

YEAR END REPORT
DAKOTA COUNTY VOUCHER PROJECT
Submitted to the Governor's Planning
Council on Development Disabilities

October 30, 1990

Overview

Dakota County decided to test the feasibility of having families control the County funds allotted them through the Voucher Project. Strictly speaking, the project has nothing to do with vouchers (which would essentially be the County's promises to pay specific expenditures); it was actually families getting direct access to funds which had previously been controlled by Dakota County purchase of service policy.

One of the driving forces behind the project was the finding that many families had not been satisfied with the service providers they were obliged to use as clients of Dakota County. Some families who responded to a limited sample phone survey told County staff that they thought they would be able to get better services cheaper than what the County was paying its contractors. (See Attachment A for a summary of the survey.) On the strength of this notion the Voucher Project was born.

Dakota County decided to work with families with children under age 18 because of the relative ease of introducing such a concept to the families. Staff notified and recruited eligible families, asking them to complete application forms (See Attachment B for a form). Families who were interested were also encouraged to attend an information session about the project. It was reasoned that the Project had the best chance of succeeding if it included families who not only understood what they were getting into, but who were also motivated to take over account management responsibilities. Fourteen families eventually submitted applications. The project advisory committee, necessarily small at that early date in the project, reviewed the applications according to a list of criteria (see Attachment C). The Project only had room for 10 families, but there were twelve families who seemed suited. The ARC-Suburban representative on the group volunteered to provide the funds related to the project (for training and to pay for monthly reports) needed to add the other two families.

Participants

The situations of the families in the project were diverse. Attachment D summarizes some of the key aspects of the participants' situations. One thing not reflected in the spreadsheet summary is the difference among families in terms of ability and comfort with self-advocacy. Several of

the families were extremely knowledgeable about working within the Dakota County system, while others were newer to the system. One unintended benefit to the project was the support and information the experienced families were able to offer the less experienced ones.

The original Dakota County proposal articulated four outcomes for the project. They are reviewed below, along with information on each outcome.

Objective 1. Participating families will use a larger number of alternative or informal providers (family child care, informal respite care) during and after the project than before the project.

Outcome of Objective 1. Anecdotal evidence from journals and interviews with half of the participants suggests that families did use more informal providers. Parents liked the fact that they could hire people they know and trust, and could fire those who do not work out.

- One family hired a neighborhood student who knows the family well to care for the child with disabilities. "She is being wonderful - washing, ironing, doing dishes, baking cookies. I am beat when I get home, but the house is spotless and the kids fed!"
- Another family is working with a neighbor who has a college degree in special education to work with their son.
- A family which had rarely used County funds prior to the project used some of the funds to hire daughter's friends, as well as her own, to care for her son.
- One family is finally able to find respite care providers who will care for their child without disabilities, too.
- One family pointed out that the people they have hired are more "trainable" and willing to comply with family requirements than County contracted providers they have used in the past.

Of course, families still ran into problems with their providers occasionally. Thirty percent of families said they had experienced some trouble or turnover of providers after the project was operational. Ten percent of families said they had experienced "major" troubles or turnovers.

Objective 2. Participating families will have different patterns of respite care during and after the project than before it, e.g. will use less weekend care and more weekday/evening care.

Outcome of Objective 2. Project staff found it impossible to measure this objective accurately since it would have required much more detailed record keeping by families in order to provide reliable data. However, all six families interviewed said that flexibility of expenditures had greatly increased as a result of the project.

Object 3. Participating families will express higher levels of satisfaction with their provider arrangements than before the project. Some examples of satisfaction which will be monitored include: parents' abilities to pursue personal and professional objectives; parents' judgments about how children adjust to providers.

Outcome of Objective 3. The fact that all of the eligible families from Year One chose to stay in the project and not to go back to the "traditional" system suggests that families were generally satisfied with the service networks they have built.

- A family talked about the value of being able to use project funds to support their informal care system. "Informal resources tend to make our family life flow the best," they said. When one of the parents had to be hospitalized, "We were able to tap into 'natural' resources...Thank goodness we are able to utilize voucher funds for such emergency situations."
- Another family emphasized the importance of being able to use funds for family outings. "The days with special events planned, and getting us out of a 'sick' house were the most rewarding," they said.
- A family credited the flexibility of the voucher funds with indirectly helping them keep their house. Before the project, they had not been able to get the kind or amount of respite care they wanted for their medically-involved child. The family feared that one of the parents would have to quit working to care for the child, making the family unable to make house payments.

Objective 4. Participating families will use funds for goods and services not traditionally funded by the County, but which will, in the judgment of the families, help maintain/reinforce family coping skills.

Outcome of Objective 4. Attachment B summarizes the types and amounts of expenditures made by families. It is fair to say that nearly all of the funds were spent on things which would not otherwise be allowed by Dakota County. In many cases, the expenditures would also have not been allowed by the State Family Subsidy program either. Some Key points about the expenditures:

- 31% of funds were spent on child care/respite care. This expenditure category was used by eleven of the twelve families, making it the most popular expenditure type. The most important thing to recognize is that most of these funds purchased services of informal providers. Family members, friends, neighbors, and others - few if any licensed - were compensated for care at rates much lower than those for which the County contracts. Families won in two ways: they got more services for the same amount of dollars, and they increased the likelihood that their informal network will remain strong.
- 20% of funds were used on home modifications and maintenance. This category was used by eight families. One family used funds to remodel a section of their home as an "apartment" for their child, something which they see as a more and more pressing need as all three of their children grow up. Another family built a wheelchair ramp. A third family purchased housecleaning services every other week.
- 8% of funds were used for family outings and recreation. With nine families, this was the second most popular expenditure category. Several families paid for family "get-aways" with the funds. Two families paid for health club memberships.
- 9% of funds were used by one family to pay the loan on its van.

