CALIFORNIA WORK PAYS
DEMONSTRATION
PROJECT

CAL LEARN
PROCESS EVALUATION


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Introduction

As required in the terms and conditions of the federal waiver, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has contracted with UCDATA to document the implementation of the Cal-Learn program. The process evaluators at UCDATA have conducted 2 waves of field interviews with state and local administrators of programs and agencies involved with and impacted by the implementation of Cal-Learn. The first wave, conducted during the summer of 1994, was designed to collect substantive information about programs prior to Cal-Learn implementation which could serve as a basis for later program comparison.

This report contains an overview of the results of the first wave interviews, describes the pre-existing programs and services for pregnant and parenting teens in the four research counties, and presents the early planning activities undertaken to prepare for Cal-Learn implementation.

Staff from the following key organizations were interviewed for this report: California Department of Social Services (CDSS), California Department of Education (CDE), the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) division of the California Department of Health Services (DHS), county welfare agencies, local school systems, and Adolescent Family Life Programs (AFLPs).

Before Cal-Learn, health, education and welfare organizations had simultaneously operated their own unique programs and services for pregnant and parenting teens. In fact, while there was often considerable overlap in the populations served by each of these organizations, there was little evidence of inter-agency communication and coordination. Each organization
primarily addressed a different aspect of the problem of teen pregnancy and focused on the goals most consistent with their specific organizational mandate. Welfare concerned itself primarily with financial considerations, health organizations, with the physical and emotional well-being of young mothers and their babies, and schools with educational concerns. Different bureaucratic structures and goals fostered a lack of communication and understanding between the health, education and welfare systems both at the state and county levels. This situation posed significant problems during Cal-Learn planning as the development of a coherent program required substantial interagency coordination. Overcoming initial inter-agency misunderstandings, agreeing to disagree on issues, and focusing on shared superordinate goals was a major accomplishment during the first year of planning.

By and large, Cal-Learn was viewed with apprehension by program administrators, and as an extremely ambitious policy. Prior to Cal-Learn, all programs for pregnant and parenting teens had served clients on a voluntary basis. The percentage of all parenting teens actually using the existing services was largely unknown. There was consensus among providers, however, that a significant proportion, perhaps the majority of pregnant and parenting teens were not utilizing the existing programs for reasons which included lack of knowledge about or negative opinions towards them, long waiting lists, language and transportation barriers, and personal or cultural preferences for informal support systems. The mandatory nature of Cal-Learn and the need to confront these difficult access issues was a challenging proposition for administrators and line staff.
Cal-Learn is an important new program incorporated into the welfare reforms of the "California Work Pays Demonstration Project" (CWPDP) which was passed into law with the signing of Senate Bill 35 (SB 35) on June 30, 1993. Its companion "clean-up" bill, Senate Bill 1078, was signed on October 11, 1993. The Cal-Learn program was designed to prevent long term welfare receipt by teen-age parents on AFDC by encouraging and assisting teens to complete their high school education. To accomplish this goal, Cal-Learn pays for supportive services, such as child care and transportation, offers intensive case-management, and applies financial incentives and disincentives through AFDC payments. Participation in the program is mandatory for pregnant and parenting teens on AFDC who are under the age of 19 and not in foster care.

Earlier versions of Cal-Learn had been proposed in the 1992 ballot initiative known as Proposition 165, and in the FY '94 Governors' budget proposal. These versions differed from the bill which eventually passed in that they relied solely on the use of financial incentives and disincentives to encourage teens to finish school. During legislative negotiations over SB 35, the Cal-Learn program became more complex and service oriented. It required the contracting out of case management services to Adolescent Family Life Programs (AFLPs) and demanded substantial coordination with the Departments of Health Services (DHS) and Education (CDE). Whereas, Cal-Learn was originally intended to be operated as an AFDC program, the shift to a more service oriented focus prompted CDSS to instead administer Cal-Learn under GAIN.

In the SB 35 legislation, CDSS is identified as the lead agency for planning and implementation of the Cal-Learn program. As lead agency, CDSS was responsible for submitting the necessary federal waivers to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS);
compiling a comprehensive fiscal package; developing technical and administrative regulations for the program; conducting an evaluation of the Cal-Learn program; and coordinating an overall program design with the counties, the California Department of Health Services (DHS) and Department of Education (CDE).

California's welfare programs are administered at the county level, with major funding and administrative oversight of the regulations from CDSS. Each county was required to submit a Cal-Learn plan to CDSS describing how it planned to implement its Cal-Learn program, for review and approval by both CDSS and DHS.
State Level Context: Pre-Existing Services for Teen Parents

This section of the report summarizes the pre-existing teen parent programs of the three major institutions involved in the implementation of Cal-Learn: the GAIN Teen Parent Program, the Adolescent Family Life Program, and school-based teen parent programs. This information will serve as a baseline for comparing the impact of the Cal-learn program once implemented, as well as highlight the different issues and obstacles which local agencies faced as they got their programs under way.

GAIN Teen Parent Program

In each county welfare department, GAIN operates as a distinct division separate from AFDC and the other entitlement programs. Like other welfare programs, management of the GAIN program is centered on standardized administration of benefits and fraud prevention. Detailed statutes and regulations leave relatively little room for discretion at the local level. Most of the program's services, such as education programs, job training, and child care, are provided by outside contractors.

In terms of inter-agency coordination, GAIN has working relationships with the AFDC program, receiving almost all of its referrals from AFDC through a formal (and often computerized) system. GAIN's sub-contractors include a wide variety of service providers, including public schools, child care providers, and job training programs, among others. Most of these contractual relationships center on administering benefits. For example, the GAIN workers in one of the counties researched worked closely with school attendance officers to verify that child care payments were justifiable.
While the welfare system serves a significant proportion of the teen parent population through its categorical entitlement programs, the GAIN Teen Parent Program was the only welfare program targeted specifically for pregnant and parenting teens. The primary goal of GAIN is to help welfare recipients find employment and leave AFDC by providing access to child care, education, and job training services. The GAIN Teen Parent Program was specifically geared towards helping teen welfare recipients graduate from high school by providing access to child care and transportation. The Teen Parent program served a relatively small portion of the overall GAIN population. Once Cal-Learn was implemented, all participants in the GAIN Teen Parent program were transferred to Cal-Learn and this program officially came to an end.

In order to be eligible for the GAIN Teen Parent program teens had to be between 16 and 18 years old and not have graduated from high school. Certain categories of AFDC recipients, including teens who had not graduated from high school, were considered mandatory participants in GAIN. Due to budgetary constraints on the GAIN program, however, most GAIN Teen participants were actually volunteers. Their primary reason for participating in the program was to obtain the supportive services they needed to return to school.

After an initial GAIN orientation session, GAIN job counselors met individually with each participant to develop a service plan. The service plan served as a legally binding contract which defined the amount and kind of supportive services that GAIN would provide and the responsibilities incumbent on the client. Failure to comply with the contract resulted in sanctioning of the participant's portion of the family's AFDC grant. Typically, "support services" provided to teens consisted of a specific number of paid child care hours per week, as determined by the teen's school schedule. Child care was not provided over school vacation periods. The plan also included, if needed, a bus pass. The GAIN job counselor drew up the contract and
authorized payment for all supportive services. Parents could choose their own child care arrangements, often with the assistance of Child Care Resource and Referral agencies.

GAIN teen parent job counselors generally had lower caseloads than adult counselors in order to provide more intensive personalized case management services to teens. In most cases, job counselors referred GAIN teens to adult education and continuation school programs, rather than regular comprehensive high school programs. The majority of GAIN job counselors' time was devoted to administering and monitoring benefits. Face-to-face contact between clients and GAIN job counselors generally occurred infrequently once services were set up, and this was often in response to program sanctions.

Adolescent Family Life Program

The Adolescent Family Life Program (AFLP) is the State Department of Health Services's primary program for pregnant and parenting teens. While the primary mission of AFLP is to improve the health of teen parents and their children, the program also seeks to address their social, educational, and psychological needs through comprehensive case management. While CDHS requires that AFLP providers meet agreed upon case management standards, the administration of the program is extremely decentralized and flexible. The Maternal and Child Health Division of the California Department of Health Services (CDHS) contracts the program out to a wide variety of agencies, including community-based non-profits, local hospitals, and County Public Health Departments. In turn, these local providers maintain extensive networks with other local service providers, including the public schools, community health clinics, child care providers, and social service agencies, among many others.
AFLP case management includes assessment, planning, coordinating, advocating, monitoring, and counseling of clients primarily around the health care needs of teen parents and their babies. Case managers are under strict documentation requirements for recording and updating client information. Reports must be filed every three months to the Maternal Child Health Division of CDHS. These reports provide detailed statistical information on client demographics, birth outcomes, health and immunization status and service needs. Health care needs are considered in the broad sense, and often include such aspects as having adequate food, clothing, shelter and safety.

Participation in AFLP is entirely voluntary, and most providers are unable to meet the demand for their services due to limited funding. Even with these limits, the AFLPs in the counties researched are generally four times the size of the GAIN Teen Parent program. Any pregnant or parenting teen between the ages of 12 and 18 years is eligible for AFLP, regardless of income. While most participants are teen mothers, teen fathers are also eligible for services. Most AFLP participants are referred to the program by their friends, schools, or local clinics. None of the AFLPs in the four research counties have been able to serve the entire county. San Joaquin's AFLP, for example, is able to serve only the city of Stockton.

As mandated in SB 35, the AFLPs will serve as the lynch-pin of the service delivery system for Cal-Learn participants. The case managers will be required to arrange comprehensive services for the teens and monitor their performance in school. The case managers will be expected to collect and turn over the grades of each participant to their GAIN counterparts. Much of the responsibility for interagency coordination in Cal-Learn will fall on the shoulders of the case managers.
School-based Pregnant and Parenting Teen Programs

Teen parents who attend public schools in California are enrolled in a wide variety of educational programs, including mainstream comprehensive high schools, alternative continuation schools, adult education programs, community schools, independent study, and specialized programs for pregnant and parenting teens. Among the specialized programs there is considerable local variation in the educational programs and supportive services provided. In California, public schools are, for the most part, funded by the state General Fund revenues at a per pupil reimbursement rate. Some public schools are able to generate additional grant funding to establish unique programs with additional services. There are two primary sources of additional state funding available to counties and local school districts to operate special programs for pregnant and parenting students. These are the Pregnant Minor Program (PMP), and the School Age Parenting and Infant Development program (SAPID).

PMP funding is channeled by the California Department of Education (CDE) through the County Offices of Education (COE). Only 14 county offices of education in the state of California receive PMP funding. Of the four counties researched, only Alameda, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino counties receive PMP funding. This funding provides a higher per pupil average daily attendance (ADA) reimbursement rate for alternative educational programs for pregnant teens under the age of 18. Pregnant Minor programs must offer self-contained classrooms providing at least 4 hours of daily instruction in academics, health and nutrition. Some also have on-site child care. Students in PM programs are allowed to remain in the program for one semester following the birth of their child.

SAPID is a major source of funding for day care programs for parenting students. SAPID programs are located at, or very close to the local high schools. Students drop off their children
at the program in the morning, attend class, and then pick them up after school. Students using SAPID services often attend alternative educational programs such as continuation schools, rather than the regular comprehensive school programs. By regulation, SAPID programs must provide classes in the area of parent education, health and nutrition, as well as supervised, practical, "hands on" child care instruction. These classes and practical experiences must be open to the entire student body of the school.
State Level Planning

It was in the context of the pre-existing programs and services described above that the state undertook its role in planning the implementation of Cal-Learn. Cal-Learn's designers hoped to address the full range of teen parents' economic, health, and educational needs through a comprehensive approach to the problem of teen pregnancy, which would combine the resources of all the major institutions and prevent further duplication of services. Cal-Learn would require extensive and on-going coordination between these systems in order to function effectively.

Implementation of this ambitious program would prove to be a significant challenge, since historically, the welfare, public health and educational systems have been extremely autonomous, with different missions, organizational cultures and modes of operation.

The Federal Waiver

Shortly after passage of the legislation, CDSS appointed an analyst from GAIN's policy unit to coordinate the Cal-Learn program. Along with four staff from the policy unit, this analyst formed the new Cal-Learn unit and began preparing the waiver from Social Security Act rules required by the federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). A universal requirement of federal waivers is that they be cost neutral. While Cal-Learn would be more expensive to operate than the existing AFDC system, it was successfully argued that the entire package of reforms in the CWPDP should be viewed as a whole, and that cost savings from the other reforms (benefit cuts) would compensate for costs of the Cal-Learn component. Moreover, CDSS contended that Cal-Learn would have a long-range impact on reducing the welfare dependency of teen parents, a group particularly vulnerable to long term welfare dependency, and
that the potential for future savings would further offset initial Cal-Learn operating expenses.

DHHS challenged certain portions of the waiver application concerning Cal-Learn. Questions were raised regarding the use of Title IV-A funding for supportive services, and the lack of a proposal to track student’s school attendance. After some negotiation it was agreed that IV-A funds could be used to fund Cal-Learn case management provided that Title IV-F (JOBS) funds were exhausted first, and that CDSS would track school attendance to the extent possible. The entire waiver process took five months, from submission of the waiver proposal on September 20, 1993 to final approval on March 1, 1994. The Cal-Learn program was officially launched following a mandatory 30 day waiting period, on April 1, 1994.

**Development of Program Regulations**

Program implementation necessitated the coordination of welfare, education, and health agencies at both the state and county levels. CDSS began its planning process by seeking input from the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA). A six member sub-committee was appointed by CWDA to work with GAIN’s Cal-Learn unit on the draft of technical regulations by which the program could operate. The CWDA Cal-Learn work group began meeting with CDSS staff in August 1993. Among members of the work group there existed disparate views on how Cal-Learn should operate. Although the SB 35 legislation was unusually detailed in its program design, there remained ample room for interpretation in terms of translating statutory language into program regulations.

After several meetings of the work group, it became apparent that input was needed from the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) division at DHS. The MCH division oversees Title V funding to AFLPs, and was granted authority in the SB 35 legislation to approve or reject Cal-
Learn county plans. The AFLP coordinator from MCH was brought into the work group meetings in the fall of 1993. At about this same time the coordinator of the Department of Education's (CDE) Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Program also began attending meetings. By January 1994, the working group had expanded to include representatives from the AFLP providers’ network. The addition of new participants with a diversity of viewpoints made regulation development extremely difficult, and after several meetings of the large group, CDSS decided to hold separate meetings with representatives from each agency.

A major aspect of the planning process at this stage was simply to become familiar with the very different perspectives and processes used by each of the agencies involved in the planning. GAIN was accustomed to administering programs through administrative oversight of detailed rules and regulations. In contrast, MCH and Education have relatively decentralized bureaucracies, exercise minimal administrative oversight, and set standards of practice, guidelines and goals within which programs are free to exercise considerable latitude.

Regulation development meetings proceeded throughout the winter of '93-94, with draft versions routinely sent to all agencies for comments and suggestions. By February 1994, sufficient agreement had been reached among the parties for CDSS to issue the emergency program regulations in an All County Letter (ACL). ACL 94-16 contained instructions to the counties for submitting their Cal-Learn county plans and included a sample plan to use a model.

Following issuance of the regulations the work group decided to continue to meet as the main forum for discussing Cal-Learn implementation and budgetary issues. One issue that remained unresolved by the work group was a precise delineation of the tasks to be performed by each agency, and at what cost. It was not until the May 1994 legislative budget hearings that final decisions were made in this regard. The 1994-95 Budget Act compromise increased the rate of
payment to AFLPs for their services, but also mandated that a cost study be undertaken prior to the next year’s budget hearings in order to determine the actual costs of running the program.

Disseminating the Regulations

CDSS followed up issuance of the regulations with training seminars at 5 locations (Sacramento, San Francisco, Fresno, Diamond Bar and Redding) in late February and early March of 1994. Officials from CDE, MCH and the AFLP providers association worked with CDSS to plan and present one-day training seminars which were targeted to the staff at county welfare offices, local school administrators, and AFLP provider agencies. Participants at the training sessions received Cal-Learn handbooks and were encouraged to ask specific questions about the program. The major concerns raised by participants had to do with funding for expansion of school-based child care; the capacity of schools to handle a sudden return of large numbers of drop-outs; the need for academic and psychological testing; confusion over submittal of report card information; issuance of bonuses and sanctions, and other operational details. Questions left unanswered at the training sessions were addressed in subsequent All County Letters, and/or through individual contact with CDSS staff. Each county was assigned a GAIN Cal-Learn unit staff member from CDSS to provide support and assistance to the counties in developing their individualized county plans.

Counties were asked to begin submitting their plans to CDSS on March 1, 1994. Placer County, which already had in place a small GAIN teen parent program that contracted to an AFLP, was the first county to begin operating Cal-Learn on April 1, 1994. The larger urban counties had considerably more difficulty putting their programs into place. Some counties faced philosophical and political opposition from their boards of supervisors. Others had an existing
web of agencies and bureaucratic structures upon which Cal-Learn was layered, and these 
relationships needed to be carefully re-negotiated and adjusted to accommodate the Cal-Learn 
mandate. Where counties had no AFLP agency, CDSS worked with the local health and welfare 
agencies to develop a case management program that would satisfy MCH's AFLP standards. To 
facilitate that process, CDSS and MCH jointly conducted a series of two-day training sessions in 
four locations across the state. These sessions focused on how to write up case management 
protocols which would meet the standards set by MCH for inclusion in Cal-Learn plans.

