULTY WORKING WITH PROJECT STAFF

The second question in the discussion was "Were the project staff easy or difficult to work with in terms of scheduling reviews and putting together case summaries?"

All of the Caseworkers reported that the project staff were easy to work with, although they frequently mentioned that it was more time consuming and that scheduling was a hassle. When asked to expand on the comment that the project staff were easy to work with, two Caseworkers mentioned that the project staff had helped in the preparation of materials, and one mentioned that the staff went out of their way to accommodate the schedule of the Caseworker.

## ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- Project staff usually prepared the materials and I just did my stuff. Scheduling was a big pain...he would say, "You need to be there at such and such a time." and I would have to say, "I can't be."
- I had no problems with the staff of the review project.
- More time consuming, but not difficult to work with. Staff went out of their way to accommodate...trying to schedule things far enough ahead.
- No problem working with staff. A lot more preparation than usual though.
- Both project staff easy to work with, in many cases they prepared the case summary for me. Their was a hassle with being in an outlying office and having to send cases, and then not getting them back for a week, but that's just specific to my office.



#### PREFERRED MODEL FOR CITIZEN REVIEW BOARD.

The third question asked, "You were in a unique position to participate in and observe the operation of both types of citizen review boards (1) one of which included five citizen members and was chaired by one of those citizens, and (2) the two citizen member boards which were chaired by independent agency Supervisors. Which of these two models did you prefer and why?"

Most of the Caseworkers responding to this question preferred the two citizen member board. The reasons for this preference varied: one thought the smaller board was less threatening to the child involved, one thought the two member board required less preparation on the part of the worker, and another thought that the less formal atmosphere of the smaller group facilitated better questioning from the citizens and were more manageable.

#### ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- I had both types and I can't tell you which I preferred. The ones with more people involved lasted longer because there were more questions asked.
- I thought the smaller group worked much better. Too many people involved in the five member board, too many people for child being placed.
- The five member board was too crowded. You had to be well prepared for all the questions that they would ask. Too much preparation.
- The smaller boards were more manageable. The bigger ones tended to be more formal. Things loosened up in the smaller ones, member questions were better.

#### EASE OR DIFFICULTY WORKING WITH CITIZENS ON REVIEW BOARDS

The fourth question was, "On the whole, would you say that citizen involvement on review boards helped or hindered the casework process? This includes case planning."

Two-thirds of the Caseworkers polled commented that citizen involvement on review boards made no difference on the casework process. Two Caseworkers said that citizen involvement hindered the casework process by complicating things and by violating the privacy of the parents.



## ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- Hindered. I think it complicated things in most cases. Just another imposed review board that I don't think served any important services.
- I don't think it helped or hindered.
- I don't think it made any difference...there were two occasions where they brought up things that I hadn't thought of, and in that way they were helpful.
- No difference. I think that it's a violation of privacy for parents.
- No difference. Should have a certain way to select or opt those that are in the project.
- Neither. I think it is a serious breach of confidentiality.

## WHERE CITIZEN REVIEW BOARDS SHOULD BE HOUSED

The fifth question was, "Many suggestions have been made regarding where citizen review boards should be housed if they were mandated. These suggestions have included (1) within the social services department, (2) within the court system, and (3) as an independent outside agency. Which of these options do you think would work best, and why?"

Although two-thirds of the Caseworkers really did not know where they would like to see the citizen review boards housed, two of these stated that they thought the boards should not be with the court. Two other Caseworkers thought that if they could change things, the citizen review boards should be within the court system, as that was where the most difficulty was.

## ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- It should not be with the courts.
- If the board could change things, I would want them attached to the court because in Child Protection that's where most of the difficulty getting things is.
- The court. That's where the main problem is.
- Inappropriate to have it with the court.

#### BOARD MEMBERS SUPPORTIVE OR NONSUPPORTIVE OF CASEWORKER EFFORTS

The sixth question asked, "Did you feel that citizen review board members were generally supportive or nonsupportive of the work that you were trying to do? Why?"

All of the Caseworkers found the citizen board members supportive of the work the Caseworker was trying to do. This support usually followed a certain amount of explanation to the board members. One Caseworker said that citizen reviewers asked appropriate questions that didn't put the client on the spot.

#### ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- Supportive. Asked appropriate questions. Didn't ask questions that put the client on the spot.
- Supportive. It took a lot of explaining to tell them what we had done, but once we had done that they accepted what we had done, and were supportive.
- Supportive. Certainly a lot of explanation involved in telling the board what I had done and why. Had to tell them what is possible in placing a child.
- Generally supportive. Some people who weren't familiar with the agency couldn't understand some of the roadblocks.
- Supportive. After a certain amount of education.

#### MOST POSITIVE EFFECT OF CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

The seventh question asked of Caseworkers was, "What would you identify as the most positive aspect of citizen involvement on review boards?"

The majority of the Caseworkers found no positive aspects of citizen review boards beyond what was already being done. One Caseworker thought that citizen involvement had the positive effect of increasing awareness of the placement process to those outside of the agency. Another Caseworker was provided with some support in the job they were doing from the citizen board members.

### ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- I really don't think that there's any positive effect, beyond what we're already doing.
- Provided some support in letting me know that I was doing a good job.
- Gives awareness to someone outside the agency, as far as what we do... what's involved in placing a child.

### MOST NEGATIVE EFFECT OF CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

As the eighth question, Caseworkers were asked, "What would you identify as the most negative aspect of citizen involvement on review boards?"

A majority of the Caseworkers thought that citizen involvement was a breach of confidentiality. Two representatives of the MR division thought citizen involvement was inappropriate for MR placement.

### ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- Element of bridge of confidentiality.
- There's no way to insure that private citizens would not be discussing these cases at a restaurant or the corner drug store or whatever.
- Confidentiality. What if the parent doesn't want anyone else there?
- I think it's inappropriate for the MR's. These parents go through enough without private citizens interfering in their affairs.
- I think because of the special needs of the MR's these people have no idea of everything needed in their placement.

### ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The last question asked of Caseworkers was, "Finally, are there any other comments you would like to make regarding citizen review that you would like to see included in our report?"



Effectiveness - 151

Two Caseworkers brought up the need for effective screening for potential citizen reviewers. Twice cited also was the idea of clients having the option of not having citizen review.

ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- Should be tight selection and training procedures for citizen review members; confidentiality should be drilled. I think also the client should be able to opt out of it.

- MR division should be exempted. The parents should be able to decide whether or not to be a part of it.

- I think we should be more concerned with the motivations of board members.

## SUPERVISOR FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

### PREFERRED MODEL FOR CITIZEN REVIEW BOARD.

The first question asked of the Supervisors was, "You were in a unique position to participate in and observe the operation of both types of citizen review boards (1) one of which included five citizen members and was chaired by one of those citizens, and (2) the two citizen member boards which were chaired by independent agency Supervisors. Which of these two models did you prefer and why?"

Although two-thirds of the Supervisors did not think it was worth the time to continue having citizen review boards, four of the six responding thought if mandated, the five member board should be utilized. Controversy, variety, support, and balance on the issues were the reasons given for preferring the five member board.

One Supervisor preferred the two member boards, as they facilitated discussion.

One Supervisor thought neither model was working, and had no preference.

### ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- Not worth the time to continue as a model. I think the five member board lead to more of a balance on some issues, and also some issues would be brought out that wouldn't have been on a two member board.

- If it were to continue, I would say, "No, it's not worth the time." I guess structurally the five member is a lot more sound as far as variety and support.

- I liked the smaller boards more. People were more apt to talk in the smaller boards.

- Didn't think either of them were working, so I really don't have a preference for either version.

- Don't know how much citizen input was of real value in assessing the appropriateness of the placement. I enjoyed the five member panels more because there was more controversy. Inclined to agree with [personal name] that the procedures used prior to the project seemed to work O.K.

### DIFFERENCE IN TIME BETWEEN CITIZEN AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

The second question asked was, "From your experience, was the

amount of time spent in reviews where citizens were involved any different from the amount of time needed to conduct the agency's administrative review?"

Almost all of the Supervisors agreed that more time was needed to conduct citizen reviews. The extra time needed was a product of different factors including: having to educate the panel members, coordinating schedules, more work involved in preparation, and heightened anxiety for parents.

One Supervisor did not feel that the time spent in citizen reviews was not all that different from the time needed to do a complete review without them.

#### ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- In some situations it was [more]. Even when the case situation was quite simple they needed to get into it in some depth, and I don't think that was essential.
- I don't think the time was that different. I think to do the complete review, you end up with essentially the same amount of time.
- Tremendously more time consuming, because in MR when we have a long term placement we're reviewing service plans and resources, but we're not going over the need for that continued placement. It's so in depth all the time.
- Reviews, conducted under the project were scheduled for us, so that we had to work around our schedules. So that meant coordinating the schedules of the workers, Supervisors, and in the instance of the two member panel, arranging for another Supervisor to chair that. This became cumbersome at times. I definitely think it was more time consuming to utilize the panels.
- A lot more time was needed for the citizen review panels, because you had to educate them and go through the whole process with them.
- More time. Also heightened the anxiety of the parents who, a lot of times, became real anxious that their child would need to move.

#### EASE OR DIFFICULTY WORKING WITH PROJECT STAFF

The third question asked, "Were the project staff easy or difficult to work with in terms of scheduling reviews and providing



you with case summaries?"

All of the Supervisors found the project staff easy to work with. Among the examples given were: expediting the involvement of difficult clients, assisting with scheduling, and facilitating the casework process.

One Supervisor stated that while the project staffs' attitudes were nice, there was still difficulty in trying to find a schedule that would accommodate everyone.

#### ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- Attitudes were real nice, but the situation locked them into some rigidity. It was hard to arrange schedules to accommodate some of our reviews.
- As good as possible. Wasn't an issue with the project at all.
- In some cases I think they expedited the involvement of some very difficult clients. They [project staff] took away some of the scheduling, writing, or calling for us to a large extent.
- As helpful as possible, didn't get in the way of pulling case summaries. Facilitated things.

#### EASE OR DIFFICULTY WORKING WITH CITIZENS ON REVIEW BOARDS

The fourth question asked, "On the whole, how easy or difficult did you find it to work with citizens on the review boards?"

The Supervisors unanimously found the citizens on review boards to be easy to work with. Two of the Supervisors found the citizen members an asset in relaying to the clients what they could expect from placement, one found it easier to work with the citizens as the project went on. Also mentioned were the citizens' knowledge of what they were doing, respect for Caseworkers and Supervisors, and client advocacy.

#### ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- Relatively easy. It became easier as the project went on. Once they got educated as far as our needs and what specific concerns as far as the MR unit were concerned.

- I thought they were particularly well trained. They basically knew what they were doing.
- No problem. Carried their authority quite well. Respectful of workers and Supervisors involved.
- They were an influence on reasonable limits as to what the child could expect from placement.
- Sometimes they preached a little common sense to the client and seemed to help them understand some reasonable limits as to what they could expect out of the placement.

#### WHERE CITIZEN REVIEW BOARDS SHOULD BE HOUSED

The fifth question was, "Many suggestions have been made regarding where citizen review boards should be housed if they were mandated. These suggestions have included (1) within the social services department, (2) within the court system, and (3) as an independent outside agency. Which of these options do you think would work best, and why?"

One-half of the Supervisors thought that the citizen review boards should be housed close by, but two added the stipulation that they maintain an independent function.

One Supervisor stated their opposition to having citizen review boards at all.

#### ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- I couldn't see them as being housed away from the program they're working on, it just requires too much integration. If their going to be permanent, I'd like to see them housed close to Child Welfare.
- Practically it would be good if they were close by, but have some independent sort of setting. Definitely against them being in the court system.
- Close by, but maintain an independent function.

#### BOARD MEMBERS SUPPORTIVE OR NONSUPPORTIVE OF CASEWORKER EFFORTS

The sixth question asked, "Did you feel that citizen review board members were generally supportive or nonsupportive of what Caseworkers were trying to do? Why?"

All of the Supervisors polled said that the citizen review board members were supportive of what the Caseworkers were trying to do. Two mentioned that the citizen reviewers were an impetus to the Caseworkers. One Supervisor said that the citizen reviewers gave another stance on what the issues were. Another Supervisor wondered at what the support of the citizen reviewers meant; "were they doing such an outstanding job in all their placements?", or "was the process really serving any purpose?"

#### ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- Very supportive. There were a couple of instances where they wanted the social worker to go beyond the goals that were set for the case.

- Very supportive. I sometimes wondered what that meant. Either we were doing an outstanding job in all our placements, or else the process didn't serve much purpose.

- Very supportive. Some instances where they certainly pushed my social worker, in a way that I couldn't push them...in a positive way.

#### MOST POSITIVE EFFECT OF CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

The seventh question was, "What would you identify as the most positive aspect of citizen involvement on review boards?"

One-half of the Supervisors thought that community awareness was the most important aspect of citizen involvement on review boards. One Supervisor thought that citizen involvement offered a common sense mode of assessment. One Supervisor felt that a child in placement was reassured by the citizen members' interest. Another Supervisor found no positive aspects of citizen involvement on review boards.

#### ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

- A common sense mode of assessment.

- General advantage of opening up the placement process to public scrutiny so the taxpayers have some understanding that the kids are getting proper placement and are receiving the services that they need.

- A youngster in placement is reassured by someone in the community, some total stranger, expressing real



care and concern about what happens. Everyone's not getting down on them.

- Something akin to community education. Also, sharing responsibility for service provisions. Especially in MR, there are inadequate resources for the people we serve. Spread responsibility.

- Think community education is real big, and also to keep the providers responsible for their care and service provisions.

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#### MOST NEGATIVE EFFECT OF CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

The eighth question was, "What would you identify as the most negative aspect of citizen involvement on review boards?"

Two Supervisors found the extra time involved to be the most negative aspect of citizen involvement on review boards. Two others found citizen review boards to be another system of checks and balances that was unnecessary. Another two thought that sensitive issues might be too much for citizen members on review boards.

#### ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTS

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- The most negative thing is the time factor. Another hoop to jump through. Here in Hennepin county we already have enough checks and balances.

- The time involved. The repeated presentation of information.

- Another layer of checks and balances that I don't think is necessary.

- [Citizen review board members] not all that well trained to deal with these kinds of sensitive issues.

- Could be devastating if reviewers are not informed on sensitive issues.

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#### ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Lastly, the Supervisors were asked for any other comments they would like to make regarding citizen review.

Only one supervisor made an additional comment, this was, "I think that it is important that our processes and purposes are known."

## INTERVIEWS WITH JUDICIAL REPRESENTATIVES

### Introduction

To obtain the view of the court, interviews (see Appendix F) were attempted with 3 members of the juvenile court system. Of these, one person declined to participate stating that he had not received any information on the project, and did not feel citizen involvement was necessary, "the way it stands is sufficient, neutral and unbiased." Included in the interviews were Chief Judge Oliesky and one court referee. Other judges of the juvenile court had not received information on the project, nor the products of reviews.

### Results

One respondent had received information on the project at a Permanent Child Placement Project, while Judge Oliesky, as presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court was involved from the beginning of the project in the selection, implementation and review of the work product of citizen review boards.

Judge Oliesky felt that the information received from Citizen Review Boards was very adequate for the needs of the court. The manner in which judicial reviews were conducted did not change with the availability of citizen review boards, the reason given was that the information was not shared with referees.

There was, however, felt to be a difference in the overall patterns of child placement. "Caused the Welfare Department to take a look from an outside position as to what was going on. Gave them some input. Prod to recalcitrant workers to move kids...look at alternatives. Encouraged parents and children to speak up and voice their concerns. Good addition - complacency in the old process - a real stimulus to workers."

Both respondents felt that Citizen Review Boards had made a difference in permanency plans for children. It was felt that just by being there there was a "watchdog" effect that "keeps everyone more attentive to their duties and the law." It was felt to be a stimulus to become "more aggressive, more searching as to what alternative there would be for children, rather than just...the status quo."

Three ways in which children have benefited from citizen reviews were identified by respondents: (1) Life planning services, (2) kids had the opportunity to speak out on their own behalf, and (3) ensuring that permanency planning is followed.

Both respondents felt that the project had an impact on families, foster parents, caseworkers and advocates. One respondent felt that judges were somewhat affected, and both felt that lawyers were probably not affected. One respondent stated, "Attorneys and judges will still have to exercise their own independent judgments." Additionally, "I don't know how much attorneys are involved in this process, suspect fairly minimally until they get to court review."



Both respondents reported that they held negative opinions when they first heard that citizens would be included in administrative review boards. Both felt that "it would be just another layer of bureaucracy." One respondent commented, "So many people coming into court - if everyone is making a decision, then nobody is making a decision." The other stated, "I was skeptical - somewhat hesitant to endorse another bureaucratic, third party group."

Both respondents reported that their opinion of citizen review boards became more positive over time. "Once I saw that it was really run by competent people and saw some of their work product, it erased most of my doubts."

Several impacts or contributions of citizen involvement on review boards were identified by the respondents. One respondent stated, "Their presence as ombudsmen, watch dogs. As objective and detached observers in the Child Welfare System. Now view them as not just another layer of bureaucracy, but as a participatory democracy." The other respondent added, "Good impetus to Bureau of Social Services or the Welfare Department to look at alternative to permanent placement. To give independent look by people from outside the agency. Good review to the extent that other alternatives were being sought out."

Some problems resulting from citizen involvement were also identified. Both respondents felt that the selection of people serving in this capacity was critical. One stated, "Crucial to have high profile of people committed to work," the other added, "these people are making decisions without any accountability - people are only as good as their consciences and talents allow." Cost and finances were also mentioned as a concern. One respondent also felt the process could be "demoralizing - a second guess, armchair quarterback kind of thing that inhibits workers by having someone looking over their shoulder."

Primary benefits seen emerging from the process included better accountability in child placement, a stimulus to look for new solutions, an outside review - a chance of a fresh look.

Neither respondent saw any legal problems associated with citizen review.

Both respondents felt that the recommendations of citizen review boards had a role in judicial reviews. One respondent felt that these recommendations could play an advocate role. The other stated, "[Recommendations] should be given some prominence and credence, and real questioning. If there is some diametric opposition between worker and CRB, the court should be the fact finder. Ask people to justify their positions. In some cases necessitate a good second look."

The one respondent who answered the question felt that CRB members were very adequately prepared to review substitute care cases. This was based on the opinion that "the county did an excellent job in training these people. My impression from seeing report and meeting



in person - these are really high quality folks."

Both respondents felt that the county had benefited from citizen review. One respondent felt there was "more accountability - better services." The other felt that the outside third party opinion has really been beneficial in stimulating the search for alternative resources.

Respondents were split on whether children should be involved in review. The respondent who felt this was not necessary felt that it duplicated efforts of the court. The other stated, "It's their lives. They should feel they have some control over what's going on for them. Gives them a feeling that they have a say. Sometimes not getting exact view point of the kid from worker, guardian or attorney."

In terms of how CRBs should be constituted if mandated, one respondent stated, "Including 5 members - this is large enough for background and small enough for consensus and allowing for individual input." The other stated, "It should be housed in the welfare department if they have autonomy. The other place would be the court."

Both respondents reacted somewhat negatively to the suggestion that administrative review be extended to corrections. "I would be against it. Corrections is a totally different field." Similarly, "The State has a matrix of kids under their jurisdiction. Look for a need before implementation. Are there too many kids in corrections for too long under that jurisdiction? My impression is that there is a push to get kids out of the corrections system quickly."

Both respondents agreed that involuntary placements should be reviewed by citizens, however they differed somewhat on voluntary placements. While one respondent stated, "Just involuntary because they have no business being involved in private affairs of the family - a family is a very delicate unit. This would take authority away from parents," the other stated, "To some extent involuntary - obviously a need to get a kid back in a home or permanent placement. I don't know about voluntary - if it is an abused system. Support for both. Leave kids too long in limbo - tend to be more parent-oriented than kid-oriented. Our system gives parents chance after chance, in the meantime, the kid is the one that suffers."

As a concluding comment one respondent stated, "I think CRBs have a very healthy role - they encourage those asked to participate."

## SURVEY OF PARENTS AND FOSTER PARENTS ATTENDING FOSTER CARE REVIEWS

### INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the responses of a survey of parents and foster parents who had participated in the Foster Care Review Project. Interviews were attempted with 30 parents and foster parents who had attended Citizen Board Reviews. A total of twenty-eight interviews (93%) were completed: fifteen of fifteen (100%) foster parents and thirteen out of fifteen (86%) natural parents. Eleven of these interviews were completed in person at the conclusion of board meetings during July and August. The remainder of the interviews were conducted by telephone with randomly selected respondents who were known to have attended at least one review. A copy of the survey instrument and respondent's open-ended comments can be found in Appendix G.

### RESULTS

The results on the individual questions in the survey instrument (Appendix G) are summarized below. Where pertinent, responses of natural parents and foster parents are compared.

#### CLARITY OF PURPOSE.

The first question in the questionnaire asked: "Did you understand the Administrative Review Process, that is, was the purpose made clear to you?" As can be seen in Table 1, most of those who returned a questionnaire felt the purpose of the review process was clear: twenty (71%) felt that the purpose was very clear, five (18%) felt that the purpose was somewhat clear and three (11%) felt the process was somewhat unclear.

Foster parents were somewhat more likely to find the process clear than natural parents. Nearly four-fifths (87%) of foster parents, compared with about half (53%) of natural parents found the purpose of the reviews "very clear." One foster parent commented, "The letter was fuzzy in explaining the overall purpose and I don't believe it was specifically spelled out before the review." According to another, "...nobody sat down and explained the purpose to me. I just assumed they would go through the case. I would have liked a copy of the form before they handed it out."

TABLE 1

## PERCEIVED CLARITY OF PURPOSE OF REVIEWS

	Foster Parents	Natural Parents	Total Sample
Very clear	13 (87%)	7 (54%)	20 (71%)
Somewhat clear	2 (13%)	3 (23%)	5 (18%)
Uncertain	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Somewhat unclear	0 (0%)	3 (23%)	3 (11%)
Very unclear	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
TOTALS	15 (100%)	13 (100%)	28 (100%)

## PRIOR REVIEWS ATTENDED

Overall, nineteen of the twenty-eight informants (68%) reported they had attended more than one review. Eleven foster parents (73%) compared with eight natural parents (62%) had attended more than one review. The sample median number of prior reviews attended was three. There was no difference between foster and natural parents in number of prior reviews attended; the median for each was three. Six informants (four foster parents and two natural parents), about a fifth of the total sample, had attended both citizen and non-citizen reviews.

## ENCOURAGEMENT TO ATTEND

Twenty seven informants (96%) reported that they had been encouraged to attend the review; 100% of foster parents and 94% of natural parents reported being urged to attend. Encouragement typically took the form of a letter and in some cases a follow-up phone call from the child's case worker.

## PARTICIPATION IN REVIEW

Twenty-six informants (93%) said they were encouraged to participate in the review. There was no difference in perceived



of foster parents and 92% of natural parents reported that their participation was urged. Encouragement usually came from the members of the board.

Fifteen informants (54%) said that they had asked questions during the review. This was 60% of foster parents and 46% of natural parents. Thirteen of the fifteen who had asked questions (87%) felt that their questions had been answered. This was 86% of natural and 88% of foster parents who had asked questions.

Twenty-four informants (87%) made comments during the reviews. This was 86% of foster parents and 84% of natural parents. All but one of those who made comments felt they were listened by other participants. One natural parent was not certain. More than a third of informants who made comments (39%) felt that changes had been made in the proposed plan based on their remarks. There was no difference between foster and natural parents in feeling that changes had been made: 41% of foster parents and 36% of natural parents thought changes were based on their comments:

#### WHO SHOULD ATTEND THE REVIEW

Table 2 shows informant suggestions concerning who should attend foster care administrative reviews. Those most recommended by the total sample included: natural parents (79%), foster parents (75%) and the responsible case worker (57%).

There were some differences between natural parents and foster parents. Foster parents most frequently mentioned foster parents (87%), followed by natural parents (73%), the concerned caseworker (47%) and the child (47%). Natural parents most frequently mentioned natural parents (85%), followed by social workers (69%) and foster parents (62%). Foster parents were more likely than natural parents to recommend presence of the citizens and the child concerned in the case.

The sense of most comments was that the review should be attended by all concerned with the case. Although some natural parents were concerned about the threat to confidentiality of including citizens in the reviews, most informants seemed to welcome participation of community volunteers. Many informants suggested that the concerned child should be involved, but a number also cautioned that only older children and those able to understand the proceedings should be invited.

TABLE 2

## SUGGESTIONS AS TO WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN REVIEWS

	Foster Parents	Natural Parents	Total Sample
Natural parents	11 (73%)	11 (85%)	22 (79%)
Foster parents	13 (87%)	8 (62%)	21 (75%)
Social workers	7 (47%)	9 (69%)	16 (57%)
Child	7 (47%)	1 (8%)	8 (28%)
Citizens	5 (33%)	1 (8%)	6 (21%)
Supervisors	3 (20%)	2 (15%)	5 (18%)
All persons involved	1 (6%)	3 (23%)	4 (14%)
Guardian ad litem	2 (13%)	2 (15%)	4 (14%)
Therapists	1 (6%)	1 (8%)	2 (7%)
Court representatives	0 (0%)	2 (15%)	2 (7%)
Teachers	1 (6%)	1 (8%)	2 (7%)
Someone to protect parents	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)
Only those with background	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)

#### ATTITUDE TOWARD CITIZEN REVIEW BOARDS

Table 3 shows the responses of informants when asked, "When you were first told that the administrative review board would include citizens, how did you feel about having citizens (persons not employed by the County) involved in handling cases?"

Nearly three quarters (72%) of the total sample of informants were initially "very positive" or "positive" about citizen participation in the review process. Foster parents tended to be more positive than natural parents. Two thirds of foster parents (67%) were initially very positive compared with two fifths (39%) of natural parents.

There were many positive comments about citizen review boards. One natural parent remarked, "...it was good to have someone in there who didn't know anything about what was going on and could hear from both sides and form an unbiased opinion." A foster parent said, "I'm impressed with the citizen involvement because I feel more action will take place. The citizens are part of the community who also want changes to occur. I think they'll get the ball rolling." A third foster parent commented, "this kind of process gets citizens involved and educates them about foster care."

About a fifth of informants (21%) were initially neutral and two (8%) were negative. Most of these were natural parents who were concerned about confidentiality. One stated, "I did not like the idea of strangers giving suggestions and advice about issues they have no knowledge of."

#### CHANGE IN ATTITUDE TO CITIZEN REVIEW

When asked whether their view of citizen review boards had changed, about a third (36%) said their view had become more positive, 61% said it had remained the same, one (4%) said it had become more negative. Six foster parents (40%) compared with four natural (31%) parents became more positive; 9 foster parents (60%) and eight natural parents (61%) did not change their opinions; no foster parents and one (8%) natural parent became more negative.



TABLE 3

## INITIAL REACTION TO IDEA OF CITIZEN REVIEW BOARD

	Foster Parents	Natural Parents	Total Sample
Very positive	10 (67%)	5 (39%)	15 (54%)
Positive	3 (20%)	2 (15%)	5 (18%)
Neutral	2 (13%)	4 (31%)	6 (21%)
Negative	0 (0%)	1 (8%)	1 (4%)
Very negative	0 (0%)	1 (8%)	1 (4%)
TOTAL	15 (100%)	13 (100%)	28 (100%)

## ADVANTAGES

Overall, three quarters (75%) of respondents saw advantages to citizen involvement on review boards. This was 93% of foster parents and 54% of natural parents. Five informants (18%), all natural parents, saw no advantages. Two informants (8%), one foster parent and one natural parent, did not answer the question.

Many who saw advantages commented on the commitment of citizen board members. In the words of a foster parent, "[They] really seemed to care for these foster children. Their feelings went a lot deeper than the county authorities (who appear to bounce them around.)" Others thought citizens bring an important outside perspective to the proceedings. A natural parent remarked, "[their] comments and concerns were refreshing and inviting." A foster parent said, "They brought out new facts and provided new ideas. Two heads are better than one."

## DISADVANTAGES

A quarter (25%) of all informants saw problems in the citizen review boards, while 71% saw no problems and one (4%) was uncertain. Natural parents were more likely than foster parents to see

difficulties: five natural parents (38%) compared with three foster parents (13%) saw problems with citizen review boards.

Most who saw potential problems with citizen involvement commented on the complexity of foster care cases. According to a foster parent, "It's difficult for these people to draw realistic conclusions about issues that they have no previous knowledge of." Others were concerned about confidentiality. A natural parent remarked, "There are possibilities of running into these citizens after the meeting. I don't like the fact that they have knowledge about personal things that are occurring in my life."

#### COMPARISON WITH OTHER REVIEWS

The six informants who had attended both citizen reviews and reviews which did not include citizens were asked to compare their experiences. Owing to the the small number of informants with dual experience, the views of foster parents and natural parents will not be compared in this section. Four (72%) found citizen boards most useful, one (14%) found the other review process more useful and one (14%) thought neither was useful.

A foster parent who found citizen review more helpful remarked, "In the two others that didn't include citizens we just went through a checklist and the administration solely ran it. There was no talking and no interaction. No valuable input was obtained." A natural parent who found citizen review more effective commented, "It was more open. Citizens asked me questions which really enlightened me."

One natural parent who found non-citizen review more useful, however, remarked, "[Non-citizen] reviewers asked more sensitive and pertinent questions --- and rightfully so, as they had more background and knew the child."

#### GENERAL COMMENTS

In their general comments most informants were positive about citizen review. Foster parents tended to be slightly more positive in their appraisal of Citizen Review Boards. One foster parent commented, "I encourage the legislature to continue having citizens on the board. It's great for all parties involved." According to a natural parent, "I'm very impressed with the way Hennepin County is handling the reviews (including citizens). I'm glad to be part of this process." A foster parent concluded, "I'd just like to see it in more counties. We have children [from] three other counties. It's so bad in other counties that we are not even informed of discussions or encouraged to attend."

## SURVEY OF CHILDREN ATTENDING FOSTER CARE REVIEWS

### INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the responses of a survey (see Appendix H) of children who had participated in the Foster Care Review Project. Due to the small number of reviews held during July and August when interviewing was done, a total of only three interviews were completed with children following their reviews.

### Summary

All three children interviewed were from Child Welfare. Two had experienced Model I reviews and the third, a Model II review. Two were females and one a male. All were older children.

All three children had previously been asked to attend reviews. Two of the children had asked questions during the review and felt that their questions were answered. One respondent added, "to the best of their ability."

Two of the three children had made comments during the review process, and both felt their comments were listened to. One commented however, "some of the question made me mad - it was so frustrating. I'm not a baby - they treat me like a child. Not really like a child, but I had to keep going over my questions and answers like I was a kid." None felt that their comments brought about any changes in their case plans.

All three indicated that they had been asked what they thought during the course of the review. Additionally, all three felt that their attendance at the review had made a difference. One respondent stated, "They were able to see changes in my attitude from earlier reviews." The second stated, "I was able to ask questions and was able to inform them." Finally, the last respondent offered, "I had a lot of input. I explained things that they probably would not have got had I not been there, like my 'hand modeling' job. If you just read it, it would have seemed dumb, but I had to explain and now I might get the money - one of the volunteers brought it up. I was also able to clear up what the social worker wrote down about if I wanted to see my mom and dad, and why I was at home. The point they got out of it didn't make sense, I had to explain it."

Only one respondent reported feeling uncomfortable because there were people on the board who didn't work for the county. She cited having to go over family details as uncomfortable, additionally, she stated that one citizen member makes her mad and gets on her nerves - not thinking she's old enough for things, but the other one was "cool".

None of the three identified any bad things happening as a result of citizen involvement, and all three identified positive things that had happened. "They brought up stuff I wasn't thinking about. A volunteer brought up things my social worker should have - my social



worker seemed like he was off in his own world." Another stated, "there was a new idea about working - a volunteer picked up that I was interested in doing that." The third said, "one of the volunteers seemed real personal - he seemed to notice my feelings."

When asked what they would like to say to the people in charge, all three had positive things to say. One respondent, while qualifying his statement that he just didn't like meetings, and this one was too long added, "It did help in thinking about what's going on with me." The second had somewhat mixed feelings, "I like it - I like the people, they're not self-centered. One volunteer lady I like because she was up on things and paid attention. The other one gets on me and I don't know why and the other volunteer sticks up for me." The third respondent was entirely positive, "They should keep doing this. It helps kids to know there are a lot of people who are interested in them."

## SURVEY OF INTERESTED PERSONS ATTENDING FOSTER CARE REVIEWS

### INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the responses of a survey (see Appendix I) of interested persons, other than Foster Care Board members, Hennepin County staff, children, parents and foster parents who had attended a Foster Care Review meetings. These persons included persons in the roles of guardian ad litem, attorney, residential treatment center staff, other relative, private social worker, probation officer, doctor or therapist, minority or other advocate, and a few whose roles were unspecified.

### RESPONSE RATE

Seventy-five interested parties were identified as attending reviews including citizens through May 31, 1986. Of this group of 75, only 62 had mailing addresses sufficient to be included. Of the 62 questionnaires mailed to individuals who had attended Citizen Board Reviews, 2 were returned because addresses had changed, 19 were completed. This is a response rate of 31%.

### COMPOSITION OF SAMPLE

The sample included six non-Hennepin County Social Workers (32%), five guardian ad litem (26%), four group home representatives (21%), one psychologist, one probation officer, one minority social service representative and one attorney.

### RESULTS

The responses to the individual questions in the survey instrument (Appendix I) are summarized below.

#### CLARITY OF PURPOSE.

The first question in the questionnaire asked: "Did you understand the Administrative Review Process, that is, was the purpose made clear to you?" Seventeen informants (90%) felt that the purpose was very clear and two (10%) felt that the purpose was made somewhat clear. Two informants commented that they were uncertain of the authority of citizen board members.

#### PRIOR REVIEWS ATTENDED

Sixteen informants (84%) reported attending more than one review. The median number of reviews attended was seven, although one person said that they had participated in "more than 200 reviews." Twelve informants (71%) had attended both citizen and non-citizen reviews.

#### ENCOURAGEMENT TO ATTEND

Seventeen informants (90%) reported that they had been encouraged to attend the review. Encouragement typically took the form of a

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letter and in many cases a follow-up phone call from the child's social worker.

Table 1 shows informant suggestions as to who should participate in such reviews.

TABLE 1  
SUGGESTIONS AS TO WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN REVIEWS

	N	%
Natural parents	12	63%
Foster parents	10	54%
Social workers	8	42%
Guardian ad litem	7	37%
Child	6	32%
Therapists	5	26%
All persons involved	4	26%
Group home representatives	3	16%
Supervisors	2	10%
School representatives	1	5%
Court representatives	1	5%
Citizens	1	5%
No citizens	1	5%

## PARTICIPATION IN REVIEW

Eighteen informants (94%) said they were encouraged to participate in the review. The source of this encouragement was usually the members of board.

Twelve informants (63%) said that they had asked questions during the review and all twelve felt that their questions had been answered.

All nineteen (100%) informants made comments during the reviews and felt that they were listened to. About a fifth of the informants (21%) felt that changes had been made in the proposed plan based on their comments.

## EVALUATION OF CITIZEN BOARD

Table 2 shows informant responses to a series of questions concerning the performance of the Citizen Review Boards.

The overall tone of evaluative remarks was positive. A guardian ad litem commented, "At first I was skeptical of [citizen] involvement, but they made a believer out of me. All acted in a very



courteous and professional manner." A private agency social worker remarked, "The citizen review members seemed well informed, knowledgeable and caring. I have no complaints or concerns. I was impressed."

A probation officer, however, was not so sure: "... my client resented 'outsiders' being involved in her case. Without spending time with her, her psychotic mother, her crazy father and her 2" thick file, I don't think they could make a meaningful assessment. A guardian ad litem thought, "... use of citizens for administrative reviews seems to be the same role as guardian ad litem without having any training or involvement in the case concerning the welfare of the children."

TABLE 2

## EVALUATION OF CITIZEN FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARDS

	STRONGLY AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	NEITHER	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
CRB members showed know- ledge and understanding of review process	79% (15)	16% ( 3)	0% ( 0)	5% ( 1)	0% ( 0)
CRB members showed know- ledge and understanding of substitute care system	53% (10)	42% ( 8)	0% ( 0)	0% ( 0)	5% ( 1)
CRB members showed know- ledge and understanding of legal system	53% (10)	37% ( 7)	0% ( 0)	0% ( 0)	10% ( 2)
CRB members questions were relevant to the case at hand	63% (12)	21% ( 4)	5% ( 1)	5% ( 1)	5% ( 1)
CRB members questions were sensitive to persons and circumstances	74% (14)	21% ( 4)	0% ( 0)	5% ( 1)	0% ( 1)
CRB members demonstrated respect toward the parties attending the reviews	84% (16)	11% ( 2)	0% ( 0)	0% ( 0)	5% ( 1)
CRB recommendations were relevant and practical to the case at hand	42% ( 8)	37% ( 7)	5% ( 1)	0% ( 0)	16% ( 3)

## ATTITUDE TOWARD CITIZEN REVIEW BOARDS

Table 3 shows the responses of informants when asked, "When you were first told that the administrative review board would include citizens, how did you feel about having citizens (persons not employed by the County) involved in handling cases?"

TABLE 3  
INITIAL REACTION TO IDEA OF CITIZEN REVIEW BOARD

	N	%
Very positive	3	16%
Positive	6	32%
Neutral	4	21%
Negative	4	21%
Very negative	2	10%
TOTAL	19	100%

Many of those who were initially positive about citizen involvement saw a need for outside input in the reviews. A psychologist commented, "Sometimes I feel the social workers in 'the system' get caught up in procedures and it is good to get fresh perspectives." According to a group home representative, "[I] thought having community input would be helpful [and] also educational for citizen members."

Most of those neutral adopted a "wait and see" attitude. Typical are the remarks of a foster home worker: "At first I was not sure of their role. I felt that they may not understand all the reasons for referral into a foster home. It was more of the attitude of unknown on my part."

Among those initially negative, the greatest concern had to do with capacity of citizens to deal meaningfully with foster care cases. An attorney commented, "My initial concern was that the members would not understand the dynamics of the cases, as most are quite complex." A guardian ad litem said, "I couldn't quite see the necessity and I guess it would have made me really angry if they overturned the county's (and my) position."

## CHANGE IN VIEW OF CITIZEN REVIEW

When asked whether their view of citizen review boards had

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changed, about half (47%) said their view had become more positive, 32% said it had remained the same, 16% said it had become more negative and one (5%) did not answer.

## ADVANTAGES OF CITIZEN REVIEWS

Around three quarters (74%) of respondents saw advantages to citizen involvement on review boards. Three informants (16%) saw no advantages and two (10%) did not answer.

Most of those who saw advantages to citizen reviews commented on the enhanced objectivity of the process. According to a group home representative, an important contribution of citizens is "...having interested persons with no ~~stakes~~ providing input." Many also thought that citizen involvement is, in the words of foster home worker, "...an accountability check; making sure what is best for the client is happening." A social worker argued, "clients identify with citizens and feel more comfortable."

## PROBLEMS WITH CITIZEN REVIEWS.

A little over half (53%) of informants saw problems in the citizen review boards, while two (16%) saw no problems and six (32%) were uncertain.

Many of those who saw problems with citizen involvement were concerned about the capacity of non-professionals to deal with complex cases. According to a group home therapist, "Some seemed uninformed, sometimes dragging the process down with questions which were ... irrelevant." Others were concerned about confidentiality. The same therapist noted, "Some parents of cases being reviewed felt uncomfortable with citizens involved." A guardian ad litem was wary of the impact of "...a 'do gooder' that may not be well informed of a particular situation."

## COMPARISON WITH OTHER REVIEWS

The twelve informants who had attended both citizen reviews and reviews which did not include citizens were asked to compare their experiences. The results are depicted in Table 4.

As can be seen, there was no real consensus. Many informants expressed dissatisfaction with administrative reviews in general. According to a social worker, "All placement plans and reviews mess the boat in respect to formulating truly helpful plans and goals for clients."



TABLE 4  
COMPARISON OF CITIZEN AND NON-CITIZEN REVIEW BOARDS

	N	%
Other review more helpful	2	17%
Citizen review more helpful	2	17%
Can't Decide/Don't know	2	17%
Both helpful	4	34%
Neither helpful	2	17%
TOTAL	12	100%

#### SHOULD CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT BE MANDATED?

Eleven informants (58%) felt that citizen involvement in foster care reviews should not be mandated, three (16%) felt it should be mandated and five (26%) did not have an opinion.

Many of those who felt that citizen reviews should not be mandated were concerned about maintaining the quality of the process. In the words of a guardian ad litem, "[Citizen reviews] should only be used when high quality is maintained." A probation officer asserted, "... if competent people hold the jobs involved in facilitating placements, I think they can be trusted without all the review procedures involving people who never have had any contact with the client." Noting that "The quality of reviews I have attended varied a lot," a group home worker concluded, "I believe the process of review is between the county and parents and pertinent professionals when appropriate for input. I think the disadvantages of citizen input outweigh the advantages."

Some informants recommended against mandating citizen reviews even though they had a positive view of the process. According to a guardian ad litem, "My experiences were exceptional but I don't believe [citizen reviews] may be all that good. There are many people I know I would not want in that position." A private agency social worker remarked, "I have had only positive experiences in Hennepin County. This is not true in a different county where a director dominated the review and essentially vetoed the plan of all other members."

