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first steps

MINNESOTA PLANNING is charged with developing a long-range plan for the state, stimulating public participation in Minnesota's future and coordinating public policy with state agencies, the Legislature and other units of government.

Action for Children is a bipartisan, public and private group that stimulates public policy to improve conditions for Minnesota's children and families. Staff assistance is provided by Minnesota Planning.

First Steps: Kids Can't Wait 1994 Progress Report was prepared by Dianne Marsh with assistance from Michael Brott and Susan Roth.



658 Cedar Street
St. Paul, MN 55155
(612) 296-3985

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Upon request, *First Steps: Kids Can't Wait 1994 Progress Report* will be made available in an alternate format, such as Braille, large print or audio tape. For TDD, contact Minnesota Relay Service at (612) 297-5353 or (800) 627-3529 and ask for Minnesota Planning.

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ACTION FOR CHILDREN MEMBERS

Kathy Bardins, President
The Right Image

Terri Barreiro, Senior Director
United Way of Minneapolis

Susan Carlson, Co-chair and First Lady
State of Minnesota

Kathryn Checchi, Attorney

Leeann Chin, President
Leeann Chin, Inc.

Judge Isabel Gomez
Hennepin County

Virginia Greenman, Health and Human Services
Consultant

Jean Holloway, Attorney
Dorsey & Whitney

Ron James, Co-chair and Vice President and CEO/MN
U S West Communications

Alice Johnson, State Representative
Minnesota House of Representatives

Tom Kingston, President and CEO
Wilder Foundation
Forum for Nonprofit Leadership

Barbara Leone, Physician
Model Cities Health Center Inc.

Myron Lowe, Acting Director
National Youth Leadership Council

Yusef Mgeni, President
Urban Coalition

Joe Nathan, Director
Center for School Change
Hubert H. Humphrey Institute
University of Minnesota

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McKnight Foundation

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University of Duluth

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Elva Walker, CEO
National Purity

Paul Walsh, COO
Grand Metropolitan Food Sector

Bob Waltman, State Representative
Minnesota House of Representatives

For the first time, Minnesota has a long-range plan for children, *Kids Can't Wait: Action for Minnesota's Children*, released in 1992 by Action for Children with staff support from Minnesota Planning. *First Steps: Kids Can't Wait 1994 Progress Report* looks at how far Minnesota has come in two years toward realizing this plan.

s u m m a r y

Governor Arne H. Carlson created Action for Children in 1991 to develop a vision of what children's lives should be like and recommend ways for the state to achieve that vision. Based on discussions with several hundred Minnesotans around the state, including communities of color, a long-range plan was developed. *Kids Can't Wait* includes a vision for the future, six recommendations and 37 strategies to help shape the kind of future wanted for Minnesota's children and families.

First Steps focuses on progress recommended by Action for Children and includes outcome measures from the long-range plan that assess the well-being of Minnesota's children. *First Steps* comes in two forms: a summary brochure and a full report that details progress for each strategy.

Progress has been made toward most of the strategies, including the creation of the Children's Cabinet consisting of commissioners from 11 state agencies; legislative funding to expand early childhood family education programs; and passage of the Recognition of Parentage Act, which increases identification of unmarried fathers.

Measuring Progress

Even though progress has been made toward many strategies, much remains to be done. Some strategies in the children's long-range plan were too specific and need to be expanded. For instance, a funding strategy focused on strict enforcement of human rights laws but overlooked many additional ways to achieve diversity.

In some cases, evaluation measures are needed to help determine whether programs are working as intended. Other strategies need clarification so that progress measures can be developed. For example, progress cannot be measured now for the strategy that removes regulations preventing teachers, parents and others from becoming partners in education. What does "partners in education" mean and how is success toward this strategy identified? Action for Children will review the strategies for effectiveness and revise them as needed.

RECOMMENDATION

Mobilize communities, workplaces, schools and other institutions in an integrated, long-range effort to strengthen families' ability to successfully raise their children and ensure that their children are fully ready for school.

STRATEGY	PROGRESS
Encourage community planning and service delivery	The 1993 Legislature appropriated money for family services and community-based collaboration grants.
Generate discussion on family-friendly workplaces.	The conference on "Building a Productive Workforce for Tomorrow: The Work Family Summit" was held in September 1992.
Develop family centers.	The Cornerstone project, funded by Head Start, the Pew Children's Initiative and several state agencies will create a statewide network for family resource centers.
Make early childhood care and education support a priority.	Members were appointed to the Minnesota Early Childhood Care and Education Council to advocate for early childhood programs.
Develop a family-impact assessment tool for all state-funded programs.	The Children's Cabinet and the Legislative Commission on Children, Youth and Their Families have begun to develop a family-impact assessment tool.
Institute home visiting programs for pregnant women and new parents.	The Legislature appropriated money to early childhood family education to fund two home visiting initiatives.
Convene a task force to study negative and inappropriate media messages for children.	Action for Children staff has researched the effects media have on children, and the Youth Advisory Council is interested in considering a media summit.
Establish children's milestones.	Many children's milestones were included in <i>Minnesota Milestones: A Report Card for the Future</i> .
Create a common data base on programs for families and children.	The Children's Cabinet has hired an information specialist to develop a plan to coordinate an integrated children's data system.

RECOMMENDATION

Reduce poverty for all families with children.

STRATEGY	PROGRESS
Ensure access to children's health care and immunizations.	Minnesota is creating and implementing a health care program for children and uninsured working poor families through MinnesotaCare.
Enforce child support agreements.	Minnesota strengthened the administrative process to increase the number of children receiving child support.
Convene a poverty summit.	A poverty summit was held in summer 1992 and a symposium "Building Family Futures and the Collaboration Strategy" was held in April 1993.
Develop programs to help working poor and welfare-dependent families become self-sufficient.	The Minnesota Family Investment Plan was started to increase employment and decrease welfare dependency among welfare families.
Require state agencies to consider graduates of state job training programs when hiring.	This strategy has not been implemented yet and will take a collaborative effort among all state agencies.
Redesign programs that combine housing with social services for families with special needs.	The Rental Assistance for Family Stabilization Program and the Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program were initiated.
Increase the number of paternities established.	The paternity of a child can now be documented at birth by signing the Recognition of Parentage form.

RECOMMENDATION

Make children and youth active partners in community decision making.

STRATEGY	PROGRESS
Integrate mentor programs and youth community service into school curriculum.	The 1993 Legislature established a youth community service program.
Encourage use of mentor programs and youth community service in teacher training programs.	The Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board administered federal and state funds to colleges and universities to provide service learning and mentor models in their curriculum.
Establish a statewide network for mentor recruitment and quality standards.	Minnesota Mentor Network was formed in 1993.
Require state agencies to develop a job connection for youth.	The Department of Transportation created an outreach program called Seeds for minority and disadvantaged students.

