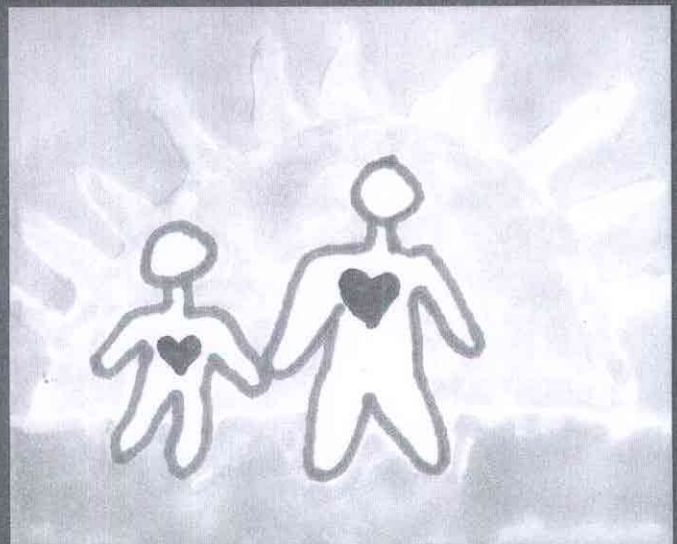


CASEY
FAMILY
SERVICES

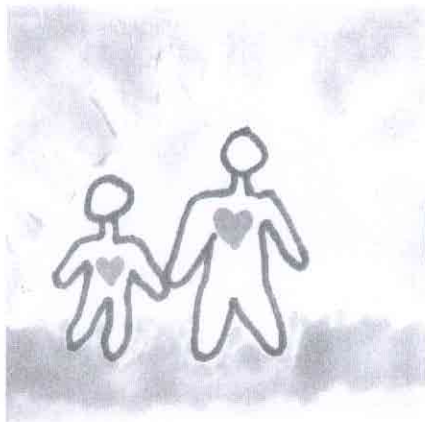
FIVE-YEAR PLAN



1998 — 2002

SERVING CHILDREN *and* FAMILIES *in* NEED

Casey Family Services is a fully licensed and accredited non-profit child welfare agency providing a broad range of programs to meet the changing needs of vulnerable children and families. The operating arm of The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Casey Family Services works to improve the lives of at-risk children and strengthen families and communities. Established in 1976, Casey Family Services provides high-quality programs and services that advance positive child welfare practices and sound public policy. With divisions throughout New England and in Baltimore, Maryland, the Agency offers long-term and treatment foster care with special emphasis on assistance to youth transitioning from foster care into independent adulthood. In addition, Casey Family Services provides post-adoption services, family preservation, family reunification services, and family advocacy and support, as well as services and assistance to teen parents and to families affected by HIV/AIDS.



INTRODUCTION

Casey Family Services has more than 22 years of experience in working with vulnerable children and families. While our core program has been foster care, over the past ten years we have made significant strides in offering a broad range of programs and services to meet the comprehensive needs of children and families. Today, Casey Family Services also offers post-adoption services, family preservation, family reunification activities and services, family advocacy and support, and assistance to teen parents. Emerging programs focus on strengthening networks of family supports and services within communities, and on meeting the special needs of children and families affected by HIV/AIDS. In 1998, we embarked on an extensive process of review and planning to guide the next five years of our work, to strengthen and improve our service delivery system, and to continually strive to contribute to the child welfare field.

As part of our five-year strategy, we intend to refine and document our programs and practices and to share lessons learned and program models with others in the child welfare field. Through clearly articulated models that identify creative solutions and approaches to problems, document results, and identify costs, we hope to make major contributions to advancing child welfare practice and policy.

In this process and in all that we do, we will continually ask ourselves these core questions:

- What are we doing to advance positive practice and sound public policy?
- What are the components that make programs effective?
- What evidence indicates that these programs are effective and practical?
- What is Casey Family Services going to do to package and disseminate our work to others?

The process of formulating this blueprint for the future has been a positive collaborative experience for all of us, as well as a productive one for the Agency as a whole. We have learned much by having met with children and their families, foster and adoptive parents, and colleagues throughout the seven states where we work. We are indebted to everyone who has contributed time and energy to this important task, and who stands ready to help us achieve the ambitious goals we have set for the next century.

