

# CENTER ON FATHERS, FAMILIES, AND PUBLIC POLICY

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## CALIFORNIA POLICY BRIEFING

March 2003 • Vol. 2, No. 2

### Advocates Express Concern Over Proposed Cuts to Child Care Services

Governor Davis has proposed substantial cuts to California's Child Care Programs in order to rectify the current budget deficit (see the January

2003 *California Briefing* from CFFPP for a more complete examination of social service programs potentially affected by this proposal). Cuts include elimination of Stage 3 child care, which is non-time-limited assistance available to parents exiting CalWORKS until they reach 75% of the state's median income. Without this program, parents are guaranteed eligibility for child care assistance for only two years after leaving the rolls. The elimination of Stage 3 child care would automatically disqualify approximately 55,000 eligible families and result in savings to the state of \$108.8 million. In addition, the governor has proposed switching the assignment of child care program management and eligibility determination from the state to counties, raising concerns over guarantee of quality services, susceptibility to county budget deficits, and differences in consistency and equity of care between counties. Advocates protest Governor Davis' proposals based upon concerns over loss of needed work enabling supports for women post-welfare (particularly at a time when women are forced off the rolls through life-time limits on welfare receipt), and the need for developmentally appropriate quality preschool programs for low-income children. On the contrary, the state has shown a need for increased funding and support for child care programs, as 280,000 eligible families were denied services and placed on waiting lists in fiscal year 2000-2001 (please see the MDRC report in this issue which includes data on unmet need for child care services among welfare leavers in Los Angeles). For details, please see the March 2003 brief, *How Will the Governor's 2003-04 Proposed Budget Affect California's Child Care and Development System?*, at [www.cbp.org](http://www.cbp.org), updated information from legal advocates at the Child Care Law Center at [www.childcarelaw.org](http://www.childcarelaw.org), and the 2/18/03 article in the Mercury News at [www.bayarea.com](http://www.bayarea.com).

For more information on child care issues (including quarterly legislative updates, updated policy analyses, and informational handbooks) in California, please visit the Child Care Law Center website at [www.childcarelaw.org](http://www.childcarelaw.org).

Finally, please see the recently released data from the Child Development Division Subsidized Child Care Data 2000 California Department of Education at

[www.cde.ca.gov/cyfsbranch/ms/msreports.htm](http://www.cde.ca.gov/cyfsbranch/ms/msreports.htm) for data on client demographics, enrollment by program, and income distribution of child care assistance users.

### Research Available on Los Angeles Welfare Leavers

Particularly relevant in a year when California's first families have hit their lifetime limits for CalWORKS, new research is available from the

Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) on the status of welfare recipients who left the rolls in 1996 and 1998 (both pre- and post-welfare reform). Hired by the federal government to assess the effects of welfare reform in select cities around the U.S., MDRC surveyed 27,000 families in Los Angeles to assess employment,

earnings, and material wellbeing without the assistance of cash aid. Almost half (48% in 1996 and 41% in 1998) did not work at all in the year after they left welfare. Only a third of the post-welfare reform group worked the entire year after leaving the rolls. Those working were earning an average hourly wage of \$8.40 and on average not increasing their earnings over the year, with one-fifth earning below minimum wage. Though child care was cited as a barrier to work, less than one-fifth of women reported receiving assistance with child care. The majority of families (54%) lived in households below the poverty threshold. Families reported material hardship in the forms of food insecurity (45%), high housing expenses with many paying rent costs over 50% of income, and difficulty for one-third of respondents accessing needed medical or dental care. Though substantially more families were enrolled in Medi-Cal in the post-welfare reform group, only about a third were receiving the \$260 monthly food stamp benefits for which they were eligible. It is important to note that those families surveyed left the rolls for reasons of higher earnings, sanctions, or decision to leave the rolls, and so may be different from those families who involuntarily reach their time limits this year. Please see the full report at [www.mdrc.org/Reports2002/tanf\\_core/post\\_tanf\\_core.pdf](http://www.mdrc.org/Reports2002/tanf_core/post_tanf_core.pdf).