RECOMMENDATION

Act to celebrate cultural diversity and end all forms of discrimination.

STRATEGY

PROGRESS

Develop a statewide resource and monitor network to help local communities develop services.

Action for Children helped to build a statewide resource network while applying for the Pew grant; the Legislature gave money for grants to enhance cross-cultural understanding in schools.

Encourage employer actions on state human rights and diversity issues.

This strategy has not been acted on yet.

Develop a campaign to create public will to eliminate racism and discrimination.

Governor Carlson proclaimed the first annual Diversity Week in 1993.

Use diversity and culture as resources for community efforts to support families.

The Department of Transportation held six focus groups in 1991, and the Department of Human Services conducted a forum to discuss how services could be more responsive.

Require state agencies to comply with Minnesota human rights laws to receive state funding.

The Children's Cabinet required two collaboration grant communities to develop new models of participation with communities of color to receive funding.

RECOMMENDATION

Require schools to become active partners with parents, youth and community agencies, social and health services, businesses and young people.

STRATEGY

PROGRESS

Make effective early childhood development programs part of the state's education mission.

In fiscal year 1993, provider training and culturally relevant early childhood programs received funding, and additional special needs programs were developed.

Designate agency-level responsibility for school readiness.

Learning readiness has been promoted throughout the state by Action for Children and Minnesota 2000.

Provide strong incentives for integrating services for children.

In 1992, service and planning grants were funded from the co-location of services grant program, as well as the 1993 family services collaboration grants.

Require the sharing of facilities by social services, health, recreation, library and school services.

Several communities that were awarded family service implementation grants plan to integrate services for families in one building.

Provide a choice of full-day programs for all children to age 12.

This strategy has not been implemented yet.

Make the career teacher program available to all school districts to link families with schools.

Hopkins School District was awarded a family services collaboration grant to implement a career teacher education model.

Fully fund programs proven to be effective.

The Cornerstone project has been fully funded for the next five years, and state and federal funding for Head Start increased; however, no proven programs have been fully funded.

Involve parents and youth in the decision-making process of government.

Several initiatives have begun around the state to include parents and youth in decision making at the city, county, school district and state levels.

RECOMMENDATION

Overhaul the state service delivery system to produce better results for children and families.

STRATEGY	PROGRESS
Eliminate barriers to community residents and teachers working together.	This strategy has not been implemented yet.
Create a Children's Cabinet.	The Children's Cabinet was created by the Governor in 1992 and codified by the Legislature in 1993.

Indicators of Progress

In addition to progress on specific strategies, long-term progress toward the well-being of Minnesota's children is measured by a series of outcome indicators taken from *Kids Can't Wait*. Many of these indicators became part of the state's overall 30-year plan, *Minnesota Milestones*. When available, data for 1980, 1990 and 1992

is reported for each indicator. If other years are used, they are noted in parenthesis. No data is available for three indicators: increasing the percentage of children who meet national physical fitness standards; increasing the percentage of children who receive full payment of awarded child support; and decreasing the percentage of children with low self-esteem.

INDICATOR

	1980	1990	1992
Decrease the percentage of low birthweight babies.	5%	5% (1988)	5%
Increase the percentage of babies whose mothers begin prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy.	78%	80% (1988)	84%
Increase the percentage of children who are adequately immunized.	74%	56%	61%
Decrease the percentage of violent and accidental deaths of children and youth.	34%	34%	32%
Decrease the percentage of youth using alcohol at least once a month during the past year:			
Ninth grade	Not Available	26%	19%
12th grade		54% (1989)	41%
Decrease the rate of pregnancies per 1,000 Minnesota teens:			
Under age 15	1.5	1.8	2.31
Age 15 to 17	36.9	33.8 (1988)	31.4
Reduce the percentage of children and youth in poverty.	10%	12%	2000 Census
Increase the rate of paternity established for infants born to single mothers, per 1,000 births.	315 (1981)	347 (1987)	Not Available
Reduce the number of children abused or neglected, per 100,000	360	790	940
Reduce the percentage of children caring for themselves before and after school hours.	Not Available	26% (1991)	Not Available
Decrease the percentage of children and youth of color who worry about racial discrimination.	Not Available	33% (1989)	34%
Increase the percentage of youth who volunteer at least one hour per week.	Not Available	Not Available	34%
Increase the number of children and youth who participate in school-based youth service programs.	Not Available	56,968 (1991)	105,000 (estimated)
Decrease the percentage of sixth-graders who watch 40 or more hours per week of television.			
Males	Not Available	Not Available	18%
Females			11%

Action for Children's recommendations for improving the lives of Minnesota's children and families were presented in *Kids Can't Wait: Action for Minnesota's Children*. This April 1992 strategic plan outlined problems and established a vision for Minnesota's children. Governor Arne H. Carlson called *Kids Can't Wait* "probably the best report prepared in America on children." President Bill Clinton honored the agenda of *Kids Can't Wait* at the final

p r o g r e s s

meeting of the National Commission on Children as one of the nation's outstanding programs for youth.

This update of *Kids Can't Wait* summarizes the progress made between February 1992 and May 1994 for each of the strategies presented in that report. In some cases, developments can be directly traced to *Kids Can't Wait*; in others, Action for Children's recommendations may have had an indirect role or coincided with the work of others.

The progress report describes the degree to which *Kids Can't Wait* has influenced policy over the past two years and acts as a reminder of work yet to be done. It serves as a checkpoint for the state and the Children's Cabinet, a cabinet-level policy council created as a result of a recommendation in *Kids Can't Wait*, to see what work has been accomplished and what has yet to be done to carry out the recommendations and strategies.

The *Kids Can't Wait* report included six recommendations and 37 strategies on how to improve the well-being of children and families in Minnesota. This update reviews each recommendation and the efforts made to achieve the related strategies.

Recommendation: Mobilize communities, workplaces, schools, and other institutions into an integrated, long-range effort to strengthen families' ability to successfully raise their children and ensure that their children are fully ready for school.

Strategy

Community planning and service delivery: Plan and implement services at the community level. They must be comprehensive to address the needs of the whole family. Include all sectors, including parents and youth, in decision making and problem solving. Develop technical assistance and incentives, such as planning money, funding flexibility and information and training for communities wanting to better coordinate services and policies to support their families. This might include forming local action councils made up of representatives from the community's public, private and nonprofit sectors. Action for Children would provide assistance, and the collaboration would spark community dialogue on common values and the need to respect children.

