

***A PLAN TO STRENGTHEN  
WISCONSIN FAMILIES***

THROUGH

***A STATE FAMILY POLICY  
BOARD***



Proposed by  
***WISCONSIN CARES, INC.***

# ***STRENGTHENING WISCONSIN FAMILIES***

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***THRIVING FAMILIES***

**raise**

***SUCCESSFUL YOUTH***

**who become**

***PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS***

**in**

***CARING COMMUNITIES***

# ***A PLAN TO STRENGTHEN WISCONSIN FAMILIES***

**By**

**Reinforcing State/Local Communication and Collaboration**

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## ***STRENGTHENING WISCONSIN FAMILIES***

<p><b>THE WAY IT IS NOW</b></p> <p><i>Programs for children and families now...</i></p>	<p><b>THE WAY IT COULD BE</b></p> <p><i>By reinforcing state/local communication and collaboration A Family Policy Board would...</i></p>
<p>Focus on targeted programs and services for categories of identified problems experienced by individuals.</p>	<p>Focus on reducing the need for treatment programs and services for individual children and adults by strengthening families.</p>
<p>Are “top-down” in operation and rely on mandated programs and court-ordered services for particular population categories and individuals.</p>	<p>Foster community ownership of health and human services and provide incentives for thinking and acting “outside the box” to promote accountability by managing for results.</p>
<p>Rely on separate state and county departments, divisions, and bureaus to administer funding for specific mandated health, human, and educational services, each with their own policies, nomenclature, and reporting requirements.</p>	<p>Enable communities to pool public/private resources and streamline programs and resources across agencies and jurisdictions to achieve jointly agreed upon performance goals with an emphasis on minimizing duplicative reporting requirements and on removing barriers to collaboration.</p>
<p><u>Serve</u> clients / customers / consumers.</p>	<p><u>Empower</u> individuals, families, neighborhoods, and communities.</p>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wisconsin's economy and quality of life depend on thriving families that prevent social problems and create a productive workforce by raising children to become responsible, tax-paying citizens. In contrast, struggling families contribute to 26% of state and 45% of county tax expenditures.

We can prevent social problems and reduce costly public interventions through fostering thriving families by:

- focusing resources for children, youth, and adults on families rather than on individuals as if they did not live in families.
- reinforcing state, local, private, and public collaboration between resources for children, youth, and families through family resource systems, and
- integrating resources through Wrap-around/Coordinated Services teams.

**Family rather than individual focus:** In order to achieve the quantity and quality of resources that our children, youth, families, and the professionals who work with them deserve, we need a paradigm shift from regarding children as independent units to recognizing them as members of intergenerational families.

Families need supportive infrastructures to fulfill their responsibilities to rear our next generation. Our nation and state recognize their responsibilities to provide these infrastructures through resources for families, such as public education; tax deductions and credits; family leaves; and a variety of human services for children, youth, and families. But we do not have a public/private infrastructure of resources for families like our public/private educational infrastructure for children and youth.

**Family resource system:** We need a family resource system that strengthens families by integrating resources for children, youth, and families. Such a family resource system would have corresponding state and local boards that facilitate communication, coordination, and collaboration and that guide the flow of funding for programs and services for children, youth, and families.

**Family Policy Entities:** We propose that each county, tribe, or service area have a collaborative structure with an operational agreement created by an Executive Committee composed of public and private stakeholders. The Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board would be transformed into a Family Policy Board to relate to these local collaboratives; to facilitate collaboration and integration between state agencies; to evaluate the impact of legislation on families; and to recommend legislative initiatives. These structures would not create additional costs by drawing upon and realigning personnel from existing agencies. They would be designated for *families* rather than for *children and families* to discourage viewing children as if they were not parts of families.

**Family Resource Networks:** Local Family Resource Networks would provide the programs and services needed by families to enable "front line" workers to better serve families by interdisciplinary Wraparound/Coordinated Services Teams.

Wisconsin lags behind many other states in state/local coordination of programs and services. We could lead the nation as we did in welfare reform by linking local family resource networks to state agencies through the Children's Trust Fund.

# **STRENGTHENING WISCONSIN FAMILIES**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The idea of developing a family strengthening system has been germinating over the last twenty years in Wisconsin and is being continued by *Wisconsin Cares*, an organization concerned about the loss of human potential and the tax burden resulting from child neglect and abuse. 26% of state and 45% of county expenditures are directly related to struggling families (Appendix 1).

The focus of *Wisconsin Cares* is on preventing social, health, and educational problems. Its first activity was to review the literature on prevention. It then surveyed existing resources for children, youth, and families in Wisconsin and found they vary greatly in scope, overlap, and efficacy. Most of them target individuals rather than families. More attention has been devoted to parental employment, childcare, and children's education than to family stability and well-being – the essential preconditions for successful education, a responsible citizenry, and a productive workforce.

Existing resources for children, youth, and families often:

- cannot focus on prevention because of competing demands for interventions;
- must spend too much time on paper work and seeking short-term categorical grants;
- are hampered by changing specific rather than holistic mandates;
- are restricted by regulations and barriers to collaboration;
- lack reliable outcome and cost effectiveness data;
- would be improved by more partnering, collaboration, and integration; and
- do not involve families in planning and implementing programs and services.

The *Wisconsin Cares* survey inspired a vision for children, youth, and families in Wisconsin. This vision is based upon the

moral and legal rights of parents and children, federal and state legislation that affects children and families, and recent national and state developments in advocacy for children and families.

*Wisconsin Cares* concluded that we need a system that strengthens families rather than waits until families are in trouble, as often is the case now. We need a system named for “families” rather than for “children” to discourage focusing on individual children and parents. We need a system to complement the educational system by uniting existing programs and services for children, youth, and families through Family Resource Networks.

**We need a system that strengthens families rather than waits until families are in trouble.**

Our state government needs to follow the lead of communities that already have and are developing these Networks.

## **II. A FAMILY RESOURCE SYSTEM**

A family resource system includes all of the elements families need in order to effectively rear our next generation: income opportunities, education, childcare, health care, and family-oriented human resources.

One of the fundamental flaws in our public policies and funding streams is the focus on children as independent units. By definition, a child is at the least a part of a two-person unit: *child-parent*. Child-oriented programs that do not take the parent side of this dyad into account and parent-oriented programs that ignore the child side are unrealistically based. Such programs can unintentionally increase stress on parents and children. Programs should focus primarily on families not just on individual child, youth, or adult family members as if they did not live in families.

The most evident consequences of treating children and youth as independent units are: 1) the disconnection of, rather than collaboration between, parents and the

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human service and educational systems; 2) the removal of children from struggling families rather than strengthening their families; 3) the separation and discontinuity rather than integration of services for children and families; and 4) prevention programs that focus on specific symptoms rather than causes.

In order to achieve the quantity and quality of resources our children, youth, families, and the professionals who work with them deserve, we need a paradigm shift from regarding children, youth, and adults as independent units to recognizing them as members of intergenerational families. Focusing services and funding solely on individual family members has a long history of weakening families, for example:

- Aid to the Families of Dependent children focused on individual children in a family and unintentionally encouraged childbearing and discouraged marriage.
- A focus solely on the employment of parents overlooks the needs for developing attachment bonds between children and parents, childcare, and parenting resources.
- Spending limits, reporting requirements, and eligibility criteria, of federal and state categorical programs often create barriers to the effective use of resources.
- Imprisoning fathers and mothers for non-violent offenses deprives their children of parenting and often unnecessarily adds the costs of foster care to the costs of incarceration.
- Health insurance designated as only for children overlooks the equal importance of health insurance for their parents or guardians.
- When health insurance does not cover family therapy, psychiatric diagnoses for the children and parents often need to be

**We need a paradigm shift from regarding children, youth, and parents as independent units to recognizing them as members of intergenerational families.**

used to justify coverage for out-patient treatment in order to avoid more costly out-of-home placement.

- Costly residential mental health and juvenile correctional placements are necessitated by both the lack of community resources and the lack of coordination between existing resources.
- In court cases, different judges may direct services, impose sanctions, and place requirements on defendants involved in the criminal, civil, and juvenile systems without coordination within the criminal justice and between the criminal justice and human service and mental health systems. For example, a judge ordered an in-patient psychiatric evaluation costing \$16,000 that duplicated an existing community evaluation.
- Because different agencies collect specific data on family members, there is no data for evaluating family outcomes.
- Field workers already with excessive caseloads are overburdened with paperwork necessitated by different requirements for reporting.
- Special education that focuses only on individual children overlooks the ways thriving families can help their own children and the ways struggling families contribute to the numbers of children who are placed in special education programs.
- While child abuse or neglect allegations are being investigated, children are placed in foster care rather than providing in-home crisis help for their families before resorting to costly placement.
- Rigid conformity to confidentiality rules creates barriers between professionals who need to share information in order to collaborate with professionals from different agencies and with other relevant persons.

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As it now stands, well intentioned but overburdened professionals often deliver limited, targeted services from agencies far removed from the neighborhoods of their clients. The most successful programs treat individuals' problems in the context of their families, offer a broad spectrum of services, flexibly use resources, and have staff trained in cross-system collaboration in order to broker necessary services to fully meet a family's needs. A family resource system organizes neighborhoods and communities to provide programs and services delivered by a team centered on each family with ready access to a single point of contact for referral. This team also involves families in planning and implementing programs that affect them. Its ultimate aim is for families to develop their own supportive networks.

We need to recognize that parents bear the primary responsibility for raising our society's young. In so doing, they require private and public resources. Our nation and state do recognize this responsibility by providing resources for families: public education; dependent tax deductions and credits; and a variety of services for children, youth, and families. A private/public family resource system complements our private/public educational system to the benefit of families and taxpayers.

The following table depicts examples of the private and public resources needed by families in order to carry out their responsibilities to provide income, health care, education, care-giving, and stability for their children and youth as they rear our society's next generation:

<b>FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	<b>PRIVATE RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES</b>	<b>PUBLIC RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SELF-EMPLOYED</li> <li>• EMPLOYMENT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEPENDENT TAX DEDUCTIONS</li> <li>• WELFARE-TO-WORK PAYMENTS</li> </ul>
<b>HEALTH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SELF-PAYMENT</li> <li>• INSURANCE OR HMO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MEDICAL ASSISTANCE</li> <li>• BADGER CARE</li> <li>• SOCIAL SECURITY INSURANCE</li> </ul>
<b>EDUCATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PRIVATE SCHOOLS</li> <li>• HOME SCHOOLING</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PUBLIC SCHOOLS</li> <li>• SCHOOL VOUCHERS</li> </ul>
<b>CAREGIVING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RELATIVE CHILDCARE</li> <li>• HOME CHILDCARE</li> <li>• CENTER CHILDCARE</li> <li>• WORKPLACE CHILDCARE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TAX DEDUCTIONS</li> <li>• WELFARE-TO-WORK SUBSIDIES</li> </ul>
<b>FAMILY STABILITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GRANDPARENTS</li> <li>• PRIVATE FAMILY SERVICES</li> <li>• FRIENDS AND RELATIVES</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAMILY RESOURCE NETWORKS</li> <li>• CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES</li> <li>• TEMPORARY OUT-OF-HOME CARE</li> </ul>

# **STRENGTHENING WISCONSIN FAMILIES**

## **III. BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR A FAMILY RESOURCE SYSTEM**

*Wisconsin Cares* adopted the following basic principles for developing a family resource system that would improve the comprehensiveness, collaboration, and continuity of programs and resources for families, children, and youth and maximize their effectiveness:

- Childrearing families are the foundation of our society and our economy. A family that raises a child to become a productive citizen contributes over \$1.2 million to our economy. A family that neglects and abuses a child costs over \$2.4 million in lost wealth and tax outlays for special education, mental health, and correction services.
- A primary responsibility of our society and our governments is to create, maintain, and enhance infrastructures that provide resources for childrearing families.
- Federal and state laws and policies should focus less on categorical programs and more on strengthening families.
- Community resources for children and youth, such as schools, libraries, recreational facilities, human services, physical and mental health services, courts, and law enforcement are essential infrastructures for childrearing families.
- Child advocacy and youth advocacy are components of family advocacy.
- Education is a family function that is delegated to public or private schools.
- Problems arising from unhealthy interactions in families and communities are better treated by fostering healthy family and community relationships than by “deep-end” services necessitated by those family and community problems.
- Workforce development resources should strengthen families.

**Childrearing families are the foundation of our society and our economy.**

- Workplaces should accommodate the family responsibilities of employees.
- Human services for children and youth should be oriented to serving families.
- The impact of law enforcement and incarceration of parents on their families should be considered.
- State and local family policy making should be made by corresponding structures.
- Parents and youth should be included in making policies that affect them.
- All parents should have access to child development resources starting at birth.
- Professionals and volunteers serving a family should function as a Wraparound/Coordinated Services Team to ensure coordination and continuity of resources.

## **IV. FAMILY RESOURCE NETWORKS**

The foundation of a family resource system is a Family Resource Network that serves as a venue for communication and collaboration between unconnected and discontinuous programs and services. It offers the potential for bringing Wrap-around/Coordinated Services Teams together according to the needs of each family where the family lives.

Family Resource Networks are needed for three principal reasons. First, the earliest years of life are the most important, but the most neglected, years in public attention and funding. Second, parents need information on child development and about the effects of smoking, alcohol, medications, nutrition, and environmental pollution on their children’s health. Third, child neglect and abuse spawn low education levels, unstable employment, and crime. For these reasons, families need and deserve private-public resources for rearing their children.

The present intervention paradigm of waiting to support families until child

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neglect and abuse are investigated by professionals from public agencies should be complemented by a prevention paradigm implemented by a Family Resource Network

that provides public and private resources for families before child neglect and abuse occur, such as the following:

## FAMILY RESOURCE NETWORK

**Faith communities; businesses; public health nursing; teen pregnancy prevention; home newborn support; early child care & education; family resource centers; schools; health, mental health & dental care; learning centers; human services; respite services; workforce development services; smoking, alcohol, & drug abuse prevention and treatment; domestic abuse services; housing services; recreation sites; intergenerational programs; environmental health; juvenile & family courts; child protection services; law enforcement.**

### V. THE TIME IS RIGHT

The time is right for developing efficacious and cost-effective private/public Family Resource Networks throughout Wisconsin. Although Wisconsin ranks higher than most states on child well-being indicators as published in *Kids Count* by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Wisconsin trails other Midwestern states in preventing child abuse and neglect through home support for the parents of newborns and tops those states in spending on correctional facilities for offenders, most of whom are the products of struggling families.

#### Home Visitation for the Parents Of Newborns & Corrections Funding (Per Capita Expenditures FY 2001)

<u>Home Visitation</u>		<u>Corrections</u>	
1) Minnesota	\$ 9.90	1) Wisconsin	\$ 173.00
2) Indiana	\$ 7.03	2) Michigan	\$ 158.00
3) Michigan	\$ 5.00	3) Illinois	\$ 102.00
4) Illinois	\$ 3.79	4) Indiana	\$ 96.00
5) Iowa	\$ 3.48	5) Minnesota	\$ 92.00
6) Wisconsin	\$ 1.10	6) Iowa	\$ 89.00

Instead, Wisconsin should lead other states in strengthening families just as we have led in welfare reform, low school dropout rates, and reducing child poverty.

### In the Nation

At the national level, the professional approach to child welfare has shifted from an ineffective child-saver/child-protection approach to an effective family strengthening approach. In the process, recognition that the most important factor in a child's life is a thriving family has led to transforming *child welfare* into *family welfare* and to integrating resources for children and families.

Federal legislation over the last 30 years has emphasized family resource integration and the timely termination of parental rights and adoption. The theme *strengthening families* has emerged as the most effective prevention and intervention approach to struggling families.

The *Government Performance and Results Act* of 1993 has been moving the nation toward a results-based accountability system. Twenty states have created structures to represent families in state governments, as originally documented in the Family Impact Seminar's publication *Coming Together for Children and Families* circulated by the National Governor's Association. The states of Washington, Oregon, Minnesota, Ohio, Michigan, Iowa, Georgia, Alabama, and North Carolina in

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particular have had considerable experience with developing corresponding structures at the state and local levels to coordinate family resource systems (see Appendix 2).

The National Governor's Association funded programs for Building Public and Political Will for Early Childhood Care and Education through State Teams. The focus of the Wisconsin State Core Team was on identifying and addressing state-level barriers to collaboration in order to better serve young children in families where parents are employed. The Core Team operated on the assumption that a comprehensive early childhood care and education system should include childcare, education, health, nutrition, social services, and support for all families.

Prevent Child Abuse America's mission is to affect change at the federal, state, and local levels in systems to support the full range of resources needed to strengthen families and promote child development.

## **In Wisconsin**

The short-term nature of federal and state legislation creates specific initiatives to address social problems based on the availability of limited funds and on accountability requirements. The unintended, but inevitable, result is a succession of statutes and regulations that often create administrative barriers to the coordination and collaboration needed to achieve the original goals of the legislation. For this reason, the provisions of Wisconsin Statute Chapter 15 mandate that the executive branch should be reorganized on a continuing basis in order to respond to changing emphases and public needs. Monitoring and adapting state government agencies to meet the needs of families is particularly impor-

**A succession of statutes and regulations often create administrative barriers to the coordination and collaboration needed to meet the original legislative goals.**

tant in Wisconsin because the Executive Branch, the Department of Public Instruction, the Attorney General, and the court system under the Supreme Court are statutorily separate.

In 1985, the Wisconsin Strategic Development Commission recognized the importance of state and local family supportive mechanisms in the economic development of the state. The Governor's Task Force on Children and Families recommended in 1990 that a state Commission on Children and Youth be created to coordinate programs between state departments and model coordination efforts for local governments. In 1995, the Commission for the Study of Administrative Value and Efficiency advocated greater cooperation between state and local governments to reduce "wasteful turf feuds and protectionism." The 1996 Legislative Audit Bureau report on prevention programs for children, youth, and families in state departments found extensive overlap.

In 1997, the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Mental Health advised incorporating prevention and early intervention practices into the public mental health system. In 1999, the Joint Legislative Council introduced a bill to create a Prevention Coordination Council to enhance

prevention services for children, youth, and families. In 2000, the Turning Point Initiative under the Wisconsin Division of Public Health found that categorical funding streams often are not linked to local priorities and suggested better coordination of state and local public health system partnerships. As a result of all of these initiatives, state departments are seeking better ways to coordinate their activities at both the state and local levels.

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In 2001, the Governor's Blue-Ribbon Commission on State-Local Partnerships for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (the Kettl Commission) concluded that Wisconsin should make government more productive and grow the economy by aggressively strengthening state/local partnerships. The Commission emphasized creating collaborative incentives for local governments and for state and local programs and services. The Commission also advised a "top-to-bottom performance scrub" of Wisconsin's governments to encourage their accountability by managing for results. This performance review, christened *Renew Wisconsin*, aimed to identify opportunities for improving governments' responsiveness and reducing their cost. *Renew Wisconsin* was a citizen-based, bottom-up effort. It combined a team of state and local officials with citizen volunteers to devise strategies and tactics for performance improvement. Its mission was to create teams in every jurisdiction to conduct a performance evaluation of every state and local agency. The evaluation included:

- Performance management and electronic data systems for state government.
- "Best practices" that could reduce governments' costs and increase their responsiveness to citizens.
- Launch a "search and destroy" mission to remove regulations that have outlived their usefulness.

The Brighter Futures Initiative was expanded to strengthen families, neighborhoods, and communities. The Brighter Futures, the Milwaukee Family Services Coordination, Community Action Programs, and the Family Care Initiatives are examples of state/local programs to consolidate services and funding streams in order to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness.

The Safe and Stable Families program directs 50% of its funding for family strengthening services. Wisconsin's welfare re-

form legislation requires Children's Service Networks across state departments. Since 1991, Wisconsin Collaborative Systems of Care and Coordinated Services/Wraparound Teams have foster integrated services.

*KidsFirst* was an initiative to benefit Wisconsin's children. A *FamiliesFirst Initiative* would expand the focus to their families, neighborhoods, and communities.

In 2003, Wisconsin's National Governor's Association Core Team brought state departments, private organizations, and community representatives together to develop local service coordination models.

### **In Wisconsin Communities**

At the local level, there is a strong current flowing toward coordinating diverse programs and resources for children, youth, and families. Most innovations are taking place in the management of programs and resources through strategic alliances and mergers, especially in the nonprofit sector. The trend is toward integrating human services from coordinating programs and organizations to the physical co-location of resources.

Many counties have formed collaborative structures. For example, Marathon County has the Start Right Community Partnership; Dane County has Start Smart and Joining Forces for Families; Sheboygan County has a Prevention Policy Board; La Crosse County has a Family Policy Board; Eau Claire County has the Healthy Families and Communities Board; and Milwaukee County has the Youth and Family Development Alliance as a steering group for the Milwaukee Brighter Futures Initiative whose mission is to strengthen families, neighborhoods, and communities. All of these local collaborative efforts would benefit from state facilitation and incentives. They reveal a compelling need for two-way communication between state and local coordinating entities.

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## **VI. A FAMILY POLICY BOARD MODEL FOR WISCONSIN**

Family Resource Networks need to be coordinated at both the state and local levels. The Family Policy Board model originally developed by the *Right From The Start Coalition of Wisconsin* is a paradigm for strengthening families through family resource networks. It accords childrearing families representation in the structure of state government, as the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board does for natural resources and the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents and Wisconsin Technical College System do for advanced education.

The Family Policy Board model aligns state agencies and organizations with localities in state family policymaking. It provides a platform for reinforcing and expanding private/public collaboration that now takes place around specific projects and programs. It utilizes existing personnel and structures and requires no additional state funding.

In order to implement this model, a Family Policy Board would be created by statute (Appendices 3 and 4). The Board would assess the impact of legislation on families and facilitate communication, coordination, and collaboration between state and local programs and services. Each county, tribe, or service region would have a corresponding collaborative structure formed by agreements between local stake-holders. The local and state family entities would directly communicate in order to bring local concerns to the attention of state officials to enhance their ability to meet the needs of families.

We propose that the Legislature expand the existing Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board into a Family Policy Board to better fulfill the former's basic mission of strengthening families. Reallocated state

department resources, private funding, and in-kind services could be used for Board expenses.

The Family Policy Board would consist of the Governor, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Attorney General, legislators, state department heads, state organizations, citizens, and local officials. (Appendix 5) The Board would stimulate and enhance ongoing collaboration between state agencies. Members of the Board from the Departments of Health, Children and Families, Public Instruction, Corrections, Workforce Development, Justice, Administration, and other related state agencies would be in a better position to link related components of state agencies and programs.

The Family Policy Board would be an extension of the work of the Governor's Blue-Ribbon Commission on State/Local Partnerships for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (the Kettl Commission). It would implement the visions of the Brighter Futures Initiative and the Call to Action of the 2004 Governor's Summit on the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect to ensure that every child has the opportunity to become a responsible and productive citizen. It would be a platform for facilitating collaboration between state agencies and between the state and localities (Appendix 6).

The powers and duties of the Family Policy Board would be to formulate and recommend policies, to advise the Governor and state agency heads on rule making, and to initiate legislation. It would have the authority to recommend interdepartmental agreements for waiving state rules and regulations that impede coordinated service delivery and for linking funding within and between state agency budgets. The Board would:

**The Family Policy Board model brings together state departments, state coalitions and organizations, citizens, and localities in state family policy making.**

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- Promote a climate in the state that recognizes the importance of the well-being of childrearing families to all citizens.
- Assess the impact of policies and legislation on families.
- Act upon recommendations from local Family Collaboratives.
- Collate and promulgate information about state and local programs for children, youth, and families.
- Formulate policies for an expanded, holistic Brighter Futures Initiative that consolidates funding streams for related state programs for children, youth, and families.
- Recommend incentives that reinforce collaboration at the state and local levels by configuring revenue streams and removing barriers to pooling money.
- Introduce legislation.
- Establish guidelines for block grant funding for children, youth, and families that implement the policies of the Brighter Futures Initiative to counties and local districts.
- Encourage “managing by results” by establishing outcome benchmarks so that evaluation information is collected from the outset of programs.
- Encourage the formation of local family collaboratives.
- Report achievements of the Board to the governor and the legislature.

**Local Family Collaboratives would develop plans to coordinate strategies for systemic improvements and methods for evaluating the results of local public and private services.**

## **VII. LOCAL COLLABORATIVES**

Each service area would have a collaborative entity with an operational agreement formed by county, regional, or tribal council stakeholders. The actual name of the entities would vary depending upon local circumstances. These local Collaboratives would be charged with developing agree-

ments to coordinate strategies for systemic improvements and methods for evaluating the results of local public and privately contracted resources (Appendix 7). The Collaboratives would make recommendations to the state Family Policy Board. Private funding and in-kind resources would support administrative assistance and Collaborative expenses.

The Collaborative membership should have a balance of race, gender, and area. Resource using parents and youths should be included.

A local Collaborative would be responsible for:

- Promoting intergenerational education devoted to the health and well-being of childrearing families.
- Educating the public about the resources families need.
- Assessing local programs and services to identify gaps and barriers through open meetings, focus groups, and subcommittees.
- Creating incentives that eliminate duplication and promote collaboration between local programs and resources.
- Promoting preparation for parenthood and support for the parents of newborns.
- Soliciting information about state and community regulations and policies that pose barriers to collaboration and providing needed resources for families.
- Making recommendations to the state Family Policy Board for changes in state regulations, policies, and legislation that affect families.
- Leveraging resources, identifying new funding sources, and guiding the flow of federal, state, and local funds designated for families, children, and youth.
- Promulgating best practice standards for family support programs and services to

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ensure that direct communication takes place between representatives of agencies serving a particular family so that professionals function as a team.

- Promote the development of uniform local and state data collection systems.
- Review demographic and outcome reports from community programs.

The Family Living Division of the University of Wisconsin Extension can provide technical assistance in forming and expanding local Collaboratives through its strategic planning function.

## **VIII. RESOURCE INTEGRATION**

The ultimate aim of the Family Policy Board is the integration of resources at the prevention and intervention levels.

John Franz of the consulting firm Paper Boat describes three models for service integration: the alliance, agency, and network models. The theme of these models is making more efficient and effective usage of resources for children, youth, and families through collaboration.

The common denominator of these models is the Wraparound/Coordinated Services Team process.

The Wraparound process initially was designed to be applied at the intervention level for children with serious mental illnesses, as illustrated by the Wisconsin Children Come First Coordinated Services Teams. This intervention wraparound process entails utilizing resources in a family's community generated from an interagency meeting that considers the strengths and needs of family members in planning a treatment approach that is implemented by an interdisciplinary team that includes parents and draws upon relevant resources (Appendix 8). The focus of the wraparound process is on a family rather than on individual family members.

**The aim of the Family Policy Board is the integration of resources at the prevention and intervention levels.**

Wraparound Milwaukee has been accorded national recognition.

Appendix 9 shows how this process can be applied at the prevention level by home visitation for the parents of newborns through the Family Foundations Initiative that offers the opportunity to begin the wrap-around process at the formation of families.

Community Action Programs also operate collaboratively at the prevention level by helping communities grow and nurture their economic health.

## **IX. SUSTAINABILITY**

At least four factors have been found by other states to be vital in establishing and sustaining a state/local family resource system:

- 1) endorsement of the concept by state and local stakeholders in the public and private sectors;
- 2) influence over funding;
- 3) ongoing communication between levels of the system; and
- 4) realistic short-term and long-term outcome measures that take political cycles into account.

The first factor is drawing upon the knowledge and skill of existing personnel. State and county workers have first-hand experience with statutes, departmental resources, and administrative issues. Local governments and

power brokers know the needs and resources of their communities. There should be little difficulty in obtaining support for the concept of a family resource system. Everyone in the field is aware of the problems, and creative minds are working on solutions, but the devil lies in the details where turf and personnel issues abound.