**New Resources Available to Assist Clients with Child Support Complaints, Welfare Time Limits**

- The National Center for Youth Law in Oakland recently published guides for both noncustodial and custodial parents on how to make complaints on mismanagement of their cases by local child support offices. The guides explain state guarantees of rights in the processing of child support cases on issues such as calculation of arrears, crediting of payments, reviewing of cases for downward modifications, and reviewing of complaints within specified time (for noncustodial parents), and improper closings of cases, failing to credit payments to parent, and investigating complaints within specified periods of time (for custodial parents). The information sheets are available at [www.youthlaw.org](http://www.youthlaw.org).
- Both the Los Angeles Coalition to End Hunger & Homelessness and the Western Center on Poverty Law have produced guidebooks for clients and advocates to assist families in the transition from welfare for those adults reaching their life-time limits on adult receipt of cash aid this year (please see the January 2003 *California Briefing* from CFFPP for coverage of time limits). The guides present information on how much families can expect to lose, eligibility and the process to pursue exemptions that the state has been found not to automatically apply, client eligibility for exceptions to time limits, and support services for which recipients are eligible. In addition, one-page flyers summarizing the above information are available to post around communities, and language-specific work sheets to determine eligibility for exemptions can be used by clients to present to caseworkers to review their cases. *The People's Guide to The CalWORKS 60-Month Limit and 5-Year Time Limit on CalWORKS* are available at [www.lacehh.org](http://www.lacehh.org) and [www.wclp.org](http://www.wclp.org).

**Two New Reports Available Documenting Significant Barriers to Work Among the CalWORKS Population**

Children and Family Futures, and the Family Violence Prevention Fund, has released two new reports analyzing the extent of alcohol and drug addictions, mental health

The California Institute for Mental Health, in collaboration with

issues, and domestic violence among those receiving CalWORKS, and the effects of these issues on compliance with CalWORKS work requirements.

Based on survey data of participants in Kern and Stanislaus Counties:

- The authors estimate a prevalence of one-third for needed or obtained mental health services (with depression as the most common disorder) and nearly half suffering from resulting inhibition of daily activities; 29% prevalence of alcohol or drug abuse; and occurrence of domestic violence within the past year among 35% of women (with 18% experiencing “serious abuse” including physical injury, stalking, threats to life, and/or deliberate interference by abuser in work activities).
- Mothers experiencing the above hardships are less likely to receive cash aid and less likely to be working than other CalWORKS recipients.

A separate survey on the prevalence of domestic violence among women who receive CalWORKS found that:

- Approximately 80% of recipients had experienced abuse at some point in their lives; over half had a need for domestic violence services at some point in the previous three years; and only half of women experiencing serious abuse sought help from law enforcement, courts, a service agency, or health provider.
- Need for domestic violence services was found to result in substantially lower wages, a higher incidence of job loss, and fewer weeks of work during the previous year.
- Many abused women were also in need of mental health and/or substance abuse services.
- Only **three** of the six hundred thirty-two women surveyed had received the Family Violence Option waiver, exempting them from CalWORKS work requirements, in the last three years.

The reports, *TANF Families in Which There Are Alcohol or Other Drug, Mental Health, or Domestic Violence Issues: Child Wellbeing After One Year of Welfare Reform* and *Working Paper: Domestic Violence Prevalence and Effects on Employment in Two California TANF Populations* can be downloaded at [www.cimh.org](http://www.cimh.org).