Progress

The 1993 Legislature appropriated \$8.5 million for grants to health, education and social service agencies willing to form collaboratives. The grants were intended to help communities develop and implement collaborative relationships between all municipalities and components within each community and ensure that services to children and families are comprehensive and address the needs of the whole family. Forty communities were awarded a total of \$1,489,793 for planning family services collaboratives, and 11 communities received implementation grants totaling \$2,385,000.

The grant application for the family services collaboration implementation grants indicated that the money could be used to support family centers, among other things.

In November 1993, an application to the Pew Charitable Trusts was submitted by the Minnesota Children's

Initiative, the state's response to the Pew Children's Initiative. The Children's Initiative builds on the effective work already underway in several Minnesota communities. It emphasizes universal approaches that involve participation by whole communities to design services for families that are family-focused, systemic and outcome-driven. The participation includes considerable flexibility to plan and implement locally designed approaches to achieve common goals.

Action for Children staff coordinated broad participation in developing the application that led to Minnesota's selection as one of the five states participating in the Pew Charitable Trusts Children's Initiative. Action for Children and Minnesota Planning staff acted as project manager for developing and writing the 700-page planning grant application that was submitted November 8, 1993.

Strategy

Family-friendly workplaces: Convene meetings of business leaders and workers around the state to discuss their successful experiences and roles in supporting families and to develop guidelines for encouraging "family-friendly employment policies." Action for Children could help arrange these meetings. Chief executive officers and business owners need to require their managers to follow through on company policies allowing for flexibility.

Progress

In September 1992, the "Building a Productive Workforce for Tomorrow: The Work-Family Summit" was held at the World Trade Center in St. Paul. Attended by nearly 100 CEOs and business owners, the conference was hosted by Ron James, CEO of U S West Communications in Minnesota and co-chair of Action for Children, and featured Jeffrey Stiefler, CEO of IDS Financial Services, and Ellen Galinsky, co-president of the Families and Work Institute. Each spoke on the importance of maintaining family-friendly work policies in business. Participants were able to share examples of their company's efforts to provide family-supportive work environments.

Strategy

Family centers: Develop community-based support centers to enhance school readiness before children's problems become multiple and severe. In these family

centers, parents should have the opportunity to support and learn from each other. The centers would also provide opportunities to manage neighborhood issues. Models are already in place in the state that, if fully funded, would accomplish this strategy.

Progress

During preparation of the application to the Pew Charitable Trusts, a commitment was made to develop family centers regardless of whether a grant was received. One of the elements necessary to successfully meet the needs of children and families is the development of a neighborhood network of family centers located in or near schools. These family centers would serve as the locus for family-related activities, support, development and preservation, and other services designed to strengthen families' ability to care for their children and prepare them for success in school.

The Cornerstone project, funded by a grant from the Minnesota Head Start Collaboration Project in 1993, provides an opportunity for the Department of Economic Security, the Minnesota Head Start Association and the Children's Cabinet to work as partners to create a state-wide network of family resource centers that have Head Start as a cornerstone. The project has awarded grants to 18 communities. These grantees have been helping families in such areas as employability, child care, early childhood education, transition, disabilities and health.

Strategy

Early childhood care and education support: Make quality early childhood care and education a top priority for Minnesota. Support the recommendations of the Child Care Task Force and the Commission on the Economic Status of Women to: increase the Basic Sliding Fee Program to all eligible families; improve quality and availability of child care by improving worker skills, worker wages, and licensing services; and create the Early Childhood Care and Education Council to coordinate child care and related policy and to improve accessibility for families.

Progress

The Minnesota Early Childhood Care and Education Council was formed by the 1991 Legislature to lead Minnesota in developing and advocating a coordinated

public-private system to meet the early childhood care and education needs of families. In March 1992, Governor Carlson appointed members to the council from a variety of occupational sectors. The 1993 Legislature eliminated the council's state funding, so it is operating on federal funds. The group has been advocating for such things as full funding for the Basic Sliding Fee Program, money for anti-crime and anti-violence programs, increased funding for child care resource and referral networks, full funding for Head Start, expansion of the Early Childhood and Family Education Program and making family and parenting education a graduation requirement for Minnesota high schools.

Strategy

Family-impact assessment: Require all current and proposed state-funded programs to adhere to family-support principles. A checklist should be developed to assess adherence to those principles. Programs that do not support families should not be funded.

Progress

At the request of the Children's Cabinet, the Children's Subcabinet developed an integrated children's budget. One of the subcabinet's first steps in preparing this budget was developing a checklist of goals and service delivery principles based on the content of *Kids Can't Wait*. A checklist of service delivery principles adopted on July 9, 1992 looks for family focus or involvement; efficacy of approach (outcome data or proven strategies); cultural sensitivity and diversity, and an absence of bias and discrimination; being community-based or having community involvement; customer input into design and maintenance; a comprehensive approach offering help in several areas or a planned way to link people to needed services; appropriate intensity or length to achieve stated goals; accessibility; and provisions for personal and public safety.

These principles were modified by the subcabinet on September 2, 1993, to include evidence of customer input into design and maintenance, evaluation and review; a comprehensive approach offering help in several areas or a planned way to link people to needed services; and a commitment to broad vision and goals.

In creating its recommendations for the children's budget, the subcabinet used this checklist in reviewing every program aimed primarily or exclusively at children

and families and selected programs to be maintained, created, modified or eliminated. The subcabinet principles were further used in policy discussions regarding the integrated children's information system project.

Strategy

Home visiting: Institute a community system of home visits to pregnant women and new parents by resident health paraprofessionals. Visits should begin during pregnancy and continue for up to three years. Services should include in-home developmental screening, provision of child development information and counseling for parents on available community supports. A state model that already exists in a few locations is the "Way to Grow" program, which locates and links families with services.

Progress

The 1992 Legislature appropriated money to Early Childhood Family Education as part of the Omnibus Crime Act to fund two home visiting initiatives. An appropriation of \$500,000 adds a home visiting component to the early childhood family education program to prevent child abuse and neglect. In fiscal year 1992, 14,000 home visits were conducted by program staff. These numbers are expected to significantly increase by fiscal year 1993 in response to the legislation. In addition, funding was given to the Health Department to establish a grant program designed to prevent child abuse and neglect by providing early intervention services for families at risk of child abuse and neglect. This is to be accomplished by expanding the public health nurse and family aide home visiting program.