This proposal does not call for eliminating positions or reducing funding for family resources. Titles, salaries, con-

## ***STRENGTHENING WISCONSIN FAMILIES***

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tracts, duties, and authority issues would be negotiated within existing personnel policies and practices. (Appendix 10) Programs and services would be expanded through more efficient use of funds and personnel. The key to success is drawing upon the expertise and unleashing the creativity of workers in state and county departments, the University of Wisconsin Extension, and community programs and services.

The second factor of funding influence is essential to provide the incentives needed to establish a family resource system and to encourage program and service partnerships, collaboration, and integration. Many years of experience with coordinating efforts have demonstrated that the best way for state and community Collaboratives to increase the efficient and cost-effective use of federal, state, and local funds is to influence their allocation. For this reason, state and local collaboratives should include elected officials or their designees.

The third factor of intra-system communication is vital for exchanging information and formulating, interpreting, and implementing policies. Regular ongoing interactive channels for communication are necessary. A key purpose of state and community Collaboratives is to provide an

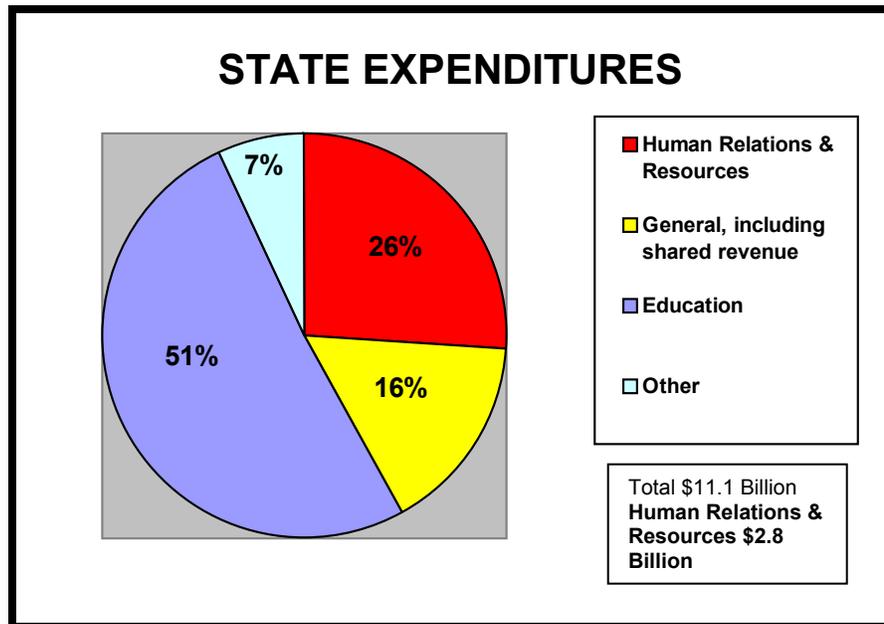
open channel for communication between users of resources and state units. Newsletters and an annual conference for the members of the state and local Collaboratives would help to spark and disseminate innovative ideas and practices. Conferences could be connected to annual meetings of organizations, such as the Wisconsin Counties Association. Education and training opportunities for the members of local and state collaboratives and stakeholders would be important as well.

The fourth factor is developing realistic outcome criteria with appropriate timelines. Short-term outcomes could relate to: 1) survival of the Family Resource System initiative through the political process; 2) bringing in new stakeholders; 3) success in establishing local Collaboratives; and 4) heightening public awareness of family needs. Long-term outcomes could be reductions in rates of child, youth, and family problems and improvements in benchmarks of child and family well-being. The key is judging the success of the initiative by realistic rather than overly ambitious goals.

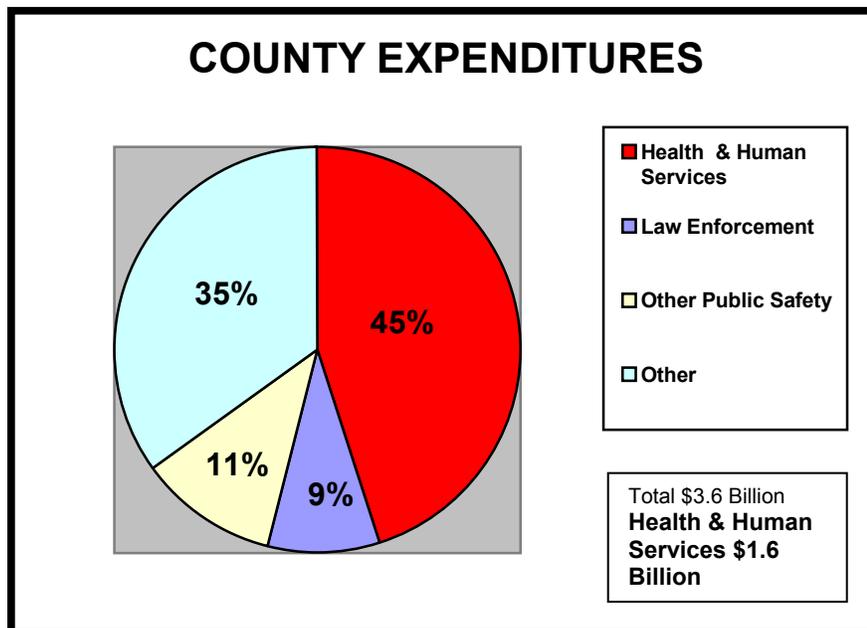
# STRENGTHENING WISCONSIN FAMILIES

## APPENDIX 1

### WISCONSIN STATE AND COUNTY EXPENDITURES RELATED TO STRUGGLING FAMILIES Fiscal year ending June 30, 2001 (actual) \$4.4 Billion Annually



Human Relations & Resources = Corrections, Workforce Development, Health & Family Services, etc.



# **STRENGTHENING WISCONSIN FAMILIES**

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## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Examples of State/Local Collaborative Systems in Other States**

In 1991, the Governor of Georgia created Family Connection codified by statute in 1996 as the Policy Council for Children and Families to improve the results of services for children and families. These structures evolved into the Family Connection Partnership, Inc., a non-profit corporation with some 41 board members from the public and private sectors. There now are Family Connection Collaboratives in 156 counties divided into 12 regions. Extensive outcome data on uniform benchmarks is available.

In 1992, the Washington State Legislature enacted the Family Policy Initiative, which created the Family Policy Council to design and carry out principle-centered, systemic reforms to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families. There now are 53 Community Public Health and Safety Networks with documented improvements in the effectiveness of resources for children, youth, and family court cases and in community collaboration.

In 1992, the Minnesota legislature established a Children's Cabinet consisting of state department heads housed in the Department of Human Services in order to promote collaboration between state departments and local service delivery systems. There are now 95 local and regional collaborative boards. Demographic, and case outcome data are available.

In 1992, the Governor of Ohio created a Family and Children First Cabinet Council composed of department heads in the Governor's office and codified by statute in 1995. There now are 88 local Family and Children First Councils. Data is available documenting system improvements.