The following list itemizes purchases by families which would not have been covered by either Dakota County or the Family Subsidy program:

Family outings/eating out	Bedroom set
Parents' nights out	Paint
Medical bills	Camera
Medications (for parent	Sewer service
due to lifting child) Physical	Toys
therapist (for parent)	Children's books
Conference	Radio antenna
Clothes	Diaper pail
Exercise videotape	Gas
VCR cable	Stamps
Tutoring	Encyclopedia
Computer repair	Health club
Film, film development	Storage shed
Parking	Deck swing
Phone calls	Filing system
Television	

The ways families choose to spend the funds remains a concern, as does how to determine what constitutes an appropriate or inappropriate expenditure. That is the heart of the project. It is the reward and the risk. Staff recognized the need to balance family choice with public perception, and worked with the families to make choices which served the balance. Staff also prepared broad expenditure guidelines for families which, while not universally popular, were generally adhered to (See Attachment E.) However, project staff and senior County managers are concerned that a few of the expenditures could be viewed by taxpayers and the media as inappropriate. Staff will work with families on these issues in the second year of the project.

One factor to be considered in implementing expenditure guidelines in Year 2 will likely be **whether** families will continue to be able to choose **how** they want the funds distributed. For example, several of the families in Year 1 received the entire amount of their accounts at the beginning of the project (February, 1990). The question is, can Dakota County expect to control expenditures when the funds are already in the hands of parents? More importantly, should Dakota County **want** to exercise such control?

Journals/Expenditure Reports

Frankly, the project was difficult for Dakota County staff to implement, given the County's long history of controlling service dollars and arrangements. Therefore, families were asked to submit monthly journals and expenditure reports to

the project social worker. If they submitted the journals/reports by the deadline each month, they were paid \$20.

Families reported that the \$20/journal incentive helped motivate them to get the reports in on time. 50% of families (N=6) submitted all nine journals (December, 1989 - August, 1990), and three more families submitted eight journals. Three of the twelve families seemed to experience some difficulties in getting the reports in at all. One family submitted only six reports, another submitted four, and another submitted only two reports. (Attachment G summarizes the number and amount of money each family was paid for report submission.) Project staff reminded families on a number of occasions, particularly those who seemed to be having trouble, to get the reports in on time.

These reports are time consuming - a couple of families spend several hours per month on them - and sometimes painful. The family which has been least able to submit journals attributes it to the fact it hurts to write about these issues. Staff will work with families in Year 2 of the project to simplify the reports, and to be sensitive to each family's pain.

Aside from their accountability and program evaluation functions and despite the problems experienced by some, several families found the journals useful.

- One family saw the journals as the vehicle for documenting the "validity" of each expenditure.
- Another family said it was "good to require receipts and checks - it's good for accountability."
- "The journals are hard to keep - but important," said a family, recognizing that it is the only source of information about how the project is doing.
- The journals have been "enlightening" reports for another family. "They help me understand what's going on in my family."
- Families agreed that the journals have value in terms of assuring the future of the project.

Training - Parents

Families were required to complete 40 hours of training, including the training arranged by ARC-Suburban under contract to Dakota County. At the start of the project, staff and ARC-Suburban planned for only three "mandatory" training sessions for participants. However, families came to value the time they had to talk over issues and concerns with each other, so additional sessions were scheduled. The sessions scheduled through the project and ARC-Suburban were:

November, 1989	Orientation
December, 1989	Liability and tax information for in-home services; planning for use of each account for 11 months in 1990
January, 1990	Using catalogs; recruiting and hiring personnel
March	General, networking
May, 1990	Special Sitters (Campfire training program); video on service brokerage
July, 1990	Participant picnic
September, 1990	"File Don't Pile" seminar

The project budget also included \$3,000 (or \$300 for each family, excluding the training paid for two of the families by ARC-Suburban) to be spend by individual families for their own training/materials. Staff were concerned during the third and fourth quarters of the project that the funds would not be spent. Staff sent two reminders to families to use the funds. Most responded, using nearly 2/3 of the, funds for conferences such as the State ARC convention. 17% of the training funds were spent on books and magazines related to disabilities. For example, two of the families subscribed to Exceptional Parent magazine with the funds. 16% of the funds - which remained unspent in the fourth quarter - were used to help pay for the September, 1990 "File Don't Pile" training. (Please note: Summaries of previous trainings were submitted with earlier reports. See Attachment H for the summary of the "File Don't Pile" seminar.)