**UCLA Analyzes Census Data on State’s Latino Population**

The UCLA Chicano Research Center has recently released an issues brief, *California’s Growing Latino Population: Census 2000*

*Dismantles Stereotypes*, which examines demographics of the state’s eleven million Latinos. Key findings that may be of use to those in state social services, policy, or research include the following:

- Fifty-seven percent of the state’s Latinos were born in the U.S. Of those foreign-born, one-quarter are naturalized citizens. Only seven percent of California’s Latinos arrived in the last five years.
- Most Californian Latino adults (67%) are bilingual (speak English “very well” or “well”). Monolingual English speakers outnumber monolingual Spanish speakers. Latino youth are especially English proficient, with only 2% of youth between ages five and seventeen years speaking only Spanish.
- Los Angeles’ total population is now 45% Latino. This population is geographically stable (91% had remained in the county for the last five years).
- The report encourages promotion of adult education programs since Latino high school and post-education graduation rates lag greatly behind that of the rest of the state’s population.

Please find the full report at [www.sscnet.ucla.edu/esp/csarc/policybrief/PB05.pdf](http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/esp/csarc/policybrief/PB05.pdf).

**Advocates Push to Expand Healthcare Access for Californian Children**

- The 100% Campaign (a coalition that promotes health coverage for every child in the state) released a recent report investigating the points in the state's medical coverage system where children eligible for Medi-Cal (California's Medicaid program) and Healthy Families (the state's Children's Health Insurance Program, SCHIP, covering low-income families with incomes slightly above the cutoff for Medi-Cal) are likely to lose coverage. Based on their findings, the group recommends that the state better coordinate Medi-Cal and Healthy Families for families working with or between both programs, simplify the annual renewal process, provide a variety of premium payment options, and offer consistent and clear communication to families. In addition, the report highlighted the important role of certified application assistants (CAA's) working through community groups to enroll families and assist those renewing or accessing their benefits. Two-thirds of recent enrollments were completed through CAA's. The CAA program faces extinction in Governor Davis' proposed budget. To oppose these cuts, or to access the report, *Children Falling Through the Health Insurance Cracks*, please visit [www.100percentcampaign.org](http://www.100percentcampaign.org).
- The UCLA Center for Health Policy Research issued two recent reports on barriers to healthcare access for the state's Latino and immigrant children populations. Data from the California Health Interview Study indicate that almost half of the state's children are immigrants or live in families with at least one immigrant parent (who may be a naturalized citizen, legal permanent resident, refugee, otherwise documented, or undocumented). Two-thirds of uninsured citizen children of undocumented parents are eligible for Medi-Cal and another quarter is eligible for Healthy Families. Families may be unaware of their eligibility or fear applying for services due to parents' illegal status. The report recommends improving outreach, expanding coverage to all low-income children regardless of status, and preventing budget cuts to safety-net providers who often provide urgent care to uninsured children. The relevant January and March 2003 health policy fact sheets can be accessed at [www.healthpolicy.ucla.edu](http://www.healthpolicy.ucla.edu).
- Undocumented children and working families ineligible for Medi-Cal or Healthy Families may be insured through growing county efforts to insure all children below 300% of the federal poverty level regardless of immigration status. Known as Healthy Kids, five counties (Santa Clara, Alameda, San Francisco, Riverside, and San Mateo) have used local funds to partner with nonprofit health maintenance organizations (HMO's) to provide comprehensive health, vision, and dental care to families at very low cost. Los Angeles and San Bernardino and four other counties have proposed similar program plans. The county programs, unheard of in the rest of the country, have garnered support from public health officials in other states and university health policy analysts, as a way to expand coverage to children with no other avenue for healthcare. Please see the 3/09/03 article of the Oakland Tribune at [www.oaklandtribune.com](http://www.oaklandtribune.com).
- The California Immigrant Welfare Collaborative has developed an outreach kit developed out of focus groups with immigrant parents of uninsured children eligible for Medi-Cal or Healthy Families. Based upon the parents' concerns

about eligibility and preferred methods of information receipt, materials were developed specific to Latino, Korean, and Vietnamese communities (all materials are also available in English). Advocates are encouraged to utilize these materials within their own communities, available at [www.nilc.org/ciwc](http://www.nilc.org/ciwc).