Figure 11.8d. COSTS OF POOR QUALITY AND PRODUCTIVITY: Service Industries

EM9804: The Globe and Mail, May 13, 1998, page A3

Child-protection system failed, B.C. report says

BY CRAIG McINNES
British Columbia Bureau

VICTORIA – The infant known as Baby M was the victim of severe bureaucratic mishandling before being assaulted by her foster mother, a report released yesterday by the B.C. Children's Commissioner says.

Baby M, born just over a year ago suffering from methadone addiction, was left with permanent disabilities after being shaken by the foster parent in whose care she had been placed four days before.

That foster parent, Kim Kierkegaard, pleaded guilty earlier this year to criminal negligence causing bodily harm and was given a conditional sentence of two years to be served in the community.

According to the review completed by Cynthia Morton, B.C. Children's Commissioner, Baby M should never have been placed in Ms. Kierkegaard's care because the woman was neither qualified nor equipped to deal with a drug-addicted baby.

This mistake was only one of more than a dozen missteps and unfortunate coincidences identified in the report. The first was a decision by the Crown to ignore police recommendations that the baby's parents be charged in an assault case so that the mother could be ordered to take drug and alcohol counselling.

The case is another black eye for B.C's child-protection system, which has been overhauled in the wake of a string of tragedies that were tied to bureaucratic blundering and insufficient resources.

A task force struck last year in the wake of the Baby M case made 32 recommendations for overhauling the foster-parent system.

Lois Boone, the Minister of Children and Families, refused to comment on the Baby M case yesterday because it is still before the courts in the form of a lawsuit against the ministry by the infant's relatives, who are now caring for her.

However, Ms. Boone argued that many of the task force recommendations are already being implemented, although she did concede that there is still a shortage of qualified foster parents and facilities for children with special needs.

By the time Baby M was born, workers for the Ministry of Children and Families had concluded that her mother was not fit to care for her, but they also rejected pleas by relatives that they be allowed to take her home.

One of those relatives, an aunt, now cares for the severely disabled child.

The process was complicated by staff turnover: Three child-protection workers were involved before the baby was sent home with Ms. Kierkegaard.

Ms. Kierkegaard had been approved as a foster parent, but not for special-needs children such as Baby M.

According to physicians who treated the infant in hospital, Baby M suffered from an array of symptoms common to drug-addicted babies, including seizures, severe gas and constant crying in discomfort.

In the hospital, nurses were changed every three hours.

Ms. Kierkegrd was a single mother with two other children in her home and no one to back her up. After two days, she complained to the ministry that Baby M had become inconsolable.

Ms. Kierkegaard later told police that the baby was not sleeping for more than half an hour at a time.

EM9903: The Globe and Mail, October 22, 1999, pages A12, A233

Quality daycare pays off, study says

Benefits extend into adulthood

NYT and AP, Raleigh, N.C.

High-quality daycare has a dramatic impact that lasts through young adulthood, affecting everything from reading and math skills to the timing of child-bearing, researchers announced yesterday in the first study that tracked participants from infancy to age 21.

The U.S. researchers believe their results are the first to definitively link high-quality child care, beginnig as early as six weeks of age, with a better adult life. Beginning in 1972, the study tracked 111 children from infancy through age 21.

"We view these results as grounds for optimism that high-quality, early-childhood education can be an important ingredient in supporting young families," said Craig Ramey, a professor of psychology, pediatrics and neurobiology at the University of Alabama.

"We're talking about changing the course of children's lives in the most fundamental way possible," said Frances Campbell, one of the investigators.

The children were divided into two groups: 54 who had an array of child-care arrangements, and 57 who received high-quality care at a daycare centre, starting when they were between six weeks and four months of age.

Of the 111 original participants, 104 were evaluated last spring.

Among the findings:

- The high-quality daycare children had higher cognitive test scores than the control group from toddler years to age 21.
- Their academic achievement in both reading and math was higher from the primary grades through young adulthood.
- They completed more years of education and were more likely to attend a four-year college.
- They were, on average, two years older (19 years) when their first child was born, compared with those in the control group (17 years), though the youngest parents in both groups were comparable in age when the first child was born.

Benefits extended beyond the children: their mothers achieved higher educational and employment status than mothers of control-group children, the study found.

The children who attended the daycare centre attended all day, five days a week. The child-teacher ratio was low, gradually increasing to 7-1 from 3-1. Teacher turnover was low because the pay was high.

The research project still needs a cost-benefit analysis, said Edward Zigler, a psychology professor at Yale University who helped plan government-run child-care programs for low-income people.

"That's what really turns decision-makers on," Prof. Zigler said.