Additional funds have gone to early childhood programs in the Anoka-Hennepin school district, Minneapolis, Red Lake, St. Paul and Winona. They have been used to reach family child-care providers and families that have no access to reliable transportation; several preschool children; children or parents with special medical, physical, or developmental concerns who have been referred by other programs and agencies; pregnant mothers on bed rest; first-time parents; parents lacking group skills who are not comfortable in group settings; schedules or life circumstances that make it difficult for them to participate in center-based classes or other opportunities; or parents who have special concerns that they prefer to discuss privately.

The Pew Trusts grant proposal also included a goal to "ensure that all families receive, within one week of the birth of a child, information on community and family center services...." Home visits are a key strategy to achieving this. Criteria for the use of home visits will be developed by local projects within communities.

Strategy

Media information: Convene a task force to explore regulatory and voluntary measures to address negative or inappropriate messages, including graphic violence and sexual images, that appear on television, in movies and in products of the recording industry.

Progress

Staff has conducted literature searches on media and its effects on children. Most of the research available is on television violence and its effects on children. Members of the media were interviewed to gain their insight and opinions. The Action for Children's Youth Advisory Council, a council of 27 youth from throughout Minnesota that advises Action for Children, has reviewed the material and is interested in working with Action for Children members to convene a media summit. In addition, Action for Children staff has been serving on the KARE-11 Children's Television Steering Committee, helping the NBC affiliate develop and implement its new television program for and by teenagers about issues that affect them.

Strategy

Children's milestones: Establish a state accountability system of goals and indicators based on desirable results for children and families that will effectively communicate the results and be a force for improvement.

Progress

In December 1992, Minnesota Planning issued *Minnesota Milestones: A Report Card for the Future*, a long-range plan based on Minnesotans' vision for their state and a series of measurable goals and indicators against which progress can be measured. The report includes 20 broad goals and 79 milestones, many of them focused on the well-being of children. Action for Children played a significant role in shaping these milestones. Some were taken directly from *Kids Can't Wait*, and Ac-

tion for Children worked closely with the *Minnesota Milestones* staff to develop additional children's indicators. Action for Children staff advised *Minnesota Milestones* staff in their work with communities to develop children's services report cards based on the indicators.

Children's indicators are also used in community assessments as part of the Pew Charitable Trusts Children's Initiative and the Minnesota's Kids Count Project managed by Congregations Concerned for Children and the Children's Defense Fund of Minnesota.

In the application to the Pew Trusts, Minnesota submitted outcome indicators and targets for children in three categories: 15 initial evaluation indicators for children from birth to age six, six "age-up" evaluation indicators for children ages six to 18 and three related indicators covering subjects that were not directly addressed by the Minnesota Children's Initiative. These indicators have five-year targets. The partner communities have all agreed to collect information on this core set of indicators.

Strategy

Common data base: Create an information system integrated across state agencies that systematically collects data on results of programs for families and children, and use this information to improve services to children.

Progress

Planning for an integrated data system began with the assistance of Robert Unterberger and Valerie Pace of IBM, who donated resources and staff time to conduct a joint application design process with the subcabinet. State-level information needs for an integrated information system were identified, and a plan for an integrated system is being developed. The Children's Cabinet has hired an information specialist to develop the plan to coordinate the integrated children's data system. Additional money for this work has been received from The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Dakota County received a family services collaboration grant to expand Fast Forward, a program to help families achieve economic self-sufficiency. Because the program links services, other collaboration grantee communities have viewed it as a model for developing and strengthening their local systems.

Recommendation: Reduce poverty for all families with children.

Strategy

Children's health care and immunizations: Within two years, ensure that all children have access to health care and affordable health care insurance coverage. Increase the number of children who meet immunization requirements by removing barriers to timely immunization.

Progress

Minnesota is already a leader in health care with the Children's Health Plan and MinnesotaCare. Through MinnesotaCare, the state is creating and implementing an affordable health care program for Minnesota's children and uninsured working poor families. The program will establish an appropriate benefits package with no co-payments for health services for all children under 18 years of age. By December 1, 1993, 60,000 people throughout Minnesota were enrolled in this program, of which approximately 36,500 were children. Seventy percent of enrolled families have incomes at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. As of May 1, 1994, 70,000 people were enrolled in the program, of which 40,000 were children under 18 years old.

The 1994 Legislature enacted a law allowing providers, consumers and employers to create locally based community integrated service networks as alternatives to existing health plans. The legislation also allows an additional 27,000 low-income Minnesotans to receive subsidized health care coverage.

Strategy

Child support: Rigorously enforce child support agreements and establish a government-insured benefit for cases in which absent parents do not meet their support obligations.

Progress

To reduce the incidence of poverty among children of divorced parents, the Department of Human Services has adopted stronger measures to establish paternity

and streamline the process to issue and enforce child support orders. The Recognition of Parentage Act passed in 1993 allows parents who are not married to each other to establish a legal relationship between a father and a child. Forms for doing this are available in all public and private obstetrical hospitals in Minnesota, along with a video and other informational materials.

Strategy

Poverty summit: Convene a bipartisan, multisector summit meeting to select from and act on economic strategies to lift children out of poverty. Action for Children would work with the Department of Economic Security to build on its sponsored programs and conferences.

Progress

In April 1993, the symposium “Building Family Futures and the Collaboration Strategy” was sponsored by the Department of Economic Security through Cornerstone, the Minnesota Head Start Collaboration Project. It brought together representatives from the private sector, state, county and local governments, agencies and programs to discuss collaborative approaches to serving children and their families that focus on economic strategies.

About 200 participants heard presentations on the Minnesota Children’s Initiative, family resource centers and Cornerstone. They also had the opportunity to meet with other people from around the state to discuss specific issues.

In June 1992, Action for Children’s “Economic Security for Children Summit” brought together top-level representatives from the public, private and nonprofit sectors to discuss economic strategies to lift Minnesota’s children out of poverty.

Strategy

Pilot programs: Develop and support pilot programs, such as the Minnesota Family Investment Plan, to help both working-poor and welfare-dependent families become economically self-sufficient.

Progress

Minnesota Family Investment Plan, a comprehensive welfare reform project that combines Aid to Families of Dependent Children, family general assistance and food stamps into a simpler, more efficient program, aims to increase employment among welfare families, increase the number of families whose income rises above poverty, and decrease welfare dependency. Field trials of MFIP began in seven counties in April 1994.

In 1993, the Legislature provided \$600,000 to fund the Minnesota YouthBuild Program, which is specifically designed to reduce unemployment and poverty. The program is an integral part of the employment and training programs in the Youth Unit of the Community Based Services Division at the Department of Economic Security. The grant money was awarded to Bi-County Community Action Program in Bemidji, The City, Inc. in Minneapolis, Carver-Scott Educational Cooperative in Chaska, Two or More, Inc. in Minneapolis, City Academy in St. Paul and Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. in Detroit Lakes.