In 1993, the Oregon legislature created the public/private Oregon Commission on Children and Families. In 1999, the legislature empowered state and local Commissions on Children and Families to facilitate comprehensive community planning. The state Commission's role is to provide a framework for comprehensive community planning; statewide policy development; systems consultation and technical assistance; and outcome evaluation.

In 1993, North Carolina was the first state to fund a statewide early childhood system (Smart Start) that offers a wide range of health, education, parent-support, and childcare services to promote school and life success for all children. Smart Start is administered by the public/private North Carolina Partnership for Children and Families that serves as an umbrella for 81 local Smart Start Partnerships and includes a National Technical Assistance Center.

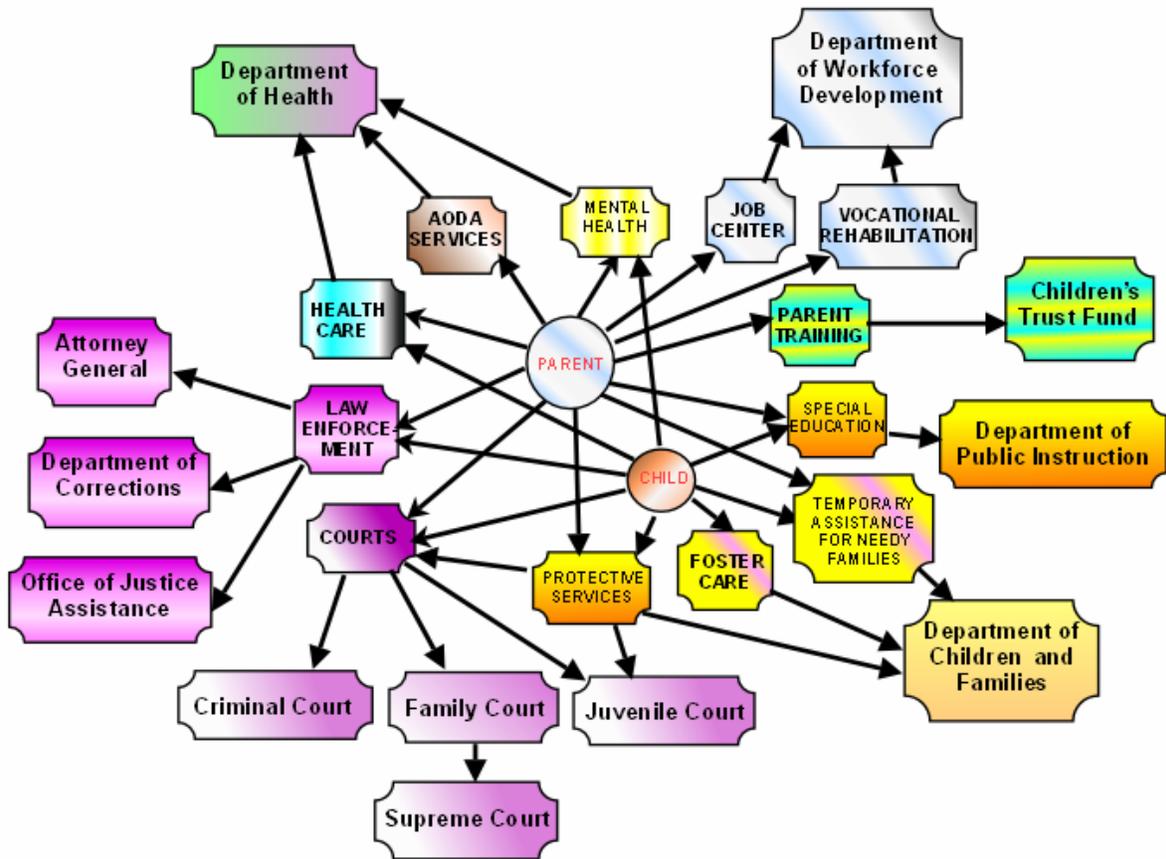
In 1995, Putting It Together with Michigan Families was formed to promote family-centered human service, mental health, and education practices with leadership rotating between state departments in response to local organizing efforts. There now are 76 local Multipurpose Collaborative Bodies that have the power to initiate and approve state requests for proposals.

In 1998, the Iowa Empowerment Board was established in the Department of Management by statute to create state and local partnerships to improve the well-being of families with young children. There now are 58 Community Empowerment Boards related to fiscal agents with disbursement control over family-related funds.