Our first priority is to find effective, sustainable solutions to the problems confronting children, families and communities.



The PLANNING PROCESS

The vision and goals outlined in this plan address the continually emerging and changing needs of two highly vulnerable populations: children who are in need of stable families, and families who are in need of stable, supportive communities. In order to create a framework to determine how we can best use our resources to improve outcomes for children and families, we established a steering committee that included former participants in Casey programs, foster parents, birth parents, community leaders and community organizations and representatives from the grant-making arm of The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Casey Family Services Board of Managers and Administration, each Casey Family Services division and the New England Association of Child Welfare Commissions and Directors. These 24 individuals energized the planning process with their creativity and ingenuity.

The process began with a discovery phase that included an in-depth review of Casey Family Services to identify potential areas of change. A key component of this phase was a detailed survey reflecting the views of 424 respondents who represented all levels of involvement with Casey Family Services. Respondents included foster parents, Casey

Family Services staff, public and private social service agency personnel and staff from other community agencies. Additionally, focus groups, including foster parents and foster care youth, were held in every division. The design phase involved the analysis of the information gathered, identification of key issues, clarification of the agency's direction and identification of options for future growth. A draft plan based on this careful analysis was tested against the feedback of key constituents and then revised. The final plan was presented to the Board of Managers and approved in December 1997.

The result of this work was a carefully restructured mission statement and set of core beliefs and principles.

Our work is grounded in the belief that the family is of paramount significance in the life of each child.



MISSION

Casey Family Services is committed to improving the lives of at-risk children and strengthening families and communities by providing high-quality, cost-effective services that advance both positive practice and sound public policy.

Values

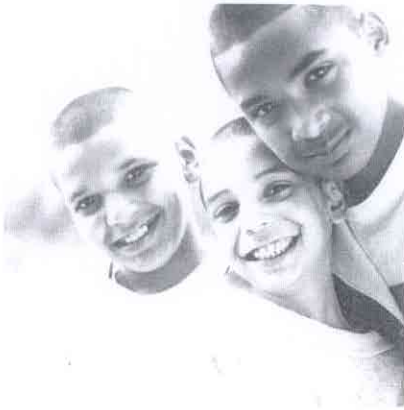
Casey Family Services recognizes that each child is unique and deserves an opportunity to grow into a responsible, productive, self-determining adult. We believe that children develop and learn best within a healthy family, surrounded by a caring, responsive, protective community. Our programs honor the diversity of individuals, families and communities and focus on their strengths.

Casey Family Services is committed to developing cost-effective, replicable program models that ensure the safety of children, promote family stability, continuity in relationships, and permanency in family life for children. We recognize the importance of linking our work with the efforts of others—birth families, foster families and adoptive families; public and private agencies; citizen associations; legislative bodies; schools; and religious organizations.

Beliefs and Guiding Principles

Casey Family Services, therefore, designs its programs and services in accordance with the following beliefs and principles:

1. All children deserve the highest quality of service that ensures, above all, their safety and well-being.
2. The culture and strength of individual families and children must be honored, respected and reflected in our program approaches.
3. Stability of relationships and permanence in family settings are essential components in achieving good outcomes for children.
4. Every child has an enduring connection to his birth family—a connection that should be supported to the optimal level appropriate for the child and family.
5. All children and families deserve equal access to services.
6. The children and families receiving services must be an integral part of the multi-disciplinary team that develops the service delivery model.
7. Service delivery models must reflect the changing needs of families.
8. Children develop best in strong families supported by strong communities.
9. All members of the community share a responsibility to support and strengthen families and community systems and services.
10. Research and lessons learned have the greatest value when they are shared among all who have an interest in strengthening children and families.



OPERATING GOALS *and* OBJECTIVES

In order to achieve our mission and faithfully adhere to our core beliefs and principles, Casey Family Services has established four primary goals, each with clear objectives for delivering high-quality, cost-effective services to children and families.

I: Achieve good family and child outcomes through the delivery of high-quality, cost-effective, family-centered services

Objectives:

- Define and articulate the conceptual and philosophical foundations of our work and services
- Provide a safe, stable, nurturing, and enriching environment to children in foster care
- Work with families and communities in activities that promote economic and social well-being
- Provide services to strengthen family functioning and prevent family disruption
- Assure that our direct practice is relevant, culturally appropriate, sensitive to human diversity, and responsive to community needs
- Provide integrated, flexible services that meet the changing needs of families and assist children and adolescents to prepare for adult living
- Track outcomes and evaluate program effectiveness

II: Assume a proactive role regarding family and child issues in neighborhoods and communities as part of larger community, state and national efforts

Objectives:

- Work in partnership with neighborhood residents, state and local government agencies, community agencies, task forces, collaborators, and families in advocacy efforts on key issues that affect families and children
- Increase our visibility in the communities where we work
- Consider the development of new service sites in response to identified community needs
- Work with the grant-making arm of The Annie E. Casey Foundation on identified community-building and systems change initiatives

III: Influence child welfare practice and policy directed at improving family and child well-being in collaboration with the grant-making arm of The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Objectives:

- Learn from colleagues within and outside of the Agency
- Document and disseminate knowledge about best practices and strategies
- Provide key constituencies with opportunities to exchange information on issues affecting children, families, and communities
- Advance cost-effective, outcome-based, replicable, family-centered service models
- Work in partnership with public and private agencies to address practice and policy issues of common concern

BUILDING *the* BASE

IV: Maintain sufficient capacity and resources to support the implementation of agency goals

Objectives:

- Assess and adapt our organizational structure in order to meet the changing needs of the Agency
- Continue the development of the Management Information System and information technology upgrade
- Assure that human resource policy and practice is supportive of, and responsive to, staff in order to maximize their potential and productivity
- Strengthen integration and communication across all levels and locations of the Agency
- Provide optimal training and professional development opportunities for all staff and foster families
- Strengthen coordination and communication with the grant-making arm of The Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Build the capacity to articulate our programs and positions clearly and effectively to key audiences

Our aim is to participate in the creation of a constellation of supports for children and families.

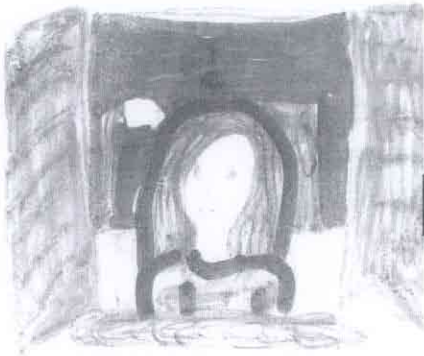
Research

The research agenda during the next five years will address the Agency-wide areas of emphasis, as well as other needs. In the area of foster care, the follow-up study of alumni who are now young adults will be complemented by a multi-phase study of the cost-effectiveness of foster care conducted in collaboration with the state and another private provider. Aggregate cross-sectional data on treatment foster care will be compiled using program performance measures and indicators of outcomes in three core domains: family continuity, health, and well-being. In the area of post-adoption services, a database for the information gathered by the program is being developed to facilitate the compilation and reporting on aggregate information. In the HIV/AIDS area, the goal is to put together reports that describe the lessons learned in the design and initial implementation of the program.

Other areas to which research efforts will be directed during the next five years include:

- Program evaluation efforts in all programs
- Redesign of the family reunification program
- Youth development/independent living area
- Compiling Achenbach information
- Standardized measures for program evaluation and performance uses
- Managed care outcomes
- Technical assistance and support to other projects

In all of these areas, a major emphasis will be on improving the quality of data, making data collection processes more efficient, and promoting the use of data for program development purposes.