Those who felt that citizen reviews should be mandated noted many advantages of the process. A group home representative commented, "I hope that citizen participation will continue and that it remains

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separate from County policy/procedure in order to be useful as an evaluation tool." A social worker argued, "The citizens bring a new perspective to the process and bring more comfort to the child and family and bring another level of accountability to the system."

## SUMMARY OF PROJECT STAFF INTERVIEWS

### Introduction

At the conclusion of the project, debriefing interviews were held with all project staff. Interviews were taped by the evaluators. Input was sought regarding their project experiences, acceptance of the project by others, implementation and other contextual factors, and suggestions for future use of the citizen review model. A copy of the interview schedule can be found in Appendix J. The following is a summary of their comments.

### Barriers/Problems During Implementation

As with any new project, there were certain problems during the implementation phase. Initially there was some resistance to the project by agency staff. An example of this was difficulty in obtaining information on Model III cases initially. Project staff felt that resistance may have been promoted when they took over the review scheduling process. The way in which the project was structured did not give them any power to change this. At times, project staff felt they were not being taken seriously.

The restructuring of Child Welfare services served to increase difficulties regarding identification of case social workers.

Project staff sometimes felt quite isolated. While housed within the agency, they felt that communication was sometimes poor. Lack of true independent operation put them in an awkward position. For example, the fact that the Project Coordinator did not directly supervise project staff was sometimes problematic.

### Essential Job Functions

Project staff was asked to identify those functions seen as essential if citizen review were mandated. The following were seen as central in getting such an effort operating:

- (1) recruiting and training volunteers,
- (2) review notification,
- (3) preparation of case summaries,
- (4) file maintenance,
- (5) feedback of review results to relevant individuals,
- (6) a centralized, coordinated system responsible for tracking when reviews are due and notifying participants.

### Perceived Attitude of the Host Agency

While all staff members felt that the agency staff's was somewhat negative and apprehensive, they also agreed that their attitude became more positive. As staff became more familiar with them, they became more accepting.



### Most Negative Aspects of the Project

Several staff members felt that the project goals were not clear. For example, while there was some expectation that the project would effect compliance, it was not organized to do so. It also served to illuminate confusion regarding whether court reviews can substitute for administrative reviews.

Like treatment of all cases (a strict adherence to form) was sometimes a problem. Especially noted were MR reviews. This sometimes resulted in insensitive questions being asked for the sake of form. Staff saw the need for a different format to deal with these cases.

Lack of day to day support from agency administration was sometimes a frustration in dealing with operational difficulties.

### Most Positive Aspects of the Project

Staff were able to point to several accomplishments throughout the project's duration. These included:

1. Proved that you can get good committed people to participate on the boards, and that they were respected.
2. Showed that client confidentiality was not a problem during the conduct of this project.
3. Project was a viable, objective advocate for kids in foster care.
4. The project helped to make permanency planning a priority issue.
5. Increased community awareness, served a PR function and kept kids from becoming invisible to the community.
6. Provided support for social workers, represented a fresh perspective and generated new ideas.
7. Educated board members about the agency.
8. Provided a system of consistent notification for reviews. "Changed it from a strictly agency function to an agency/family/community function. It let everyone know it was important."

### Essential Factors for Implementation

Staff identified several factors that should be addressed if citizen review is mandated. A high priority was the need for an independently operating system to track and schedule reviews, and with the ability to follow-up on cases that have been reviewed to examine

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progress this would help to "give meat" to their recommendations. There would need to be a high degree of coordination "with court review to bring to light issues that need to be highlighted." It was also suggested that a liaison between boards and the social service agency is needed.

Good training of board members was seen as essential. This was seen as an ongoing process addressing permanency issues, communication and negotiation skills. It should encompass training regarding the law "in order to establish a consistent agency and community approach in carrying out the legislation".

## OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In examining the outcomes of this project, it is important to bear in mind several important factors:

1. The short duration of the project severely limited the evaluative effort. Because the project was in its implementation stages throughout much of the timeframe of the evaluation, much of the evaluation was being conducted while the "bugs" were being worked out of the system. For example, incorrect dates were sometimes given for the first review to be conducted by the project, and reviews were sometimes held by Hennepin County staff without project involvement. Many children participated in only one review throughout the duration of the project, project impact cannot be assessed meaningfully on this basis. A longer term study would be needed in order to eliminate these problems.
2. At the outset of the project, it was stated that "The primary objective of the Hennepin County Foster Care Review Project is to examine three models of review in order to determine the method which provides the best opportunity of assuring permanency for children and achieving compliance with Public Law 96-272 and Minnesota Statute 257-071." This was an unrealistic goal for this project. The effects of citizen review illustrates that compliance is based on several different factors, to a limited extent, the project was only able to influence one of these factors. In examining the compliance issue, compliance and case review should be viewed as separate issues, it is important to realize that citizen review will not ensure compliance, and some other mechanism must be sought to address this issue.
3. The issue of where Citizen Review Boards should be housed is an important one. One of the problems in providing timely reviews of cases in this project centered around the fact that the project did not have the power to call reviews. Reviews were frequently cancelled because dispositional hearings were due in court. These hearings often had to be postponed, and therefore the case would not receive any type of review within the recommended timeframes. The project should have had the power to provide a review for such cases, but it did not.

In considering where citizen review boards should be housed, it is important that these boards should not be isolated from the social services/court structure. If an independent agency were set up, reviews would be considered events isolated from practice, and it would be even more difficult to have an impact upon permanency planning and compliance.

4. Information generated by citizen review boards must be properly disseminated and stored. In the analysis of the 427 review section, it was found that in some cases, the information that a case review had been held had not been entered into the case file. In a related example, reports from the citizen review boards was forwarded to Judge Olesky, however it was not necessarily



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forwarded to the judge hearing the case. It is important that information generated at case reviews be used to inform the judicial as well as the casework process.

5. In considering the size and makeup of boards, the two member board seemed to have the broadest acceptance. It was felt that the five person boards were sometimes overwhelming to clients. In examining the results of the reviews, it is also evident that these boards did not take much longer to conduct than the standard agency review. Additionally this particular composition seemed to enable input from agency staff and citizen reviewers.

Appendix A

Administrative Review Summary

**FOSTER CARE REVIEW PROJECT  
ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW SUMMARY**

CHILD NAME \_\_\_\_\_ CASE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ MEM NUM \_\_\_\_\_

LAST REVW \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_ THIS REVW \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_ BOARD NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ START TIME: \_\_\_\_\_ END TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

**PARTICIPANTS: (circle numbers of all present)**

01 father	06 rtc staff	11 attorney
02 mother	07 social worker	12 therapist
03 child	08 unit supervisor	13 Indian advocate
04 foster parent	09 independent reviewer	14 other (specify)
05 group home staff	10 guardian ad litem	

Placement plan for the next six months as presented by the social worker

- ☐ 01) continue current placement
- ☐ 02) change placement facility
- ☐ 03) child to return home within six months
- ☐ 04) pursue termination of parental rights

**OUTCOME: (check all that apply)**

☐ plan accepted as presented ☐ plan not accepted  
☐ plan accepted with modifications (if not accepted explain below)

Modifications made by board members were included in the plan:

services to child	yes	no	visitation plan	yes	no
services to parent	yes	no	permanency goal	yes	no
services to foster home	yes	no	other _____	yes	no

IS THERE A NEED FOR AN ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL? yes no

IF THIS IS A MINORITY CHILD, IS CHILD IN A MINORITY HOME? yes no

IF NO, DO PARENTS AGREE WITH PLACEMENT IN NON-MINORITY HOME? yes no

IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS: # of parental visits with child \_\_\_\_\_  
 # of social worker visits with child \_\_\_\_\_  
 # of social worker visits with parent(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 # of social worker visits with foster parent(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**BARRIERS TO PERMANENCY (circle numbers that apply)**

**THE CASE PLAN**

- 01 Permanency goal not clear
- 02 Time frame for accomplishing goals not clear
- 03 Goals/expectations for child not clear
- 04 Goals/expectations for parents not clear
- 05 Major problem/issues not addressed
- 06 Placement does not meet needs of child
- 07 Other \_\_\_\_\_



**THE AGENCY**

- 01 Lack of resources/services
- 02 Lack of training
- 03 Caseload too high
- 04 Staff turnover
- 05 Agency policy
- 06 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**THE CLIENT**

- 01 Inability of parent to make progress toward goals
- 02 Inability of child to make progress toward goals
- 03 Lack of cooperation from parent(s)
- 04 Lack of cooperation from child
- 05 Lack of parent/child contact
- 06 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**LEGAL SYSTEM (attorneys, juvenile court etc.)**

- 01 Lack of permanency training
- 02 Disagreement with agency plans
- 03 Case load too high
- 04 Staff turnover
- 05 Time delays in obtaining TPR
- 06 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**NO BARRIERS TO PERMANENCY**

- 00 None

**COMMENTS OF CHILD:**

**COMMENTS OF NATURAL PARENTS:**

**COMMENTS OF BOARD MEMBERS:**

**COMMENTS OF OTHER PARTICIPANTS:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
signature of board member)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(person completing form)

Appendix B

427 Case Audit  
Case Record Survey

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### CHILD WELFARE - CASE RECORD SURVEY

- ☐ Voluntary Placement: \_\_\_\_\_ (Agreement Date)
- ☐ Court-Ordered Placement: \_\_\_\_\_ (Court-Ordered Date)
- ☐ State Ward: \_\_\_\_\_ (T.P.R. Hearing Date)

CASE NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ CASE RECORD NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

#### CASE DATA:

- A. DATE PLACED: \_\_\_\_\_ (Date - Mo/Da/Yr)
- B. WRITTEN CASE PLAN: \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)
- C. ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS: \_\_\_\_\_ (Dates Completed)
- D. DISPOSITIONAL HEARINGS: \_\_\_\_\_ (Dates)

#### FINDINGS:

	FY 86		
	Yes	No	None Due
Major Safeguards:			
Written Case Plans	_____	_____	
All Periodic Reviews Within the Prescribed time	_____	_____	_____
Dispositional Hearing Within the Prescribed time	_____	_____	_____

\_\_\_\_\_ of the 18 protections acceptable. (Must have 15 or more to be acceptable.)

FY 86:      ACCEPTABLE (   )      NOT ACCEPTABLE (   )

A. WRITTEN CASE PLAN	Yes	No	N/A
(1) Does the plan describe the type of home or institution in which the child is to be placed?	_____	_____	_____
(2) Does the case plan discuss the appropriateness of the placement?	_____	_____	_____
(3) Has the case plan been designed to achieve placement in the least restrictive (most family-like) setting available consistent with the best interests and special needs of the child?	_____	_____	_____
(4) Have efforts been made to place the child in close proximity to the parents' home consistent with the best interests and special needs of the child?	_____	_____	_____
(5) Does the plan make provision to carry out any judicial determination made with respect to the child in accordance with Section 472(a)(1)?	_____	_____	_____



Appendix C

Question Response Checklist

**Question Response Checklist**  
**Hennepin County Foster Care Review Project**

QUESTIONS	PAR/FP	CH	CRT	AGCY PERSONNEL	BOARD	OTHERS ATTEND	PJCT STFF
1. Did you understand the AR process?	1					1	
2. What didn't you understand? What information should have been received?	1a					1a	
3. Have you attended other AR's?	2	1				2	
4. How many reviews have you attended?	2a					2a	
5. Were any reviews you attended in the past not conducted by the FCRP?	2b					2b	
6. Were you encouraged to attend the Administrative Review today?	3					3	
7. How were you encouraged?	3a					3a	
8. Who should be encouraged to attend/ participate in these reviews?	3b				29	3b	
9. Were you encouraged to participate in the Administrative Review today?	4					4	
10. How were you encouraged to participate? Who encouraged you?	4a					4a	
11. Did you ask questions at the AR today?	5	2				5	
12. Were your questions answered?	5a	2a				5a	
13. Did you make comments during the review process?	6	3				6	
14. Were your comments listened to?	6a	3a				6a	
15. Were changes made in the proposed plan based on your comments?	7	3b				7	
16. What kinds of changes were made?	7a	3c				7a	
17. When first told, how did you feel about citizens reviewing the case?	8		7	9		16	
18. Why did you feel this way?	8a		7a			16a	

QUESTIONS	PAR/FP	CH	CRT	AGCY PERSONNEL	BOARD	OTHERS ATTEND	PJCT STFF
19. What is your opinion of agency staff's initial attitude toward Citizen Review Boards?					36		4
20. In what ways has their attitude changed overtime?					36a		4a
21. Did your participation change your attitudes?					37		
22. In what ways?					37a		
23. Overtime has your view of citizen review boards changed? How? Why?	8b		8 8a	10 10a		16b	
24. Are there advantages resulting from citizen involvement on AR boards? What?	9		11 11a	12		17	
25. Are there disadvantages resulting from citizen involvement on AR boards? What?	10		10 10a	13	35 35a	18	
26. Compare experiences with AR reviews with citizens v. no citizens.	11					19	
27. Other comments regarding the AR process?	12	8	20	21	38	21	
28. Were you asked what you thought?		4					
29. Do you think your being at the review made any difference?		5			34a		
30. In what ways has it made a difference?					34b		
31. Were you uncomfortable because of people on board who don't work for the county?		6					
32. Why were you uncomfortable? What made you feel uncomfortable?		6a					
33. Did good or bad things happened for you because of people on review board who don't work for the county? What?		7					
34. Have you received information about the Citizen Review Board Project?			1				
35. How have you received this information?			1a				



QUESTIONS	PAR/FP	CH	CRT	AGCY PERSONNEL	BOARD	OTHERS ATTEND	PJCT STFF
36. From whom have you received this information?			1b				
37. Is the information received from CRB adequate for the needs of the court?			2				
38. Why do you feel the information received is inadequate?			2a				
39. Has the manner in which judicial reviews are conducted changed since the CRB?			3				
40. How have judicial reviews changed?			3a				
41. Do you think that CRB have made any difference in patterns of placement?			4				
42. How have CRB made a difference in the patterns of child placement?			4a				
43. Do you think that CRB have made any difference in permanency plans?			5				
44. How have CRB made a difference in permanency plans for children?			5a				
45. Are there other ways children have benefited from citizen reviews?			5b				
46. Do you think that CRB have had impact on: families, FP, CW, Atty, judges, advocates?			6				
47. What have been the largest impacts made by citizen involvement on AR boards?			9		34		
48. Do you feel there are legal problems associated with citizen review?			12				
49. What types of legal problems?			12a				
50. What role should recommendations made by a CRB play in judicial reviews?			13				
51. Are CRB members adequately prepared to review substitute care cases?			14	2			
52. Why or why not?			14a	2a			

QUESTIONS	PAR/FP	CH	CRT	AGCY PERSONNEL	BOARD	OTHERS ATTEND	PJCT STFF
53. Has the county benefited from citizen review?			15				
54. How has the county benefited from citizen review?			15a				
55. Should children be involved in AR?			16				
56. Why or why not?			16a				
57. If mandated, what form do you see CRB taking?			17				
58. What would you recommend regarding the implementation of administrative review of children under the jurisdiction of corrections?			18				
59. Should both voluntary and involuntary placements be reviewed by citizens?			19	19	45		
60. Why or why not?			19a	19a	45a		
61. What is your job title?				1A			
62. What unit are you with?				1B			
63. How long have you been employed in your current capacity?				1C			
64. How many of your cases were reviewed by boards with citizen participants?				1D			
65. How many reviews have you personally attended where citizens were included as board members?				1E			
66. Which roles have you performed during the AR project: CW, Superv., boardchair that include 2 citizen members?				1F			
67. Board members demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the administrative review process.				1	8		
68. Board members demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the substitute care system.				2	9		

QUESTIONS	PAR/FP	CH	CRT	ASCV PERSONNEL	BOARD	OTHERS ATTEND	PJCT STFF
69. Boards members demonstrated knowledge understanding of the legal system as it is involved in foster care issues.				3		10	
70. Board member's questions were relevant to the handling of cases in which you were involved.				4		11	
71. Board member's questions demonstrated sensitivity to persons involved.				5		12	
72. Board members demonstrated a respectful attitude toward the parties attending the reviews.				6		13	
73. Board member's recommendations were relevant and practical to the case situation.				7		14	
74. Comments regarding the areas of board functioning rated in the previous seven statements.				8		15	
75. How did you feel about the way your time was scheduled for training and conducting reviews?					19		
76. How difficult was it to schedule reviews for the project boards?				11	20		
77. Do you think that citizen involvement on review boards should be mandated?				14	39	20	
78. Why or why not?				14a	39a	20a	
79. If mandated, where should these citizen reviews be housed?				15	40		
80. If mandated who should chair the boards?				16	41		
81. If mandated, how many citizens should be on the board?				17	43		



QUESTIONS	PAR/FP	CH	CRT	ABCY PERSONNEL	BOARD	OTHERS ATTEND	PJCT STFF
82. If mandated, what factors should be taken into account during the implementation? How might implementation be different for smaller counties? What components of the project do you feel are essential? If you could make one recommendation that you knew would be instituted, what would that be?				18	44		7-9
83. Should mentally retarded children in placement be reviewed in the same manner as other children in placement?				28	46		
84. Why do you feel this way?				28a	46a		
85. How helpful was your initial training in preparing you as a board member?					1		
86. How helpful was the initial training in teaching you the foster care system?					2		
87. How helpful was the initial training in teaching you the legal system as it is involved in foster care issues?					3		
88. How helpful was the training manual that you received?					4		
89. Was the amount and type of information contained in the training manual helpful?					5		
90. How helpful were the videotape presentations used in your training?					6		
91. How helpful were the speakers used during your training?					7		
92. How helpful were the role playing situations?					8		
93. Please comment on the sections of training above which were most useful to you as a board member					1-8b		
94. Did you use the project training manual as a reference?					9		

QUESTIONS	PAR/FP	CH	CRT	ABCY PERSONNEL	BOARD	OTHERS ATTEND	PJCT STFF
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|---|-----|
| 95. How helpful were each of the following sections of the manual in your work as a board member: Review Process, Permanency Planning, Child Welfare Laws, Services Provided, Forms, Organizational Structure, Glossary, Recommended Reading? | 9a  |
| 96. Please comment on the sections of the manual which were most useful to you in your work as a board member.  | 9b  |
| 97. Is there additional training you would have liked to receive at the beginning?  | 10  |
| 98. On what subjects would you have liked to receive additional training?   | 10a |
| 99. Were there areas of training that you feel should not have been included?   | 11  |
| 100. Which subjects would you have deleted from the initial training?   | 11a |
| 101. Was the amount of time spent on training appropriate?  | 12  |
| 102. Should there have been additional training for Board Chairs?   | 13  |
| 103. What topics should be included in additional training for Board Chairs?  | 13a |
| 104. How would you rate the training received to prepare you as a board member?   | 14  |
| 105. Any additional comments you would like to make regarding your training?  | 15  |
| 106. Please rate the degree to which project staff have been helpful to you in carrying out your role as a board member.  | 16  |
| 107. Additional comments you would like to make regarding the project staff and how they provided guidance and assistance in terms of this project.   | 16b |

QUESTIONS	PAR/FP	CH	CRT	AGCY PERSONNEL	BOARD	OTHERS ATTEND	PJCT STFF
108. Was the time commitment asked of you sufficient to do monthly commitments?					17		
109. Opinion regarding a two year commitment to serve as a board member.					18		
110. How adequate was the amount and type of feedback received on the cases from staff assistants, project coordinator, court, case social worker/supervisor?					21		
111. How did the feedback or lack of it effect your functioning as a board member?					21a		
112. What was the financial cost to you of your participation as a review board member?					22		
113. Rate each of the review components in terms of overall adequacy for you to do your job during the review process: background case materials, amount of time allocated, information presented, board member participation, attendance of parents and children affected, board recommendations, project social workers' participation, agency workers' participation.					23		
114. For each of the components you indicated as needing improvement, indicate how it needs to be improved.					24		
115. Do you think you were given enough information to have a firm grasp of permanency planning?					25		
116. How large of a problem were each of the following factors in permanency planning: vague plans, worker turnover, lack of timelines for TPR, court action, policy regarding holding pattern, vague court orders.					26		
117. For each of the components indicate above as being either a large or slight problem, what would you recommend to overcome these problems?					27		



QUESTIONS	PAR/FP	CH	CRT	AGCY PERSONNEL	BOARD	OTHERS ATTEND	PJCT STFF
118. What do you see as the greatest barrier to permanency planning for children in foster care?					28		
119. Do you feel that the AR format is simple enough for participants to understand?					30		
120. What would you change about the current format?					30a		
121. Was the time spent beneficial to social workers, families and children involved in the program?					31		
122. In what ways?					31a		
123. What do you see as the major purpose of citizen participation on review boards?					32		
124. What would be the effect of rotating Board Chairs?					42		
125. Are you aware of any obstacles to having citizens involved in the review process? Are there barriers to your effectiveness?					33		
126. Have there been any problems in the general operation of the board?					Focus		2
127. Inclusion of MR cases in the sample.					Focus		
128. What were the characteristics of the children who were reviewed					Focus		
129. How do you feel the project affected these kids?					Focus		
130. How did you feel about the amount of feedback you received regarding your recommendations, your effect on kids?					Focus		
131. What about barriers to your effectiveness?					Focus		2

QUESTIONS	PAR/FP	CH	CRT	AGCY PERSONNEL	BOARD	OTHERS ATTEND	PJCT STFF
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|---|--|
| <p>132. How would you compare your experiences on 2 and 5 citizen boards? How difficult is it for alternates to move from board to board? Would you prefer to serve on one board or have the ability to rotate boards? (For alternates)</p> <p>133. Relationship between the project and the agency in which it was housed. How do you feel the Social Service Workers responded to you and to the review process in general?</p> <p>134. What level of authority should citizen review boards have, advisory or something else?</p> <p>135. Describe your job duties.</p> <p>136. Which of your job functions are essential, and who could carry them out?</p> <p>137. What were the most positive aspects of this project?</p> <p>138. What were the most negative aspects of this project?</p> | <p>Focus</p> <p>Focus</p> <p>Focus</p> <p>1</p> <p>3</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> |
|---|--|

## Appendix D

### Board Member Information

- a. Board Member Questionnaire
- b. Board Member Focus Group Outline
- c. Open-ended Questionnaire Responses



# Program Evaluation Resource Center

501 Park Avenue South  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55415  
(612) 348-7811

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 24, 1986

TO: Board Members and Alternates  
Hennepin County Foster Care Review Project

FROM: Nancy Larsen  
Project Evaluator

RE: Hennepin County Foster Care Review Project Evaluation

As the Hennepin County Foster Care Review Project begins to wind down, we begin the most important part of the evaluation process - gathering information from those who participated in the project. Board members and alternates are being asked to help us in two ways. First, by completing the enclosed questionnaire and returning it to us. Second, by attending and participating in a group interview, called a focus group. The reason that we are collecting this information in two stages is that some issues that have been identified are more easily "talked about" than written about, and these issues deserve some discussion.

We request that you complete the enclosed questionnaire as soon as possible, and return it to the Program Evaluation Resource Center. Please have the completed questionnaire in the mail to me by August 4, 1986. It is important for us to receive them quickly so we can analyze them for inclusion in the final report and also identify additional themes for discussion during the focus group. We realize that this questionnaire is rather thick, but we wanted to make sure that you would have ample opportunity to express your opinion on issues related to the demonstration project.

Please remember as you complete the questionnaire that your responses are confidential, so please be as candid as possible. No one but the Program Evaluation Resource Center staff (which is independent of both Hennepin County and the State of Minnesota) will see your questionnaire. Your individual responses will not be shared with project staff, Hennepin County personnel, or those persons involved in the project at the State of Minnesota. Your input is anonymous in the analysis of the data - your name will never appear together with the comments you make.

Below are listed three times during which focus groups will be conducted. Within the next week a Program Evaluation Resource Center staff person will be calling you to find out which of the three focus groups you can attend. We will be limiting the size of the groups

to ten persons in order to facilitate discussion. We will do our best to accommodate you at your preferred time. Focus groups are expected to last approximately one and a half hours. Scheduled times for the focus groups are:

Tuesday	- August 19, 1986	9:00 A.M.
Thursday	- August 21, 1986	1:00 P.M.
Monday	- August 25, 1986	7:00 P.M.

We hope to be able to make use of space in the Hennepin County Government Center for these meetings. You will be notified of the precise time and place for your group when the schedule for these groups has been finalized.

Thank you for your interest and participation in this project, and thank you very much in advance for your help in this evaluation endeavor. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me.

# CITIZEN REVIEW BOARD MEMBERS QUESTIONNAIRE

Name \_\_\_\_\_

CARD1 (1)  
ID (2-3)

Board Number \_\_\_\_\_

(4)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

## SECTION I QUESTIONS REGARDING INITIAL TRAINING:

INSTRUCTIONS: PLEASE USE THE GRID BELOW TO ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS. CIRCLE ONLY ONE RESPONSE PER QUESTION.

QUESTIONS	VERY HELPFUL	SOMEWHAT HELPFUL	NEITHER	NOT VERY HELPFUL	NOT AT ALL HELPFUL	
1. Overall, how helpful was your initial training in preparing you to participate as a board member?	1	2	3	4	5	(5)
2. How helpful was the initial training in terms of teaching you about the foster care system?	1	2	3	4	5	(6)
3. How helpful was the initial training in terms of teaching you about the legal system as it is involved in foster care issues? (These include TPR, court-ordered goals, 18 month reviews)	1	2	3	4	5	(7)
4. How helpful was the training manual that you received?	1	2	3	4	5	(8)
5. Was the amount and type of information contained in the training manual helpful?	1	2	3	4	5	(9)
6. How helpful were the videotape presentations used in your training?	1	2	3	4	5	(10)
7. How helpful were the speakers used during your training?	1	2	3	4	5	(11)
8. How helpful were the role playing situations?	1	2	3	4	5	(12)



1-8b. Please use the space provided below to comment on the sections of training (i.e., 1-8) which were most useful in you as a board member.

THIS SPACE IS INTENDED FOR YOU TO WRITE YOUR COMMENTS ON THE TRAINING SECTIONS WHICH WERE MOST USEFUL TO YOU AS A BOARD MEMBER. PLEASE USE THE SPACE PROVIDED BELOW TO COMMENT ON THE SECTIONS OF TRAINING (I.E., 1-8) WHICH WERE MOST USEFUL IN YOU AS A BOARD MEMBER.

9. Did you use the project training manual as a reference?

Yes.....1  
No.....2

(13)

9a. How helpful were each of the following sections of the manual in your work as a board member? [PLEASE CIRCLE ONLY ONE RESPONSE CATEGORY PER MANUAL SECTION.]

MANUAL SECTIONS	VERY USEFUL	SOMEWAT USEFUL	NEITHER	NOT VERY USEFUL	NOT AT ALL USEFUL	
Chapter 1- The Review Process	1	2	3	4	5	(14)
Chapter 2 - Permanency Planning	1	2	3	4	5	(15)
Chapter 3 - Child Welfare Laws	1	2	3	4	5	(16)
Chapter 4 - Services Provided/Resources Used	1	2	3	4	5	(17)
Chapter 5 - Forms	1	2	3	4	5	(18)
Chapter 6 - Organizational Structure	1	2	3	4	5	(19)
Chapter 7 - Glossary	1	2	3	4	5	(20)
Chapter 8 - Recommended Reading	1	2	3	4	5	(21)

[illegible]

Y 命題.....1 (Go to 10 頁) (22)  
No.....2 (Go to 11)

[illegible]

Yes.....1 (Go to 11a) (23)  
No.....2 (Go to 12)

11a. Which subjects would you have deleted from the initial training?

THIS SPACE IS FOR YOUR COMMENTS. IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS, PLEASE WRITE THEM IN THIS SPACE. IF YOU HAVE NO COMMENTS, LEAVE THIS SPACE BLANK.

12. Was the amount of time spent on training appropriate?

(24)

Much Too Long.....1  
Somewhat Too Long.....2  
About Right.....3  
Somewhat Too Short.....4  
Much Too Short.....5

COMMENTS:

THIS SPACE IS FOR YOUR COMMENTS. IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS, PLEASE WRITE THEM IN THIS SPACE. IF YOU HAVE NO COMMENTS, LEAVE THIS SPACE BLANK.

THIS SPACE IS FOR YOUR COMMENTS. IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS, PLEASE WRITE THEM IN THIS SPACE. IF YOU HAVE NO COMMENTS, LEAVE THIS SPACE BLANK.

13. Should there have been additional training for Board Chairs?

Yes.....1 (Go to 13a)  
No.....2 (Go to 14)

(25)

13a. What topics should be included in additional training for Board Chairs?

THIS SPACE IS FOR YOUR COMMENTS. IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS, PLEASE WRITE THEM IN THIS SPACE. IF YOU HAVE NO COMMENTS, LEAVE THIS SPACE BLANK.

14. Overall, how would you rate the training that you received to prepare you for your role as a board member?

(26)

Excellent.....1  
Very Good.....2  
Good.....3  
Fair.....4  
Poor.....5

COMMENTS:

THIS SPACE IS FOR YOUR COMMENTS. IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS, PLEASE WRITE THEM IN THIS SPACE. IF YOU HAVE NO COMMENTS, LEAVE THIS SPACE BLANK.

THIS SPACE IS FOR YOUR COMMENTS. IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS, PLEASE WRITE THEM IN THIS SPACE. IF YOU HAVE NO COMMENTS, LEAVE THIS SPACE BLANK.

THIS SPACE IS FOR YOUR COMMENTS. IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS, PLEASE WRITE THEM IN THIS SPACE. IF YOU HAVE NO COMMENTS, LEAVE THIS SPACE BLANK.



15. Use the space below for any additional comments that you would like to make regarding your training.

THIS SPACE IS INTENDED FOR YOU TO WRITE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE REGARDING YOUR TRAINING. IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS, PLEASE WRITE THEM IN THIS SPACE. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE ANY COMMENTS, LEAVE THIS SPACE BLANK.

16. Please use the grid below to rate the degree to which project staff have been helpful to you in carrying out your role as a board member. Rate only the social worker (staff assistant) who is assigned and works with your board. Alternates, please rate both social workers if you have had contact with them. CHECK ONLY ONE RESPONSE CATEGORY PER QUESTION.

QUESTIONS	VERY HELPFUL	SOMEWHAT HELPFUL	NEITHER	NOT VERY HELPFUL	NOT AT ALL HELPFUL	
A. The Project Manager (Shirley Barfknecht)	1	2	3	4	5	(27)
B. The Project Manager (Margaret Lonergan)	1	2	3	4	5	(28)
C. The Project Coordinator (Dianne Dee)	1	2	3	4	5	(29)
D. Project Social Worker (Jean Lindgren)	1	2	3	4	5	(30)
E. Project Social Worker (Richard Spratt)	1	2	3	4	5	(31)
F. Project Clerk (David North)	1	2	3	4	5	(32)

[illegible]

SECTION II  
QUESTIONS REGARDING BOARD OPERATIONS:

17. Was the time commitment you were asked to make sufficient in terms of fulfilling your actual monthly commitments? (i.e., Was your original time commitment of 8 hours per month sufficient to complete your work as a board member?)

Time Committed Was More than Enough.....1 (33)  
Time Committed Was About Right.....2  
Time Committed Was Too Little.....3

COMMENTS:

18. The proposed time for an individual to serve as a board member in this project was 2 years. Is a two year commitment:

Too Long.....1 (Go To 18a) (34)  
About Right.....2 (Go To 19)  
Too Short.....3 (Go To 18a)

18a. How long time commitment do you recommend?

19. How did you feel about the way that your time was scheduled for training and conducting reviews? (e.g., did you get enough notice, etc.) Please comment on any issues or problems related to scheduling.



20. How difficult was it to schedule reviews for the project boards?

Very Difficult.....1 (35)  
 Somewhat Difficult.....2  
 Neither.....3  
 Somewhat Easy.....4  
 Very Easy.....5

21. How adequate was the amount and type of feedback you received on the cases you reviewed from the following sources?

Sources	Very Adequate	Somewhat Adequate	Neither	Somewhat Inadequate	Very Inadequate	
a. staff assistants	1	2	3	4	5	(36)
b. project coordinator	1	2	3	4	5	(37)
c. court	1	2	3	4	5	(38)
d. case social worker/ supervisor	1	2	3	4	5	(39)

21a. How did the feedback or lack of it effect your functioning as a board member?

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22. What was the financial cost (e.g., taking time off from work, using vacation time, etc.) to you of your participation as a review board member?

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23. Based on your experiences as a review board member, rate each of the following review components in terms of overall adequacy in order for you to do your job during the review process. [PLEASE CIRCLE ONLY RESPONSE CATEGORY PER QUESTION.]

	Very Good	Adequate	Needs Improvement*	
a. background case materials	1	2	3	(40)
b. amount of time allocated for the reviews	1	2	3	(41)
c. information presented at the reviews	1	2	3	(42)
d. board member attendance	1	2	3	(43)
e. board member participation	1	2	3	(44)
f. attendance of parents and children affected	1	2	3	(45)
g. board recommendations	1	2	3	(46)
h. project social workers' participation	1	2	3	(47)
i. agency social workers' participation	1	2	3	(48)

\*24. For each of the components that you indicated above as needing improvement, please indicate how it needs to be improved.

a. background case materials

b. amount of time allocated

c. information presented

d. board member participation

(Question 24, continued)

e. board member attendance

f. attendance of parents and children affected

g. board recommendations

h. project social workers' participation

i. agency social workers' participation

25. Do you think that you were given enough information to have a firm grasp of permanency planning?

Yes.....1

No.....2

(49)

26. Based on your experiences as a review board member, how large of a problem was each of the following factors in permanency planning for children? [PLEASE CIRCLE ONLY ONE RESPONSE CATEGORY PER QUESTION.]

	Large Problem*	Slight Problem*	Not A Problem	
a. vagueness of plans	1	2	3	(50)
b. worker turnover	1	2	3	(51)
c. lack of timelines for TPR	1	2	3	(52)
d. initiation of court action	1	2	3	(53)
e. county policy regarding holding pattern	1	2	3	(54)
f. vagueness of court orders	1	2	3	(55)



\*27. For each of the components indicated above as being either largely or slightly problematic, what would you recommend to overcome these problem areas?

a. vagueness of plans

b. worker turnover

c. lack of timelines for TPR

d. initiation of court action

e. county policy regarding holding pattern

f. vagueness of court orders

28. What do you see as the greatest barrier to permanency planning for children in foster care?

29. From your perspective, who should be invited and encouraged to attend administrative reviews?

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW SHOULD BE INVITED AND ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW SHOULD BE INVITED AND ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW SHOULD BE INVITED AND ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW SHOULD BE INVITED AND ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS.

30. Do you think that the administrative review format is simple enough for all persons participating to understand?

Yes.....1

(56)

No.....2

30a. What would you change about the current format?

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW SHOULD BE INVITED AND ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW SHOULD BE INVITED AND ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW SHOULD BE INVITED AND ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW SHOULD BE INVITED AND ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS.

31. Was the time spent beneficial to social workers, families and particularly the children involved in the program?

Yes.....1 (Go To 31a)

(57)

No.....2 (Go To 32)

31a. In what ways?

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW SHOULD BE INVITED AND ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW SHOULD BE INVITED AND ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW SHOULD BE INVITED AND ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS.

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ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW SHOULD BE INVITED AND ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS.





( 58 )

[illegible]

( 59 )

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(40)

(61)

37. Did your participation as a review board member change your attitudes in any way?

Yes.....1 (Go to 37a)

(62)

No.....2 (Go to 38)

37a. In what ways?

38. Use the space below for any additional comments or suggestions you would like to make regarding citizen participation on review boards, or the current review process?

SECTION III  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

39. Do you think that citizen inclusion on review boards should be mandated?

Yes.....1

No.....2

(63)

39a. Why do you feel this way?

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40. If citizen review is mandated, where should these citizen review boards be housed?

.....

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.....

41. If citizen review is mandated, who should chair the boards?

A citizen member.....1

A social service supervisor.....2

Other (please specify).....3

(64)

.....

42. What would be the effect of rotating Board Chairs?

.....

.....

.....



43. If citizen review is mandated, how many citizens should be on the board?

Persons

(65-66)

44. If citizen review is mandated, what factors should be taken into account during the implementation. How might implementation be different for smaller counties? What components of the project do you think are essential? If you could make one recommendation that you knew would be instituted, what would that be?

45. Should both voluntary and involuntary placements be reviewed by citizens?

Yes.....1  
No.....2

(67)

45a. Why do you feel this way?

46. Should mentally retarded children in placement be reviewed in the same manner as other children in placement?

Yes.....1  
No.....2

(68)

46a. Why do you feel this way?

47. Within the next month, you will be asked to attend a discussion group to further help us evaluate this project. Below you will find a listing of topics we are planning to include, please add any other topics to the list that you think need to be discussed.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- A. Have there been any problems in the general operation of the board?
- B. Inclusion of MR cases in the sample.
- C. What were the characteristics of the children who were reviewed?
- D. How do you feel the project affected these kids?
- E. How did you feel about the amount of feedback you received regarding your recommendations, your effect on kids?
- F. What about barriers to your effectiveness?
- G. How would you compare your experiences on 2 an 5 citizen boards? How difficult is it for alternates to move from board to board? Would you prefer to serve on one board or have the ability to rotate boards? [For alternates]
- H. Relationship between the project and the agency in which it was housed. How do you feel the Social Service Workers responded to you and to the review process in general?
- I. What level of authority should citizen review boards have, advisory or something else?

Thank you for your assistance in this evaluation.

FOR ALTERNATES ONLY

48. How would you compare your experiences on 2 and 5 citizen boards?

1. Very Difficult  
 2. Somewhat Difficult  
 3. Neither  
 4. Somewhat Easy  
 5. Very Easy

49. How difficult is it for alternates to move from board to board?  
Would you say that it is:

Very Difficult.....1  
 Somewhat Difficult.....2  
 Neither.....3  
 Somewhat Easy.....4  
 Very Easy.....5

(69)

49a. Why is it difficult?

1. Very Difficult  
 2. Somewhat Difficult  
 3. Neither  
 4. Somewhat Easy  
 5. Very Easy

50. Would you prefer to serve on one board or have the ability to rotate boards?

Serve on one board.....1  
 Have the ability to rotate boards.....2

(70)

50a. Why would you prefer this?

1. Very Difficult  
 2. Somewhat Difficult  
 3. Neither  
 4. Somewhat Easy  
 5. Very Easy





FOSTER CARE REVIEW PROJECT  
BOARD MEMBER GROUP INTERVIEW FORM

August 18, 1986

INTRODUCTION

HELLO, MY NAME IS . I REPRESENT THE PROGRAM  
EVALUATION RESOURCE CENTER, AN INDEPENDENT ORGANIZATION RETAINED  
BY THE STATE TO HELP DETERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE FOSTER  
CARE REVIEW PROJECT.

AS PART OF THE EVALUATION, MEETINGS SUCH AS THIS ONE ARE BEING  
HELD WITH FOSTER CARE BOARD MEMBERS TO GET THEIR VIEWS ON HOW THE  
BOARDS HAVE FUNCTIONED AND HOW THEY COULD BE IMPROVED.

YOUR REMARKS ARE CONFIDENTIAL, BUT I WILL BE TAPING THE INTERVIEW  
SO THAT I WON'T HAVE TO SPEND TOO MUCH TIME TAKING NOTES.

1. Overall, how do you feel about the time you spent as a board member? Was it worthwhile?
2. What kinds of problems, if any, were there in the operation of the board? Were there barriers to your effectiveness? Was the relationship with the agency satisfactory?
3. How, if at all, did the project effect the kids whose cases were reviewed?
4. Does it seem to you that some kids remain in placement too long? If yes, why? What can be done about it?  
  
    PROBE: Some difficulties with TRPs have been mentioned.  
          Do you see speeding up this process as an alternative?
5. Did it seem that some kids were sent home to avoid reviews? What could be done about this?
6. What would be the best way to time reviews? Should they be every six months even when a court review is being done?
7. What about feedback? Did you receive adequate information concerning the effect of your recommendations on kids whose cases you reviewed?
8. How would you define "successful" and "unsuccessful" reviews?
9. What factors were characteristic of cases where the board seemed most effective and least effective?
10. Some problems have been reported in reviewing MR cases using the current format. What do you think should be done in reviewing these cases differently?
11. What level of authority should citizen review boards have ... advisory or something else?
12. What are your recommendations for changing the way the board operates?

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING THE MEETING!



## Citizen Review Board Member Responses

### SECTION I: QUESTIONS REGARDING INITIAL TRAINING

Question 1-8b: Comments regarding the most useful sections of initial training to participate as a board member.

