

**REPORT OF THE
JOINT LEGISLATIVE
AUDIT AND REVIEW COMMISSION ON**

**THE VIRGINIA DIVISION
FOR CHILDREN**

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



House Document No. 14

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
1984**

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PREFACE

House Joint Resolution 10 of the 1983 session of the General Assembly directed JLARC to review the operations of the Virginia Division for Children and to recommend whether the Division should continue to operate after June 30, 1984. At that time, the Division is scheduled to cease operations because of a "sunset" provision in its enabling statute.

The Division for Children was created in 1978 to provide a single focus on children and to plan and coordinate children's services. Such services are provided by a multiplicity of State and local, public and private entities.

Subsequent to the staff briefing of the draft report, a legislative subcommittee established to work with the Commission on this study held a public hearing. The hearing provided an opportunity for the agency and interested parties to express their opinions on the JLARC draft recommendations and the Division's past performance and continuing need.

The majority of the subcommittee endorsed the following recommendations outlined in the report:

- that the Virginia Division for Children be continued until 1989;
- that the Division's mandate be revised to focus on coordination of children's services and to relieve the agency of its current responsibilities for evaluating children's programs and maintaining a central placement registry for facilities;
- that the Division continue to have an independent identity as an agency but that its administrative support services be assigned to another state agency; and
- that the number of authorized positions assigned to the Division should be reduced by at least four through administrative and legislative changes outlined in the report.

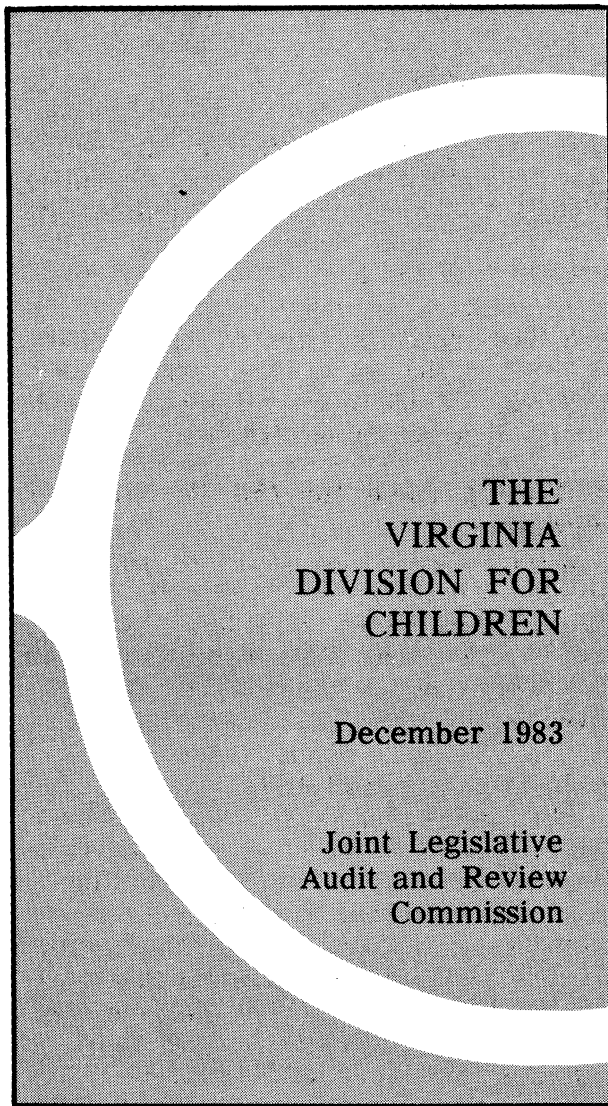
The subcommittee also proposed that legislation be introduced in 1984 to implement the major recommendations contained in this report. The full Commission concurred with these recommendations.

On behalf of the Commission Staff, I wish to acknowledge the cooperation provided by the employees of the Division for Children and the many public and private agencies across the State which provided information for this report.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ray D. Pethtel".

Ray D. Pethtel
Director

December 12, 1983



Created as an autonomous children's agency in 1978, the Virginia Division for Children grew out of recommendations made by two legislative commissions. The Division was established with the dual purpose of providing for the planning and coordination of all State services to children and promoting the best interests of all children and youths.

The Division's 15 full-time staff carry out a broad range of responsibilities, including monitoring and evaluating State children's programs, legislative tracking, training, informing the public and other professionals of opportunities available for children, and maintaining a central State registry of all public and private placements.

House Joint Resolution 10 directed JLARC to evaluate the performance of the

Division for Children and recommend whether the Division's enabling legislation should be reenacted. This report therefore focuses on the Division's fulfillment of its mandate and on determining whether there is a continuing need for the Division's services.

Evidence contained in this report suggests that there is a continuing need in Virginia for an organization of this kind. However, in its past performance the Division has not placed appropriate emphasis on certain of its mandated responsibilities. To ensure that its activities address identified needs, revisions appear necessary in the Division's enabling legislation.

A JLARC REPORT SUMMARY

Fulfillment of Mandate

During its early years of operation, the Division for Children seems to have taken an adversarial position regarding its child advocacy role and placed a lower priority on its planning and coordination mandate. This position seems to have limited the Division's ability to work with State agencies. Recently, under the leadership of a new director, the Division appears to have achieved organizational stability and clearer direction. Nevertheless, the Division has not completely carried out its legislative mandate.

Agency Outcomes and Impacts. The Division for Children has carried out certain mandates relating to its information, technical assistance, and advocacy responsibilities. These activities, which include a monthly newsletter, individualized consultation, informational publications, and innovative approaches to reaching "parents at risk," have received generally favorable ratings from recipients.

However, the Division's primary purpose as specified in its enabling legislation — planning and coordination of children's services — has not received adequate attention. In order to fulfill this role, the General Assembly gave the Division such tools and responsibilities as budget review, program evaluation, planning, monitoring,

and making legislative recommendations. The Division has not effectively used these tools and has been reluctant to address its broad coordination function. Many State officials and members of the child-care community indicated to JLARC that greater coordination is needed and that the Division's past efforts have had little impact in this area.

Although some effort was initiated in the past, the Division has not fulfilled its mandate to review the budgets of State agencies providing services to children. The experiences of children's offices in other states and the Virginia Department for the Aging, which have similar review functions, indicate that budget reviews can be used for such purposes as identifying duplication, comparing relative funding of special interests or programs, creating a central resource for information on State programs, and tracking funding trends. The information derived from such reviews could also help in fostering coordination, and would be useful to both executive and legislative policy-makers during budget deliberations.

In addition, the Division has not effectively exercised its authority to evaluate children's programs. Only two of the 17 studies conducted by the Division during the past five years directly related to the agency's evaluation mandate. JLARC's analysis indicates that weaknesses in the Division's research practices have often resulted in inconclusive findings. Such problems make it difficult for the Division to carry out its evaluation mandate, have limited the studies' impacts, and affect the Division's research credibility with other State agencies.

The Division has also been charged with maintaining a listing of all placement facilities in which children are placed by, or with funds from, State agencies. To comply, the Division published its registry, the *Yellow Pages of Children's Services*, in 1980. The 2000-page publication contains listings beyond those required by statute and is of limited usefulness due to its large size, out-of-date and incomplete information, and difficulties updating the data. Moreover, the existence of several other sources of placement information may eliminate the need for the Division's registry in the future. In particular, a legislative Commission is studying the feasibility of a Statewide infor-

mation and referral network, through which a comprehensive resource directory may become available.

Existing Impediments. The Division's current organizational structure has resulted in the inefficient use of staff resources. Changes are needed in order to improve the span of supervisory control and to centralize supervision of the Division's clerical staff.

In addition, officials of the Division are concerned about the limited administrative resources available to this small agency. Assigning the Division's support services to a larger State agency is advisable.

Continuing Need for the Division for Children

Several issues are involved in determining whether the Division should continue operating: whether the need continues for State-level attention to children's issues and coordination of children's services, the Division's performance in meeting that need, and the likely impact if the Division were abolished.

Need for a Focus on Children. Conditions which led to the creation of the Division for Children continue to exist. Among these are fragmentation and duplication of children's services and agency management problems which prompted the Virginia Advisory Legislative Council to recommend creation of the Division in 1976. Respondents to JLARC's survey of the child-care community indicated that planning and coordination continues to be the most important function a State-level organization could perform. In addition, although lobbying efforts in certain areas related to children are intense, the need continues for a single State entity to speak for all children.

The Division's Performance. JLARC found that the Virginia Division for Children has not effectively carried out all of its mandates and has not systematically addressed existing needs. Therefore, the current responsibilities assigned to the Division should be re-examined and revised.

Likely Results if Abolished. As the Division is presently constituted, there would be little impact on current services to children if the agency were abolished. However, the State would lose the potential for a central focus for children's issues and a mechanism for coordinating and monitoring programs.

No State entity would represent all children, fragmentation of services would continue without review, and an information source would be lost. In addition, such action would make Virginia one of the few states without such a State-level organization focusing on children.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Evidence contained in this report suggests a continuing need for the planning and coordination of children's services. Therefore, State-level support for these areas should be continued. However, changes are needed in order to increase the impact and effectiveness of the Division for Children in addressing these needs.

Recommendation (1). The General Assembly should reenact legislation in 1984 to continue the Division for Children. Several revisions, however, should be made to Division's enabling legislation:

- (a) The Division's coordinative responsibility should be more clearly spelled out in legislation. Such a definition should communicate to the Division that coordination is the first priority of the organization. The Division should be directed to coordinate children's services and programs by convening agencies and other interested parties on matters of mutual concern and interest; by facilitating the exchange of information and ideas on children's services through planning, monitoring, budget review, and legislative tracking; and by advocating the best interests of children and youth before agencies, the Governor, and the General Assembly.
- (b) Because of the Division's past performance and incompatibility with its

advocacy role, the Division's evaluation responsibility should be deleted from its legislative mandate.

- (c) The responsibility for maintaining the central registry of placement facilities should be transferred to either an information and referral network or another State agency such as the Department of Social Services.

Recommendation (2). Because of its advocacy role, the Division should continue to have an independent identity as an agency, but its administrative support services should be assigned to another State agency. Such action would reduce the routine administrative demands on the Division's staff and increase the agency's service delivery capability. If a new department of advocacy agencies is created, the Division should be assigned to that agency for administrative purposes.

Recommendation (3). The number of authorized positions assigned to the Division should be reduced by at least four. Three professional positions and one clerical position could be eliminated through assignment of some administrative support activities to a larger agency, centralization of support staff, more efficient word processing, agency reorganization, and reduction in legislatively assigned responsibilities.

Recommendation (4). The General Assembly should enact a sunset provision expiring the Division for Children in five years. Such a provision would authorize another review of the continuing need for the Division for Children and provide the basis for an assessment of the Division's performance in carrying out its revised mission. If the Division does not fully comply with its mandate, it should be abolished.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Many public and private organizations provide services to Virginia's children. Like many states, however, the Commonwealth has established a single State agency to focus on the needs of children -- the Division for Children. The General Assembly has authorized this agency to oversee and coordinate children's services on a Statewide basis.

Prior to the creation of the Division in 1978, two organizations focused on children's needs and services in the State. The Virginia Commission on Children and Youth was established by the 1968 General Assembly to conduct research into any and all matters affecting the welfare of youth. In 1972, an Executive Order established the Virginia Community Coordinated Child Care Council to coordinate comprehensive child care service delivery in the State.

Throughout the early 1970s, a series of legislative study committees and citizens' advisory panels identified problems in the planning and coordination of children's services in Virginia. In 1974, the General Assembly requested that the Virginia Advisory Legislative Council (VALC) appoint a committee to study the needs of young children and prepare a report on its findings. As part of its study, the VALC was charged with recommending the best location for an office which would provide for the planning and coordination of children's services.

The final report of the VALC study, issued in 1976, identified two types of problems that prevented children's services from being delivered as effectively as possible: agency management of service delivery systems and the lack of the central overview necessary for the indepartmental coordination of service delivery. To remedy these problems, the Council recommended the creation of a Division for Children in the Office of the Governor.

Coincidentally, another legislative committee, the Commission on State Government Management, was examining ways to make State government more effective. The committee identified the need for a central focus for the planning of State services to children and recommended a separate agency under the Secretary of Human Resources. This option was enacted into legislation, creating the Division for Children. The Commission on Children and Youth and the Community Child Care Council were abolished and their functions merged into the new Division.

The Division for Children

Legislation assigns the Division specific responsibilities for carrying out its planning and coordination mission. The Division has a professional staff which relies on an advisory board for assistance in establishing program priorities and objectives.

Responsibilities. The responsibilities of the Division for Children are outlined in Sections 2.1-549 et. seq., *Code of Virginia*. The overall purpose of the agency is "to provide for the planning and coordination of all State services to children in order that the children of the Commonwealth may develop to their fullest potential the physical, mental, and social capabilities which they possess and that the role of the family as the primary and fundamental influence on child development be promoted and enhanced." The Division is also responsible for "promoting and advocating the best interests of all children and youth." The agency is charged with the following specific responsibilities:

- to develop a program to inform the public of opportunities available for children and youth to fulfill their needs and solve certain problems through existing State and local services and to make available such other information as would be of value to professional and other citizens working in the juvenile field.
- to aid in the provision of technical assistance and training within the State in order to support efforts to initiate or improve programs and services for children and youth.
- to make appropriate recommendations for legislative changes to the Governor and General Assembly and to follow and evaluate federal legislation having a potential impact upon the children and youth of the Commonwealth.
- to evaluate State programs which deliver services to children and youth to determine their effectiveness and to make recommendations to the appropriate government officials concerning the future financial support and continuation of such programs and the establishment of new ones.
- to monitor State programs delivering services to children and youth to determine the extent to which services promised or mandated are delivered.
- to maintain a central registry of current information concerning all public and private placements in which children and youth are placed by or with funds from the Department of Corrections, Department of Education, Department of Health, Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Welfare and the Commission on the Visually Handicapped. The registry of such placements shall include, but not be limited to, residential treatment centers, boarding facilities, group care facilities, halfway houses, emergency shelter care, maternity homes, psychiatric hospitals, rehabilitation centers, trade schools and institutions with special education programs. The registry shall be open to and available for the use of the agencies which contribute information thereto, all other public and private agencies and organizations and parents and citizens who request information therefrom.

In addition, Section 2.1-397.1, *Code of Virginia*, directs the Division to review the proposed budgets of State agencies delivering services to children prior to their submission to the Department of Planning and Budget, and make recommendations concerning the proposals to the appropriate agencies and the Governor's secretaries.

Organization. The Division is currently authorized to have 15 full-time positions. Agency professional and clerical staff are divided into two sections. The Information, Training, and Technical Assistance Section handles information exchanged with State and local organizations and individuals, publishes the agency newsletter, identifies and provides services for training and technical assistance needs, and plans conferences and workshops. The Planning, Research and Evaluation Section is responsible for legislative tracking, evaluation, and monitoring. The Division is administratively located under the Secretary of Human Resources (Figure 1).

Advisory Board. The General Assembly established a 15-member Advisory Board to assist the Division for Children in carrying out its mandates. Board members are appointed by the Governor for four-year staggered terms, and the membership is required by statute to include an attorney, an educator, a pediatrician, and a parent of a child under 18 years of age.

The Board advises the Division on agency objectives and activities, and is responsible for advocating for children and youth on a statewide basis." Members serve on committees established by the Division, including the School Age Parents Committee and the Day Care Council. The Board meets monthly for most of the year.

Funding. The Division's appropriation for the current biennium is \$821,680. Appropriations and expenditures for the Division are presented in Table 1.

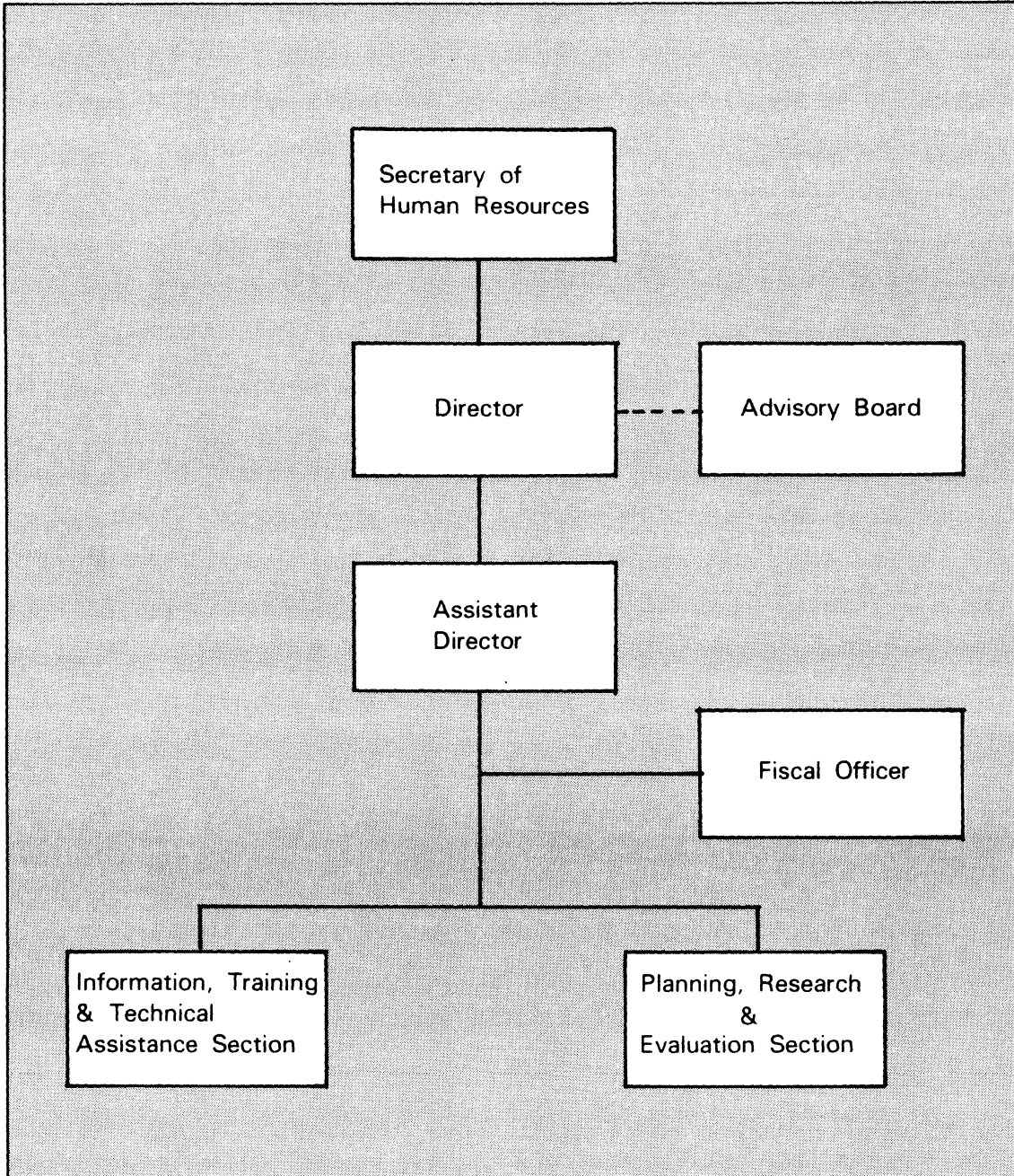
Children's Services in Virginia

Children and youths under 18 years of age comprised nearly 30 percent of the total population of Virginia at the time of the 1980 census. Youths between the ages of 19 and 21 made up an additional four percent. Most of these children and youths have received or will receive services provided by a State agency before they mature into adults.

Services to children include schooling, financial assistance, health and nutrition programs, day care, recreation, protective services in the home, residential placements, special education programs, counseling, adoptions, and court-related services. In addition, there are programs which indirectly serve children by assisting their families in such areas as nutrition services for expectant mothers or mothers of infants, homemaker services, and parental counseling.

Figure 1

**ADMINISTRATION OF THE
VIRGINIA DIVISION FOR CHILDREN**



Source: Virginia Division For Children.

Table 1

REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FOR THE DIVISION FOR CHILDREN
(FY 1979-82)

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Appropriation</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Appropriated Revenue*</u>
1979	\$505,871.97	\$457,254.44	--
1980	\$429,232.67	\$387,048.07	--
1981	\$410,790.00	\$407,654.95	\$10,000
1982	\$473,720.00	\$412,268.67	\$ 6,000
1983	\$401,985.00	--	\$ 5,000
1984	\$419,695.00	--	\$ 5,000

*refers to revenues earned by workshops, publications, etc.

Source: Department of Planning and Budget and CARS reports.

Although the school system serves by far the largest number of children in the State, many other agencies including the Departments of Social Services, Health, Mental Health and Mental Retardation, Corrections, and Visually Handicapped provide services to children (Table 2).

In addition to State providers, hundreds of community organizations serve the needs of children. These organizations may be public or private, for-profit or not-for-profit. They provide such services as day care, counseling, or legal advice. Several organizations have been established to advocate on behalf of children with special needs.

Comparisons With Other States

Many other states besides Virginia have established state children's agencies. According to a 1980 report by the Children's Defense Fund, over 30 states have some form of council, office, or commission whose specific purpose is to ensure that children's needs are met. Several state legislatures, including Georgia and Arkansas, also have created standing committees on children.

There appears to be a trend among states toward establishing a body to focus on children's issues as 20 of these entities were created after 1970 and eight have existed only since 1977. Of the states without children's offices, two -- Oklahoma and New Jersey -- are in the process of creating one.

Recent actions suggest an increased interest in children's issues on the national level also. During 1982, the U.S. Congress, the National Governors Association, and the National Conference of State Legislatures established new subcommittees on children.

Table 2

EXAMPLES OF STATE SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Program</u>	<u>Estimated or Actual Expenditures¹</u>
Department of Social Services	Title XX	\$ 39,536,122
	ADC	\$171,468,162
	Foster Care	\$ 4,386,018
	Day Care	\$ 4,680,884
Department of Corrections	Youth Services, Learning Centers, etc.	\$ 57,614,673
Department for Visually Handicapped	Special Education Services	\$ 1,173,303
	Financial Assistance for Special Education	\$ 426,784
Department of Mental Health/Mental Retardation	Institutional Care	\$ 8,129,771
	Training Center Programs	\$ 14,936,779
	Community Services	\$ 9,004,592
Department of Education	Elementary and Secondary Education, Vocational Training, Special Education	\$831,556,819
Department of Health	Women, Infants and Children's Nutrition Program	\$ 23,412,747
	Child Development/Crippled Children's Services	\$ 6,062,850
	Maternal and Child Health Services	\$ 18,627,529
	State Advocacy Office for The Developmentally Disabled	Consumer and Legal Assistance, Public Awareness and Training

¹Estimates include State general, special and federal funds. All amounts are for FY'83, except SDSS and DOE amounts are for FY'82.

Source: Appropriations Act and agency data.

States have adopted numerous structures and granted various responsibilities to their children's offices. Three of the ten agencies which JLARC contacted -- the North Carolina Governor's Youth Advocacy and Involvement Office, the Mississippi Commission for Children and Youth, and the Maryland Office for Children and Youth -- are located within the state Governor's office. Children's offices in Tennessee, Delaware, Massachusetts, New York and Alabama are organized as separate state agencies within the executive branch. A researcher for the Children's Defense Fund noted a growing trend to place children's agencies in state social service agencies or under the aegis of state legislatures.

Several state children's offices including Virginia's have the responsibility of overseeing and coordinating the activities of other state provider agencies through budget reviews and program evaluation and monitoring. Other responsibilities which children's agencies are frequently assigned include maintaining a centralized information system, tracking legislation, licensing, and advocacy (Table 3).

In addition, several offices provide direct services to children. For example, offices in Massachusetts and North Carolina provide direct services to small numbers of children whose needs are especially acute, and Alabama's Department of Youth Services provides a range of services to children who live away from home by staffing group care facilities, wilderness camps, and detention centers.

According to information obtained from the Children's Defense Fund, the majority of state offices for children have small budgets and staff. In 1980, only 11 had budgets over \$100,000. Virginia's Division for Children, with an appropriation of \$474,000 in 1982, has the fourth largest budget of those JLARC contacted.

JLARC REVIEW

JLARC's review of the Virginia Division for Children centers around key provisions specified in Sections 30-58.1 and 30-68, *Code of Virginia*, and referenced in House Joint Resolution 10. The provisions focus on determining the continuing need for the Division for Children, the Division's fulfillment of its mandates, and the likely impacts if the Division were abolished.

In carrying out the review, JLARC is directed by HJR 10 to "consult with private, public, state and local agencies and organizations which have been served by or worked with the Division in meeting the needs of the children of the Commonwealth." The resolution also establishes a legislative liaison committee composed of three General Assembly members to work with JLARC during the course of the study.

Table 3

STATE CHILDREN'S OFFICES IN EASTERN AND SOUTHEASTERN STATES

State	Organization	Actual FTE	Annual Budget	Responsibilities										
				Coordination	Advocacy	Informational/ technical assistance	Legislative tracking	Evaluation	Monitoring	Maintenance of central registry	Budget review	Licensing direct services	Statistical data bank	
Alabama	Separate Agency	385	N.A.										✓	
Delaware	Governor's Office	10	N.A.	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓		
Maryland	Governor's Office	5	\$ 144,000	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓			
Massachusetts	Separate Agency	185-200	\$5,200,000		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		
Mississippi	Governor's Office	5	\$ 241,000	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓			✓
New York	Separate Agency	35	\$1,000,000	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
North Carolina	Governor's Office	5	\$ 300,000	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	
South Carolina	Legislative Committee	3	\$ 70,000			✓	✓			✓				
Tennessee	Separate Agency	24	\$1,000,000	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓
VIRGINIA	Separate Agency	15	\$ 174,000	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			

Scope of the Review

In accordance with provisions and criteria set forth in Section 30-58.1 and Section 30-68 of the *Code of Virginia*, this report focuses on the performance of the Division for Children and the central question of continued need for the Division's services.

Objectives. Five objectives of the study are:

- to determine whether the purpose for which the Division was created continues to be needed;
- to review the appropriateness of the Division's responsibilities;
- to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the Division's operations;
- to identify existing impediments to fulfilling the Division's mandates; and
- to assess the likely results if the Division were discontinued.

Methods. The findings in this report are based on data collected by:

- questionnaires mailed to approximately 190 organizations whose primary purpose is to provide services to children or who were identified by the Division as having worked with or been served by the Division staff in recent years;
- a phone survey of the Division's current and recent past Advisory Board members;
- in-depth interviews with the Division for Children staff;
- interviews with officials in seven State agencies which are major providers of children's services;
- review of various agency documents and publications;
- attendance at several of the Division's Board and committee meetings, a street theatre performance, and a regional conference; and
- contact with children's offices in several other states.

In addition, an agency self-study was requested by JLARC in order to provide the Division for Children with the opportunity to comment on questions related to its operations. The agency self-study is included in the Appendix to this report.

Report Organization

This report is organized into three chapters. Chapter One provided an overview of the Division for Children's background, responsibilities and structure. Chapter Two evaluates the specific issues relevant to the Division's continued operation. Chapter Three outlines study conclusions and legislative options regarding the Division's future.

II. REVIEW OF THE OPERATIONS OF THE VIRGINIA DIVISION FOR CHILDREN

The General Assembly created the Division for Children to play a strong role in bringing about greater coordination of State services to children. Those groups which have received assistance, have worked with the Division, or provide children services are generally favorable towards the Division's informational activities. However, evidence seems to suggest that the full impact of the Division's efforts on the direct provision of children's services in Virginia has been limited. Nearly half of the public and private organizations responding to the JLARC survey indicated that the Division's efforts have had no effect on eliminating duplication in programs or services; nor have they fostered coordination between organizations. This is due, in part, to the Division's choice to emphasize information and technical assistance activities rather than its budget review, monitoring, and coordinative functions.

Survey respondents believe that a need still exists at the State level for planning and coordination of children's programs. An assessment of the appropriate level of future State involvement in this area must be addressed in light of the Division's past performance and the continuing need for its services. JLARC's review of the Virginia Division for Children, therefore, centers upon several key questions which address the efficiency and effectiveness of the agency in fulfilling its mandate and the continuing need for the agency or program:

Fulfillment of Mandate

1. *Does the Division have measurable outcomes and have these outcomes been achieved? Has the agency successfully carried out its mandates? To what extent can the Division measure the impacts of its services?*
2. *Is the Division carrying out its activities at an appropriate level? Are improvements needed in the Division's activities?*
3. *Are there any impediments to carrying out the Division's mandate? Do administrative or statutory obstacles exist which hinder the Division's activities? Are organizational or legislative changes needed to improve the Division's effectiveness?*

Continued Need

4. *Is there a continuing need for the Division for Children? Do the conditions which led to the agency's establishment still exist today? Are these conditions likely to continue in the future?*

5. *Should any of the responsibilities granted to the Division be redistributed or redefined? Does the agency's mandate need to be clarified? Would specific responsibilities be better carried out at a different level or by another agency?*
6. *What would be the likely results if the Division were abolished? How would agencies which use the Division's services be affected if the Division's services were no longer available? What impact on children's services in the State would likely result?*

FULFILLMENT OF THE DIVISION'S MANDATE

The Virginia Division for Children was created for the overall purpose of planning and coordinating all State services to children and promoting and advocating the best interests of children and youth. The Division has been given a wide range of responsibilities with regard to its statutory charge.

The extent to which the Division has met its legislative charge can be assessed by reviewing the agency's objectives and achievements, examining the focus and level of its activities, and identifying existing impediments to fulfilling its mandate.

Question 1: Does the Division have measurable outcomes and have those outcomes been achieved?

The Division for Children has carried out many activities relating to its legislated mandates. The Division's self-study, included among the Appendixes to this report, catalogs its activities during 1982-83. Some of the activities, such as an agency newsletter and annual forum, began under the Division's predecessor, the Commission for Children and Youth.

Organizations served by the Division include public agencies, private and non-profit organizations, and local units of government. The opinions of user groups, which can be used as a measure of effectiveness, indicate favorable support for the Division's activities aimed largely at providing information, technical assistance, and advocacy. However, these same groups and the JLARC analysis indicate that the Division has not been as successful at carrying out its planning and coordination mission.

Activities and Impact. "Opening Doors for Children," the Division's report on its first four years of service, and the agency self-study provide a good overview of the range of activities carried out by the agency. In the area of public information and awareness, the Division has engaged in such diverse efforts as holding annual

conferences for State child advocates, coordinating a national conference on "Working with Media for Children" in 1978, and publishing *Aware*, a monthly newsletter. The newsletter is supplemented by "alerts", i.e., brief announcements to inform public and private agencies of current information on such issues as legislative changes or new grant or funding possibilities. The agency's conferences and newsletters generally receive favorable ratings.

The Division has also recently begun some innovative approaches to reach "parents at risk" with information on the treatment of children within the family. These activities include a street theater program designed to portray family situations with a message and a newsletter for new parents who read on a remedial level.

Describing its research efforts, the Division lists a variety of publications and studies such as *Children, Youth and Families in Virginia: Assessing Their Needs* (1978) and *Virginia's Children: A Statistical Summary* (1982). The Division has also conducted studies relating to child health, handicapped children, child abuse, day care, and child pornography.

In addition, the agency has commented and made recommendations on a number of State plans and reports such as the State Women, Infants, and Children Work Plan and the Department of Education Five-Year Plan for Vocational Education. The report also indicates that the Division has engaged in a number of grant reviews for activities funded through such federal programs as CETA and LEAA.

In the area of legislative advocacy, activities have included monitoring and tracking bills, making presentations to State legislative study groups, contacting individual Congressman, and disseminating information about State and federal legislation having to do with children.

In spite of the wide range of activities conducted, Division officials acknowledge that much of the agency's actual impacts cannot be determined. The officials feel these difficulties relate to the nature of the agency's mandate to advocate on behalf of children, oversee the services provided by operating agencies, and provide information and assistance to policymakers and interested groups rather than provide direct services to clients. In addition, the agency cannot ensure that its efforts will be used by any other entity in the State. As a result, the impacts of many of the Division's activities cannot be easily determined.

In some areas where impact can be assessed, the Division has had problems. For example, several projects were begun but never completed. Frequently changing agency priorities, a high incidence of staff turnover, and difficulties in completing assignments contributed to some projects being left undone after considerable staff time had been invested in those activities. Incomplete projects include the development of a State children's budget and a preliminary study of child abuse reporting. Numerous sources indicated to JLARC staff,

however, that the recent change in the Division's leadership has established more stability in the agency's priorities and a greater adherence to the agency workplan.

Perceptions of User Groups. Opinions of user groups can be used as one surrogate measure of the Division's effectiveness. For evaluative purposes, user groups have been defined as public and private organizations that have worked with or been served by the Division or provide children services. JLARC systematically surveyed a sample of 190 user groups in order to obtain generalizable information about the Division's effectiveness in carrying out its legislative mandates. (Statistical techniques, i.e., stratified sampling and increasing the sample size, were employed in order to ensure a high degree of confidence in the findings obtained. The survey sample included a large portion of those groups which the Division itself identified as having had "sustained" or substantial contact with the agency.)

Results of the 138 surveys returned to JLARC indicated that user groups are generally positive about the Division's activities relating to information, technical assistance, and legislative tracking. However, a high percentage of respondents indicated they had not received a particular service from the Division. The most widely received service appears to be the agency's newsletter *Aware* and the "alerts" bulletin (Table 4).

Survey respondents were not as positive with regard to the Division's coordination efforts and central placement registry. Participation of the Division in these activities is more fully discussed in the following sections of this report.

Question 2: Is the Division for Children carrying out activities at an appropriate level given its legislative mandate?

The Division for Children has pursued many activities in an attempt to meet its legislative mandate. These activities, particularly those related to public information, technical assistance, and legislative tracking, are perceived as a valuable resource within the child-serving community. As previously mentioned, these mandates have received priority attention from the Division. Agency mandates relating to budget reviews, evaluation and monitoring, coordination, and maintenance of a central placement registry have not been fully or systematically carried out.

Coordination and Planning

Coordination of State services to children is one of the principal reasons for the Division's creation. Section 2.1-549 of the *Code of Virginia* clearly states that the purpose of the chapter creating the Division "is to provide for the planning and coordination of all State services for children...."

Table 4

USER PERCEPTIONS OF THE SERVICES
OF THE VIRGINIA DIVISION FOR CHILDREN

<u>Information/Technical Assistance</u>	<u>Excel- lent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Satis- factory</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Not Received</u>
Newsletter (<i>Aware</i>)	43%	21%	6%	4%	0%	25%
Publications	22	19	11	0	1	46
Annual Forum	12	12	8	1	1	67
Other conferences, regional forums, or workshops	10	18	4	2	2	64
Responses to informational requests	18	13	3	0	2	64
Assistance with the development of a brochure or publication	4	4	2	0	0	90
Assistance in identifying and securing new funding sources	4	4	1	0	1	90
Assistance with conducting conferences or workshops	8	2	1	0	1	89
Other	1	0	1	1	0	97

<u>Legislative Tracking</u>	<u>Service Not Received</u>	<u>Is Information:*</u>						
		<u>Service Received</u>	<u>Accurate?</u>		<u>Timely?</u>		<u>Relevant?</u>	
			<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
"Alerts" Bulletin	54%	46%	100%	0%	100%	0%	98%	2%
Legislative Hotline	78%	22%	95%	5%	92%	8%	96%	4%
Legislative Workshops or Committees sponsored by the Division	82%	18%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%
Legislative Updates included in the <i>Aware</i> newsletter	40%	60%	100%	0%	98%	2%	100%	0%

*Based only on those receiving the service.

Source: JLARC survey of user groups.

"Coordination" is a broad concept, however, and has been difficult to define. The Division's attempts to foster coordination have produced mixed results. Despite these activities, many State officials still feel greater coordination of children's services is needed. However, Division officials indicate that difficulties have made them reluctant to continue devoting significant agency resources to carrying out this mandate.

Efforts at Coordination. The 1976 study published by the Virginia Advisory Legislative Council on the "Needs of Young Children" found "considerable overlapping and duplicating of functions" among State agencies which provide services to children. The study identified obstacles to coordination and recommended the creation of a single agency which would have an overview of children's needs and problems within the State system. In order to improve its ability to coordinate other agencies services, the study advised that the new agency, the Division for Children, be granted the responsibility to plan, monitor, evaluate, review budgets, and make legislative recommendations concerning children's issues. These responsibilities were the tools to be used by the Division in operationalizing its planning and coordinative mission.

The Division for Children's agency self study lists a wide range of activities during 1982-83 as being associated with coordination and planning, including promoting the establishment of a day care council, studying the feasibility and need of long-term care facilities for children, coordinating local services to provide for the needs of a local day care center, and participating in 14 inter-agency and State task forces. The Division will also be coordinating the Southern Regional Legislators Conference on children and youth in December, 1983.

Impact on Coordination of Services. Thirty-nine percent of the survey respondents agree or strongly agree that the "Division has had little impact on fostering coordination between us and other organizations." More surprising, however, is the response from government agencies -- over half agreed with this statement (Table 5). Overall, respondents ranked coordination of children programs as the most important service that should be performed on a statewide basis.

Respondents also believed that duplication was still a problem. Fifty-three percent of those individuals responding for government agencies indicated that duplication exists among services provided children. Forty percent of the government respondents felt that the Division helped to somewhat reduce duplication of services.

Division officials have acknowledged specific concerns about coordination in the agency's 1984-86 program proposal and Executive Agreement:

- increased State responsibility for administering and funding of services and programs for children and families requires intensified coordination efforts.
- perceived lack of coordination of State services.
- potential for greater service contributions by civic and social organizations and businesses to supplement services provided by government.
- unidentified numbers of children in need of services who do not fall within the "indigent" classification.

The Division has proposed undertaking the following steps during the upcoming biennium to remedy these difficulties.:

- compile a compendium of State services created or expanded between 1974 and 1978 as a result of legislation passed in the General Assembly to be used as a basis for legislative planning;

Table 5

PERCEPTIONS OF THE DIVISION'S COORDINATION EFFORTS

Statement: The Division has had little impact on fostering coordination between us and other organizations.

<u>Survey Group</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>No Response</u>
Total Respondents	20%	19%	29%	15%	9%	8%
Governmental Agencies	29	23	27	12	5	4
Non-governmental agencies	11	19	30	19	11	10
Sustained Contacts	9	18	12	29	29	3
Other	21	19	31	14	7	8

Source: JLARC survey of user groups.

- augment State services by obtaining commitments from volunteer, service, and social organizations and businesses to include services to children in their plans for 1984;
- establish community coalitions to address children's problems and offer recommendations to government; and
- participate in an Interagency Coordinating Committee on Delivery of Related Services to Handicapped Children (established in response to recent legislative action).

Past attempts at coordination have met with only partial success. One Board member described the Division during its earlier years as "the new kid on the block," who had to earn its right to negotiate with more established agencies. This perception is supported by the results of JLARC's telephone survey of the Division's Board members. Fourteen of fifteen respondents agreed with the statement that "coordination of children's services within the State has been difficult to achieve because other agencies refuse to cooperate."

In a recent interview with JLARC, a Division official acknowledged that the Division "underestimated the need to build contacts and relationships" during the early years of its operation. The agency built a relationship with child advocacy groups, the agency official claimed, but not with providing agencies.

Representatives from the major State agencies which provide services to children also perceived that the Division has not taken the initiative in coordinating children's services. In structured interviews with officials in the Departments of Health, Education, Social Services, Corrections, Visually Handicapped, Mental Health and Retardation, and Rehabilitative Services, only one agency representative was aware of any efforts the Division had made in the past four years to convene other agencies.

Agency representatives continue to call for greater coordination of children's services. For example, the chairman of the State Mental Health and Retardation Board proposed in June 1983 that the Division take the lead in developing a "comprehensive plan of services for all children, normal, at-risk and dysfunctional." Under the MHMR plan, the Division would compile information to support the need for and possible benefits of implementing such a plan. The plan would be passed on to the Secretary of Human Resources and then the Governor.

Division officials, however, are reluctant to undertake such an effort in view of their current staffing commitments, the fact that their priorities have already been set for their next year of operation, and a concern that if the Governor does not make it a top priority, other agencies might not give it sufficient attention. Furthermore, a Division official expressed the feeling that it is "inappropriate" for the Division to formulate a plan which dictates what other agencies are to do.

The results of JLARC's telephone interviews with officials of children's agencies in other states, however, indicate that meaningful levels of coordination can be achieved without the authority to enforce compliance with its recommendations. Children's officials in most State offices contacted feel they can provide effective leadership in coordinating children's services by means such as convening meetings with agency heads, forming interdepartmental teams, establishing official liaison with each department, and sitting on statewide citizen's councils. A report published by the Children's Defense Fund also observed that no state children's agency they spoke to wished to remove decisionmaking responsibilities from individual State departments.

JLARC's interviews with representatives of the major State agencies which provide children's services suggest that these methods of effecting coordination can be implemented in Virginia as well. Administrators in three agencies specifically indicated that they would like to see ties strengthened with the Division. They did not feel the Division needs more formal authority to coordinate interaction between other agencies; rather, the Division needs "leadership and legitimacy." In the words of one top agency official:

"The Division should try to work within the system as a facilitator, rather than acting as if they are outside the system. This would mean a change in the [current] attitude of the Division that advocacy means an adversarial role."

The Division should take steps to renew its efforts to coordinate State children's services. The mandate to coordinate and plan State services is a key element in the legislative intent behind the creation of the Division. Therefore, greater emphasis on fulfilling this mandate should be central to the Division's workplan.

The Division should consider initiating several of the activities suggested by other agencies within and outside Virginia including:

- establishing official liaison with each State agency;
- cooperating with MHMR and other agencies in developing a Statewide plan for children's services;
- convening agency heads to discuss specific issues of concern, perhaps focusing on a different topic each year; and
- forming interdepartmental teams around issues of concern to all children's agencies.

Budget Review

The Division's budget review responsibility can be a potentially effective mechanism for achieving greater coordination among

children's programs and for reducing duplication among children's services. Information on agency budgets can be used by the Governor's secretaries, the Governor, and legislative budget committees during budget deliberations.

The Division for Children is one of five State agencies which is currently mandated by Section 2.1-397.1, *Code of Virginia*, to participate in the budget development process of relevant agencies by reviewing their budget proposals prior to the submission to the Department of Planning and Budget. The purpose of this charge is to enable the Division to make recommendations on the impacts of budgetary proposals on children's services and areas of possible duplication or conflicting priorities across programs. The recommendations are to be made to the appropriate agencies and the secretaries of the Governor before the budget is finalized.

The Division has not fulfilled this legislative charge, citing staffing limitations and difficulties in obtaining accurate data. Nevertheless, the experience of other agencies with similar responsibilities, such as the Department for the Aging, indicates that efforts in this area can produce information that can be useful during budget deliberations.

Children's Budget. According to information contained in the agency self-study, the Division did not engage in any activities relating to this mandate during 1982-83. Recent interviews with the Division's staff reveal that none are currently responsible for budget reviews. In addition, State officials of seven major providers of children's services were unaware of ever having received comments on their agency's proposed budgets from the Division.

When the Division was created, at least two staff positions were established with the responsibility of carrying out budget reviews. One section chief's job description included "planning and supervising the development of a process and methodology for reviewing the budgets of State agencies providing services to children and youth" and "coordinating review activities with the Department of Planning and Budget." An additional staff person assigned to the same section had duties which included responsibility for "providing State agency budget review analysis relative to programs and services for children and youth."

The activities specified in the job descriptions to "determine State agencies' appropriations for children and youth programs and the effectiveness and efficiency of such appropriations" have not been implemented. Rather, in January 1981, the Division assigned five staff members to collect the data necessary to develop a "Children's Budget." The children's budget was envisioned to be a comprehensive inventory of financial data for all children's programs by agency, and was to include funding sources, program and subprogram objectives, and the amount of funds requested, appropriated, and expended by program and subprogram.

The Division encountered several problems in attempting to develop a Children's Budget. Internal agency memos reveal that the Division's staff were concerned about the scope of the analysis, and the completeness and accuracy of information able to be obtained. Division staff were also concerned about the estimation procedures used by other agencies to provide the Division with information. Estimations of expenditure data were necessary because budget formats do not readily break out client population. Consequently, the Division dropped this effort when difficulties with obtaining data were encountered and in view of the fact that some turnover of staff occurred -- even though several months of effort had already been expended.

Telephone interviews conducted with the four other State agencies with similar review authority indicate that at least one agency -- the Department for the Aging -- compiles a document which describes State agencies that provide services to its clientele, the specific services offered, and the amount budgeted for these services. The other three agencies indicate a more limited review effort. In spite of difficulties encountered similar to the Division for Children's earlier attempts, the Department for the Aging gathered the information that was available and produced a report useful for several purposes including: overall trends, comparisons between State support for outpatient services and institutional care, and descriptions of resources available to local groups from other agencies.

It appears that the information currently available -- along with agency program narratives -- would provide the Division with a foundation for reviewing budgets to determine trends, priorities, duplication, and service gaps in children services. Difficulties with obtaining actual budget data on children's services can be overcome by requesting agencies to start collecting budget data on children's programs. The Division could develop a procedure or form for the collection of such data.

Other State's Experiences. Children's offices in some other states are involved with analyzing budget information on children's services in their states. Of the nine states contacted by JLARC, seven review agency budgets. Comprehensive Children's Budgets were compiled in three states - New York, North Carolina and Massachusetts. Other states engage in a more limited review for such purposes as commenting on grant applications, reviewing reasons for budget amendments, assessing the effect of government reorganization on children's services, and reviewing the needs of particular programs.

According to telephone interviews conducted by JLARC staff, the information included in the New York and North Carolina Children's Budgets allows the agencies to:

- identify areas of duplication by showing where similar services are provided by more than one agency;

- compare relative funding of special policy concerns;
- provide a resource manual for advocacy groups by describing agency's children's programs;
- familiarize themselves with the program structure of other agencies;
- identify potential sources of expansion for children's services; and
- track shifts in funding levels due to changing distribution methods, changing federal reimbursements, or new initiatives.

An even less detailed children's budget has been cited by Massachusetts for identifying funding priorities, comparing actual appropriations with agency budget requests, and tracking shifts in funding levels and the effect of new policy initiatives.

The Virginia Division for Children has not carried out its responsibilities for reviewing budgets at an appropriate level. As part of its role to coordinate services to children, the Division should be engaged in the review of other agencies' budgets. The experience of agencies with similar functions both within and outside of Virginia indicates that even limited efforts can be useful for oversight, information, coordination, planning, and advocacy purposes.

Evaluation

The Division has been given the responsibility for evaluating State programs which provide services to children in order to determine their effectiveness and recommend "future financial support and continuation of such programs and the establishment of new ones." The Division's role as evaluator differs from that of other State agencies with similar functions and from the evaluation sections which exist within several operating agencies including the Departments of Social Services and Mental Health and Mental Retardation. Unlike other evaluation agencies, the Division for Children focuses its studies only on children's programs, and in contrast to internal evaluation sections, the Division can review programs administered by more than one agency.

Two evaluations of State programs have been carried out by the Division during its five-year history. (A third evaluation is in progress.) State agencies have expressed serious concerns about the Division's past evaluations and other studies with regard to their research design, research methodology, and impact.

Number and Type of Studies. According to a list prepared by agency officials at JLARC's request, the Division for Children has carried out 17 studies since its creation in 1978. These studies vary in duration, reason initiated, source of request, staff assigned, and type of study (Table 6).

Table 6

STUDIES BY THE DIVISION FOR CHILDREN

<u>Title</u>	<u>Duration</u>	<u>Reason Initiated</u>	<u>Source of Request</u>	<u>Professional Staff Assigned</u>	<u>Type of Study</u>
Children and Families in Va.: Assessing Their Needs	1977-78	to establish data on children, needs, and problems	initiated by the Division	11	informational
Alternative Program Evaluation Techniques: Handbook	1978-79	to serve as a guide for Virginia program directors	initiated by the Division	2	informational and Resource Guide
Step-by-Step	1979-80	to provide persons with a better understanding of juvenile justice system	General Assembly	3	informational and Research
Implementation of the Revised State Plan for the Identification and Diagnosis of Handicapped Children	1979-80	to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the revised State plan	General Assembly and the Secretary of Human Resources	4	evaluation
Need for and Appropriateness of Public School Operated Day Care Programs for School Age Children	1979-80	to examine appropriateness of schools offering before and after school day care	General Assembly	2	research
Report on Referral Form and Procedures Developed Under SJR 157	1981-82	to examine efforts to improve referral between schools and juvenile justice system	SJR 157 Agency Taskforce	1	evaluation
Evaluation Report on Prescription Team	1979-80	to determine the effect of prescription team operations on children	Secretary of Human Resources in response to legislative request	3	research
Preliminary Study of Child Abuse Reporting	9/79- (not completed)	to look at how child abuse reporting occurs in Va.	initiated by the Division	1	informational
Needs of Medically Indigent Children in Virginia	1980-81	to examine resources available to meet needs of this group	General Assembly	2	informational

Table 6

(Continued)

<u>Title</u>	<u>Duration</u>	<u>Reason Initiated</u>	<u>Source of Request</u>	<u>Professional Staff Assigned</u>	<u>Type of Study</u>
The Yellow Pages of Children's Services	1980-82	to update service resources in Va. in response to legislative mandate	initiated by the Division	1	informational
Study on Child Pornography and Prostitution	1981-82	to examine extent of child pornography and prostitution in Va., services offered and adequacy of laws	US GAO and Secretary of Human Resources	2	informational
Virginia's Children: A Statistical Summary	1981-82	to examine status in many areas reflective of quality of life, data for comparisons	initiated by the Division	2	research
Title XX Day Care	January-July 1982	to document effect of budget cuts on Title XX day care services for children	Director of the Division	1	informational
Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) Services in Virginia	1982-83	in response to decreased EPSDT screening activity and scheduled Federal revision of EPSDT regulations	initiated by the Division	1	informational
Long-Term Care for Children with Medical Needs	March-May 1983	need for Pediatric Nursing Home	Secretary Fisher	1	informational
Day Care Study (in progress)	April-October 1983	to assess current need for day-care services	Director and Day Care Council	5	informational
Study of the Implementation of Selected Recommendations made by the State Crime Commission to the Department of Corrections in 1977	January-August 1983	first step in examining recommendations in other studies	initiated by the Division	1	limited evaluation and informational

Source: Virginia Division for Children.

Few of the studies relate directly to the Division's evaluation and monitoring mandates. Only two of the studies, i.e., those dealing with the revised State plan for handicapped children and the referral procedures between schools and the juvenile justice system, are considered by Division officials to be full "evaluations" of State programs. A current study of the implementation of 1977 State Crime Commission recommendations is viewed by the Division "as a first step in examining recommendations made in other studies." This project has been termed a "limited evaluation and informational study" and is among the Division's few attempts at carrying out its monitoring mandate.

Several of the studies have been conducted as part of the Division's other mandates to provide information and maintain a central registry of placements. These studies are considered by the Division to be either "informational," if they provide data and material without assessing program effectiveness, or "research," if the project is beyond being purely informational but not a full evaluation.

Impact. According to information supplied to JLARC by the agency, most of the Division's studies have had little or no discernible impact on the provision of children's services in the State to date. It appears that the studies which provide information or serve as a resource to interested agencies and persons receive the most use. The Division indicates that its statistical summary and publication on the workings of the juvenile justice system, for example, have been widely used as an information source. However, no distinguishable impact can be cited for most of the Division's studies, including the agency's two evaluation reports.

Officials of the Division feel that its ability to effect changes in State programs based on its study findings is greatly limited and often depends on the receptiveness of the operating agency officials, the interest of policymakers, and budgetary conditions. As stated in the agency self-study, Division officials indicate that the absence of "a clear mandate to require agencies serving children to implement study recommendations... renders the Division incapable of specifying the impacts of much of its work...."

Other factors have also limited the impact of the Division's studies. State agency administrators, who are often the potential users of evaluations and studies, expressed mixed opinions about the quality of the Division's reports. During interviews with JLARC staff, some State agency officials praised the Division's efforts to identify problems and indicated that some studies had contributed to subsequent program changes. In contrast, others sharply criticized the Division's study methods, reliance on graduate students to conduct projects, and ability to interpret data. In particular, shortcomings in the research methodology used in several studies have resulted in inconclusive findings and recommendations and have adversely affected the persuasiveness of the Division's studies.

Shortcomings in Design and Methods. JLARC conducted an assessment of the Division's past and current research practices. The

Division was asked to submit a list of its studies, and a content analysis of each evaluative study was carried out. Interviews were held with Division staff and State agency officials to discuss research procedures and report impact. Agency criticisms of the Division seem valid based on the JLARC analysis.

During in-depth interviews conducted by JLARC staff, Division personnel indicated that the agency does not follow a formal research process for most studies. Rather than developing a detailed research plan or design to guide the study, agency researchers frequently develop project "outlines" for themselves. These outlines do not typically undergo an internal quality review until after the research is completed and the report draft is written. At this stage, it is often difficult to correct inherent problems in methodology or to identify overlooked issues. As a result, some studies have not been finalized and others were published with methodological deficiencies which could have been identified and corrected early in the project.

For example, the Division began a study in September 1979 to determine the extent of child abuse reporting in Virginia. A draft report was prepared after seven months of research time by a graduate student intern. However, the study was never completed because of inadequate methodological practices, which the draft report itself acknowledged rendered the findings "inconclusive." A content analysis of the draft report confirmed the problems.

Several questionnaires were used during the study. The decision to limit survey sample sizes due to perceived time considerations produced data which were not conclusive. For example, only 16 of over 150 residential facilities across Virginia were sent questionnaires to assess institutional procedures concerning abuse and neglect. Even if all 16 had responded, the generalizability of the small sample to the entire institutional sector for children in the Commonwealth would be limited. In fact, only four of 16 facilities receiving the questionnaire returned it to the Division. As the Division's draft report itself states, "the statistics obtained during this study are inconclusive, inferences can be drawn from the patterns depicted by the data but the small sample and response rate has resulted in statistics that are not necessarily valid." Even that statement is inaccurate. Inferences cannot be drawn that are at all valid because of the small number of responses.

Greater attention to research methods during the initial phase of the study could have identified the potential problems with small sample sizes. Larger samples would have significantly improved results and allowed for more conclusive findings with minimal increase in effort, time, and expense.