The Minnesota YouthBuild Program demonstrates a commitment to Minnesota’s high-risk youth and their communities by helping these young people to rebuild their neighborhood and take charge of their lives. Participants are ages 16 to 24, economically disadvantaged or eligible for the high school graduation incentives program, and have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out of school. More than half of the participants are youth of color. The program is expected to serve 500 young people over the next two years, along with 300 homeless, battered women and children, and very low-income persons in need of affordable housing.

Strategy

Job connection: Require state agencies and departments to give strong consideration to graduates of state jobs training programs when hiring. Secure similar commitments from businesses, nonprofit organizations and local governments.

Progress

No action has been taken on this strategy.

Strategy

Housing for families with children: Create a work group under the direction of the Housing Finance Agency to report back regularly to the Children's Cabinet, to be responsible for looking at housing aspects of various policy recommendations and agency actions and to work with Action for Children on redesigning programs that combine housing and social services for families with special needs.

Progress

The Governor initiated the Rental Assistance for Family Stabilization Program in 1991 and the Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program in 1993. The Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program aims to assist families who are homeless or are at imminent risk of becoming homeless. Desired program outcomes include preventing homelessness, shortening the length of stay in emergency housing and eliminating repeated periods of homelessness among families and youth. The program is intended to encourage and support innovation at the local level in redesigning the existing response system to the problem of family homelessness or in establishing a comprehensive system to address the problem. The Legislature appropriated \$3.75 million to the program for the biennium ending June 30, 1995.

The Rental Assistance for Family Stabilization Program is a demonstration project aimed at families who receive public assistance. The program provides rental assistance to families with children and a caretaker parent enrolled in a self-sufficiency program. The program is intended to determine if providing rental assistance to public assistance recipients enrolled in self-sufficiency programs enhances their opportunity to achieve self-sufficiency. Three million dollars was appropriated for the biennium ending June 30, 1995.

As previously noted, the participants in the Minnesota YouthBuild Program help to rebuild their neighborhoods and provide affordable housing for homeless, victims of domestic abuse and very low-income families and individuals.

Strategy

Paternities established: Increase the number of paternities established at birth to ensure that children receive Social Security benefits, inheritance, armed

service-related benefits, health care coverage and other benefits.

Progress

The need for establishing paternity at birth is recognized in *Minnesota Milestones*, which recommends that hospitals be required to seek a declaration of paternity from the father at birth in cases where the mother is not married. This recommendation and milestone comes directly from *Kids Can't Wait* and the work of Action for Children. Collecting child support often is hindered when the identity of the father has not been legally determined.

Establishing paternity for children born to unmarried parents guarantees the children will receive many needed benefits, including child support, Social Security benefits, inheritance, benefits from the armed services, health care coverage and workers' compensation benefits. Minnesota now encourages fathers of children born to unmarried women to sign a "Recognition of Parentage" statement at the birth of a baby. The action is voluntary, and the declaration of parentage form is available from hospital staff. The declaration establishes rights and benefits for the father, the mother and the child. During the first quarter of 1994, 40 percent of the parents who were not married signed this form at the birth of their child in the hospital. The number of children for whom paternity is established is anticipated to increase by 46 percent, to 5,100, by June 1994. Increased child support payment collections are estimated to reach \$3.7 million by June 30, 1995, and \$5.7 million by June 30, 1996.

Recommendation: Make children and youth active partners in community decision-making.

Several areas of progress for this recommendation do not fit directly under a specific strategy, but they are important enough to warrant discussion. These developments include the creation of Action for Children's Youth Advisory Council, the Attorney General's Youth Task Force on Juvenile Justice and the Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee.

Youth Advisory Council: Action for Children members were concerned about the lack of representation from

youth, particularly given the recommendation to ensure that youth be partners in decision making. Wary of the token gestures implied by appointing one or two young people to Action for Children, it decided to create the Youth Advisory Council. The council is comprised of 27 youth, three from each congressional district and three at-large members. Participants are ages 12 to 18 and have a broad range of geographical, socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds.

In operation since September 1992, the council has addressed such topics as violence in the media and the need for public service announcements to educate communities about their children and youth. Members have critiqued proposed policies and legislation. The council organized a statewide youth conference in March 1994 entitled "Listen '94: Kids Can't Wait." The purpose was to provide an opportunity for youth to express their concerns to policy-makers, business people, educators, peace officers and others and to educate youth on how to get involved in the political process. About 150 young people from throughout the state attended and shared through small group discussions the concerns and issues that they face in their communities. The council will produce a report from the information gathered at the conference.

Attorney General's Youth Task Force on Juvenile Justice: In September 1993, Attorney General Hubert H. Humphrey III formed the Attorney General's Youth Task Force on Juvenile Justice to solicit input from youth on various juvenile justice issues. The charge of the youth task force, which consisted of nine high school students from across the state, was to review key issues in the juvenile justice system and to make recommendations to the attorney general, the Supreme Court Task Force on Juvenile Justice and the Legislature. The task force conducted public hearings at six high schools across the state that focused on four main issues: certification of juveniles for criminal prosecution as adults; use of juvenile and criminal records; due process considerations, such as right to counsel and jury trial; and how to reduce violent behavior among juveniles. In January 1994, the Youth Task Force presented its findings to Attorney General Humphrey.

Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee: The Department of Economic Security's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee sponsored conferences involving youth as active partners in community decision-making. The "Building Youth Leadership Conference" provided a unique opportunity for 250 Minnesota youth ages 15 to 17 to learn teamwork, leadership and community organization skills. Teams of five youth and one adult from

throughout the state worked to develop a plan of action to implement on returning to their communities. Each team elected to work on one of three focus areas: diversity, relationships and chemical dependency. The conference was unique in that it reached out to youth who were not usually recognized for their leadership skills, including youth labeled "at risk." The Youth Intervention Program Association and the Minnesota Association of Runaway Youth Services co-sponsored the conference with funding and support provided by the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee.

"Voices of Our Children: A Native American Response to Adolescents in the Juvenile Justice System" conference provided an opportunity for Native Americans to identify areas of concern in the juvenile justice system. The conference was sponsored by the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee, the Indian Child Welfare Advisory Council and the Red Lake Social Services' Eagles Program.

Strategy

Integration into curriculum: Integrate mentor programs (student-student and adult-student) and youth community service learning into school curriculum at every grade level and in every discipline, as well as into the activities of community-based organizations. Provide incentives and technical assistance to help local school districts and action councils develop active learning and community service strategies that engage children and youth in real school and community jobs and projects.