A major concern of both the AFLPs and school districts during the pre-implementation 
phase was the possibility of a sudden explosion in enrollment. There was apprehension that Cal-
Learn would compromise the integrity of existing programs and create serious fiscal and 
administrative repercussions. AFLPs anticipated that they would be doubling or tripling in size 
and lobbied heavily for start-up funds. SB 35 had only authorized per capita reimbursement to 
AFLPs for case management. Pressure from the AFLP lobby, combined with a surplus in the Cal-
Learn operations budget due to the slow implementation of Cal-Learn state-wide, eventually 
allowed for about $8M of the $55M slated for first year program operations to be transferred to 
one-time start-up costs. The delay in access to start-up funds, however, caused some of the 
larger counties to delay program implementation for several months.

Planning an Evaluation

A major focus of the planning to implement Cal-Learn in the four counties selected for 
research was the simultaneous initiation of a Cal-Learn program evaluation. In the fall of 1993 
UC DATA, in collaboration with the research branch of CDSS, initially proposed a 
research design which was similar to one that had been used to evaluate GAIN. Significant
In April 1994, at a Research Advisory Committee (RAC) meeting of the CWPDP in Berkeley, a decision was made to proceed with a two-way factorial design for Cal-Learn. This four-group design would test both of the major program components, case management and financial incentives/sanctions, separately and in combination. A draft of the new research design was sent to the four research county Cal-Learn coordinators for their consideration and comments. A decision was also made at the April RAC to form a special advisory group, the Cal-Learn Advisory Committee (CLAC), to meet specifically about Cal-Learn research. The first CLAC meeting was held in June 1994 to discuss the new design and proposed data elements.

Over the summer of 1994, researchers from CDSS and UCDATA continued to meet with staff from DHS, AFLP, and the counties to determine the feasibility of collecting evaluation data elements from existing administrative databases, and amending computer systems to enable the tracking of teens. Due to the significant work still to be done in this regard, and to the complexity of simply implementing the Cal-Learn program, it was decided that a single county (San Bernardino) would be used in a pilot a test to assess the appropriateness of the research design prior to full scale implementation of the evaluation in all four counties.
County Level Context, Planning and Early Implementation

In addition to the substantial differences between the major institutions and their programs, the implementation of Cal-Learn is being shaped by a variety of local factors, such as the diversity of the population, the organization of the county's service delivery system, the availability of supportive services, and the local planning processes. This section of the report describes the unique context of each of the four research counties, the planning processes that they undertook, and their earliest experiences in implementing the Cal-Learn program.

Alameda County

Alameda County contains both densely populated inner-city, urban areas and large suburban and rural sections. Its population of approximately 1.2 million is concentrated in the north and western portions of the county, and is notable for its great ethnic diversity. The largest city, Oakland, according to 1990 census figures, is composed of at least eighty-two different language and/or ethnic groups.

GAIN Context

In Alameda, the GAIN program is a highly centralized organization, with all functions situated in one welfare office located in Oakland. Alameda County had been operating a small GAIN teen parent program, comprised of only about 60-100 of the approximately 3,000 total cases enrolled in GAIN each month. Participants were mostly volunteers who had been referred to the program by their AFDC eligibility worker after expressing a need for child care.
Participants in the GAIN Teen Parent program attended a group orientation to GAIN, along with other adult GAIN applicants. Teens, however, were assigned to a teen parent employment counselor who served in the role of case manager. Alameda had two employment counselors assigned to its Teen Parent program.

GAIN teen case management essentially consisted of referring teens to school programs and child care resource and referral agencies, writing up contracts to pay for child care, monitoring contracts to confirm attendance, and issuing bus passes as needed. Three child care resource and referral (R&R) agencies played a major contractual role in the operation of Alameda's GAIN teen parent program. R&Rs helped the teens to locate licensed child care providers and handled all of the billing paperwork to GAIN.

GAIN Planning

Alameda was anxious to get their Cal-Learn program underway as soon as possible to ensure adequate program funding. GAIN planned to use the staff of its existing Teen Parent program to operate Cal-Learn. A GAIN program analyst was appointed to the new position of Cal-Learn coordinator. GAIN and AFDC program staff began meeting internally on a monthly basis to plan how to implement both the program and the evaluation of the program, in March 1994. Discussions centered on procedures for transferring information between GIS (GAIN Information System) and CDS (Case Data System, for AFDC), the two welfare computer systems. GIS and CDS changes would be required to identify Cal-Learn eligible participants, flag their research status, track bonus, sanction and supportive service payments, and document report card schedules.
A major concern of the planning meetings was determining how to identify teens on AFDC who were mandated to participate in the Cal-Learn program. The county had to estimate the number of teens to be enrolled in Cal-learn over the first year for their Cal-Learn county plan. Teen parents who were the heads of their own assistance units were fairly easy to identify by scanning the CDS system for heads of households under age 19. Pregnant and parenting teens who remained part of their parent's assistance unit (nested cases), however, were much more difficult to detect. There was no CDS code assigned to teen parents. Reliable estimates of the number of Cal-Learn eligibles, therefore, required the manual review of case files. To facilitate this process, the county scanned its CDS system to generate a list of assistance units that contained both teenagers and children under the age of three. This list was given to all case bearing AFDC eligibility workers, and they were asked to determine which of their cases on the list contained teen parents. In Alameda County there are thousands of cases not assigned to a specific eligibility worker, however. These unassigned cases, known as "transfer desk" cases, had to be reviewed by welfare management staff. Review of these files was a formidable task, involving week-end work, and further complicated by objections from the EW labor union. By August, the list was thoroughly reviewed, and 779 cases were identified as currently Cal-Learn eligible.

In July 1994, one month prior to the implementation of Cal-Learn, CDSS's research branch decided to postpone implementation of the research design in Alameda in order to allow for a pilot test of that design in San Bernadino County. Alameda was both relieved and somewhat irritated by this decision since it had already expended considerable effort and expense to accommodate research data needs. Expenses involved changes to the GIS system to track school information required for the Cal-learn evaluation.
Early Implementation: GAIN

Once the Alameda County Board of Supervisors approved the county's Cal-Learn plan on August 22, 1994, GAIN immediately mailed out notices to the 779 cases it had identified to inform them of their Cal-Learn obligations. Included with the formal Notices of Action, GAIN added brightly colored flyers proclaiming benefits available under Cal-Learn: "free child care", "free case management". The county also did public service announcements on a popular radio station to publicize the program.

GAIN asked teens eligible for Cal-Learn to come into the GAIN office to attend an orientation session on the program. The orientation was modeled on GAIN orientations, but with AFLP case managers present. Initially, orientations were scheduled twice a week during the first two months beginning on September 12, 1994. Attendance at orientations, however, was poor, with only about a third of those scheduled actually attending. Besides scheduling and rescheduling orientation appointments with teens, the primary tasks of GAIN workers in the early implementation period were sending out the appropriate notices of action (NOAs) and collecting students report card schedules. Administration of bonuses and sanctions was not an issue at this time because of a mandatory 90-day participation period before teens become eligible for this.

During the early phase-in period there was considerable confusion over operational aspects of Cal-Learn. GAIN was transforming procedures it had used primarily with adults to a strictly teen population. GAIN staff began attending monthly case manager meetings of the combined staffs of the county's two AFLP agencies. These meetings were used to work out operational problems and were helpful in terms of assisting line level staff understanding of the different roles and responsibilities of their counterparts in the AFLP agencies. This early phase must be characterized as a transitional period in which all parties were still learning how the
system worked, and developing ideas for how to fine tune it.

**AFLP Context**

There are two AFLP programs in Alameda County. Prior to implementing Cal-Learn, AFLP #1 served only the Oakland portion of Alameda county. AFLP #2 served the Tri-Cities area in the southwestern portion of the county. The City of Berkeley, which has its own Health Department services, and some of the less populated portions of the county were not served by either agency.

Both agencies provide comprehensive case management services under Title V funding, adhere to the statewide AFLP standards of practice, and belong to the AFLP provider network. All case managers, prior to Cal-learn, held graduate degrees in social work, psychology or related fields, and exercised considerable professional discretion in working with clients. Most of the case manager's work involved individual problem solving, advocating and brokering services from a wide range of service providers. These included child care providers, counseling agencies, Medi-Cal, substance abuse treatment centers, and occasionally GAIN.

AFLP #1 is a private, non-profit agency which began in the early 1980's as a network of perinatal providers concerned about the high rates of infant mortality in the low-income neighborhoods of Oakland. It was one of the first agencies in the state to provide comprehensive case management services targeted specifically to pregnant and/or parenting teens. It had grown to an agency with a staff of over 80 FTEs, serving a predominantly African-American clientele in the cities of Oakland and Richmond, and with a variety of programs addressing the perinatal health care needs of women and families in the East Bay.
Prior to the implementation of Cal-Learn, AFLP #1 had about 700 teens in its Title V program, of which about a half were in Alameda County and half were in Contra Costa County. It was estimated that the program served only about a third of those eligible due to the limitations of Title V funding. Typically, clients participated in the program for about 2 years. AFLP #1 estimated that one half of its clients in the pre-Cal-Learn period were on AFDC.

All of AFLP #1's case managers were directly supervised by the program director. The 12 case managers in Alameda County worked out of offices located in the Planned Parenthood Building in East Oakland, and at the McClymonds High School in West Oakland. In addition, AFLP #1 sub-contracted a portion of its case management services to several community based organizations in the county. All sub-contracts were allowed to expire as of June 30, 1994, in part due to the anticipated expansion of services under Cal-learn.

AFLP #2 began operating as a primary care health clinic in Union City in 1971, and in 1984 it opened a satellite clinic site in Hayward. Both clinics serve a largely (60-70%) Latino population, and clients live mostly in Fremont, Hayward and Union City. The AFLP program is just one component of the Health Center, whose principal services are comprehensive primary health care. Prior to the implementation of Cal-Learn, this AFLP program was staffed by 2 full time, MSW social workers, one of whom also served as its program director. There were 53 clients enrolled in the program, seven of whom were AFDC recipients.

AFLP Planning

GAIN administrators began negotiating with Alameda's two AFLP agencies in March, 1994 regarding contracts for the case management aspect of the Cal-Learn program. At first, it was assumed that AFLP #1, the larger of the two providers, would be the sole agency with whom
GAIN would contract for Cal-Learn case management. The smaller AFLP agency soon asserted its intent to also access Cal-Learn funding. Consequently, separate negotiating sessions were held with each AFLP provider. Negotiations stalled for several weeks due to a disagreement at the state level over the AFLP duties and payment rates. Once this issue was settled by the legislature, contract negotiations at the county level proceeded smoothly.

Planning for Cal-Learn was most intensive for the AFLP programs, particularly for the larger of the two agencies. This provider anticipated a tripling of their AFLP caseload with the influx of Cal-Learn cases. It planned to expand its geographic area into the City of Berkeley, as well as into the less populated portions of the county which had previously been either uncovered or sub-contracted to other community based agencies.

The larger AFLP eventually hired 15 new case managers, created a new supervisory level of case management, opened a new, much larger office in Oakland, and stationed case managers at additional sites in Berkeley, Oakland and San Leandro. Their Cal-Learn contract differed from the smaller AFLP's in that it included administration of child care supportive services. This meant hiring a child care specialist to provide referral services and dispense payments to child care providers. This provider actively engaged in planning with local school districts and special school programs for pregnant and parenting teens by writing up formal memoranda of understanding and identifying key contact persons to facilitate inter-agency cooperation with the schools.

The other AFLP provider in the county had less extensive planning requirements because their program was smaller and they opted not to administer supportive services. Their case management staff was increased from 1.5 to 3 FTEs, and they opened a new site at the location of a Head Start program in Hayward.
Early Implementation: AFLP

As noted above, attendance at Cal-Learn orientations was not as high as expected. To increase active participation, starting in November 1994, the larger AFLP agency began reaching out to teens who failed to attend their group orientation sessions. Case managers were given a list of teens who did not come to orientations, and actively tried to find them at their homes, at health clinics and at schools. Once found, they conducted individual orientations with the teens to Cal-Learn. Teens who lived in the parts of the county covered by the smaller AFLP agency did not receive outreach services until several months later, in May of 1995.

During the early implementation period, the two AFLP providers held combined monthly staff meetings, also attended by GAIN Cal-Learn staff, at which Cal-Learn operational issues were discussed, procedures were clarified and revised. These meetings were significant in that they allowed face-to-face communication between line staff from GAIN and AFLP agencies for the first time. The meetings served to reveal some of the organizational similarities and differences, and provided an opportunity for staff to confront and address their differences.

School Programs Context

In Alameda county there are 14 school-based programs targeted specifically to pregnant and/or parenting students. Although not each of the 18 local school districts in the county has its own pregnant and/or parenting program, each district has access to at least one program to refer such students. Each program is unique, with variations depending on the physical, financial and staff resources available to the district. Considerable funding for these programs comes from SAPID and Pregnant Minor Program (PMP) funding streams. Most programs also receive supplemental funding and/or in-kind donations of physical space and staff time from other sources.
such as Healthy Start, Title I, and private donations. Local health and social service agencies, including AFLPs, also contribute staff to some school programs.

In Alameda, SAPID programs are operated by four unified school districts (USD): the City of Alameda USD, with 20 child care slots; Berkeley USD, with 34 slots; Fremont USD, with 26 slots; and Hayward USD, with 25 slots. SAPID programs have had level funding by the state for about 10 years. Two other school districts collaborate with a private child care agency to provide on site child care centers at two additional public high schools. New Haven USD coordinates with Tri-Cities child care agency to operate a child care facility on the campus of Logan High School in Union City, with 50 slots. Mission Valley Regional Occupational Program also coordinates with Tri-Cities to operate a child care facility at Kennedy High School, with 8 infant slots.

There are four programs in the county using Pregnant Minor Program (PMP) funding. The largest program is in Oakland, and is called the "Comprehensive Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Program" (CTAPP). This program operates in three of the six Oakland USD high schools. Only two of the three sites, however, Castlemont and McClymonds High Schools, receive PMP funds. The third site, Oakland Technical High School, has no child care, and is operated without COE input or PMP funding. Enrollment for the CTAPP program averages over 200 students per year, but average daily attendance (ADA) is only about 90. The County Office of Education (COE) contracts with Pleasanton USD to operate the "School Age Mothers" (SAM) program with PMP funds. This program serves all school districts in the valley portion of the county. Enrollment in the Pleasanton SAM averages about 80 students per year, with ADA about 57. COE contracts to another agency, Girls Inc., to operate another SAM program located in San Leandro. This program serves students in the Eden area of the county, and has both an
enrollment and ADA of about 40 students per year. The Berkeley PMP is operated independently by Berkeley USD without PMP funding, and has an average enrollment of 23 students per year and an ADA of 17.

Referrals for pregnant and/or parenting teen school programs generally come from staff within the local school districts. Most often, a pregnant or parenting teen comes to the attention of her local school principal, the school nurse or guidance counselor. A referral is then made to the special pregnant and/or parenting teen program which serves that school district. Since all alternative programs are by law optional, students cannot be coerced into attending these programs over the comprehensive school programs. Unfortunately, it is believed that most teens in Alameda drop out of school once they become pregnant. Few school districts have the resources to make the extensive outreach efforts necessary to bring drop-outs back to school.

Administrators of special school programs have reported that their students are disproportionately faced with problems which present formidable obstacles to the attainment of traditional academic goals. In addition to the normal pressures of parenting a young baby, the problem most frequently mentioned was the significant proportion of students living in violent and economically depressed communities, where role models for academic success are scarce. Other problems frequently mentioned include chaotic family situations under the strain of poverty and multiple social pressures; poor academic skills; and attitudes and behaviors not conducive to learning.

School Planning

Planning for Cal-Learn was least involved for school programs. Their lack of involvement was cause for considerable consternation on the part of some school staff, who felt left out of a
process that potentially might have serious consequences for them. There was only one meeting between GAIN and the county Office of Education (COE) with regards to planning for Cal-Learn, held in May 1994. COE subsequently called two other meetings with the county's special school programs for pregnant and/or parenting teens to inform them about Cal-Learn. At that point it was still unclear what impact Cal-Learn would have on existing programs since estimates of the number of teens to be involved were still not known. COE and the school districts believed that concrete plans could not be made until more specific information was available about the number of teens involved, and where they would be attending school.

**Early Implementation: Schools**

In the early implementation period, school district staff were sought out by the two AFLP agencies to discuss how they could work together on Cal-Learn. Some teachers were asked by AFLP case managers to identify teen parents on AFDC in their programs so that they could ensure that these teens were being enrolled into Cal-Learn by GAIN.

The Cal-Learn program required that an individual report card schedule be entered for each case. All school districts were asked by GAIN to provide a schedule of when they issued report cards. Many of the special school programs, however, had different report card schedules than the other schools in the district. Many teens were enrolled in programs, such as adult school and independent study, that did not issue report cards at all. Most of these programs did not use traditional letter grades either. In the early stages of program implementation it was unclear how this issue should be handled since the program regulations assumed that all students received report cards and earned grade point averages. GAIN workers began to automatically enter into each teen's Cal-Learn case file the report card schedule as supplied by the school district in which
the teen lived, unless the teen or their case manager provided GAIN with an alternate schedule. Eventually, the teachers in special school programs without report cards and letter grades were asked by their Cal-Learn students or AFLP case managers to fill out special progress reports, at designated times in the school year, that were specifically designed to provide the type of information needed to satisfy Cal-Learn program requirements.

San Bernardino County

San Bernardino County is a vast, largely rural county with a rapidly growing population of about 1.5 million that is largely concentrated in the southwestern portion of the county. Racially and ethnically, according to 1990 census figures, the county is primarily White (61 percent) and Hispanic (27 percent), with few Blacks and Asians (8 and 4 percent respectively).

GAIN Context

The separate GAIN teen parent program was terminated in February, 1994, once it was realized that Cal-Learn would soon be implemented. While the teen parent program was in operation, one or two "employment specialists" (ES) at each district office were trained and designated to handle teen parent cases. In San Bernadino there are 8 GAIN district offices. Teen parent Employment Specialists generally carried adult cases as well as teens, although they were normally assigned a lower caseload of about 50 cases, compared to the average ES caseload of approximately 100 cases. The number of teens enrolled in GAIN was small prior to implementation of the Cal-Learn program, accounting for only about 100 of a total 2,100 active cases enrolled in GAIN.
GAIN Planning

Primary planning responsibility for the implementation of Cal-Learn was assigned to a GAIN program specialist. An initial planning task involved negotiating a memorandum of understanding with the county AFLP agency, called the Adolescent Parent Program (APP) to provide case management services. GAIN was already quite familiar with APP since it had been in earlier negotiations with it to operate the GAIN teen parent program. These negotiations were put on hold in February 1994, after it was realized that Cal-Learn would supersede any local agreements. It should be noted that the dollar figure discussed in these earlier negotiations was significantly higher than the rate finally established for Cal-Learn by the state.

When negotiations between GAIN and APP resumed in January 1994 relative to Cal-Learn, the parties were frustrated by what they perceived as constant revisions to the rules at the state level. In May, 1994 a final decision was made by the state legislature regarding the rate of reimbursement to AFLPs for case management services, which paved the way for the parties to complete their Cal-Learn memorandum of understanding. Once GAIN and APP came to agreement, they were able to quickly develop a Cal-Learn county plan, and this was approved by the San Bernadino Board of Supervisors at their June 28 meeting.

The Department of Public Social Service's (DPSS) next focused on identifying Cal-Learn eligible teens on the AFDC caseload. In order to find teen parents "nested" in their parent's AFDC case, eligibility workers (EWs) were instructed to review all of their cases for teen parents, mark the case, and send it for coding by data processing clerks with a "TP" indicator. This process was unsuccessful due to the inability of EWs to review all cases, errors by data processing staff, and bugs in the computer program into which the data were entered. As a result, only 120 cases were identified country-wide on this first attempt.
Over the summer of 1994 additional training was provided to data processing staff, and EWs were given the less daunting task of reviewing only cases from a computer generated list that: (a) contained a female between the ages of 13-19 and (b) a child between 0-4. This process produced a list of about 1400 cases. It also turned out to be somewhat inaccurate, however, since by December when the first bonuses and sanctions would be issued, many of those identified would already be over 19. Nevertheless, the county mailed out "self-assessment forms" to all 1400 cases during the last week of August 1994. By the end of October about 500 of the self-assessment forms had been returned, and many of these teens were either too old to be eligible, or had already graduated. DPSS's initial difficulty in finding eligible cases resulted in APP case managers taking the lead in referring potentially Cal-Learn eligible clients to GAIN. It was not until December 1 that APP officially stopped referring clients to GAIN for Cal-Learn, and instead all Cal-Learn referrals were supposed to come to APP from GAIN.

As part of the research conducted for a Cal-Learn evaluation, GAIN cloned its management information system (GEMS) to create a separate new system called CLAS (Cal-Learn Automated System) so that an independent accounting could be made of Cal-Learn data. GAIN hired an employment services technician (EST) in August, 1994 to be responsible for entering all information on Cal-Learn clients into the new system. This EST would also be responsible for processing the incoming Cal-Learn self-assessment forms and verifying eligibility for the Cal-Learn by searching through information on the AFDC computer system. The EST had a relatively short two week period to learn the computer systems before the Cal-Learn program officially began in San Bernadino on September 1, 1994.
Early Implementation: GAIN

During the early phase-in period, the county Cal-Learn coordinator and the EST worked very closely with each other and with APP staff to create viable program procedures. The Cal-Learn coordinator attended the monthly meetings of APP case managers to answer any questions about the program and attempted to clarify the new procedures.

All of the cases initially enrolled in Cal-Learn during the early implementation period came from APP or teens already enrolled in GAIN. A single GAIN technician screened all APP referrals to be sure that they were, in fact, on AFDC and started a case file for each teen on the new CLAS system. If teens requested child care funded through Cal-Learn, the GAIN technician would meet with the teen and the child care provider to write up a contract, as is done with all GAIN clients. During the early implementation period there were very few requests for child care reimbursement.

AFLP Context

The Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting Project (APP) is the name of the AFLP in San Bernardino county. It has been operated by the San Bernardino County Dept. of Public Health (DPH) since 1985. Prior to Cal-learn, the program was staffed by 10 case managers (7 RNs and 3 MSWs) and 3 para-professional Health Service Assistants (HSAs). While staff work out of 13 program offices located throughout the county, most client contact takes place in client’s homes. APP also contracts out to 2 community based agencies for 20 cases each: People's Choice, which specializes in African-American clients, and the Boy's and Girl's Club of San Bernadino, which specializes in very high-risk, low income cases. The APP program grew from 200 Title V slots to 400 slots between 1985 and 1994.
Referrals to APP came primarily from clients themselves and the agencies that serve as members of the APP Coordinating Council. During the '93-'94 fiscal year, there were over 900 referrals made to APP. Only 180 of these were able to be accepted, however, due to the limited number of spaces available. In order to deal with the large number of program applicants, APP had developed its own "acuity tool" to prioritize referrals, to determine which referrals were most likely to benefit from APP services, and which would therefore be accepted into the program. It was estimated that about 1/3 of those referred for services had such complex problems that they were beyond the capability of existing program resources to serve. The demographics of clients in the pre-Cal-learn period were: 50% Hispanic, 22% African-American, 30% White, and 4% Asian. It was estimated that between ½ and 1/3 were on AFDC. Most clients lived with their families (66%), and a majority were enrolled in school (73%). The most significant problem cited by program staff was the instability of teen parents’ home situations, strongly related to larger issues of poverty, violence, and substance abuse.

The types of services provided by APP case managers were in keeping with those designated by the AFLP Standards of Practice. APP case managers had caseloads of 40 clients each. Case managers generally referred clients to Child Development Services (CDS), the local Resource and Referral agency, to help clients find and pay for child care services. Transportation was frequently a problem for APP clients, particularly in the remote desert areas of the county.

**AFLP Planning**

APP projected a tripling of its previous caseload with the implementation of Cal-Learn. It needed approval from the county Board of Supervisors to hire an additional 19 case managers and 9 other staff. Planning for implementation included convincing the Board to approve these hires
at the rate of compensation believed necessary. It also meant navigating the county personnel bureaucracy, which took longer than expected, and contributed to a delay in implementation of the program. All needed approvals were not received until November 1994, two months after the program was started.

By the summer of 1994 there was considerable concern on the part of APP staff about the impact that Cal-Learn might have, and an ad hoc committee was formed to discuss these concerns. Case managers were apprehensive that, since Cal-Learn was a mandated program, clients would be resistant and very difficult teens with whom to work. Staff had further misgivings about the nature of their work shifting from one of supporting clients to one of "policing" them. Concerns were raised about safety issues, additional paperwork responsibilities, and the need to monitor school and day care attendance. All of these changes were seen as getting in the way of establishing supportive relationships. Finally, concerns were raised about ethical aspects of the research design in which a control group would be denied needed services.

**Early Implementation: AFLP**

Amid a climate of uneasiness and change APP embarked on the process of converting their eligible Title V clients to Cal-Learn beginning in September, 1994. This process, expected to be completed in one month, took much longer because of uncertainties over who was truly Cal-Learn eligible and time delays, both in verifying eligibility and in orienting new clients individually. APP also wanted to enroll an additional group of 66 teens from their waiting list prior to the commencement of randomization into the 4 cell research design. These delays postponed implementation of the research design until mid-November.
Schools Context

In San Bernadino there were 13 known school-based programs targeted specifically to pregnant and parenting students in the pre-Cal-Learn period. These programs, operated by local school districts and the County Office of Education (COE), offered day care and/or educational programs for pregnant and parenting students. Each program was unique and varied according to the particular resources available within each district. In addition to 13 special programs, an untold number of pregnant and parenting teens were enrolled in regular school programs. It was believed that most teen parents enrolled in school, however, were enrolled in alternative educational programs such as continuation schools, adult schools and home study programs.

Of the 13 known special programs, three were operating with SAPID funding. SAPID child care programs were located in Chino (Buena Vista H.S.), Ontario (Valley View H.S.) and Colton (Colton H.S.). The San Bernadino County Office of Education (COE) operated three other programs with Pregnant Minor Program (PMP) funding. These were located in Rialto, Barstow, and Hesperia. The county-administered PMPs had an average daily attendance of 179 during the 1993/94 school year. Unified school districts (USD) operated the remainder of special programs for pregnant and parenting students using funds available through their regular ADA allotment from the state Department of Education (CDE). Throughout 1994, in an effort to upgrade the district programs to the state PMP standards and to allow local school districts to tap into the higher revenue limit available through PMP funding, the COE made a concentrated effort to get local special programs for pregnant and parenting teens into revenue sharing agreements with it. This effort eventually resulted in 13 USDs entering revenue sharing agreements with the county Office of Education during the 1994-95 school year.
School Planning

The COE had projected that up to 800 referrals might be made to PM programs as a result of Cal-Learn in the first school year. Existing PMPs could not possibly handle an influx of that magnitude, but since projections were still very uncertain, a "wait and see" attitude prevailed. Coincidental to Cal-Learn, the county had already launched a campaign to expand the county Pregnant Minor program through a creative "revenue sharing" arrangement with local unified school districts (USDs). This arrangement allowed special programs, essentially operated by USDs, to be claimed under the higher revenue limit available to the COE through PMP funding. Several USDs responded to this COE initiative, and it was anticipated that Cal-Learn might prompt others to seriously consider the option. There was some concern, however, that the state Department of Education (CDE) might cap PMP funding if the program expanded too rapidly.

Aside from projecting the number of students potentially eligible, there was virtually no planning on the part of the schools for the implementation of Cal-Learn. Schools simply did not know what to expect. Although the County Office of Education and other school staff had attended the Cal-Learn training meeting organized by CDSS and held in Diamond Bar in February, 1994, they considered the training to be directed primarily towards non-school personnel. They were disappointed to learn that Cal-Learn funds could not be used to help pay for child care programs run by the schools. The lack of sufficient on-site child care at schools was seen as one of the leading reasons why teens did not return to school after the birth of their babies.

Since schools were not given a specific administrative role in the Cal-Learn legislation, they were also not seen as necessary for inclusion in the planning meetings between DPSS and APP. When some public school nurses raised concerns about Cal-Learn at one of their regular
meetings held after the Diamond Bar training, they were reassured that Cal-Learn would not alter their usual duties and that DPSS or APP case managers would handle all administrative (paperwork) aspects of the program.

**Early Implementation: Schools**

Most school programs knew very little about Cal-Learn in September when it began concurrent with the start of the new school year. AFLP case managers made contacts with school programs, mostly on a case-by-case basis, to explain the Cal-Learn program to teachers and line staff, and to obtain the report card schedules for their cases.

**Los Angeles County**

Los Angeles County is by far the largest and most urban of the four research counties, with almost nine million residents in 1990. It is also more ethnically and racially diverse: 37 percent of the population is Hispanic, 10 percent African-American, and another 10 percent Asian or Pacific Islander. Befitting the scale of the county, the three main types of teen parent programs are all decentralized, with multiple sites across the county. Both the population of Los Angeles County and the number of independent agencies to be involved in Cal-Learn presented a unique implementation challenge.

During the period covered by this report, 1993-94, Los Angeles was still in a planning stage. The Board of Supervisors did not approve the county plan until February, 1995, and the county did not begin to implement until March of that year.
GAIN Context

L.A. County's GAIN program was first established during the 1985-86 fiscal year. For the first seven years of the program, the GAIN division contracted out all aspects of the program, including all case management functions. This contracting policy proved to be highly controversial, leading to protracted legal and budgetary battles. As a result, the first few years of the program were marked by considerable uncertainty and repeated budget cuts. After DPSS took on the responsibility for case management in 1993, the agency had to develop a new regional management structure and hire line staff. The DPSS now has five regional GAIN offices with over 600 employees.

L.A. County's GAIN Teen Parent program was relatively small, given the size of the county's population. When GAIN first implemented this program in 1989, the agency implemented a comprehensive plan in partnership with the county's five Adolescent Family Life Programs (AFLPs). The first AFLP to respond to the Teen Parent RFP and receive a contract was the Southern California Youth & Family Center. Before any of the other AFLPs were able to respond, however, GAIN suffered budget cuts and chose not to expand the new program further. Youth and Family Center maintained an average caseload of 105 teens, all from GAIN Region 5. They patterned their program on the AFLP model, providing comprehensive case management with a focus on the health needs of the teen parent and child. At Youth and Family Center each case manager had an average caseload of 40 clients.

The only other GAIN Region which served any appreciable number of teen parents was Region 6, which served an average caseload of 35 clients. Region 6 modeled their program on the adult GAIN program rather than AFLP. Their Teen Parent case managers had an average caseload of approximately 150 cases each. Thus, the majority of their cases were adults.
Communication between the GAIN division and the AFLP agencies took place only between GAIN Region 5 and the Youth and Family Center.

GAIN Planning

As the county agency mandated to implement Cal-Learn, the Los Angeles Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) assigned several high-level managers from the GAIN Division to plan for Cal-Learn. GAIN established a formal interagency planning committee, following the same planning process originally used to establish the GAIN program in L.A. County. Beginning in October, 1993, the GAIN division convened monthly meetings with representatives from the county’s five AFLP agencies, the County Office of Education (COE), and the L.A. Unified School District (LAUSD) in order to develop its county plan, negotiate contracts, and plan for program implementation.

Cal-Learn was stalled for several months because of the lack of start-up funding in the state budget. After lobbying the State Assembly and the State Department of Social Services, AFLPs were eventually able to obtain start-up funds and continue planning with GAIN. Because of this delay, L.A. County was still in the planning phase at the end of 1994.

In planning for Cal-Learn, GAIN intended to assign one unit (about 7 Case Managers) in each of its regional offices to work exclusively on Cal-Learn. Case managers would administer supportive services, issue bonuses, determine sanctions, and maintain the GEARS database. In addition, they were expected to work closely with the AFLP agencies within their service area.

Before Cal-Learn, communication between GAIN and the AFDC program in DPSS was limited, with most client information communicated via computer systems. Direct communication between the two division's was supposed to be channeled through GAIN coordinators previously
assigned to several AFDC offices, where they met with prospective GAIN clients and answer programmatic questions. Under Cal-Learn, EWs in the 24 local welfare offices have primary responsibility for identifying nested cases and administering program sanctions. Nested cases are to be identified as they come in for AFDC redetermination interviews over the first year of the program’s implementation. The Cal-Learn sanctioning process is modeled on GAIN’s existing process.

GAIN expressed concern that, given the high EW caseloads, the GAIN sanctioning procedure often takes several months to complete. As a result, GAIN planned to require their own case managers to monitor this process for Cal-Learn clients.

AFLP Context

AFLPs operate throughout much of L.A. County through five non-profit agencies scattered across the county. Three of the AFLP agencies are community-based social service non-profit organizations. The other two programs are run by health care providers; one as a component of a large teaching hospital, the other as part of a community health clinic. All AFLP agencies operate a variety of social service and health programs, ranging from violence prevention to AIDS education.

One of the AFLPs was a pioneer in the AFL comprehensive case management model in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The other four agencies began their AFL programs in 1985-86 when the state Department of Health Services significantly expanded the program. One agency was by far the largest AFLP provider in the county, operating out of two locations and serving about 800 clients. Two agencies had about two to three hundred clients, and the two health clinic-based programs each served approximately 135-165 clients. Even with the significant
expansion of the AFL program in 1985-85, the five AFLP providers combined covered less than half of the county and all maintained long waiting lists.

L.A. County's five AFLP agencies have a well-established interagency networks. The directors meet at least quarterly to discuss common issues, coordinate new initiatives, and resolve interagency conflicts. In addition, each agency has its own extensive network with other social service and health care agencies. Prior to the planning process for Cal-Learn, however, only one had significant contact with DPSS. None of the AFLPs had much experience in working with either the County Office of Education or the LAUSD.

AFLP Planning

Expanding AFLP service areas to cover the entire county was a major issue in the Cal-Learn planning process. Serving the remote Antelope Valley area was one of the most difficult problems since none of the existing AFLP agencies wanted to expand there. GAIN and the COE, as a result, turned to the only existing GAIN contractor in that area, and recruited them to develop a new AFLP agency. Expanding the AFLP agencies' service areas also required them to establish boundaries for the first time. While GAIN advocated for aligning the new service areas with their existing regional structure to simplify interagency communication, the AFLP agencies argued that it would be too disruptive to their other networks. In the end, the boundaries were set by zip code around the existing service areas, requiring each AFLP to work with one to three regional GAIN offices.