Training - Project Social Worker

The budget for Year 1 of the project included \$500 of training funds for the social worker who was the primary contact for participants. A portion of the funds were used for her to attend the Gatlinburg Conference (Brainerd). Among the benefits of the conference for the project, according to the social worker were:

- State-of-the-art information on the biology of

mental retardation which she finds useful as she works with her client-families

- Contacts and networking with other professionals and researchers

The remaining training funds were devoted to subsidizing her computer training. As stated in the proposal, Dakota County purchased the social worker a laptop computer (Toshiba 3000) for storage and maintenance of records. Since she had never used a computer before, she was tutored by Dakota County technical support staff and took classes in conjunction with the Case Management System (CMS) grant project.

The social worker has since made the computer part of her daily routine. She receives information from families on their expenditures each month and she keeps up-to-date records on the amounts remaining. In the second year of the project, she will send quarterly account status reports to her families.

Advisory Committee

If there is any disappointment in this project for the first year, it is the failure to recruit and sustain an active advisory committee. The "rough spots" for pulling a committee together are highlighted below.

- Project staff had high hopes for attracting a high caliber public policy researcher with a background in vouchers/parent choice. Staff contacted Sen. John Brandl and James Jernberg, both of whom are faculty members at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute, for suggestions, but came away with no one who was currently active in the area.
- Staff also planned to have a representative of another Council-funded project, but determined that because of the sites and topics of the other projects funded during the year, it would be impossible to secure a representative who could attend meetings.
- Because of the expected importance of non-traditional/alternative providers, staff planned to have a representative of this group on the committee. This turned out to be too ambitious since a solid core of these providers had not developed. This may be an appropriate group to tap on an ad hoc basis for the committee.
- Staff unsuccessfully recruited a Washington County supervisor of developmental disabilities

- case managers. He appeared at one committee meeting to describe Washington County's Adult Family Subsidy program, a small local version of the state family subsidy program.
- It was extremely difficult to find meeting times which were compatible to members' schedules. Even when meetings were successfully scheduled weather or other factors interfered with attendance.

Despite the problems, staff was able to put together a group which conducted useful discussions on the main project issue: utilization of funds.

- Two representatives of the participants volunteered to serve on the committee for the first year of the project. They were able to use their experiences as parents and as taxpayers to enhance the project.
- A representative of ARC-Suburban was valuable for the project because of her experience in advocating for parents and her experience in working under Council grants.
- An employee of PACER Center was successfully recruited. Her experience with PACER, and the fact that she is also a resident of Dakota County, made her input important.
- A representative of Dakota County's Human Services Advisory Committee sat on the committee. He is a resident of the County and has in the past worked for the State of Minnesota on developmental disabilities issues.
- A Dakota County senior planner not familiar with the project was recruited for two reasons: his impartiality and his experience sitting on the board of the Chance to Grow organization. (A Chance to Grow is a private non-profit organization which works with children with learning disabilities, brain-injuries, and developmental disabilities; their parents; volunteers; and school personnel.)

The committee met in July, 1990, and addressed, among other things, expenditure guidelines. The group recommended maintaining individual family flexibility as much as possible - something members agreed with be more and more difficult to do as the project expands. See Attachment J for the meeting summary.

The budget included \$1,500 for Advisory Committee activities and to pay for the contract evaluation assistant. Approximately \$1,300 of the funds paid for this contractor, whose rate was \$12/hour, or \$2 an hour more than was anticipated. The remaining funds were used to pay parent training related expenses incurred by ARC-Suburban.

Use and makeup of the Advisory Committee represents an opportunity to strengthen the project in the second year.

Staff Activities

Staff projected needing 184 person days to implement the project, including 3 days from a contracted evaluation assistant. This estimate turned out to be conservative. Staff spent more time than anticipated reading and analyzing journals, solving journal/expense reporting problems with families, and interviewing families for project evaluation. Clearly, for replication purposes, these activities should not be underestimated. Staff now estimate that the project required 200 person days. Host of the additional staff time was covered by Dakota County, though \$107 remaining from family training funds was transferred to the personnel line item.

Another area of staff time investment came in working out an agreement with County Financial Services about getting funds to families. Previous previous project reports noted that the flexibility of fund distribution (ranging from one-time lumps sums to item-by-item reimbursements) was incompatible with the County's automated Vendor Payment System (VPS). As staff from both divisions waded into the issue, it became clear that it was not just limited to the project funds, that there were other points of friction between the two staffs related to billing and payment. Senior Human Services Division staff convened a committee with representatives from Human Services, Financial Services and Data Processing to work out the issues. The group, called Project Liberty, came to some agreements which allowed staff on both sides to be flexible enough to meet immediate family requests. It is also working out some long term agreements to resolve the tension between the staffs.

Project Publicity

As the project matures, it seems to be generating much interest. Examples include:

- Feature article in the St. Paul Dispatch-Pioneer Press
- inquiries from ARC-St. Paul, Ramsey County Human Services, Hennepin County Community

Services, the Minnesota Department of Human Services, STAR Center (Cincinnati), Mile High United Way (Denver), and the Colorado Developmental Disabilities Planning Council

- Article in The Executive
- 170 fliers distributed at December, 1989 TASH conference
- Staff presentation to a State Legislative task force
- Parent, ARC-Suburban and County staff to present project to TASH conference in December, 1990

ACTIVITY:

1. Train social worker/voucher coordinator on protocol

TARGET DATE: October 15, 1989

PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE:	BUDGET FOR TASK : \$ 4000 \$ 2000 \$2000 (Total) (Federal) (Local)		
ACTIVITY COMPONENTS: - Develop protocol outlining limitations of vouchers, emergency procedures if participants face unexpected crisis, procedures for encouraging families to stay in program. - Develop voucher payment agreement with County Financial Services to ensure timely vendor payment. - Compile all above in voucher project manual. - Educate other social workers about program and impacts on their cases.	PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE:	QUARTERLY REPORT: __ 1st; __ 2nd; __ 3rd; <u>X</u> 4th	
	10/1/89	Drafted and reviewed by Advisory Committee 12/21/89. Some families challenged the protocol with their expenditures. Will have to outline some restrictions for year 2.	
	10/1/89		
	10/15/89	9/30/90-It was ambitious of us to believe we could do a project manual before the project. The best we could do is a 3-ring binder containing records of the important project outcomes, issues, decisions. A "How-to" manual is something we'd like to work on in year 2, particularly if Dakota County expands the voucher idea to other areas.	
	10/15/89	As of 11/15/89 all project participants were transferred to Lura Jackson's caseload; an equal number of non-participants were transferred from her caseload to other social workers. The impact of the project will be a bigger issue in year 2 as additional social workers get involved.	

FORM 11
WORK PROGRAM

ACTIVITY:

2. Convene advisory group

TARGET DATE: October 15, 1989

PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE:	BUDGET FOR TASK:		
	(Total)	(Federal)	(Local)
ACTIVITY COMPONENTS:	PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE:	QUARTERLY REPORT: _1st; _2nd; _3rd <u>X</u> 4th	
- Write draft group charge, including topics group will be asked to advise on. Develop tentative meeting schedule.	8/15/89	10/15/89. Delay due to attention given to recruiting/education potential members.	
- Contact prospective members.		12/1/89, Had turnover of membership and much difficulty getting community panel members (that's non-county staff) to agree on meeting schedules. We added two participant representatives to the committee early in the project. We will expand this for year 2.	
- Hold first meeting of the advisory committee to finalize group charge, task expectations and time commitment. The group's most pressing task will be at its second meeting, when it reviews applications of families interested in participating in the voucher project.	9/15/39	10/23/89. Because of trouble getting this entire group together we held a meeting to select participants with four (at that time) of the six members. The meeting was productive because of the attention paid to each application.	
	10/15/89	We've already held a meeting to select year 2 participants and had great turn out through we excluded the participant members from that meeting. Instead, we recruited a parent who is a client, but is not in the project to represent families' point of view.	

ACTIVITY:

3. Recruit participants

TARGET DATE: December 15, 1989

PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE:	BUDGET FOR TASK :	\$ 5500 (Total)	\$ 3000 (Federal)	\$ 2500 (Local)
ACTIVITY COMPONENTS:	PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE:	QUARTERLY REPORT: 1st; 2nd; 3rd; X 4th		
- Prepare and mail out an announcement about the project, explaining benefits and challenges, to each family on the Dakota County DD-Child caseload for which the County has budgeted County funds. Each family will be asked to notify their social worker whether or not they wish to participate.	10/1/89	This task was speeded up because the 1990 budget was being set - we needed to set individual family budgets to make sure the department's request would be complete/accurate.		
- Follow-up phone calls to families who have not yet expressed their intentions.	10/15/89	9/15/89. 85 families were contacted; 20-25 attended meetings; 14 applied. 12 of those were selected.		
- Send notices to parents who have expressed interest in the project to attend one of two general information sessions during which they will learn more about the project, the ARC-Suburban training, and the benefits and challenges of the project. Those interested in participating will be asked to return completed voucher project application forms.	11/17/89	10/28/89		
- The Voucher project Advisory Committee and County Staff members will review all applications to judge applicant family's level of interest and commitment to the project, and how closely they fit the D.D. Council's service priorities. Ten families will be chosen and notified. Remaining families will be notified and asked to consider being alternate participants, should any of the first ten families decide not to participate.	11/15/89	11/1/89. Chose 12 families, with ARC-Suburban supplementing training/family journal budget for the extra two families.		
- Hold project kick off meeting with participants	12/15/89	11/18/89.		

ACTIVITY:

4. Customize ARC-Suburban Consumer Case Management curriculum to match voucher project. Have participants complete the training by February 15, 1989.

TARGET DATE: November 15, 1989 for customized curriculum. Parents complete training by 2/15/90.

PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE:	BUDGET FOR TASK :	\$ 4500	\$ 2000	\$ 2500
		(Total)	(Federal)	(Local)
ACTIVITY COMPONENTS:	PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE:	QUARTERLY REPORT: __ 1st; __ 2nd; __ 3rd; <u>X</u> 4th		
- Interview parents who completed the ARC-Suburban Case Management curriculum to date to determine the strengths and areas for improvement in the current curriculum.	10/15/89	11/21/89. We found that while the case management curriculum was valuable, it could not address issues specific to the project. We asked participants to tell us the kinds of training they wanted. Nearly all of the literature had to do with education vouchers and much was not applicable. Eric Rudrud supplied some more germane to our project - it was very helpful.		
- Review literature on how other voucher programs trained consumers.	10/15/89			
- Identify what applicant families expect of the voucher project by asking a question in the application about what they hope will happen as a result of the program.	11/1/89	11/1/89. We accomplished this in our project applications.		
- Use information gathered in above steps, together with the telephone survey County staff completed in March, 1989, to Judge arc-suburban curriculum match with what families need/expect. Make changes as needed.	11/15/89	See first entry on this page.		
- Arrange for ARC-Suburban to organize carrying out the training.	11/15/89	11/15/89		
- Convene a participant's support group.	1/1/90	1/6/90. Final mandatory training session for participants was held. Major discussion items: recruiting/hiring/firing in-home providers; catalog shopping for adapted clothing, materials, etc.		
- All participants complete Consumer Case Manager curriculum.	2/15/90	3/30/90. Parents wanted to get together to discuss project with one month of vouchers completed. (Coincided with decision about applying for Year 2 funds—an idea universally supported by participants.) Group decided to hold other support group meetings in May, July, Sep		