- I felt that the permanency planning theory/philosophy by Mardi Louisell, and the role of the court by Molly Flowers were the most informative for me.
- Information about the Indian Child Welfare Act and Minority Act. Information on the legal system.
- Reading the manual on issues of TFR court ordered goals and the 18 month reviews trying to get families together. The role playing we learned help to see real life situations of how important our position as board members were in helping families broken to be made whole again in some cases. I feel we made a difference in our reviews.
- The general knowledge from experienced people.
- I felt it was all very helpful. I think a few extra sessions of training, after the first few cases participating as board member - might reinforce or clarify certain problems. Problems and cases have more meaning after experiencing being on the boards. Getting board members together with staff ventilates problems and increases sharing knowledge with everyone's experiences.
- Role playing gave me an insight as to how it will feel being in their situation.
- I found the speakers to be a resource of knowledge and skill within their disciplines.
- I like concrete resources, the manual was extremely useful to me. Most, if not all, of my concerns about meanings and terminology was answered. Biggest waste of time was the role playing. I had forgotten about it; which indicates how useful it was.
- I thought everything was helpful. I appreciated the written materials being available for reference (although I never seemed to have it when it was needed, I could look things up later). The speakers in the later training were very helpful, especially since I knew more about what was being discussed. The training was very well-planned.
- #1 (initial training to prepare to participate as a board member), #2 (initial training to teach about foster care system) and #7 (speakers used during training).

- As a professional social worker already very familiar with foster care and the administrative review requirements, the most useful parts to me were getting acquainted with the other reviewers, the county staff and procedures, and the resources available to Hennepin County. You should not judge the usefulness to me of the training as a good measure of its usefulness to others not as familiar with the service.
- The speakers and discussions which frequently followed a speaker's presentation were the most helpful to me.
- Overall initial training was most helpful to me. My previous training and experience had already provided me with knowledge of the foster care system. Therefore the explanation of the duties and expectations of a board member - which I had not been previously, was most helpful.
- Training in the legal system was extremely interesting to me. I had no idea that so many people were involved, from Judges, Guardian Ad litem, Indian Advocates, Social Workers, Supervisors and foster parents. As a private citizen I had no notion on how the placement of foster children progressed from shelter to home to emancipation. The training if nothing else has made me a concerned and caring advocate of citizen boards.
- I believe in the future that more initial training, group discussions as well as actually going through several mock reviews would be very helpful. Have more initial training as it is very difficult time wise to come back for additional training.
- Learning about the legal system was most helpful, as far as participation in foster care reviews is concerned.
- While I certainly do not know all there is to know about the foster care system, please know that I had been working in the system for a number of years. That is why the training was probably less useful to me than to others to whom the system was new.
- Training sessions were well prepared and meaningful. However, I did not appreciate Mr. Wiker's comments regarding the role of social workers but I may be too critical of my own professions. Prejudicial maybe a better description.
- The legal was most useful. I enjoyed the speakers as they could answer questions. I am a foster parent, so I understood the system.
- The individual presentations from department employees was the most instructive as far as background information, and probably the videotape was most instructive (in the beginning) as to how a board would operate, just as an example of the attitudes and problems that would be presented.



Question 9b: Comments on the most useful sections of the training manual.

- I am sure all the sections are very useful, but I felt there was too much information to absorb before the reviews began. Perhaps some condensing would be appropriate.
- Indicated use of the project manual as a reference, but also said "but limited." (1) Forms (2) Review Process (3) Organizational Structure
- The Review Process - questions needing answers having names and telephone numbers of persons in the planning group. The review takes place every 6 months unless in court. Review the existing placement/permanency plan. Evaluate progress toward permanency make recommendations relative to achieving permanency goals. Identify and document barriers to placement.
- The information of all other resources available.
- The more information a board member has the better - and sharing experiences makes board members more sensitive. I would like to see the attorney's office have some representation so they understood the total situation in foster care review. Too much time elapses in foster care for decisions to be made legally. The county is not there for the client.
- The review process helped to prepare me for the actual reviews.
- Listings of the laws applicable to permanency planning and the Indian Child Welfare Act were very helpful in deciphering a mission.
- Glossary - helped to define things more clearly. Recommended Reading - useful, helped re-direct the initial focus.
- Child welfare laws/services provided/ resources used.
- Initially, the history of the project and the actual process were most valuable. As I became familiar with the process of reviews, the sections on permanency planning, and laws became more important.
- #1 (the review process), #2 (permanency planning), #4 (services provides/resources used), and #5 (forms).
- See 1-8b (As a professional social worker already very familiar with foster care and the administrative review requirements, the most useful parts to me were getting acquainted with the other reviewers, the county staff and procedures, and the resources available to Hennepin County. You should not judge the usefulness to me of the training as a good measure of its usefulness to others not as familiar with the service.)



- There were not so much particular sections that stood out but knowing the manual was always there as a reference/refresher during the time I was a board member.
- Permanency planning - why and implications were adequately dealt with. Excellent examples were given.
- After the initial training, I put my manual away and did not refer to it again. It may be a good idea to read and refer to them during the training and then return them afterwards. I did read through them during these days of training and did refer to it and found it useful understanding the system.
- Initially I used the manual to understand the laws after that I never used the manual.
- [in response to Chapter 4 of manual: Services Provided/Resources Used] What's available in our community is necessary information for a person making recommendations.
- Chapters 1-4 most useful in bringing me up to date. Marvelous manual and hope it has further use considering staff time expended and expense.
- I found the resources most helpful.
- Knowing that I had it to refer to was most helpful, but actually I didn't use it very much after the first few months, except to review the Child Welfare laws or find a term in the glossary.

Question 10a: On what subjects would you have liked to receive additional training?

- Yes, Indian rights as far as what is the law that pertains to placement in foster home.
- (1) Can there be some objective psychologist present to try and explain certain situations help us understand the situation better. Psychologists to help everyone understand case better. (2) Can boards demand the courts to follow through quicker - maybe call certain cases priority ones.
- The emotionalism involved (the human aspect of reviews). Mental retardation options.
- Services provided/resources used - laws.
- I would have liked more training on differences in child welfare/child protection and what regulations relate to each - also differences in people we might see, especially in child protection cases.

- More information on what other states were doing in area of citizen review - maybe even video tapes from various citizen reviews done in other states.
- Psychology.
- I was a group chair. I feel it would have been helpful to work with the welfare department to learn how to get the most out of the review process.
- (1) On a number of occasions parents who are mentally ill (with children in foster care) came to the review. All participants in the review seemed unable to deal with this situation. Much information, I felt, was not addressed because of a fear of upsetting the mentally ill parent. (2) Far more information about the dynamics of sexual abuse should be included.
- The realities of what happens in court and court hearings and the way the county is side-stepped and the county attorney can side-step recommendations.

Question 11a: What subjects would you have deleted from the initial training?

- None.
- None.
- None.
- None.
- Nothing I can think of.
- None.
- None.
- None.
- None.

Question 12: Comments regarding the appropriateness of the amount of time spent on training.

- Too much to absorb in short length of time.
- People could leave early if had to and those could stay if had extra questions.

- All day sessions were too much information for one day.
- Didn't cover the vital areas.
- More intensive specific areas.
- Excellent.

Question 13a: What topics should be included in additional training for Board Chairs?

- How to better interpret the questions on the form that was filled out at the meetings.
- I was not a board chair.
- How to keep the review moving.
- I'm totally unaware of the purpose of the Board Chair. I was on a 2 member board.
- More familiar with laws.
- What board chairs could do to assist their boards, examples of difficult situations that might arise, questions to/not to risk.
- More practice on running hearings and filling out the forms
- Our board chair was very organized and knowledgeable and helpful and I didn't feel she was lacking in anything that would have improved that specific skill.
- More training on how to conduct a meeting, move things along, elicit response from all present, etc.
- Not applicable to me, I received no training as a board chairperson.
- How to manage the meeting. Conflict theory.
- How to solicit comments and get the group involved. Worked more on the options that were available for placement.
- A little more in depth of the already chosen topics.
- We had an excellent chairperson, but she was experienced. For those who were not, training in the mechanics of chairing a meeting would be vital.



Question 14: Comments regarding the overall training received to prepare for the role of board member.

- As I have nothing to compare it to, I felt it was satisfactory.
- The information given clearly and the manual for review and references.
- Screening people properly - so that you get open minded non-judgemental board members - then experience is the way to learn - learning thru experience of participating on the boards.
- You can only teach so much. The rest will be learned in the process of doing.
- Could have been better; but did provide some information which was useful.
- It's difficult to relate to process until you've done reviews. More training after a few reviews, and less initially would be helpful.
- See 1-Bb (As a professional social worker already very familiar with foster care and the administrative review requirements, the most useful parts to me were getting acquainted with the other reviewers, the county staff and procedures, and the resources available to Hennepin County. You should not judge the usefulness to me of the training as a good measure of its usefulness to others not as familiar with the service.)
- In hindsight I would have liked to have had some training in the psychology of dealing with people.
- Excellent, even though I know much of the information.
- Manual very impressive in detail and staff presentation on the whole very worthwhile and professional.

Question 15: Additional comments regarding training.

- Perhaps the section about the legal aspect by the attorneys could have been more specific.
- Appreciated having the in-service later.
- The training was adequate and the speakers for the most part present their material well. Some I think could have been a little more personable and down to earth, not talking in initials but spelling out what the initials meant.

- I found the discussions after the cases very important. I feel the staff involved with my cases were helpful and experienced. They helped me a lot - again it might be interesting to refer certain problems to psychologists to explain and clarify problems - e.g. I felt some parents were pathological liars but wasn't 100% sure.
- I'd preferred the training either (a) on a continuous basis; once a month, a different area of reviewing covered or (B) more intensive initially. Not so spread out for short periods of time.
- See 14 comments (i.e. It's difficult to relate to process until you've done reviews. More training after a few reviews, and less initially would be helpful.) Training and manual were good and useful. All of the information was a bit overwhelming at first, especially when we had no idea how reviews would go. Small groups discussing MR/CP/CW would have been helpful. CP cases were most difficult for me because I felt least informed, while I know others felt that way about MR cases.
- The speakers that went over their time limit caused scheduling problems - and in one case I thought the speaker was not well organized and still went over.
- The training was very helpful. I would have liked more opportunity to have defined role of board more and to have met as a board (5 member) prior to doing reviews to have done more role-playing, discussing appropriate responses, etc. At times I felt board members got into personal stories, etc. which took away from the overall "professional" type atmosphere, I thought should have been created. I think training in area of appropriate things to talk about, etc. would have helped.
- We were trained in the structure of the foster care system, the legal system and the various agencies that support it. What we were not trained in was how not to be intimidated by irate parents or children, how to be at ease in a confrontational setting, how to make others feel comfortable in our presence, how to be compassionate or not compassionate when the situation arose. I really could have used some psychology training.
- I feel the training was very useful but that it would have been just as effective if speakers would have been "less winded." This would have made the sessions shorter; it is difficult for full-time employees to take 2 days out for training. The sessions could possibly be reduced to 1 day.
- Would it be possible for alternates to meet maybe twice yearly to discuss mutual experiences and problems?



Question 16b: Additional comments regarding the project staff and how they provided guidance and assistance in terms of the project.

- I felt that Jean was very objective with the information that she gave to Board Members. She was able to explain various roles and what responsibility that workers had.
- Richard was helpful in having case studies ready and in interpreting the review process for us. He gave excellent introductions before each review.
- Jean Lindgren sent out notices a week or more before reviews and discussed materials with us a half hour before reviews. After reviews, did our evaluation of cases and our recommendations and barriers to permanency. Dianne answered questions we had about the Project, also furnished us with newsletters and update training dates of January 1986. Supplied us with reimbursement forms for our parking and lunch.
- Jean Lindgren was always a positive influence.
- Diane, Richard and Jean - were the staff I worked with. They were excellent and supportive in every way. I feel they listened to me and shared their ideas. I enjoyed working with them.
- Richard Spratt was very helpful in every way with the review process.
- None.
- I feel staff were excellent. Everyone was helpful and friendly. They were supportive, answered questions (even those that I'm sure seemed pretty dumb at times), and treated us very professionally. I valued their opinions and appreciated assistance and morale boosts. Information (background, updates, etc.) provided at reviews were invaluable. I can only imagine the frustrations involved in coordinating reviews with so many people and getting necessary information. The only area I would have liked more would have been in re: to updates on cases we had reviewed, i.e., court results, returning home, etc. It seemed as if many cases just disappeared.
- In my opinion, the Project Coordinator did an excellent job. The project seemed to run smoothly. The reception we received from the Hennepin County staff was fairly positive - much more so as the project progressed. The project social worker (Jean Lindgren) was exceptional; I'm not sure we would have functioned nearly as well without her concise summaries of the cases and her very tactful linkage with staff and clients. I cannot imagine us wading through the tons of case material prior to each review!



- Jean Lindgren was the staff person I worked most closely with and she was excellent. There were times when I felt our board needed a little guidance and she handled situations tactfully and yet honestly.
- All questions raised by me were satisfactorily explained -- such as -- what happened in certain cases -- continued follow-up, etc.
- Richard was very helpful. He tried very hard to provide leadership. I feel the support he received from the unit was limited. Diane Dee was always available to help. She was very knowledgeable and was the driving force holding the program together. The true success of the program was due directly to Diane's influence.
- Not only did Jean Lindgren provide excellent summaries of each case on paper, she spent time discussing each case with us before the review began. I believe this type of treatment of the cases is necessary.
- The coordinator and two project social workers were always professional and cooperative. I was very impressed with this staff and enjoyed my association with them. They were helpful but not intimidating with lay board members.
- They were all eager to listen or answer any questions we had.
- Richard Spratt was our primary guidance source and was excellent, both in the extra information he provided and his demeanor. He was very encouraging in his positive feedback and kept us on track. I can't speak highly enough of the job he did.

## SECTION II: QUESTIONS REGARDING BOARD OPERATIONS

Question 17: Comments regarding the sufficiency of the time commitment in fulfilling actual monthly commitments.

- The time commitment was not honestly communicated - it was often more than 8 hours a month - particularly in the beginning.
- I could have spent more time if it had been necessary. I really felt good about helping families find permanency.
- As an alternate it was fine - I could easily give more of my time to the project at the present time if needed.
- Sufficient for the time I had available.
- Being board chair added additional hours. Hours varied greatly month-to-month, e.g.. some months no reviews, other months 3-4 days required.
- I keep fairly detailed time records for myself; the project took an average of 16 hours per month. While some of this time was spent representing the two-lay-member panels as chair, that was limited. The bulk of the time was spent in reviews and preparation for reviews and follow-up after reviews.
- As it seemed more than 8 hours some months it was less other months and must have about averaged out.
- Varied from month to month - some months was more than the commitment of 8 hours. - other months was less.
- Because I am an alternate, no exact time commitment was made.
- The time commitment initially was much more than 8 hours per month which caused quick burn out.
- As an alternate I found it difficult to attend reviews with short notice as my supervisor is not willing/able to accommodate this. As a result I did not do as many reviews as I would have liked to.
- Actually, I wish I had been scheduled for more reviews. People who are able to volunteer their time often have more time available than was required for this project.
- As an alternate I served on 22 reviews according to my notes.
- Some months it required more than 8 hours but other months not as much time was spent.
- It varied greatly from month to month - some months involved 4 hours while other were 16+.

Question 10a: How long of a time commitment do you recommend?

- It takes a lot of time to gain expertise - Perhaps 3 or 4 years would be better.
- Once a person is involved in this project I think 2 years is fair.
- Judging from my own experience, I would suggest one year - anything longer may cause burn out. That fresh approach is very important.
- My actual involvement was less than a year. The citizen involvement should have been 2 years not one year.
- Although it was a 2 year project boards evaluated case for about 1 year.
- I think this varies from person to person, depending greatly on other commitments. I feel a minimum commitment is necessary to justify training, but after that some might want to continue longer than others.
- This was supposed to be a 2 year commitment but as a board member I participated for just over one year after the project had begun - that was just right, two years at an 8 hour/month commitment is difficult.
- Two years seemed appropriate. I would recommend a minimum of 1 year. (less than that would be a waste of training, etc.)
- Two years.
- I recommend that the commitment be only 1 year no more. Also that the monthly time be 8 hours or less no more.
- If a volunteer performs to level desired by a project supervisor, that person should be able to be called upon for as long as they indicate availability.
- I feel 2 years is about right, but feel you should be able to continue if you wish. It takes 2 years to learn and understand the process. Also to be able to see some changes.
- Two years sounds ideal - after training. It would give enough time to be somewhat experienced and knowledgeable, but not so long that you could possibly lose some of your objectivity.



Question 19: How did you feel about the way your time was scheduled for training and conducting reviews?

- I feel there was enough time and notice. I didn't have any problems with this.
- I was satisfied with scheduling and timing.
- Got enough notice - but it was sometimes difficult to get away from work to attend the reviews.
- The scheduling was just fine. Had all of two weeks to make plans. No problems with the time. Knew also a year ahead as of the tentative dates for monthly meetings.
- I was always informed about meetings two weeks prior to each, and that was after the board had already set times and days 6 months ahead.
- I could be very flexible no problem rule of thumb - more planning longer notices probably could be helpful in scheduling. Everyone was able to come to the training sessions.
- The schedule was fine. But a few times it interfered with my schooling - therefore, I had to miss a few reviews.
- Fine.
- Enough notice was given. I appreciated having the alternates available.
- All right, but not very much involvement in the reviews by parents and because of the county's presence there was reluctance on the part of board members to be constructively critical or otherwise of county performance.
- I felt scheduling went exceptionally well, especially considering the number of people involved. My board felt that it is necessary to have social workers at reviews and reviews should be re-scheduled if s/he is unable to attend. As we set dates for reviews, I feel I had enough notice. For questions 20, I feel project staff could answer this question best.
- No problems - everything was well organized.
- Since there were only two of us, scheduling was no problem at all. One related problem: children scheduled for review would suddenly go home. That may or may not be a problem. Did they go home for the right reasons???
- If I remember correctly the time notice for initial training was quite short - the notice for scheduling reviews was very adequate.

- Richard couldn't have arranged the reviews more conveniently whether there was one or five in a day. I always received notice in advance. Training, as I recall, involved early mornings til late afternoon, probably necessary in order to keep number of days down but not real convenient for me.
- Scheduling was done with board members schedules in mind and done for 3 or 4 months in advance. One recommendation would be to meet in rooms with windows!!
- Notices were sometimes short - I am not sure this was unavoidable because notice from a regular board member might have been short.
- It was good, basically.
- The staff was very supportive in letting us as a board choose our schedule for board reviews ourselves. The reminder letters were extremely helpful to me and much appreciated to show to my boss to get time off. I was not inconvenienced by the training because of my flexible work hours.
- We always had enough time to plan for reviews. We always knew the dates well in advance.
- See # 17 (i.e., As an alternate I found it difficult to attend reviews with short notice as my supervisor is not willing/able to accommodate this. As a result I did not do as many reviews as I would have liked to.)
- I received enough notice with information about place of review, etc. There were no problems. This was due to the organization of Jean Lindgren.
- As an alternate I occasionally served on short notice but this did not present problems for me.
- It was handled very well.
- Richard was very accommodating to the schedules of the board members. We often times were able to combine separate dates into one longer day or work around inconvenient times, etc.

Question 21a: How did feedback or lack of it effect your functioning as a board member?

- Regarding some social workers, I felt that they were very arrogant and felt as though they were doing me a favor by being there.
- I felt that any information asked for was given sufficiently.
- Didn't recall receiving much feedback at all. Would have appreciated updates.

- The feedback helped to know that what we were doing was effectively helping families and foster care children and teens have some needs met while waiting to know of permanency for their lives.
- Without feedback, you are always wondering if the board has made an impact or not.
- As an alternate I got no feedback on cases - I feel very objective in my contributions to the boards. Keeps me less emotionally involved - mixed feelings.
- If suggestions or recommendation were followed through. That reinforced the purpose of the review board. I always wonder about cases with no feedback.
- Did not receive feedback from persons other than R. Spratt and Dianne Dee. Occasionally from SW and/or supervisor - more so from MR Division.
- Staff assistance was useful. She made only one negative suggestion to me. She asked that I not offend the mother of a retarded adopted child; its a long story, but I felt she was out of line.
- Some was good but initially staff were hesitant in being "open" with a "Board." Somewhat uncomfortable at the beginning.
- It made a great difference when social workers were absent or uninformed themselves (new to case, etc.). It was difficult to make recommendations when we did not have information from the past, especially relating to reasons for court findings (i.e., TPR denied, etc).
- I remember two social workers who seemed somewhat burned out and did not really appear to be on top of their cases, so I wondered about the effectiveness of their follow-up services.
- Since one of the major system problems as I see it is the interrelationship between social service and the court, the lack of any court feedback was indicative of that problem. I think the court functioned as though we did not exist. On the other hand, feedback from the project staff was excellent and a high motivating factor.
- The feedback received was often asked for specifically and was given then or researched, then given. I did not ask any source other than Richard Spratt about feedback.
- I didn't feel we received very much feedback except from the staff assistant. I think more feedback would have been very helpful in reviewing a case for a second time and also just as a learning tool.
- We always had a general update from the staff assistants and a detailed one from the case social worker/supervisor before every review. I felt I was well informed for each case reviewed.



- Richard did an excellent job of providing "up front" information and summaries of cases. Sometimes it would have been nice to know what happened to the cases after we reviewed them.
- I would have liked to have heard more about our success/failure rates in permanency planning, examples of cases with good and bad permanency planning by review boards as a teaching tool, etc.
- If you are asking if we received follow-up information, it was not adequate. And for me, that means that not enough progress had been made since last review.
- [responding to question # 20:] As an alternate I seldom received cases more than once.
- It affected the ideas or suggestions for changes.
- We received excellent feedback, both as a board and individually, it greatly enhanced our performance.

Question 22: What was the financial cost to you of your participation as a review board member?

- I tried to arrange my schedule to be at the board meeting. It wasn't too much of an inconvenience.
- My time used was personal time.
- Parking. Some child care. Had to take vacation time from work.
- I really can't say because my schedule was in keeping with my day off work. The training did involve some time off work, but the results out weighed the cost.
- As a retired person, my schedule was very open, my costs were only parking and lunches and even though I could have received some compensation, I never turned in a voucher for either.
- I am very flexible at this time in my life - matter of setting priorities for me no problems in participating.
- I missed a few morning meetings from school. The review board and my school meeting were on the same morning for about 4 months. No time was taken off from work. I worked evenings.
- Zero. No monetary cost - Schedule was re-arranged.
- Wages - \$400.00. Transportation - \$125.00
- None - but if I was not in the position I currently hold I feel it might have been different.

- I have very little financial cost, as the majority of my work is in the evening.
- My primary problem was time off from work, as after the project started, my time spent attending commitment court hearings increased substantially.
- None; my employer perceived this project as a bonafide part of my job. They picked up all incidental expenses, like parking.
- Minimal - only I wish the reimbursement schedule would have been discussed early in the selection process. I almost didn't get involved because I didn't realize child care would be a covered expense.
- None - all of my expenses were covered by the Project.
- The financial cost for me was minimal.
- No financial cost as I am now retired.
- Too much time asked.
- The only time I lost was personal time which I gladly would donate again.
- I never really measured the financial cost or thought of it in that way. I felt I was giving back something for all I've received from the county over the years. I think I'm still way ahead.
- Six vacation days.
- None.
- I'm retired.
- I honestly do not know as I did not keep any record. For me the costs were not as important as having a review board.
- I was fortunate in that my company counted it as if I'd worked so I didn't need to use vacation time. Other than occasional babysitters for training, I incurred no financial cost.

Question 24: Resolutions for review components identified as needing improvement:

A. BACKGROUND CASE MATERIALS:

- Can always ask questions.
- Varied from case to case - some needed more information - some the county workers needed to update themselves.

- For alternates going to a second review I didn't get good information at what happened in first review.
- Frequently didn't have psychologist/psychiatric reports on clients who were seeing someone regularly; reports from schools, group homes, etc. would have often been helpful but were not available.
- This may be limited because of privacy laws.
- I can think of several cases where we were not made aware of certain vital circumstances, usually because the case social worker didn't want us to know.

#### B. AMOUNT OF TIME ALLOCATED FOR REVIEWS:

- Enough.
- There wasn't enough time to get involved as I'd like to have.

#### C. INFORMATION PRESENTED:

- Sometime social worker wasn't prepared or knew very little about case.
- Sometimes the plan wasn't clear and for some of the workers not all had clear information.
- If information lacking we can always ask questions.
- Most plans seemed prescribed prior to review. Frustrating.
- Depending on the workers it was either very good or real poor - depended on the attitude of S.W. toward board.
- Generally good, but inadequate if social workers were absent, very new, etc. Need more participation from parents, children, etc.
- High worker turnover often left a worker trying to present a case that was brand new with information not all that clear for social worker; high case loads often meant that suggestions made previously had not been carried out - no time!
- By the project social workers were excellent - some agency social workers were not too well prepared.



D. BOARD MEMBER PARTICIPATION:

- No meeting was ever cancelled even if one couldn't come.
- They need to be better prepared to make suggestions for cases and the county - suggestions didn't start until approximately 5 or 6 months into program.
- More guidelines on appropriate responses etc. would have been helpful.

E. BOARD MEMBER ATTENDANCE:

- I seldom sat on a board where all members of my board were present. Eliminate 5 member boards and go to 3.

F. ATTENDANCE OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN AFFECTED:

- I question whether all social workers encouraged parents and children to attend.
- I feel it is difficult to make decisions when you have no personal contact with those involved. I felt much more capable with face to face contact with the children.
- Sometimes they were notified by letter but I feel the importance of the meeting and affects on their lives wasn't stress and more effort put forth.
- Very few parents or foster parents attended.
- Many times they are just not there. It does make a difference to meet them.
- It would help us with recommendations if we could speak with the involved child and parent.
- Often did not attend.
- Rarely did the parents come/ children as well. Discovering as a reviewer.
- A lot of parents didn't show up - County needs to stress the review more emphatically.
- Very helpful when they are there. Seemed drop-off on second time appearance when no progress had been made.
- It was very helpful when the families and/or children attended.

- Far too few parents and children. I'm not sure how to get better parent attendance - court orders? I would like to think that lay involvement might be an incentive to parent participation. Your statistics would be a better indicator of that than my "feelings." As far as children are concerned, I really believe that the children should be there except in those few cases where it could be damaging to them. (I would in most instances also except mentally retarded children.) I don't agree with the county philosophy that exempts children under the age of 12. I remember one review where the foster parent brought along an 18-month old child - who had a great time! Having the child there does a number of very positive things: (1) it brings home the reality of dealing with a real live human being to board members. This is no "hypothetical," (2) it allows the child to participate in what is undoubtedly a very important event. People are making decisions about what will happen to the child that affect a large proportion of its life. The kids know what's going on. I think it's wrong to exclude them, (3) for the older child who does get invited, I think mandating attendance is just one more push toward responsibility for one's acts and practice in decision-making. I don't think it's right to have reviews without them, (4) it makes the reviews much more than perfunctory - which they can get when there's only county staff and regular reviewers there, (5) for both parents and children, it affords the forum where needed confrontation can occur. For all these reasons I would urge that much more stress be put on parent-child attendance. I would like to see some sort of "polite mandate" on such attendance.
- I realize this is probably no ones "fault."
- Perhaps the wording of letters sent and follow-up by social worker.
- Try to obtain more commitment from parents/children to attend and give group homes/foster parents/etc. more pressure to attend or send report at least.
- Too many times there were no parents present. I don't know who can fix this but it should be stressed that parents be there.
- More parents and the older children need to be in attendance.
- SWS (in some cases) did not appear to realize importance of parents and children participating. SWS should be more aggressive in this area.

G. BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS:

- I feel these are important but I received no feedback on them.
- Comment: in 6 months time our recommendations weren't implemented.
- Board members hesitant to be critical of county.
- Not very clear exactly how or if board recommendations really used.

H. PROJECT SOCIAL WORKERS' PARTICIPATION:

- Rarely said much other than read what she'd written.
- Good.
- I think the project leaders both Richard and Jean need group dynamic skill training.

I. AGENCY SOCIAL WORKERS' PARTICIPATION:

- I felt that some social workers more so than others were glad to have the input.
- Some seemed to be unaware of pertinent information, waiting until the day of reviews to make call for some of the work that I felt should have been an ongoing working of the workers - not all, some.
- Seemed defensive. Always seemed threatened by suggestions.
- Good to very poor depended on attitude toward citizen board - need to improve the Boards importance and/or positive involvement for county.
- Ran the whole spectrum. Often excellent and well informed; but at times not very helpful at all, so this end needs work.
- Only as described in 24-c (i.e., High worker turnover often left a worker trying to present a case that was brand new; high case loads often meant that suggestions made previously had not been carried out - no time!) Solution would appear to be lower case loads and less turnover.
- Sometimes there were social workers who I felt were more of a hindrance than an asset.



- Some SWS spoke of case work as only manipulating the environment. A few poorly prepared and did not appear to be doing an adequate job. However, many were doing a really professional, thoughtful job.
- Most participated very well, but a few left a lot to be desired.

Question 25: Comments regarding the amount of information given to have a firm grasp of permanency planning.

- Said yes, but also added, "In some cases others weren't so clear."
- The child's plan seemed in many cases to have already been decided or no change.
- I felt I understood it, but often wasn't sure the courts, social workers, etc. did.

Questions 27: Resolutions for factors in permanency planning indicated as being either largely or slightly problematic.

#### A. VAGUENESS OF PLANS:

- Set deadline or follow through on plans.
- Plans for a child should be very specific and time limits placed and adhered to.
- This goes along with "c". There should be concrete plans and timelines - no action, or not enough action, then TPR
- To get with supervisor, court and all involved in the making of the plans and each one understanding what is required to meet the plan.
- Not enough thought going into permanency past 6 months.
- I felt some plans were just holding patterns waiting for judgments.
- Plans and meetings were often vague and evasive to the issue of P/P.
- Some had good case plans other had real vague.
- Training in specific planning and setting more guidelines within the 6 month plan.

- Simply more specificity with regard to each separate element of the plan.
- Use MBO standards for writing plans. Can you tell at the end of the time period whether or not something has been accomplished?
- In one case in particular it didn't seem like the worker was using community services available to the child.
- More supervision on cases - lower caseloads and SW and supervisor review in between 6 month reviews.
- Avoid use of "pat" phrases and give specific plans with frequency/timelines/who responsible to do it included.
- This improved after working with social workers through successive reviews.
- Require specific rather than general recommendations be made. Have some form of accountability.
- More input from several parties in developing case plans.
- Obviously, the answer here is for more specific information. Parents would certainly benefit from more easily understood goals.
- In several cases, SW did not either have or present plan?
- Needs more time lines in plan.
- I saw an improvement while being a member - I firmly believe that working with the board instigates more specifics of the plan.

#### B. WORKER TURNOVER:

- One or 2 cases this had happened, seemed to be somewhat a problem.
- In a couple of cases, a new worker was assigned and I felt made improper decisions about child.
- Sometimes a problem - when turnover is necessary, maybe outgoing and incoming worker could work together for a while.
- Some had just gotten the case and had to go with what the former worker had worked on. I think they need to know the person involved on their own and work with them on that basis.
- If a worker has had the case for a short time, the previous worker should attend.

- If there was turnover it took work time to understand the whole problem.
- Most children have problems with changes.
- Higher pay wages. More incentives to motivate staff.
- County C.F. has very high turnover rate.
- I wish I knew. Possibly better orientation of new social worker by old.
- That was only a problem in one case that I remember.
- Change county policy about re-organizing every week and shifting caseloads. You'll always have some turnover, but it doesn't have to be as extensive as it has been.
- Different personal philosophies affect or effect different needs definitions must be hard on the family.
- No recommendation other than the usual "lower caseloads" and "perks."
- I don't know that it can be overcome completely but agency should try to be sensitive to it.
- I think this area is an outright disaster, the movement of workers is nothing but harmful to the kids and the entire system.
- Too many workers for too many children too often/allow promotions and raises for working with the same children.
- Not knowing the org. structure of Hennepin County, I cannot comment.
- Changes in staff causes cases to move to back burner. Supervisors need to prevent this from happening. There is no excuse for this happening.
- A problem in any agency but continuity in working with children should have priority.
- One of the greatest problems and is where review board is needed so the child does not fall between the cracks.
- This seems to be chronic - higher pay, lower caseload. Perhaps some sort of rotation system or stress and burn out management.



C. LACK OF TIMELINES FOR TPR:

- Needed to be clearer.
- No child should be in limbo for more than 1 year.
- Need definite timelines and effective lawyers willing to risk.
- Some had been cases for many years. It was as if they were afraid or could not enforce working on the plan and the timelines were not considered.
- Parents not meeting goals, again and again, and court keeps giving another chance.
- Everyone seems unable to take this step fast enough for client.
- Set time limits and stick with them for the sake of the child.
- Worker often unwilling to address TPR or present to county attorneys office.
- Less paperwork.
- County should pursue TPR within 2 years of child in foster care.
- Terrible problem - needs to move much more quickly to keep children from becoming "too old" for adoption. Set timelines at time of first placement, so parents know they must move NOW to get kids back.
- In some cases TPR's should be begun sooner.
- Hinges on (a) above (i.e., use MBO standards for writing plans. Can you tell at the end of the time period whether or not something has been accomplished?) But also requires a commitment by the county to act when certain goals aren't met.
- The ideal would be nice - I realize the reality of courts and legislation.
- More supervision and attention paid to timelines.
- "Second chances" given and re-given. Work to set dates for TPR early on and follow thru with check points prior to TPR.
- It seemed to me that workers hesitated too long to use TPR.
- TPR seemed to be a dirty work - sending the children home was the goal. Is this always realistic.
- More pressure on court system.

- Some workers don't even know the steps needed to be taken to initiate a TPR. More training is needed before a worker is given such a caseload.
- Agency philosophy ground to protection of parental rights. Great reluctance re: TPR's.
- If better case plans and follow thru were done - the timelines could be shorter, as they are too long.

#### D. INITIATION OF COURT ACTION:

- Needed to be clearer.
- Any situation needing court action should be accomplished within one month.
- The cases we reviewed the court action was unclear - the interpretation of what Court was looking for.
- Too many legal complications in TPR.
- Court too busy to relate to case (foster) court time needed.
- Takes too long cases should be reviewed within 3 months.
- County attorney often not willing to present to court - per SW.
- Lack of zealousness. Motivation on behalf of social workers.
- Because of back log for court as well as "worker decision" to initiate court action is a concern.
- More receptive court system (D.A.'s?) so social workers are not so reluctant to pursue TPR's.
- In some cases it should be begun sooner.
- Written criteria by court system on what cases will be accepted, what evidence is sufficient, etc.
- Same as above.
- Work with court system to speed up court dates, etc., once action is taken to go for TPR need to improve court flow somehow!
- What? Just another formality.
- More pressure on court system.
- Easier access to asst. county attys. must occur for the workers.

- Few SWs aggressive in this area. May be intimidated by court and attorney.
- Social worker hands are many times tied. I feel we need changes in laws.

#### E. COUNTY POLICY REGARDING HOLDING PATTERN:

- Needed to be clearer.
- I am not sure just what this means but if it means holding decisions about children, too much time is taken.
- See number 2B (i.e., LAW The legislature needs to enact new laws that limit the holding pattern - put timelines to TPR - become advocates for the child not the parents. Top notch lawyers who care about children should risk in TPR cases. Counties should have a paid advocate working with the legislature every session - making recommendations in the law where it needs to be changed. I feel very strongly about the ineffectiveness of our legal system that ties to hands of social workers!!
- The clarity here was vague. Why prolong the action for years (some 10-12 years) before TPR.
- I really don't understand this frustrating part.
- Especially with the court process or resistance to initiate court process. Also workers unwillingness to address long-term stability.
- More concrete guidelines. More concise steps to be taken.
- I'm not sure what this means but it should never be used where children are involved. A little progress every 6 months for years is not enough.
- If this means the county's tendency to sit on a case where no movement is noticeable, then I think the answer is strict adherence to (a), (c), (d) and (f).
- Seems too flexible.
- Uniform guidelines enforced with workers regarding amount of time given situations to change and what is considered "permanency" - Is a permanent foster home really permanent (not always)
- What?
- I'm not sure what you're asking here.



F. VAGUENESS OF COURT ORDERS:

- Needed to be clearer.
- Too many court orders were not specific enough for workers to have something substantiated to go on.
- I was in some review where one a line or sentence saying what was expected and it all seemed so unclear as to what was expected.
- I feel these orders are just a holding pattern - perhaps experts could be involved sooner to expedite situations.
- Goals as outlined sometimes not specific.
- Explanations.
- Be more specific in initial orders or in case plans based on court orders.
- See (a) above (i.e., use MBO standards for writing plans. Can you tell at the end of the time period whether or nor something has been accomplished?)
- Clarify in court orders how "long" parents have to do specific things listed in order to meet the court order. (Remain sober - 1 week, 1 month, 6 months?)
- I don't think unless there was a court/police problem that they were ever more than standard.
- More input from several parties in developing case plans.
- Not enough timelines.

Question 28: Greatest barrier to permanency planning for children in foster care.

- Lack of an effect on the social worker part to place child in a permanent home. Some were to comfortable in having child in foster care and didn't want to rock the boat. Also questioned how much the supervisor was aware of what was going on in the cases. I question this.
- As I see it, the goal of the County, is to patch the family together. This is not always realistic. If a child is removed from the home before the age of 5 and the parents don't provide a proper environment within 1 year - the child should be placed for adoption. One year of a 5 year olds life is 1/5 of this life. When you are 50, a year is only 1/50 of a life. Time is long to a child. Timelines should be judged against the child's time frame.

- LAW The legislature needs to enact new laws that limit the holding pattern - put timelines to TPR - become advocates for the child not the parents. Top notch lawyers who care about children should risk in TPR cases. Counties should have a paid advocate working with the legislature every session - making recommendations in the law where it needs to be changed. I feel very strongly about the ineffectiveness of our legal system that ties the hands of social workers!!
- Waiting for the case plan to be completed by parents or applying for TPR when the parents are not interested and the children are left in foster care or shelters, group homes or treatment centers.
- Complacent court's and social workers, not being firm enough with parents to meet goals or TPR.
- Terminating parental rights of inadequate and problem parents - if the court could intercede sooner maybe some kids could be in a permanent home sooner. Once parents are recognized as unfit it takes too long to terminate rights in many cases. Actually it takes us too long to find parents unfit when they really are
- The real parents who state they will change but most likely never will - everybody keeps hoping including the courts.
- County worker and courts unwillingness to begin TPR when necessary and to be assertive to plan.
- Lack of drive on behalf of the social workers/parents and foster parents. Too many people benefit financially because children are in placement. The social worker prolongs the child's absence from home, the parents feel less than human, because of their inadequacies they feel dehumanized and powerless, the Foster homes continue to collect difficult care rates for a child who is confused and biologically homeless.
- Development of clear, concise case plans, resources available and court decision as well as court backlogs.
- I feel the greatest barrier is the reluctance to pursue TPR's on children. A baby may be placed and parent make minimal progress every 6 months for years until the child is considered too old and unlikely to be adopted. It often seems so obvious looking from outside, but we are told it's too early, not enough evidence, too late, not in the best interest of the child (?), etc - very frustrating for us and I'm sure for social workers.
- Probably the length of time for a TPR. In some cases, the TPR's should have probably been begun sooner considering the many opportunities some parents were given to get involved and never did for any significant period of time.
- The county's unwillingness to "make waves," to confront parents who are just drifting along.



- Looking at specific needs of specific children. On one hand we need good legislation and timelines would appear to make the process easier on the other hand we need to realize the differences and uniqueness of all people, i.e., adoption is not the answer for all children.
- Caseloads too high and worker turnover.
- Willingness of workers/agency/court system to enforce child's rights over parents rights - Moving toward TPR's soon enough that child has not already sat for years in foster care and has more possibilities for adoption.
- Lack of homes for adolescents, especially minority children.
- The greatest barrier I have seen is the worker turnover. Trust in a worker is hard to come by and extremely important to the successful conclusion of a placement. The kids are troubled enough without a different worker coming in every few months. Also, I've noticed a serious lack of minority workers for minority kids.
- The system! It is locked into a certain way of doing things. TPR isn't considered in even the most natural cases. Takes too much time and effort to buck the system. The good people burn out. No long range goals are looked at for the children. It felt like everything is done in terms of 6 months rather than a lifetime.
- Vagueness of plans and tendency to keep trying when there appears to be little hope of improvement.
- Social workers allowing cases to exist in foster care as they are/if nothing outrageous is happening; not knowing the system and what legal steps are available to provide for permanency for the children; slow to provide intensive casework.
- The court system focus on parental rights and rights and protection of child gets short shift in Hennepin County. Hennepin County philosophy also interferes with permanency planning. We are playing a waiting game and one that does not benefit the children in many instances.
- We need a shorter time frame for permanency. When there is a worker turnover - the new worker should start where the other one left off not from square one again. We need stricter laws and they must be followed.
- In Minnesota, the Indian and Minority Child Welfare Act. There simply aren't enough minority foster homes and the placement with extended family members is usually totally ineffective from the cases we saw.



Question 29: Persons who should be invited and encouraged to attend administrative reviews.