Based on the DPSS's estimate that approximately 11,000 pregnant and parenting teens would be eligible for Cal-Learn, the AFLP agencies committed themselves to varying degrees of expansion. The largest AFLP agreed to expand more than four-fold to accommodate
approximately 4,000 Cal-Learn clients. The community health clinic AFLP volunteered to expand the most dramatically, from one of the smallest AFL programs to the second largest Cal-Learn program, with 2,500 projected clients. The other three AFLP agencies tried to limit their expansion under Cal-Learn in order to maintain a balance between the new program and their existing operations.

School Context

The L.A. County Office of Education (COE) works with 81 local school districts, operates numerous alternative schools, and has over 4,000 employees. In addition to directly operating alternative educational programs such as continuing schools, community schools, and special education programs, the COE also serves as a resource to the local school districts, providing information and assistance on a wide range of educational and administrative issues. Given the voluntary nature of this relationship, there are wide variations between districts in the frequency and intensity of their interactions with the COE.

Because the L.A. Unified School District (LAUSD) is so large, it effectively operates as the co-equal of the County Office of Education in L.A., with its own alternative schools and educational consultants. There is little interaction between the two agencies. Enrolling almost half of the students in the county, LAUSD includes some 50 high schools, 75 middle schools, and over 400 elementary schools. In contrast to the COE, LAUSD directly supervises the schools within the district. During the fall of 1994, however, the LAUSD began to implement a comprehensive reorganization plan, aimed at decentralizing budgetary and administrative control to the local school level.
Both the COE and LAUSD operate school-based programs for pregnant and parenting teens. LAUSD runs 15 different Pregnant Minor and SAPID programs, including 2 Pregnant Minor high schools. The COE supervises 41 Pregnant Minor programs scattered throughout the other 81 local school districts.

As contractors, the COE and LAUSD both had extensive contact with GAIN at the central and regional levels. To maintain good communication, GAIN funds several "GAIN Consultant" positions at each agency to serve as liaisons between the bureaucracies. In contrast, neither the COE nor the LAUSD had any previous formal relationship with the AFLP agencies. What contact there had been between AFLPs and schools took place at the local school level.

**School Planning**

For the COE and LAUSD representatives on the Cal-Learn planning committee, coordinating with such a large number of local school districts proved to be one of the most difficult problems confronted during the planning phase. COE and LAUSD staff have facilitated meetings between the GAIN division, AFLPs, and local school district officials to introduce them to Cal-Learn. One AFLP agency held meetings with the more than 20 school districts that it expected to work with under Cal-Learn. In addition, GAIN staff invited representatives from all the local school districts to the state Department of Social Services' initial training session for Cal-Learn in February 1994.

Reactions to the Cal-Learn program from school staff varied initially from enthusiastic support to hostile rejection. The most consistent reaction has been resentment over the fact that the Cal-Learn legislation failed to give the school system a formal role in the program. By December 1994, however, most school officials still had little or no knowledge of Cal-Learn.
San Joaquin County

Of the four research counties, San Joaquin is the smallest in population and geographic size. Its population came to just under one-half million in 1990, of whom 59 percent were white, 23 Hispanic, 12 percent Asian or Pacific Islander, and 5 percent African-American. San Joaquin is predominantly a rural community and has a relatively large Southeast Asian refugee population.

GAIN Context

San Joaquin County’s Human Services Agency (HSA) operates the GAIN and AFDC programs out of a single office located in Stockton. Prior to implementation of Cal-Learn the GAIN division consisted of 40 staff members, 33 of whom were case managers. GAIN case managers normally carry a caseload of approximately 200 clients. The GAIN Teen Parent Program was small and fairly indistinct, with just two case managers designated to handle all teen clients in addition to their other adult cases. Of note in San Joaquin was a particularly high percentage of southeast Asian refugees enrolled in the GAIN teen parent program.

The GAIN division had previously assigned a liaison to work with the schools to assist in finding appropriate educational referrals, even before implementing Cal-Learn. Teen Parent case managers reportedly found that the adult school programs were the most helpful in working with their clients. Teens, like adults in need of child care resources, are referred to the county's Family Resource and Referral agency. In the pre- Cal-Learn period about half of the teens in GAIN used family members for child care, and half were using licensed centers or school-based child care programs.
GAIN Planning

San Joaquin's Human Services Agency (HSA) appointed one of its program specialist staff to be their Cal-Learn Coordinator subsequent to a September 1993 meeting on Cal-Learn with CDSS. This Cal-Learn coordinator began convening meetings in October to work out a plan for the county with the county's AFLP program, which is operated by San Joaquin County Public Health Services (PHS). Together they drafted the Cal-Learn County Plan and submitted it to the state in May 1994. Details of a memorandum of understanding between HSA and PHS on Cal-Learn continued to be worked out over the summer of 1994. On August 9 the plan received the approval of the county Board of Supervisors, with HSA set to begin the program on September 1.

The HSA originally estimated that 330 pregnant and parenting teens would be enrolled in Cal-Learn in the first year. They subsequently revised their estimate upwards to 520 to account for nested cases. San Joaquin County expected that a fairly high number of teens (104) would be exempted from participation in the program due to their research status in the APDP control group.

The AFDC branch of HSA was assigned responsibility for identifying all Cal-Learn eligible cases including those still on their parents' cases. HSA anticipated significant problems in the implementation of Cal-Learn associated with the complicated ongoing transition to a new computer system; the State-wide Automated Welfare System (SAWS). Implementation of SAWS in San Joaquin required extensive changes in the management of the AFDC program, training and re-training of staff, transferring data between the old and the new system, and temporarily maintaining two data systems. The new system frequently "crashed", causing long delays and backups in processing of applications. It was believed that the overriding problems with SAWS would prevent eligibility workers from devoting much effort to Cal-Learn during its first year of
implementation. Due to these problems and delays, it was decided that GAIN's central administration, rather than the AFDC branch, would issue the Cal-Learn bonuses.

In addition to major SAWS problems, San Joaquin needed to update their GEMS (GAIN) management information system to include variables needed for the Cal-Learn research. These variables included supportive services expense information, as well as school grades and attendance. San Joaquin County decided to follow the lead of San Bernadino County and clone its GEMS system, revising the data collected so that it was specifically relevant to Cal-Learn.

**Early Implementation: GAIN**

San Joaquin implemented its Cal-Learn program in September, 1994. During the early period, identification of all Cal-Learn eligibles was done by eligibility workers manually, as cases came in for initial applications or their re-determination reviews.

In August 1994, GAIN hired two Cal-Learn Liaisons to staff the new program. The first notices were sent out to clients in September, and the first Cal-Learn orientation was done by AFLP staff in October. Thereafter, the GAIN workers began transferring over to Cal-Learn the 22 teens then enrolled in their GAIN teen parent program who were Cal-Learn eligible. By the end of December, in coordination with AFLP case managers, they had also enrolled 69 AFLP clients, and another 11 completely new cases, for a total of about 100 active cases. Enrollment was slower than the 200 per month projected in the county's Cal-Learn plan. GAIN Cal-Learn staff acted as a contact for the AFLP case managers, administered supportive services, and approved bonuses and sanctions.
AFLP Context

The AFLP program in San Joaquin has been operated by the county's Public Health Services (PHS) agency since 1985. It is called the Young Parents Program (YPP), and it is housed within the nursing department in PHS's downtown Stockton office/clinic. In the pre-Cal-Learn period, the program served only teens in the city of Stockton. Originally, YPP had been operated by social worker case managers. Over time, however, its staff gradually shifted over to nurses, and when Cal-Learn came on line all three case managers were registered nurses. Each carried a caseload of approximately 45 teens. YPP received its referrals from community agencies, the WIC program, private doctors, the county hospital, public health nurses, Child Protective Services, and GAIN. The program did not engage in client outreach since it routinely maintained a short waiting list.

AFLP Planning

San Joaquin's YPP, like other AFLP agencies, initially lacked start-up funds to move to a larger site or to hire and train new case managers. For Cal-Learn, YPP planned to hire five additional case managers. The new staff was anticipated to be a combination of social workers and nurses, and to carry mixed caseloads of both Cal-Learn and AFLP Title V funded clients. YPP also faced the problem of expanding into other previously uncovered parts of the county.

To prepare for Cal-Learn, YPP began meeting with the principals at the local schools and assessing the availability of child care and transportation services. Transportation access for their current AFLP population in Stockton, they determined would not be a problem. For teens in other parts of the county, particularly Lodi and Tracy, transportation was expected to be problematic. One of the main issues for AFLP was finding child care resources for Cal-Learn.
teens returning to school. The program preferred using on-site child care programs located at the schools. These programs, however, frequently had waiting lists and therefore YPP began looking into other sources of licensed and family day care facilities.

