

# Child protective services

[Family](#), [Children](#)



CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES REFORM 1 INTRODUCTION Child Protective Services (CPS) is a complex system of assessments, investigations, and conclusions. CPS is the central agency in each communitieschild abuseand neglect service system. It is responsible for ensuring that preventative, investigative, and treatment services are available to children and families endangered by child abuse and neglect. As a result, CPS workers must perform a variety of functions when responding to situations of child maltreatment and play a variety of roles throughout their involvement with child protective clients.

Reporting a suspect case of child maltreatment to the local CPS agency (or a family member's own request for help with the problem) initiates the CPS response process. Once the intake is completed, an investigative process is done, and then the initial assessments and services planning processes are completed. Then the stage is set for implementation of ongoing services(Schene)(1). This description of the process of child protective services sounds acceptable and workable. However, an increasing number of child abuse and neglect cases have presented themselves in recent years.

According to Jane Waldfogel, a writer for Child Welfare, about three million children were reported to the CPS in 1997, a more than fourfold increase over the number reported just 20 years earlier. In our society today, with increased violence and agitation the number has risen dramatically again. SHE ALSO 2 stated that caseloads of child protection workers increased dramatically in response to widespread concerns about CSA (child sexual abuse)(Waldfogel)(2). The number of children coming into the child welfare

system remain at unacceptably high levels because of substance abuse, poverty, joblessness, housing, and other social problems.

This increasingly high number of reports turning into caseloads for social workers has combated the effectiveness of the above CPS process. The average social worker handles approximately 135 cases. The high number of caseloads per social worker ratio is driving down the original intended purpose of CPS. There is also the issue regarding gaps of protection for the children. Twenty-five to fifty percent of deaths from child abuse involve children who were previously reported to authorities for suspected maltreatment.

Tens of thousands of other children suffer serious injuries while under the supervision of CPS (Besharov)(3). At the same time, overreaction to complaints of abuse plagues the system. Children have been removed from parental custody and placed in foster care for weeks and months based on the most cursory investigations. Sometimes the children were removed on the basis of unvalidated complaints. Many courts have begun to find that when CPS employees fail to do their jobs well, the agencies and the employees may be liable for resulting injuries.

There have been some setbacks though. For example, in 1989, the U. S. Supreme Court held that the failure to protect a child who had been reported to CPS as in danger and who was under the agency's supervision through home visitation, was not an actionable claim under § 1983 of the Federal Civil Rights Act. The case was *DeShaney v. Winnebago County Department of Social Services*(4). This history of foster care as child

protection is quite recent, expanding into its modern core components as a result of a law passed by Congress in 1961.

As the National Coalition for Child Protection Reform (NCCPR)(5) points out in a Child Welfare Timeline on their website ([www.nccpr.org](http://www.nccpr.org)), the tension between placing children out of the home and preserving and restoring the family has proven to be the decisive struggle in child protection. As a result of decisions made during the Presidencies of Reagan and the senior Bush, undermining of support for family preservation and strengthening of incentives for foster care placement effectively reversed the trend.

The result is that as of 2006 there are nearly 600,000 children in foster care nationwide. Statistics are given by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services in annual reports to Congress in their Adoption Foster Care Report (AFCARS) (6). According to another report by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Child Abuse and Neglect National Statistics (CANNS)(7), the composition of children in foster care is the result of, 10% sexual abuse, 19% physical abuse, and 63% neglect. The cost of foster care is a staggering \$9,400,000,000 annually.

It seems apparent that the CPS system is in dire need of reform. Funding for services needs to be completely overhauled. The higher caseload situation is compounded with reduced resources and lack of support for both families and workers. These issues are very important to all of us Americans. These children are our future. We as Americans need to look into what types of reform are needed and have these issues addressed to Congress. RESEARCH QUESTIONS During my research, I will be conquering questions that are important to this subject.

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Questions like, “ What types of reforms are currently in place? ” “ What type of education does a CPS worker need? ” “ How can we ensure expanded voluntary/preventive family support systems are adequately funded for child well-being systems to be put into place? ” “ What type of funding should be allocated by the federal government and state government? ” “ What type of liability does CPS have for inadequate protection? ” “ Which cases really belong with CPS and which ones should be more community- based cases? ”

**METHODS** My approach for my research will consist of multiple different facets.

I will be using archival information, including both journal articles and books, from the library. I will also be gathering information from various websites that pertain to Child Protective Services. The websites will be both federal and state governmental sites, child protective services reform sites, and psychiatric based perspective on children in protective services. In addition, I will be conducting a personal interview with Mrs. Tammy Houtari LMSW, ACSW, CAADC. Mrs. Houtari is a local social worker who has numerous years of experience working for local human services agencies.

Currently, she is an instructor here at Lake Superior State University and also has her own private practice. My hopes are that Mrs. Houtari will be able to enlighten me on many different facets of the social worker and their responsibilities to ensure the safety of children. I will also explore what other researchers have contributed to this issue and what they are currently saying. I will also examine present day statistics involving the funding for protective services. In addition, I will study the current plans for reform and

what types of community programs are available to children and their families.

Utilizing these various methods will provide me with a broad range of information and resources that will aide me in completing my research.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS Society's expectation of the child protection system is that it will keep children safe from serious injury and that it will reach out effectively to all legitimate community concerns for the safety of children. This expectation is not being met with the current system and resources, and it is the standard by which any newly designed communitybased system of child protection should be judged.

The bottom line for any system of child protection is that it assures safety for children, not just for those who make it into the system. It is for all those who are at risk in the nation's communities. Public support for any such system will depend primarily on whether it can assure that safety while simultaneously recognizing and respecting the responsibilities of parents to raise their own children.

6 WORK CITED (1) Patricia A. Schene, PhD, consultant in children and family services and is associated with the Graduate School of Public Affairs at the University of Colorado, Denver.

THE FUTURE OF CHILDREN – PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT, VOL. 8 – NO. 1, SPRING 1998. <http://www.americanhumane.org/children> (2) Jane Waldfogel, BA ME d MPA PhD, professor of social work and public affairs at the Columbia University School of Social Work. [http://futureofchildren.org/futureofchildren/publications/docs/19\\_02\\_09.pdf](http://futureofchildren.org/futureofchildren/publications/docs/19_02_09.pdf) (3) Douglas J. Besharov, Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research in Washington, D. C. and a visiting professor at the <https://assignbuster.com/child-protective-services-research-paper-samples/>

University of Maryland School of Public Affairs. See RECOGNIZING CHILD ABUSE: A GUIDE FOR THE CONCERNED (1990). <http://www.welfareacademy.org>

(4) DeShaney v. Winnebago County Department of Social Services Trial. Sec. 1983 of the Federal Civil Rights Act. [Http://www.welfareacademy.org](http://www.welfareacademy.org)

(5) National Coalition for Child Protection Reform. <http://www.nccpr.org>

(6) U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. The AFCARS Report Availability: <http://www.acfhhs.gov/programs/cb/dis/afcars/index.htm>

(7) Child Abuse and Neglect Statistics distributed by National Clearing House On Child Abuse/Neglect. [Http://www.calib.com/nccanch/pubs/factsheets/canstats.com](http://www.calib.com/nccanch/pubs/factsheets/canstats.com)