Methodological deficiencies were also noted in several of the Division's completed studies. While the Division often recognizes that inadequate methods render findings inconclusive, conclusions and recommendations are nevertheless frequently drawn from those methods. JLARC's content analysis of all four of the Division's printed studies

which contain recommendations found a number of methodological problems. For example:

The Division's 1980 study of the implementation of the revised State plan for handicapped children appears to be the most methodologically rigorous study the agency has published. The report was based largely on qualitative methods including interviews, site visits, and literature reviews. The extensive use of such qualitative methods requires careful analysis to ensure that findings are based on a convergence of data. However, the staff assigned to the project did not appear to follow this research practice and convergence is not clearly documented in the Division's report.

* * *

During 1981-82, the Division evaluated the referral form developed by an interagency task force to facilitate coordination of the education and juvenile justice systems. While the study attempted to determine whether the form was used by public schools to make referrals to local juvenile justice units, it did not attempt to identify which factors influence its use. Rather, the Division relied heavily on a single article in the field to conclude that "variances in referrals from schools to juvenile courts appears to be the result of differences in judicial philosophies and service availability." Although judicial differences may be a primary factor influencing use, other plausible reasons -- such as differences in philosophies within and among school systems in Virginia -- were apparently not considered by the Division.

The same report also included a follow-up telephone survey of school principals to determine what effect the new referral procedures had on schools and students. However, principals from only 25 of a total 734 public schools containing the seventh grade were surveyed. Use of such a small sample size relative to the total population produces results which are not highly confident of representing the entire population.

* * *

The Division's study of the appropriateness of public schools operating before- and after-school day care programs relied heavily on the input of

members of an advisory task force, demographic information, three public hearings, and a phone survey of working parents. With regard to the latter, organizations in four areas of the State were asked by the Division to identify working parents of school age children who would be willing to participate in the phone survey. Participating parents were, in turn, requested to identify other parents for the survey. Although this selection process resulted in 107 working parents being surveyed, it also may have introduced sampling bias into the findings. This might result because organizations and participating parents are likely to recommend individuals with backgrounds and philosophies similar to their own for inclusion in the survey.

The above cited problems make it difficult for the Division to reach conclusive findings, result in limited impact, and affect the agency's research credibility. The General Assembly should consider relieving the Division of its evaluation mandate.

Central Placement Registry

Maintaining a central data source about all public and private residential placement facilities in which children are placed with State funds has been of legislative interest for a number of years. This interest has arisen amid concerns about variations in costs of residential placements, ability to locate adequate placements for children across agency and geographical jurisdictions, and the number of Virginia children placed in out-of-state facilities.

The Division's predecessor, the Commission on Children and Youth, developed the first resource inventory in 1978 with the publishing of a 900-page directory of information on children's services and facilities. The Division for Children has since expanded the inventory to include over 2,000 pages of services in the State. The publication, the *Yellow Pages of Children's Services*, lists more than the residential facilities required by statute and includes such entities as girl scouts, libraries, sheriff's departments, hospitals, community colleges, schools, parks, and fire departments.

Several limitations, including its large size and incomplete and out-of-date information, seem to have reduced the usefulness of the *Yellow Pages* as either a placement registry or as a source of information about children's services in the State. More importantly, however, the existence of similar but more efficient sources of information in the State suggest that the Division's central registry may no longer be needed.

Usefulness. The results of two surveys indicate problems with the *Yellow Pages*. The Division of Children attempted to assess

the usefulness of the *Yellow Pages* by sending out a survey in June, 1982 to all 750 agencies who had received copies of the *Yellow Pages*. The Division's analysis of returned questionnaires showed that 72 of 175 respondents routinely consulted the *Yellow Pages* as part of their job, although only 37% of the respondents indicated they use it as often as once a month. The main criticisms of the document by respondents of the Division survey pertains to its size and incomplete information. Respondents also felt the information is too quickly out of date, and is too costly for what it provides.

The JLARC survey of users tends to confirm the Division's findings, and to indicate that some users are consulting the document for residential placements. Forty-two percent of the respondents had a copy of the *Yellow Pages*. Of those that did, half had used the document at least once since it was published in 1980. That is, about one-quarter of all survey respondents made some use of the document.

Purposes for which the *Yellow Pages* was used varied widely. The greatest use was as a reference for making residential placements. This finding tends to demonstrate that the document can be used for its intended purpose.

As in the earlier survey by the Division, respondents criticized the document as being difficult to use, out dated, too large, and incomplete. Strengths of the document cited by users include its comprehensiveness, its availability as a resource, and its usefulness in locating desired placements or providers.

Maintaining the Central Registry. Division officials acknowledge that maintaining a complete and up-to-date registry is "unmanageable" because of financial difficulties and updating problems. These difficulties also limit the registry's usefulness.

According to Division staff, the *Yellow Pages* was compiled by surveying all service providers who were listed in the prior inventory. The Division also consulted local youth services directories and solicited information from local agencies which it identified as providing services to children. The data for the registry were gathered and compiled in 1980, and published in May 1982. Thus, the information was already two years old at the time of printing.

The Division's lack of computer capabilities makes updating the information in the *Yellow Pages* costly and time-consuming. The outdated information may cause difficulties for the user. If a facility closes, expands, or changes services, those changes cannot be reflected in the *Yellow Pages* until it is updated.

The Division's initial distribution was free. The current user charge of \$18.10 per copy has been cited by some organizations as prohibitive. Many agencies, such as local welfare service departments, which may have several different branches, may have only one copy. This means the copy is inaccessible to workers at other branches.

Existence of Other Sources of Information. The existence of other sources of children's placement information may eliminate the need for the Division to carry out this responsibility. Interviews with officials of State agencies with responsibility for children's programs revealed that none use the *Yellow Pages* for locating residential placements. Rather, the Departments of Social Services, Corrections, and Education maintain their own listings. The Department of Vocational Rehabilitation also keeps a list of "vendors" of services, and the State Advocacy Office for the Developmentally Disabled compiles a directory of services for its client population. The latter office also staffs a toll-free number which other State agencies can call for information about special placements.

In addition, the results of JLARC's user survey show that many agencies which refer children to residential placements have developed their own resources or consult other sources of placement information. These include listings compiled by the State Departments of Social Services and Corrections and local or regional sources of information such as youth service commissions.

Agency officials interviewed mentioned that the sharing of information is commonplace across agencies. For example, the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation consults the Department of Social Services listing for placement information while the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation consults the list prepared by the Department of Education. Agency representatives also cited numerous informal contacts between individuals within agencies on the State and local level for the purpose of sharing placement information.

A comparison of the listings maintained by other State agencies with that of the Division for Children reveals that other listings contain more complete information on each entry. In addition, agency listings tend to be updated more frequently than the Division's *Yellow Pages*. For example, the Department of Social Services updates its lists every two to three years, while the Departments of Corrections and Education update their respective lists almost annually.

Local and regional organizations such as youth councils and planning districts have developed directories of community services which contain information on placement facilities as well as other children's services. These are not necessarily comprehensive, however, and are not available in all areas of the State.

A more comprehensive resource directory may be available Statewide in the future. There are presently six information and referral (I&R) centers in the State which inventory human services. The centers are funded by Title XX through the Department of Social Services with a State and local match, supplemented with United Way funds.

The present I&R network serves approximately 80% of the State's population. A joint legislative subcommittee is currently studying the establishment of a statewide information and referral

system for human services programs. The subcommittee is scheduled to report its findings to the 1984 Session.

The existence of the I&R network, especially if it is expanded statewide, may render the *Yellow Pages of Children's Services* unnecessary. The I&R center in the Richmond planning district, for example, lists over 1,000 resources, all of which are coded by age of population served. Resources include special education programs, group homes, rehabilitation services, and shelter care. Unlike the Division for Children's registry, information is computerized, and therefore can be updated fairly easily. Data on space available in the shelter care facilities, for example, is updated daily.

The computerized list of services, which is also published in handbook form, is publicized through radio and television. The Center's toll-free number is staffed 24 hours a day to serve both agencies and individuals.

Given the Division for Children's currently limited ability to maintain a central registry, the limitations on its usefulness as a source of information on children's services in general, and the availability of other statewide information on placements, the General Assembly should consider relieving the Division for Children of its present mandate to maintain a central registry of placements. If a statewide information and referral network is developed, it could maintain a registry of child placement data, and access to the information for agencies and interested persons could be guaranteed through legislation.

An appropriate information role for the Division for Children might be the development of a directory of agency directories for children services.

Question 3: Are there any administrative impediments to carrying out the Division's mandates?

The Division has cited some administrative impediments which hinder its ability to fully meet its mandates. The Division Director has indicated that professional staff are at times called upon to handle clerical tasks. In response to JLARC's request for an agency self-study, the Division Director disclosed that:

"...the smaller number of staff persons imposes many limitations on the agency's follow-up capabilities, and accomplishment of routine daily tasks. For example: professional staff must be assigned to take bulk mailings to the Post Office. Although the example cited seems simplistic, management efficiency is affected when professional staff are developed to handle such responsibilities, especially when many deadlines must be met. Agency activities are affected markedly by the limited

number of clerical staff available to meet our vast typing and information dissemination needs."

While the number and use of staff are of concern to Division officials, staff inefficiencies appear to be related to the narrow span of control of supervisors and the lack of overall supervision of clerical staff. The agency's current location within the structure of State government is also a concern.

Supervision of Staff. The number of Division personnel with supervisory responsibilities results in a narrow span of control. Six of the 11 professional staff positions have supervisory responsibilities: the Director, the Assistant Director, the two Section Chiefs, the Child Program Analyst Supervisor, and the State Planner C (Figure 2). In practice, the latter two positions do not exercise supervision on a daily basis. The Children's Program Analyst Supervisor does not supervise anyone since a former subordinate resigned over a year ago and the position was subsequently abolished. The Planner C position is designated as back-up supervisor in the absence of the Information, Training, and Technical Assistance Section Chief.

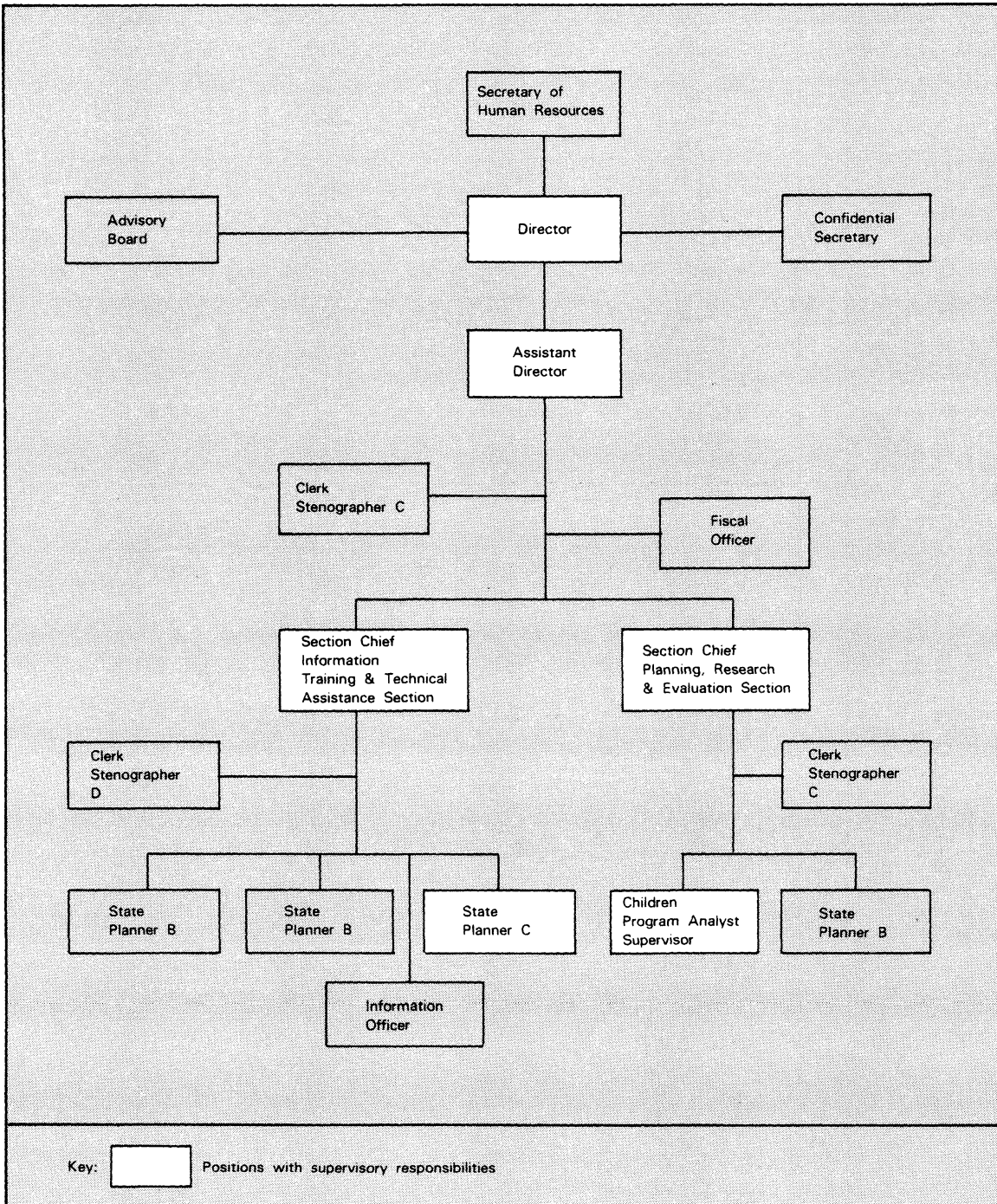
The organizational structure has also limited the efficient use of support staff because supervision of these resources is spread throughout the Division. Interviews with the Division staff indicate that secretarial time (three clerk stenographers and a confidential secretary) is considered a scarce resource which must be routinely allocated to various agency priorities.

Because the supervision of clerical staff is shared among five individuals, the problem of allocating secretarial support to projects which cut across individual needs is elevated to the Assistant Director. The resolution of competing typing priorities by the Assistant Director on a routine basis appears to be an unnecessary occurrence and an inefficient use of the Assistant Director's time. Nevertheless, efficient secretarial support is important in an agency such as the Division for Children, which processes large quantities of information materials. Pooling clerical resources and assigning one person the responsibility for setting typing priorities can have a dramatic effect on carrying out the agency's activities and improve productivity.

Given its small staff, the large number of supervisory positions appears to be unnecessary and takes away from time which could be spent in carrying out activities related to the Division's mandates. The Division should take steps to restructure its organization to make more efficient use of its staff by eliminating the current narrow span of supervisory control and providing centralized supervision of all clerical staff. Alternative reorganizations such as proposed in Figure 3 would reduce the number of supervisors and increase the amount of staff time available to carry out the agency's mandate. If the General Assembly chooses to continue the Division with fewer mandates, a reorganization may be needed to accommodate a possible staffing reduction. Options for reorganization to expand and streamline the span of control include:

Figure 2

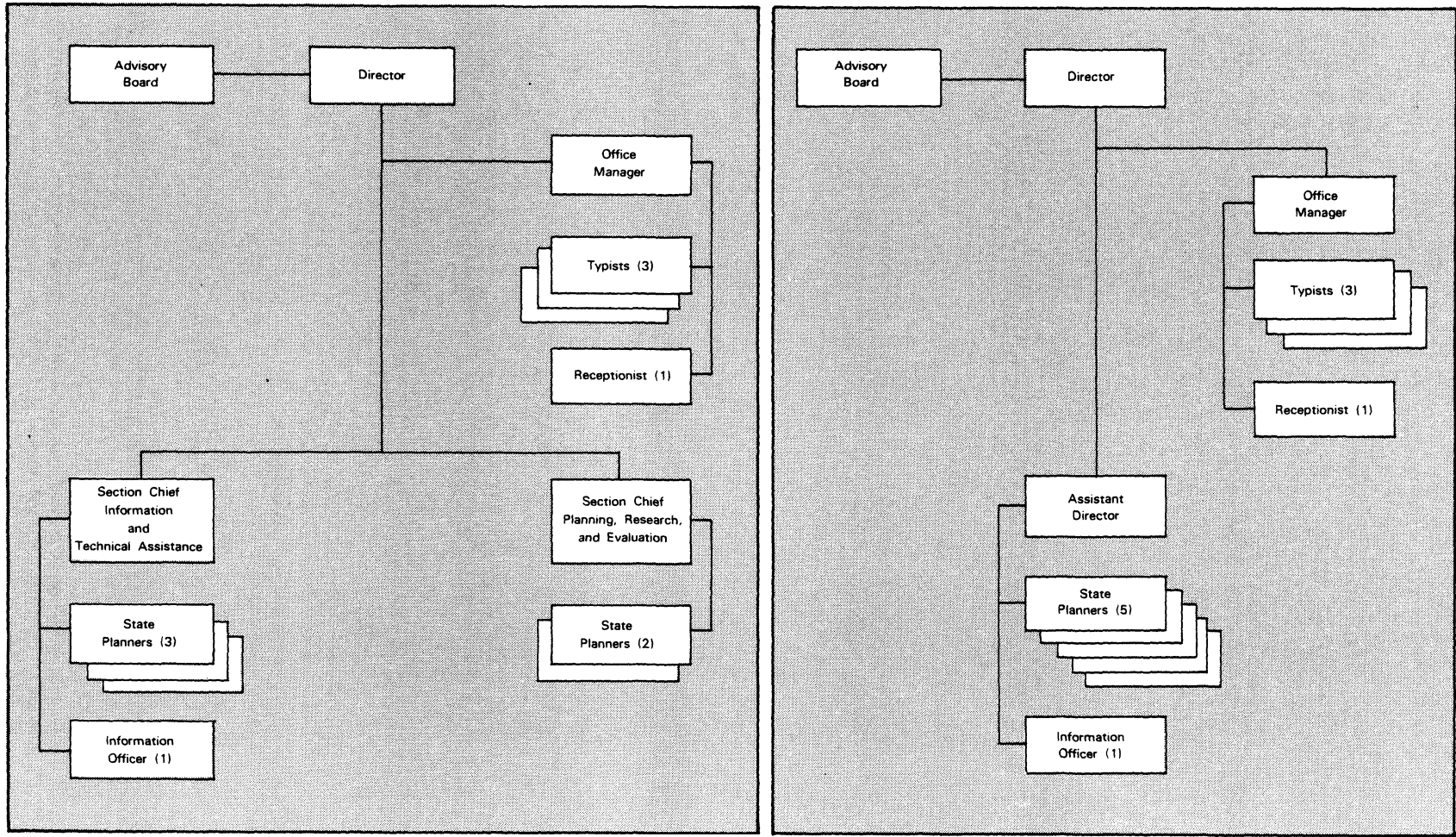
CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE VIRGINIA DIVISION FOR CHILDREN



Source: JLARC Illustration Of VDC Information.

Figure 3

PROPOSED REORGANIZATION ALTERNATIVES FOR THE VIRGINIA DIVISION FOR CHILDREN



Source: JLARC Staff Illustration.

- eliminating the Assistant Director position in order to reduce the number of supervisory layers within the agency structure. This would also give the Director greater accessibility and direct supervision over staff.
- placing the responsibilities of the Section Chiefs in the Office of the Assistant Director, resulting in a greater span of control for the Assistant Director and reducing the agency's total staff positions by two.

Regardless of which alternative is chosen, JLARC also recommends the Division reorganize its administrative structure in order to centralize authority over the clerical staff in one position. Options include:

- placing all clerical staff under the supervision of a designated head secretary or another staff member; and
- authorizing one person to serve as an office manager to oversee daily clerical responsibilities.

An office manager position, if created, could also be assigned responsibility for the fiscal management tasks currently under the agency's accountant and could handle the personnel matters currently carried out by the Assistant Director. This alternative may, therefore, make those positions unnecessary or available for other purposes.

Lack of Information Processing Capabilities. VDC officials also cite the lack of computer capabilities as an impediment to fulfilling their mandates. The agency self-study noted that the lack of availability of computer services results in an excessive amount of staff time for data compilation.

The Division's program proposal for the 1982-84 biennium specified several purposes for which the agency could utilize computer capabilities, including the storage of:

- mailing lists;
- listings of the Division's library holdings;
- descriptions of legislative proposals; and
- texts of agency reports and publications.

Division officials have stated such capabilities would enhance their research capacity, their ability to maintain a central registry of placements, their ability to review budget information and services provided to children, and their payroll and personnel functions.

If the Division is continued, the Department of Management Analysis and Systems Development could easily conduct an assessment of data and word processing needs of the Division.

Agency Placement. Division officials also cite their status as a small State agency within the Human Resources secretariat and

their limited authority to bring about change as hindering the Division's effectiveness. Division officials indicate that increased administrative responsibilities have hampered the Division's ability to carry out program activities. A small agency like the Division for Children with 15 full-time employees must respond to the same administrative requirements as larger agencies which have thousands of employees. However, the burden of such activities has a much greater impact on a small agency's ability to carry out its mandate. Division officials indicate that about 15 percent of the agency's staff time is spent on administrative matters and that the burden is increasing.

The Division also believes that its ability to exercise influence on human resource agencies is limited, due in part to the agency's current placement in the Human Resources secretarial area. During interviews with JLARC staff, Division officials stated that the agency was not seen on a par with the larger State provider agencies, and as a result, it was "awkward" to advocate for changes within the Human Resources area or in other secretarial areas.

Increased authority does not appear to be necessary for the Division to be effective. Better coordination and oversight can be achieved through improving the Division's credibility and rapport with other State agencies. Nevertheless, several options for relieving the Division of its administrative duties and strengthening its authority do exist:

- Provide administrative support for the Division and other small agencies through a new Department of Administrative Services. Accounting and personnel tasks could be centralized for small agencies.
- Assign the Division's administrative responsibilities to another, larger State agency within the Human Resources Secretariat.
- Make the Division a bureau within another State agency, such as the Department of Social Services or Mental Health and Mental Retardation, which deals routinely with children's issues.
- Place the Division's functions and personnel within the Governor's office.
- Place the Division within the legislative branch in order to enhance the agency's advocacy position, allow for less restricted lobbying on behalf of children, and make the agency more responsive to legislative interests and priorities.
- Another option identified in a JLARC study of the structure of State government is to group the Division and other small agencies that deal with the aged, blind, and deaf into a department of advocacy agencies for administrative support.

Careful consideration would have to be given to the advantages and disadvantages of each of the alternatives outlined above. The Director's preferred placement, as stated in the agency self-study, would be in the Governor's office or in the legislative branch of Virginia government. The Director stated that, on the whole, "to place the Division for Children in any other arm of State government is to seriously jeopardize its ability to objectively deal, across the board, with issues and problems of children."

Division officials and most board members view the merger of the Division with another State agency as diminishing their effectiveness. The Director stated in the agency self-study that:

"There are no disadvantages to maintaining the Division for Children as a separate state agency. Even if the General Assembly were to drastically reduce staff and other resources to the Division, the agency should still remain an independent entity. The special needs of children and families can easily be submerged in very large agencies despite the fact that these agencies are delivering services to this group."

The Division indicates that in contrast to State agencies which are concerned about their own programs, it has responsibility for advocating for the total needs of children. Division officials believe that maintaining it as an independent entity has a clear advantage of providing the widest dissemination of information, advocacy, and appropriate and equitable services for children and their families.

Likewise, board members contacted in a telephone survey favored maintaining the Division as a independent entity indicating that merging the agency would be accompanied by a loss in its ability to advocate effectively, serve all children, and review programs and budgets of other agencies with objectivity and detachment.

CONTINUING NEED FOR THE DIVISION

Several issues are involved in determining whether the Division's enabling legislation should be reenacted by the General Assembly. On one level, regardless of the Division's performance, consideration should be given to the continued need for State-level attention to children's issues and to coordination of children's services. On another level, the performance by the Division is a factor, because another agency or a reconstituted agency may better achieve the Commonwealth's purposes or better meet the requirements of public and private organizations involved with children's services.

This section of the report focuses, therefore, on the extent to which the conditions that led to establishing the Division still exist, the appropriateness of its current mandates, and the likely impact of abolishing the Division.

Question 4: Is there a continuing need for the Division of Children?

Multiple State, local, and private agencies provide services to children in the Commonwealth. The need for greater coordination and oversight of these programs was noted in several legislative studies in the 1970's. As a result, the General Assembly established the Division with a broad mandate which includes "the planning and coordination of all State services to children...."

The findings of the 1976 report of the Virginia Advisory Legislative Council (VALC) on the needs of young children clearly detailed the purposes for which a separate State agency for children was needed. The VALC report found that while there are many individual State and local programs rendering valuable services to children, that two types of problems hinder the effective delivery of those services:

- (1) Agency management problems including the provision of services in a crisis-oriented atmosphere, a service delivery system often based on the agency's internal arrangements rather than the needs of client groups, insufficient data on children's services, and inadequate program evaluation, needs determination, and priorities for children.
- (2) Coordination problems among agencies caused in part by the reluctance of agencies to relinquish exclusive responsibility for a program, the reluctance of agencies to assume new functions especially in shared programs, and fragmented structural organization of State government which places agencies providing services to children under several different secretarial areas.

The VALC report concluded that the existence of management and coordination problems indicates "that there is no single entity which has the sole responsibility of monitoring service to children and which has the power to effect changes over the whole of State government." The study commission recommended creation of a Division for Children, with responsibilities for program monitoring, evaluation, legislative analysis, information and technical assistance, budget reviews, data compilation, and advocacy as the means for filling the void.

The Legislature established the Division with each of the responsibilities recommended by the study commission except data compilation. The maintenance of a central registry of children's residential placements was added to the Division's mission.

The conditions which were present at the time of the VALC study in 1976 and which led to the creation of the Division for Children in 1978 still exist today. For example, despite the proliferation of interagency task forces and studies, Virginia's 1.6 million children still receive such services as education, health and mental health care, financial assistance, and custodial care in a fragmented fashion

from numerous State and local entities. Therefore, coordination of children's services is still a major concern.

Also, despite recent efforts to reorganize and streamline State government, State agencies delivering services to children continue to be located under several of the governor's secretarial areas, including education, human resources, and public safety. Coordination and oversight of these programs from a single source representing children still appears to be desirable.

While State operating agencies and private organizations still lobby on behalf of children, there also continues to be a need for a single State agency to serve as spokesman for children, who as a group cannot collectively lobby or advocate a point of view on their own. Each State agency focuses on particular issues affecting children as they relate to the agency's overall mission and as part of its total service delivery program. Agencies' efforts on behalf of children are also constrained by budgetary limitations, balances between the agency's client groups, and the personal interests of agency administrators and politicians.

Private and non-profit groups which lobby for children continue to be organized around the needs of special groups, like handicapped children, or certain issues, such as child seat restraints. Children whose needs have well-organized spokespersons tend to be better represented than those who do not.

Clearly, the need still exists for a State-level organization to plan and coordinate children's services. Respondents to the JLARC survey indicated that planning and coordination were the most important functions a State-level organization could perform. Nevertheless, as previously mentioned, the Division for Children has not carried out its entire legislative charge and has not systematically addressed these problems. Therefore, the current responsibilities assigned to the Division should be redefined.

Question 5: Should any of the responsibilities granted to the Division for Children be redistributed or redefined?

Although the purpose for which the Division for Children was created continues to exist, it appears that consideration should be given to redefining several aspects of the agency's broad mandate. The scope of the agency's current mandate provides the Division with a great deal of latitude in carrying out activities. However, as past performance indicates, the broad mandate also makes it difficult to establish agency priorities for fulfilling the entire mandate, and leaves in question exactly what activities the Division should be pursuing.

Although the agency has been in existence for five years, debate continues within the staff, the Advisory Board, and other interested parties over defining the Division's mission. Division officials

have expressed concern that the scope of the current mandate is "nearly impossible to fulfill" given current agency resources. Division officials also suggest that its mandate should be redefined in order to provide the agency with clear direction.

In the agency self-study requested by JLARC, Division officials indicate that:

"There appears to be ambiguity relative to the agency's role in advocacy. Historically, organizations and groups have expected the agency to assume leadership in stating positions on controversial and highly sensitive issues affecting children and families. Some of these issues have had political overtones which made it difficult for the agency to advocate for children."

JLARC's telephone survey of the majority of present and recent-past members of the Advisory Board found that two-thirds of the 15 respondents felt the agency's broad mandate was either a serious or minor problem. While generally supportive of the Division's current focus, board members varied on where they felt the agency should place its emphasis (Table 7).

In light of these factors, the General Assembly may wish to consider amending the Division for Children's mandate if the agency is reauthorized to continue operating. Statutory changes could be based on the assessment of the agency's mandates and performance contained in this report.

Table 7

DIVISION'S EMPHASIS ON MANDATES

Mandate	Board Member Reponse			
	Too Much Emphasis Currently	Sufficient Emphasis	Not Enough Emphasis Currently	No Opinion
a. Planning and Coordination	-	14 (93%)	1 (7%)	-
b. Promoting and Advocating	-	13 (86%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)
c. Information	-	11 (73%)	3 (20%)	1
d. Technical Assistance	-	12 (80%)	3 (20%)	-
e. Evaluation	-	9 (60%)	5 (33%)	1 (7%)
f. Monitoring	-	12 (80%)	3 (20%)	-
g. Maintaining Central Registry	2 (13%)	12 (80%)	-	1 (7%)
h. Budget Reviews	-	9 (60%)	3 (20%)	3 (20%)

Source: JLARC telephone survey of VDC Advisory Board Members.

Question 6: What would be the likely results if the Division for Children were abolished?

If the Division were abolished, there would be little impact on current services provided to children. The State would also save approximately \$450,000 annually in current operating costs or could transfer these funds to provide additional services to children. However, the State would lose the potential for a central focus on children's issues and a mechanism for coordinating and monitoring programs. Support for the Division's continuation varies within the child-care community.

State Focus. Since the Division does not provide direct service to clients, abolishing the Division would have little affect on State services to children. Numerous other State and local governmental and nongovernmental agencies would continue serving Virginia's younger citizens.

However, the loss of a central focus for children on the State level would result in a greater potential for fragmentation of services, and the identification of service gaps and issues would be less likely. In addition, the State would not have in place a single mechanism for the coordination and oversight of children's programs. Abolishing the Division for Children would also mean that no single agency within the State could serve as a representative for all children, unless another entity were given that responsibility. Such action would also result in the loss of a central source of information on children's issues at the State level and would make Virginia one of the few states without such an agency to focus on Children's needs.

In the agency's self-study, Division officials did not state specific impacts which they felt would occur if the Division's services were no longer available. Rather, the Division indicated that:

"A review of the Division's mandate and of its efforts to meet that mandate will clearly indicate how children's services will be affected by the Division's demise. Children will not be represented in policy-making meetings. It is probable and possible that their cause will not continue to command priority attention."

Impacts on User Groups. Support for the Division's continuance varies among the public and private agencies which provide children's services, have received assistance from the Division, or have worked with the Division. In response to a survey question regarding the "likely impacts on programs of State agencies or on those provided by your agency" if the Division were abolished, 16 percent of the respondents perceived little or no impact on Children's programs (Table 8). Forty-nine percent of the respondents chose not to answer this question.

Table 8

IMPACTS ON USER GROUPS IN VDC WERE ABOLISHED

<u>Perceived Impacts</u>	<u>Percent of Agencies Responding to Each Impact</u>
Little or no impact on my program	16%
Loss of information	15
Loss of legislative information	12
Damaging to my program	7
Decreased awareness/less priority on youth programs	7
Less coordination	6
Loss of an advocate	5
Loss of technical assistance	2
No opinion	49

Source: JLARC survey of user groups. Multiple responses are possible.

Responses about the likely impacts varied greatly, as exemplified by the following comments from JLARC's survey:

"A poorer response by the government to the needs of children in Virginia."

* * *

"Less awareness of State programs and agencies; loss of legislative lobbyist; increased duplication of services; and a general lack of unity in child and youth related services on an eventually lower quality of services."

* * *

"Would lose the objective perspective that is possible when an agency is not tied to any one department."

* * *

"Based on past performance, the impact would be minimal... [unless] the role of the Division could be better defined and some clear, measurable outcomes established..."

* * *

"At present, the basic help we receive from the Division for Children is the Aware newsletter. It is informative and helpful, but that is not enough. There needs to be more direct contact with service agencies."

* * *

"There would be no significant negative impacts on the programs of State agencies or on those programs provided by my agency.... In fact, its elimination would have a positive impact. The Division for Children has seldom fulfilled its function as a support or facilitating agency, i.e., it has seldom been helpful. It has dissipated its energies in attempting to oversee the operations and programs of other agencies and in engaging in repetitive and generally useless surveys and studies that have accrued to little more than taxing the staff, time, and resources of the service agencies that it studied."

* * *

"Overall there might be limited impact, but the Department does receive certain pieces of information from the Division which we might not otherwise have. The money budgeted for the Division could certainly be used to provide services directly to children. If the Division were abolished, the focus on children generally might be diminished, particularly in those programs or populations that are served by more than one agency."

These findings suggest that the State would save over \$400,000 annually and would not immediately impact direct services to children by abolishing the Division. However, this action, if taken, would also result in the loss of a focal point on the State level to represent children's interests in the future. Abolishing the agency would result in the loss of a mechanism which could be used to coordinate and oversee the State's services to children. In addition, the variation in support from the child-care community appears to be based on the agency's past performance and does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that the Division is no longer needed.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Evidence contained in this report suggests a continuing need for a State-level focus for the planning and coordination of children's services. The need for such a focus mirrors the national trend whereby a single state organization is designated to carry out coordination and advocacy responsibilities for children's programs. Virginia has been in the forefront of this movement, but revisions to the existing enabling legislation appear necessary.

During its early years of operation, the Division seems to have taken an adversary position regarding its child advocacy role and placed a lower priority on its planning and coordination mandate. Recently, under the leadership of a new director, the Division seems to have achieved organizational stability and clearer direction. Nevertheless, the Division has not carried out its legislative mandate completely, and changes are needed in order to increase its impact and effectiveness.

Recommendations

Recommendation (1). The General Assembly should reenact legislation in 1984 that continues the Division for Children. Several revisions should be made to the Division's enabling legislation:

- (a) The Division's coordinative responsibility should be more clearly spelled out in legislation. Such a definition should communicate to the Division that coordination is the first priority of the organization. The Division should be directed to coordinate children's services and programs by convening agencies and other interested parties on matters of mutual concern and interest, by facilitating the exchange of information and ideas on children's services through planning, monitoring, budget review, and legislative tracking, and by advocating the best interests of children and youths before agencies, the Governor, and the General Assembly.
- (b) Because of the Division's past performance and incompatibility with its advocacy role, the Division's evaluation responsibility should be deleted from its legislative mandate.
- (c) The responsibility for maintaining the central registry of placement facilities should be transferred to either an information and referral network or another State agency such as the Department of Social Services.

Recommendation (2). Because of its advocacy role, the Division should continue to have independent identity as an agency, but its administrative support services should be assigned to another State

agency. Such action would reduce the routine administrative demands on the Division's staff and increase the agency's service delivery capability. If a new department of advocacy agencies is created, the Division should be assigned to that agency for administrative purposes.

Recommendation (3). The number of authorized positions assigned to the Division should be reduced by at least four. Three professional positions and one clerical position could be eliminated through assignment of some administrative support activities to a larger agency, centralization of support staff, more efficient word processing, agency reorganization, and reduction in legislatively assigned responsibilities.

Recommendation (4). The General Assembly should enact a sunset provision expiring the Division for Children in five years. Such a provision would authorize another review of the continuing need for the Division for Children and provide the basis for an assessment of the Division's performance in carrying out its revised mission. If the Division does not fully comply with its mandate, it should be abolished.

APPENDIXES

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APPENDIX A

TECHNICAL APPENDIX SUMMARY

JLARC policy and sound research practice require a technical explanation of the research methodology. The technical appendix for this report is available upon request from JLARC, Suite 1100, 910 Capitol Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

The technical appendix includes a detailed explanation of the methods and research employed in conducting this study. The following areas are covered:

1. Survey of User Groups. HJR 10 requested JLARC to consult with public, private, state and local agencies and organizations which have been served by or have worked with the Division. In accordance with this resolution, a survey questionnaire was sent to 190 public and private agencies which work with or have been served by the Division, or which provide services to children. Questions covered the performance of the Division for Children in providing its services and the impact of these services on children's programs in the Commonwealth. Data from 138 returned surveys were analyzed using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) package. Results of the survey are included as Appendix B to this report.

2. Phone Survey of Advisory Board Members. A structured interview was conducted by telephone with 17 current and former board members. The purpose of the survey was to ascertain their perceptions of the appropriateness of the Division's current mandate, hinderances to carrying out the mandate, needed improvements, impacts if the agency were abolished, and administrative concerns. Results of the survey are included as Appendix C to this report.

3. Agency Self Study. In accordance with authority granted to JLARC in Section 30-686, *Code of Virginia*, the Division was requested to complete an agency self-study. The format, designed by JLARC, provided the opportunity for the Division to list its accomplishments and to comment on questions relating to its continued operations and fulfillment of its mandates. The completed agency self-study is included as Appendix D to this report.

JLARC SURVEY ON DIVISION FOR CHILDREN

Is your organization a government agency? () Yes () No Total Number of Responses = 138

What services does your organization provide for children? Check all that apply.

Services	
<u>26%</u> Day Care	<u>15%</u> Employment Services
<u>24%</u> Financial Assistance	<u>13%</u> Legal Services
<u>37%</u> Referrals to Residential Placements	<u>31%</u> Advocacy
<u>23%</u> Social Services (e.g., companion services)	<u>53%</u> Education
<u>46%</u> Counseling Services	<u>14%</u> Provide Residential Placements
<u>18%</u> Health Care	<u>1%</u> Other _____

General Instructions: This survey contains a series of questions concerning the activities of the Virginia Division for Children and the overall need for State-level services for children. The Division for Children undertakes a wide range of projects related to children's programs and issues. Please respond to each question in the manner that reflects your understanding of how the Division's activities have affected your own organization. If your organization's contact with the Division has been limited, we encourage you to read each question and answer to the best of your knowledge. If your organization has not received a particular service, please indicate that in the space provided.

For your convenience, specific instructions precede each question.

Information and Technical Assistance

1. The Division for Children serves as a resource by providing general information on children's services or issues and supporting public and private organizations in carrying out their programs. Please indicate your assessment of the quality of the information or technical assistance that your organization has received from the Division. If your organization does not receive a service, please check "not received".

Type of Service	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Fair	Poor	Not Received
a. Newsletter ("Aware")	(43)%	(21)%	(6)%	(4)%	(0)%	(25)%
b. Publications	(22)%	(19)%	(11)%	(0)%	(1)%	(46)%
c. Annual Forum	(12)%	(12)%	(8)%	(1)%	(1)%	(67)%
d. Other conferences, regional forums, or workshops	(10)%	(18)%	(4)%	(2)%	(2)%	(64)%
e. Responses to informational requests	(18)%	(13)%	(3)%	(0)%	(2)%	(64)%
f. Assistance with the development of a brochure or publication	(4)%	(4)%	(2)%	(0)%	(0)%	(90)%
g. Assistance in identifying and securing new funding sources	(4)%	(4)%	(1)%	(0)%	(1)%	(90)%
h. Assistance with conducting conferences or workshops	(8)%	(2)%	(1)%	(0)%	(1)%	(89)%
i. Other: _____	(1)%	(0)%	(1)%	(1)%	(0)%	(97)%

Legislative Tracking

2. The Division for Children provides child-serving organizations with information on federal and state legislation that impacts children and youth. We are interested in your opinion of the information that you have received and any action your organization has taken as a result.

For each service listed below, please assess whether the information was generally accurate, timely, and relevant. Check the appropriate column.

Service	Service Not Received	Is Information:*					
		Accurate?		Timely?		Relevant?	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
a. "Alerts" Bulletin	(54) %	100%	(0) %	(100%)	(0) %	(98%)	(2) %
b. Legislative Hotline	(78) %	(95%)	(4) %	(92%)	(8) %	(96%)	(4) %
c. Legislative Workshops or Committees sponsored by the Division	(82) %	100%	(0) %	(100%)	(0) %	100%	(0) %
d. Legislative Updates included in the "Aware" newsletter	(40) %	100%	(0) %	(98%)	(2) %	100%	(0) %
e. Other _____	(97) %	(75%)	(25) %	(75%)	(25) %	(75%)	(25) %

*Percentages are based on those receiving services.

3. Below is a list of actions your organization may have taken on proposed legislation. Please check those actions which your organization has taken as a direct result of legislative information received from the Division for Children in 1982 and 1983.

<u>46%</u>	Our organization has taken no action
<u>7%</u>	Our organization testified before committees of the General Assembly
<u>8%</u>	Our organization met individually with legislators or their staff
<u>6%</u>	Our organization joined a coalition to lobby the General Assembly
<u>22%</u>	Our organization discussed concerns with local officials
<u>30%</u>	Our organization alerted other interested parties
<u>7%</u>	Other: _____

Yellow Pages of Children's Services

The Division for Children has developed an extensive listing of agencies which deliver services to children and families. This listing, titled the Yellow Pages of Children's Services, includes many different entries such as residential placement facilities, treatment centers, boarding houses, half-way houses, facilities with special education programs, courts, clinics, and hospitals. We are interested in knowing its uses for your organization.

4. Does your agency have a copy of the Yellow Pages of Children's Services?

42% Yes 58% No (If no, please proceed to Question 8.)

5. Have you used the Yellow Pages of Children's Services at any time since 1980?

50% Yes 50% No (If no, please proceed to Question 7.)

6. Since the Yellow Pages of Children's Services is a list of many services, we are interested in knowing the types of services your organization provides and the types of services that you have located through the Yellow Pages. For each of the services listed below, please indicate whether your organization made referrals for those services. Also, indicate whether your organization used the Yellow Pages as a reference for making those referrals during 1982.

<u>Services</u>	<u>Made Referrals For These Services During 1982</u>	<u>Used Yellow Pages As* A Reference For These Services During 1982</u>
Day Care	(25)%	(38)%
Financial Assistance	(15)%	(38)%
Residential Placements	(51)%	(34)%
Social Services (e.g., companion services)	(19)%	(28)%
Counseling Services	(39)%	(54)%
Health Care	(91)%	(26)%
Employment Services	(22)%	(43)%
Legal Services	(21)%	(21)%
Advocacy	(33)%	(59)%
Education	(34)%	(45)%
Other _____	(12)%	(64)%

*Percentages are based on the number of agencies who made referrals.

- 7a. We are particularly interested in your assessment of the usefulness of the Yellow Pages as a source of information for children's services. In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the Yellow Pages?

Percent of Responding Agencies

Strengths

No opinion	45%
Comprehensive	18%
Provides helpful information	14%
Information is readily available	14%
Useful to locate providers of services	8%
Useful to locate services outside immediate area	6%

Weaknesses

No opinion	38%
Difficult to identify services and residential placements	24%
Information inaccurate	18%
Information incomplete	16%
Outdated	13%
Too large	11%
Not useful	10%
Duplicates existing information	2%

(Some agencies gave more than one response)

- 7b. If your organization makes referrals for residential placements, are there any other sources you use more often for these purposes than the Yellow Pages of Children's Services? Please list the title(s) and source. (If no, go to question 8.)

No response	23%
Title XX vendor information - "VA. Profile of Services and Prices"	26%
State Department of Social Services Listing	19%
Staff contacts	17%
Local organizational source	12%
State Department of Corrections Listing	11%
Other statewide source	9%

(Some agencies gave more than one response)

Coordination

Many organizations and services are aimed at children and youth. Therefore, planning and coordination is necessary to ensure that children's needs are identified and met. In addition, organizations should be aware of potential areas of duplication or cooperation. We are interested in obtaining your views on the impact of the Division for Children in fostering coordination among the public and private organizations in this State.

8. To the best of your knowledge, what impact has the Division had in coordinating children's services throughout the State? (circle the appropriate response)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
a. The Division has had little impact on fostering coordination between us and other organizations	1 20%	2 19%	3 29%	4 15%	5 9%	8%
b. The Division has made our organization more aware of services available for children and youth	1 24%	2 31%	3 19%	4 9%	5 9%	8%
c. The Division has facilitated contact between our organization and other organizations in the child welfare community	1 9%	2 26%	3 30%	4 15%	5 11%	9%

9. Do you feel duplication exists among services provided to children?

45% yes 22% no 33% don't know

If yes, to what extent do you feel duplication has been reduced by the Division for Children's efforts?

4% greatly reduced

43% somewhat reduced

53% no effect

10. In your opinion, to what extent do the Division's own activities duplicate those of other agencies?

3% greatly

11% moderately

27% very little

11% no duplication exists

48% don't know

Improvements/Impacts

Please use the space below to indicate any changes or improvements that you would like to see in the Division for Children's current operations or services.

	<u>Percent of Responding Agencies</u>
No opinion	68%
Greater visibility and contact with other agencies	8%
Improvements in coordination	7%
General praise for the Division	6%
Increased advocacy efforts	5%
Increased technical assistance and training	4%
Expand services and conferences	3%
Improve staff abilities	1%
Increased evaluation and monitoring of public agencies	1%
Eliminate the Division	1%
Other	6%

(Some agencies gave more than one response)

12. In your opinion, what would be the likely impacts on the programs of State agencies or on those programs provided by your agency if the Division for Children were no longer in operation?

	<u>Percent of Responding Agencies</u>
No opinion	49%
Little or no impact	16%
Loss of information	15%
Loss of legislative information	12%
Decreased awareness and emphasis on youth programs	7%
Generally damaging	7%
Less coordination	6%
Loss of an advocate	5%
Loss of technical assistance	2%
Other	7%

(Some agencies gave more than one response)

Service Needs

We are interested in your opinion of the types of responsibilities that are most important to be carried out at the State-level. Please answer this question without regard to your views on the current services or performance of the Division for Children.

From the list of responsibilities below, please rank the top five services which you believe an agency with statewide jurisdiction should perform, where 1 = most important, 2 = second most important ... and 5 = fifth most important. If you care to explain your answers, please use the back of the page or attach an additional sheet.

<u>Services</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Weighted Mean Score</u>
a. Planning and coordinating services to children at the State level	<u>1</u>	3.02
b. Promoting and advocating the best interests of all children and youth	<u>2</u>	3.03
c. Informing the public of available services	<u>4</u>	4.04
d. Providing technical assistance and training	<u>5</u>	4.56
e. Tracking State and federal legislation	<u>6</u>	4.69
f. Making recommendations for legislative changes to the Governor and General Assembly	<u>3</u>	3.96
g. Evaluating children's programs of State agencies	<u>7</u>	5.00
h. Maintaining a central registry of public and private placements for children and youth	<u>8</u>	5.27
i. Reviewing proposed budgets of State agencies delivering services to children	<u>9</u>	5.59
j. Other _____	_____	

APPENDIX C

DIVISION FOR CHILDREN - BOARD SURVEY

Name of Board Member _____ N = 17

When contacted (date & time) _____

My name is _____ and I'm with the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, which is a research agency for the General Assembly. The General Assembly has requested that we review the operations of the Virginia Division for Children. Because you're a member of the Advisory Board for the Division, we're especially interested in obtaining your impressions of the Division's operations. Do you have a few minutes to answer some questions? Our questions may take 15-30 minutes. We'll be happy to call back if another time is more convenient.

1. The Division for Children has a broad mission that relates to children. You're probably familiar with the Division's responsibilities. As you know, in general, the Division is charged with the responsibility "to provide for the planning and coordination of all State services to children" and to "promote and advocate the best interests of all children and youth."

Seven more specific mandates are these:

1. informing the public of existing state and local services for children and youth
2. aiding in provision of technical assistance and training
3. tracking state and federal legislation and making recommendations for legislative changes to the Governor and General Assembly

4. evaluating State children's programs and making recommendations concerning the continuation and funding of these programs or the establishment of new ones
5. monitoring State programs delivering services to children
6. maintaining a central registry of public and private placements for children and youth
7. reviewing proposed budgets of State agencies delivering services to children

Now, when I go back over each of the mandates, I'd like to know how you rate the way the Division carries out each of its responsibilities. I'll start with number 1. (Read a.) Would you say that the Division has carried out that responsibility in an excellent, good, satisfactory, fair, or poor manner, or is this a service that the Division doesn't provide?

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Satis- factory</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Not Providing</u>	<u>Cannot Answer</u>
a. Planning and coordinating all State services to children	(6)	(8)	(2)	()	()	()	(1)
b. Promoting and advocating the best interests of all children and youth	(10)	(6)	()	()	()	()	(1)
c. Informing the public of existing state and local services for children and youth	(9)	(6)	()	(1)	()	()	(1)
d. Aiding in provision of technical assistance and training	(3)	(10)	(1)	()	()	()	(3)
e. Tracking State and federal legislation and making recommendations for legislative changes to the Governor and General Assembly	(15)	(1)	()	()	()	()	(1)

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Satisfactory</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Not Providing</u>	<u>Cannot Answer</u>
f. Evaluating State children's programs and making recommendations concerning the continuation and funding of these programs or the establishment of new ones	(5)	(8)	()	(1)	()	()	(1)
g. Monitoring State programs delivering services to children	(4)	(11)	()	()	()	()	(2)
h. Maintaining a central registry of public and private placements for children and youth	(7)	(8)	(1)	()	()	()	(1)
i. Reviewing proposed budget of State agencies delivering services to children	(1)	(9)	(3)	(1)	()	()	(3)

2. Our second question concerns the same mandates. We know that agencies sometimes must choose to emphasize certain responsibilities above others and allocate their resources accordingly. We'd like to know what you think about the emphasis the Division for Children places on each of its responsibilities. This time when I read over the list of mandates I'd like to know whether you believe the Division places too much emphasis/ sufficient emphasis/ not enough emphasis/ or no emphasis on that mandate.

	<u>Too Much Emphasis</u>	<u>Sufficient Emphasis</u>	<u>Not Enough Emphasis</u>	<u>No Emphasis</u>	<u>Cannot Answer</u>
a. Planning and coordinating all State services to children	()	(14)	(1)	()	(2)
b. Promoting and advocating the best interests of all children and youth	()	(13)	(1)	()	(3)
c. Informing the public of existing state and local services for children and youth	()	(12)	(3)	()	(2)

	<u>Too Much</u> <u>Emphasis</u>	<u>Sufficient</u> <u>Emphasis</u>	<u>Not Enough</u> <u>Emphasis</u>	<u>No</u> <u>Emphasis</u>	<u>Cannot</u> <u>Answer</u>
d. Aiding in provision of technical assistance and training	()	(10)	(4)	()	(3)
e. Tracking State and federal legislation and making recommendations for legislative changes to the Governor and General Assembly	()	(13)	(3)	()	(1)
f. Evaluating State children's programs and making recommendations concerning the continuation and funding of these programs or the establishment of new ones	()	(9)	(6)	()	(3)
g. Monitoring State programs delivering services to children	()	(12)	(4)	()	(1)
h. Maintaining a central registry of public and private placements for children and youth	(2)	(12)	()	()	(3)
i. Reviewing proposed budget of State agencies delivering services to children	()	(9)	(4)	()	(4)

3. In the course of our study, we've been in touch with a number of state and national children's agencies, including the Division for Children itself. We've learned something about the difficulties a state children's agency may encounter in carrying out its legislated mandates. These difficulties may be internal or external to the agency. I will read a list of possible problems. To what degree do you think each of these difficulties is encountered within the Virginia Division for Children? (Read a). Does a serious problem exist, a minor problem exist, or is there no problem at all?

	<u>Serious Problem Exists</u>	<u>Minor Problem Exists</u>	<u>Not a Problem</u>	<u>Cannot Answer</u>
a. The Division's mandates are too broad to be met effectively	(3)	(7)	(6)	(1)
b. Coordination of children's services within the state has been difficult to achieve because other state agencies refuse to cooperate	(4)	(11)	(1)	(1)
c. The Division has been reluctant to assume a leadership role in promoting coordination among other State agencies which provide services to children	()	(3)	(13)	(1)
d. Too much staff effort has been devoted to activities not specifically associated with the Division's mandates	()	()	(16)	(1)
e. The Division's recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor do not receive the attention they deserve	(5)	(7)	(3)	(1)
f. Duplication exists between the Division's services and those of other agencies	(1)	(5)	(10)	(1)
g. The Division's mandate to monitor and evaluate State programs for children conflicts with its role as a child advocate	()	(2)	(14)	(1)
h. The Division's efforts have been focused too exclusively upon private organizations to the detriment of providing services to State agencies	()	()	(16)	(1)

4. What, in your opinion, have been the major contributions of the Virginia Division for Children?

Information (Conferences/Publications)	12*
Advocacy	10
Coordinating efforts	10
Legislative tracking	3
Central registry	3
Studies, statistical compilations	2
Other	2

5. Are there any changes or improvements you would like to see in the Division's current mandates or operations?

More staff needed	5
More responsibility for coordination	4
Change in mandates	3
Placement of agency within Governor's Office	2
More support from law-makers	2
Other	6

Agency Status

As you know the agency will cease to exist after July 1, 1984 unless reauthorized by the General Assembly. Several options are available to the legislature including, but not limited to: maintaining the Division in its current form; eliminating the Division; or making changes in the Division's administrative status or responsibilities. Please respond to the following questions to provide your opinion of the effect on children's services in Virginia if certain actions were taken.

6. In your opinion, what would be the impact on children's services in the State if the services provided by the Division for Children were no longer available?

Loss of interdisciplinary approach	8
Loss of data gathering and information resource	3
Long range negative impact on children and society	2
Loss of advocacy	2
Duplication or fragmentation of services	2
Other	2

7. What are the advantages and disadvantages of maintaining the Division as a separate State agency in contrast to merging it with another agency?

Advantages:

Independence	9
Freedom to advocate	5
Ability to serve all children	1
Objective monitoring of other agencies	1

Disadvantages:

Lack of clout	3
Lack of computer services	1

8. Is there anything else you'd like us to know?

(Various comments were made relating to the quality of staff, the agency's mandates, and future.)

9. Approximately how long have you been a member of the Advisory Board for the Division for Children?

Years _____

Months _____

We appreciate the time you've taken to respond to these questions. If there's anything further you'd like to comment on, please feel free to get in touch with us. We're always available to talk over your concerns.