- The social worker, child if older and parents and in some cases the foster parent.
- Foster parents, birth parents, grand parents and any child 8 years old or older. They know what's going on.
- Child (perhaps older than 10), parents, social workers, child advocate, etc. - I guess everyone who currently is invited.
- The parents, foster parents or counselor of group homes or of other facilities. Children when old enough. These are the persons immediately concerned with the children.
- Social workers, supervisors of social workers, parents foster parents, group home counselors, guardians, child protection workers, doctors.
- Foster parents they seem to add information about children we cannot get in any other way, especially when children are shy and quiet.
- Natural parents; foster parents; child; social worker, and anyone closely connected to the child.
- Parents/foster parents, possibly extended family if appropriate to the plan.
- Any and everyone who has entered the child's life since the removal/placement away from home. School teacher, parents, foster parents, minister, closest relative.
- Everyone involved - Foster, natural, P.D., county.
- (1) Child - even if very young the child could be introduced and then go play in another area - would help a lot to meet each child, (2) parents and/or other involved relatives, (3) guardian ad litem, (4) day program representatives, (5) therapist, when applicable, (6) foster parents, residential staff, etc.
- I wish more families and/or foster children would feel comfortable attending.
- Everyone who is currently involved with the child - especially parents and children - see 24(f)
- Anyone with significant knowledge of the case.
- All parties involved, those representing the parties and at least one objective reviewer.

- Anyone involved with the child on a regular basis - parents, foster parents or four home staff, the child (if old enough) and psychologists (counselors) seen on a regular basis or a report from this source.
- Parents children (foster parents also). Social worker and supervisor. Citizen board members.
- Parents, board, and service rendering people currently involved.
- I had no problem with this, I thought it was very well planned on who would attend these reviews.
- Review boards, parents, foster parents, grandparents, social workers. Anyone who cares!
- Present attendees work well together.
- The guardian ad litem, parents, foster parents, school teachers, older children, social worker and supervisor, specially trained citizen reviewers.
- In addition to appropriate county staff, parents, foster parents, group home staff, children (probably 8 years and older), mental health workers, education counselor.
- Parents, child, foster parents/staff. Many workers has discouraged foster parents to attend and they are very important as they are the ones that live with the child.
- The child, not necessarily 12 and over. foster parents, biological parents, etc. More or less those that are currently invited.

Question 30a1 What would you change about the current administrative review format?

- Make sure all persons understand what's going on or what is being said especially if the parent and child are present.
- Too many terms are used that the people involved can't understand. Many people birth parents seemed of low mentality and simplification is necessary.
- The form is not appropriate for MR cases.
- The forms for the special needs child. Spell out the initials so everyone knows what each one is talking about.
- Make the questions more to the point, to many could be taken in different ways.

- There is always room for comments - I think they (these comments) should be recorded and understood better.
- Format is confusing for lay people. Also uses professional jargon/language.
- The format is misleading and threatens the biological parents. The review should be a synopsis of the past 6 months. Not a guessing game; full of conflicts.
- Understanding the meaning and rationale for asking questions and the impact it has on each case.
- The check list is cumbersome and often stifles discussion. I was never sure what its purpose was or how it was used after review.
- The MR format should probably be revised.
- Questions are not well worded; they try to cover all the legal bases but don't convey much to lay people. Even the professionals don't understand them always.
- Some of the wording on front page needs to be very simple as involved parties are likely to be too nervous to ask questions and to be able to interpret some parts.
- Format should be changed to suit various special needs groups - MR should have a separate form, children where TPR has taken place should have modified form, etc.
- Eliminate most of the MR cases
- I would eliminate the review form and come up with one designed especially for citizen review boards and one for the mentally handicapped kids.
- Have them done in the same room each time for each child. Have the rooms take on less of a sterile institutional feeling.
- The MR format is most inadequate.
- The form itself does not serve the best interests of the mentally retarded community. Some parents of MR children are defensive about the questions on the current form used.
- More intensive effort to involve parents etc. It should not be just a routine matter to fill out a form. Also, present administrative review form is not appropriate for MR's.
- I feel a different format should be used for MR.
- Yes (above) from the standpoint that we had an excellent chairperson who would explain it to the people and made them feel comfortable.



Question 31a1 Ways in which the time spent was beneficial to social workers, families and children involved in the program.

- It gave the child a chance to talk on his or her behalf, to say what they would like to see happen in their life regarding placement.
- Presented new ideas - provoked thought - supported families and children. Good to have people "outside" the agency involved in the process - I think families and children felt supported. Social workers felt supported - got new ideas - also felt challenged at times.
- Some suggestions were considered and was helpful for children involved in program. One of our reviews a black youth was able to have her hair taken care of in the special way needed. Some children went home to live with family.
- I hope so - I hope the children feel we care and progress is being made for the clients (them). I do feel when these problem situation are aired in this setting clients and families have every opportunity to get help and hopefully learn to understand the variety of help available.
- The families and involved children pleased that citizens was trying to help them.
- Hopefully, not able to know in most cases.
- Social workers seemed bored; routine!
- Worker felt better about the board and reviews as well as families able to publicly address their concerns when they felt it or they were being heard and not ignored.
- (Q 31) I certainly hope so. (Q31a) I feel that when social workers were receptive they liked discussing their cases, the work they had done, the problems they were having, etc. They also listened and were open to new ideas, some requested assistance. Hopefully new suggestions and perspectives benefited children. Social workers seemed to appreciate board's support for TPR, and I feel families and children generally appreciated that others cared and listened. I was surprised at openness during reviews.
- Primarily because of the increased sense of emotional support for all concerned in working toward the same common objective.
- Broader source for input to social workers; evidence of community concern to parents and children; more substantive reviews; improved plans for children and parents; support to social workers wanting to take action, but thwarted by system.

- Parties involved knew someone other than the system were committed. A forum makes it clearer that all involved feel "something" needs to be done.
- Gave social worker a sounding board, varied ideas, feedback, etc. (if worker not defensive - a few were). Gave families support at times, feedback other times and probably a push sometimes. Gave children feedback from someone besides S.W., supportive often.
- Pertinent questions were raised.
- To the social workers because they were challenged to provide good reviews. To the families because I felt they felt some one was on their side. And to the children because our greatest concern was for them.
- I think the children benefited the most. I think that we brought a new perspective that the children may have benefited from. The families felt that there was someone there who represented their needs, wants and wishes. I also felt that the parents who came opened up more.
- There was always plenty of time to ask many questions and become relaxed around one another.
- Hopefully, for children, with so many people involved, nothing is left unexplored.
- I can't answer for the SWs but several families and older children actively participated and appeared to gain from the process.
- If one of the above did not have a good working relationship with workers the board was a good sounding board and was non bias. I feel also that families and particularly teens felt that someone else cared.
- To the children and foster parents especially - they were without exception pleased with being involved in the process.

Question 32: Major purpose of citizen participation on review boards.

- I feel that the citizen can be objective and not caught up in the system and have the interests of the child at hand.
- Private citizens bring a fresh perspective to the problems of children and can in many cases help suggest new avenues of thinking.



- To open up a somewhat closed system so that all of the possibilities for children in foster care are explored - i.e., to ensure permanency planning for foster care children.
- To help the agency see some points in the case they have overlooked and if not the agency evaluation of itself. The people involved feel they have someone to listen to them and make suggestions on their behalf.
- To have honest and concerned citizens more involved.
- Citizens bring in community values to the whole picture and support program ideas opportunities for children to develop their potential. I hope we question the professionals to speed up permanency plans.
- To be objective in suggestions and recommendations for the child's best interests.
- To offer suggestions to the plan from a lay perspective and to monitor/guarantee parent involvement in the plan and process.
- Hopefully to help find a balance in the placement plan. To offer suggestions and express concerns. To listen and learn. Also to exemplify a humanness to the review process, so the parent doesn't feel alone or inadequate.
- Providing an outsider perspective and quality suggestions for workers.
- It brings a new perspective and support, especially on cases that seem to be stuck-in-place. Sometimes people not directly involved can be more objective and make objective recommendations. It can also give support and a "pat on the back" that this case is going well - good job.
- To provide increased overall perspective, to contribute valid suggestions as appropriate as the citizen are not so close to the situation, and to provide a sense of support to all concerned as everyone shares the same objective.
- To ensure the most appropriate and least restrictive plans for children leading to a permanent family for every child as soon as possible.
- Weighing community understanding and philosophy into how legislation is being interpreted by agencies.
- Objective viewpoints - "fresh" minds.
- (1) Giving new/fresh insights or validating old ones. (2) keeping the county agency on top of each and every case so that kids not "presently" causing problems aren't lost in the shuffle.
- To help identify needs of children and to make recommendations to



workers, agencies, legislature, etc.

- Provide a broader perspective on case progress and goals.
- I feel the major purpose is that an outside source was ensuring permanency for the kids, the county was also challenged to provide good and thorough plans because these plans were subject to support or criticism by the boards.
- To provide fresh new outlooks. To assist the social workers and reconfirm their decisions or to disagree with their decisions. Healthy disagreement may provide new insight. Citizens hopefully can help with the burn out factor.
- To enhance permanency planning.
- To ask questions from a non-agency point of view and to make recommendations from the same perspective.
- (1) Education process for lay board members, (2) improvement in community support for program - considering cost etc., (3) resource for SWs - depending on their attitude, of course.
- They are more concerned about time frames and permanency than agency. They also had different ideas and were more in tune to permanency for the child. They have non bias viewpoint based on the needs of the child without adhering to bureaucratic policies.
- Objectivity. It can be very easy to get a narrow perspective when working with this everyday as a social worker. The input of people out in the "real world" is essential to provide a balance. I must also note that most of the workers I met on cases were either not married and/or had no children and these things also can affect the vision or the balance of what a "normal" family life and childhood should be.

Question 33: Are you aware of any obstacles to having citizen involved in the review process? Are there any barriers to your effectiveness?

- Sometimes I felt that the supervisor of the social worker tried to influence the board about how they were to handle cases. This could be an obstacle.
- None. None.
- None. Only barriers to my effectiveness were timing - there were times that I could not leave my job to attend reviews. I also had a baby in Feb. which kept me from attending some reviews.
- No I'm not unless the Social Workers feel they are being checked upon by someone other than their supervisors. Yes there are if the

workers don't cooperate with the citizen reviewers. I didn't find this true of the reviews I participated in.

- Time off for working people, parking. I had no barriers.
- I feel listened to but maybe we could be organized so we could impact system with one voice. This group of volunteers should have a meeting evaluating this questionnaire so we may be able to act as board members. I would like to see citizen board members meet to brain storm on these questions 32, 33, 34 and speak with one voice.
- Too long periods of time may cause burn out, therefore a decrease in effectiveness. I can see no obstacles to having citizens involved in the review process if selections of board members continues to the best.
- Yes. Some supervisors and their units are overtly resistant as indicated by their attitudes and verbal/behavioral responses. This hinders the process. These supervisors need to re-evaluate their positions within the structure - i.e., it doesn't matter where their values and opinions are.
- Perhaps too many opinions would inhibit the already questionable productivity of the system. Too many options seem to not get prioritized which could prolong the process even longer.
- No.
- When I consider the total number of children involved in foster care and the few we reviewed, the task seems staggering (but definitely worthwhile). The laws, policies, etc. are so numerous - might help to have each board member have in-depth knowledge of a different area, i.e., Minority Child Welfare Act, Native American legislation, etc. Greatest barrier was lack of information in some cases - also not seeing cases consistently due to court reviews.
- The only barriers are whether or not our recommendations are taken seriously by the professionals involved.
- Cost of the system? System attitudes (both worker and administration).
- No - not after the initial learning process - any new experience leaves us on different wave lengths.
- None. Barriers - the fact that the social workers do not have to do anything that is suggested.
- No - as long as the citizens are very aware of the confidentiality laws. My only other concern is for families of MR clients, where the family can no longer care for the child and therefore places him - I think families feel uncomfortable with "outsiders" (especially a large group - as with the 5 member board) looking at their case. Barrier to effectiveness - some S.W. felt citizen boards should not



have access to all the records - not clear or uniform guidelines in this area.

- Privacy laws.
- It's a good process and selection was good to weed out unqualified people.
- No.
- The confidentiality issue always presents a problem,. The time commitment another. The load must be light. In out state people may be harder to get as they know each other. The barriers are: the initial resentment of social workers, the initial learning curve of board members, the feelings of inadequacy in an overwhelming situation.
- The biggest obstacle may be attitudes of staff. In rural counties there could be a problem with confidential nature of information.
- No, except they must abide by the confidentiality. I feel citizens can be very effective. I would like to see Minnesota Review Board more like the Delaware Review Board.
- I believe the department feels more positively about the Board members now but we did encounter negative attitudes in the beginning.

Question 34: The largest impacts [or contributions] of citizen involvement on review boards.

- To get social workers to focus on the child's needs and if goals are set follow through on them and try to make decisions on what should happen with child to get him or her placed.
- The fact that a private citizen is willing to give time and effort can be a large support to everyone concerned.
- Questioning the plan/system for child. Giving fresh and creative input - new ideas. Showing that the larger community cares about our children.
- I feel seeing some of the areas of their cases and plans that are unrealistic and suggesting some helpful ways to get people to cooperate with plans.
- Getting the social workers to think and work harder on permanency planning.
- The freshness of out looks.
- Serving as an unbiased observer/participant in addressing the



direction of P/P for the child.

- Again, I'd have to say the greatest contribution I feel, is the aspect of "being one of the outsiders." Parents can appreciate someone else other than case workers, paper work, etc. being involved.
- Better perspective for workers on case planning and supportive role in suggestion for TPR's.
- I feel everyone felt they were being heard and what they had to say was important. Again, we could be objective in questions and recommendations. I feel having to come before the same people every six months might give some parents more motivation to work on goals. It would be nice if we could help speed the processes.
- Providing an additional external (extra-agency) check or reviews on the services provided by the professionals. Sometimes having an objective non-professional viewing the situation from a greater distance and possibly a slightly different perspective can be helpful.
- Community awareness of the problems, the kinds of children needing county intervention, the lack of resources for children.
- "Fresh," objective ideas.
- (1) Pushing the system to keep on top of all cases - I seem it as a type of quality assurance - a group of people (with no vested interests) looking at all the alternatives for a child and saying this is our best alternative. (2) A way of establishing more uniformity between social workers and how cases are handled. Making less dependent on an individual social worker's perspective or bias.
- If used effectively boards may be helpful in bringing about pressure for change. Members may be able to take action which an employee may not be free to take.
- Broad perspective. Get ideas from others who care. Fresh perspective by people who don't have to deal with same issues everyday.
- It shows commitment and concern for the situation and the children. I don't feel that it was in any way a negative response by citizens to change the system but a way to help.
- We enter the reviews fresh, without "burn out", and may perhaps enhance case plan by filling in the gaps and adding new perspectives.
- Same as # 32 (i.e., To ask questions from a non-agency point of view and to make recommendations from the same perspective.)
- Minority board members made significant contribution to staff and

white board members.

- A non bias viewpoint based on case history.
- Objectivity. It can be very easy to get a narrow perspective when working with this everyday as a social worker. The input of people out in the "real world" is essential to provide a balance. I must also note that most of the workers I met on cases were either not married and/or had no children and these things also can affect the vision or the balance of what a "normal" family life and childhood should be.

Question 34b: Ways in which your participation has made a difference.

- By making suggestions to workers encourage them to place kids in permanency as far as their placement are concerned.
- I have seen both foster, birth parents and children respond to the care we show.
- Support for foster parents involved in the review process - I think I came across as a foster parent. My questioning of the legal system.
- Some changes were made and the children's needs were met and the parents. Some of them saw the need to change for the good of family. Special needs children's families felt good about their decisions and not guilt.
- Enlightenment for myself and the social workers that too many children were getting lost in the system.
- (1) Opened up discussions on points I felt important. (2) Insisted some shy or quiet people (parents) or foster parent or children comment when process was moving to fast.
- Some of the involved children were the age of my children. I could see what were missing and offered suggestions that may be helpful to these children.
- Have frequently asked, if the plan was vague, - "What direction is this going or How long is it going to continue." Important to P/P to identify a time frame and proceed accordingly.
- I've made suggestions which have been implemented. I'm an opinionated person. I've noticed a sigh of relief in the faces of the biological. parents. I've made a difference because I care.
- Providing a minority perspective as well as being knowledgeable and understanding the system.
- I feel I was able to make participants feel comfortable and often



glad they came. I think recommendations and questions from myself and my board were intelligent and helpful to those involved.

- Not really because of the many reviews I have had to miss because of my work conflicts (going to court hearings for continued commitments).
- Have identified and expostulated on system problems. Have made constructive suggestions both on individual plans and system.
- As an experienced social worker in another state, not currently employed in the system, I believe I had the resources to contribute some suggestions that I had personally tried. As an objective party to the case I could at times, perhaps naively suggest alternatives.
- Opportunity to emphasize "permanency planning" for children who have been in foster care for a number of years already. Sometimes someone from the outside can see the "ideal" and encourage people to work towards it - even if it can't be obtained completely. Sometimes people within the the system know the ideal will never be reached so don't try for it - but by trying something better than "status quo" might be achieved.
- I think I participated - asked pertinent questions and made some suggestions as to resources, etc.
- Helped with making parents and children feel like they're involved, doing something good. Helped workers to better formulate specific, measurable goals. Helped to resolve conflict between family and the system.
- I tried to play devil advocate by not taking sides, i.e., the county, the foster kid, or parents. I made my decisions on what was good for the kids.
- I felt that some of the decisions that I made with the help of the board members were made through the eyes of a parent rather than a social worker. The biggest difference was made in me. I know how large a problem we are faced with.
- I feel I contributed by adding a different perspective and suggesting alternative case plans in a team effort.
- I usually stress the fact that while we adults take our time in making plans, etc., the children continue to grow older and more needy.
- Actively urged lay board to participate and make recommendations for case plan.
- Because of my role as a citizen I can support or oppose any entity than would benefit a child.
- My main concern is the screening process and how citizens would be



chosen.

Question 35a: Problems resulting from citizen involvement on review boards.

- Acceptance from social workers and supervisors.
- I suppose some people could be overbearing or so quiet as to be ineffective.
- If no contract is made...some board members may back out of the job.
- Perhaps too many opinions would inhibit the already questionable productivity of the system. Too many options seem to not get prioritized which could prolong the process even longer.
- Personality conflict or opposition from social workers could interfere with effective planning. Some parents, children etc. might be hesitant to attend reviews. In smaller communities confidentiality might be a problem (although coming from a very small community, it seems everyone knows that's going on anyway). What could liability be if recommendations were followed with negative results?
- Probably not if review boards become accepted as a part of the whole problem.
- Perhaps some initial uncomfortable feelings from staff regarding our knowledge - questionable or accurate.
- Possible Problems - breach of confidentiality - if it occurred who is responsible. Liable suits - if family were to sue for a decision made by a review board with citizen on it - who is responsible. These are only possible problems that need to be addressed but are not reasons in themselves to not have citizens on review boards.

- There is a risk of "untrained" citizens asking inappropriate questions. Screening would eliminate this error if done in conjunction with an emphasis on professionalism (i.e., at interview stage ask "what sort of questions might you pose to a parent").
- Data privacy issues...
- Maybe threatening to staff - but not all instances.

Question 37a: Ways in which your participation as a board member changed your attitudes.

- Someone needs to look over the social workers shoulder to make sure they follow through on their cases and make them accountable.
- It made me realize that nothing is cut and dried and when you are dealing with the lives of families, it can be very complicated.
- Made me more aware of our ineffective and cumbersome legal system. Makes me question how much children really are important to us - made me more angry about our foster care system.
- I understood better that the work load of some of the workers was heavy and may have caused them to be negligent because of so many clients. The changing of workers for clients and not having the information and time to work out the best in a shorter time before reviews.
- I had no idea how many resources were available for foster children and parents of foster children.
- I went from participating to enthusiasm for getting involved.
- I'm more determined to remain involved in the issues pertaining to children; specifically foster children.
- I no longer have the confidence that the best that can be done is being done - more realistic, I guess. It brought me face-to-face with types of people I had only heard and read about - most aren't terrible, just need help. I had to face the fact that there are a lot of needy children, and a lot of people who care about them.
- It gave me a greater appreciation of the complexity of the entire foster care situation - from the worker's point of view, from the child's, and from the family's.

- Became acutely aware of some system problems - especially between social service and court system; gained a great deal of admiration for volunteers as well as county staff, struggling against overwhelming case loads and a system that often gets in the way of doing what they're hired to do.
- Social workers need to be aware of their need for continued training.
- I had a really good feeling that Minnesota was open to the idea of citizen involvement as it could easily be judged as irrelevant or interfering.
- Made me more aware of the problems in obtaining TPR's. Made me more aware of how important the S.W. is - a client who enters the system could have very different things happen to him/her based upon who his/her worker is and how they approach things.
- I don't think my attitude changed because of my long term involvement with children and families.
- More respect for the social workers and families.
- Like most citizens I was unaware of what happened to foster kids, I didn't know who cared or if anyone cared about them. But when I personally became involved in a non professional role in the planning decision I found that I cared.
- I realize how busy the social workers are and what a toll it takes on their lives. I also understand more about why things are and aren't done.
- I am more understanding of all parties involved in foster care.
- Reaffirmed my belief in the need for citizen review boards.

Question 38: Additional comments/suggestions regarding citizen participation on review boards or the current review process.

- I like the process. I felt very positive about being involved. I think its open the system. It reminds worker that someone is concerned and someone is looking out for the kids and it makes workers more concise about what is going on.
- Update the boards on previous cases. Make clear parameters for board recommendations. Good to have diversity on citizen review boards. Wish we had a little more prep time for cases.
- I would like to see citizen participation continue because I feel it has a definite impact on the results of some of the cases where the plan is not clear and the case is carried for years. Suggestion and



recommendations from citizen reviews help the worker do a more effective job and frees some of their trying to do other things that are needed to bring families together or establish permanency for children.

- My writing is not the best - please call me for clarification. Essentially I feel citizens help the process move along. Citizens also can express their honest opinion without feeling any political or bureaucratic pressure. I feel more professionals should be called in to label mentally ill participants ill or inadequate and the courts should be called in to [act] sooner so the young client the child can be placed in the best permanent situation for his mental and emotional development.
- The social worker has a lot of work its just a continuous process. That's why the review board is needed -- fresh ideas and suggestions.
- The current review process was okay. I understand that it was only a pilot program. There's room for much improvement. Citizens need to remain involved to add some equilibrium to the review process.
- After seeing such a wide spectrum of social workers and plans, I feel it is very important to have objective citizens on the boards. I would like to see a policy regarding what to do with review recommendations, as this varied from worker-to-worker, and within the court system. I feel people from the court system should be more involved as there seemed to be a wide gap between what we felt and what the court's actions were. (I hope this will be mandated as is or with constructive changes).
- There is a large system effect of a project like this. First, one gains a group of knowledgeable advocates for children - potential usefulness unlimited. Second, the system itself takes notice. Staff make conscious efforts to look at system problems. A kind of Hawthorne effect. So the overall system improves. (That's not to say that the improvement lasts beyond the project). As we know well, fiscal incentives drive any system whether its a county or a family. An improved system would evolve from fiscal rewards for the appropriate movement of children into families. Likewise, I believe that exempting low-income families from any fiscal responsibility for a child in care is to encourage longer placement than necessary. I know this is state law and you can't change it. But the incentives are wrong!
- I was disappointed to note that most of the people on the review board were social service in background - i.e., ex-social workers, teachers, etc. I think some caring, sensitive, corporation management would have helped give the program a different slant.
- I think citizen review should be mandatory for any "public service" agencies dealing with children as clients. Children often aren't in a situation to speak up for themselves or to be heard if they do. Need to determine, though, if citizen review boards are

"recommending" boards or "decision-making" boards. Important to educate all staff/social workers with respect to purposes of citizen review and try to make them less threatening.

- In some cases the agency and social workers involved already know that permanent arrangements cannot be made. Going thru the review process may not be necessary.
- I think it is a must that citizens be included in the review process. Social workers burn out, parents and children feel less threatened when there are private citizens involved. I also think that the review process has just become a rubber stamp in many cases and with outside participation it makes everyone stop and think a little more.
- MR cases should not be included in citizen review process. There are already more safeguards for this community of people.
- Serving as alternate on the lay board has been a positive stimulating experience for me and I am sorry to have it terminated. The project staff and board members were dedicated to their goal and I felt they made a significant impact to that goal.
- I feel they should be all citizen review boards. I believe all agency staff should be more informed about the function and benefits of citizen review board.

### SECTION III: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

Question 39a: Comments regarding mandating citizen inclusion on review boards.

- It brings outsiders into the system. The accountability is there. I feel that some kids are forgotten if this wasn't in place.
- If it is not mandated, I believe that we would see in house boards.
- Opens the review process up to new ideas. Proves to parents, children, families, social workers that the larger community is concerned about the welfare of children. Becomes a "safety valve" to ensure the best plan possible for children.
- That way the agency will know that it is something that they have to include in their reviews and that it will be helpful for them. If this project was mandated I feel it would work well and many lives were changed for the better because of it.
- To get fresh ideas and to get citizens involved with community problems.
- I think citizens bring objective community values to the board. Citizens also listen and relate to all the participants which may help burn out - when they request clarifications or support of special positions - hopefully leading to resolutions.
- Because without mandate few counties would involve citizens/lay persons.
- Citizen participation, from my experience, will offer diversity and room for suggestions. If a board is mandated by legislature or/and/ Commissioners of Human/Social Services the public would be more acceptable to the issues and concerns.
- I think it is very valuable and feel that if it is not mandated, many areas will not use it, as I am sure the organization of such a program is a tremendous amount of work. All children should have the benefit of such a review process.
- It would be premature to decide they should be mandated until we have had an opportunity to review the results of the project to assess whether or not they did make a significant difference.
- I think the system is better off for the added input in reviews and the added public awareness for the system. It will never happen in 87 counties unless its mandated!



- Provides a checks and balance to (at least in large counties) county administration interpretation of legislation. Also, a citizen may well say what a county social worker may feel like saying but because of the politics of the system can't.
- At least one or two objective parties should be involved - I guess that would be citizens - certainly not someone within the system - I guess because of the objectivity and naivete involved.
- (1) A way of establishing quality assurance. (2) a means of advocating for the child (not a part of system and all that entails). (3) a means of establishing both support and devil's advocate roles for agency's soc. workers.
- I think the inclusion of citizens on review boards decreases the possibility of children being "lost in the shuffle." By that I mean that children would no longer be left in foster placement for long periods without some action.
- No, I feel that it is something that can be done on a voluntary basis. When the successes are seen, and there will be successes, it will become adopted in most areas. I think it should be mandated to get it going, but I say no because there will be so much resentment from the Social Service Community that will just hinder the entire process.
- It is an effective way to enhance permanency planning.
- When I first heard about this project and the proposed legislation, I felt that the children already had the safeguard of the guardian ad litem. However, all the children do not have a g.a.l. because they are not involved in the court, yet. Because of this there is need for someone to be concerned only about the best interests of the children. Citizen reviewers may fill that need.
- (1) Objections of staff in some instances, (2) expense and (3) privacy problem in rural counties.
- So agencies can't have the option of using or not using review boards.
- It would be the only way to ensure the objectivity and the very purpose. Obviously, the less bureaucracy involved in affecting real children's lives, the better and within just a county framework (i.e., before citizen reviews) the review boards could not help out but have their own narrower scope in dealing with permanency and homeless kids.

Question 40: If mandated, where would citizen review boards be housed?

- Outside the system if possible.
- I believe they should be statewide mandated with uniform standards and with individual board established for each county. This should be under the jurisdiction of child protection.
- The present structure seems to work.
- A special office building where information is easy accessible for the reviews and people will feel they are a part of the reviews and not in and a part of the agency.
- At Hennepin County Building.
- Convenient for workers and clients. The government center is fine - children and foster parents should be included in reviews if possible.
- In Minneapolis.
- Unclear question.
- In the facility for which most of the cases are heard: Gov't Center, Sabathani, etc.
- Within the county Gov't Center.
- It would be nice to be on "neutral ground," but I think convenience is a priority so as many as possible are able to attend.
- NOT in the court system, as has been suggested. That would just promote greater rivalry between them and less trust. I think it needs to be within the social service system with safeguards for the citizens (such as the right to appeal).
- In a separate agency with a liaison staff in the soc. service dept. or as a separate branch within the agency (2nd choice).
- Same building as social service staff for convenience and time saving of social work staff.
- ?
- In a comfortable setting away from the institutional setting which now prevails.
- With the county.
- Volunteer services.

- Wherever the board and agency agree on.

Question 42: Effect of rotating Board Chairs.

- He or she can participate in the overall process and worry about keeping notes.
- You would get diversity of perspective
- Not sure - Nice to have the same one so can work well as a team. On the other hand - that can get too comfortable - might be good to have revolving chairs.
- It would help others conduct reviews and new questions asked and not the same one. Some people are more personable than others.
- I found as a chairperson, that being so involved with the completion of forms that I couldn't get as involved as I would have liked to in the conversation.
- I have no opinion on joint sharing.
- Everyone is not willing to chair.
- Inconsistency in skills/time/willingness.
- Provides others with the opportunity to enhance their leadership abilities.
- Yes.
- I would like this as I feel it gives a different perspective. I know being chairperson made me talk more than I might have otherwise, but it also led me to leave questions to others, as my role seemed more of a moderator than a questioner. I would like to see the process as a non-chair.
- I like the idea of rotating the chairs.
- Less consistency, which is already a problem with rotating social service supervisors as chairs. But, please provide special training for chairs!
- In my opinion it takes some time to adjust to a board chair position and if rotating it should be done every fifth review or so.
- I don't see it as real helpful.
- I believe there would be no negative effect.
- Good.



- No continuity. It would give the chair a break but would probably be disruptive.
- Not sure.
- No continuity.
- It should have another purpose besides giving members an opportunity. The chairs should be well trained and diplomatic. If this would be possible with rotation - great.

Question 44: If citizen is mandated, what factors should be taken into account during the implementation? How might implementation be different for smaller counties? What components of the project do you think are essential? If you could make one recommendation that you knew would be instituted, what would that be?

- Keep it open to outside review. Make training for social worker and board member dealing with minority.
- Board members should have a high degree of interest in the welfare of children and knowledge of how the system works. They should be required to attend comprehensive training. Fewer board members and less frequent reviews. Strong citizen involvement. Diversity. My recommendation is that the boards not be advisory but to have decision-making authority
- Felt we had a good number at 5. Board members should make up a diversity in terms of experience and exposure to social services. I liked our mix of foster parent/MR experience/minority experience/past social worker/caring citizen.
- The selection of board members be persons concerned with families and what can be done to help them be together and live together with success.
- For smaller counties, if volunteers are not available, either have a traveling board, or review cases in county where board is available. The one recommendation I would make would be that there always would be a staff assistant at all meetings.

- I think 2 or 3 people are enough to brain storm situation and discuss facts. The training of volunteers is essential. The book is essential. I think there should be a review of experiences of volunteers in the beginning after the first one or two board to be able to ask general questions and listen to others point of view.
- Geographically dispersed to cover equal services to all county residents. The forms should be designed by the state and consistent across the state.
- Too many questions! (A) Careful screening of each board member, (B) Implementation of suggestions from board members, (C) Evaluation after each case hearing.
- The various laws. ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act), MNICPA (Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act), MHA (Minority Child Heritage Act)
- I think having 5 people gave our board a variety of backgrounds and experiences that really made us effective. Smaller counties might require a discussion at time of scheduling so members could disqualify themselves at that time and alternates found. My one recommendation would be that social workers attendance should be required.
- I would have to think more about this one.
- Confidentiality; caseload size and turnover; pool of volunteers; travel factors; staff and administration attitudes; # of children in placement; court attitude and willingness to cooperate; general awareness of permanency as a goal (need for permanency training); volunteer training. Look at multi-county boards and/or swapping citizen volunteers between counties; travel time and distance could make a big difference in some counties. Training for both volunteers and staff; some sort of "project staff"; volunteers; sufficient funding; acceptance by administration; appeal route for volunteers. Guaranteed access to court with court orders (clearly written) to compel cooperation (Ha!)
- Need to look at what number of reviewers is essential - 5 member boards are nice, but not necessary. In smaller counties may even have to have 1 or 2 citizens on a board and have them supervised from a staff in a larger county. Essential that some separateness be kept between citizens and agency so citizens don't become just another staff member. Must feel some autonomy. Recommendation - have all information available to citizens and all involved parties at reviews!
- An integrated review board - age, ethnic background, sex, etc. where possible inclusion of minority board member when reviewing minority children.
- That the end goal would be Permanency! I don't think we did anymore towards obtaining permanency than has been previously done. The

system is stuck in a rut. Everyone talks big but no one takes action. Have long range planning done that looks at as many permanency goals for each situation as possible. The real problem is not citizen review or not it's permanency planning!

- Screening, training, staffing. Smaller counties might face issue of conflict of interests.
- If review is mandated, I would recommend that it apply to only 5 counties - Hennepin, Ramsey, St. Louis and also St. Cloud and Rochester.
- Small counties may need to use exchanged board members. All. All citizen review board.

Question 45a: Comments regarding whether both voluntary and involuntary placements should be reviewed by citizens.

- Yes, again the social worker should be aware they have a job to do that is placing the child in a permanent home or back in their home and not in limbo.
- A voluntary placement is probably done with a great deal of care and concern.
- Because both carry the concern for permanency planning for children.
- I feel this way because placements are very important and a citizen will be able to see some things that the workers may not feel is important.
- The permanency planning for the children is needed regardless of type of placement.
- The client is the child - since the community pays for the child it should have some impact into the placements, understanding this whole problem by citizens participating may be able to educate the rest of the community. I think a special review board can do these cases together 1/month - they seem more or less cut and dried with staff understand options best. One board member suggested a picture of client in every review to personalize.
- Just to check out facts.



- A voluntary placement can become an involuntary one if necessary. The goal of the board is to provide P/P for all children in placement. Choosing to place your child does not mean non-involvement.
- Voluntary placements are as important as involuntary placements. Each situation involves a child in placement.
- I saw no differences in the need for reviews in CW/CP cases, and some seemed to go from one to another. Plans were often similar and children's needs did not vary greatly.
- I don't feel citizen reviews should be mandated for voluntary placements, but they could still serve a valid purpose.
- It is often accidental as to whether a placement is voluntary or not. The problems are not always that different. Children need the protection regardless.
- There are countless options to ways of thinking in any case - court action doesn't mean a placement is all it can be.
- Both can get lost in the system.
- The format should be different but the purposes are the same. Parents "voluntarily" place their children and never decide that they are ready to have the children return home - county is in position of having children in placement where decisions need to be made as to what next. Involuntary placements need to be coordinated with court system but still reviewed by citizens.
- In either case on occasion, children have been in foster placement for long periods of time. Hopefully reviews would decrease this possibility.
- I think that an outside opinion is always helpful whether or not it's voluntary or involuntary. People are always looking for help in confirming or denying decisions.
- Citizens could provide useful info.
- Vital to protect welfare of child in all instances.
- Because both kinds of placement can get lost in the system.
- The suggestions that a Board member might make or a Board recommendation should not really be affected by a voluntary or involuntary placement.

Question 46a: Comments regarding whether mentally retarded children in placement should be reviewed in the same manner as other children in placement

- The forms should be different for mentally retarded kid.
- I believe that we need an entire new format and form for MR's - because their problems and needs are entirely different from that of an abandoned or abused or neglected child.
- Parents are too guilted - they need to have this guilt removed - not added to. A different form needs to be used.
- Because they are persons the same as others only they have special needs and the forms can be changed to meet their needs.
- Because a large majority of the MR cases, were children that really had no future except where they already were.
- But listening might be important. But I feel I have no input into the problems. The problem is more or less cut and dried - child is evaluated by professionals - foster care is special - there are only so many options - I feel I just listen and have no input.
- Forms and process does not apply to this population.
- Usually MR cases as already pre-determined. There should be, however, some way of evaluating the structure.
- Limited resources available and no reunification problem and basically clear, understood agreed upon case plan.
- Although many (most) will not go home, they may not be in the best placement available. It struck me in reviewing these cases, that everyone involved (parents, social workers, children) seemed open and pleased to have someone listen to their concerns, joys, fears, dreams, etc.
- Their needs and situations are so different that they require a different kind of review.
- The form used is clearly not appropriate for the vast majority of MR cases. At the very least, that should be changed. Most MR cases are just that, with parents heavily involved already. The cause of placement is different from CPS or CW cases. For a few MR cases, there is also parental failure of some sort and the review is appropriate. But for most it's not.
- This I've given countless hours of thought - at first my inclination was to say no. Yet, the more I become familiar with MR cases the more I realize that some of these people are not serviced to the extent if what is available through existing programs. A point in case would be Title 19 waivers. Also, the community at large needs

more understanding of the issues involving the MR population. Even a "rubber stamp" review affords the MR person with the same rights as the non-MR person - and gives the community at large a citizen review person with more understanding of the struggles of families connected with MR relatives. One way the citizen review board can promote human relationship understanding.

- Form and forum could be simpler due to fewer possible alternatives.
- Often times there were no alternatives to placement for the family as they could no longer care for the child and there are no opportunities for the child to be returned home or moved to a less structured environment, etc. Still should be reviewed - maybe fewer citizens involved and a different format.
- In all of the MR cases reviewed in which I was a participant plans remained about the same - resources are somewhat limited in MR cases.
- I felt in this process that the MR Social Service Unit has their act together better than any other. This area is very specialized and few citizens can step in and offer help.
- MR format inappropriate.
- There are already more safeguards for this community of people.
- A retarded child should have some rights and protection as any other child.
- I feel the MR forms should be different.



FOR ALTERNATES ONLY:

Question 48: Comparison of experiences on 2 and 5 citizen boards.

- The smaller boards seem to move along faster. The discussions on the larger boards are more interesting. Trade off - 3 citizens.
- I was only on a 2 member board.
- I felt there was more participation from a greater number of citizens in the 5 member citizen boards, although parents may feel more at ease with fewer participants.
- Five members is too "heavy" - sometimes overwhelmed the foster care provides, etc.
- Prefer 2 rather than 5 but would recommend 3 person board. Five member board is simply too large in number and an agency supervisor takes over with 2 member board.

Question 49a: Comments regarding difficulty in moving from board to board.

- It is not because the focus of helping the child is the priority and everything falls into place.

Question 50a: Comments regarding preference in serving on one board vs. having the ability to rotate boards.

- I think it would facilitate optimum - resolution of cases moving them along as fast as possible to allow child, the clients, and foster parents to participate more.
- I believe serving on one board would provide more opportunity for an alternate to become a better functioning member of one group of individuals by (a) getting to know group members better and (b) hopefully to function better as a group because of increased knowledge of how and why members of group respond in a certain manner.
- I would be able to make a stronger commitment if allowed to participate in advanced scheduling.
- Considerable differences in attitude and skills of the boards.

#### Additional Closing Comments:

- To summarize my feelings I'd like to say I feel as an ombudsman for the family in crisis helping all the facts and option surface and be understood by the family. I feel strong and adequate for this experience because essentially I'm a "good consumer" and know my right or more important how to protect them and ask for them. I feel frustrated when not enough facts or knowledge about the situation is presented and will ask for more input - psychologists etc and more legal advice from attorneys but on the whole of family court could keep up with the case good decisions could be made faster. I would like to see attorney general's office or judges hear our frustrations on lack of continuity their delays cause young clients.
- Because of some personal health issues my time commitment was severely limited. Yet because of my community involvement in the aspects of children in "crisis situations" I would have liked more opportunity to have been more a part of this program. I continue to believe that family dynamics are extremely complex and the more facilities we have to exploring needs and how those are being met/not met the more communities of people will live with an increased feeling of security. I think citizen review boards could have the ability to foster a positive link between those needing services and those providing services.
- Citizen review boards should operate at the advisory level of authority and the opportunity to follow the case and to be heard if there continue to be objections or questions.

Appendix E

HC Agency Staff Information

- a. Staff Survey
- b. Caseworker Focus Group Outline
- c. Supervisor Focus Group Outline
- d. Open-ended Survey Responses



# Program Evaluation Resource Center

501 Park Avenue South  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55415  
(612) 348-7811

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 23, 1986

TO: Ray Ahrens  
Mike McGraw  
Carol Ogren

FROM: Nancy Larsen

RE: Hennepin County Foster Care Review Project Evaluation

This memorandum will serve as a follow-up to the June 24 memo regarding the evaluation of the Hennepin County Foster Care Review Project sent by Carol Kuechler.

The first phase of data collection from caseworkers and supervisors is about to begin. Within the next week, the Program Evaluation Resource Center will distribute a brief questionnaire to all 107 caseworkers and 36 supervisors who participated in the pilot project. A small subsample of these individuals (approximately 10 caseworkers and 10 supervisors) will also be asked to participate in a focus group near the end of August.

In order to increase participation of the Hennepin County staff, we would appreciate your assistance in doing the following:

- Let your social workers and supervisors know that they may be contacted to participate in the project evaluation.
- Let them know that they have permission to participate in the evaluation.
- Encourage them to respond quickly to any invitations or other correspondence they receive regarding the evaluation.
- Let them know that their input is anonymous in the analysis of the data.
- Thank them for their interest and participation.

Thank you very much in advance for your help in this evaluation endeavor. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me.

cc: Marian Eisner, Connie Cobb, Carol Kuechler, Carol Watkins  
Charles Hogan, Dianne Dee, Shirley Barfknecht, Margaret Lonergan

# Program Evaluation Resource Center

501 Park Avenue South  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55415  
(612) 348-7811

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 29, 1986

TO: Hennepin County Staff

FROM: Nancy Larsen  
Project Evaluator

RE: Hennepin County Foster Care Review Project Evaluation

As the Hennepin County Foster Care Review Project begins to wind down, we begin the most important part of the evaluation process - gathering information from those who participated in the project. Caseworkers and supervisors who participated in the project are being asked to help us in two ways. First, by completing the enclosed questionnaire and returning it to us. Second, a few individuals will be asked to attend and participate in a focus group. The reason that we are collecting this information in two stages is that some issues that have been identified are more easily "talked about" than written about, and these issues deserve some discussion. You will be notified within the next two weeks if you have been selected for inclusion in one of our focus groups.