School Context

The San Joaquin County Office of Education (COE) has several county-wide committees which bring administrators and teachers from the local school districts together to address common concerns. Two of these committees deal specifically with teen parent-related issues. The Teen Parent Project Advisory Committee includes staff from many of the specialized pregnant and parenting teen programs in the local schools and meets quarterly. A more recently formed Child Care Planning Council is chaired by the COE’s Child Care Coordinator and had been researching the need for child care across the county.

Several local school districts in the county have specialized programs for pregnant and parenting teens. Stockton Unified School District (USD) has a SAPID program with three day care centers which served approximately 84 teen parents. Lincoln USD also has a SAPID program which served 15-17 infants. Tracy USD was in the process of creating its own child care center. Both the Stockton and Lodi USDs also ran Pregnant Minor Programs.

School Planning

To help prepare schools for Cal-Learn implementation, HSA sent copies of its Cal-Learn Plan to principals and school district staff across the county. The special committees put together by the COE also helped to get the word out about the Cal-Learn program. Special programs for pregnant and parenting teens in the county were both the most familiar with the program, and the
most concerned about its implementation. School staff in San Joaquin shared the same concerns as their counterparts in the other counties; i.e., that they would be over-run with new paperwork requirements for Cal-Learn, that a flood of school drop-outs might soon arrive at their doorstep, and that they might need to become embroiled in the host of other social problems that many of these teens represented. The schools were also disappointed that Cal-Learn funding was not allowed to be used to pay for child care centers located at, or run by the schools.

**Early Implementation: Schools**

Despite the outreach of HSA and the COE committees, it was widely believed that many school boards and principals were not fully aware of the Cal-Learn program when it was launched in September. Hence, the early implementation period was spent explaining the Cal-Learn program to teachers and staff at the line level.

**Conclusion**

Implementing Cal-Learn will require that the welfare, public health, and education systems, which historically have been autonomous, develop and sustain unusually strong working relationships. Given the scale of the expansion that is anticipated, the costs associated with start-up, and the quick deadline mandated by SB 35, implementation will be extremely challenging at the local level. Furthermore, because the four research counties face significantly different local conditions, each county will ultimately shape its own distinct Cal-Learn program. Given this variation, the evaluation research will have to address a wide range of environmental and organizational factors to accurately assess the impact of Cal-Learn.
WHO is eligible?

- on AFDC
- pregnant or custodial parent
- less than 19 years old
- no high school diploma or GED
- mandatory

WHAT do they get?

- case management
  - $ for child care, transportation & ancillary expenses
  - $100 bonus for good grades
  - $500 bonus for graduation
- $100 sanction for poor grades
Health Services

Schools

Child Care

Transportation

AFDC identifies eligibles

GAIN $$

AFLP case management

Social Services
First Wave Exploratory Questions

- Who are the institutional actors involved in implementation and what are they like?
- What are their concerns and interests in the program?
- What sorts of programs and services do they currently operate for teen parents?
- How many teens and staff are involved in these programs?
- What does implementation mean for them operationally?
- What is their planning process?
Significant Findings of 1st wave

Welfare

- Difficulty finding nested teens.
- Concerns about timely issuance of bonus checks.
- County contract negotiations with AFLPs go smoothly pending resolution of reimbursement rate and start-up funds issue.

AFLP

- Gearing up for a threefold increase in caseload.
- Demands for start-up funding.
- Concerns of staff about becoming agents of the state rather than advocates for kids
- Mandated clients will be more difficult to work with
- Ethical concerns regarding the research design.
Schools

- Most unaware of Cal-Learn.
- Special programs for pregnant and parenting teens fear sudden flood of drop-outs registering for limited spaces.
- Concerns that Cal-Learn may impose administrative burdens.
- Dismay that Cal-Learn will not pay for school-based child care.
CAL-LEARN EVALUATION

As part of the welfare reforms of SB 35, California is initiating a new program to help pregnant and parenting teenagers on AFDC to finish high school, avoid further pregnancies, cement relationships with their own parents and the fathers of their children, and take steps to ensure their own health and the health of their children. This new program, known as Cal-Learn, combines financial rewards and penalties with case management and supportive services to achieve these ends. Teens eligible for Cal-Learn are pregnant or parenting AFDC recipients or applicants who are not high school graduates and are aged 18 or under.

The primary goal of Cal-Learn is to get adolescent mothers to graduate from high school. A secondary, implicit goal, is to get them to forego having more children until they are older and have completed high school. More generally, Cal-Learn is part of a strategy to deal with the most at risk adolescent mothers.

The evaluation of the primary goal of Cal-Learn will be done by creating randomly assigned groups within the AFDC Cal-Learn eligible population—one a "no treatment" control group and others as experimental groups which receive different program conditions of policy relevance. In four demonstration counties (Alameda, San Bernardino, San Joaquin, and Los Angeles), all new pregnant and parenting teens will be randomly assigned on the basis of the last two digits of their social security numbers into one of four research conditions and observed over the five year period that the demonstration project is in effect. Each group will be followed to determine whether or not its members get higher grades, graduate from high school, and put off having additional children. This factorial research design will be very useful in evaluating the programmatic strategies within Cal-Learn.

Such an approach, however, can tell us little about why adolescents become pregnant and have children, and why they enter into Cal-Learn. Consequently, we propose to implement a broader study with three additional elements: a retrospective evaluation of the social circumstances of program participants and their assessment of the program; a follow-up study of all Cal-Learn participants; and a prospective study to determine the etiology of teen parenthood and other positive or negative social outcomes among high risk youth.

The Factorial Research Design---Previous research and policy debates have suggested the importance of testing separately the impact of the two major Cal-Learn program elements: case management and financial incentives. These two elements yield four distinct research conditions: case management only, financial incentives only, both, and neither. (See attached chart)

The Adolescent Family Life Program (AFLP), which is the legislatively identified preferred provider of Cal-Learn case management services, views case management services as the backbone of its program model. This model was favorably evaluated by researchers at the USC School of Social Work (Thiel, et al. 1990). Alternatively, some policy makers view
sanctions and rewards as the most important feature of Cal-Learn, with case management services merely a means of facilitating compliance. Important policy questions would be answered if research can identify which features or combination of features of Cal-Learn result in the most desirable outcomes. Implementing a factorial research design will allow us to test the most important features of this model. Participants assigned to the condition of financial incentives only will also be entitled to child care and transportation services, but their access to these services will not be facilitated by a case manager. The final condition is a no treatment control group.

A Retrospective Evaluation of the Social Circumstances of Participants---Second, as part of the evaluation of Cal-Learn, UC DATA is developing an initial interview schedule for Cal-Learn teens which will ask about their social circumstances, including previous school experience, their knowledge of available community resources, understanding of the Cal-Learn program, and prior family experience to determine why they became teen parents and how Cal-Learn might be changing their behaviors. This study will be broader than merely following each adolescent to determine if she does well in school. It will also try to capture the social milieu in which the person is involved to see how that contributed to having a child as an adolescent and to see how behaviors other than school work might be changed by Cal-Learn.

A Follow-up Study of Cal-Learn Participants---Cal-Learn young mothers exit the program when they turn 19, graduate from high school, earn a GED, or leave AFDC. We will continue to follow participants in all four experimental groups, whether or not they are still Cal-Learn eligible. This is, in fact, a prospective study of Cal-Learn youth. In this study, and in the Prospective Teen study described below, educational and other outcomes will be followed through June of 1998, which allows several months for analysis and reporting.

A Prospective Study to Find out why Disadvantaged Adolescents have Children---The retrospective study of why people get into Cal-Learn has the disadvantage that it focuses on a highly selected population: young women who have already gotten pregnant. Even after we collect retrospective data on these adolescents it will be hard to know which factors were crucial in their becoming pregnant without a comparison group that did not become pregnant. Consequently, we are undertaking a companion "prospective" study of high risk adolescents: those who have been in AFDC families within two years before the commencement of the study. Some of these adolescents will become parents during the course of our study and others will not. This will provide a crucial comparison.

In addition, by studying young people not yet in Cal-Learn, we will also be able to determine whether Cal-Learn has any effect on the decision-making of teenagers: that is, whether they know about the program and its features, and whether they make decisions based upon its probable impacts. The prospective study will also allow us to examine a question that has been widely debated in the literature on welfare: To what extent does welfare "reproduce" itself with welfare children becoming welfare mothers in a cycle of dependency. With information from these teens, pregnancy prevention strategies may be improved.
FACTORIAL RESEARCH DESIGN FOR THE CAL LEARN DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

University of California Data Archive and Technical Assistance - Berkeley

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