County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
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DAVID SANDERS, Ph.D.
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May 10, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair Pro Tem
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe

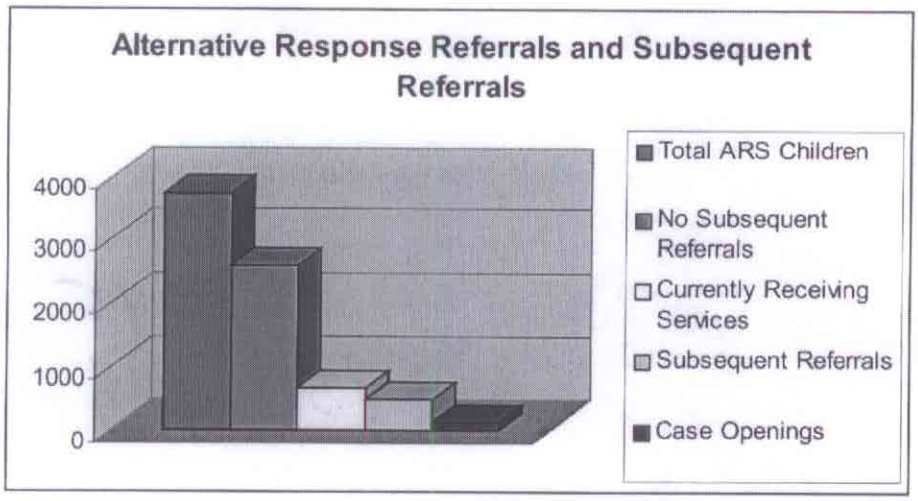
From: David Sanders, Ph. D.
Director

MAY 10, 2005 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #19: ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE SERVICES (ARS)

On April 26, 2005, in response to a motion by Supervisor Knabe, the Board ordered the Department of Children and Family Services to report back within one year on the outcomes of the Alternative Response Services Program (ARS), specifically on the number of families referred to ARS, and on the rate of future reports of child abuse /neglect and DCFS case openings for those families who completed the ARS program. As stated in the Board's motion of May 10, 2005:

> Historically, DCFS referred only those families to community-based Family Preservation services for whom DCFS had determined that allegations of child abuse/neglect were "substantiated". Currently, through the ARS program of early intervention Family Preservation services, DCFS will refer those families who may be experiencing difficulties in family functioning to receive community-based Family Preservation services, rather than DCFS supervision, after DCFS determines that specific allegations of suspected child abuse/neglect are "inconclusive". The goal of providing these community-based services is the prevention of future reports of child abuse/neglect and/or DCFS case openings.

As of April 10, 2006 the following data was collected by DCFS Information Technology Services on children and families receiving ARS from the reporting period of January 2005 through March 2006.



During this period, 1,738 families were referred to ARS. These families contained 3,743 children. Of the 3,743 children, 661 remain in ARS and are continuing to receive services. Of the remaining 3,082 children who have terminated ARS services and have left the program, 2,597 (84%) had no subsequent referrals, and 485 (16%) of the children had subsequent referrals.

Of the 485 children for whom there were subsequent referrals, 116 (24%) necessitated opening of a case. Therefore, of the 3,082 children who received ARS services and have now left the program, only 116 (4%) had subsequent substantiated referrals. Ninety-six percent (96%) then, had no subsequent substantiated referrals.

To date, this program has been very effective in keeping children safe and in their own homes. If you have any questions, or need further information, please contact me, or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

DS:LP:od

c: Chief Administrative Office
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors