

CHILD WELFARE ADVOCACY COALITION

MOST EGREGIOUS CUTS

Based on the Governor's January, 2010 Budget Proposal

Keeping Kids Out of Foster Care: \$10,603,000 GF-S Cut

Home Based Services – (\$654,000 GF-S)

Home Based Services funds are used to purchase supplemental services for families who are at risk of placement or in need of reunification from foster care. Services may include parent aides, counseling, supports for basic needs (e.g. clothing, shelter, transportation, etc) and the like.

The Governor's proposed budget reduces funds for HBS by 10% for the remainder of the biennium. The reduction means that fewer resources will be available for families. Additional reviews and tighter cost controls will be put into place to manage the reduction.

Crisis Family Intervention – (\$2,949,000 GF-S)

Crisis Family Intervention (aka FRS phase 2) is a contracted service for 12 hours of counseling and crisis intervention for families with youth 12 – 17 years of age. The goal of the services is to maintain the family as a unit (prevent the need for out of home care).

The Governor's proposed budget eliminates the program. In FY2008, 1600 families were served through this program. Without this resource, it is expected that a portion of these youth will end up on the streets and/or go into foster care.

Family Preservation Services – (\$5,892,000 GF-S)

FPS provides in-home counseling, skill building and support for families whose children are at a substantial likelihood of being placed into foster care. FPS is also used to reunify children with their families following placement. Evaluations conducted by the Office of Children's Administration research from 1997 – 2003 indicated the program appears to be effective at helping families reduce risk factors and connect with ongoing resources. (No control group research has been conducted on WA's model of FPS.)

The Governor's proposed budget reduces FPS by 50% over the remainder of the biennium. This cut means that over 1700 families would not receive a service that could avoid the need for out of home care. This reduction is contrary to the goal of reducing placements and length of stay in care.

Comprehensive Assessment Program –(\$924,000 GF-S)

CAP provides assessment and service recommendations for high risk case, typically involving children age birth to 12, who have complex issues such as serious physical (abuse, severe/chronic neglect, and sexual abuse. Cases referred to CAP are those where the caseworker is extremely concerned and unsure how to proceed with safety and service planning for families. CAP targets voluntary service cases and is available at the front end of the case, with the overall goal of reducing recurrence of child maltreatment.

The Governor's proposed budget eliminates the Comprehensive Assessment Program. **This includes \$276,000 in federal funds.** CAP began in Feb, 2009 and is available in regions 1,4,5, and 6. It is being piloted in region 3. The focus of the program is on increasing child safety in higher risk cases, creating service plans that allow children to remain safely in their homes, and reducing the recurrence of child maltreatment. If the program is eliminated it is anticipated that more children would be placed in out of home care.

Elimination of the Council for Children and Families – (\$184,000 GF-S)

The Council for Children and Families is a 28 year old, stand-alone agency, dedicated to the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

Since its inception, CCF has been a leader in promoting child and family development and raising awareness about abuse and neglect. CCF is funded by the state's general fund, the federal Community Based Child Abuse Prevention program, the Children's Trust fund and private donations.

The Governor's proposed budget eliminates the CCF. Doing so means the loss of expertise in the most effective ways to prevent child abuse and neglect; the work being done with community-based agencies to help ensure that what they are doing is achieving the desired results; the knowledge base that exists related to evaluating and improving programs; and critical efforts such as the Shaken Baby Syndrome and Postpartum Depression public awareness campaigns.

The Governor's proposed budget also transfers the child abuse/neglect prevention functions from the CCF to the Children's Administration at DSHS. The impact of the transfer could likely mean that prevention will not receive the focus it needs as the

mission of the Children's Administration is first to protect abused and neglected children, to support the efforts of families to care for and parent their own children safely, and to provide quality care and permanent families for children in partnership with parents and kin, Tribes, foster parents and communities. Further, given the shortage of critical resources within the Children's Administration, it is possible that dollars intended for prevention conducted by community-based agencies would be redirected to more deep-end services.