# STRENGTHENING WISCONSIN FAMILIES

## APPENDIX 3

### PRESENT RELATIONSHIPS OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO SEPARATE LOCAL AND STATE STRUCTURES

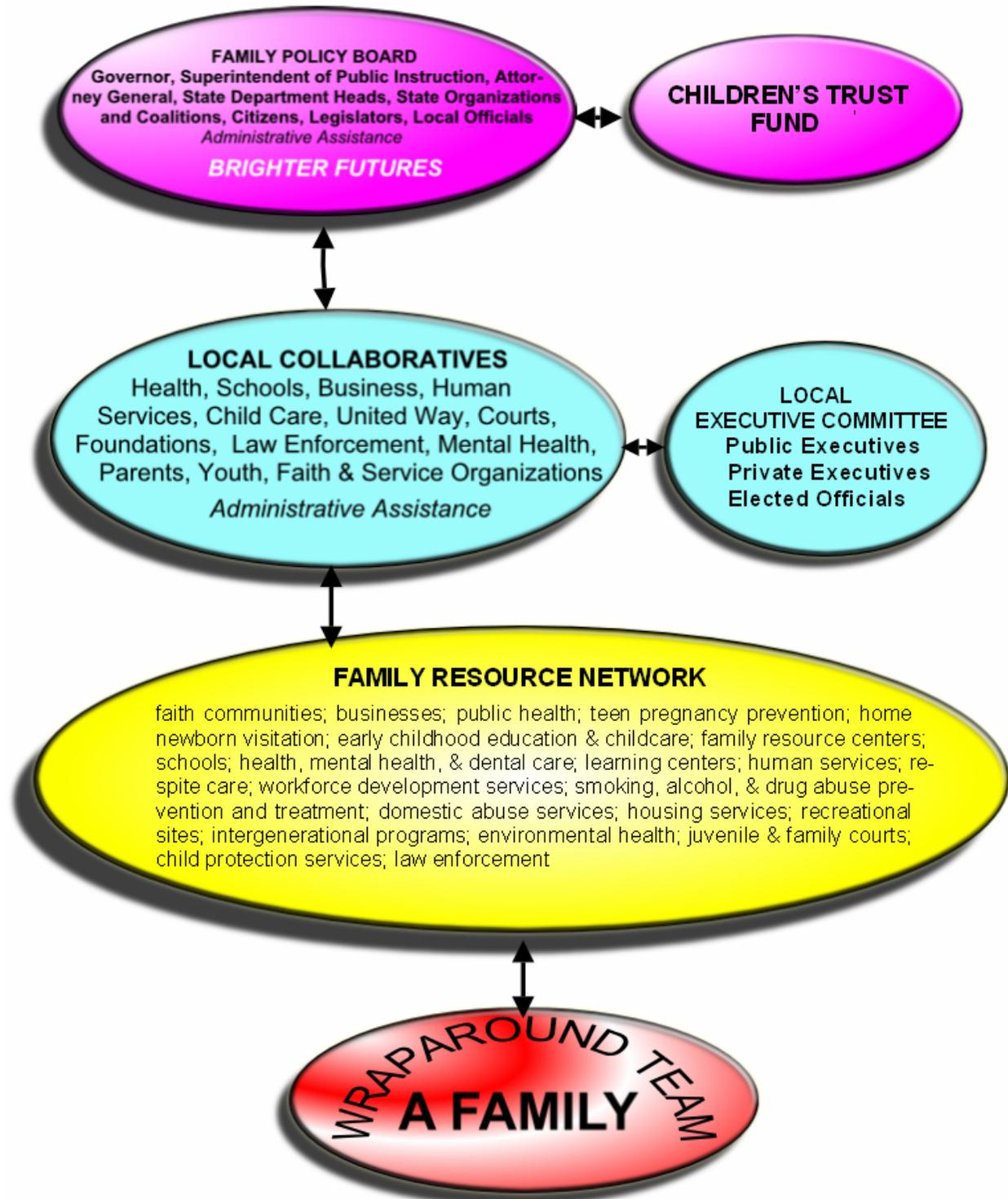


### A STATE FAMILY POLICY BOARD WOULD BE A PLATFORM FOR COORDINATING STATE AND LOCAL STRUCTURES



# STRENGTHENING WISCONSIN FAMILIES

## APPENDIX 4 A STRUCTURAL MODEL TO STRENGTHEN WISCONSIN FAMILIES



# ***STRENGTHENING WISCONSIN FAMILIES***

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## **APPENDIX 5**

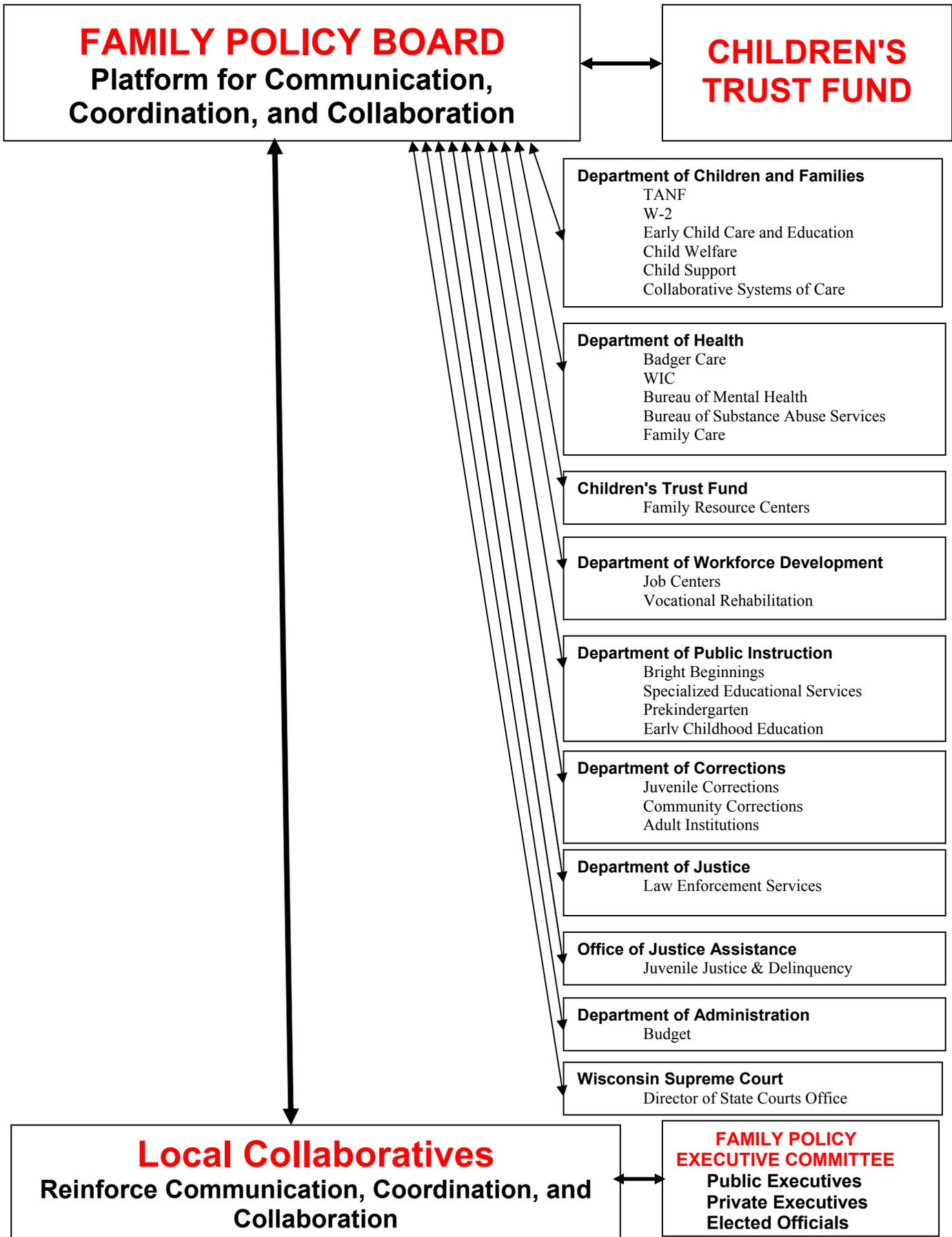
### **Possible Composition of a State Family Policy Board**

A state Family Policy Board whose chair is the Governor or Lieutenant Governor might consist of the following members:

- 1) The State Superintendent of Public Instruction or designee.
- 2) The Attorney General or designee.
- 3) The Secretary of Children and Families or designee.
- 4) The Secretary of Health Services
- 5) The Secretary of Administration or designee
- 6) The Secretary of Workforce Development or designee.
- 7) The Secretary of Corrections or designee.
- 8) The Executive Director of the Office of Justice Assistance.
- 9) The Dean of University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension or designee.
- 10) The Director of State Courts.
- 11) One majority party representative of the assembly appointed as are the members of assembly standing committees.
- 12) One minority party representative appointed as are the members of assembly standing committees.
- 13) One majority party senator appointed as are the members of senate standing committees.
- 14) One minority party senator appointed as are the members of senate standing committees.
- 15) Twelve public members appointed by the governor for three-year terms:
  - a. One member representing the Wisconsin County Human Services Association
  - b. One member representing private business.
  - c. One member representing organized labor
  - d. One member representing intergenerational aging groups
  - e. One member representing youth.
  - f. One member representing nonprofit service organizations.
  - g. One member with experience and expertise in public health.
  - h. One member with experience and expertise in child and family mental health.
  - i. One member with experience and expertise in human services.
  - j. One member with experience with special education.
  - k. One member with experience with child day care.
  - l. One member who represents users of family resources.