ACTIVITY:

5. Design and implement project evaluation

TARGET DATE: Design completed by December 15, 1989, preliminary project analysis completed by July 1, 1990:

PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE:	BUDGET FOR TASK :	\$ 19500 (Total)	\$ 7500 (Federal)	\$ 12000 (Local)
ACTIVITY COMPONENTS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop family journal outline to be used to gather pre-voucher data on service arrangements. Families will be asked to complete the monthly journals beginning February 1, 1990. - Train participants how to use journals. Each family will receive a stipend in exchange for each complete monthly journal they submit. To ensure journal reliability, families will be asked to submit - journals to Dakota County Human Services not later than the fifth working day after the end of the month. The social worker/voucher coordinator will review the journals to assure that they are reliable - Develop and implement a monitoring system for each participating family's voucher account. System will be based on current County vendor payment system; however, each family will receive a monthly statement specifying the balance and providers paid in the previous month. - Conduct a preliminary analysis on family use and satisfaction with vouchers - Analysis of Social Worker/Voucher Coordinator's case load, comparing time/activities for voucher participants with rest of caseload. - Social Worker/Voucher Coordinator contacts each participating family at least once per month. 	PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE: 12/15/89 1/15/90 2/1/90 6/1/90 7/1/90 9/30/90			QUARTERLY REPORT: _1st; _2nd; _3rd; X 4th 11/21/89. In order to capture families' experiences <u>before</u> managing their accounts we decided to ask families to begin journalizing in December, 1989. This provided some level of information for evaluation of the project. 11/21/89-9/30/90. As mentioned above, families were asked to begin keeping journals in December, 1989 so staff could get a picture of life before vouchers. Families generally cooperated with timelines. A few families missed a couple of months and one family submitted only one journal during year 1. This is a concern for year 2. Staff assumed that most families would ask for reimbursements of expenses with itemized documentation of each expense - As it turned out, however, 7 of the 12 asked for lump sum of their allocations (2 of the 7 took their entire allocations.) 4 others asked for equal monthly payments. Only one participant asked for expense reimbursements. Because of the large number of lump sum arrangements staff records are not as detailed as expected. Voucher Analysis and client Survey completed 8/30/90. Timeline delayed until families had more experience with the project. Informal review completed 6/1/90. Contact completed in a variety of ways:home visits, phone, mail, office visits. (continued next page)

5. Design and Implement project evaluation

TARGET DATE: Design completed by December 15, 1989, preliminary project analysis completed by July 1, 1990. (continued)

PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE:	BUDGET FOR TASK: \$ \$ \$ (Total) (Federal) (Local)	
SUBTASKS:	PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE:	QUARTERLY REPORT: __1st; __2nd; __3rd; <u>X</u> 4th.
- Families will complete additional training related to managing vouchers and purchased services.	9/30/90	<p>Lura has found that the monthly journals greatly enhance her understanding and method of working with each family,</p> <p>This took some doing. We discovered families forgot about these funds or were just too busy to use them all up. Examples of additional training: PACER Workshop, Down Syndrome National Convention, Subscriptions to Exceptional Parent, ARC memberships, literature search of the U of M Bio-Med library on a specific disability. Where funds were under-expended, we arranged a group training session- "File Don't Pile."</p>

Attachment A

MEMORANDUM

DAKOTA COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION
Planning Department
33 East Wentworth Avenue
West St. Paul, MN 55118
450-2742

DATE: March 6, 1989

TO: DD Section

FROM: Gay Bakken
Meg Grove

RE: Results of phone survey of parents

We surveyed 10 of the 23 families identified by DD workers as possibly interested in vouchers. (Despite repeated attempts, we were unable to reach the other families.)

We expected to find broad-based support for the voucher idea, or at least recognition of the concept. Instead, we found that a few had a great deal of knowledge, some had a little knowledge, and some had no idea of what vouchers were at all.

Because we expected so much of the respondents about vouchers, we also expected them to have specific examples of where they knew they could get services cheaper. In fact, there were only a couple among the respondents.

We were uncertain whether parents knew of the responsibilities that a voucher program would place on them in terms of finding and keeping their own providers. We were pleasantly surprised to find two respondents who had very specific plans.

Overall, we believe that the survey results can support a voucher experiment, though we suggest that it must be scaled back to perhaps 10 families, and that it must focus on training participating families about their responsibilities.

FINDINGS

1. Six respondents were familiar with the concept of vouchers, four were not.
2. One respondent had experience with vouchers, having used food stamps for a time.