We request that you complete the enclosed questionnaire as soon as possible, and return it to the Program Evaluation Resource Center. Please have the completed questionnaire in the mail to me by August 4, 1986. For your convenience in returning the questionnaire, a PERC mail label has been enclosed. It is important for us to receive them quickly so we can analyze them for inclusion in the final report and also identify additional themes for discussion during the focus group. Please make use of the areas for comments, this is your opportunity to express your opinion on issues related to the demonstration project.

Please remember as you complete the questionnaire that your responses are confidential, so please be as candid as possible. No one but the Program Evaluation Resource Center staff (which is independent of both Hennepin County and the State of Minnesota) will see your questionnaire. Your individual responses will not be shared with project staff, other Hennepin County personnel, review board members or those persons involved in the project at the State of Minnesota. Your input is anonymous in the analysis of the data - your name will never appear together with the comments you make.

Thank you for your interest and participation in this project, and for your help in this evaluation endeavor. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me.

HENNEPIN COUNTY FOSTER CARE REVIEW PROJECT EVALUATION  
QUESTIONS FOR AGENCY CASEWORKERS AND SUPERVISORS

CARD1 (1)  
ID (2-4)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date Completed \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

A. What is your job title? \_\_\_\_\_

B. What unit are you with?

Child Welfare.....1 (5)  
Child Protection.....2  
Mental Retardation.....3

C. How long have you been employed in your current capacity?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Years (6-7)

D. How many cases in which you have been involved were reviewed by  
boards which included citizen participants?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Cases (8-9)

E. How many reviews have you personally attended in which citizens  
were included as board members?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Reviews (10-11)

F. Which roles have you performed during the project's administrative  
and citizen reviews? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

	YES	NO	
caseworker.....1	2		(12)
supervisor.....1	2		(13)
chair of board			
that include 2 citizen members.....1	2		(14)

\*\*\*\*\*



**INSTRUCTIONS:** PLEASE USE THE GRID BELOW TO ANSWER THE FOLLOWING SEVEN QUESTIONS. CIRCLE ONLY ONE RESPONSE PER QUESTION.

QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	NEITHER	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	
Citizen Review Board members demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the administrative review process.	1	2	3	4	5	(15)
Citizen Review Board members demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the substitute care system.	1	2	3	4	5	(16)
Citizen Review Board members demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the legal system as it is involved in foster care issues. (These include TPR, court-ordered goals, 18 month reviews)	1	2	3	4	5	(17)
Citizen Review Board member's questions were relevant to the handling of the cases in which you were involved.	1	2	3	4	5	(18)
Citizen Review Board member's questions demonstrated sensitivity to persons and circumstances involved in the case.	1	2	3	4	5	(19)
Citizen Review Board members demonstrated a respectful attitude toward the parties attending the reviews.	1	2	3	4	5	(20)
Citizen Review Board members' recommendations were relevant and practical to the case situation.	1	2	3	4	5	(21)

B. Use the space below to make additional comments regarding the areas of citizen review board functioning that you rated above for the seven questions. Both positive and negative comments and examples are important in the evaluation of this project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## 8. COMMENTS CONTINUED

1. The first time I heard of the proposed citizen review boards, I was very positive. I thought it was a good idea and I was glad to hear that it was being implemented. I was very positive about it and I was glad to hear that it was being implemented.

2. I was very positive about it and I was glad to hear that it was being implemented. I was very positive about it and I was glad to hear that it was being implemented. I was very positive about it and I was glad to hear that it was being implemented.

3. I was very positive about it and I was glad to hear that it was being implemented. I was very positive about it and I was glad to hear that it was being implemented. I was very positive about it and I was glad to hear that it was being implemented.

4. I was very positive about it and I was glad to hear that it was being implemented. I was very positive about it and I was glad to hear that it was being implemented. I was very positive about it and I was glad to hear that it was being implemented.

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9. I was very positive about it and I was glad to hear that it was being implemented. I was very positive about it and I was glad to hear that it was being implemented. I was very positive about it and I was glad to hear that it was being implemented.

10. I was very positive about it and I was glad to hear that it was being implemented. I was very positive about it and I was glad to hear that it was being implemented. I was very positive about it and I was glad to hear that it was being implemented.

9. When you first heard of the proposed citizen review boards, what was your initial reaction?

Very Positive.....1  
 Positive.....2  
 Unsure.....3  
 Negative.....4  
 Very Negative.....5

(22)

10. Has your opinion of citizen review boards changed over time?

Became more positive.....1  
 Stayed the same.....2  
 Became more negative.....3

(23)

10a. Why do you feel this way?

1. I feel this way because I think the citizen review boards are a good idea and I think they will help to improve the way the government works. I think they will help to make sure that the government is doing what it should be doing and that it is not wasting money. I think they will help to make sure that the government is doing what it should be doing and that it is not wasting money.

2. I feel this way because I think the citizen review boards are a good idea and I think they will help to improve the way the government works. I think they will help to make sure that the government is doing what it should be doing and that it is not wasting money. I think they will help to make sure that the government is doing what it should be doing and that it is not wasting money.

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4. I feel this way because I think the citizen review boards are a good idea and I think they will help to improve the way the government works. I think they will help to make sure that the government is doing what it should be doing and that it is not wasting money. I think they will help to make sure that the government is doing what it should be doing and that it is not wasting money.

5. I feel this way because I think the citizen review boards are a good idea and I think they will help to improve the way the government works. I think they will help to make sure that the government is doing what it should be doing and that it is not wasting money. I think they will help to make sure that the government is doing what it should be doing and that it is not wasting money.

11. How difficult was it to schedule reviews for the project boards?

Very difficult.....1  
Somewhat difficult.....2  
Neutral.....3  
Somewhat easy.....4  
Very easy.....5

(24)

12. What benefits do you see resulting from citizen involvement on review boards?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

13. What problems do you see resulting from citizen involvement on review boards?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

14. Do you think that citizen involvement on review boards should be mandated?

Yes.....1  
No.....2

(25)



14a. Why or why not?

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15. If citizen review is mandated, where should these citizen review boards be housed?

THIS PAGE IS LEFT BLANK FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING A PLACE FOR THE ANSWER TO QUESTION 15. WHERE SHOULD THESE CITIZEN REVIEW BOARDS BE HOUSED?

16. If citizen review is mandated, who should chair the boards?

A citizen member.....1 (26)  
A social service supervisor.....2  
Other (please specify).....3

THIS PAGE IS LEFT BLANK FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING A PLACE FOR THE ANSWER TO QUESTION 16. WHO SHOULD CHAIR THE BOARDS?

17. If citizen review is mandated, how many citizens should be on the board?

Persons (27-28)

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18. If citizen review is mandated, what factors should be taken into account during the implementation. How might implementation be different for smaller counties? What components of the project do you feel are essential?

THIS PAGE IS LEFT BLANK FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING A PLACE FOR THE ANSWER TO QUESTION 18. WHAT FACTORS SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION. HOW MIGHT IMPLEMENTATION BE DIFFERENT FOR SMALLER COUNTIES? WHAT COMPONENTS OF THE PROJECT DO YOU FEEL ARE ESSENTIAL?

19. Should both voluntary and involuntary placements be reviewed by citizens?

Yes.....1  
No.....2

(29)

19a. Why or why not?

THIS SPACE IS FOR YOUR COMMENTS. IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS, PLEASE WRITE THEM IN THE SPACE BELOW. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE ANY COMMENTS, LEAVE THIS SPACE BLANK.

20. Should mentally retarded children in placement be reviewed in the same manner as other children in placement?

Yes.....1  
No.....2

(30)

20a. Why or why not?

THIS SPACE IS FOR YOUR COMMENTS. IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS, PLEASE WRITE THEM IN THE SPACE BELOW. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE ANY COMMENTS, LEAVE THIS SPACE BLANK.

21. Use the space below for any additional comments you would like to make regarding this project or the inclusion of citizens on administrative review boards.

THIS SPACE IS FOR YOUR COMMENTS. IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS, PLEASE WRITE THEM IN THE SPACE BELOW. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE ANY COMMENTS, LEAVE THIS SPACE BLANK.





## CASEWORKERS FOCUS GROUP OUTLINE

### Introduction

Hi, my name is Scott Lenz and I work for the Program Evaluation Resource Center. The Center has been retained as the independent contractor to evaluate the Foster Care Review Project. Most of you have already completed a written questionnaire for us (we have received responses from slightly more than 75% of caseworkers who had cases reviewed by the project and from almost 85% of supervisors who participated in reviews where citizens were present.) We want to thank you for your interest and participation in the evaluation thusfar.

Today we will be spending some time discussing issues that were not covered in that questionnaire. Before we begin, I would like you to introduce yourselves and also say which unit you are affiliated with. [Let them introduce themselves and make note of those attending]

If there are no questions, let's begin. I will be tape recording our discussion so I can ensure the accuracy of my notetaking. Please be as candid as possible, no one will be mentioned by name in the report. Okay, let's begin.

1. From your experience, was the amount of time that you needed to prepare for reviews where citizens were involved any different from the amount of time needed to prepare for the agency's administrative review? [Probe for differences, was a longer or shorter amount of time needed? What for them was different in preparing for a citizen review?]
2. Were the project staff easy or difficult to work with in terms of scheduling reviews and putting together case summaries? [Probe for examples]
3. You were in a unique position to participate in and observe the operation of both types of citizen review boards (1) one of which included five citizen members and was chaired by one of those citizens, and (2) the two citizen member boards which were chaired by independent agency supervisors. Which of these two models did you prefer and why?
4. On the whole, would you say that citizen involvement on review boards helped or hindered the casework process? This includes case planning. [Probe as to why or in what ways?].
5. Many suggestions have been made regarding where citizen review boards should be housed if they were mandated. These suggestions have included (1) within the social services department, (2) within the court system, and (3) as an independent outside agency. Which of these options do you think would work best, and why?
6. Did you feel that citizen review board members were generally supportive or non-supportive of the work that you were trying to do? Why?
7. What would you identify as the most positive aspect of citizen involvement on review boards?
8. What would you identify as the most negative aspect of citizen involvement on review boards?
9. Finally, are there any other comments you would like to make regarding citizen review that you would like to see included in our report?

Thank you very much for your time today,  
your comments have been very helpful.

## SUPERVISORS FOCUS GROUP OUTLINE

### Introduction

Hi, my name is Scott Lenz and I work for the Program Evaluation Resource Center. The Center has been retained as the independent contractor to evaluate the Foster Care Review Project. Most of you have already completed a written questionnaire for us (we have received responses from slightly more than 75% of caseworkers who had cases reviewed by the project and from almost 85% of supervisors who participated in reviews where citizens were present.) We want to thank you for your interest and participation in the evaluation thusfar.

Today we will be spending some time discussing issues that were not covered in that questionnaire. Before we begin, I would like you to introduce yourselves and also say which unit you are affiliated with. [Let them introduce themselves and make note of those attending]

If there are no questions, let's begin. I will be tape recording our discussion so I can ensure the accuracy of my notetaking. Please be as candid as possible, no one will be mentioned by name in the report. Okay, let's begin.



1. You were in a unique position to participate in and observe the operation of both types of citizen review boards (1) one of which included five citizen members and was chaired by one of those citizens, and (2) the two citizen member boards which were chaired by independent agency supervisors. Which of these two models did you prefer and why?
2. From your experience, was the amount of time spent in reviews where citizens were involved any different from the amount of time needed to conduct the agency's administrative review? [Probe for differences, was a longer or shorter amount of time needed? What for them was different in a citizen review?]
3. Were the project staff easy or difficult to work with in terms of scheduling reviews and providing you with case summaries? [Probe for examples]
4. On the whole, how easy or difficult did you find it to work with citizens on the review boards? [Probe as to why or in what ways?]
5. Many suggestions have been made regarding where citizen review boards should be housed if they were mandated. These suggestions have included (1) within the social services department, (2) within the court system, and (3) as an independent outside agency. Which of these options do you think would work best, and why?
6. Did you feel that citizen review board members were generally supportive or nonsupportive of what caseworkers were trying to do? Why?
7. What would you identify as the most positive aspect of citizen involvement on review boards?
8. What would you identify as the most negative aspect of citizen involvement on review boards?
9. Finally, are there any other comments you would like to make regarding citizen review that you would like to see included in our report?

Thank you very much for your time today,  
your comments have been very helpful.

Open-ended Survey Responses

NOTE: ID NUMBERS 001 THROUGH 107 INDICATE CASEWORKERS  
ID NUMBERS 200 AND OVER INDICATE SUPERVISORS

QUESTION 8.

- 001 I was surprised to find the citizen were unaware that we pay "extra" for difficult kids. Also these women were unaware that people can and do earn their livelihood throe foster caring.
- 003 Competent board members were selected. They were qualified to review plans but not qualified or experienced enough to make casework suggestions.
- 006 My first citizen board review was early on in the project - so some of the knowledge/understanding that was not apparent then - became apparent at later reviews.
- 009 My only involvement with the panel was nearly a year ago so I do not recall all of the details, especially regarding legal issues in regard to how knowledgeable the panel was.
- 010 It was all done very nicely but I think it was also unnecessary. The MR cases are already subjected to several review processes to determine appropriateness of placement.
- 013 I only was present at one review. My client was not present.
- 015 CR Bd. members reviewing case material in CPS should be prof. trained. It is not enuf to be sensitive with respectful attitude e.g. I don't think a hair dresser can be much help.
- 017 The "knowledge and understanding" that apparently was needed re: the above issues was generally not relevant to MR issues - MR placements are by-and-large voluntary placements. On items 18, 19, and 20, my thinking would be more adequately expressed by stating I "agree" rather than defining them with "strongly" or "somewhat."
- 018 I did have the feeling that I would have appreciated more support from the citizen review board members regarding the difficulties and frustration I was experiencing in dealing with this particular family
- 022 The last citizen review cases have been several months ago since I am with the prevention of placement unit now. I felt that the citizen Reviews were really not necessary in my cases since the circumstances mandated placement; and the parent had to have placement.
- 025 Many of the participants had their own ax to grind - world view - hidden agenda and they were not professionals.
- 033 Review Board members did not appear particularly enthusiastic.
- 035 MR cases did not need to be reviewed.



QUESTION 8.

- 036 In my two cases, the Board did not make any recommendations, but rather reviewed the situation and commented on how they say the placement going. I don't know how knowledgeable they were about the legal aspects of the cases, as it was not raised as an issue (the county had legal custody in both cases). They did seem experienced in the administrative review process. In summary, the Board system did not produce any results or recommendations or issues that were different from any that a "regular" Administrative Review would have procedures. The Board system did not bring in any different insights or perspectives that could have been discussed.
- 037 I was pleasantly surprised to find citizens were not offensive, seemed understanding, but made suggestions in the areas they thought warranted it.
- 043 Case can't give an adequate perspective - this was my only experience - plus I think MR cases don't lend themselves to the value of citizen review - tend to be stable, long term unlike CW/CPS.
- 046 Having done only 1 review, my comments may or may not be pertinent. Procedures worked extremely well during my client's review. Parent was also absent during the review process.
- 051 Generally competent reviewers in only one case did a reviewer seem to want to rush through the review without much discussion or thought.
- 052 I found the review board members to be generally supportive of the child, but not experienced enough to offer new information for planning and reviewing the placement.
- 054 Review board members seemed to improve over the months in their knowledge and understanding of placement issues, as indicated by their questions.
- 058 Citizens come to the reviews with their own area of expertise, their thoughts many times were useful and appropriate and showed sensitivity. There were a couple of times when a member seemed to go off on their own crusade about their pet area of concern.
- 059 Please change the administrative review format for MR clients - it doesn't really apply to their situation.
- 062 Not helpful - just took up a lot of time without serving any purpose.
- 063 Do not thing that the citizens' participation added anything to the process on the cases I had.
- 066 Some members somewhat naive. Good interest shown by members.

QUESTION 8.

- 068 Although the conversation was animated and interesting I don't believe any 'change' or unique solutions came forth from Citizen Review Panels I participated in.
- 070 The first review I had involved a Citizen Review Board member who asked inappropriate and insensitive questions.
- 071 Little understanding of the lifestyles of clients and their problems. Well meaning people, though.
- 078 One citizen on the panel did not seem to have an understanding of client's situation and made what I thought were inappropriate comments and questions (other two citizens seemed to understand).
- 080 Members of the citizen's panel became involved in discussions about case plan details not related to issues of placement. I did not feel they always had the experience or knowledge to do this. It was not clear to me if this was part of their commission.
- 081 CRB seemed to assume legal remedies where none existed.
- 086 The case I was involved with were reviewed more than 1 year ago therefore my memory is sketchy.
- 087 This single case was a very different situation which probably was not completely understood by the board.
- 090 They, in general, extended great sensitivity and respect, both for the client and his/her situation and for me as a worker. Their knowledge of our options in case planning was limited by their lack of experience due to not working in the field.
- 093 This was a waste of time for me, my clients and staff time. Nothing ever came of a review, no different discussions or recommendations were made.
- 097 I thought it was a positive experience for my client and that the board did a good job!
- 100 Citizen's knowledge and training is not the issue here. The administrative review for mentally retarded children is so routine that there is no need for citizen's knowledge and understanding in order to carry out the process.
- 104 It was helpful in certain instances to meet with the board prior to the review to provide some background and to suggest that some areas of interest/concern to the child not be aired in the review because of the child's sensitivity to the issue.

QUESTION 8.

- 106 Board members seemed to understand the foster care placements but not the guardianship-adoption process (with some notable exceptions). I cannot respond to the relevance of the questions because there were hardly any questions asked on the guardianship cases. They were all very nice and very respectful but had little to add to the work being done with state wards.
- 107 I think the project was beneficial in bringing some more realistic impressions of what we do to those few who participated. I don't feel it had any positive impact on my client. However, therefore I feel, putting clients first, staff time could be better employed elsewhere. OK for PR purposes, but not as a rule of thumb.
- 200 On the whole, board members' participations were high quality. MR "substitute care system" is complex, but the citizens became well informed over ? of relevant issues and resources.
- 203 The citizens' comments generally added a refreshing note of realism and candor while still being supportive.
- 204 Board members were not real knowledgeable about substitute care for MR children. All MR placement reviews that I attended happened to be long term stable placements. Subsequently, the review boards had very little that they could offer in the way of recommendations.
- 205 Board's can be influenced by the type, skill and personal strengths of the presenting Social Worker and supervisor.
- 209 At times (2) I felt the less assertive citizen members allowed themselves to be dominated by one very assertive member -- would not express their own viewpoint unless actually requested. The Boards were generally good. I do question having so many foster parents involved as "Independent" reviewers, as it is difficult for them to be truly independent of the agency. I am personally in favor of having all placements reviewed by the court at 90 days and every 6 months thereafter. For children under the age of 4 - a court review at 30 days. This is the age where children are most damaged by separation and lack of permanency. I firmly believe in Court ordered goals for parents so reunification or permanency planning can be accomplished. I know our present staff could not handle this at first but I believe it would save in the long run.
- 214 I felt board members were committed to their role. The fact they really cared about these kids was obvious. I felt supported by their judgments and recommendations. I can recall only one instance in which a board member seemed impatient, rather cold, even a bit hostile, and likely to disagree with "the plan," whatever it might be.
- 218 Several citizen members seemed critical of caseworkers plans without understanding said plans.



QUESTION 8.

- 223 Some of the panel members seemed more cognizant of the overall circumstances and our role. Some seemed to take a more authoritative, direct role. All, I believe, were sensitive to the needs of the retarded child. There was some expression of opinion that the retarded child's circumstances were, in most cases, dissimilar than those children placed because of dependency or neglect.
- 224 As the project progressed I saw a much better understanding by the citizen panel - but based on entire experience I had to circle +2. Overall I saw the panel as responsive but never saw any change ? from the panel that was different from regular review. I always felt that the review was a positive experience but felt it served more as education to the panel.
- 225 I consistently felt the citizen boards were knowledgeable re the review process. From time to time recommendations were made for services we had overlooked and were of benefit for the children.
- 226 The citizens seemed to be selected well. They seemed child oriented. I have had both positive and negative reactions to the 5 panel format. It is very hard for clients to face 10 or more people in what has to be a rather formal atmosphere and one in which allows for all to participate. The chairperson is too often an uncomfortable position with the need to observe time restraints on important barrier. Its costly.
- 228 While it was nice to get citizen input regarding placement cases, as a general rule there was little that was provided other than support for the existing case plan. It took considerable time familiarizing panel members with the uniqueness of MR placements, but once that was done, their support. Understanding of the inappropriateness of the form was appreciated.
- 229 Board intentions not always knowledgeable about CPS casework realities.
- 230 I answered "somewhat agree" to majority, but it should be noted that when participants did not fully understand our complex system, people were very eager to learn, and ask questions in a very appropriate, kind, and respectful manner. I only had one poor experience with one citizen reviewer, but it was handled appropriately, and there were no follow-up problems.
- 231 Do not believe that the Review Board made or makes a significant difference in planning for children.
- 232 I found that the issues discussed in the reviews had already been discussed in court and that the Board members never had any ideas which had not already been tried. I saw this as primarily and educational experience for the board members.

QUESTION 8.

233 The units I have supervised -- intensive services ? and CPS intake do not have kids in placement, they the 2 I was involved in were as the vectral party.

QUESTION 10a.

- 001 People in the community need to know more about foster care, this is one way they can learn (and spread the info so to speak).
- 002 They were able to present a different perspective to the placements.
- 003 I don't see the need or purpose in having them. They can't make policy decisions.
- 006 The process was not as time consuming as I thought; some of my 5 selected clients were disqualified due to age. The project coordinators were easy to work with. I am hopeful that positive changes may evolve from the process.
- 007 Did not find ?.
- 009 My initial reaction was more in terms of MR clients than clients from other programs. I do not think this type of review is needed or appropriate for the MR program. Our families are put through so much as it is and have problems other families do not face so additional reviews just add to their burden.
- 010 When there is not time to do all of the necessary work to meet practical needs it is particularly distracting to do things that do not seem to meet a practical need.
- 012 Confidentiality - data privacy concerns and a feeling that some citizens were very critical of social workers.
- 013 My one experience was positive. It was a state ward in a stable living situation and there was little to discuss.
- 014 Altho my direct participation is extremely limited -- I feel the persons involved were all quiet sensitive to the issues and confidential nature of this review.
- 015 I saw no benefits.
- 017 It was a questionable use of time. MR placements are generally voluntary, these are long-term placements, and it is rare that they change.
- 018 1. It seems important for other people to be aware of the complexities and difficulties of certain case situations. 2. The review persons were supportive of this particular child's situation and that was important for him to hear.
- 020 In the case of MR placement the Administrative Review is just one more time consuming step. Following the mandates of DHS Rule 185 I feel we are expected to evaluate the placement process in a comprehensive manner.



QUESTION 10a.

- 022 I guess because I became used to it and it was ordered. Originally I felt it was a question of my integrity as to why I placed a child. Some reviewers were on state wards or those we had legal custody.
- 025 I feel inexperienced people have a narrow view of the foster care system.
- 026 It gave parents, who are coping with the idea of placing their child, a chance to get a sympathetic hearing.
- 027 I didn't see where it made any difference in case plan or goals.
- 028 Review process re: MR cases seems irrelevant.
- 029 Our clients are in long term, voluntary placements and rarely involved in situations where permanency planning is an issue. Therefore, the review process is simply not very useful in most cases.
- 030 I saw nothing accomplished by this project.
- 033 They are not an integral part of the system, do not learn or understand the ultimate responsibility of the social worker. The system is cumbersome enough without this addition. Checks and balances need to stop somewhere - and - again - the assigned social worker is ultimately responsible anyway!
- 034 Although I still am not sure they are needed, now I have found of their effectiveness as only satisfactory, where previously I was concerned about breach of confidentiality and their possible lack of knowledge of our functioning.
- 035 All of my MR placements are already over reviewed by administration etc., court advocates, MR guidelines, health dept., state MR reviews.
- 036 My experiences with the boards were basically positive. My initial reaction was that the boards were in place to monitor the caseworker and to hold the worker accountable (which isn't unreasonable) but I wanted the focus to be on how to better serve the client and child in placement. I was concerned the focus would be on "coming down" on the worker for not providing sufficient services (as in reprimanding). My experiences, while not extremely helpful, were certainly not demanding in any way.
- 037 Although my experience with review board was positive, I'm not sure that would have been the case, if I had had more cases involved with citizen boards.
- 042 The reviews are time-consuming, and seldom helpful in determining what direction in which to proceed.

QUESTION 10a.

- 043 I felt just a general non relevance regarding MR cases considering beyond my case and speaking to other workers - a not real meaningful formality.
- 046 Appears to be a duplication of effort -- most probably should be available as an option when unsure of case plan. Repeats several internal mechanisms already available.
- 048 Saw no difference in outcome or much in progress.
- 049 It depends on the citizens on the board.
- 051 People on the boards were generally genuinely concerned, asked relevant questions and were not "a pain in the posterior." By asking not picky irrelevant questions - this was much appreciated.
- 052 I feel we do a very responsible and responsive job in reviewing need for placement and placement progress in the child's interests utmost. Staff time with independent review person is most agency should expend. I found review board members rather naive and not well enough informed to challenge our thinking/planning with the children. Extra work and expertise in arranging review as well as another staff person to organize this didn't seem worth the benefit to the child.
- 054 Citizens weren't as judgmental or critical as I anticipated. In fact, most of the time they were very supportive of how the case was being handled.
- 056 I only have one case to base my opinion on. If went well but I do not have a generally idea from this.
- 058 Initially I thought this would be just more hassle to endure. I did not expect citizens to override case plans and they didn't. I don't see any compelling reason to include citizens but it was OK and did not change the outcome of the reviews.
- 059 The citizens were well trained and really seemed interested in the children in placement and what was best for them.
- 061 Although citizens involved in reviews seem to be trying hard to do have some knowledge of the system. Their attitudes inevitably only add more pieces to the already complex questions. They have their own biases, they are not "neutral," each having their own ax to grind, so to speak.
- 063 Just more people to have to schedule with and explain things to.
- 064 Participated in only 1 such review; would have better assessment if had several opportunities.

QUESTION 10a.

- 066 The reviews did not take anymore time than those ? citizens and the input participation, questioning, was of high quality.
- 067 Can be a good process to help us keep focus on child's needs as well as families'
- 068 Discussion is always good -- on principal. The reviews I was in were 'good' -- no one missed the point or got off track. There seemed to be some wishful thinking about what could be accomplished. They certainly weren't "bad" for anyone.
- 069 It is important for citizens to be aware of the critical issues facing children in out of home placements.
- 070 The whole project was conducted in a professional manner; discussion at the reviews clarified some points and there were some good suggestions from citizen review board members.
- 071 If the general public only knew how poorly children are treated by parents in CPS. I hoped they exert pressure to change policies -- laws. Also, pressure the courts into more expedient rulings.
- 073 The reviews seem unnecessary for MR clients.
- 076 I feel that the citizens review board generally supported me and also it let me know that they understood the needs for placement in some circumstances.
- 077 Helped me education review board members re: special needs of MR kids.
- 078 Another hoop for workers, don't feel it was useful, felt like another way my judgment was being questioned, invasion of my privacy for clients; a time consuming, anxiety producing process to rubber stamp an already developed plan.
- 080 I feel we spend valuable time being "reviewed to death." We have foster care plans, administrative reviews and judicial reviews. In MR we also have detailed individual service plans. If there are goals our agency, other gov't units (and society at large) want us to achieve with children. They should be clearly stated and a system of accountability be set up that is direct and less cumbersome. What we have are layers of oversight systems and no real social responsibility.
- 081 CRB acknowledged the difficult task of child protection casework. CRB asked appropriate questions, including questions of parent(s) and child(ren).
- 082 Because members were more sincere and sophisticated in their input than I anticipated.



QUESTION 10a.

- 083 This can go either way depending on panel members may be well informed, may have strong feelings toward system.
- 087 I feel the process is a duplication. It is hard to present all the information necessary for a person to understand a difficult case situation.
- 090 I feel that the process helped them gain an appreciation of the types of problem areas that we typically encounter on our caseload. It did not help me do my job better, however.
- 091 I see some positives in that citizen participation improves communication between our agency and the community, it makes us sensitive to the ideas and concerns of the community and it helps the community gain a certain comfort with our agency by dispelling myths and educating.
- 092 Less trouble than I expected.
- 093 The administrative reviews already perform the same function. Citizens in review boards require more meeting time to enlighten and educate. I didn't find any of their comments enlightening.
- 094 Board was able, in one instance, to advocate for my client/child in a way that I and other service providers could not do in giving direct feedback to child and commenting on this particular situation.
- 096 I feel they can bring other perspectives to cases.
- 097 I think its important for citizens to know what their many is being spent for and the quality of workers in this agency, and the work done. Citizens need to know the difficulties we face as social workers and the high rate of success we experience - usually the negatives hit the press.
- 100 Because they do not contribute anything substantial to the process -- I think we waste their time and maybe money (if money is involved here).
- 101 My experience too limited.
- 102 Because of events or feelings in a child's life being dredged up from the past that may be better off forgetting. Also because of the current supervisor being ill-prepared in handling the reviews. Also it makes for more paperwork for the social worker.
- 104 All participants attempted to understand the individual case, the issues and dilemmas involved, to take into consideration the perspectives of the clients and worker rather than imposing their own views on the case initially. The boards operated in an effective problem solving mode.

QUESTION 10a.

- 106 I am speaking only in regards to state wards. Their situations and goals are fairly set. There is no family involved. There was nothing the citizens could add and it became quite a waste of time to travel from a branch office to downtown for what seems to have had little purpose.
- 107 Because my clients were treated respectfully, and also because, thank God, none of my really messy controversial cases got drawn!
- 200 I enjoyed sharing the experience and, at times, the responsibility of planning for children in out of home placement. Liked the education aspect of the process (citizens came to see how social workers made decisions) and also the citizens' perspectives from outside the system.
- 202 Board knowledgeable of their charge. Prepared prior to starting assignment i.e. learned about agency, courts, resources. Approached assignment with best interests of children in mind but also aware of limitations and barriers in moving toward permanency.
- 203 Sensible, informed participation. Where continuity of involvement was experienced, the consistency of insight was very good.
- 204 At the very least, the review boards did not have a negative impact on the client or their families.
- 205 I am interested in knowing if the families and children have been served better -- with the focus of children, staying in ? homes with "home base" service -- children in placement will, has, decreased and project had a neutral affect.
- 209 Internal reviews are often not very meaningful in that co-professionals tend to endorse each others work for a variety of reasons. I feel the public sector needs to be informal and educated about the cases we deal with and that it is important for us to get their feedback.
- 214 At first I thought citizen board members might not understand what problems we deal with and would be another administrative hurdle rather than a help. I quickly discovered they did they did understand and wanted to help clients and us! Having someone from outside the system either validate your thinking or offer suggestions for changes proved valuable (and welcomed).
- 216 While the concept is excellent the problem is the task(s) required to do this right have added to the job over and above any workload adjustments in other areas. Duties/expectations rise but caseload size hasn't been reduced enough to take the new demands into account.
- 218 Panels were generally supportive. The cost in staff time and panel expense doesn't seem to warrant using them. "In-house" reviewers are adequate.

QUESTION 10a.

- 220 I have no information at this point in time as to what impact the citizen review has regarding permanency planning.
- 221 I did not have enough experience with the boards to form a more definite opinion.
- 223 Perhaps their role could be something else rather than direct review of cases. The model, in most cases, did not fit MR.
- 224 I felt that the panels did have a better understanding of the system than I had expected.
- 225 1. Helpful for citizen review of children in out-of-home placement.  
2. Their concerns are the same as professional staff involved.
- 226 There is considerable concern about the amount of time the review process takes and this is a reality. Placement units do between 10 to 20 reviews per month (60 are listed for CW services - approx.) with the involvement of 3 county staff people and others and with an average of more than hour per review it is costly. This time must be balanced against other ways time should be spent. I believe most reviews do open up new understanding -- especially if family participates.
- 227 Citizens are more objective.
- 228 I was impressed with the concern and sensitivity of board members. By and large, they were nice people. They offered positive feedback to social workers and generally were supportive of their work.
- 229 Due to the many demands upon workers -- this seemed to be an added burden.
- 230 As expected above, people were very respectful and wanting to learn about our process -- has potential for serving useful purpose (for certain situations).
- 231 "Permanency planning" has been an issue for the 18 years I have been employed as a social worker. I do not believe and the experience with the board did not change that social workers intentionally or unintentionally allow children to "drift." In fact, it is something of a charade to believe that once parental rights are terminated that permanency has been achieved even though it is considered so within the scope of the reviews.
- 232 It's probably useful as an educational tool for the public and somewhat affirming for our staff to have citizen approval of the case plans. I doubt if it's worth the time and money, however.
- 235 I don't see the need for them in MR cases but have had direct experience with them for CPS cases.



QUESTION 10a.

236 Overall, good management and training of volunteers.

QUESTION 12.

- 001 I feel the more information (knowledge) the average non-involved citizen has about social services the better off we all are.
- 002 The parents and social workers are accountable more directly to representatives of the community.
- 003 The board members may have learned a little about how we operate or how kids end up in placement.
- 004 None.
- 006 1) Citizen education and understanding of substitute care systems. 2) Positive changes in reviewing voluntary placements vs involuntary placements. 3) Better credibility from citizen panel on how well/poorly we accomplish our tasks. 4) Discussion of subjects that are sensitive.
- 007 None other than that they may have a better understanding as to what is irrelevant in the placement process.
- 009 In some programs there can be value in helping the agency to examine its policies and procedures in regard to placements -- their necessity and longevity but I do not see a need for this as an on-going procedure.
- 010 None.
- 012 Some of the citizens were bright and became quite enlightened and empathetic to social worker's dilemmas (the "law" etc.).
- 013 They seemed to have the benefit and care of the child foremost in their minds.
- 014 Perhaps educational from the standpoint of the public regarding specific situations the REAL family's that find is necessary to utilize alternative placements for children.
- 016 Helpful for parents who feel system is against them to have non system people on board can offer suggestions outside the usual scope.
- 017 I am not in a position to respond positively or negatively re: child welfare or child protection placements. I do not think it is necessary for voluntary MR placements. I think it is over-kill.
- 018 In this particular case, they were supportive for the child -- his parents chose not to be present -- if they had been there, the review persons would have been confrontive to the parents -- this might have been helpful to all concerned.
- 020 I would like to see them recommend the termination of the Adm. Rev. Process for MR placements -- except for situations in which the case managers sees a

QUESTION 12.

- 022 It helps to inform the committee on what we are doing, why, and the issues/complexities involved in there situations. It does make us more aware of why we place.
- 025 The public may become more "enlightened" about the difficulties involved in the foster care system.
- 026 No opinion.
- 028 Citizen support for agency position.
- 029 None in our division.
- 030 None.
- 033 I'm not aware of any. I do not feel they were particularly informed -- therefore could not be a real asset in the process.
- 034 None "specifically" that can't be accomplished with two supervisors.
- 035 None.
- 036 I think it's important to view the placement process from many perspectives -- qualified persons from the community certainly represent one perspective. It helps keep the workers within the system from developing a narrow view on how the placement process should operate.
- 037 It adds an additional overlay of monitoring what is done with cases.
- 041 Citizens became more aware of the process and our job for children in placement.
- 042 Very few -- some people who didn't know learned a little more about our jobs and the people we deal with.
- 043 I do see value with cases in which kids are drifting in the system tho such reviews must be tempered with support as constructive criticism has value, however there are very real constraints that outsiders may not truly comprehend -- particularly CPS cases.
- 046 If all boards are well informed and function as a group decision making body can provide input to assure effectiveness and appropriateness of case plan for child.
- 048 1) Politically -- agency less vulnerable to criticism. 2) Can see good questions arising -- practical viewpoint.
- 049 I don't see any benefits.



QUESTION 12.

- 051 Understanding of the complexity of the placement process and the many difficulties that can be encountered wider exposure of social worker competence, and better interaction with the community in general.
- 052 Other "heads" to challenge need for placement and ways to resolve need for placement -- but only if volunteers are very estute and know our system and children's families needs well. Community knowledge of Child Welfare placement concerns; resonice deficits.
- 054 Citizens become more aware of the complexity of child placement issues.
- 056 I had one case and the questions they asked were good.
- 058 Citizens do bring a different perspective and sometimes have additional ideas that are useful for the children. Possibly citizens will take with them a feeling for the difficult cases we deal with and provide the public a knowledge of needs of our clients.
- 059 Better community understanding of foster care. Perhaps a more un-biased review.
- 061 They do ask some legitimate questions.
- 062 None.
- 063 None.
- 064 Objective input; different perspectives possibly invaluable; satisfy wishes (demands?!) of the community; citizens learn about the complexity and difficulties connected with placement issues.
- 066 Helpful to gain broader perspective, new insights into dynamics of situation these unique citizens come up with. Educates citizens as to kinds of services, families, personnel, problems we deal with.
- 067 Gave additional perspective.
- 068 PR maybe. The process may occasionally correct a mistake or provide a new direction although I didn't see this happen.
- 069 Broader community awareness of the issues facing children in placement and their families. Realizations that there are no easy answers. Citizens able to give a fresh outlook on cases that may have become stagnant.
- 070 Nothing.
- 071 Greater awareness of CPS clients, problems CPS faces.
- 073 Citizens learn about the system and the clients.

QUESTION 12.

- 076 It provides ? with an unbiased party.
- 077 They became more aware of MR kids special needs.
- 078 None.
- 080 I don't know. Whom do citizen advocates represent? Only the gov't bodies can have a direct responsibility to do the public and be accountable for their policies.
- 081 Support for case plan (out of home plan).
- 082 Affirmation that the direction taken with case made sense not only to professionals closely involved but to community at large.
- 086 Community may lose hostility toward substitute case system as out files would be subject to review.
- 087 Educate the community as to family situations which do require reviews.
- 090 Greater appreciation for the job we do, for the severity and direction and chronic nature of the problems we encounter every day.
- 091 Already stated.
- 092 Easier because special unit took care of the mechanics.
- 093 Enlightening to them re: out courts and our system.
- 094 A sense of shared responsibility, as opposed to "watch dog" effect, was my experience in working with board -- brought community role/function into perspective -- helped me be more clear, thorough as I was "member of a team" responsible for client service.
- 096 Overall better decisions.
- 097 We need to let the public know what this agency is doing!!!
- 100 None for neutrally retarded population.
- 102 Issues can be raised that may not have been before that need to be addressed.
- 104 Plans for children may be made with less professional bias, less contingent, perhaps, on an agency's current view of service delivery or its present organization.
- 106 For state wards -- nothing.
- 107 Allows the public to gain a more accurate idea of our work.

QUESTION 12.

- 200 -"Outside the system" perspective. -Education of the public to child welfare and m.r. issues. -A model for community -- cw system cooperation.
- 202 That somehow the general public will have a better understanding of the difficulties we sometimes face in dealing with the issue of permanency. That they could in some way assist in getting funding, additional resources, or staff to do a "better" job.
- 203 Public information, understanding and support. Agency perspective. Client awareness of "peer concern" and also that the agency was open to constructive criticism.
- 204 None for MR placements.
- 205 In Hennepin County because of large population, the involvement of citizens to education, other citizens, to be the voice of the community standard will be lost. It appears that social work, foster parents and the agency has been more sometimes to children or out of home placements.
- 209 Education of citizens. Another viewpoint for SW and supervision of parents.
- 210 None.
- 211 Citizen involvement.
- 214 1) Placement plans weren't changed drastically, but they were "fine-tuned" better as a result. Improvements were made. 2) Keeps our system more honest, less "incestuous." 3) Helps to educate the community about what we do and why.
- 216 A. Another point of view. B. Improved relation with community. C. Better planning.
- 217 Input from parties outside system provides objectivity. Community education re: services, issues, needs.
- 218 Some improved awareness of the agency's role by certain citizens.
- 220 Community awareness about problems we face in permanency issues.
- 221 Care of children is a community responsibility. By involving citizens, there is an active way for this to be expressed. The process also keeps foster care open to public view.
- 223 Perhaps some support that a review system for children placed primarily because of mental retardation and related conditions should be modified to reflect the circumstances of those children. Overall -- better citizen understanding.



QUESTION 12.

- 224 A better understanding in the community -- but question that it would outweigh the time commitment that the panel require of workers -- or how far the panel's views are shared in the community.
- 225 Expose citizens to a very sensitive issue of children out-of-their homes. Gain community support for placement where needed.
- 226 Highlighted concern for case planning with client and professional response to this interest. Opening up the system for analysis and scrutiny with support for change anticipated.
- 227 Community awareness.
- 228 For me, the primary benefits were of an educational nature. It provided lay people and professionals outside the agency with the opportunity to see the kind of work we do, the nature of the problems with which we deal, and how the review format does not fit with the placement situations for MR clients.
- 229 Community awareness of the difficulty in casework -- esp CPS.
- 230 Very appropriate for child welfare, child protection situations, for assistance in providing feedback to legal system, etc. To help resolve difficult, "stuck" -- long term unresolved placements.
- 231 None.
- 232 The public can get a more realistic picture of the work we do and of the barriers to permanency planning.
- 233 Objective, ? observations.
- 235 Citizens gaining more understanding of placement process -- esp. helpful in CW and CPS cases.
- 236 None.

