

Social Services challenged by caseload From Page A1

of) Social Services is leaving these kids in the home, and they're growing up," he said. "Can you imagine what kind of parents they'll be?"

The Department of Social Services operates under the premise that children are better off staying with the family, Bolz said. "We work to prevent the breakup of the family," he said. "Children are removed from their home only when their life is threatened or they are in danger of serious injury. When these conditions exist, the Department of Social Services tries first to place the child with a relative, and if that's not feasible, in a foster home."

Grisard said Bolz told him abused and neglected children are left in the home "because that's what these people are used to," Grisard said. "But they're just living there because that's what Social Services is condemning them to. This social work theory is one of convenience, because if you take a child from his home, you have to find a place to put him. There's not enough foster homes."

"But the basic problem is that Social Services won't acknowledge that there's a problem. They don't have the support from the higher levels."

The number of suspected child abuse incidents reported to Social Services has increased by about 5 percent each year for the last 10 years, Bolz said.

And the size of the protective services division has not grown in proportion to the problem. In 1975, when Bolz joined the division, the department received about 30 child abuse complaints each month. The number of abuse reports has doubled since that time, he said, and the

staff of Protective Services has grown from five to seven social workers.

The number of Social Services Department staff members has gone down in the past 13 years, Bolz said. "Three years ago, there was a special (federal) grant available for more social workers," Bolz said. "Other counties took advantage of it, but the director in this county (Gerald M. Thornton) opted not to do it because there were strings attached. The county would have had to pick up the cost eventually. We (the protective services division) have gotten all our staff increases through shifts within the agency. There are six or seven less social workers now in the (entire) department than in 1975."

About 650 teachers, health professionals or concerned friends, family members or neighbors reported an instance of suspected child abuse to the county Department of Social Services during 1987, Bolz said.

Of the 650 cases of child abuse or neglect reported in 1987, 247 were "substantiated" by the division, and 43 were actually taken to court, Bolz said. So far this year, 25 cases of abuse and neglect have been taken to juvenile court by the department.

Only five alleged abuse cases found their way into juvenile court during the 1986-87 fiscal year, however, while 55 neglect cases were petitioned, according to the North Carolina Office of Administrative Courts. Bolz said that more than half of the abuse cases investigated by the Department of Social Services involve sexual abuse, and these matters are taken to criminal court instead of juvenile.

About half of the juvenile court petitions ask for removal of the

child from the home, Bolz said, and the remainder ask for treatment for the parents and children involved.

But Chief Counsel for the Forsyth County Juvenile Court James Weakland said the department is not following the legal procedures required for child abuse reports. "We see a lot of delinquents and runaways who never get into the system," Weakland said. "They're often abused and neglected, and we report it (to Social Services), and we never get an answer back about what's done. By law they have to respond. We never get the letters back and neither does anyone else."

Bolz, however, denies this charge. "Staffing remains a problem, but we meet all the requirements by law," he said. "I could use seven more social workers. If I could treat every case as a priority-one case, I would, imminent danger or not. But we have to treat some as a high priority and others as a low priority."

All teachers and health professionals are required by state law to report suspected abuse to the Protective Services Division of Social Services immediately.

Once an incident is reported, the process grinds into motion, bouncing the reported victim and family through a series of sometimes lengthy steps to determine what has occurred in the home, why it happened, and what can be done about it.

The Division of Protective Services' seven social workers investigate every report of suspected child abuse in Forsyth County. When a case is reported, an investigation must begin within 24 hours, and the law requires that Social Services

notify the person who made the report what is being done, Bolz said.

If the reported abuse is proven, a number of routes can be taken which include family and individual therapy or, as a last resort, legal action to remove the child from the home. A family assessment is conducted first to determine what is causing the violence, and goals are set for the family, Bolz said.

Because Protective Services removes children from the home only when at risk of serious injury or death, social workers must first determine whether the child's safety is at stake. "If it's a safety issue, we'll find a place for that child no matter what," Bolz said. "Otherwise we'll wait for a space to become available."

And that can often take some time. The options are foster care, group homes and adoption, all of which often have limited space. "There is a shortage of foster homes," Foster Care Division Supervisor Carol S. Downey said. "We have fewer than 60 licensed foster homes, and it really reduces our ability to make good placements. We need to have a number of homes available to make a good match. That's a tremendous problem."

When a child is found to be in serious danger, and a home is not immediately available, the child is placed in an emergency shelter, Methodist Children's Home on Reynolds Road, or Baptist Children's Home in Thomasville, Downey said. The child may also be kept in a short-term foster home until a slot opens in a foster home.

Part II of this series on child abuse in Forsyth County will focus on the victims of domestic violence.

Chronicle named best in the nation From Page A1

best church page.

The Chronicle also won two second place awards, for best women's section and best sports section, and a third place award for test use of photos.

Garth Reeves Sr., publisher of

the Miami Times, was named publisher of the year.

During its convention, the NNPA welcomed four new members to its organization and elected two new board members. Dr. Ruth

Love, publisher of the California Voice and a former superintendent of Chicago city schools, was named to the NNPA board of directors. Also named to the board was Terry Jones, publisher of the New Orleans

Black Data News Weekly.

The new NNPA members are: the Memphis Silver Star News, the Chicago Standard Newspaper, the South Suburban Standard, and the City Sun of Brooklyn, N.Y.

OUTTA THE BAG CONCERTS

Daily Noon - 1 p.m.
During July

WINSTON SQUARE PARK

<p>Friday, July 1 Monday, July 4 Tuesday, July 5 Wednesday, July 6 Thursday, July 7 Friday, July 8 Monday, July 11 Tuesday, July 12 Wednesday, July 13 Thursday, July 14 Friday, July 15 Monday, July 18 Tuesday, July 19 Wednesday, July 20 Thursday, July 21 Friday, July 22 Monday, July 25 Tuesday, July 26 Wednesday, July 27 Thursday, July 28 Friday, July 29</p>	<p>Split Decision Holiday Something for Everyone WSJS/Solid Gold Lunch Fryns Theme Park Tim Sambaugh & Charles Pence Beggars' Holiday WSJS/Solid Gold Lunch B R Days Second Wind The Blue Jammers Key Wives WSJS/Solid Gold Lunch Sireticut The Mighty Wonders Lo Jay Riche & Fleming WSJS/Solid Gold Lunch The Graphic Zake Saunders & Blades of Grass</p>	<p>Nostalgia Latin Jazz Oldies 50's & 60's Jazz Fusion Rock & Roll Bluesgrass Acoustical Rock/Bop Classical Rock Country Music Oldies 50's & 60's Country Variety Gospel Music French Folk Music Rock & Roll Oldies 50's & 60's Original Music Bluesgrass</p>
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Saturday, July 2	Magic of Mark Daniel	Magie Show
Saturday, July 9	Shirley Holloway	Suzette
Saturday, July 9	Nathan Rees Freeman	Mime Artist
Saturday, July 16	Triad Song Writers Association	Musical Play/Comedy
Saturday, July 16	Kemerville Children's Liable	Theatre - "Art-in The Park"
Saturday, July 23	Edward Falco	Animal Friends

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Friday, July 8
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