3. Seven respondents receive Family Subsidy grants.
Uses include: (all that apply)

- Babysitting -- 5 respondents
- Medicine/med. bills -- 3
- Respite -- 3
- Day care -- 2
- Diapers/linen -- 2
- Formula -- 1
- Computer -- 1
- Alarm -- 1
- Damaged windows -- 1

4. Six respondents have County-paid respite; 3 are
TEFRA recipients.

5. Several respondents had some knowledge of service
costs, especially if they were using Family Subsidy
funds to pay for them. For example:

Babysitting: Two respondents said they were able
to get less expensive sitters than if they used
an agency. One said an agency would charge \$4.50
per hour, while she pays a family member \$2.00/
hour. Another said that an agency would charge
\$10/hour; she pays a high school student \$5.00/hr.

Respite: One respondent knew that REM charges
\$15/hour; another said the provider charges
\$24-36/day; another said the service cost
\$40/day.

Nursing service: One respondent said the agency
charges \$17.50 per hour; she thought the charge was
too high. "I'm sure the nurse only gets half of
that," she said.

6. Several respondents felt very strongly that vouchers
would help them significantly. Comments included:

- o Flexible use of funds -- services for other
family members who are affected by the presence
of a DD child
- o Provider agency sometimes forget that families
are clients, not the County
- o More services for fewer dollars

7. One respondent was concerned that the voucher
arrangement would "dump" recruitment/screening of
providers in family's lap. Same respondent had
experience with recruiting a friend to be respite
provider, got friend registered with Thomas
Allen, but found the friend's slots all full.

8. When asked about frustrations with the current system of funding and service provision, responses were mixed:

- o Several respondents want more respite care; two specifically mentioned weekday respite; other respite needs include before/after school, some weekday evening care.
- o Five respondents were struggling with current and past medical bills.
- o Two respondents mentioned shortcomings of Thomas Allen, Inc.
- o One respondent was confused about MA ineligibility
- o one respondent wants a latchkey program which will take her DD child and her normal child. She also complained that her family is geographically isolated from services.
- o Two respondents were frustrated with the lack of response from their HMOs.

9. Two respondents said they would recruit their own babysitting and respite providers in church bulletins, school and community newspapers. One said she would look for people who either have CPR certificates, or would be willing to get them. This parent said that one problem with providers is their reliability.

cc: Joe Schum

7. PLEASE INDICATE THE TYPES OF SERVICES CURRENTLY USED BY YOUR FAMILY FOR YOUR DISABLED CHILD(REN) FUNDED BY SOURCES OTHER THAN YOUR OWN INCOME OR BY PUBLIC SCHOOLS. (Check all that apply.)

SERVICES	USE	# OF HOURS/ MONTH
<input type="checkbox"/> Out of Home Respite Care		
<input type="checkbox"/> In Home Respite Care		
<input type="checkbox"/> Weekday Respite Care		
<input type="checkbox"/> Babysitting		
<input type="checkbox"/> In Home Support Services- Behavioral		
<input type="checkbox"/> In Home Support Services- Medical		
<input type="checkbox"/> Behavioral Therapy		
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Counseling		
<input type="checkbox"/> Physical Therapy		
<input type="checkbox"/> Occupational Therapy		
<input type="checkbox"/> Speech Therapy		
<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation		
Other (please specify)		

7.a. For each type of service checked above, please indicate next to the **number of hours per month** your family uses this type of service.

8. DO YOU PURCHASE ADDITIONAL SERVICES WITH YOUR OWN MONEY?
(Check one)

☐ YES
☐ NO
☐ NOT SURE

APPLICATION FOR DAKOTA COUNTY VOUCHER PILOT PROJECT

Please complete this application form and return it by
October 16, 1989 to:

Lura Jackson
Dakota County Social Services - Dev. Dis. Section
33 East Wentworth Ave.
West St. Paul MN 55113

If you have any questions about the application form, or
about the project, please call Lura Jackson at 450-2684.

This application does not commit your family to the Dakota
County Voucher Pilot Project, nor does it guarantee
participation. All applications will, however, be seriously
considered for participation in the project.

1. PARENTS NAMES: _____

2. ADDRESS: _____

3. TELEPHONE NUMBER(S): _____ (home)
_____ (work)

4. NUMBER OF CHILDREN LIVING WITH YOU: _____

5. NUMBER OF DISABLED CHILDREN WHO ARE UNDER AGE 18 AND
WHO ARE LIVING WITH YOU _____

6. PLEASE INDICATE THE NATURE OF THE CHILDREN'S DISABILITIES
(check all that apply)

____ Mental Retardation
____ Cerebral Palsy
____ Epilepsy
____ Autism

Other (please specify) _____

If you have more than one disabled child, please indicate the
number of children with each type of disability by putting
the number next to the type of disability.

8.a. If yes, please estimate a monthly number of hours and cost to you for each type of service for which you pay.