QUESTION 13.

- 001 There are times when "too many cooks spoil the broth."
- 002 None.
- 003 It is not an effective system. They only know what we told them about a case, and we certainly came from a prejudiced point of view. It was like a rubber stamp.
- 004 Delays -- disagreements between reviewers over action to be taken.
- 006 -Questioning of client-family values, decisions, lifestyles especially in a voluntary placement of a handicapped child. -Confidentiality/privacy violation for families.
- 007 None.
- 009 Confidentiality concerns. time wasted with meetings.
- 010 Unproductive use of time.
- 012 One "lemon" could create quite a stir with media etc.
- 013 None as long as they are competent and trained and understanding confidentiality and all the problems that currently exist in making and maintaining placements.
- 014 I continue to have some reservations regarding the issue of confidentiality. In the (one) situation that I was involved with -- neither the "family" (foster or biological) nor the child in placement attended. I suspect the format could be somewhat intimidating.
- 015 Delay.
- 016 Parents can feel the need to "justify" placement and can become more rigid. Citizens need to be trained in placement issues.
- 017 See above. Also, I think the confidentiality of clients/families is an issue here.
- 018 Possibly not understanding the complexities or frustrations or difficulties in certain situations.
- 020 None.
- 022 An occasional member sometimes fails understand or "see" the issues involved.
- 024 Confidentiality and the difficulty of appearing before a group of strangers to discuss one's life problems. Also there is the possibility that a citizen reviewer would know or be aware of a client in another context.

QUESTION 13.

- 025 Unweildly -- time consuming.
- 026 No opinion.
- 027 The meetings were scheduled for me. This made it easy. If the worker had to schedule; it would be very cumbersome.
- 028 None.
- 029 The most problematic thing would be time consumption as our ordinary reviews have basically been a paper process, and if we were to team each case, it would take a lot of time.
- 030 Lack of pertinence.
- 033 Failure to be fully informed and sometimes failure to be objective on in an adversarial position to the system does not ? in help to the child -- who is the client I've been in positions to advocate for. I worked in Child Protection prior to this position and the ? involved in those cases are too complicated for the interested party from the community to fully comprehend or advise on.
- 034 None except I don't still feel an absolute need for this procedure.
- 035 Waste of time and money. Citizens not familiar with MR situations.
- 036 It would be a problem if the board operated to criticize the system in Child Welfare Services -- the board needs to work cooperatively with the system to devise more helpful ways to serve clients -- the focus needs to remain on the client and what their needs are.
- 037 I wonder if citizens are as committed to confidentiality as agency personnel.
- 041 The dynamics of multiple and complicated considerations for a child in placement were sometimes viewed rather simplistically. This may be more true for our mentally retarded clients. It did improve by the time project ended.
- 043 See above.
- 046 -Significant problems if uneducated and unaware of issues involved. - Need to leave ability to arrive at group consensus or at least respect differing opinions.
- 048 None in Metropolis.
- 049 There weren't any problems.
- 051 Potential to get uninformed citizens not familiar with FC process who may ask irrelevant questions, or lack understanding to be sensitive to difficult ? by social workers or ?.



QUESTION 13.

- 052 Suggestions to be followed up that have been tried before but confuse child or family. Not enough experience with particular child to comment on child's situation helpfully. Too many people -- intimidating for many children, parents.
- 054 I didn't see any except that in general it seemed a lot of times to spend with little result -- that is, no placements were changed as a result of being in the review.
- 056 Lack of experience in working with placements and sensitive issues.
- 058 Setting up a review with additional people is cumbersome and not flexible to foster parents etc. work schedules. Program staff briefed citizens prior to reviews. This and other additional tasks would revert to the worker. There is less consistency in the reviews than with our system of one supervisor being the independent reviewer.
- 059 Parents may sometimes not want to share information with other community people about their own private situations. Extra time and money spent for each.
- 061 As previously stated.
- 062 Time consuming for SW.
- 063 None.
- 064 Jump to conclusions, opinions, recommendations, etc. based upon limited knowledge of the individual case in point.
- 066 None.
- 067 I didn't run into any but had only 2 cases.
- 068 A relatively expensive, time consuming process.
- 069 Resentment from agency personnel that an "outsider" is telling them how to do their jobs. If the review is in a locked format there may be no opportunity to dialogue over points of disagreement.
- 070 Confidentiality.
- 071 Some members feel workers aren't doing the job right as they don't understand the severe limitations caseworkers work under.
- 073 It appears to be a waste of time and money for MR clients.
- 077 No problems.
- 078 Hassles.

QUESTION 13.

- 080 1) Invasion of privacy. 2) Question of accountability (see above).  
3) Again, multiple layers of accountability. 4) Lack of professionalism.
- 082 None.
- 086 Panel may come in with biase against system.
- 087 His understandings that are normally generated by a misrepresentation of facts, by oversight or by a lack of knowledge of federal and state laws. The more people involved, the more chance of misunderstanding.
- 090 It makes for more people to explain a case to their suggestions generally were not helpful in making revisions of case plans, its a somewhat more stressful and confusing environment for the children being reviewed, as more strangers are ? their situation.
- 091 They should not get directly involved in cases.
- 092 They tend to be naive of what is possible on a case.
- 093 Much extra and wasted staff time.
- 094 As long as: their role is clearly defined and they do not become "policy settlers," lines of accountability are clear, training and clarity of expectations adequate, and board members make commitment for at least 1 year to insure continuity and reduction of people involved for client -- I can't think of any major problems.
- 096 Hopefully not but may know family from community.
- 097 None.
- 100 Parents will resent it.
- 102 Confidentiality.
- 104 None occurred that I had anticipated.
- 106 Waste of time and money for state ward cases.
- 107 1) Administration pays no heed to panels' recommendations; 2) often the panelists have not real comprehension of the factors effecting implementation of cases plans, and it is frequently not a good ideal to explain everything due to the complexity and personal or agency politics entering in.
- 200 I haven't seen any significant problems.
- 202 None from my experiences with the current board.
- 203 None, really. Scheduling was a hassle at times, but it worked out.

QUESTION 13.

- 204 Additional time in coordinating for the review. A duplication of the many reviews of MR children in placement.
- 205 Problems are best seen by project personnel.
- 209 Occasionally where there was court involvement also, the client and the citizens seemed under the impressions that their recommendations were binding.
- 210 None.
- 211 Repetitious -- areas covered anyway.
- 214 Don't believe I can identify any other than lost time if scheduling is a problem and people begin not to show.
- 216 None that can't be worked out. If the overall caseload size allows time to the job.
- 217 The larger number could be overwhelming to clients who may already feel overpowered by "the system." Having only 1-2 would be preferable to 5.
- 218 Cost -- scheduling of staff time.
- 220 It is a time consuming process! Some clients are difficult to deal with and the social worker can be "on the spot" when clients "attack" them in this setting. I am sure the clients will find it also a "painful" process at times.
- 221 None at this time.
- 223 The (some) social workers feel some demands to get a case ready for review and perhaps feel some imposition on them.
- 224 As indicated, the time commitment. Overall, citizen reviews took much more time than than regular reviews and the outcome doesn't appear to be different.
- 225 Scheduling. Large number of people -- at times limits client participation.
- 226 None I identify at this point.
- 228 Time-consuming in terms of arranging meeting times -- another thing to fit into a worker's already-too-busy schedule. If boards are mandated, I would like to see a selection process which guards against loss of objectivity and freshness on the part of members. Once such a board becomes institutionalized and permanent, it loses its perspective and simply becomes another bureaucratic layer.



QUESTION 13.

- 229 None really.
- 230 In MR situations, the only purpose would be to add another layer onto an already cumbersome review process already in place; it would also continue to add stress to parents that are continually dealing with their grief in having an MR child and needing to place that child; they usually have "told" their story many times over, and providing another place to do so is not helpful.
- 231 Case confidentiality. Really don't see how this involvement will necessarily further permanent planning.
- 232 1) It's more time consuming for our staff. 2) I have some concerns about this process in regard to the client's privacy -- I think this is an invasion of privacy which the children have no ability to say no to.
- 233 Need training that informs them of the resources, placement process and HC services.
- 235 Violation of clients confidentiality.
- 236 Cumbersome, particularly with hostile clients.

QUESTION 14a.

- 001 Keeps us "honest" -- we now have to be able to say exactly why a kid is out of the home -- and when he is to return. A piece of paper to the state office is somehow different than your neighbor and your client's neighbor sitting at a table with you.
- 002 The child benefits from knowing that the citizens care what happens to him/her.
- 003 Supervisors and administrators should or could be capable of doing this function.
- 004 I do not believe they made any significant change in what he has been doing.
- 006 I don't think mandated citizen review boards will be positive; I would prefer to be more flexible with citizen review boards being voluntary.
- 007 I do not see sufficient benefit.
- 009 Mainly wastes time that can better be used in other ways.
- 010 In some areas it may develop community support for improved services.
- 012 Cumbersome -- not natural. Social workers have too much to do without the added pressures.
- 013 From my one limited experience it is impossible to answer your question.
- 014 I'd hesitate to mandate this position.
- 015 No redeeming value.
- 016 I don't think they make that much difference. It is probably good "PR."
- 019 See 12 and 13.
- 022 It informs the public and keeps us disciplined relative to placement issues.
- 024 Because the problems mentioned in question #13 would outweigh the possible advantages.
- 025 We have too much bureaucratic red tape already.
- 026 Not necessary.
- 027 It didn't seem to make any difference.
- 028 Not important enough.

QUESTION 14a.

- 029 For the above reasons.
- 030 I saw them serving no great purpose.
- 033 They do not strike me as having the expertise to deal with some of our complicated legal-social-psychological issues. This I apply primarily to CPS. In the case of MR -- it seems to be an insult to the parents of those clients to be called in for these reviews -- also painful for them. Again -- how many checks and balances do we need?
- 034 I have previously stated.
- 035 There is already too much review of placements. See #13.
- 036 It depends on how clearly their role is defined. Refer to #13. I'm not sure if their involvement should be legally mandated, but I'm not opposed to their involvement. Their purpose needs to be defined as well as who they would report to, what authority they would have over the placement process and county personnel, etc.
- 037 I don't think it is necessary for citizens to review each case.
- 041 Not for MR clients.
- 042 Not worth the effort necessary.
- 043 I'd truly like to see and hear what has been the outcome in other states also faced with fiscal cutbacks, the social service delivery system will be greatly stressed -- I'm not sure how sensitive citizens would be to this in light of what's realistic vs. not feasible to change in a case.
- 046 Most mandates serve to change the focus or function of group and effectiveness is lost.
- 049 I don't see any advantages. The citizens have no power to make changes.
- 051 Not sure -- gut level feeling -- mandating may lead to less adequate citizen involvement -- adversarial rather than cooperative venture and short-circuit cooperative feeling?
- 052 In these questions, I can see that I so strongly oppose mandating the service that I cannot give thought to these following issues.
- 054 Doesn't seem applicable in MR. Where placement issues are usually much different than Child Welfare or Child Protection i.e. children are placed because of the difficulty of care vs problems with parents.
- 056 Can be too subjective.



QUESTION 14a.

- 058 The system is too unweildy for 100% of reviews. If citizen review is needed for whatever reasons, a sampling of cases would serve the same purpose.
- 059 Would be very time consuming to do on all cases.
- 063 Adds nothing.
- 064 Need to consider the parents' (of child in placement) perspective, feelings regarding confidentiality, etc. Some cases (i.e., state wards) are routine and the AR's are redundant and it would serve no important purpose in having such formal reviews.
- 066 Helpful, supportive, educates community.
- 068 Time and money ration to results did not appear high to me.
- 069 Provide a varied approach to issues facing children in placement. I found this particularly helpful in cases involving minority children especially in situations with someone of the child's same race and ethnic heritage on the board.
- 070 Another layer of bureaucracy. Gains made by having a citizens review board do not justify time and expense.
- 071 Public should know what goes on.
- 076 It is still I think too time consuming a process.
- 077 Because it has citizens involved in a very essential process -- foster home placement.
- 078 Reasons stated previously -- don't see any benefits.
- 080 It may be useful at some time to use citizen review boards as a sounding process for new ideas and treatment experiments. It may not be desirable or feasible all the time from the standpoint of efficient use of time and money.
- 082 Should be available not mandated.
- 087 believe that what might be a good process for one area of the state is not necessarily need for others. I previously worked in a rural area of the state and am well aware of how easy it is for "confidentiality" to be lost in a small community.
- 090 I do not feel that it benefits the children in any substantial way. It is in my opinion, more effective to have the worker, immediate supervisor, and someone knowledgeable in the system independent and objective, like Jim O'Brien, to be the independent reviewer. This services the children just as well.

QUESTION 14a.

- 092 I did not find it helpful just more people to include.
- 093 It serves no useful purpose for our clients or our work. They learn something and it is good PR and there certainly is some value in that.
- 094 Have other counties tried similar projects? My response would be "up" if bureaucratic mechanism(s) were stipulated.
- 097 This may be one of the better ways to involve citizens and to build support for what the agency is doing.
- 100 Please keep in mind that we are dealing with the retarded population here. The issue is different, the situation is different.
- 102 See #10a.
- 104 Plans for children would be made with less bias of the agency's particular political perspective i.e., workers may be obliged to spout agency dictions when those may not be most appropriate in a specific case.
- 106 Again I can speak only about guardianship cases. I saw nothing gained in reviewing these cases. No recommendations were made that resulted any changes.
- 107 I feel that such reviews might be (voluntary) used again, periodically, for public awareness, but I feel that we have a number of checks and balances in the system already to avoid abuses, and certain other very negative aspects can't be avoided anyway, like changing workers frequently.
- 200 In my field -- MR -- I don't think the citizens' involvements have made significant changes in overall case planning so I don't feel mandatory involvement is warranted.
- 202 Same as stated in question 12.
- 203 I think a group of 2 or 3 is adequate. More than that are hard to integrate effectively.
- 204 A duplication of already mandated reviews of MR children in placement.
- 205 As stated in #12.
- 209 As stated.
- 211 Repetitious.
- 212 More cost than its worth.
- 214 Because I feel they are beneficial for all concerned, and review by someone not in our system is simply good practice.

QUESTION 14a.

- 216 Because the profession needs ? community input.
- 218 Basically, it isn't worth the time or the expense. In house reviews are adequate.
- 223 If mandated ? for all cases I feel that is counterproductive.
- 225 Primarily, I do not believe staff review of placements results in any different decisions.
- 226 See previous answer.
- 227 To assure involvement of persons in the community rather than only bureaucrats.
- 228 My limited experiences with the board suggests that, while they have given board members and the lay community opportunity to learn about Community Services placements, they are not necessary. I sat in on no board meetings that resulted in any significant recommendations for change in the case plan.
- 229 Too time consuming.
- 230 I think the option would be good, for a social worker or unit supervisor to utilize as another resource. If mandated, as stated, it should be for CPS and child welfare.
- 231 See above comments.
- 232 1) It's too time consuming for staff. 2) Most of our cases are court ordered placements in which any administrative review is not very useful so why have one that takes even more time?
- 233 Not on all reviews -- primarily due to the difficulty there would be in scheduling timely reviews.
- 234 The more input from various sources the better ongoing planning will result.
- 236 There are innumerable "checks and balances" in the system -- another is not necessary!



QUESTION 15.

- 001 Here.
- 002 McDonald Building or Gov't Center.
- 003 Away from this agency.
- 004 Gov't Center.
- 006 Hennepin County Government Center.
- 007 At the office where the case is!
- 009 ?
- 010 Government Center.
- 012 With professional in the county.
- 014 No opinion -- altho it just occurs to me -- perhaps downtown -- with reviews at the satellite offices if appropriate.
- 015 ?
- 016 In social services office (Court is already on independent review).
- 017 Unbeknownst to me.
- 018 Do not know where would be most advisable.
- 020 No opinion.
- 022 Government Center or at the other offices in/near the area of parental residence.
- 025 I don't know.
- 026 No opinion.
- 028 N/A.
- 029 Don't know.
- 030 Government Center.
- 034 I don't know, perhaps still at the Government Center.
- 035 At the placement sites.
- 036 Depending on how closely they're mandated to work with the county, they should be easily accessible, but I have no specific suggestions as to the location.

QUESTION 15.

- 037 They should be housed in the agency.
- 041 Does it matter?
- 042 ?
- 043 Not at Government Center -- at neutral setting.
- 046 No comment.
- 048 Shouldn't.
- 049 Government Center.
- 051 Unsure.
- 054 Government Center.
- 056 ?
- 058 In the office -- the same as other reviews.
- 059 County Social Services.
- 063 In Government Center.
- 064 Need for flexibility, i.e., Government Center, satellite offices, community location.
- 066 Government Center.
- 068 Government Center.
- 069 Preferably in a place that would provide a degree of comfort and be easily accessible to all parties, particularly clients.
- 071 Don't know, probably Government Center.
- 077 Government Center, court side.
- 080 I don't have an opinion.
- 086 At Government Center.
- 087 A well known yet neutral area, with easy access for all.
- 090 In the office where the caseworker and his/her supervisor work. This would therefore include satellites.
- 091 ? Don't care.
- 092 No opinion.

QUESTION 15.

- 093 Anywhere.
- 096 In offices of Child Protection.
- 097 Probably the Government Center.
- 102 Government Center.
- 104 I don't know.
- 107 I feel the reviews should be set for locations that are reasonably convenient to workers and clients.
- 200 In a community setting. Not in the Government Center.
- 202 The Government Center appears to be a suitable central location.
- 203 I can't imagine.
- 204 Within the Government Center.
- 205 At the state level - DHS - they should all rotate thru state (all county social service agencies).
- 209 See when time must be considered. If we had space, it would be mine to have a set of rooms reserved for this purpose.
- 214 I'd like to see reviews conducted where the families and staff are located -- Ridgedale, Brookdale, etc. as well as at the Government Center.
- 216 With CPS staff.
- 217 A state level organization outside the social service system perhaps administered by Supreme Court or Department of Administration.
- 218 Do not mandate them!!
- 220 Within the agency, so that as little time as possible is required in completing the review.
- 221 No opinion.
- 223 A place away from where the used agency business is conducted.
- 224 Government Center.
- 225 1st Choice - Agency. 2nd Choice - placement facility.



QUESTION 15.

- 226 I don't know. Accessibility to clients very important. As informal a setting as possible and still retain privacy and professional (businesslike) atmosphere.
- 228 At the Government Center. Case workers/managers have too much to do already without having to schedule additional meetings in other, less convenient, locations.
- 229 Foster care.
- 230 At the gut center; otherwise, too much travel involved.
- 231 ?
- 232 Don't know.
- 233 ?
- 234 In the agency to be as convenient as possible for agency people and clients to participate. If agency worker is in a decentralized office and the family lives near there, the review should not be in the Government Center.
- 236 In the office of the managing social worker.

QUESTION 16.

- 007 Do not come!
- 014 No opinion.
- 017 It doesn't make any difference to me.
- 018 Do not have an opinion on this.
- 020 No opinion.
- 022 Either.
- 030 No opinion.
- 035 Social worker.
- 036 A citizen member and social service supervisor could co-chair.
- 042 Rotational basis.
- 051 Social worker associated with project full time to coordinate reviews.
- 066 ... or persons on staff supervising citizen review.
- 068 Jim O'Brian has added real consistency to the Ad. Rev. process in general -- and to the reporting and correcting of data. A citizen member simply could not be knowledgeable enough to take the power position -- would be asking for trouble, in my opinion.
- 078 Uninvolved worker specialist.
- 080 I don't know.
- 091 As long as a citizen member handles that job responsibility I am OK with that, but not if they have ax to grind.
- 093 Social worker.
- 097 Either and or social worker or combination.
- 102 The social worker whose case it is.
- 209 I have no preference.
- 214 Why not both? Might want to compare results of each and see if "chain" has an effect?
- 226 Dependent upon qualifications. Either party OK.
- 227 Either or both.
- 229 Not sure.

QUESTION 16.

231 Head of community services or a counter commissioner.

236 No opinion.



QUESTION 18.

- 001 Citizens from all levels of society be involved, perhaps some professionals -- teachers, social workers too.
- 002 Implementation should be the same for large and small counties.
- 003 Let citizens have some clout or influence with county boards or policy makers.
- 004 Reduce size of board to one citizen only. Always have the date/place the same for every review -- other wise we are frantically trying to negotiate a place, other reviews, etc. Much to much hassle.
- 006 -Training of citizen members. -Explanation/discussion on issues of substitute care. -Training is essential.
- 007 I cannot relate to this and some other questions! I do not have sufficient value to the citizen review!
- 012 Smaller counties know more about each other and who is "bad" etc. This could present a tremendous problem in people being fair, sympathetic, etc. For our county -- it's still a small world and people do know about each other. Who selects these people for the Citizen Review -- they should be very cautious.
- 014 Confidentiality -- some training for citizens relative to this agency's functioning and role in the use of foster care -- role of foster parents, workers, court, family's etc. is essential. Brief history and goal of placement. All parties should be aware of the expectation of such a review -- committee needs to be aware of shove of the "restrictions" of our purpose -- community resources etc.
- 017 I don't agree with a citizen review panel being mandated for MR placements. It would perhaps be necessary with child welfare or child protection placements, but I have no expertise in those areas. I think smaller counties would have to address the second part of the question above.
- 018 Do not have any thoughts about this -- my experience was really limited.
- 022 1. Reasons for placement. 2. The legal situation. 3. Length of placement. 4. Goals and achievement of goals during placement. 5. Child's and parental attitudes.
- 024 Confidentiality -- this would be particularly significant in smaller counties also in minority groups such as American Indians.
- 025 The citizens should be carefully screened -- confidentiality should be stressed. Training is important.
- 026 No opinion.

QUESTION 18.

- 027 Don't know.
- 029 I don't have adequate knowledge of the project to answer this.
- 030 No opinion.
- 034 Difficult to answer since I don't feel they are necessary.
- 035 None.
- 036 Not familiar enough with these issues to comment on them.
- 037 One factor is that it becomes harder to schedule the more people there are involved.
- 042 No components are essential because it's not necessary to have the reviews in the first place.
- 046 No recommendation.
- 048 Voluntary nature -- no mandates. If citizens wish to participate -- fine tenure a review panel needs to be limited time period -- say one year.
- 049 Confidentiality would be VIP especially in small counties.
- 051 Adequate screening of citizens for competence, knowledge of process, vendettas against social sciences, etc. I found 2 person panels to be the most efficient.
- 054 Citizen should make certain time commitment; that is be on the board long enough to become knowledgeable but not long enough to become complement. One year might be good. Smaller counties have many fewer resources and people are more likely to know each other which creates confidentiality concerns.
- 056 Smaller counties may be more conservative. My concern would be in picking the citizens for the board who have not had hands on experience with issues of placement.
- 058 There may be problems getting enough appropriate citizens. Confidentiality may be a real problem. I have talked with workers who were previously in small counties. They recounted numerous incidents or know about people and that affected their decisions re: benefits etc. I suspect that citizens would have a good chance of personal contact at some level with placements they review.
- 059 Smaller counties -- would have smaller budgets -- need to scale down maybe just 1 or 2 volunteers. The case managers might have to coordinate each review. Essential components would be a standard form and the members of the review team social worker, parents supervisors and citizens.

QUESTION 18.

- 063 As little involvement as possible.
- 066 No comment.
- 068 Review at random -- i.e. not every review. Maybe choose cases to review again when it seems necessary to the panel to follow-up on that particular case.
- 069 1. Training in following: placement procedures, cultural similarities and differences, separation and attachment, conflict between law and social work. 2. Preparation of staff including how, what, when, why of CR's.
- 071 Training. Better screening of members. Few do-gooders. 2) No different. 3) Same as #1.
- 077 Essential citizen input and knowledge of what foster-placement entails. Citizens serving need solid knowledge base about placements.
- 080 Training for board members about professional behavior -- objectivity, confidentiality, education about family dysfunction, behavior disorders, MR, etc., etc. and treatment alternatives.
- 081 Could case confidentiality be maintained in smaller communities? Also, what would happen if a CRB were related to a case, such as, part of a multi-generational incestuous family?
- 086 For smaller counties perhaps reviewers should come from other counties to protect confidentiality.
- 087 See #14a. I believe confidentiality is a prime consideration for continuation of a good working relationship. I am afraid though that the more individuals that are involved, the more risk there is of confidentiality being broken. Perhaps each county could have the flexibility to design their own program. Also, I believe clients should have the choice as to whether or not their case is reviewed by citizens.
- 090 Not sure. Keep the scheduling out of the hands of the caseworkers, as it gets too cumbersome. Limit involvement to no more than 2 citizens. Make recommendations by citizens non-binding on the worker, as professional judgment should prevail.
- 092 Knowledge of C.W., system court process, what resources including S.W. time and uncooperative parents are available.
- 093 Concerns I have already expressed. Have fewer reviewers. I feel none of the components of the project are absolutely essential.



QUESTION 18.

- 097 Confidentiality is essential -- especially in small counties and education and training of citizens would be important. Some balances would be necessary in case someone got in power who was biased in one area.
- 102 None.
- 107 Citizen panel members should be carefully screened for personal issues which might color their input to the reviews -- they should be neutral parties. Also, how to protect confidentiality of the client? Clients should be allowed to decline citizen reviews.
- 200 Training: initial and on-going of citizen members. Specialized training for MR board members. Clear delineation of roles. Clear information re: citizen review functions to parents involved.
- 202 Cannot address the issues of smaller counties. Number of children in placement, type of placement, reasons for and length of placement -- legal status (court involvement) parents efforts to correct problems are all things essential for the board to understand in making decisions on permanency.
- 203 Keep the boards small. Establish an office for program information and management. Offer training sessions related to aspects of the programs, e.g. CWS versus CPS versus court services.
- 205 With "minority" board members make sure not just the "vocal" part of the community becomes board members. All other board members should come from "all citizens" -- maybe reviews need to be done -- evenings, weekends to get best citizen involvement can draw from all citizens.
- 209 Citizens must have enough information to understand the situation well enough to make recommendations.
- 211 Unknown.
- 214 1) Important for staff to understand purpose. 2) Important for citizen participants to be "quality" people with something to offer. 3) Pre-training to citizens. 4) Minimize scheduling difficulties, paperwork requirements, etc. Keep time costs to a minimum.
- 216 A. Workload of staff needs to be reasonable. B. Adequate time to train citizen review. C. Periodic formal evaluation of the process/ procedure should be ongoing.
- 217 Some check to assure that this system does not become "rubber stamp" over time but that it continues to look critically at cases and at system.
- 218 Don't mandate reviews by "citizens."
- 220 Do not have enough experience to comment.

QUESTION 18.

- 221 No opinion.
- 223 If mandated, the boards should be primarily advisory and not have as primary function to directly review cases.
- 224 Someone, beside worker, would have to take on massive job of coordinating the schedule -- workers cannot be simply told a date to appear, nor can a reviewing supervisor.
- 225 1. Training. 2. Helpful to have same people over a period of time. 3) Might be helpful for citizens to attend/participate in court reviews of same issues.
- 226 Clear definition of purpose based on the spirit of the law. People with authority that comes from knowledge and being creditable and not people who impose authority because of own needs, preconceived ideas, or power. In smaller counties issues of confidentiality could be overwhelming. I know how much of a problem it can be for county commissioners who involve themselves in welfare programs. The client feeling about privacy must be recognized.
- 227 Good recruitment. Time limited terms of office. Adequate training of citizens. On-going assessment of program effectiveness seems important -- especially in earlier stages of program.
- 228 I do not know whether results warrant continued review of placements by the lay community. If they do, then I think they should be done in a manner which least intrudes on a social worker/case manager's time. The format focus needs to be changed with regard to MR placements.
- 229 1) Training -- department specific. 2) ? Smaller counties. 3) ?
- 230 Again, apart from MR situations, maybe mandating a case before the citizens review only after a child has been in placement for a period of time, i.e. 1+ years. Essential to have minority input.
- 231 No comment.
- 236 Reviews should not be done on court involved cases, at all. It only causes extra work, confusion and chaos. No opinion about smaller counties.

QUESTION 19a.

- 001 Volunteer placements are often just a short step away from court actions. Just because parents have agreed to cooperate, etc. does not mean they or us will automatically do what's best for the child.
- 002 All placements should be reviewed so kids aren't lost in placement.
- 003 I don't see any reason to treat them differently.
- 004 If the feeling was/is that social workers need other is
- 010 Not for MR.
- 012 Involuntary placements usually involve hard core people with multi-generational problems. These are very difficult for the general public to understand, especially sex problems, incest, etc. and should be excluded from private citizens.
- 014 Perhaps -- altho I'm not certain how I feel about this -- I'd have to think more about it.
- 016 Court already reviews involuntary placements -- additional reviews are cumbersome; additional work for overworked staff.
- 017 See previous response re: MR placements.
- 018 Probably important to review all aspects of how a child gets into placement -- and how long stays in placement -- how placement ? regardless whether is voluntary or involuntary.
- 022 Certain placements need only one review -- wards, legal custody of certain types, etc.
- 024 Again, confidentiality.
- 025 In involuntary placements parents often hostile resistant more people escalates things.
- 026 No opinion.
- 028 Only voluntary placements -- involuntary placements are monitored by the court.
- 029 Because clients who are voluntarily placed generally are in long term placements, there are no goals for the family, and the object is not to return home.
- 030 No opinion.
- 033 Placements are already reviewed by a series of individuals employed by and responsible to the system.
- 034 All placements need to be reviewed.



QUESTION 19a.

- 035 Neither.
- 036 If the purpose of the review is to monitor the appropriateness of all placements, involuntary placements can be reviewed.
- 037 If cases are to be reviewed by citizens, they would be selected from a larger pool of cases if both kinds of cases were reviewed.
- 041 Only involuntary.
- 042 To be consistent.
- 043 Question of confidentiality and perhaps with involuntary issues of resistance would be heightened by some "strangers" coming in.
- 046 Do not feel involuntary placements should be a part of the process.
- 048 That's two questions.
- 051 Involuntary often involve the need to treat with "kid gloves," great sensitivity. Large need if due to have component -- well-informed citizenry.
- 052 If one is the other should be.
- 054 I'm not totally sure about voluntary placements although involuntary or court-ordered placements are hard to get so I don't believe there are very many of them. Certainly not in the MR division.
- 056 Involuntary and voluntary should be reviewed by the court as they are in 18 months.
- 058 I had both types reviewed and did not see any reason to exclude involuntary. In practice we have to work for cooperation of clients. Court orders do not hold placement together and seem to impress kids only the first time around.
- 059 I think both situations should be treated with the same type of review.
- 061 Voluntary placements are by nature more influenced by parents.
- 066 We are responsible for both.
- 068 Duplication of effort on court related cases -- we already have plenty of that with Court Services. I don't have State Wards -- but might be good to bring in state wards and "parent them" via the board -- that "someone is there."

QUESTION 19a.

- 069 Unlike typical dichotomy between social work and recipients, citizens provide a middle ground to ask probing questions of to both the agency and the recipients of the service.
- 071 Better understanding of the problems of kids -- limbo in placement (voluntary or involuntary) is still limbo -- detrimental to kids.
- 073 Not for MR clients.
- 077 As an overseeing focus -- getting their input -- objective viewpoint.
- 078 If any are, all should be.
- 080 If you are going to use the system at all, it would make sense to do both.
- 081 Involuntary placements are already reviewed in court.
- 082 Because I don't see that even involuntary status of case would change the rationale for using review board.
- 087 Again there would be a duplication of services. When a child in placement has court involvement they potentially have the services of a guardian ad litem, public defender, American Indian Advocate, social worker, counselor, etc. (This is also true of voluntary placements.)
- 090 I see no point in having long-term court-ordered placements reviewed by citizen panels. The situation is spelled out, plans of action are clear cut and nothing beneficial would be gained.
- 091 I see no real difference.
- 092 Only voluntary since nothing can be changed once the court has made an order.
- 093 There is probably more value, if any, in reviews of
- 102 Just involuntary placements. Since the court placed them they should be made to be more responsible.
- 107 For a reality base; if citizens are regularly to participate in these reviews, they should be exposed to a cross section of all such placement situations, voluntary and involuntary.
- 202 Just because a placement has been court ordered -- and goals for parents/children have been ordered doesn't automatically insure that things are going to be resolved in a smooth orderly fashion. Boards could be effective in making other suggestions to parents/staff or pushing court to move foster toward termination.
- 203 They both neglect essential aspects of the system.

QUESTION 19a.

- 204 Some voluntary placements exhibit elements of neglect. In Child Welfare cases, some parents might be less motivated to change once the child is in placement.
- 205 All placements need review since they all involve a familiar child/ren being separated and is a serious community concern.
- 209 It is confusing to clients and reviewers when a case is being decided by the court. I think all placements should be reviewed by the court.
- 211 Better overall picture.
- 212 Too costly.
- 214 The review process can serve a two-way educational, check/balance function for the court vis-a-vis the community re: court-ordered placements. I would hope the court would welcome citizen review.
- 216 No matter how sharp the surgeon's knife -- placement always leaves some scar.
- 217 If the citizens' recommendations have some power and are not merely advisory they could impact court cases but there's also the danger of creating a parallel system with attorneys, etc. in control.
- 218 No citizen review panels at all.
- 220 Voluntary placements are often more problematic than court ordered placements. Foster care "drift" is more likely to occur in voluntary placements.
- 221 Foster care, whether voluntary or involuntary and the purpose of foster care are community concern regardless of the nature of the placement.
- 223 The board should address the issue of all placements.
- 224 Involuntary imply court and court is already reviewing the placements. I do not believe court placements should have ? reviews, ? as they give parents a false since that something outside of court can make a change.
- 225 Issues are the same.
- 226 The court in itself is only as good as those who administer it and indeed this can lead to great abuse (as a system) which needs evaluation.
- 227 All placements need reviews.



QUESTION 19a.

- 228 I fail to see what difference there is between a court-ordered and voluntary placement with regard to assessing appropriateness, length of stay, involvement of family, case plan, etc. The providers are the same and services should be meeting the need of client and family regardless.
- 229 Providers general understanding of the total picture in placement.
- 230 If mandated, both should be included; it is as easy for voluntary placements to go on unresolved.
- 231 Children in placement are children in placement.
- 232 Involuntary placements are already reviewed by the court and in this county the children also have guardian ad. litem to represent them -- in addition the social worker must deal with the parents, treatment resources, parents attorneys and often minority advocates -- to have another set of people to oversee the process from "outside" the system seems to me excessive.
- 233 Involuntary placements are already reviewed by the juvenile court.
- 235 All cases should be reviewed where goal is correction of family situation and return to home but not cases where placement was for MR or special needs of child that can't be met in the home.
- 236 See #18.

QUESTION 20a.

- 001 Just because a child is "different" does not (or should not) mean he is to grow up in a family of foster homes. I feel very strongly we need to give the message, this child is your responsibility, not ours -- we will help you, but we will not do it for you.
- 002 Same as #19.
- 003 There seems to be significantly different reasons why retarded individuals are placed out of the home.
- 004 Those with a very retarded level of functioning will not understand the proceedings. On the other hand, it might be OK for the reviewer to actually see the child and they would understand some of the problems.
- 006 Issues are different -- usually there are no "goals" for parents/children. Forms don't apply to both cases -- many questions are N/A for voluntary placement situations. Parent lifestyles, judgments, decisions, etc. should not be subjected to review in voluntary placements.
- 009 Usually mentally retarded children are placed out of the home for different reasons than are other children. The level of care the child requires or behavior problems can be overwhelming to parents and have detrimental effects on siblings of the retarded child. Rarely are MR children placed because of dysfunctional parents.
- 010 MR placements are reviewed through Rule 34 provisions and DHS and DPH and Federal licensing agents. They are also periodic court reviews and in some instances reviews by the Welch?Nevine Court monitor. Furthermore, clients accepted by the MR division for placement services must go through a screening process that includes OMRPD RSS review before placement. The nature of the need also makes it into a very different situation than other placements.
- 012 MR is more easily understood as a condition for placement. However, MR children are extremely vulnerable and are mistreated in so many ways that I don't think anyone from the public should hear or have this information.
- 014 Perhaps -- ?? Some questions I'd ? with question 19a.
- 015 Because of the inherent dangers of too long placements with little visible change.
- 016 With all the in home services and other support services available for MR children, our of home placements should be monitored as closely as other placements.
- 017 See previous response re: MR placements.
- 018 Important to review all aspects of placements.

QUESTION 20a.

- 020 See previous comments.
- 022 There should be no exceptions. The reasons for placement and parental attitudes should be explored.
- 025 I don't think retardation is necessarily the only issue in placement and many concerns are similar.
- 026 Placement was not necessitated by a lack in the home situation as is true in other placements.
- 028 Situation completely different.
- 029 Because of the reasons already stated.
- 030 Same.
- 033 Parents seem to feel they're being held responsible for their child's condition, guilty or suspect of something. They experience enough pain and complications in re: to their children's conditions.
- 034 Their placement status is also important and needs periodic review.
- 035 See 13 and 14a.
- 036 Alternatives to placement can be reviewed for their appropriateness -- if alternatives are not available, this deficit can be documented and other services can be documented and other services can be developed and implemented to correct this deficit.
- 037 I'm not sure.
- 040 Should have same rights as other children.
- 041 The painful decision of placement being reexamined time after time by persons not having a part in that decision is an unfair imposition on the parents. No wonder they usually don't come.
- 042 To be consistent.
- 043 Most of the ad review form is not applicable much less the review. Tend to be much long term with long range plans of not returning home. Whole different dynamics for placing.
- 046 Goals and objections/family functions/ needs of the child are all significantly different.
- 048 Same answer -- voluntary -- invitational.
- 049 There are all kinds of advocates for the MR who watch these placements.



QUESTION 20a.

- 051 Could be longer time between reviews -- conditions do not change rapidly and 6 month reviews are not needed once/year may be more realistic.
- 054 Placements issues are totally different. Families have strong guilt and shame feelings about not being able to come for their child. I believe it's unfair to publicly scrutinize their decision.
- 056 Can get lost in the shuffle.
- 058 I am working with a couple of borderline retarded and the same review process makes sense for them. The severely retarded are serviced by MR workers and they have a different system to monitor them. Extending this review process to them may result in a duplication in accountability.
- 059 Usually the reason for placement is different and because of the child's handicap.
- 061 Even more difficult to determine without detailed knowledge of child's needs and what resources in community are available to meet them.
- 066 Same issues apply.
- 068 No experience here.
- 069 Often the issues are different and more complex. Resources and laws impacting retarded children have a greater variance than those impacting dependent and neglected children or children in need of supervision.
- 070 Their situation is stable -- usually children are placed because of their problems not their parents' problems. There is nothing to be done to un-retard somebody. Existing regulations and laws mandate training, staff ratios, etc.
- 071 Mentally retarded kids are people too.
- 073 Because MR clients tend to be in necessary long term placement.
- 077 Feel their special needs need to be considered. Likely goal is not "reuniting families."
- 078 Same as above -- if the process has merit at all, should have for all cases, situations, why discriminate?
- 080 Yes and no. In some cases placement could be avoided if other resources could be brought into the home. On the other hand, alternatives have already been explored by social worker and family prior to placement.

QUESTION 20a.

- 086 No opinion -- not my area.
- 090 I don't feel qualified to answer this question.
- 091 No difference.
- 092 No opinion.
- 093 No opinion.
- 094 However, review criteria should be rewritten to meet needs of MR child.
- 097 They have enough reviews and advocates already.
- 100 The majority of these placements is voluntary and done by parents who are caring and concerned and totally involved in their childrens' health and welfare. Most parents will resent the involvement of "strangers" in dealing with the private personal affairs of their families.
- 102 Why not.
- 106 They seem to have the same or similar situations to state wards in that goals are more defined.
- 107 Because those workers are already inundated with mandatory paperwork, and most of it is to justify their case plans to meet state and federal guidelines. Why add to the burden, when it amounts to further duplication of efforts.
- 200 Case plan is generally long-term out of home care due to child's needs. Current emphasis of administrative reviews on reuniting family is usually misplaced. I believe case situations certainly bear regular reviews (maybe yearly) but with emphasis on appropriateness of placement and auxiliary services.
- 202 If you exempt MR children you imply that county staff are capable of making decisions without outside assistance it would follow that staff in child welfare services would say they are no different than MR staff and should be accorded the same privileges.
- 203 Labels should not preclude review and involvement, of the child and parent.
- 204 Most MR placements are due to the severity of the child's disability and are not due to parental neglect. Through Rule 185 all MR placements are reviewed stringently.
- 205 As above.

QUESTION 20a.