Research was conducted at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

(*continued overleaf*)

EM9407: The Globe and Mail, July 13, 1994, page A7

Child-abuse incidence ripe for further study

42% of allegations unfounded, report says

BY DAN HAWALESHKA
The Globe and Mail

TORONTO – A study released yesterday by the Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse took a few shaky, subjective, but much-needed steps toward understanding just how often child abuse occurs in Ontario.

Nico Trocmé, an assistant professor in the University of Toronto's faculty of social work, headed the study, titled *Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect.* He characterized the report as a "reflection of how much further we have to go" toward understanding the incidence of child abuse in Canada.

In an attempt to paint a comprehensive picture of just how many reports of child abuse actually turn out to be founded, 15 of Ontario's 54 Children's Aid Societies were randomly selected for the study; 2,447 children were investigated.

Based on these findings, Mr. Trocmé estimated that almost 47,000 child-maltreatment investigations were undertaken in Ontario in 1993. This represents, he said, an estimated incidence of 21 abuse investigations per 1,000 children in the province. He said that 42 per cent of the investigations found that the allegations of abuse were unfounded, 30 per cent were classified as suspected cases of abuse, and 27 per cent were substantiated.

Speaking to reporters yesterday at a news conference in Toronto, Mr. Trocmé said it was up to the individual aid worker's discretion to decide what constituted a substantiated case of abuse.

He said it was a "fairly subjective judgement."

Cases were designated as "suspected" if there was not enough evidence to substantiate maltreatment, but also not enough evidence to rule out the possibility.

As to whether the results from 15 aid societies could reliably be applied to the entire province, Mr. Trocmé said: "We just hoped that randomization turned out to be accurate."

The director of prevention and information services for the institute, Anne Telford, said just because more than two out of every five investigations turn out to be unfounded, social workers are not wasting their time.

"'Unfounded' sounds like these may be whimsical referrals but they're much more than that," she said, adding that a social worker's duty and obligation is to investigate reported cases.

Despite some of the handicaps, the study is seen as ground-breaking.

Robert Glossop, program and research director at the Ottawa-based Vanier Institute of the Family, said any study that tries to present a provincial overview is long overdue.

"It's what the statisticians would call more reliable and more robust information than we've had in the past," Mr. Glossop said in a telephone interview.

In the past, aid workers and policy makers had to content themselves with anecdotal evidence and studies of smaller populations, he added.

Among other findings:

- In 75 per cent of cases the alleged perpetrator of the abuse was either both parents, the mother, the father or the step-father.
- Police were involved in 23 per cent of the investigations and criminal charges were laid in at least 6 per cent of cases.
- Investigations involving older children were more likely to be substantiated.
- In the United States, the incidence of abuse investigations was estimated at 43 per 1,000 children, double the estimate for Ontario.

The common theme of the three articles reprinted in this Figure 11.8d is the role of quality (however defined) in the complex array of processes that enable a successful transition from childhood to adulthood, and the potentially disastrous effects of a *lack* of quality in one or more of these processes.

- The article EM9407 reprinted above also raises the difficult measuring issues involved in correctly identifying child-abuse.

1 From a statistical perspective, the article EM9903, reprinted overleaf on the lower half of page 11.47, is notable for the in formation, important to an informed reader, that it does *not* present. For instance:

- there is no mention, in the second paragraph of the middle column, of equiprobable assigning in forming the treatment and control groups of 57 and 54 children;
- the difference(s) between the daycare provided to the treatment and control groups is not described;
- the *magnitude* of the (average) gains in the benefits obtained by the 57 members of the treatment group are seldom provided – are they (usually) large enough to be practically important?

Describe why information on such matters is needed to make a statistically-informed assessment of the investigation's answers to the question: *What are the benefits of high-quality daycare?* Also:

+ comment briefly on the treatment and control group average ages (19 and 17 years) at the birth of a first child, and on the quality daycare child-teacher ratios of between 3-1 and 7-1;
+ identify the key issue raised by Prof. Zigler's comments about a cost-benefit analysis in the fourth and fifth paragraphs of the right-hand column of the article EM9903;
+ discuss briefly the practical difficulties of an investigation that lasts 20 or more years and how successful the investigators seem to have been in overcoming these difficulties;
+ indicate briefly the *ethical* issue(s) facing the investigators when they undertook this investigation; include in your answer consideration of equiprobable assigning of children to the treatment and control groups in an investigation like this one.

2 Describe briefly the *statistical* issue(s) raised by the statement by Mr. Trocmé, quoted in the fifth paragraph of the middle column of the article EM9407 reprinted above: *We just hoped that randomization turned out to be accurate.*