AREAS of EMPHASIS...continued

- Careful child and family matching
- Qualified, experienced staff
- Extensive foster parent education and supervision
- Extensive array of foster parent supports
- Family connections maintained and strengthened

Outcomes that indicate effectiveness:

- Successful transition into family care for previously/potentially institutionalized population
- Sufficient stable foster homes to provide care for very disturbed children
- Cost-effectiveness

Advocacy goals:

- Increase the acceptance and use of treatment foster care as a mainstream response to addressing the needs of severely emotionally disturbed children in out-of-home care
- Stimulate the development of high-quality, relevant models for recruiting, training, and supporting treatment foster care families

Strategies:

- Prepare and complete a detailed outcome and cost study
- Prepare a "cost of failure" analysis that compares costs of the Casey Family Services treatment pro-

gram with costs incurred to society in the absence of services and supports to children

- Create case studies that document the need for treatment foster care and describe the components of the Casey Family Services treatment model
- Develop and implement a dissemination plan for promoting our model that includes conference presentations and targeted articles for academic journals, child welfare association newsletters and the popular press
- Prepare and market materials, for use by states and agencies that describe the Casey Family Services model for recruiting, training and supporting treatment foster parents

Post-Adoption Services

Casey Family Services has over seven years' experience in offering post-adoption services to the community and many more years in providing post-adoption services to Casey foster families who have adopted their foster children. Additionally, we will continue to work on both regional and national levels to raise awareness about this issue and influence policy and practice.

In December 1996, Casey Family Services sponsored a very successful regional conference on post-adoption services. The report from this conference has been disseminated nationally and has had a very positive response. The new Adoption and Safe Families Act

puts an emphasis on expedient permanency planning and provides incentives for adoption. Casey Family Services is well-positioned to be a catalyst for raising awareness about the need for post-adoption services and for bringing people together to share knowledge and experience concerning best practice and cutting-edge solutions to complex adoption-related issues.

Our expectation is to more clearly define our model through a description of our client population, client needs, services, supports and strategies, short-range outcomes, and follow-up data on outcomes.

GOAL: Develop innovative, cost-effective, replicable service models that stabilize and preserve adoptive families

Program characteristics that make post-adoption services successful:

- A strengths-based, family systems approach
- An array of service options
- Support and help parents advocate for the needs of their children
- Extensive community education

Outcomes that indicate effectiveness:

- Few adoption disruptions
- Improved behavior of children
- Adoptive parents who advocate for and access needed resources

- Expanded community supports for adoptive families
- Increased community understanding and acceptance of adoption
- Cost-effectiveness

Advocacy goals:

- Support and advance policies and practices that encourage adoption of children in foster care
- Promote broader acceptance and use of post-adoption support models that strengthen families and prevent unnecessary adoption disruptions

Strategies:

- Prepare and complete outcomes and costs study
- Prepare a written description of Casey Family Services post-adoption services model and costs to assist other agencies with replication
- Develop a manual that helps adoptive parents access needed community resources and become stronger advocates on behalf of their adopted children
- Continue to track adoption policy activities in states where Casey Family Services works and complete plans to provide technical assistance and support to policy makers, task forces and others that are responding to recent federal child welfare legislation on adoption
- Prepare strategy that allows us to quickly and effectively take advantage of opportunities to provide invited Congressional testimony



INTO *the* 21st CENTURY

Today, families living at the margins of our society face unprecedented challenges in their struggle to build for their children an oasis of stability in often uncertain, even chaotic surroundings. Reflecting mounting pressures on these families, children today are entering the foster care system more traumatized and emotionally disturbed than ever before. At the same time, there also is more demand for national, state and local public and private agencies to design programs and services that are innovative and effective in both protecting children while strengthening the families and communities responsible for their well-being.

Casey Family Services embraces the challenges ahead. We look forward to expanding our strong, child-centered and family-focused programs, and to contributing to the national dialogue. We are eager to actively participate in efforts to organize resources and engage new partners in a long-term sustained commitment to transform distressed communities into family-supportive environments. Our ultimate goal, as always, is to provide the best of our skills, knowledge and experience to assist parents and communities to guide their children safely through childhood and adolescence and to help them become healthy, productive, involved citizens of a more enlightened society tomorrow.

Our vision is to play a significant, supportive role in one of the next century's most important events: the forging of strong neighborhoods and healthy communities in which families will be better able to care for their children.



“Our horizon is as distant as our mind's eye wishes it to be. Let us get a clear understanding of our objectives. Only then will we be able to map out the highways and skyways and byways that will take us there.”

—James E. Casey
Founder,
United Parcel Service,
The Annie E. Casey Foundation &
Casey Family Services

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