

ECTOR COUNTY CHILDREN'S SERVICES



1975 ANNUAL REPORT
TEXAS DEPARTMENT of PUBLIC WELFARE

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Staff of Children's Services

DPW
UNIT 22

Martin Theophilus, Supervisor
Bruce Carter, Juvenile Worker
Kathy League, Juvenile Worker
Pat Jones, Intake Worker
Chad Spears, Intake Worker
Gloria Godfrey, Intake Worker
Linda Hannah, Unit Steno
Donna Malone, Clerk Typist
Ginnie Storey, Clerk Typist

DPW
UNIT 21

Jane Conner, Supervisor
Billie O'Dowdy, Foster Care Worker
Beverly Mahon, Foster Home Licensing Worker
Gail Goodrum, On-going Worker
James Allison, On-going Worker
Jean Chapman, On-going Worker
Susie Kimble, On-going Worker
Sylvia Ramirez, Case Aide
Shirley Muery, Unit Steno
Patsy Prater, Clerk Typist
Jill Marrs, Clerk Typist

The staff of Children's Services are salaried, administered, and trained by the State Department of Public Welfare. Their Program Supervision comes from Ms. Molly Whittington, Program Director for Social Services in Midland. The Ector County Staff is part of Region 2 of the State Department of Public Welfare headquartered in El Paso. The Social Services Regional Director is Mr. John Miller, and the Administrative Regional Director of Region 2 is Ms. Hazel Baylor, who recently replaced Mr. Tom Cragen, all of El Paso.

Children's Services is also funded locally by funds allocated for the Child Welfare Program from Ector County. The direction for the expenditures of these funds as well as liaison with the County is provided by the Ector County Children's Services Board. The Board's members are appointed for three year terms, by the Ector County Commissioner's Court. The present Board consists of the following members.

Children's Services Board

Dr. William D. Furst, Chairman
Mr. Keith Dial, Vice-Chairman
Mrs. Faye Connell, Secretary
Mrs. Shirley Rodman, Member
Mrs. Mary McDowell, Member
Mrs. H. H. Heap, Member
Mr. Joel B. Locke, Member
Reverend H. L. Steger, Member
Mr. Kellus Turner, Member
Mrs. Judy Lewis, Member
Mrs. Evelyn Almanza, Member

Members who also served during 1975 were, Mr. Jay Poynor, past Chairman, and Reverend Anthony Montez.

Description of Services

Ector County Children's Services is a jointly financed Child Protection Program by Ector County and the Texas Department of Public Welfare. Children's Services is primarily responsible for the investigation of complaints received regarding the neglect and abuse of children from 0 to 18 years. The services include working with children and families to insure the children are receiving adequate care with the goal of keeping the family together.

Most of Children's Services caseload involves younger children (under 10) who have been abused and neglected and who remain in their own home. At times it becomes necessary to remove children from their home because of dangerous circumstances. When this happens Children's Services continues to work with the parents at home and place the children in foster care to hopefully resolve the child care problems and reunite the family again. The staff also works with unwed mothers, who believe placing their child for adoption is in the child's best interest. Children's Services does not complete formal adoption studies for families wanting children. This is handled by an Adoption Worker, Mrs. Lynn Bass, also with the Department of Public Welfare, but who works out of the Midland Department of Public Welfare office. The staff completes Independent Court Adoption Reports ordered by the District Court on families who have a child placed by a source other than the Department of Public Welfare.

One of the most involved studies completed by Children's Services is the Disputed Custody Study. This is ordered by one of the District Courts and is an in-depth evaluation of two or more homes (parents, grandparents, etc.) to determine the best home for the child. (This usually involves divorce situations.)

Also the staff works with pre-delinquent older children to prevent their having to be handled by the Juvenile Courts. Children's Services maintains a cooperative program with the Ector County Juvenile Department to assist in the proper handling of delinquents and pre-delinquents.

Children's Services maintains a number of foster homes for the children that can not remain in their own home. A family who applies to us to become foster parents is involved in a study to determine if foster care is appropriate for them. More foster parents are needed in Ector County, especially for school age children.

Children's Services has fewer resources than we have had in several years. This forces the workers to leave children in their own environment who might otherwise be removed for their protection. We now have 14 licensed foster homes and would like to double this amount by the end of 1976.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our appreciation to all the local service agencies who assisted us in providing services to our families. There were also many persons who helped by identifying situations involving children and parents who needed our help during 1975. These included the local medical professionals, law enforcement personnel, educators, and many more.