- 209 I believe their needs are more similar than different from other children. I believe this is the area where we all need to work to make it easier for these children to remain at home via special money respite care etc. Profoundly retarded children may be special cases.
- 212 No opinion.
- 214 Same purpose as stated earlier. Can't think of a rood reason why not.
- 217 Some MR children are placement for similar reasons that other children are in placement. There should not be the assumption that being retarded automatically equals placement. There are already many review mechanisms but they look at different things for different reasons -- perhaps some coordination of these efforts would be most effective.
- 220 They are more vulnerable as a group and often cannot express what might be lacking in their care.
- 221 No opinion.
- 223 Often these placements are not made because of family dysfunctioning but are made because of a joint decision between the family and the agency. The decision is based on evaluation factors and mutually agreed on.
- 225 Need for review exists in both cases.
- 226 The role of the family in seeking remedial therapy is so often different. The length of placement and the purpose to be served is very often different.
- 227 Same as 19.
- 228 See earlier remarks. For the most part, MR children are in long-term placement due to no fault of the parents. The current format is insensitive to the situation of most of our MR families, and it is easy to conclude from the form that parents are somehow at fault for the placement, need to make changes and look toward reunification when this is unlikely the court reviews these cases less frequently.
- 229 Same as above.
- 230 See question #13.
- 231 See 19a.
- 232 I'm actually not sure -- only if there is no other system of oversight.
- 233 Ambivalence on this as there are so many MR children in long term placement, which is the social service plan.



QUESTION 20a.

- 235 Placement reasons are not the same as for CW-CPS cases -- current forms ad review process does not apply to MR cases. There are better types of placement screening devices for MR placements this is a duplication on many cases.
- 236 No opinion -- I don't know anything about this field.

QUESTION 21.

- 001 I don't regard this project as a way to avoid placements, but as a way to make placements "work" for the family. I feel we are already avoiding placements, but need to take a look at what can be done to shorten the time, as well as make the placements more effective.
- 003 The citizens were competent, well selected, and do a good job in what they were asked to do. The system of having them is unnecessary and a waste of time.
- 004 I do not believe that citizens review accomplish anything that is not accomplished in house.
- 010 The administrative review process for MR has been a costly waste of time.
- 012 I feel we should be working for our clients and that Public Relations should and could be handled in another way with "concerned citizens." Let them volunteer to assist our clients.
- 014 I must confess -- I've not spent a lot of time thinking about this project -- in part due to my limited direct involvement and my "job change" to a Home Based Service Unit. Have had my hands full with that!!
- 015 Eliminate them.
- 018 None.
- 033 I do not wish to ignore the gentle accommodating attitude of some of the board members. It's just that these review sessions have seemed to be either perfunctory, insulting to the client or a place for a board member to "rebell" against the system (I only saw one of the later incidents).
- 034 No further comment.
- 035 Entire process was a waste of time.
- 037 None.
- 046 If the process needs to continue I would suggest non-mandated continuation -- I have no problem with citizen participation in my limited experience -- citizen reviewers were experienced in MR.
- 052 I hope I am not chosen for inclusion in a focus group.

QUESTION 21.

- 058 The 5 member panels were intimidating to both kids and foster parents. The same purpose can be served by two citizens. I strongly recommend that if these reviews are to be mandated that the citizen reviews be limited only to a sampling and a maximum of two citizens. If the citizens uncover problem areas the county administration needs to give serious consideration to resolving those problems. The citizens need to be carefully screened and trained so they don't approach the reviews with an ax to grind. I think that their input needs to be seriously considered or the whole program would be a farce.
- 063 Would hope such a project is not undertaken. Cases get reviewed so much by too many people already including a host of players when they hit the court system, it gets ludicrous.
- 068 Review boards are a monitor on worker performance, beyond the supervisor. Purpose then would be to "keep worker on their toes."
- 069 I think that the review process was very useful. Many times the citizens asked thoughtful and insightful questions regarding the specific cases. Frequently I felt that my case plan or the case plan of the worker I supervised had been affirmed. The major drawback in many of the reviews is that while there is support for the citizens in the form of a chairperson and a conviener, and there is support for the worker in the form of a supervisor, there is no support or advocate for the parent of the child in out of home placement. (As a result many parents feel threatened by the process. This would also hold true for the standard administrative review.)
- 071 Richard did an excellent job.
- 078 I greatly disliked the whole process (including this questionnaire). However, if it had to happen, the fact that it was chaired -- coordinated by a competent uninvolved fellow worker made it bearable. If the process is continued, I would see the involvement of these specialized workers as essential.
- 087 There are children, who despite of the close existence of biological families, will still need out-of-home placement until they live independently. In some cases these situations are well known and reasoning for continued care is straightforward. I feel that further review of such cases is sometimes disruptive, a waste of time, and should also be dealt with in a different way. People are different as are their histories and situations. The reason for the existence of "case workers" or "social workers" is to assess and discern these individual differences and make plans accordingly. As far as I am concerned it follows that one, inflexible review system is not enough. The process of review is necessary, but perhaps there should be different review processes available for different case situations such as mentally retarded, handicapped, minority, long term placements, guardianship cases, adoption cases, children with non-cooperative parents, etc.



QUESTION 21.

- 090 I feel that the citizens level of concern and respect for both worker and client were high. Some recommendations were well made. However, on balance, I feel that their involvement adds nothing beneficial to the process. Nothing at least, that an experienced objective independent reviewer wouldn't provide. I feel that Jean Lindgren and Richard ? did a good job in coordinating the whole process. They were a pleasure to deal with.
- 100 As stated in 20, parents who chose to place their children are under the most difficult circumstances, that they feel they could no longer endure the physical as well as emotional hardship (and ? too). They overwhelmingly feel guilt in placing their handicapped children. Thus, to have "strangers" interfere with their affairs is so unfair and unjust, and to create unnecessary defensiveness in them. Placement of the mentally retarded children in all ? is a completely different matter than placement of ordinary normal children in group homes, foster facilities ... Thus it should be administered differently in terms of delivery of services. Parental involvement is very important in the process not only because their children are placed. I am against citizen involvement in this affair. It is already bad enough that too many people are involved in their son or daughter's life just because these unfortunate children needing the services -- who wants to "show off" their retarded child to the public?
- 102 I think that supervisor should know more about the case background. Also he and the caseworker should review the case prior to the review so as to avoid embarrassment.
- 106 Thank you for the opportunity to comment.
- 203 I think a total board involvement would be counter-productive, losing a quality control while inundating the program with another staff level.
- 204 It seems to be a more worthwhile process for CW and CPS placements. It is a duplication of effort for MR placements. Efforts should be made to coordinate this program with the state MR Division.
- 209 I think the citizens might use their time more profitably by taking the training and becoming guardian ad litem -- they would have legal standing before the court and can have some direct influence in the plan for a child. There were too many foster parents on the board, I sat on -- great people and concerned etc. but hardly "independent" of the agency.
- 214 Just to say again that my experience was a very positive one. These were good people who were supportive without being rubber stamps. I think families and kids benefited from citizen review and I'd like to see it continue, at least on a percentage basis (which I think would accomplish most of what I've discussed).

QUESTION 21.

- 216 Despite clear instructions my experience that few staff did the prework in the way it was supposed to have been done. the forms were sometimes filled out partly or not at all; the questions were interpreted to mean different things for each panel. Quality control overall, in my opinion, was very poor. This same problem ripples into the whole preplacement, placement, just placement process despite clear requirements the actual ? has wide application. As a result children are haphazardly served by the luck of the draw in worker/supervisor. Hennepin County, in my opinion, has a very very poor system to see that each child in placement has had all the required activities actually completed. Part of the problem is with the heavy staff workload, but the bulk of the problem is with poor management that look only to what appears to look good and not what is really going on. The case records, the case plans, the placement REAL documentation is, in most cases, TERRIBLE.
- 223 Citizen participation should lead to a better understanding of the involved problem a public agency deals with, and can be helpful in finding better ways to deal with the problems. Feedback to the agency and to the public (through the media and other means) hopefully has an overall positive effect.
- 226 I would like to have the system involved to that point that review is only routine on a randomly selected sample basis, reserving major effort for those cases that are unusually troublesome. It would be good to consider "a class action" type of philosophy where case examples could serve as the basis for administrative, legal and perhaps legislative change.
- 228 My involvement with board members has been uniformly cordial and positive. They are a fine bunch of bright, concerned, enthusiastic folks. However, I question whether the time, effort and expense involved in maintaining such a group is warranted. Has it had a significant impact in terms of County placement activities? Do the results indicate that this type of monitoring is warranted given the amount of time required for each review, e.g. case worker, family, supervisor, community representatives? From my perspective, it has been nice to have an outside group confirm that our case managers are doing a good job, and the lay community has no doubt gained considerable insight into the workings of community services and its placement responsibilities, but I would have trouble supporting such a proposal unless there is significant evidence that our work is of such quality that continued, regular monitoring is required.
- 230 Again, do not use citizens for MR cases.

QUESTION 21.

- 232 I think the project staff did an excellent job of preparing the citizens and of preparing the material to be presented to them -- I can see some value in this review process for voluntary placements -- I can see none for involuntary placements and in fact view it as a waste of time and money and another violation for the child. I think the voluntary placements it might feel to clients like the community has an interest in them and there is more latitude in decision making so there is more purpose for citizen involvement.
- 236 Mandated citizen review boards are not necessary. With supervisors, budget cuts, limited resources for placement, advocates, legal aid, public defenders, tribal involvement etc., why employ yet another hurdle for everyone to jump!?!



Appendix F

Judge's Interview Schedule

Hennepin County Foster Care Review Project  
Questions for Hennepin County Court Personnel

CARD1 (1)  
ID (2-3)

NAME:

INTERVIEWER:

COMPLETION DATE:

\*\*\*\*\*

INTRODUCTION

We would just like to spend a few minutes with you to discuss your  
opinions regarding citizen review boards.

1. Have you received any information about the Citizen Review Board  
Project?

Yes.....1 [GO TO #1a]  
No.....2 [GO TO #2]  
DK.....8  
RA.....9

(4)

1a. How have you received this information?

1b. From whom have you received this information?





4. Do you think that Citizen Review Boards have made any difference in the overall patterns of child placement?

Yes.....1 [GO TO #4a]

(7)

No.....2 [GO TO #5]

DK . . . 8

RA.....9

4a. How have Citizen Review Boards made a difference in the patterns of child placement?

[illegible]

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11710 22724 11133 12148 13155 14166 15177 16188 17199 18210 19221 20232 21243 22254 23265 24276 25287 26298 27309 28320 29331 30342 31353 32364 33375 34386 35397 36408 37419 38430 39441 40452 41463 42474 43485 44496 45507 46518 47529 48540 49551 50562 51573 52584 53595 54606 55617 56628 57639 58650 59661 60672 61683 62694 63705 64716 65727 66738 67749 68760 69771 70782 71793 72804 73815 74826 75837 76848 77859 78870 79881 80892 81903 82914 83925 84936 85947 86958 87969 88980 89991 901002 911013 921024 931035 941046 951057 961068 971079 981090 991101 1001112 1011123 1021134 1031145 1041156 1051167 1061178 1071189 1081200 1091211 1101222 1111233 1121244 1131255 1141266 1151277 1161288 1171299 1181310 1191321 1201332 1211343 1221354 1231365 1241376 1251387 1261398 1271409 1281420 1291431 1301442 1311453 1321464 1331475 1341486 1351497 1361508 1371519 1381530 1391541 1401552 1411563 1421574 1431585 1441596 1451607 1461618 1471629 1481640 1491651 1501662 1511673 1521684 1531695 1541706 1551717 1561728 1571739 1581750 1591761 1601772 1611783 1621794 1631805 1641816 1651827 1661838 1671849 1681860 1691871 1701882 1711893 1721904 1731915 1741926 1751937 1761948 1771959 1781970 1791981 1801992 1812003 1822014 1832025 1842036 1852047 1862058 1872069 1882080 1892091 1902102 1912113 1922124 1932135 1942146 1952157 1962168 1972179 1982190 1992201 2002212 2012223 2022234 2032245 2042256 2052267 2062278 2072289 2082300 2092311 2102322 2112333 2122344 2132355 2142366 2152377 2162388 2172399 2182410 2192421 2202432 2212443 2222454 2232465 2242476 2252487 2262498 2272509 2282520 2292531 2302542 2312553 2322564 2332575 2342586 2352597 2362608 2372619 2382630 2392641 2402652 2412663 2422674 2432685 2442696 2452707 2462718 2472729 2482740 2492751 2502762 2512773 2522784 2532795 2542806 2552817 2562828 2572839 2582850 2592861 2602872 2612883 2622894 2632905 2642916 2652927 2662938 2672949 2682960 2692971 2702982 2712993 2723004 2733015 2743026 2753037 2763048 2773059 2783070 2793081 2803092 2813103 2823114 2833125 2843136 2853147 2863158 2873169 2883180 2893191 2903202 2913213 2923224 2933235 2943246 2953257 2963268 2973279 2983290 2993301 3003312 3013323 3023334 3033345 3043356 3053367 3063378 3073389 3083400 3093411 3103422 3113433 3123444 3133455 3143466 3153477 3163488 3173499 3183510 3193521 3203532 3213543 3223554 3233565 3243576 3253587 3263598 3273609 3283620 3293631 3303642 3313653 3323664 3333675 3343686 3353697 3363708 3373719 3383730 3393741 3403752 3413763 3423774 3433785 3443796 3453807 3463818 3473829 3483840 3493851 3503862 3513873 3523884 3533895 3543906 3553917 3563928 3573939 3583950 3593961 3603972 3613983 3623994 3634005 3644016 3654027 3664038 3674049 3684060 3694071 3704082 3714093 3724104 3734115 3744126 3754137 3764148 3774159 3784170 3794181 3804192 3814203 3824214 3834225 3844236 3854247 3864258 3874269 3884280 3894291 3904302 3914313 3924324 3934335 3944346 3954357 3964368 3974379 3984390 3994401 4004412 4014423 4024434 4034445 4044456 4054467 4064478 4074489 4084500 4094511 4104522 4114533 4124544 4134555 4144566 4154577 4164588 4174599 4184610 4194621 4204632 4214643 4224654 4234665 4244676 4254687 4264698 4274709 4284720 4294731 4304742 4314753 4324764 4334775 4344786 4354797 4364808 4374819 4384830 4394841 4404852 4414863 4424874 4434885 4444896 4454907 4464918 4474929 4484940 4494951 4504962 4514973 4524984 4534995 4545006 4555017 4565028 4575039 4585050 4595061 4605072 4615083 4625094 4635105 4645116 4655127 4665138 4675149 4685160 4695171 4705182 4715193 4725204 4735215 4745226 4755237 4765248 4775259 4785270 4795281 4805292 4815303 4825314 4835325 4845336 4855347 4865358 4875369 4885380 4895391 4905402 4915413 4925424 4935435 4945446 4955457 4965468 4975479 4985490 4995501 5005512 5015523 5025534 5035545 5045556 5055567 5065578 5075589 5085600 5095611 5105622 5115633 5125644 5135655 5145666 5155677 5165688 5175699 5185710 5195721 5205732 5215743 5225754 5235765 5245776 5255787 5265798 5275809 5285820 5295831 5305842 5315853 5325864 5335875 5345886 5355897 5365908 5375919 5385930 5395941 5405952 5415963 54

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5. Do you think that Citizen Review Boards have made any difference in permanency plans for individual children?

Yes.....1 [GO TO #5a]

(8)

No. . . . . 2 [GO TO #6]

DK . . . 8

RA. . . . 9

Q. How have Citizen Review Boards made a difference in permanency plans for children?

[illegible]

14995 14996 14997 14998 14999 15000 15001 15002 15003 15004 15005 15006 15007 15008 15009 15010 15011 15012 15013 15014 15015 15016 15017 15018 15019 15020 15021 15022 15023 15024 15025 15026 15027 15028 15029 15030 15031 15032 15033 15034 15035 15036 15037 15038 15039 15040 15041 15042 15043 15044 15045 15046 15047 15048 15049 15050 15051 15052 15053 15054 15055 15056 15057 15058 15059 15060 15061 15062 15063 15064 15065 15066 15067 15068 15069 15070 15071 15072 15073 15074 15075 15076 15077 15078 15079 15080 15081 15082 15083 15084 15085 15086 15087 15088 15089 15090 15091 15092 15093 15094 15095 15096 15097 15098 15099 15100 15101 15102 15103 15104 15105 15106 15107 15108 15109 15110 15111 15112 15113 15114 15115 15116 15117 15118 15119 15120 15121 15122 15123 15124 15125 15126 15127 15128 15129 15130 15131 15132 15133 15134 15135 15136 15137 15138 15139 15140 15141 15142 15143 15144 15145 15146 15147 15148 15149 15150 15151 15152 15153 15154 15155 15156 15157 15158 15159 15160 15161 15162 15163 15164 15165 15166 15167 15168 15169 15170 15171 15172 15173 15174 15175 15176 15177 15178 15179 15180 15181 15182 15183 15184 15185 15186 15187 15188 15189 15190 15191 15192 15193 15194 15195 15196 15197 15198 15199 15200 15201 15202 15203 15204 15205 15206 15207 15208 15209 15210 15211 15212 15213 15214 15215 15216 15217 15218 15219 15220 15221 15222 15223 15224 15225 15226 15227 15228 15229 15230 15231 15232 15233 15234 15235 15236 15237 15238 15239 15240 15241 15242 15243 15244 15245 15246 15247 15248 15249 15250 15251 15252 15253 15254 15255 15256 15257 15258 15259 15260 15261 15262 15263 15264 15265 15266 15267 15268 15269 15270 15271 15272 15273 15274 15275 15276 15277 15278 15279 15280 15281 15282 15283 15284 15285 15286 15287 15288 15289 15290 15291 15292 15293 15294 15295 15296 15297 15298 15299 15300 15301 15302 15303 15304 15305 15306 15307 15308 15309 15310 15311 15312 15313 15314 15315 15316 15317 15318 15319 15320 15321 15322 15323 15324 15325 15326 15327 15328 15329 15330 15331 15332 15333 15334 15335 15336 15337 15338 15339 15340 15341 15342 15343 15344 15345 15346 15347 15348 15349 15350 15351 15352 15353 15354 15355 15356 15357 15358 15359 15360 15361 15362 15363 15364 15365 15366 15367 15368 15369 15370 15371 15372 15373 15374 15375 15376 15377 15378 15379 15380 15381 15382 15383 15384 15385 15386 15387 15388 15389 15390 15391 15392 15393 15394 15395 15396 15397 15398 15399 15400 15401 15402 15403 15404 15405 15406 15407 15408 15409 15410 15411 15412 15413 15414 15415 15416 15417 15418 15419 15420 15421 15422 15423 15424 15425 15426 15427 15428 15429 15430 15431 15432 15433 15434 15435 15436 15437 15438 15439 15440 15441 15442 15443 15444 15445 15446 15447 15448 15449 15450 15451 15452 15453 15454 15455 15456 15457 15458 15459 15460 15461 15462 15463 15464 15465 15466 15467 15468 15469 15470 15471 15472 15473 15474 15475 15476 15477 15478 15479 15480 15481 15482 15483 15484 15485 15486 15487 15488 15489 15490 15491 15492 15493 15494 15495 15496 15497 15498 15499 15500 15501 15502 15503 15504 15505 15506 15507 15508 15509 15510 15511 15512 15513 15514 15515 15516 15517 15518 15519 15520 15521 15522 15523 15524 15525 15526 15527 15528 15529 15530 15531 15532 15533 15534 15535 15536 15537 15538 15539 15540 15541 15542 15543 15544 15545 15546 15547 15548 15549 15550 15551 15552 15553 15554 15555 15556 15557 15558 15559 15560 15561 15562 15563 15564 15565 15566 15567 15568 15569 15570 15571 15572 15573 15574 15575 15576 15577 15578 15579 15580 15581 15582 15583 15584 15585 15586 15587 15588 15589 15590 15591 15592 15593 15594 15595 15596 15597 15598 15599 15600 15601 15602 15603 15604 15605 15606 15607 15608 15609 15610 15611 15612 15613 15614 15615 15616 15617 15618 15619 15620 15621 15622 15623 15624 15625 15626 15627 15628 15629 15630 15631 15632 15633 15634 15635 15636 15637 15638 15639 15640 15641 15642 15643 15644 15645 15646 15647 15648 15649 15650 15651 15652 15653 15654 15655 15656 15657 15658 15659 15660 15661 15662 15663 15664 15665 15666 15667 15668 15669 15670 15671 15672 15673 15674 15675 15676 15

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[illegible][illegible][illegible]

*[The following information was obtained from the FBI's National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS) search results:]*

	Yes	No	DK
--	-----	----	----

COMMENTS:

[illegible]

47744 47745 47746 47747 47748 47749 47750 47751 47752 47753 47754 47755 47756 47757 47758 47759 47760 47761 47762 47763 47764 47765 47766 47767 47768 47769 47770 47771 47772 47773 47774 47775 47776 47777 47778 47779 47780 47781 47782 47783 47784 47785 47786 47787 47788 47789 47790 47791 47792 47793 47794 47795 47796 47797 47798 47799 47800 47801 47802 47803 47804 47805 47806 47807 47808 47809 47810 47811 47812 47813 47814 47815 47816 47817 47818 47819 47820 47821 47822 47823 47824 47825 47826 47827 47828 47829 47830 47831 47832 47833 47834 47835 47836 47837 47838 47839 47840 47841 47842 47843 47844 47845 47846 47847 47848 47849 47850 47851 47852 47853 47854 47855 47856 47857 47858 47859 47860 47861 47862 47863 47864 47865 47866 47867 47868 47869 47870 47871 47872 47873 47874 47875 47876 47877 47878 47879 47880 47881 47882 47883 47884 47885 47886 47887 47888 47889 47890 47891 47892 47893 47894 47895 47896 47897 47898 47899 47900 47901 47902 47903 47904 47905 47906 47907 47908 47909 47910 47911 47912 47913 47914 47915 47916 47917 47918 47919 47920 47921 47922 47923 47924 47925 47926 47927 47928 47929 47930 47931 47932 47933 47934 47935 47936 47937 47938 47939 47940 47941 47942 47943 47944 47945 47946 47947 47948 47949 47950 47951 47952 47953 47954 47955 47956 47957 47958 47959 47960 47961 47962 47963 47964 47965 47966 47967 47968 47969 47970 47971 47972 47973 47974 47975 47976 47977 47978 47979 47980 47981 47982 47983 47984 47985 47986 47987 47988 47989 47990 47991 47992 47993 47994 47995 47996 47997 47998 47999 48000

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Very Positive.....1 (15)

7a. Why did you feel this way?

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8. Has your opinion of citizen review boards changed over time?

Yes.....1 [GO TO #8a] (16)  
No.....2 [GO TO #9]  
DK.....8  
RA.....9

8a. In what way has your opinion changed?

Became more positive.....1 (17)  
Remained the same.....2  
Became more negative.....3  
DK.....8  
RA.....9

COMMENTS:

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9. What have been the largest impacts [or contributions] that citizen involvement on review boards has made?

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10. Do you see any problems resulting from citizen involvement on review boards?

Yes.....1 [GO TO #10a]

(18)

No.....2 [GO TO #11]

DK.....8

RA.....9

10a. What problems do you see resulting from their involvement?

.....

.....

.....

.....

11. Do you see any benefits resulting from citizen involvement on review boards?

Yes.....1 [GO TO #11a]

(19)

No.....2 [GO TO #12]

DK.....8

RA.....9

11a. What benefits do you see resulting from their involvement?

.....

.....

.....

.....

12. Do you feel there are any legal problems associated with citizen review?

Yes.....1 [GO TO #12a]

(20)

No.....2 [GO TO #13]

DK.....8

RA.....9

12a. What types of legal problems?

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13. What role should recommendations made by a Citizen Review Board play in judicial reviews?

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14. In your opinion, are Citizen Review Board members adequately prepared to review substitute care cases?

Yes, very adequately prepared.....1

(21)

Yes, slightly prepared.....2

Unsure/Don't know.....3

No, slightly unprepared.....4

No, very inadequately unprepared.....5

RA.....9

14a. Why or why not?

14a. Why or why not?

14a. Why or why not?

14a. Why or why not?

14a. Why or why not?

15. Has the county benefited from citizen review?

Yes.....1 [GO TO #15a]

(22)

No.....2 [GO TO #16]

DK.....8

RA.....9

15a. In what ways has the county benefited from citizen review?

15a. In what ways has the county benefited from citizen review?

15a. In what ways has the county benefited from citizen review?

15a. In what ways has the county benefited from citizen review?

15a. In what ways has the county benefited from citizen review?

16. Should children be involved in Administrative Reviews?

Yes.....1

(23)

No.....2

DK.....8

RA.....9

16a. Why or why not?

16a. Why or why not?

16a. Why or why not?

16a. Why or why not?

16a. Why or why not?



- [illegible]

- [illegible]

- |          |   |      |
|----------|---|------|
| Yes..... | 1 | (24) |
| No.....  | 2 |      |
| DK.....  | 8 |      |
| RA.....  | 9 |      |

[illegible]

20. Before concluding our interview, are there any other comments you would like to make about Citizen Review Boards?

Well, those are all our questions, thank you for taking the time to talk with us today?

Appendix G  
Parent/Foster Parent Information

- a. Parent/Foster Parent Interview Schedule
- b. Foster Parent Open-ended Interview Responses
- c. Parent Open-ended Interview Responses



FACSIMILE OF LETTER SENT TO PARENTS & FOSTER PARENTS  
PRIOR TO ATTEMPT TO INTERVIEW THEM

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Since June of last year, Hennepin County and the State of Minnesota have been conducting a project to examine what effects there might be when persons who do not work for Hennepin County are included on administrative review boards for children in foster care. The Program Evaluation Resource Center has been asked to find out what people think about this, and if there have been any changes for people since this project started.

Since you have attended an administrative review for a child in foster care which included citizen review members, we would like to ask you a few questions about your experiences. I encourage you to participate, since it is only through getting information from persons who participated in the process that we can understand how people feel about this project.

Within the next week, a staff person from the Program Evaluation Resource Center will be calling you to ask about your feeling about administrative review, and how you participated in this process. Individual names of people who answer the questions will NOT be used. The answers you give to this survey will be put together with answers from many other people. Grouping answers this way will help give us an overall picture of how people feel about this project. Before you are called, you should know:

1. You do not have to take part in this survey.
2. Whether or not you participate, the services that you are now receiving from Hennepin County will NOT be affected.
3. Your answers will not be given to project staff, review board members, your caseworker or anyone else.
4. The individual answers will be seen by the evaluators only, and they are not connected in any way with either Hennepin County or the State of Minnesota.

Again, we encourage you to participate in this telephone interview. Your view are important in helping us to evaluate this project. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Dianne Dee  
Project Coordinator  
Foster Care Review Project

INFORMED CONSENT TO BE INTERVIEWED FOR THE  
HENNEPIN COUNTY FOSTER CARE REVIEW PROJECT

For a little over a year now, Hennepin County and the State of Minnesota have been conducting a project to examine what effects there might be when persons who do not work for Hennepin County are included on administrative review boards. The Program Evaluation Resource Center has been asked to find out what people think about this, and if there have been any changes for people since this project started.

I would like to spend a few minutes talking to you now about your feelings about administrative reviews, and how you participated in this process. I encourage you to participate since it is only through talking with people like yourself that we can really understand how people feel about this project. Before we begin, there are a few things that you should know.

1. Individual names of people who answer the questions will not be used. The answers you give to this survey will be put together with answers from many other people. Grouping answers this way will let us know how people feel about this project.
2. You do not have to take part in this survey.
3. Whether or not you participate, the services that you are now receiving from Hennepin County will not be affected.
4. Your answers to this survey will not be given to project staff, review board members, your caseworker or anyone else.
5. Your individual answers will only be seen by the evaluators, and we are not connected in any way with either Hennepin County or the State of Minnesota.

I understand this form as it was read to me and agree to be interviewed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS

Before beginning the interview, be sure to introduce yourself and read the informed consent statement and get the client's signature, if possible, otherwise initial the form and state that verbal agreement was given by the client.

### SAMPLE INTRODUCTION:

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I understand that [Jean or Richard] has already explained to you why we would like to talk with you today, but before we begin, I'd like to tell you a little about what we'll be doing.

### [READ INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT]

Do you have any questions before we begin? If not, I would like you to sign this form which indicates that I have explained the information to you and that you agree to be interviewed.

Thank you for agreeing to participate. Let me remind you again that I am not an employee of either the county or the State, so please be as candid and honest as you can. If you liked something we want to know that, and if you didn't like something, we want to know that too.

Let's begin.

### [BEGIN INTERVIEW]



## Hennepin County Foster Care Review Project

## Questions for Parents and Foster Parents Attending Reviews

NAME:

CHILD'S NAME:

CASE NUMBER:

(2-9)

MODEL NUMBER:

(10)

INTERVIEWER:

COMPLETION DATE:

\*\*\*\*\*

## INTRODUCTION

You have just attended an administrative review, and we would like to spend just a few minutes with you to find out what you thought of that process.

1. First, did you understand the Administrative Review process, that is, was the purpose made clear to you? [DO NOT READ CATEGORIES]

Yes, very clear.....1  
 Yes, somewhat clear.....2  
 Unsure/Don't know.....3  
 No, somewhat unclear.....4  
 No, very unclear.....5  
 RA.....9

(11)

- 1a. If purpose was not clear, probe to find out what they didn't understand and what information they felt they should have received but did not.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. Besides the one today, have you attended other administrative reviews?

Yes.....1 [GO TO #2a]  
 No.....2 [IF NO, GO TO #3]  
 DK.....8  
 RA.....9

(12)

2a. About how many reviews have you attended?

(13-14)

2b. Were any of the reviews that you attended in the past NOT conducted by the Foster Care Review Project?  
[INTERVIEWER NOTE: These reviews would have occurred prior to May 1985 and would not have included citizen review board members]

Yes.....1

(15)

No.....2

DK.....8

RA.....9

NA.....0

3. Were you encouraged to attend the administrative review you came to today?

Yes.....1 [GO TO #3a]

(16)

No.....2 [GO TO #3b]

DK.....8

RA.....9

3a. How were you encouraged? (e.g., letters, SW call, etc.)

3b. Who do you feel should be encouraged to attend and participate in these reviews?

4. Were you encouraged to participate (i.e., actually take part) in the administrative review today?

Yes.....1 [GO TO #4a]

(17)

No.....2 [GO TO #5]

DK.....8

RA.....9

4a. In what ways were you encouraged to participate?  
Who encouraged you?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

5. Did you ask any questions during the review today?

COMMENTS:

Yes.....1 [GO TO #5a]  
No.....2 [GO TO #6]  
DK.....8  
RA.....9

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

(18)

5a. Were your questions answered?

COMMENTS:

Yes.....1  
No.....2  
DK.....8  
RA.....9  
NA.....0

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

(19)

6. Did you make any comments during the review process?

Yes.....1 [GO TO #6a]  
No.....2 [GO TO #8]

.....  
.....

(20)

6a. Were your comments listened to?

COMMENTS:

Yes.....1  
No.....2  
DK.....8  
RA.....9  
NA.....0

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

(21)



7. Were any changes made in the proposed plan based on your comments? For example, some of the things that were talked about today - i.e., where your child is living now, what's going to happen with that, number of contacts with your child's SW, services provided by Hennepin County, visits and goals for your child.

Yes.....1 [GO TO #7a] (22)  
No.....2 [GO TO #8]  
Made no comments.....3 [GO TO #8]

7a. What kinds of changes were made?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

8. When you were first told that the administrative review board would include citizens, how did you feel about having citizens (people not employed by the County) involved in reviewing the case? Would you say you felt: [READ CATEGORIES]

Very Positive.....1 (23)  
Positive.....2  
Neutral.....3  
Negative.....4  
Very Negative.....5  
DK.....8  
RA.....9

8a. Why did you feel this way?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

- 8b. Now that you've gone through a review in which citizens were included, has your view of citizen review boards changed? How?

Became more positive.....1 (24)  
Remained the same.....2  
Became more negative.....3  
DK.....8  
RA.....9

9. Do you see any advantages resulting from citizen involvement on review boards? What are they?

COMMENTS:

Yes.....1  
No.....2  
Maybe.....3  
DK.....8  
RA.....9

(25)

10. Do you see any disadvantages or problems resulting from citizen involvement on review boards? What are they?

COMMENTS:

Yes.....1  
No.....2  
Maybe.....3  
DK...8  
RA...9

(26)

11. [INTERVIEWER: ASK ONLY IF THE RESPONDENT HAS ATTENDED OTHER REVIEWS WHICH DID NOT INCLUDE CITIZEN BOARD MEMBERS - SEE QUESTION #2b] You mentioned earlier in the interview that you had attended some administrative reviews that did not include citizens on the panel, how would you compare your experiences with these two types of boards? For example, which type of review was more helpful, and why? [PROBE FOR COMPARISONS]

COMMENTS:

Other review more helpful.....1  
Citizen review more helpful.....2  
Can't decide/Don't know.....3  
Both helpful.....4  
Neither helpful.....5  
RA.....9  
NA.....0

(27)

12. Finally, do you have any other comments you would like to make regarding the administrative review process?

That concludes our interview, I'd like to thank you very much for taking the time to let us interview you. [INTERVIEWER COMMENTS: USE BACK PAGE]

## PARENT AND FOSTER PARENT COMMENTS

### FOSTER PARENTS

q1a. If purpose was not clear, probe to find out what they didn't understand and what information they felt they should have received but did not?

- I'm not sure. It was last year. We didn't go over it this year. In part, I'm sure it was clearer last year.
- Being new, I got the impression that "they" knew what it was - reviewing the case - nobody sat down and told me what a review was. I just assumed they would go through the case - case planning. Would have liked a copy of the form they handed out.
- Didn't understand the first time, but understand better today
- I understood it from before.



3a. How were you encouraged [to attend]?

- Child's social worker.
- Informed by my social worker. I felt it was important to get a foster parent's perspective.
- Through a letter and my social worker informed me.
- Received a letter and also talked with the social worker. She encouraged us to be here.
- I received a letter from the social worker. I don't have to be encouraged, I think it's really important.
- Sent a letter and a follow-up telephone call to see if I was coming today.
- The case worker sent us letters. Earlier we were never informed.
- A letter informed me.
- Caseworker informed me over the telephone.
- Received a letter.
- Social worker told us and followed up with a letter.
- Was given an option through my social worker. A letter was also received.
- Social worker. Letter.
- Letters informed me. Social worker also encouraged me.
- My social worker encouraged me.
- Social worker sent letter and called.

3b. Who do you feel should be encouraged to attend and participate in these reviews?

- Foster parents. Major caseworkers should be involved.
- Parent, child, social worker, members from the community, county attorney's office (because they have some clout.)
- The social worker, the social worker's supervisor, the guardian of the foster child.
- Social worker, guardians/foster parents, natural parents (very important).
- I feel very strongly that foster parents should attend. Too often foster parents are not listened to or even encouraged to participate and that's the person with the child all the time. Parents should be there also I do like the citizen committee. Its encouraging to see that many people participating.
- Its covered pretty well. We've got citizens, someone from the community, foster parents involved, biological parents. She did forget in letter, but I reminded her - any therapists/counselors. I invited my foster child. Children should be involved only if they are old enough. Teachers or school representatives should be there too.
- Certainly the parents. If in foster care, the foster parents should also attend. Also someone from the school or placement. Though I see potential problems in that some people might be uneasy about speaking them there. Obviously the social worker should be there and in a sense those in a position to evaluate the circumstances of the child and perhaps be disinterested enough to review the placement in an appropriate way.
- Foster parents. Board members who understand our cases (i.e., one who was a student who was knowledgeable about issues.)
- Foster parents. Birth parents. Foster child.
- Foster parents, birth parents, child (not under 12 or 13) social worker, supervisor.
- Foster parent, parent, social worker, supervisor.
- Child. Foster parent.
- Foster parents. Volunteers (citizens). I feel they listen better than county authorities.

- Natural parents. Foster parents (a lot are not informed about these meetings.)
- Parent. Foster parent. Child.
- In part the reviews have been a stressful experience. The cases presented usually aren't resolved. Everyone involved with the child: natural parents, foster parents, social worker.



4a. In what ways were you encouraged to participate? Who encouraged you?

- The board members asked us to respond and ask questions.
- I was asked direct questions from the board and the facilitator.
- The board members asked me direct questions.
- The board chair asked specific questions of me and other members of the panel asked specific questions. Also the social worker referred certain questions that could better be answered by myself.
- Asked questions. The unit supervisor of social worker would ask a question and social worker would answer if it pertained to the child and then he would ask "is that true" and direct the question toward me and I would answer "yes, that's true."
- Citizen review member asked me a question. Social worker asked me a question.
- Board asked us to offer our information that happened within our house, so I offered a lot of input. I felt that I know more than the social worker about my foster child's real mother.
- The facilitator and the supervisor were very encouraging.
- A review board member encouraged all parents and foster parents to participate.
- I was asked questions by the social worker and the independent reviewer.
- Chairman asked me direct questions.
- The social worker's supervisor (moderator) asked me questions about my son's problems.
- Asked questions. Everyone did.
- The facilitator from the board asked many questions and made me feel very important. And my concerns were well taken and responded to.
- They listened to me.

5. Did you ask any questions during the review?

- I don't have too many questions about the process.
- Just gave some information.
- When I didn't understand a question on the form.
- Just a couple. The review was explained very well so there was no need to ask many questions.

5a. Were your questions answered?

- Very much so! A lot of good suggestions were offered.
- They weren't all answered to my liking, but yes they were all answered.
- Yes, but not all to the point of my liking. No actions were immediately taken.
- Very well answered.
- Although nothing seemed to change.
- When I asked a question, I was answered with a question. Nothing was resolved.
- The responses were unclear because the citizens did not know the legalities of foster care and the MR population. They weren't familiar with the system.
- To a small degree.

6a. Were your comments listened to?

- Again, many ideas were discussed but no action was taken after the review. This was frustrating to me.
- Short discussions followed the comments that I made.
- I think they've seen our commitment. The child has been with us over three years.
- They were noted --- especially by the mother.
- For sure.
- I felt very much a part of the process.
- Very much so.
- I brought in a bid for a worker to continue working with my son. They listened, but not very much action was taken.
- Reflected appropriately. I was impressed with the citizens' responses. They were very caring people and were very interested in my son.



7a. What kind of changes were made?

- I attended two reviews under this system and felt very frustrated; although they were good, they were not powerful (in other words they didn't push to get things done.) For example, the termination of parental rights could have gone to court, but no action was taken. I question their clout.
- The moving out of our home and into another setting and the type of setting and the extra needs he needs (psych testing). These have been written into the order and are in the process of being done.
- My issues were well-taken and reflected upon.
- A lot has changed. The mother has decided she is going to give up her rights. I don't know if it was a quick or thought our decision, but a lot of people from the community had spoke up about the children telling the people that they did not want to go home with her
- Since I know the real mother, suggestions I made were realistic. I felt I could relate better to the problems than the SW because I knew more.
- Social worker brought up TPR.
- Not much was changed. It seemed like everyone was satisfied with the status quo.
- Will help support us more and come up with more definite plan (house rules).

8a. Why did you feel this way [about having citizens there]?

- I'm impressed with citizen involvement because I feel more action will take place. The citizens are part of the community who also want changes to occur. I think they'll get the ball rolling.
- The more people who know about it, the better. I feel that citizens should know their rights and the power that they do have. I feel they are a bit overwhelmed by their power and don't exercise it.
- If you're not involved in the system, you don't know what's going on. This broadened others' awareness of foster care issues.
- Because its our county. The more people are involved the more and better balance we have throughout our whole community. Its encouraging to see participation and caring for children and families
- I think for citizens or persons who do not know anything about these cases to come in here and help with the decision-making is good and good for the children
- We need someone out the the Hennepin County system and without an emotional relationship with the child to help with decisions.
- Because sometimes I feel its too bureaucratic. With the involvement of citizens who aren't wrapped up in the system. Their comments are refreshing and important.
- Its essential in life to have outside observers, because not only do they offer nonobjective suggestions, but they become educated in the issues.
- This gave them a chance to get involved. My disagreements were listened to and they gave me the opportunity to voice many of my personal opinions.
- I think some people outside the agency can carry some clout when needed. Helps kids getting lost in the shuffle.
- They need another outlook other than what the staff work with everyday.
- The purpose of the review as changed and needs to be more clearly defined for citizens.
- Seemed "for" the child. Seemed to know what they were doing.

- Because we've always had trouble with county authorities. They brought about many new ideas and the comments were very nonobjective.
- Just felt it was accepted practice.
- New and interesting comments were made. It was a good learning experience.



9.

Do you see any advantages resulting from citizen involvement on review boards? What are they?

- The more tuned the system will get with citizens involved. More things will get accomplished with the community being educated to these issues.
- After while, when one works in the system, thoughts and ideas become hardened. By having new people attend new ideas are introduced. Also it makes them more aware.
- I think the outside citizens become more aware of problems such as personal placements for these foster children.
- Accountability of social worker and CP to the system. Another method of holding people accountable for what they should be doing, what we should be doing, to help children and their families.
- I don't think its right to leave it totally up to Hennepin County to make the decision regarding placement.
- Offers a different perspective and in a sense advocates for the child.
- To bring someone new in who is not involved in the system. Their ideas should be highly considered.
- To oversee the movement of birth parents in reaching their goals and in personal planning.
- They gave us a chance to discuss matters about our child. Issues concerning sending our foster child back to his natural parents were not favored.
- Have an objective opinion. They asked questions that clarified the situation.
- Can be more objective than social worker and foster parents. Impartial.
- It was refreshing to have an unbiased opinion from the citizens and their intentions were good.
- People who are not directly involved offer a lot of new insights. They are unbiased and neutral. Show no favoritism to either side.