SERVICES	USE	# OF HOURS/ MONTH
_____ Out of Home Respite Care _____		
_____ In Home Respite Care _____		
_____ Weekday Respite Care _____		
_____ Babysitting _____		
_____ In Home Support Services- Behavioral _____		
_____ In Home Support Services- Medical _____		
_____ Behavioral Therapy _____		
_____ Individual Counseling _____		
_____ Physical Therapy _____		
_____ Occupational Therapy _____		
_____ Speech Therapy _____		
_____ Recreation _____		
Other (please specify) _____		

9. WHO PROVIDES THE SERVICES YOUR FAMILY USES FOR YOUR DISABLED CHILD(REN)? (Check all that apply)

☐ Thomas Allen, Inc.
☐ REM. Inc.
☐ Dakota's Children
☐ Human Services Support Network
☐ Dakota County foster care
☐ Private psychologist
☐ Med Personnel Pool
☐ Integrated Home Care
☐ Dakota County Public Health
☐ NOTSURE
 OTHER (please specify) _____

10. PLEASE RATE YOUR OVERALL LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH THE SERVICES AND SERVICE PROVIDERS YOUR FAMILY USES BY THE NUMBER WHICH BEST REPRESENTS YOUR EXPERIENCES. (1=VERY DISSATISFIED, 5=VERY SATISFIED)

1.....2.....3.....4.....5

11. PLEASE INDICATE THE TYPES OF MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT YOU PURCHASED FOR USE WITH YOUR DISABLED CHILD(REN) WITHIN THE LAST 12 MONTHS USING EITHER FAMILY SUBSIDY FUNDS/MEDICAL ASSISTANCE, TEFRA FUNDS OR FUNDS FROM DAKOTA COUNTY. (Check all that apply)

MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT	USE	\$ PER MONTH
<input type="checkbox"/> Diapers		
<input type="checkbox"/> Adapted Clothing		
<input type="checkbox"/> Ramps		
<input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle alteration		
<input type="checkbox"/> Home alterations		
<input type="checkbox"/> Specialized locks and alarms		
<input type="checkbox"/> Wheelchairs/car seats/strollers		
<input type="checkbox"/> Therapy equipment (for example: lifts, bath chairs, prone stander)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Adapted toys/educational materials		
<input type="checkbox"/> Communication Devices (example: Touchtalker)		
<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (Please specify)		

11.a. For each item checked above, please indicate the approximate cost per piece of equipment or the per month cost of materials.

12. PLEASE RATE YOUR GENERAL LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH THE EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS YOU HAVE PURCHASED FOR USE WITH YOU DISABLED CHILD(REN) BY CIRCLING THE NUMBER WHICH BEST REPRESENTS YOUR EXPERIENCE.

(1=VERY DISSATISFIED, 5=VERY SATISFIED)

1 2 3 4 5

13. Why are you interested in the Dakota County voucher pilot project? Use additional sheets if necessary.

14. Have you considered how you would use the funds for your disabled child(ren)? If so, please describe your ideas for the funds, including alternative providers. Use additional sheets if necessary.

15. The Dakota County Voucher Project will require commitment of participants. The following is a list of project requirements and limitations. Please read these and indicate your level of concern, given your family's particular situation.

15.a. Participants must complete 40 hours of training, including two day-long sessions (to be held on Saturdays). Check one:

- ☐ Not a problem
- ☐ May be a problem (please explain)
- ☐ Will be a problem (please explain)

15.b. Participants will spend many hours making their own service arrangements and contingency plans. Check one:

- ☐ Not a problem
- ☐ May be a problem (please explain)
- ☐ Will be a problem (please explain)

15.c. Participants will be responsible for monitoring services and for paying the providers out of the project funds. Check one:

- ☐ Not a problem
- ☐ May be a problem (please explain)
- ☐ Will be a problem (please explain)

15.d. Participants will be required to keep a journal/log accounting for services provided, cost, problems encountered and solved. Check one:

- ☐ Not a problem
- ☐ May be a problem (please explain)
- ☐ Will be a problem (please explain)

15.e. Participants will be subject to the same funding restrictions as all other families who receive County funds. Check one:

- ☐ Not a problem
- ☐ May be a problem (please explain)
- ☐ Will be a problem (please explain)

16. Please describe the benefits you see for your family in the Dakota county Voucher Project.

Attachment C

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES VOUCHER PROJECT
PARTICIPANT SELECTION COMMITTEE

October 23, 1989

1. Introductions
2. Review DD Council RFP guidelines, Dakota County proposal
3. Agreement on selection criteria:
 - o Applicant lives in a rural area
 - o Applicant has 2 or more DD children
 - o Applicant has at least one DD child and at least one normal child
 - o Applicant seems to understand the commitment the voucher project will require; is able to give ideas of how the funds could be used

(Added by committee on 10/23/90)