We are very grateful to the various County departments that assisted us through their services; The County Attorney's Office whose attorneys represented us in cases we presented to the court, the Auditor's Office, Purchasing, District Clerk's Office and many more.

We especially thank the 1975 Ector County Commissioner's Court without whose support many of our services would not be possible. The Court for 1975 included:

Ector County Commissioner's Court

Honorable Joe Connally, County Judge

Commissioners

Erskin Wunsch	Precinct Number 1
Joe Johnson	Precinct Number 2
Julian Pressly	Precinct Number 3
Salvador Guerrero	Precinct Number 4

The District Courts hear all protective service cases that become so serious that only court intervention will prevent further damage to the children involved. The Honorable Judges C. V. Milburn and R. L. McKim have heard numerous cases in the past year and have been very objective in giving decisions regarding the families involved.

The Year MCMLXXV

Several changes occurred during 1975 that effected the services of Children's Services. The staff was enlarged from four to twelve casework positions with a total of six clerical support positions all divided between two supervisors. This staff was specialized into four groups; Substitute Care, Intake, On-going, and Juvenile services. The caseloads have leveled out at a workable 25 to 30 cases per worker as compared to 50 each a couple of years ago.

Children's Services now has tenured staff who are able to deal effectively with the protection of children. Many people do not realize that protective services is not just an "eight to five" job of "helping" people. The staff must be available 24 hours a day and averages 60 after hour protective service calls per month. The workers must be capable of handling hostile clients who have not requested or want services from us. Few protective service workers have not been threatened and some have even been shot at. They must be able to explain why our services are necessary in a manner to gain the clients co-operation. This differs from other social work jobs where work is done with clients who ask for help or are voluntary. They must evaluate situations to determine whether or not a child should remain in the home. Is the complainant really concerned about the children or just trying to use this service to harass an ex-spouse? The wrong decision could cause the child serious injury - possibly even death.

The workers must be familiar with the Texas Family Code as it applies to protective services. They must be able to work with attorneys and judges when it is necessary for a case to go to court, then testify in court giving their professional opinion as to what would be in the child's best interest. They must be familiar with medical problems of children and work closely with the medical community. Their ability to tap local resources for help is very necessary in providing protective services.

It is a difficult job to motivate parents to improve their child caring techniques and the workers must continually deal with disappointments such as, parents who just don't care or children who continually runaway. The decisions these protective service workers make every day effect what future the children involved will have. Other people rarely want to be involved, by either reporting problems they see or in supplying services that will help families that are experiencing problems. If these workers did not intervene, many of the children we see every month would not have the chance in life they deserve.

The workers must be familiar with the development of children and recognize deficiencies. The staff of Children's Services works with 400 to 500 children each month. Ninety percent of these children are in their own home. Approximately five percent of these children are in substitute care situations, (other than foster care). These situations include children's homes, ranches, and relatives. The remaining five percent are in foster care.

Hopefully foster care will be temporary and the child can be returned to the parents when appropriate.

Late in 1975 the Children's Services staff moved into new offices at 3603 Andrews Highway. Our telephone number was changed to 362-0464 (24 hour number). Also housed in this building are other divisions of the State Department of Public Welfare including; AFDC Family Services, Day Care Licensing, and Adult Services. The supervisor and foster home licensing staff for protective services in the outlying counties is also officed in the building. The remainder of the State Welfare staff (Financial and Food Stamps) is still officed at 2330 West 10th Street while the DPW/VR staff is at 701 East 7th Street with TRC.