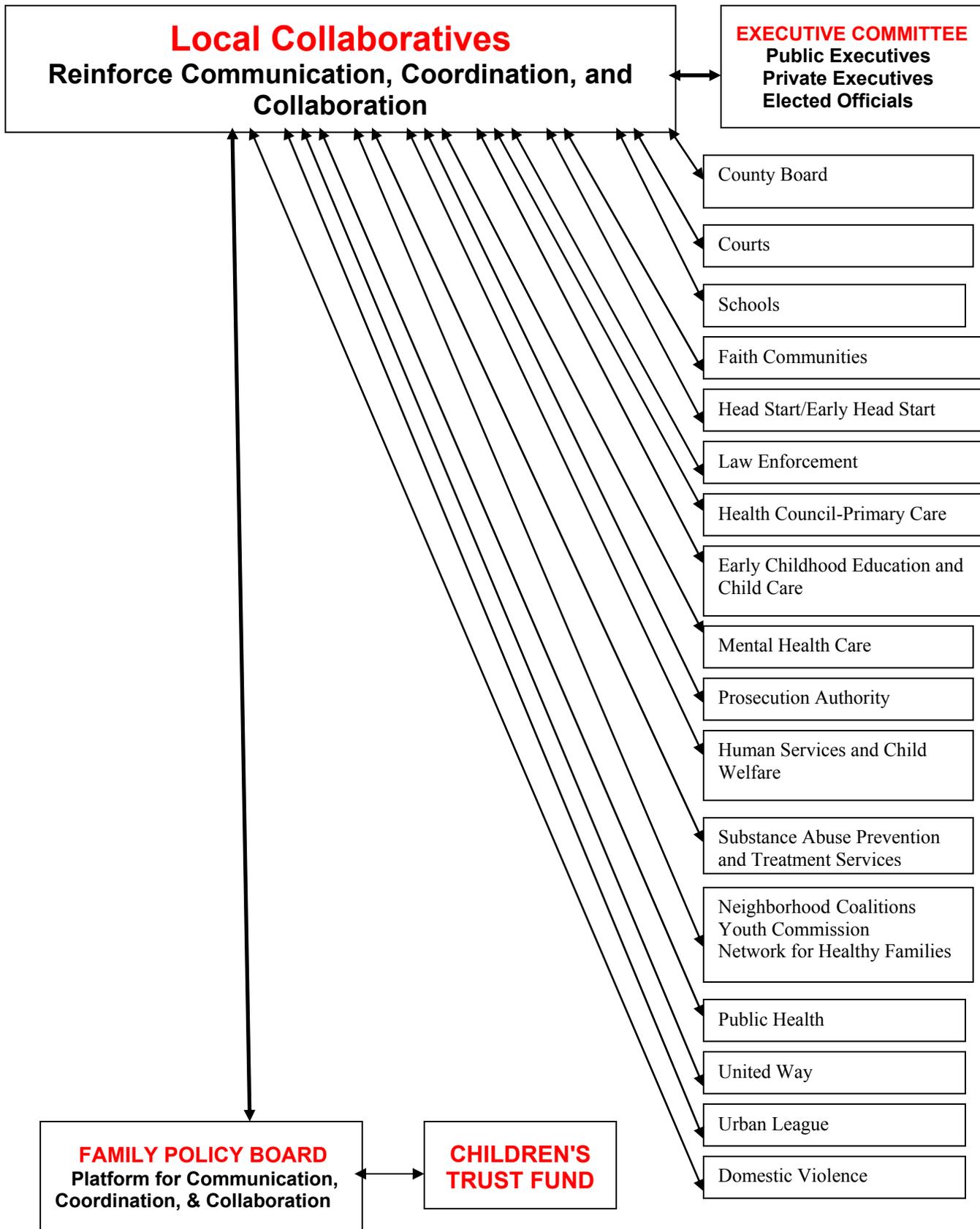
# STRENGTHENING WISCONSIN FAMILIES

## APPENDIX 6



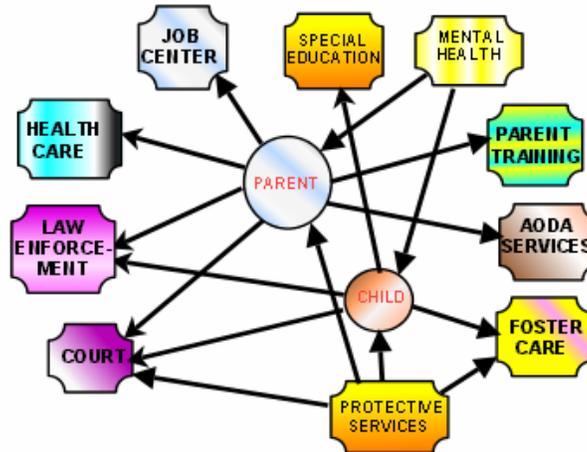
# STRENGTHENING WISCONSIN FAMILIES

## APPENDIX 7



APPENDIX 8

**INDIVIDUALLY vs.  
FAMILY ORIENTED SERVICES**  
**INDIVIDUALLY ORIENTED SERVICES**



**FAMILY ORIENTED SERVICES**

More and better communication, coordination, and collaboration



## APPENDIX 9

### **FAMILY FOUNDATIONS INITIATIVE**

#### **Why is *Family Foundations* Needed?**

The vital importance of the first years of life has been confirmed by brain development research. Further research shows that prevention programs at the beginning of life are more effective and less costly than in later years. Home support to strengthen families before and after childbirth is the most cost-effective method for preparing children to learn in school and for success in later life. Strengthening families helps prevent child abuse and neglect – the leading contributors to school failure; delinquency; violence; addictions; crime; and teenage pregnancy, health problems, and emotional disorders.

Now available to only one-quarter of the parents of newborns in Wisconsin, it is time to make voluntary, publicly and privately funded home support available to all parents.

#### **What will *Family Foundations* Do?**

*Family Foundations* creates a partnership between the state and communities to offer voluntary parenting support to all families before and after childbirth.

This initiative offers parents the information and resources they need to raise their children well. It offers a variety of services ranging from telephone contacts to home visits by volunteers, para-professionals, parent educators, and health care professionals.

1. **Universal Access and Continuity of Support for Families.** Almost all parents of infants and young children appreciate an ongoing relationship with professionals in meeting their children's physical, educational, emotional, and health-related needs.
2. **Developmental Optimization for All Children.** All children need effective parenting and nurturing relationships in wholesome environments. The purpose of *Family Foundations* is to optimize the development of *all*

children, not just those who are thought to be at risk for developmental problems.

3. **Shared Public and Private Responsibility for Child Development.** Building bridges by supporting parents from pregnancy to school requires the participation of all segments of our society, including neighbors, co-workers, faith communities, service providers, governments, schools, community organizations, and businesses.
4. **A Public Attitude that Supports Child Development.** The “developmental trajectories” of children have implications for the welfare and integrity of society. Community education and publicity is needed to gain public support for policies and programs that support the child-rearing responsibilities of families.
5. **Enhancing Community Capacities.** Assuring the healthy development of children involves forming a network of resources to assist families consistent with community priorities. Home support should be a part of family support networks.
6. **Cultural Diversity Means Diversity of Approaches.** Childrearing practices based on cultural and ethnic differences should be honored in the context of community parental expectations.

# STRENGTHENING WISCONSIN FAMILIES

## Appendix 10

### Staffing Considerations for a Family Policy Board