- o Applicant is a single parent
- o Applicant or child is an ethnic minority

Attachment D

Situation	Child #1	Child #2	Child #3	Child #4	Child #5	Child #6	Child #7	Child #8	Child #9	Child #10 Child #11	Child #12	Child #13
Client Age(s)	10 yrs.	6yrs	12 yrs	13 yrs	2 yrs	2yrs	8 yrs	12 yrs	10 yrs	7 yrs 10 yrs	8 yrs	6 yrs
#,ages other child. at home	Two – 12, 15 yrs	two – 3, 4 yrs	two – 14, 16 yrs	two – 9, 14 yrs	one – 8 yrs	two – 1, 10 yrs	two – 10, 16 yrs	three – 11, 15, 18 yrs	one • 9yrs	one – 13 yrs	one - 2 yrs	eleven 2-18 yrs all adopted
Devel. Disab. of child	Profound MR, CP non-mobile and non- verbal	Severe MR, CP,non- mobile and non- verbal	Neimann- Pick Disease	Severe MR, epilepsy	Spina bifida	Cornelia DeLange Synd., severe MR	Landau- Kleffner Syndrome	Down Syndrome	Moderate MR	Child #1- mil MR; Child #2 - learn. disability	Autism, tuberous sclerosis	CP, MR
State Asst.	TEFRA, Fam. Sub.	TEFRA, Fam. sub.	TEFRA, FAM. Sub.	TEFRA, Fam. Sub.	TEFRA	TEFRA, Fam. Sub.		TEFRA, Fam.Sub.	TEFRA	TEFRA, Fam. Sub.	Fam. sub.,	Fam. sub. Adopt Sub.
Amt of Co.Asst (/yr)	\$12,048	\$2,236	\$6,310	\$7,335	\$5,741	\$4,403	\$4,847	\$4,451	\$1,698	\$4,680	\$14,409	\$6,669
Medical Conditions of client	Bowel/ bladder respir. infect.	Respir. infect., vision impair, bowel/ bladder, hydroceph	Muscle degener., gas. tube, terminal	Severe hearing loss,minor uncont seizures, not toilet trained.	Phys.dis. L2 level hydroceph. neurgenic bladder	Hearing impair, trach.,gas tube, vent dependent		Hearing/ vision im- pair, orth problems, heart defect	Hearing impair.	Uncon- trolled Seizures, bladder, migraines	Seizures, asthma/ allergies .	Non-mobile non-verbal respir. infect.

Dakota County Voucher - Year 1 Expenditures

Attachment E

Type of Expend.	Family #1	Family #2	Family #3	Family #4	Family #5	Family #6	Family #7	Family #8	Family #9	Family #10	Family #11	Family #12	Total \$ per type	Percent of total
Adapt. clothes, clothing	\$220 2.6%	\$80 3%	\$1010 18%	\$11 .3%							\$397 3%	\$60 2%	\$1,778	4%
Adapt. Equip.		\$50 2%			\$160 18%	\$135 6%			\$15 1%		\$121 1%		\$482	1%
Child Care Respite	\$1401 16%	\$738 32%	\$746 13%	\$1617 45%	\$51 6%	\$1078 49%		\$456 38%	\$616 36%	\$1665 43%	\$5028 39%	\$2274 66%	\$15,670	31%
Computer/ TV/VCR	\$1058 12%			\$302 8%				\$150 12%			\$32 .2%	\$120 4%	\$1,682	3%
Estate Plan/ Insur.											\$1560 12%		\$1,560	3%
Family rec., outings	\$646 8%	\$40 2%	\$375 7%	\$447 12%	\$448 49%			\$552 46%	\$294 17%	\$162 4%	\$795 6%	\$21 .6X	\$3,780	8%

Dakota County Voucher - Year 1 Expenditures

Attachment E (continued)

Type of Expend.	Family #1	Family #2	FAMILY #3	Family #4	Family #5	Family #6	FAMILY #7	Family #8	Family #9	Family #10	Family #11	Family #12	Total \$ per type	Percent of total
Food/food equip.			\$2191 39\$		\$92 10X								\$2,283	5%
Furn/equip	\$220 3%		\$1205 22%	\$277 8%		\$98 4%	\$77 2%		\$355 21%				\$2,232	4%
Health	\$40 .5%				\$152 17%	\$126 6%	\$3379 95%	\$4 .3%			\$82 .6%		\$3,783	8%
Home mods. cleaning	\$4832 57%	\$1000 43%	\$50 .8%	\$953 26%		\$705 32%				\$1540 40%	\$612 5%	\$220 6%	\$9,912	20%
School/ toys									\$382 22%	\$500 13%		\$205 6%	\$1,087	2%
Spec.Serv.		\$400 17%										\$105 3%	\$505	1%
Van											\$4396 34%		\$4,396	7%
Misc.	\$91 1%	\$9 .4%			\$5 .6%	\$54 2%	\$106 3%	\$20 2%	\$36 2%	\$25 .6%	\$28 .2%	\$415 12%	\$789	2%

Dakota County Voucher - Year 1 Expenditures

Attachment G

Type of Payment	Family #1	Family #2	Family #3	Family #4	Family #5	Family #6	Family #7	Family #8	Family #9	Family #10	Family #11	Family #12	Total \$ per type
Journals	\$160	\$180	\$180*	\$180*	\$120	\$160	\$160	\$20**	\$80	\$180	\$180	\$180	\$1,420*
Conferences	\$260	\$215	\$300*	\$300*	\$300	\$50		\$300	\$80	\$300	\$300	\$174	\$1,979*
Books, magazines		\$85				\$134	\$255		\$50				\$524
Child care mileage		\$12	\$21										\$33
Remain. funds	\$60					\$136	\$45	\$160	\$270			\$126	\$797***

* Journal and training funds paid by ABC-Suburban

** Family submitted two journals, but one was too late for payment

*** \$690 of remaining funds paid for Sept. "File Don't Pile" training session; \$107 transferred to personnel

Please note: Staff originally anticipated families beginning journal submission in November, 1989, but found that it was not realistic to expect journals until December, 1989. The funds budgeted but not used for this purpose were transferred to the personnel line item.