A P P E N D I X

TABLE 1
 TOTAL NUMBER CHILDREN SERVED: 1965-1975
 ALL CHILDREN BY YEAR

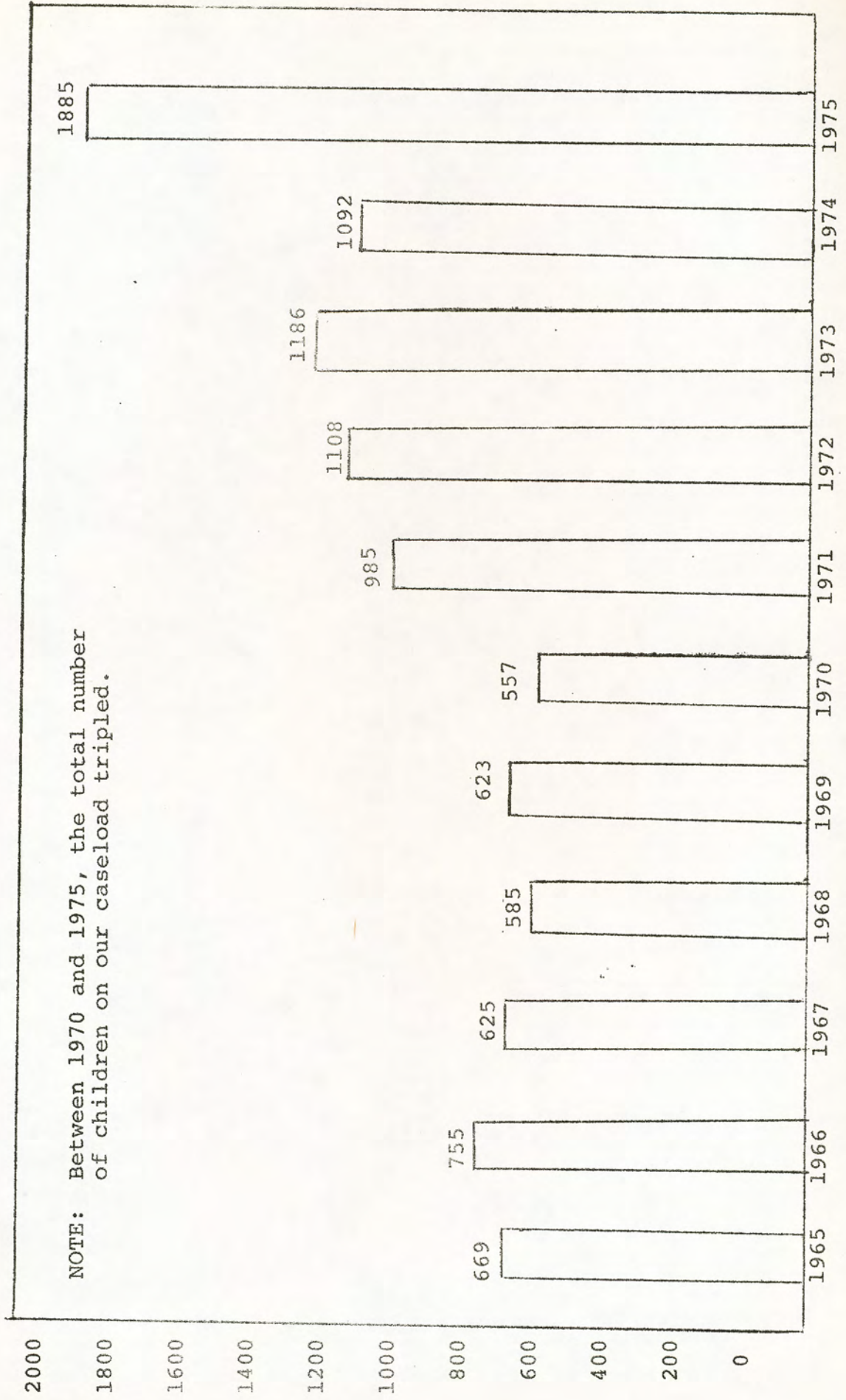


TABLE 2
SOURCE OF REFERRALS

Individuals	22%
Relatives	18%
Courts	14%
Law Enforcement	13%
Schools	8%
Dept. of Public Welfare	8%
Other	7%
Self	4%
Anonomous	3%
Medical	<u>3%</u>
	100%

TABLE 3

F U N D I N G

	<u>1975 Budget</u>	<u>1976 Budget</u>
Board & Lodging	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
Drugs - Medical	2,500.00	4,000.00
Clothing	2,400.00	2,400.00
In-County Travel	5,000.00	2,100.00
Out-County Travel	1,420.00	4,800.00
Office Supplies	900.00	1,000.00
Office Equipment Maintenance	200.00	300.00
Telephone	1,500.00	3,000.00
Dues - Subscriptions	250.00	250.00
Unwed Mothers	2,500.00	2,500.00
Machinery - Equipment	4,850.00	1,000.00
Sanitation Supplies	350.00	- 0 -
Building Materials	500.00	- 0 -
Electric	1,500.00	- 0 -
Water	200.00	- 0 -
Gas	300.00	- 0 -
Miscellaneous	<u>2,400.00</u>	<u>2,000.00</u>
TOTAL	\$41,770.00	\$38,350.00

(NOTE: Building expenses assumed by the State Department of Public Welfare)

During 1975, Ector County expended for Children's Services..... \$40,211.59

During the same period, the State Department of Public Welfare expended.....\$166,492.47
(This amount was for salaries only)