10. Do you see any disadvantages or problems resulting from citizen involvement on review boards? What are they?

- Can't say enough good things about it.
- None.
- Power issue. Must be able to stand up for what they believe and take action. This has not been proven yet.
- If it got into politics. If people got voted in and say we're going to terminate parental rights and send kids out to be adopted.
- Only that some people might feel threatened by it. Some people are very closed regarding private family matters and might feel that the increased number of people involved is a threat.
- I like the idea of outsiders being involved in the board.
- Intrusion of my privacy, because they really had no previous knowledge of these situations. The advice they gave appeared to be very psychotherapeutic.
- Got a cross-section of opinions. Felt sympathy and encouragement.
- Bring out new facts. As they say, "Two heads are better than one." Brought out new ideas.
- These citizens really seemed to care for the foster children. Their feelings went a lot deeper than the county authorities (who appear to bounce them around.)

11. How would you compare experiences on the two types of boards? For example, which type of review was more helpful and why?

- The two others that didn't include citizens we just went through a checklist and the administrator solely ran it. There was no talking or interaction amongst each other. No valuable input was obtained. Very upsetting.
- [Citizen review] is much more informative. It gets fresh ideas and viewpoints of how things are moving and how child is moving, parents are relating to their children, how foster parents need to move.
- Be nice to know how they chose citizens. The ones I've been to it seems like they do what they're trying to accomplish.
- I think it can be positive if they have permission to enter. Permission from everyone involved. SWs and other professions may feel resentful if they just pop in and ask questions. Any time someone from the outside is involved I can see someone resenting it. I'm not one of them
- [Citizen reviews more helpful] when citizens are involved.
- Objective.
- It tended to be more a group therapy with citizens instead of an administrative review. No major objectives, but the purpose of the review was changed. Its frustrating to me to listen to these bureaucratic meetings. I only reason I go is for my foster daughter to see her mother.



12. Finally, do you have any other comments you would like to make regarding the administrative review process?

- No. Although a definite follow-up should be done within the first month after the review.
- I think it would be very good for the County to contact foster parents about the reviews; where they will take place and when (if this is not already being done). The only way I was informed was through my social worker.
- None, except I'd like to see some action taken. Since the review I've seen no changes or follow-ups. This is very discouraging.
- Just like to see it in other counties. We work with a couple of other counties that do not. We'd like to see more participation. Its so bad in some counties we're not even informed of any discussion or encouraged to attend.
- Its a good idea. I wonder if it would have made more of a difference if we could have attended earlier, but we were never informed until recently.
- I encourage the legislature to continue having citizens on the board. Its great for all parties involved.
- I hope the project is kept. Let me know if I can help.
- Very positive. The review made everyone feel good. Sometimes it isn't so much with regular county workers. I could see concern for the client and child. It really showed. The citizens do not represent an authority figure. They really talk to you.
- The forms that were used are not important to me and its not my responsibility to fill them out.
- I would like to see the review board continue with citizens. Its nice to be asked questions from people on the outside.
- I enjoy the review meetings and I think four or five members is a good number of have on the board.
- The process is getting better. I've had the child and his brothers since 1978 or '79. They've placed the kids and they just stayed there. There were no reviews. The social worker would come out once in a while or would come if I called (you know, had problems) and there were some meetings, but nothing like a review where a plan was discussed step-by-step like they do now. Yes, the process is getting better.

## NATURAL PARENTS

q1a. If purpose was not clear, probe to find out what they didn't understand and what information they felt they should have received but did not?

- A review on how effectively the system worked was the purpose that was explained to everyone --- after the review. I definitely questioned it.
- My state of mind that day was not clear and my emotional state was poor.
- The letter was fuzzy in explaining the overall purpose and I don't believe it was spelled out before the review.

3a. How were you encouraged [to attend]?

- Social worker informed me. Got a letter.
- Social worker sent a letter and I got a call (but I was out of town.
- A letter through the mail informed me.
- Child protection said it was mandatory.
- Letter from social worker said it would be essential to be there.
- Letter. Through communication with our social worker.
- A letter.
- Letter informing me. The social worker.
- Sent a letter by CPS worker. I was encouraged to come but it wasn't necessary. It was left up to me.
- Child's social worker invited us by letter and phone call.
- A letter informed me. My social worker told me about it.



3b. Who do you feel should be encouraged to attend and participate in these reviews?

- Parents/guardian, social worker.
- Only people half way knowledgeable about what it means to have a MR child or in the system of what people go through - they structures they work with. If you take anybody off the street or even the most well meaning person and put them in a chair you end up being their educator, not someone whose there to help you or to oversee what's going on. Parent, social worker resident people should be there.
- There should be an organization that deals with families and how they are affected by the social service's decisions. Certain accusations were made which were false and people (the social worker) who attend should have facts and evidence before proposing accusations.
- Foster parents, the child protection worker.
- Foster parent, natural parent, the foster child.
- Parents. Anyone working closely with my child. Citizens (the community.)
- Whoever is involved with the child's well-being and benefits the child. The social worker. The parents (natural and foster.
- Natural parents. Foster parents.
- All people involved in the case. Social worker, supervisor, foster parent and parents (myself).
- Biological and foster parents, counselor Genesis II program should have come, but she didn't. Guardian ad litem, I suppose.
- Parents, social worker. I don't know the positions of the others, but they're all involved in the child's placement, so I assume that it was important for them to be there. Someone from the school was invited but couldn't attend. The social worker has been at the parent-teacher conference so that part was covered OK.
- Foster mother. Natural parents (at least one). Social worker. Supervisor.

4a. In what ways were you encouraged to participate? Who encouraged you?

- The conductor of the board asked many questions.
- My social worker always encourages input. She's never made me feel like you're not part of what's going on or we've got control. The letter made that pretty clear. I was asked some questions, but not many ... like before.
- The board leader asked the group many questions.
- The board members and my child protection worker.
- People on the board asked me questions.
- It was a very informal approach. Everyone from the board encouraged the entire group to interact.
- The board members were very encouraging.
- I was questioned by the citizens. My foster child also encouraged to participate. I was very pleased with this.
- Asked questions by some of the people. I felt it was necessary to answer regarding by feelings on some of the things they were talking about.
- The letter was encouraging to me. It specifically spelled out the pros and cons.

5. Did you ask any questions during the review?

- Issue was about my child stealing money and concerns about school.

5a. Were your questions answered?

- Our question why visitation rights were cut off were not answered.
- I was asked many questions concerning our child's well-being.



6a. Were your comments listened to?

- Sure. The board came back with a lot of good responses.
- A little bit about my child's background so they know where he's coming from. He's always had Sharon as a social worker, so there's nothing to fill in with her.
- Our needs were looked at and acted upon after the meeting. She was admitted to a mental health facility as a direct result of this meeting. Also, she was taken off meds that were not needed.
- I recall that a discussion followed after I commented on something.
- Yes. I enjoyed the responses the citizens gave.
- The issue of not being paid enough for being a foster parent was discussed and well agreed on.
- Something said about my son helped to change the plans regarding giving him up.
- I talked a lot about my feelings and son and his father.
- Very definitely. Very interested in learning about the school. We like it and the social worker has been there and likes it. These other people were interested in learning about the school, so I talked about it.
- I was concerned about my child's age. Now that he's turned 18 he's no longer involved in Hennepin County.

7a. What kind of changes were made?

- We were looked on as a family with needs and were not ignored.
- Have been thinking about giving up my kids.
- At least I never heard of any.
- Agreements were made to have better communication between foster parents and natural parents --- having closer contacts about child's social life.
- Everything is going the way it is supposed to happen now, except for I brought up fact that the father is going to get out of prison and Hennepin County is going to work with me on that.
- I've been satisfied with the placement. I didn't ask that any changes be made. At this time all of her needs are being met very well.
- Since my child constantly got in trouble, action would only be taken if it was reported within 90 days. If not, these incidents would not be followed through on.

8a. Why did you feel this way [about having citizens there]?

- I personally wondered why they had to be there. If Hennepin County wanted them there I don't object because I have nothing to hide.
- I guess I thought it was probably a good idea. I didn't feel threatened but I wasn't overjoyed. I thought, "it sounds like one more time to tell the story." You tell the story over and over again.
- [Citizen review] is more comfortable and they make you feel you are not alone with your problems. The comments made by outsiders were not biased and opinionated.
- Due to the specific personal matters, I did not like the idea of strangers giving suggestions and advice about issues they have no knowledge of.
- Because it was our business and didn't involve the outside public. I felt as if my privacy was being violated.
- Because its good for them to be concerned about where their taxes are going to. They're also being made aware of related issues concerning foster care. Their ideass were non-objective [sic]. It was great.
- It brings these issues out in the open. The public now has a better understanding of foster care issues that they would never have been subjected to otherwise.
- To have someone of the committee or board say something. The kind of questions they ask.
- Because I felt it was good to have someone in there who didn't know everything that was going on and could hear both sides and form an unbiased opinion
- Because I'm happy to share what is being done for my child at the school. I'm so excited that she is receiving OT and PT, which no doctor recommended.
- Its nice to have an outside point of view, but they don't get the whole picture of all problems that are related to each case from sitting in on one review.



9. Do you see any advantages resulting from citizen involvement on review boards? What are they?

- No. They ask basic questions. They should know. I've been through it with doctors and social workers. Some of it is pretty tender. The questions were pretty insensitive, like "what does an institution have to offer that you don't." They weren't informed. They don't understand what its like to have an MR child.
- The social worker must account for the things they've done and must answer to where he received his information. More facts are brought out when citizens are involved.
- Definitely. Comments and concerns were refreshing and inviting, but I'd like to see a follow-up of action.
- They now have a better and broader understanding of the social services. How different each caseload is.
- They now have a better understanding of what foster parents go through. Job ethics seem to over-rule. Having nonemployed people on the board, opinions were very non-objective.
- I think things were looked at more fairly.
- They learn from parent more about the facility where placed and there's a genuine interest on the part of these people in learning more about all these facilities.
- People who come in once don't see the whole picture of what is really happening.

10. Do you see any disadvantages or problems resulting from citizen involvement on review boards? What are they?

- You could really shake up a sensitive person if they have just placed a child and you bring in an outsider to be judging again. Their problem is that there is not enough information before hand and its hard on a sensitive parent.
- It doesn't make any difference to me who attends. I just go along with the flow of things.
- My husband became angry because he thought he was being judged --- which he has been in the past.
- There are possibilities of running into these citizens after the meeting and I don't like the fact that they have knowledge about personal things occurring in my life.
- Many of their comments were silly. They wanted to take parent rights away from us. They don't really know what's going on.
- Its a good idea to involve the community in such issues.
- I can't imagine there would be any.
- Its difficult for these people to draw conclusions about issues that they have no previous knowledge of.

11. How would you compare experiences on the two types of boards? For example, which type of review was more helpful and why?

- [The administrative reviewers] asked more pertinent and sensitive questions and rightfully so --- they knew the child and his background.
- More open. Many citizens asked me questions which really enlightened me.



12. Finally, do you have any other comments you would like to make regarding the administrative review process?

- Today's meeting was quick. The first one was long and it got pretty static in the room because the social worker knew these people were asking a lot of questions. Maybe someone told them or maybe they learned.
- It should be a review for social service administration as well as for us.
- None. Although daughter was afraid that I might want to give her up too.
- Foster parents don't get paid enough for their services. I feel more people would get involved if they would. These concerns should be looking into more.
- I'm very impressed with the way Hennepin County is handling these reviews (including citizens). I'm glad to be part of the process.
- The child's benefit could be improved by having citizens on the board.
- I think it's a good idea that they have it because of reasons I said before. It's in the child's best interest.
- I'm impressed that the county follows-up so closely on placement of children. There's a real concern that the child be placed appropriately.
- I feel these reviews are very good to have because problems occur with my child. It's good to know that action can be taken from the county to prevent him from being institutionalized.

Appendix H

Children's Interview Schedule

## Hennepin County Foster Care Review Project

## Questions for Children in Foster Care Attending Reviews

CHILD'S NAME:

CASE NUMBER:

(2-9)

MODEL NUMBER:

(10)

INTERVIEWER:

COMPLETION DATE:

\*\*\*\*\*

## INTRODUCTION

You have just attended an administrative review, and we would like to spend just a few minutes with you to find out what you thought of that meeting.

1. Have you been asked to come to a review before?

Yes.....1

(11)

No.....2

DK.....8

RA.....9

2. Did you ask any questions during the review today?

## COMMENTS:

Yes.....1 [GO TO #2a]

(12)

No.....2 [GO TO #3]

DK.....8

RA.....9

2a. Were your questions answered?

## COMMENTS:

Yes.....1

(13)

No.....2

DK.....8

RA.....9

NA.....0



3. Did you make any comments during the review process?

COMMENTS:

Yes.....1 [GO TO #3a]  
No.....2 [GO TO #4]  
DK.....8  
RA.....9

(14)

3a. Were your comments listened to?

COMMENTS:

Yes.....1  
No.....2  
DK.....8  
RA.....9  
NA.....0

(15)

3b. Were any changes made in your plan based on your comments? For example, some of the things that were talked about today - i.e., where you're living now, what's going to happen with that, number of contacts with your SW, services provided by Hennepin County, visits and goals for you.

Yes.....1  
No.....2  
DK.....8  
RA.....9  
NA.....0

(16)

3c. What kind of changes were made?

4. Were you asked what you thought?

Yes.....1  
No.....2  
DK.....8  
RA.....9

(17)

5. Do you think your being at the review made any difference?

COMMENTS:

Yes.....1

No.....2

DK.....8

RA.....9

(18)

6. Were you uncomfortable because there were people on the board who don't work for the county?

Yes.....1 [GO TO #6a]

No.....2 [GO TO #7]

DK.....8

RA.....9

(19)

6a. Why were you uncomfortable? What made you feel uncomfortable?

7. Do you think any good or bad things happened for you because there were people who didn't work for the county on your review board? What were they?

COMMENTS:

Good things

(20)

Bad things

(21)





Appendix I

Interested Party's Information

- a. Interested Party's Survey
- b. Open-ended Survey Responses

## Program Evaluation Resource Center

501 Park Avenue South  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55415  
(612) 348-7811

Dear Interested Party:

For a little over a year now, Hennepin County and the State of Minnesota have been conducting a project called the "Hennepin County Foster Care Review Project," to examine what effects there might be when persons who do not work for Hennepin County are included on administrative review boards for children in foster care. The Program Evaluation Resource Center has been asked to find out what people think about this, and if there have been any changes for people since this project started.

Since you have attended an administrative review as an interested party for a child (or children) in foster care which included citizen review members, we would like to ask you a few questions about your experiences. I encourage you to participate, since it is only through getting information from persons who participated in the process that we can understand how people feel about this project.

Please complete the enclosed survey and return it to the Program Evaluation Resource Center in the enclosed envelope by September 8, 1986. Individual names of people who answer the questions will not be used. The answers you give to this survey will be put together with answers from many other people. Grouping answers this way will help give us an overall picture of how people feel about this project. Your answers will not be given to project staff, review board members, your caseworker or anyone else. The individual answers will be seen by the evaluators only, and we are not connected in any way with either Hennepin County or the State of Minnesota.

If you have attended several reviews in the last year and need further information regarding which reviews were included in the project, please feel free to call me at the Program Evaluation Resource Center. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Nancy E. Larsen  
Project Evaluator

Hennepin County Foster Care Review Project  
Questions for Interested Persons Attending Foster Care Reviews

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ROLE: \_\_\_\_\_

(4-5)

MODEL NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

(6)

COMPLETION DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

1. Did you understand the Administrative Review process, that is, was the purpose made clear to you?

- Yes, very clear.....1  
Yes, somewhat clear.....2  
Unsure/Don't know.....3  
No, somewhat unclear.....4  
No, very unclear.....5  
RA.....9

(7)

1a. If purpose was not clear, what didn't you understand?  
What information did you feel you should have received?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Have you attended other administrative reviews?

- Yes.....1 [GO TO #2a]  
No.....2 [IF NO, GO TO #3]  
DK.....8  
RA.....9

(8)

2a. About how many reviews have you attended?

(9-10)



2b. Were any of the reviews that you attended in the past <sup>NOT</sup> conducted by the Foster Care Review Project? (These reviews would have occurred prior to May 1985 and would not have included citizen review board members)

Yes.....1 (11)  
No.....2  
DK.....8  
RA.....9  
NA.....0

3. Were you encouraged to attend the administrative review you came to?

Yes.....1 [GO TO #3a] (12)  
No.....2 [GO TO #3b]  
DK.....8  
RA.....9

3a. How were you encouraged? (e.g., letters, SW call, etc.)

.....  
.....  
.....

3b. Who do you feel should be encouraged to attend and participate in these reviews?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

4. Were you encouraged to participate (i.e., actually take part) in the administrative review?

Yes.....1 [GO TO #4a] (13)  
No.....2 [GO TO #5]  
DK.....8  
RA.....9

4a. In what ways were you encouraged to participate?  
Who encouraged you?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

5. Did you ask any questions during the review?

COMMENTS:

Yes.....1 [GO TO #5a] (14)  
No.....2 [GO TO #6]  
DK.....8  
RA.....9

5a. Were your questions answered?

COMMENTS:

Yes.....1 (15)  
No.....2  
DK.....8  
RA.....9  
NA.....0

6. Did you make any comments during the review process?

Yes.....1 [GO TO #6a] (16)  
No.....2 [GO TO #8]  
DK.....8  
RA.....9

6a. Were your comments listened to?

COMMENTS:

Yes.....1 (17)  
No.....2  
DK.....8  
RA.....9  
NA.....0

- ```

Yes.....1      [GO TO #7a]      (10)
No.....2      [GO TO #8]
Made no comments.....3      [GO TO #8]

```

[illegible]



(5)

## 15. COMMENTS CONTINUED:

16. When you were first told that the administrative review board would include citizens, how did you feel about having citizens (people not employed by the County) involved in reviewing cases? Would you say you felt:

Very Positive.....1  
 Positive.....2  
 Neutral.....3  
 Negative.....4  
 Very Negative.....5  
 DK.....8  
 RA.....9

(26)

16a. Why did you feel this way?

16b. Now that you've gone through a review in which citizens were included, has your view of citizen review boards changed? How?

Became more positive.....1  
 Remained the same.....2  
 Became more negative.....3  
 DK.....8  
 RA.....9

(27)

17. Do you see any advantages resulting from citizen involvement on review boards? What are they?

COMMENTS:

Yes.....1  
 No.....2  
 Maybe.....3  
 DK.....8  
 RA.....9

(28)

18. Do you see any disadvantages or problems resulting from citizen involvement on review boards? What are they?

COMMENTS:

Yes.....1  
 No.....2  
 Maybe.....3  
 DK...8  
 RA...9

(29)

19. [ANSWER ONLY IF YOU HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN REVIEWS THAT HAVE NOT INCLUDED CITIZEN BOARD MEMBERS] How would you compare your experiences with administrative reviews that did and did not include citizens? For example, which type of review was more helpful, and why?

COMMENTS:

Other review more helpful.....1  
 Citizen review more helpful.....2  
 Can't decide/Don't know.....3  
 Both helpful.....4  
 Neither helpful.....5  
 RA.....9  
 NA.....0

(30)





COMMENTS OF INTERESTED PARTIES WHO  
ATTENDED FOSTER CARE REVIEW SESSIONS

q1a. If purpose was not clear, probe to find out what  
didn't you understand? What information do you feel you  
should have received but did not?

-----  
PRIVATE SOCIAL WORKER:

(016) - I was not sure of the citizen's role in the process at  
first, whether they would change placement or not.

-----  
GUARDIAN AD LITEM:

(013) - Except for the "citizens" authority.

3a. How were you encouraged [to attend]?

---

PRIVATE SOCIAL WORKER:

- (001) - Letter and SW call.
- (006) - Letters, mostly. Occasional calls from the social worker.
- (007) - Letter. Social worker contact.
- (011) - Supervisor required attendance, per county policy.
- (016) - Called by SW and letter.
- (019) - Letters and calls.

---

GUARDIAN AD LITEM:

- (003) - Letters.
- (009) - Letter.
- (010) - Letters and call from SW.
- (012) - Letter. Call from social worker.
- (013) - Phone calls

---

GROUP HOME/RTC STAFF:

- (005) - Letter and social worker call.
- (008) - Letters and the social worker called.
- (014) - Invited by letter.
- (015) - County social worker called and attempted to schedule review taking into consideration my schedule. Also mailed letter.

---

PSYCHOLOGIST:

- (004) - Phone call and letter from social worker.
-



PROBATION OFFICER:

(002) - I was primary on the case and the review was set around my availability. It was discussed by phone.

ATTORNEY:

(018) - The social worker encouraged me to attend.

3b. Who do you feel should be encouraged to attend and participate in these reviews?

-----  
PRIVATE SOCIAL WORKER:

- (001) - Parents and child and foster care personnel (representatives from residential treatment programs only when presence is necessary to determine plans.)
- (006) - All persons involved in the child's treatment plan (foster parent, therapist, etc.)
- (007) - Foster parents, foster child, natural parents, SW, private agency SW if applicable.
- (011) - Yes, as the active social worker it is impossible not to conduct a proper review unless you attend.
- (016) - Client, SW, parents, foster parents.
- (019) - foster parents, foster child, all SW's with program perhaps therapists.

-----  
GUARDIAN AD LITEM:

- (003) - Everyone was present who was needed.
- (009) - Caseworkers, guardian ad litem, parents, foster parents.
- (010) - Child protection worker, parents, guardian ad litem, Hennepin County Child protection Supervisor, and foster parents if possible.
- (012) - Parents, foster parents, social worker, guardian ad litem.
- (013) - Guardians, parents.

-----  
GROUP HOME/RTC STAFF:

- (005) - Depends on the purpose of the review and what needs to be discussed. I would only like to be there if it would be valuable or necessary.
  - (008) - Parents, guardians, group home/foster home representatives, when appropriate the resident.
  - (014) - Social worker, supervisor, parents, representative from placement, guardian ad litem.
  - (015) - Parents, foster parents, therapist or treatment provider, child - if age appropriate.
-

-----  
MINORITY ADVOCATE:

(017) - Parents - County workers - court workers - foster providers - agencies clients known to work with. School social workers and teachers are seemingly excluded. They know children better than a lot of parents or social service providers.

-----  
PSYCHOLOGIST:

(004) - Guardian ad litem. Therapists actively working with client being reviewed. Citizen review members.

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PROBATION OFFICER:

(002) - I don't like inclusion of citizens. I think pertinent parties involved with the client are in the best position to judge propriety of placement. Other agency professionals would be acceptable if oversight is necessary.

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ATTORNEY:

(018) - It is my impression that professionals that are directly involved in the case should be encouraged to attend.

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4a. In what ways were you encouraged to participate? Who encouraged you?

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PRIVATE SOCIAL WORKER:

- (001) - Everyone involved in the meeting (parent, client, social worker, other administrative staff, other review board members.)
- (006) - The facilitator.
- (007) - Person conducting the review.
- (011) - Panel members asked numerous questions.
- (016) - SW encouraged me to present written report and I also was encouraged to verbally explain how the client was doing.
- (019) - All members of the review team asked questions or if I had anything important to say.

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GUARDIAN AD LITEM:

- (003) - The leader encouraged me to speak on my knowledge of the present placement.
- (009) - Questions from citizens board and caseworkers.
- (010) - As a guardian ad litem I was asked to attend the review.
- (012) - Atmosphere was very open and comfortable. Everyone was free to participate.
- (013) - Usually the person who took charge of the review.

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GROUP HOME/RTC STAFF:

- (005) - Group members asked questions.
  - (008) - The facilitator and the review panel asked questions and made comments and problems. Encouraged me to share information.
  - (014) - Asked to report on child's status/progress. Asked for recommendations. Both the social workers and review members.
  - (015) - I was directly asked questions by the county social worker his/her supervisor and the independent reviewer.
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MINORITY ADVOCATE:

(017) - All persons from the review board have asked questions of persons invited to the reviews. The chair persons usually go around and listen carefully to all participants.

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PSYCHOLOGIST:

(004) - Several people at the review asked me questions.

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PROBATION OFFICER:

(002) - I encourage me, but everyone present sought participation by all those present.

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ATTORNEY:

(018) - Questions that I could add information to.

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5. Did you ask questions during the review?

GUARDIAN AD LITEM:

(003) - I have kept in close contact and knew the situation well.

(010) - Discrepancy of information concerning welfare of the child.

5a. Were your questions answered?

GUARDIAN AD LITEM:

(010) - Could have been answered with respect to helpful information shared.

MINORITY ADVOCATE:

(017) - I feel the process is always an excellent way to get a picture of case progress.



6a. Were your comments listened to?

PRIVATE SOCIAL WORKER:

(016) - I felt the information presented was taken into consideration.

GUARDIAN AD LITEM:

(010) - Somewhat rushed because of amount of number and time cases need for review.

GROUP HOME/RTC STAFF:

(008) - Comments were listened to and questions were asked and suggestions made for programs.

(014) - Some citizen members seemed biased against residential treatment and appeared to believe clinical reasons for continued placement were merely justification for extended stays.

MINORITY ADVOCATE:

(017) - All participants have an impact on the review and its outcome.

PROBATION OFFICER:

(002) - This occurred 1 1/2 years ago and its hard to recall specifics.

7a. What kind of changes were made in the proposed plan based on your comments?

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PRIVATE SOCIAL WORKER:

- (001) - Difficult to answer because there was agreement on all points.
- (006) - I do not recall specifics, however in several instances I was more verbal than others present.
- (007) - My comments were to explain family situation and foster family attachment to citizen members. My comments served to protect the child from inappropriate recommendations which were being suggested by citizen members. When citizen members understood the situation they withdrew their suggestions.
- (019) - I did not ask for any changes, yet I feel that had I asked for or encouraged a different plan it would have been accepted.

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GUARDIAN AD LITEM:

- (003) - No changes were needed.
- (013) - Possibly in the way of perceived problems or goals, but generally I've been in agreement with those identified by the social workers.

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GROUP HOME/RTC STAFF:

- (014) - Decisions to pursue foster care following discharge from RTC and decision to extend placement beyond original discharge date. These decisions were supported by the county worker but not necessarily the county overall philosophically.
- (015) - Comments regarding special education needs and post-discharge therapy were discussed and incorporated into the case plan.

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MINORITY ADVOCATE:

(017) - Since participants are making a "mindset" re: the case, they are able to see where they can all support, protection or their particular expertise and services can be better utilized. At times a case is going poorly toward re-uniting a family - I feel that social workers and court units are "unable" to make any headway. They frequently are "evaded" by clients. Others who put forth the effort are allowed access. Sometimes it goes well for the client and sometimes it becomes more apparent the clients are not willing to make changes rather than unable to make changes. I find it is possible to give a push to resistant clients in an un-enabling manner. I feel that generally services are available but clients don't hear this from soc. services even tho they are told! They just shut it out. Hearing this from someone else helps. Frequently they make some progress. That's what its all about. Progress.

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15. Use the space below to make additional comments regarding the areas of citizen board functioning.

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PRIVATE SOCIAL WORKER:

- (001) - I have had extremely positive experiences with the review process. When I was able to attend there was no undue pressure.
- (006) - The citizen review members seemed well informed, knowledgeable, caring. I have no complaints or concerns. I was impressed.
- (007) - Recommendations were relevant but not appropriate, and were withdrawn after further discussion.
- (019) - The review board listened and responded to all participating in the review.

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GUARDIAN AD LITEM:

- (003) - I had previously known these people. Some have been guardian ad litem and had full knowledge of the proceedings.
- (010) - Citizen review could be a risk to children's welfare if they have not personally interviewed persons having direct contact during court jurisdiction or the children. Hennepin County's use of a citizen for administrative reviews seems to be the same role of the guardian ad litem without having the training or involvement in the case concerning the welfare of the children.
- (013) - I recall 2 reviews with "citizens" involved. All acted in a very courteous and professional manner. At first I was skeptical as to their involvement, but they made a believer out of me. In fact in the one I was very glad they were there to witness the mother's antics and listen to her aberrations. I'm sure they came away firmly convinced of the need for the child's placement.

-----  
GROUP HOME/RTC STAFF:

- (008) - The review board appeared genuinely interested and concerned. They made good suggestions for program changes.
  - (014) - I would encourage members to visit local RTCs to get information about different programs. Overall, citizen participation was helpful and provided additional feedback, checks and balances.
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MINORITY ADVOCATE:

(017) - They're sometimes a "devil's advocate" in the case, usually the county social worker. Some usually has taken a standard and cannot relinquish for child protection reasons. The review can help resolve; a plan to progress can be worked out without compromising social norms and standards. If a client refuses to do a Chem. Dep. Eval. because they do not feel they are chemically dependent. But they were in Detox when the children were removed from an unsafe situation with a known violent "spouse" (usually a boyfriend) the client may be willing to (1) do a psychological eval, (2) work with a battered woman's program, (3) go to woman's resource center or some other resource (the City, CUCCH clinics) (4) they may have underlying problems - Depression, PMS (or something). Problems being medicated by alcohol. When the clients see their ideas are respected they usually are willing to take another look at the chem dep problem to see how far the disease has progressed in them and what effect it has on their family.

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PROBATION OFFICER:

(002) - I think the reviewers are probably fine and capable people but my client resented "outsiders" being involved in her case. Without spending time with her, her psychotic mother, her crazy father and her 2" thick file, I don't think anyone could make a meaningful assessment about the appropriateness of foster care etc.

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ATTORNEY:

(018) - I was extremely frustrated with the review board members. I felt they didn't understand the process nor the complexity of the case in which I was involved. They also gave very little consideration or respect to my client. Decisions that had been made in court they questioned. They also had little or no understanding of legal process. I felt they served no useful purpose at the review I attended. I felt that only professionals involved would have made the administrative review more appropriate.

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16a. Why did you feel this way [initial reaction to CRB#]?

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PRIVATE SOCIAL WORKER:

- (001) - It is good to have someone not involved directly in the service system involved. They appeared to be objective, yet very concerned that the needs of the client are being addressed and that everyone is doing their "job."
- (006) - It is always helpful to have an objective opinion as long as the citizens are aware of foster care dynamics and procedures.
- (007) - Wary about what might happen. Had not experienced any problems with former administrative review process, so saw no need to change the process.
- (011) - I took a "wait and see" attitude primarily due to the unknown, untried system of citizen review.
- (016) - At first I was not sure of their role and I felt that they might not understand all reasons for referral into foster home. It was more of an attitude of fear of the unknown on my part.

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GUARDIAN AD LITEM:

- (003) - I was apprehensive until I saw that they were people who had had experience in the field in other areas. There were some who had not but their insight added to the review.
  - (009) - The citizens could be unbiased and perhaps see the situation from a clear, fresh viewpoint.
  - (010) - As guardian ad litem for the child or children, a person serving as a citizen review member never interviewed me of my opinions or facts concerning the welfare of the children before the review.
  - (012) - An outside objective opinion is often very helpful.
  - (013) - I couldn't quite see the necessity and I guess it would have really made me angry if they overturned the county's (and my) position.
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GROUP HOME/RTC STAFF:

- (005) - Felt it would be a waste of time.
- (008) - I think its often beneficial to have a neutral party involved for an objective view of the situation.
- (014) - Thought having community input would be helpful - also educational for citizen members.
- (015) - Although I felt I understood the intent of the citizen's participation, I was skeptical to what degree most citizens would understand the human service system as well as dynamics of ED or special need youth.

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MINORITY ADVOCATE:

- (017) - Having a great deal of faith in Sen. Berglin, I was willing to listen to her concepts since she listens to ours (minority positions). I feel as a volunteer I have an impact on situations, so people (citizens) who are trained should have a positive effect as well.

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PSYCHOLOGIST:

- (004) - Sometimes I feel the social workers in "the system" get caught up in procedures and it is good to get some fresh perspectives. Also important that citizens in general become more aware of how complex cases are.

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PROBATION OFFICER:

- (002) - If the professionals (SWs, POs, lawyers, judge) can't be given concrete guidelines and then follow them w/out citizen checkup, I think something is radically wrong. Supervisors should have this function, not such citizens. I see this as another accountability gimmick or no usefulness and one which I think adds to our heavy workloads.

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ATTORNEY:

- (018) - My initial concern was that the members would not understand the dynamics of the cases, as most of them are quite complex.
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17. Do you see any advantages resulting from citizen involvement on review boards? What are they?

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PRIVATE SOCIAL WORKER:

- (001) - Holds everyone accountable. Brings fresh perspective.
- (011) - Clients identify with citizens and feel more comfortable. Citizens also bring a fresh perspective to workers that get caught up in the system.
- (016) - They can serve as an accountability check; making sure what is best for the client is happening.

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GUARDIAN AD LITEM:

- (003) - They may look at it with a different perspective than the county workers; working with it every day it may be just a business or job that needs to be done.
- (009) - Citizens can see types of cases being worked on and they can contribute ideas that might be more creative from fresh viewpoint.
- (013) - They should reinforce steps taken and provide positive PR when needed.

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GROUP HOME/RTC STAFF:

- (005) - Reviews were more in-depth and less of a routine process.
- (008) - Objective; neutral viewpoint.
- (014) - Having interested persons with no stakes in cases providing input.
- (015) - Brought forth some different perspectives than those of the professionals.

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MINORITY ADVOCATE:

- (017) - They reinforce objectivity.

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ATTORNEY:

- (018) - Review members should be professionals who have knowledge of the system, but no knowledge of the specific case.
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18. Do you see any disadvantages of problems resulting from  
citizen involvement on review boards? What are the?

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PRIVATE SOCIAL WORKER:

- (001) - If members are not informed, they could interfere with the treatment process. I have not experienced this however.
- (006) - Confidentiality
- (007) - Lack of understanding of specific case dynamics can lead to wasted time and inappropriate recommendations. Can have negative effect on child to discuss personal issues with more strangers.
- (011) - At times the panel got a little sidetracked off issues at hand, but generally no disadvantages.
- (016) - If the review committee does not understand the case well.

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GUARDIAN AD LITEM:

- (003) - A do gooder that may not be well enough informed of particular situation.
- (009) - Only if uninformed citizens, and depends on the amount of power citizens are given.
- (010) - Guardians ad litem serve as a full party to protecting the best interest of the children in foster care.
- (013) - If they have the power to overturn decisions made by the county. I'm not sure if they do. If it is just pro forma, I would question the necessity also.

-----  
GROUP HOME/RTC STAFF:

- (005) - Time consuming for providers, social workers and expensive for tax payers.
  - (014) - Not enough time in reviews to educate re: specific diagnoses and needs.
  - (015) - Some seemed uninformed sometimes dragging the process down with questions which were basic or irrelevant. Some parents of cases being reviewed felt uncomfortable with citizens involved.
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MINORITY ADVOCATE:

(017) - They can help us realize ideals and high standards with minimum compromise.

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PSYCHOLOGIST:

(004) - Issues of confidentiality.

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PROBATION OFFICER:

(002) - Its simply inappropriate. Do social workers review engineers construction plans? Client anxiety is also a byproduct.

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ATTORNEY:

(018) - I feel that in this specific case they served no purpose but to make my client even more angry.

19. How would you compare your experiences with administrative reviews that did and did not include citizens?

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PRIVATE SOCIAL WORKER:

- (001) - Positive experience with both.
- (007) - Review process is mandated by law and is a formal situation. If change in case plan is needed or if a problem arises, I talk with the social worker right away instead of waiting for a review. Most reviews I have attended have not been problem-solving situations.
- (011) - I feel strongly that clients identified more with the citizens and felt more comfortable with the process and outcome.
- (016) - Ones without citizens seem to be less threatening to the client.

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GROUP HOME/RTC STAFF:

- (014) - Required more thorough presentation of cases - led to more discussion/evaluation.
- (015) - Reviews without citizens were generally more productive.

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MINORITY ADVOCATE:

- (017) - Because counties answer to outside opinion.

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PROBATION OFFICER:

- (002) - All of these reviews satisfy funders somewhere, but they're basically not really meaningful. All the placement plans, reviews, etc. mess the boat in respect to formulating truly helpful plans and goals for clients, I think.

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ATTORNEY:

- (018) - I have been involved in reviews where county workers review the cases. I thought this was a better way to handle these reviews!
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20. Do you think citizen involvement on review boards should be mandated? Why or why not?

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PRIVATE SOCIAL WORKER:

- (001) - Only helpful if informed; involved citizens can be found. Should not be mandated.
- (006) - To ensure that fair treatment is given to the child as well as the natural family.
- (007) - Administrative reviews are already a source of great anxiety to the teens I work with. The presence of strangers who are not familiar with the family situation creates more anxiety and results in discussing very personal issues before a group of strangers.
- (011) - The citizens bring a new perspective to the process, bring more comfort to the child and family and bring another level of accountability to the system.
- (016) - Both can be helpful, but I do not feel that it should always be mandated.

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GUARDIAN AD LITEM:

- (003) - My experience was exceptional, but I can't believe they may all be that good. There are a couple people I know that wouldn't work in such a situation.
  - (010) - The social worker should be present during a review or have all answers documented true or false for review. A guardian ad litem should also have the opportunity to answer true or false answers to questionnaire. There wouldn't be a need for citizen involvement if the child advocate were present during the review.
  - (012) - Quality is important. They should only be used when high quality is obtained.
  - (013) - I have mixed feelings. If its just a pro forma review, I see no advantage. On the other hand I don't want them to have unlimited power. If they only have power to suggest or recommend I believe they have a purpose. Obviously I don't know enough about their jobs - how they're selected, etc. Also, as a guardian I have a strong voice and believe I might be as effective as a citizen, since that's what I am also, when you really think about.
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GROUP HOME/RTC STAFF:

- (014) - Guarantee ongoing involvement from the community - make citizens aware of county and RTC policies.
- (015) - I believe the process of review is between county and parents and pertinent professionals when appropriate for input. I think the disadvantages of citizen involvement outweigh the advantages.

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MINORITY ADVOCATE:

- (017) - Does this mean legislated? Would it be like a jury? Could it be optional to counties? I think it is very positive committee. I'd like to know more about mandating this particular board. Some persons may view it as political.

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ATTORNEY:

- (018) - I don't find it necessary.
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21. Finally, do you have any other comments you would like to make regarding the administrative review process?

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PRIVATE SOCIAL WORKER:

- (001) - I have only positive experiences in Hennepin County. This is not true in a different county where a director dominated the review and essentially vetoed the plan of all other members. Parents, child in residential treatment, therapists, county probation and social worker all agreed to a plan and it was vetoed by administrative personnel. This has not been my experience in Hennepin County.
- (007) - Citizen members were well trained re: legal process. Citizen members seemed good. It is the involvement on boards which I object to. Citizens review members questioned extensively about areas which previously had been settled in the best possible manner. Child and other involved persons had to educate citizen members about the specific case. Citizen members then agreed. Perhaps the citizen involvement would make sense for children placed in county foster homes. The children with whom I work are in private agency foster homes and the private agency social worker is very involved as an advocate for the child when needed.
- (011) - The physical setting of the review should be changed to a less intimidating setting, i.e., chairs in a circle, no table, etc. This is a personal bias, but a frequently overlooked one.

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GUARDIAN AD LITEM:

- (010) - Review questionnaires could be completed before the day of the review and only answers that raise concern in the case plan be discussed during the review hearing.
- (013) - I always find it educational.

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GROUP HOME/RTC STAFF:

- (014) - Would hope that citizen participation will continue and that it remains separate from county policy/procedure in order to be useful as an evaluation tool for the county as well as placements.
- (015) - The reviews I have attended have varied a lot. Some tend to come across as an interrogation of the parent. Others the members were sensitive and supportive. In some reviews it would be helpful for members to be more informed about the case before reviewing so not as much time would be spent reviewing basic information of the case.
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MINORITY ADVOCATE:

(017) - I'd like to see a community meeting again. Or a public hearing.

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PROBATION OFFICER:

(002) - Again, if competent people hold the jobs involved in facilitating placements, I think they can be trusted without all these review proceedings involving people who never have any contact with the clients.

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ATTORNEY:

(018) - I believe the principal of administrative review is very good! However, I strongly support county workers, specifically people knowledgeable in the field.

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Appendix J

Project Staff Interview Schedule

HENNEPIN COUNTY FOSTER CARE REVIEW PROJECT  
PROJECT STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

JOB TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

HOW LONG EMPLOYED IN THIS CAPACITY \_\_\_\_\_

1. First, can you briefly describe for me your duties as a member of the foster care review project staff?

2. What kinds of problems if any, were there in the operation of the project? Were there any barriers or obstacles to your effectiveness in trying to do your job?

3. If citizen review were mandated, which of your job functions would you see as essential? Who could or should carry them out?

4. Thinking about the implementation phase of the project, what do you feel was the agency staff's initial attitude toward citizen review boards?

Very Positive.....1  
Somewhat Positive.....2  
Neutral/Unsure.....3  
Somewhat Negative.....4  
Very Negative.....5

4a. In what ways has their attitude changed over time?

Became more positive.....1  
Remained the same.....2  
Became more negative.....3

5. From your perspective, what were the most positive aspects of this project?





8. How might implementation be different for smaller counties?

9. What components of the project do you feel are essential? If you could make one recommendation that you knew would be instituted, what would that be?

10. From your perspective, what do you feel the evaluators should know in looking at the project? What factors do you think it is essential we know about?