APPENDIX D

AGENCY SELF-STUDY, DIVISION FOR CHILDREN

I. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES/ACTIVITIES

The Division for Children has a broad mission that includes many activities related to children. Please provide the information requested below as it applies to the responsibilities assigned to the Division. A separate sheet is to be completed for each specific responsibility.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY: To provide for the planning and coordination of all State services to children.

Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
Promoted the establishment of the Virginia Day Care Council. (Day Care Council members absorb all costs personally for their involvement, which attests to their high level of interest.)	Identified need for a Coalition on Day Care, culled from the Director's contacts statewide. There was no formal structure for the sharing of information among the programmatically and geographically divergent members of the day care community.	A comprehensive plan for day care services will be developed by the Council and the Division. Council's actions will impact changes in policies for children. (This will be documented.)	The day care community's cohesiveness and effectiveness have been greatly enhanced since the establishment of the Council. (Council members will substantiate this claim.) Coordination of services has been improved as a result of the Council's efforts. Council members represent the day care community. Agencies' representatives (Departments of Social Services and Health) attend Council meetings and serve in an advisory capacity.
Coordinated the School-Age Parents Committee (chaired by the agency Director).	The School-Age Parents Committee was established by the agency in 1978. In 1980, the Committee was subsumed under the aegis of Planned Parenthood. During its tenure with Planned Parenthood, state agency involvement waned considerably. Planned Parenthood suggested that VDC re-convene the Committee. Because teenage pregnancy was an agency priority focus, the Committee was convened under the auspices of the Division in 1983. Our response in establishing and strengthening this	Committee participation by state agencies is substantial. The Departments of Health, Education, Social Services, Mental Health and Mental Retardation are represented, and representatives from these agencies attend meetings regularly. The medical, academic, and social work communities are also represented. Perspectives on problems, and information are shared by service providers, professionals, and agency representatives.	Public attention will be focused on: - the need for Family Life Education curriculum in the schools - the need for increased services for school-age parents, i.e. services that are not "reward" oriented; resources that must be developed or expanded for school-age parents.

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Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
A "Long-Term Care" feasibility study was initiated to determine the extent of need for long-term care facilities for children in Virginia.	Committee was based on the needs for better coordination of services, and communication between state agencies and local agencies and organizations providing services.	Direct actions have been initiated by the Committee in cooperation with the agency to increase public awareness of the problems faced by school-age parents.	A more focused assessment of long-term care needs by the affected agencies. Study will be used as a basis for <u>planning</u> to address, or not to address, this question.
An examination of regulated and non-regulated child care programs was initiated in April, 1983.	<p>Response to a request by the Virginia Day Care Council.</p> <p>The need for child care services is increasing in importance as certain demographic trends become apparent. In the past ten years, more women have entered the labor force and more children are living in households with single parents, or with both parents working. Prior to the initiation of the VDC study, there has been no effort made to examine Virginia's child care services in a comprehensive and systematic manner. Such an examination is a necessary precursor to planning policy and advocacy activities</p>	<p>Affected agencies have reviewed, and commented on, the study.</p> <p>On the basis of the study findings, a comprehensive plan for day care services will be developed with the assistance of the Virginia Day Care Council.</p>	<p>The study will be completed in October, 1983. Recommendations will be made to improve the availability, accessibility, and quality of child care services in Virginia.</p> <p>The Division has, through the Day Care Council, a structure in place to ensure that recommendations are implemented.</p>

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 I. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES/ACTIVITIES

The Division for Children has a broad mission that includes many activities related to children. Please provide the information requested below as it applies to the responsibilities assigned to the Division. A separate sheet is to be completed for each specific responsibility.

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Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
Promoted expanded utilization of Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) services by Medicaid-eligible children through direct contact and dialogue with Virginia Head Start Directors' Association.	Preliminary results of EPSDT study indicated parents' lack of awareness about the program.	Directors were informed of the program, and VDC staff members served as resource for subsequent inquiries.	Head Start Directors expressed enthusiasm about obtaining knowledge about the program and were prepared to assist their clients in obtaining services.
Coordinated local services to provide for local need.--Enabling a day care center, which provides services to children of low-income families, to remain operative.	The United Way referred center's director to the Division. Center's director explained that the center, which services 27 low-income children, was on the verge of closing. Documentation was provided to VDC to substantiate claim.		The center remained open and maintained service levels. (Center director will attest to the Division's role in mobilizing community to assist.)
Facilitated communication between Family Day Care Systems' sponsors through planned meetings. (Family Day Care Systems Coalition was established in June, 1983.)	There are nine (9) Family Day Care Systems in Virginia. One sponsor expressed the need to communicate with other sponsors. Through VDC's contact with sponsors, it was determined that others were extremely interested in information-sharing. Sponsors were put in contact with their counterparts. The Division serves as a resource to this group and does not accept responsibility for the group's activities.	Sponsors indicated interest in continuing contact with each other. Shared problems and needs of the Systems community were identified.	Eight of the nine (9) Systems are interested in working together toward common goals. The group met on July 18, and overall impact is yet to be determined. Activities that led to the July 18 meeting were completed during June, 1983.

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SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY: To provide for the planning and coordination of all State services to children.

Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
<p>Participated in 14 inter-agency and statewide task forces and committees and four (4) major sub-committees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better Beginnings Task Force (Director) - Governor's Overall Advisory Committee on the Needs of Handicapped Persons (Director) - Governor's Advisory Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect (Director) - Governor's Task Force, Virginia's War Against Drugs and Drug Abuse (Director) - Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Council (Director) - Board of Directors, Virginia Perinatal Association (Director) - Virginia Council on Early Adolescence (Director) 	<p>All task forces and committees have a planning and coordination focus.</p>	<p>Previously no impact measures have been attempted, although there have been indications of impact such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actions initiated to address alleged child abuse and neglect problems at a military base. - Strengthening of resources for task force projects. 	<p>A plan has been outlined to measure results of involvement in the 1984-86 biennium.</p>

I. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES/ACTIVITIES

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SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY: To provide for the planning and coordination of all State services to children.

Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Virginia Early Childhood Education Council (Director) - Prevention Advisory Committee (Director) - Interagency Prevention Committee (Director) - Task Force on Mental Health Services for Children (Assistant Director) - Board, Parents Anonymous (Assistant Director) - Interdepartmental Task Force on Licensure and Certification (ITTA Planner C) - Task Force on Permanency Planning for Black Children (ITTA Section Chief) - Balance of State Planning Council (PRE Section Chief) - Governor's Employment and Training Council (PRE Section Chief) 			

I. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES/ACTIVITIES

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SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY: To provide for the planning and coordination of all State services to children.

Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
<p><u>Sub-Committees:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education Committee, GOAC (Director) - Prevention and Education Committee (Director) - Technical Kit Package Development Committee (Director) - Multi-Disciplinary Teams (Assistant Director) 	<p>Begin building a strong child advocacy network in Virginia.</p>	<p>Impact will be measured when this group, as a block, supports or does not support and affect the passage of specific child related measures.</p>	<p>Not identifiable at present.</p>
<p>Convened a group of 15 child advocate organizations to focus increased attention on the passage of effective legislation for children and families.</p>	<p>Response to requests by the Office of the Governor and members of the General Assembly.</p>	<p>Increased participation of legislators and judges as compared to the number of such participants last year.</p>	<p>Can not be determined until after December, 1983.</p>

I. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES/ACTIVITIES

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SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY: To provide for the planning and coordination of all State services to children.

Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
Participate on the Board of the Richmond Diagnostic and Prescription Center.	Determine how coordination of multi-disciplinary services is working in this group as a precursor to VDC developing coordination model.	Information gained will be useful to us in better coordinating state services to children.	Development of coordination model.

I. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES/ACTIVITIES

The Division for Children has a broad mission that includes many activities related to children. Please provide the information requested below as it applies to the responsibilities assigned to the Division. A separate sheet is to be completed for each specific responsibility.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY: To promote and advocate the best interests of all children and youth.

Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
<p>Awards Ceremony - Outstanding Young Virginian's Outstanding Child Advocates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Special recognition of youth who have engaged in laudable activities in their communities and, of adults who have worked assiduously on behalf of children. - Excellent public relations activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extensive publicity about the ceremony and awards recipients. - Local response to our request for nominations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stimulates interest in service and advocacy. - Publicity for the agency. - New media contacts for the agency that can be used to promote the agency efforts.
<p>Initiated meetings to promote policies or activities to benefit children. (Documentation available)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attention to expressed concerns of child advocates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cannot be determined generally. Concerns of the advocacy community regarding: licensing standards for child care facilities; training needs of child care providers; and training of teachers in Family Life Education curriculum, were communicated to key decision makers. <p>At the Division's request the Commissioner of Social Services asked Senator Gartlan to introduce an amendment to SB121 (licensing fees for child care facilities) to designate that fees from child care facilities be used for training of care givers to the extent possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S.B. 121 was amended and passed. (It should be noted that the child care community was opposed to S.B. 121 in its original form. The amendment was an acceptable compromise to the child care community.)

I. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES/ACTIVITIES

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SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY: To promote and advocate the best interests of all children and youth.

Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
<p>Presentations were made to child advocacy groups and major organizations in the state.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tidewater Child Care Task Force. - Northern Virginia Coalition of Child Care Advocates - Roanoke 4C Forum - Colonial Heights Interagency Commission - Youth Planners - State Youth Services Commission 	<p>Responses to requests.</p>	<p>Additional requests for resources and/or technical assistance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tidewater Child Care Task Force enlists the Division's assistance in bringing their concerns to the attention of decision makers. - Individual members of the Northern Virginia Coalition of Child Care Advocates have requested technical assistance from VDC staff. - An organization that is part of the Roanoke 4C Forum has established linkages with Children's Defense Fund. An administrator of 4C serves on our Day Care Council. - A VDC staff member serves as a resource on legislation to the Colonial Heights Interagency Commission on a continuing basis. - Technical assistance was provided to Youth Planners in Southwest Virginia who were conducting a Mock Assembly.

I. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES/ACTIVITIES

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SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY: To promote and advocate the best interests of all children and youth.

Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health Educators State Conference - Zeta Phi Beta Sorority - Virginia Chapter - Central Virginia Child Development Association - State and Richmond Metropolitan School Social Workers' Association - Fisher Elementary School - J. Sergeant Reynolds' Community College 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Response to request. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group was interested in legislation and how they might be more effective in their work with legislators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cannot be determined. - The sorority presented a scholarship to a deserving student and shared acknowledgment with VDC. - Cannot be determined. - Cannot be determined. - Cannot be determined. - Cannot be determined.

I. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES/ACTIVITIES

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SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY: To promote and advocate the best interests of all children and youth.

Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
Developed a proposal for Street Theater which was submitted to the Department of Social Services Family Violence Prevention Programs. Street Theater is a series of skits designed to transmit information on parenting to parents who are "at risk" of abusing their children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director's decision. - Some members of the Advisory Board had urged that the Division focus on more prevention activities. Many parents who are recipients, or potential recipients, of state services need to develop skills in parenting. - Possibility for greater outreach--i.e. involvement of organizations in promoting services to children. 	A Pilot Performance was presented in April to determine how the professional community would view this innovative approach. Testing sessions were held with the target population--i.e. they viewed and critiqued video tapes of performances.	To be determined. Thirty performances will be presented during FY 84.
Developed prototype of a child development newsletter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director's decision. Response to "first-time parents need for child development information. 	Test copies were reviewed by school-age parents and "selected" mothers who do not read conventional child development literature.	A simple explanation of stage appropriate behavior will enable parents to have more realistic expectations of children's behavior. It is expected that incidences of child abuse will be reduced.

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SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY: To develop a program to inform the public of opportunities available for children to fulfill their needs through existing State mechanisms and make available such other information as would be of value to professional and other citizens working in the juvenile field.

Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
Revision of the "School-Aged Parent Packet."	Highlight and renew needed attention to the problem of adolescent pregnancy in Virginia. Lists statistical data, programs, resources, etc.	By the packets used by professionals and citizens.	The reorganization of the School-Aged Parents' Committee exemplifies the importance of the information we produced. This information has been helpful in the work that other agencies have begun to do in this area.
<u>Aware</u> , VDC monthly newsletter	There is no statewide vehicle that disseminates information across disciplines.	The newsletter is evaluated by its readers annually.	The newsletter repeatedly receives a favorable response. Where possible, suggested revisions are made.
"Some Light on the Subject," a wallet-size crisis information card for youth.	Provide handy information for young people on a variety of topics affecting them.	Increased volume of requests for the card; number distributed.	Youth more informed of approaches for handling potentially traumatic situations.
<u>Civic/Social Groups and Children: A Guide for Action</u>	Encourage organizations to make addressing the needs of children their priority.	A reporting form was included in the publication so that groups could advise VDC of the project which they undertook.	The due date for the submission of the reporting form to VDC is 10/17/83.
Ident-i-Child--VDC publicized this program with every police department and sheriff's office in Virginia.	A low-cost activity that could potentially aid in locating a lost child.	Many law enforcement offices undertook this project.	Cannot be determined.

74 I. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES/ACTIVITIES

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<u>Virginia's Children: A Statistical Summary</u>	-Identified need for a statistical resource reference. This publication serves as a handy reference of statistical information on health, employment, child care, juvenile justice, mental health, education, substance abuse, foster care, adoptions, Aid to Dependent Children, Title XX allocations, Head Start, Child Abuse, etc.	An evaluation form is enclosed in the summary.	The comments have been favorable. Is widely used by service providers and state agency personnel.
<u>Children's Boards, Commissions, and Committees</u>	Identified need for a contact listing for child advocates. Many persons in localities around the state were not aware of the involvement of persons in their area on policy and advisory boards.	Constant requests for copies of resource.	Cannot be determined.
<u>T.V. for Children (Brochure)</u>	Identified need for guidance for parents in monitoring their children's T.V. viewing habits.	Constant requests for copies.	Cannot be determined.

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Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
Distribution of legislative updates to child advocates and responding to telephone inquiries regarding legislation during General Assembly.	Provide updated information on measures being considered to child advocates. Fill information needs not provided across the board by any other organization. Allow for most current information to be distributed.	By number of requests for printed updates and of calls to legislative hotline.	Statements made by consumers on the helpfulness of these activities.
Conducted Forums in two regions of Virginia (Tidewater and Southside) on child-related issues.	Assist localities to focus on child-related needs in their area. Included in agency workplan.	Forums held.	Cannot determine.
Revision of "A Child Advocate's Guide to the Virginia General Assembly."	Provide child advocates an updated listing of state legislators for their use in activity in behalf of legislation.	By number of requests for the publication.	This guide is widely distributed and used by child advocates when the Assembly is in session.
Revision of "Child Abuse and Neglect in Virginia," a brochure.	Provide for general consumption statistical data, information and resources about child abuse and neglect.	By number of requests for the publication.	This brochure is widely distributed and requested as there is no publication like it for the average citizen.

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Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
1982 Forum (5th Annual) "Children: A Population At Risk"	The forum offered child advocates an opportunity to learn more about those issues impacting their target groups and afforded them an opportunity to prepare for the upcoming session of the Virginia General Assembly.	All phases of the Forum were evaluated by the participants. More than 90% of the respondents rated the Forum "Good-Excellent"	

*Number of publications distributed: 5,990

I. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES/ACTIVITIES

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SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY: To aid in the provision of technical assistance and training to support efforts to initiate or improve programs and services for children and youth.

Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
<p>Provided assistance to Accomack County Department of Social Services in the development of a child abuse brochure and materials specific to that county.</p>	<p>Request for assistance received from that county.</p>	<p>By the actual development of the materials requested and indications of satisfaction by requesting party.</p>	<p>By the distribution of the materials to the requesting agency's target group (not yet completed).</p>
<p>Provided assistance in the establishment of a coalition of family day care systems, and in defining priorities.*</p>	<p>Director's assessment of need.</p>		
<p>Assisted the Virginia Coalition of 100 black women identify resources for teenage pregnancy.</p>	<p>VDC was requested to provide this service, and it coincided with one of our major policies.</p>	<p>The requesting organization received the assistance requested.</p>	<p>Cannot measure.</p>
<p>Provided assistance to three organizations (a state hospital, Westminster-Canterbury, and an apparel company) in developing corporate-sponsored child care.</p>	<p>Reflects agency priority area. We were requested to provide assistance.</p>	<p>By the expression of satisfaction with our efforts by requesting organizations.</p>	<p>The establishment of day care programs, and/or their decisions to terminate plans.</p>
<p>*See this entry under "Coordination."</p>			

1. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES/ACTIVITIES

78 The Division for Children has a broad mission that includes many activities related to children. Please provide the information requested below as it applies to the responsibilities assigned to the Division. A separate sheet is to be completed for each specific responsibility.

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Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
Assisted the Louisa County Health Center Foundation in developing Public Service Announcements and in media marketing techniques.	By request.	Public Service Announcements produced, media assistance provided to the satisfaction of requesting agency.	Cannot determine.
Provided training to National Foster Parents Association, and Virginia Foster Parents Association in legislative advocacy and in strengthening their organization.	By request.	Presentations made. Evaluations done by organizations indicated very positive results.	Cannot determine.
Assisted Virginia Cares with research into area of incarcerated parents and effects on children.	By request.	Assistance provided to satisfaction of requesting organization.	Cannot determine.

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Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
Provided assistance to Richmond Commission on the Handicapped in developing a newsletter.	By request.	Satisfaction expressed by requesting organization.	
Assisted Peninsula League of Youth in organization building, resource identification.	By request.	Satisfaction expressed by requesting organization.	
Assisted Virginia Child Care Workers Association and Parents Anonymous in brochure development.	By request.	Satisfaction expressed by requesting organization.	Brochures developed and distributed by the requesting organizations.
Assisted local Richmond church in setting up a youth conference. Helped with conference format, topic, and speaker selections.	By request.	Satisfaction expressed by requesting organization.	Conference held was termed successful by the church.

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Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
Assisted Cultural Experiences Unlimited by reviewing their grant proposals and by providing funding resources.	By urgent request.	Comments made on proposal content and potential funding sources provided.	Cannot determine.
Developed research outline for the Richmond Diagnostic and Prescriptive Center.	By request.	Research done, outline completed to satisfaction of requesting organization.	Representative from VDC sits on Board of the Diagnostic and Prescription Center.
Assisted in board development of the Mental Health Association.	By request.	Presentation made, evaluation done by requesting group very positive.	This group has more knowledge of mental health services for children in Virginia.
Assisted in the training of volunteers for Family and Children's Service of Richmond.	By request.	Presentations made on request. Evaluations positive.	Cannot determine.

