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INTRODUCTION

An in-home aide service for families with children, to which these standards of practice pertain, is one of the temporary services in which qualified family aides, parent aides, auxiliaire familiades,* parent educators, homehelpers or homemakers, are used to empower parents to take control of their own lives (0.4), thus allowing them to better carry out their parenting role, and thereby maintain the family unit for their children and the other family members. As a child welfare service, this area of practice contributes to the agency's mandate to assure that children have the care and protection they need, when for any number of reasons their own parents or caregivers are temporarily unable to provide it. (1.1–1.7)

An in-home aide service is a specialized temporary social service that the community provides, through its social agencies, to help families and individual family members who need assistance in solving a wide range of problems associated with impaired functioning of the parents or caregivers. The in-home aide service requires the use of a variety of aides, trained specifically for the wide assortment of functions requiring support by different families. These standards do not address themselves to the services of housekeepers, domestic helpers, or practical nurses, since other programs and organizations make these services available to families who are unable to obtain or pay for qualified help in the home, and who need or want no other service. (3.4, 5.5)

In-home aide programs have developed under various auspices, and necessarily differ in relation to the nature of the problems and the needs of the families for whom the service is offered, the purposes

*A Canadian designation

that the aides are asked to serve, and the community's readiness to assume responsibility for supporting the program.

Yet, all in-home aide programs for families with children, under whatever auspices they may be offered, are provided by the community through its social agencies out of a concern for those children who lack or may be temporarily deprived of parental care. Their purpose is to assure for children living with their own families the necessary love, care, protection, and guidance they require by assisting their parents or other caregivers to fulfill their child-rearing responsibilities to the best of their abilities.

0.1 Values and assumptions underlying practice in an in-home aide service

An in-home aide service for families with children is based on a conviction about the value to children of their own families, and the responsibility of society to assure that children receive adequate care and protection.

Children's own families, when they are loving, protective, understanding, and providing children with a sense of worth and belonging, are the most favorable environment for the development of healthy personalities.

Children should not be separated unnecessarily from their own families, or deprived of the care and protection of their own parents. It is in the best interests of children to remain with their own families so long as their parents or other caregivers are capable of providing care and protection, or can be helped to do so.

Insofar as possible, all that is positive in the relationship between children and their parents should be preserved, and that which is tenuous should be strengthened. Most parents want to be successful and effective parents, and want to enable their children to grow into healthy, well-functioning adults. (2.16–2.23)

All families need support at some time, although the type and degree may vary. Society should provide parents with all possible assistance in fulfilling their parental role to the best of their ability.

The responsibility that the community assumes for its children should be discharged through services that provide supports to parents that are congruent with their cultural, ethnic, and social values.

Parents are likely to become better parents if they feel good about themselves and thereby can feel competent in other important areas of their lives, such as in their jobs, at school, in their own families, and in social relationships.

0.2 Role of the in-home aide

An in-home aide service should be considered for children who are lacking or may be deprived of love or proper care and protection because of family circumstances or problems of the parents, and whose individual needs can best be met in their own homes.

The duties of an in-home aide will depend on whether the parent is in or out of the home, the amount of responsibility each parent can carry for the children, the number of children, and the duration of the service. The role of the aide will vary in each family and change as the family situation changes. (5.8)

It should be the primary role of the in-home aide to assure that the children have both care and protection. The aide should be expected to supplement, not take the place of, the parent. The aide must show a respect for the relationship between the parents and their children.

0.3 History of in-home aide service

Before 1900, assistance to families who could not care for their own children generally was provided by religious organizations, neighbors, or organized social groups. The first agency-based in-home aide service program in the United States was provided in 1903 in New York City.

“Domestic workers were employed by a family service association to perform household tasks to supplement nursing services to sick mothers. Between 1903 and the early 1950s, housekeepers, and later “homemakers,” were employed to

care of children during the illness or absence from the home of the mother, usually during childbirth...During the Depression...a limited number of "housekeeping" projects which provided for the training of homemakers were funded federally. Family agencies...began subsequently to offer "homemaker" services, continuing the policy of restricting assistance to the short term care of children when the mother was ill or absent...

With the passage of Titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act in 1965, Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries became eligible for homemaker-home health aide services. The integration of homemaker-home health aides into health-oriented home care agencies has been slow but consistent." [National Homecaring Council 1982]

In 1968, the first in-home aide program solely devoted to nurturing abusive and neglectful parents and teaching parenting skills was developed in Denver, Colorado. Since that time, in-home aide programs have been developed throughout North America by public and voluntary agencies, using paid paraprofessional staff members or volunteers.

0.4 Terminology of the service

Today, an in-home aide service is known by a variety of names such as auxiliarie familiade, homemaker, parent-aide, human service aide, homehelper, parent educator, family support worker or lay therapist. They all share the common purpose of helping to maintain children in intact families. This volume of standards uses the generic inclusionary term of in-home aides.

0.5 Current issues

The successful use of an in-home aide service, will be determined in part by the manner in which we address the following issues:

- A service must recognize and acknowledge the positive impact of an in-home aide as an important member of a child welfare team for serving families. Too often, social workers respon-

sible for the planning of child welfare services overlook the critical role that in-home aides or volunteers can play in achieving positive family behavioral change, thereby missing out on a major source of information based on the aide's interaction with the family, and pertinent recommendations for practical steps toward family improvement.

In-home aides should be trained and supervised to maintain proper focus and direction. (4.13)

Efforts to support family functioning should be as broad as the needs of the families served. An in-home aide service can be a valuable tool and a major resource for maintaining families.

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