Progress

The Youth Works bill introduced by Representative Andy Dawkins and Representative Kathleen Blatz was passed by the 1993 Legislature. The purpose of the law is to establish a youth community service program. Under the community-based Minnesota Youth Works Act, communities identify potential projects for youth service that benefit the community. Youth participants are eligible for credit, a stipend or money to be used for college. The law explicitly calls for integration of the community service experiences into the curriculum of schools. Dawkins made a presentation to Action for Children's Youth Advisory Council seeking feedback and improvements to the bill.

In 1993, an advisory group was formed under the Youth Works Act to guide the establishment of the youth community service programs.

The Minnesota YouthBuild Program is an excellent model of community service. The program builds self-esteem and leadership skills in high-risk youth. Meaningful and necessary community service is accomplished through the rebuilding of neighborhoods and the acquisition of affordable housing for homeless, battered and very low-income families and individuals.

Strategy

The need for research and the role of post-secondary education: Challenge institutions of higher education to conduct research and incorporate curricula related to mentor programs and youth community service in all teacher training programs.

Progress

The Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board began administering grants in 1992 under the federal National And Community Service Act of 1990. In September 1992, it awarded \$142,500 to 12 colleges and universities to institute programs to train future teachers in service learning, experiential learning and mentorship methods. In March 1994, it awarded an additional \$83,750 to 11 colleges and universities to continue this work.

In January 1994, the board awarded \$105,000 of state money to seven colleges and universities and technical colleges to institute service learning models in their curriculum and to give students hands-on experience in teaching. Some of these programs specifically target children of color and children with disabilities.

Strategy

Mentor recruitment and quality standards: Establish a statewide network for prospective mentors, provide technical assistance to local communities, evaluate the effectiveness of mentor programs and develop quality standards.

Progress

The Minnesota Office of Volunteer Services, in collaboration with the departments of Administration and Education, KARE-TV and Lutheran Brotherhood, spearheaded the institution of the Minnesota Mentor Network, which is a group of about 300 mentor programs that are working together to expand the quality and availability of such programs for Minnesota's youth. In the fall of 1993, it launched a media campaign, began recruiting mentors and started gathering data for a statewide directory of mentor programs. Its first statewide conference for Minnesota mentor leaders in May featured Mark Freedman, author of *The Kindness of Strangers*, which has been described as a "blueprint for mentoring."

Strategy

Job connection: Require state agencies and other public employers to develop internship, school-to-work transition and apprenticeship programs for youth — including low-income youth, youth of color and youth with disabilities. Challenge private- and nonprofit-sector employers to do the same.

Progress

In January 1994, the commissioner of the Department of Employee Relations convened the Diversity Action Council, which is comprised of more than 20 government agencies. Its mission is to keep the issue of diversity in the forefront of all government activities and to deal internally with such issues as hiring, recruiting, retention and training, as well as service delivery. Subcommittees on mentor programs, training and internships were developed. The council is staffed by Minnesota Planning and the Department of Employee Relations.

The Department of Transportation created Seeds, an outreach program to minority and disadvantaged youths. Students in high school, business and technical schools and colleges may qualify for the program. Participants are placed in job areas related to their interests after formally agreeing to maintain grades, class attendance, attitude and job expectations. Transportation employees, called Seeds Planters, provide skills training, mentor services and tutoring and permanent career opportunities when possible. Since its inception in De-

September 1992, 27 students have been hired and 25 Seeds Planters have provided support and guidance.

Recommendation: Act to celebrate cultural diversity and end all forms of discrimination.

Strategy

Statewide resource and monitor network: Develop a statewide resource and monitoring network that will support local Action for Children Councils, family centers, schools and youth-serving organizations in developing and evaluating multicultural, gender-fair approaches to their work. This network should coordinate and publicize existing efforts. It would not require a new organizational structure.

Progress

Action for Children helped to build a statewide resource network while developing The Pew Charitable Trusts planning application. Substantial involvement of the White Earth and Leech Lake reservations will provide a stronger opportunity to ensure that community efforts to improve outcomes for children and their families build on the effective work already underway within communities.

The 1993 Legislature gave \$125,000 to the Department of Education for grants to enhance cross-cultural understanding among students and staff in Minnesota schools. It also gave \$10,000 for a Multicultural Education Advisory Council.

The departments of Education and of Human Rights have formed the PRIDE program to deal with anti-bias issues within the schools. The commissioner of Human Rights will appoint a blue-ribbon task force that will work to get funding for the programs.

Strategy

Employer actions: Ask employers, the state and other public entities to take swift and decisive action regarding employees or departments that fail to adequately address human rights and diversity issues. The state

should provide leadership to public- and private-sector employers on these issues.

Progress

In October 1993, Minnesota Planning released its *State of Diversity* report outlining nine recommendations and 37 strategies for Minnesota to improve its racial climate in several areas, including preparing youth for entrepreneurship and building government commitment to diversity. Lt. Governor Joanell Drystad formed a minority cluster as a result of the *Racism and Equality Interim Report* by Minnesota Planning. The cluster includes the Council on Black Minnesotans, the Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans, the Spanish Speaking Affairs Council, the Indian Affairs Council, the Council on the Economic Status of Women and the Council on Disability. The cluster is staffed by the Department of Employee Relations and Minnesota Planning. Its purpose is to advise the Governor on the issues of diversity. It is preparing an action plan for the state involving all state agencies that will include measurable goals and annual progress reports.

The Department of Corrections encourages gender and culturally specific programming for juvenile offenders through the Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee.

Strategy

Public awareness and education campaign: Develop and initiate a public awareness and education campaign to create the public will to eliminate racism and other forms of discrimination. The ongoing campaign should promote respect for cultural and racial diversity and for people with disabilities, and portray all people, including youth, females and people with disabilities, in positive roles.

Progress

Governor Carlson proclaimed the week of October 25, 1993, as the first annual Minnesota Diversity Week to celebrate the rich diversity in Minnesota. The second annual Minnesota Diversity Week is scheduled for the week of October 24, 1994.

Strategy

Diversity and culture as resources: Convene a meeting of leaders from diverse communities to discuss their experiences and their role in supporting families, as well as strategies they have identified for their communities. Identify implementation opportunities and possible resources to achieve strategies.

Progress

The Department of Transportation held six-hour focus groups in 1991 with each of the African American, Asian-Pacific Island, Hispanic and American Indian communities. These meetings were followed by a second meeting with representatives from each of the four focus groups. One of the focus group recommendations resulted in the deputy commissioners of the Department of Transportation establishing an ongoing Minority Focus Group comprised of two representatives from each of the minority groups. The group's charge is "to advise and counsel the Affirmative Action Committee, the Affirmative Action Manager and senior management on multi-cultural issues."