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Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
Assisted the Virginia Automobile Association in developing a measure on child restraints for introduction in the Virginia General Assembly.	Provided an expanded resource on child restraints for parents.	Legislation drafted, the Association found a sponsor and measure was introduced.	Bill was defeated.

I. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES/ACTIVITIES

The Division for Children has a broad mission that includes many activities related to children. Please provide the information requested below as it applies to the responsibilities assigned to the Division. A separate sheet is to be completed for each specific responsibility.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY: To make appropriate recommendations for legislative changes to the Governor and General Assembly and to follow and evaluate federal legislation having a potential impact upon the children and youth of the Commonwealth.

Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
<p>The Division reviewed all bills and resolutions filed by members of the 1983 General Assembly relating to children, youth and their families and entered approximately 150 of them into a tracking system. We indicated positions on 80 of those measures, wrote analyses or testified on approximately 75 measures. Objective information was distributed to child advocates statewide. Also provided direct advice and comments on legislation to members of the General Assembly, and to the Secretary of Human Resources.</p>	<p>Facilitate the legislative interests of children, youth and families in Virginia. Provide information to child advocates and others.</p>	<p>Child advocates requested the Division to make presentations expounding on legislation.</p>	<p>Child advocates contacted legislators on specific measures based on information provided by the Division. Legislators and their aides contacted the Division on the potential impacts of legislation on children and families statewide.</p>

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Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
Comments submitted on P.L. 94-142, Missing Children's Bill, Child Labor Laws. Cost Principles, and the establishment of the House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families at the Federal level.	The importance of these issues on federal policy, funding and legislation affecting the target group.	Cannot be determined.	Cannot be determined.

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The Division for Children has a broad mission that includes many activities related to children. Please provide the information requested below as it applies to the responsibilities assigned to the Division. A separate sheet is to be completed for each specific responsibility.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY: To evaluate State programs which deliver services to children to determine their effectiveness and to make recommendations to the appropriate government officials concerning the future financial support and continuation of such programs and the establishment of new ones.

Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
Evaluation of referral form and procedures developed in response to SJR157, 1979 General Assembly.	A group of representatives from the Department of Corrections and Educations, juvenile courts and court service units assembled to respond to SJR157 requested that VDC should evaluate the outcome (i.e., form and procedure) of their efforts.	Survey questionnaires were sent to all school divisions and juvenile courts. Responses were used to determine effectiveness of referrals between schools and courts. Additionally, a telephone interview was administered to a small sample of elementary and secondary school principals.	A report of the evaluation was submitted to Secretary Fisher. Many of the committee representatives are no longer in state service.
Assessment of levels of screening, diagnosis, and treatment services provided to low-income children by EPSDT (Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment) program.	Changes in Federal EPSDT regulations were being considered. A consideration of current program performance was deemed important in determining potential impact of suggested changes. Also, the study was follow-up to 1978-79 VDC activities to increase EPSDT utilization.	Program statistics were examined over time and over regions of the state to determine trends. Local program coordinators were interviewed. The EPSDT information system and input documents were examined to determine reliability of the data. Officials from other states' EPSDT programs were contacted to provide information about their effective or innovative EPSDT practices.	The completed study and the recommendations are currently being reviewed by the Departments of Health and Social Services, the two agencies administering the program. Results and impact cannot be determined at this time.

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SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY: To monitor State programs delivering services to children to determine the extent to which services promised or mandated are delivered.

Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
<p>A study to determine whether, and to what extent, recommendations made by the State Crime Commission in their 1977 Children and Youth in Trouble report, have been implemented, was undertaken.</p>	<p>Interest in determining the effectiveness of studies <u>already</u> completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identified need to use information that is already available. - Study was in keeping with VDC's mandate to monitor state services to children. 	<p>Study was completed on August 15th, and is now undergoing agency review.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not yet determined. - It is anticipated that the study report will be helpful to the Department of Corrections in setting priorities for improvements in learning centers.
<p>Compilation of data from survey sent to Chapter X boards statewide.</p>	<p>Examination of services offered to children by these agencies and financial resources allocated to children's services.</p>	<p>Report produced in which accumulated data was analyzed. Survey indicated that an exacting breakdown of expenditures for children's services is needed.</p>	<p>Report was submitted to the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation to use in planning of children's services.</p>

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SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY: To maintain a central registry of current information concerning all public and private placements in which children are placed with funds from the Departments of Corrections, Health, Education, Mental Health, and Mental Retardation, Vocational Rehabilitation, Welfare, and the Commission on the Visually Handicapped.

Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
There was no activity in this area during 1982-83. However, in June, 1982, 1250 copies of <u>The Yellow Pages of Children's Services</u> were prepared and disseminated.	Carryover from previous years as part of Central Registry mandate.	- User survey was disseminated and results were analyzed.	

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SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY: To review budget proposals of State agencies who provide services to children and make appropriate recommendations prior to submission to the Department of Planning and Budget.

Specific Activities Engaged in During 1982-83 With Regard to This Responsibility	Reason for Selecting These Particular Activities	Ways the Division Measures Results or Impacts of Each Activity	Identify Specific Results/Impacts if Possible
No activities engaged in during 1982-83.			

In addition to the activities outlined in the self-study forms, the agency has assumed the following routine responsibilities:

- Responded to information requests.
- Reviewed and commented on project proposals of organizations and institutions in the state.
- Participated in grant proposal review and employee-selection panels.
- Sent letters of commendation on any service or activity of note to children and families.
- Participated in programs and special events relating to children and families.
- Coordinated Advisory Board meetings and activities.

II. ACCOMPLISHMENTS/PROBLEMS

1. What do you feel have been the major accomplishments of the Division for Children?

The agency serves as an effective spokesgroup to government for children, youth, and families. Through the agency's efforts, the visibility of children's issues has been greatly enhanced and public consciousness of these problems and issues has been raised substantially. The agency serves in a trusted ombudsman role and is used by child advocacy groups and organizations throughout the state to communicate their concerns to other state agencies. Further, the agency projects the Commonwealth into the national eye as a state that assigns importance to the needs of children and youth, and services provided them.

Within state government, the Division has brought focused attention on aspects of state planning and programs for children, youth, and their families that could be strengthened or improved. Practical and reasonable recommendations have been made for improved services. Through the agency's advocacy efforts, state agencies which had not previously mentioned children in their service plans, included children in their plans for the first time. Our Needs Assessment, Planning District Reports, and Resource Inventory introduced an innovative way of looking at the perceptions of Virginia's families of services, and what was available to meet their needs. The data provided state agencies and Planning Districts with tools they could use in service planning.

(continue on 1-A)

2. Are there any internal or external difficulties that should be corrected in order to enable the Division to more effectively carry out its mandate?

Internal -- The small number of staff persons imposes many limitations on the agency's follow-up capabilities, and accomplishment of routine daily tasks. For example: professional staff must be assigned to take bulk mailings to the Post Office. Although the example cited seems simplistic, management efficiency is affected when professional staff are deployed to handle such responsibilities, especially when many deadlines must be met. Agency activities are affected markedly by the limited number of clerical staff available to meet our vast typing and information dissemination needs. Lack of availability of computer services necessitates excessive staff time demands for data compilation.

External -- There are differing points of view as to why the agency was created and what the agency's functions should be. Some advocates have the notion that the agency was created to relate to the needs of young children. Others have expressed the view that the agency's primary focus should be youth. Thus, dissatisfaction is experienced by both groups at some time.

There appears to be ambiguity relative to the agency's role in advocacy. Historically, organizations and groups have expected the agency to assume leadership in stating positions on controversial and highly sensitive issues affecting children and families. Some of these issues have had political overtones which made it difficult for the agency to advocate for children.

(continue on 1-A)

II. ACCOMPLISHMENTS/PROBLEMS (continued)

1. The agency's information program has continually provided unduplicated and new cross-disciplinary information on children and youth, and the problems and issues affecting them. Notably, our Rights and Responsibilities Handbook is acknowledged for its uniqueness in presenting needed new information to youth. The Children's Defense Fund has cited the Division's publications as the highest quality publications of their nature in existence.

The Division is the only agency which maintains an overview, and tracks all child/youth-related legislation in the General Assembly. Numerous child advocates, advocacy organizations, and agencies depend on the Division for objective information on legislative measures. The information flow from the agency has promoted increased involvement of citizens and advocacy groups in the legislative process.

The establishment of the Virginia Day Care Council has enabled the child care community to unite and promote positive responses to the very critical need that exists for improved and expanded child care services in the Commonwealth.

The agency has introduced innovative model approaches to solving problems facing children which can be replicated by state agencies and service providers.

2. A clear mandate to require agencies servicing children to implement study recommendations has not been granted to the Division. This absence of authority renders the Division incapable of specifying the impact of much of its work, and the work of the many task forces and committees that have convened since the agency's inception. A standard measure of effectiveness is uniformly applied in assessing the performance of state agencies that does not take into account this limitation on the Division's work and the breadth and uniqueness of its program activities.

III. AGENCY STATUS

As you know the agency will cease to exist after July 1, 1984 unless affirmative action is taken by the General Assembly. Several options are available to the legislature including, but not limited to: maintaining the Division in its current form; eliminating the Division; or making changes in the Division's administrative status or responsibilities. Please respond to the following questions to provide your opinion of the effect on your agency and children's services in Virginia if certain actions were taken.

1. In your opinion, what would be the impact on children's services in the State if the services provided by the Division for Children were no longer available?

A review of the Division's mandate and of its efforts to meet that mandate will clearly indicate how children's services will be affected by the Division's demise. Children will not be represented in policy-making meetings. It is probable and possible that their cause will not continue to command priority attention.

2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of maintaining the Division as a separate State agency in contrast to merging it with another agency?

There are no disadvantages to maintaining the Division for Children as a separate state agency. Even if the General Assembly were to drastically reduce staff and other resources to the Division, the agency should still remain an independent entity.

The special needs of children and families can easily be submerged in very large agencies despite the fact that these agencies are delivering services to this group.

Traditionally, service-providing agencies are concerned about expanding, protecting, and promoting their services. This results frequently in a focus on the above priorities; advocacy and innovative approaches to problem-solving are not within the realm of things significant. Specifically targeted services

(continue on 2-A)

III. AGENCY STATUS (continued)

2. and methods of delivering services are not thought of for non-reading parents, handicapped children, minority children, et al. We are not aware of extraordinary efforts on the part of other agencies to endorse, or impose federal policies, especially when those policies do not relate to their specific bailiwick. Most agencies do not view the impact of service delivery efforts on the total family system and especially if those families have a member who has special needs. In the past, these oversights by agencies have led to a proliferation of special interest groups to assure adequate service provisions and have resulted in undue additional expense for the state and fragmentation of services. There is a distinct advantage to having an organization such as the Division for Children to assure the widest possible dissemination of information, to advocate for needed changes, and to assure equitable and appropriate services for children and their families. The ability to move between agencies and across Secretarial lines can not be achieved with any other construct.

3. If the Division's mandate is continued but not its indepen-

dent agency status, where within the framework of State government do you feel would be the best placement of the Division in order to carry out its mandate?

The best placement of this agency, in order for its mandate to be carried out, would be in either the Governor's Office, as originally intended, or in the legislative branch of Virginia government. To place the Division for Children in any other arm of state government is to seriously jeopardize its ability to "objectively" deal, across the board, with issues and problems of children.

It must be noted that 30 states in the United States have developed either offices, councils, or commissions for children. Twenty-eight have been established since 1970. Two states, Oklahoma and New Jersey, are moving toward establishing such offices at the present time. Additionally, the National Governors' Association, in its recently concluded conference, held a symposium on the needs of children. Both the U. S. Senate and the House of Representatives have established special committees to more closely scrutinize problems and needs associated with our target group.

In light of these developments, can we really justify, in Virginia, refragmenting these responsibilities, or eliminating an agency that has responded admirably to its assignment, and from whom other states seek advice?

4. If the General Assembly does not act to reauthorize the Division's continued operations, which, if any, of the agency's current responsibilities should continue to be carried out at the State level and how?

All current legislative mandates of the Division for Children should be implemented oblivious to the level of priority and focus we have been unable to attain to date. If any of these functions are assigned to other agencies, conditions would revert to the documented disarray that led to the creation of the Division. It would be unwise to suggest such a course under any circumstances, just as it would be unwise to suggest that these functions are not needed at all.

- 5. Are there any additional options or comments that you feel the General Assembly may wish to consider with regard to your agency?

Virginia's children must be protected: Virginia's future must be secured. The Division should be continued and given the resources to fulfill its mandate.

Signature of Agency Director:

Mark Jami Gilbert

Date:

August 19, 1983

APPENDIX E
AGENCY RESPONSES

As part of an extensive data validation process, each State agency involved in JLARC's review and evaluation effort is given the opportunity to comment to an exposure draft of the report.

Appropriate technical corrections resulting from the written comments have been made in the final report. Page references in the agency response relate to the exposure draft and may not correspond to page numbers in the final report.

Included in this appendix are the following responses:

- Secretary of Human Resources
- Division for Children



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Richmond 23219

Joseph L. Fisher
Secretary of Human Resources

October 7, 1983

Mr. Ray Pethel, Director
Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission
910 Capitol Street, Suite 1100
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Ray:

I am most appreciative of the JLARC staff's thoughtful evaluation of the Division for Children. On the whole, I think that the recent report was a fine piece of work. I know that you have recently received a letter from the Director of the Division for Children, Martha Gilbert. I am in full agreement with the specific comments mentioned in her letter. To those, I would add a reservation regarding the proposed staff reduction at the Division. Though a responsibility of the agency may be removed, I question the elimination of such a large percentage of an already small staff.

In my judgment, the Division has performed a valuable service to the Commonwealth in its coordination, education, and advocacy roles. In addition, the Division serves as a bridge to the many organizations in the Commonwealth concerned with children. In many instances, its staff resources are severely strained. This will surely be the case during the upcoming Regional Conference which the Division will be hosting. I hope some consideration will be given to maintaining the existing staff size.

I look forward to hearing your conclusions based on the public hearing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JL Fisher".

Joseph L. Fisher

cc: Martha Gilbert, Director
Division for Children

JLF:bcp



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DIVISION FOR CHILDREN

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September 30, 1983

Mr. Ray Pethtel
Director
Joint Legislative and Audit
Review Commission
910 Capitol Street
Suite 1100
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Mr. Pethtel:

The Division for Children is most appreciative of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission staff's thorough and informative evaluation of the agency. We envision a more effective agency as we attend to the specific programmatic and operational recommendations made in this document. The following are specific comments about each of the recommendations:

In Reference to Recommendation (1) (a): We are pleased that the coordination focus for the Division has been clearly delineated as our first priority. There has been much ambiguity about the Division's responsibility in coordinating State services to children and youth. The JLARC staff's focus on this responsibility has provided needed guidelines for internal planning and program design. The Division will now begin to place major emphasis on coordination of State services and other services provided by agencies and organizations which augment, or interface with, State services to children, youth, and their families.

Revocation of our evaluation responsibility as outlined in Recommendation (1) (b) reflects the JLARC staff's in-depth understanding of our limitations. Evaluation research is exceedingly difficult to accomplish without highly-trained specialists in research methodology and statistical analysis. The Division will continue to monitor and review children's services, to generate information to be used in the policy and decision-making process.

In the body of the report, the JLARC staff has highlighted the importance of the Division's involvement in budget review of children's services. There is no doubt that a central focus on children's services can only be accomplished through careful analysis of trends in budget allocations, analyses of the scope of services provided for the dollars spent, and careful examination of the impact of services provided on selected segments of the child/youth population. Through continuous review of changing needs and program impact, and participation in budget development, the Division should become an invaluable resource to other State agencies, 97 the Governor and affected Governor's Secretaries, and the Legislature.

In reference to Recommendation (1) (c): We gladly relinquish the responsibility for maintaining a central registry of children's services. Given the agency's present staff level and lack of access to computer services, it is virtually impossible to fulfill this part of our current mandate.

In reference to Recommendation (2): Child advocates and our staff are pleased that the JLARC staff has recommended that the Division for Children should remain an independent agency. Effective advocacy can only be achieved when citizens can be assured that the Division takes an impartial approach to every issue and problem --i.e., that the agency has no vested interest in the outcomes of its efforts other than--are children's interests best served. The complex nature of the agency's work dictates the need for autonomy--not only in the Commonwealth, but as the agency relates to national advocacy efforts. The neutral role assumed by the Division in examining an issue or a service becomes increasingly significant as budgetary constraints influence policy decisions and re-alignment of priorities.

In reference to Recommendation (3): The JLARC staff has ably addressed the question of organizational structure. Access to computer services and word-processing capabilities would be cost-effective and efficient measures to compile data, and increase agency information output. The proposal for re-structuring the administrative staff responsibilities may ultimately result in improved operations.

It has been useful to examine how the agency's duties and responsibilities outlined in the report can be implemented to maximize the Division's value to State government and the citizenry. Logistics, and areas of concentration in program activity focus (coordination, budget analysis, technical assistance, legislative tracking, information development and dissemination), are essential considerations in staff deployment. For example, the elements of coordination defined in the report are the foundation for an integrated approach to service delivery. We believe that there are other elements that command attention if effective coordination of services is to be accomplished: assessment of needs, and of existing services to meet those needs; preliminary planning, monitoring of services, continuous follow-up on efforts that have been initiated; contact with local counterparts of State agencies, and occasional site visits to facilities where services are provided to make the determination that what is on paper is what is in effect. Successful coordination and advocacy efforts also require active participation in many meetings, accessibility (to listen to concerns), availability for immediate responses to crises, analyses of issues and problems, and documentation. All these responsibilities require staff. Reduction of professional staff would render the agency incapable of performing at the high level of expectancy reflected in the JLARC staff report.

In reference to Recommendation (4): We view critical re-evaluation of the agency in five years as both necessary and valuable, and we look forward to the twin challenges of coordinating State services to children and determining the impact of all future program activities.

Thank you for analyses and recommendations which will assist us in further improving the administration of the Division for Children.

Sincerely,


Martha Norris Gilbert

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