On August 23 and 24, 1993, the Department of Human Services sponsored a forum with communities of color that developed ideas and formed committees on how the agency's services could be more responsive to these communities. The forum included representatives of: African American, aging, Asian-Pacific Islander, hearing impaired, persons with disabilities, Hispanic/Latino, Native American and sexual minority communities.

Strategy

State funding: Require agencies to comply with Minnesota's human rights laws in order to receive state funding.

Progress

This was also a recommendation in Minnesota Planning's *Racism and Equality Interim Report*. Although little work has been done that is directly related to this specific recommendation, some progress has been made in cultural diversity and state funding. While administering the family services collaboration grants, the Children's Cabinet asked two communities to develop inclusiveness plans for increased participation by com-

munities of color and small nonprofit organizations. Collaboration grant funding was made contingent on the inclusivity plan development.

Recommendation: Require schools to become active partners with parents, youth, and community agencies, social health services, businesses, and young people.

Strategy

Early childhood development: Make strong, effective culturally diverse early childhood development programs part of the mission of Minnesota's education system.

Progress

The Governor's 1993 State of the State address and the children's budget emphasized the need for strong, effective, culturally diverse early childhood development programs. In 1993, approximately 14,615 poor working families obtained needed child care services with state assistance. Efforts are underway to improve the quality of this care through expanding provider training, developing culturally relevant and special needs services and supporting provider accreditation programs. During fiscal year 1993, 119 provider training programs received funding and 41 culturally relevant programs, 18 special needs programs and 56 accreditation or certification programs were developed.

In addition, the Minnesota Children's Initiative provides for family and community partnerships to achieve improved school readiness and child development. Draft plans were developed by three communities to improve outcomes in this area.

Strategy

School readiness: Designate agency-level responsibility for school readiness. Action for Children and Minnesota 2000 should jointly develop a long-range initiative with specific action steps to address the school readiness of children. The state's business leaders, in conjunction with government and community leaders, should promote school readiness.

Progress

Action for Children has worked closely with Minnesota 2000 to promote learning readiness throughout the state. Minnesota 2000 is similar to America 2000, the national educational program that works with business and education leaders to create the public will for education reform at both the state and local levels. Action for Children has been designated the lead to help communities promote learning readiness.

Strategy

Integrated services: Provide strong incentives for the integration of school, health and social services for children, and provide training and technical assistance. Lift waivers to allow for joint funding.

Progress

In response to the recommendations from *Kids Can't Wait*, Challenge 2000 and Minnesota 2000, the co-location of services grant program was created to improve the links among schools and health and social services. Each project must involve health screening and referrals, mental health and family counseling, employment and training and other community services. Approximately \$600,000 was made available for this grant program from the Governor's Discretionary Funds in Drug Free Schools and Community Act and Chemical Abuse Prevention Program. In 1992, 13 service grants and nine planning grants were funded.

Minnesota is one of 22 states to receive a Head Start-state collaboration project grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The purpose of this grant is to bring the perspective, concerns and philosophy of Head Start to bear in the creation of state policies and systems that relate to children and their families. As a result of this grant, Cornerstone was created in the Department of Economic Security.

Local Cornerstone centers are funded through Minnesota Head Start Innovation grants. These local centers integrate Head Start programs with a comprehensive and coordinated system of support services for children and families. The presence of Head Start in the community collaborative ensures the inclusion of underserved and underrepresented people in the design and governance of community service systems.

The state family services collaboration planning and implementation grants provide an incentive for communities to coordinate services for children and families. The Children's subcabinet is developing a technical assistance framework and a plan for working with local communities.

Strategy

Shared facilities: Require joint location of programs, such as social service, health, recreation, library, and school, in all new or remodeled facilities. Give the commissioner of Education authority to withhold approval of plans for new or remodeled school facilities that do not include space for social, health and other youth services.

Progress

The commissioner of Education does not have any authority to withhold approval of new building if shared facilities are not included in the plan. However, the Department of Education encourages communities to use shared facilities and points out to them the benefits of shared staff, such as savings and the more efficient dissemination of information. The agency also administers the secondary facilities grant, which gives \$5 million to a school district to help build a new facility; the district receives another \$1 million if it co-locates with other services.

Several communities that were awarded family services implementation grants have plans to integrate services for families in one building. Some of these plans include locating family services sites within elementary schools and putting a cross-agency referral service in one location that also will use staff who are cross-trained in agency mandates, rules and regulations.

The Metropolitan Council and the Center for School Change held a conference on the issue of shared facilities in 1993.

Strategy

Choice of full-day programs: Create a full-day option in school for all children to age 12, offering learning, enrichment, recreation, community service and other youth activities in neighborhood and school settings.

Progress

This strategy has not been acted on.

Strategy

Career teacher link to families: Make the Career Teacher program, available to all school districts to link each family to the school. Career teachers are master teachers who want to advance in their profession yet continue in the classroom. Each child is assigned one career teacher who functions as educational case manager and who is primarily responsible for ensuring the school readiness of each student. The career teacher should be provided with an effective referral system for obtaining help for students who need it.

Progress

The Children's Cabinet awarded a family services collaboration implementation grant to the Hopkins School District to implement a family mentor/career teacher model of learning. In five elementary schools, a family mentor/career teacher will act as a resource, a guide and a mentor to families as their children move through the formal educational system. Among the responsibilities of the family mentor/career teacher will be to develop a blueprint for the family's learning, serve as a bridging agent during critical transition times from early childhood to kindergarten and grades six to seven, act as a catalyst within the traditional school system, and monitor the child's learning records and communicate with the family and other teachers.

Strategy

Program funding: Fully fund programs such as Head Start that are already proven to be effective. Implement a multiyear effort to ensure steady, supportable growth of such proven programs.

Progress

Action for Children participated in the development of Minnesota's successful application to receive a federal grant to fund the Cornerstone project. The project is funded at \$100,000 each year for five years.

In 1993, state funding for Head Start increased to \$25 million and federal funding increased to \$8.5 million for the biennium. About one-third of all children in poverty who are eligible for Head Start will be served in fiscal year 1994. The Minnesota Head Start Association has described full funding as sufficient funds to serve 100 percent of eligible children ages three to five, one-third of them in full-day, full-year Head Start, and sufficient funds to make program enhancements to meet local demands for service.

Strategy

Involve parents and youth: Fully involve youth and parents in decision-making in schools, including planning, evaluating and reporting committees, Minnesota Education Effectiveness Program teams and outcome-based education teams.

Progress

A lot of work has been done to integrate youth into the decision-making processes of state and local government and schools. The College of Education at Mankato State University coordinated a Leadership Research Project that focused on involving youth on policy-making boards and councils. In January 1993, 15 Minnesota organizations serving youth were selected to document their experiences. As a result of this research, a guide will be produced to help other organizations involve youth in decision making. The guide is expected to be released in 1995.

Several youth advisory councils have been created in various city and county governments across the state such as Marshall, Cambridge, Barnesville, Forest Lake, Apple Valley-Rosemount, Wayzata-Plymouth, Moundsview, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Olmstead and Dakota Counties. Some public school districts have youth involved in decision making, such as Worthington, Winona, Albert Lea Area, Lake of the Woods, Crosby-Ironton, Park Rapids, Eden Prairie, St. Louis Park, Forest Lake, Rosemount and Chaska Area. Statewide efforts to include youth in policy and decision making include the 4-H Advisory Council, Action for Children's Youth Advisory Council and the Attorney General's Youth Task Force on Juvenile Justice.

Recommendation: Overhaul the state service delivery system to produce better results for children and families. Require improved coordination of local, county, state, and federal government programs. Make programs and services more accountable for results. Discontinue ineffective or inefficient services, and support services that produce results.

Strategy

Eliminate barriers: Eliminate state and local regulations that limit the ability of parents, youth, social service professionals, teachers and community members to become partners with teachers in the educational program.

Progress

This strategy has not been acted on yet.

Strategy

Create a Children's Cabinet: Create a cabinet-level policy council of agency heads from the departments of Administration, Corrections, Education, Finance, Health, Human Services, Economic Security and Public Safety and the Housing Finance Agency and Minnesota Planning. The Children's Cabinet will be headed by a senior member of the Governor's staff who would be responsible for aggressively advocating for children and families. The Children's Cabinet will serve the following functions:

- Provide continuing government leadership on issues affecting children and families and strive to realize Minnesota's vision of community concern.
- Work in partnership with Action for Children to foster public-, private- and nonprofit-sector involvement in children's issues, to create a common work plan to achieve major policy goals and to lead a public awareness campaign to build support for Minnesota's children and families.

- Develop a state strategy and budget for children and plans for implementation. Member agencies would coordinate their efforts and identify gaps and duplication. The cabinet would oversee a regular goal-planning and assessment process within each state agency and department.

- Develop a standing committee to promote racial and cultural diversity across state agencies and establish close relationships with county government, school boards and community groups, such as the Council on Black Minnesotans, the Indian Affairs Council, the Spanish Speaking Affairs Council and the Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans.

- Work with Action for Children and other organizations to stimulate local commitment and action on children and family issues by communicating major goals and expectations and providing resources and incentives for communities. The cabinet would establish a mechanism to review waivers of state rules that impede local collaboration.

- Review the need for and supervise existing inter-agency committees and projects. Interagency committees would regularly report to the Children's Cabinet to further budget and policy objectives. Staff within state agencies would be made available to work with the cabinet.

Progress

The Children's Cabinet has been in operation for two years. Creation of the cabinet was a major recommendation of Action for Children in *Kids Can't Wait*. Governor Carlson immediately implemented the recommendation, and the 1993 Legislature adopted legislation formalizing the cabinet's membership and providing \$400,000 in funding over the biennium. The Legislature also assigned the cabinet a number of significant tasks: administering the family services collaboration grants, participating in a joint governance study and planning for an integrated children's services data base.

In 1993, the state began integrating the outcome measurements from *Minnesota Milestones* into the state budget process. The goal was to begin the transition to a performance-based budget for all state agencies — including those with major responsibilities for children's services — so that agency funding can be tied to producing desired outcomes. A performance-based budget system, coupled with regular reporting on out-

comes, is a way to ensure public accountability for results.

The Children's Cabinet prepared a state budget for children in 1992. The cabinet established a set of goals and service-delivery principles to guide its work. After conducting a multiagency analysis of each program and the budget requests, the cabinet developed an integrated budget for children's services that was forwarded to the Governor. The total children's budget was not reduced, despite a budget deficit, and the Governor pledged that the state would commit more resources to children and youth than it did in the previous biennium. Almost all of the cost changes recommended went to preventive services.

The Children's Cabinet and the Legislative Commission on Children, Youth and Their Families met jointly to conduct a study of state-level governance options for children and family services. In an unprecedented example of collaboration between the executive and legislative branches, the cabinet and the commission jointly agreed to fund a staff position to conduct the study.

The Children's Cabinet was given the responsibility of developing procedures and distributing funds to the applicants of the planning and implementation grants for family services collaboratives. The Children's Cabinet

distributes the \$8.5 million fund created to provide incentives for communities to plan and implement major service delivery reforms for children and family services.

The Minnesota Legislature has given state agencies the authority to grant waivers of regulations for local family services collaboratives when they can show that the waiver would enable them to provide better services. The newly formed Board of Government Innovation and Cooperation can also grant waivers of state regulations. It is expected that a streamlined waiver process will permit more flexibility in funding, which will make it easier for families to get services and for agencies to provide the assistance families need.

Legislation passed in 1993 requires several Children's Cabinet departments to report back to the Legislature in 1995 with a joint study on an integrated children's services data base. The Legislative Commission on Children, Youth and Their Families has expressed interest in working with state agencies on this study.

The Children's Cabinet provided leadership for Minnesota's intensive planning work for The Pew Charitable Trusts Children's Initiative. The cabinet was responsible for ensuring that statewide planning activities and preparation of the written application were completed.

Action for Children has provided a strong framework to guide Minnesota to responsible, effective children's policy development and continues to work on several fronts, including implementing service delivery reform; bringing integrated, comprehensive services into the schools; creating the public and political will to solve the pressing economic and social problems of children and families; and creating community environments that foster strong families and successful children.

n e x t s t e p s

Action for Children is helping communities to work together for children and their families by providing an incentive for community action and creating buy-in from businesses, nonprofit organizations, government, youth and education professionals through recognizing initiatives that focus on results; developing procedures for service delivery and redesign, and providing assistance; developing baseline data to profile the community and track progress; and continuing to create a public awareness of issues affecting children and families.

Over the next year, Action for Children will review the recommendations and strategies in *Kids Can't Wait*, monitoring progress and adjusting the strategies as needed. It also will update the indicator data and determine if other indicators should be tracked. Working with local communities will continue to be a major focus for Action for Children. Among its activities will be encouraging public discussion and awareness of issues affecting children and families, and helping to provide technical assistance to communities for such efforts as involving the private and nonprofit sectors in redesigning services.