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INTERIM REPORT ON THE
INTENSIVE FOSTER CARE SCHEME

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Prefatory Note

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The present report on the Intensive Foster Care Scheme is intended to be an interim report only. It presents information gathered during the four year period for which the scheme has been operating to date. However, the rate at which children have entered the scheme has been much lower than was originally planned, so that the four year period has yielded fewer cases than are required for the research strategy employed. As a consequence, the data obtained do not enable firm conclusions to be drawn on a number of matters of interest.

Despite the impotence of the data to elucidate many of the issues of concern, it was decided to produce the present document (which reports on almost all the data collected to date), since a commitment had been given to report at the end of the trial period to the joint committee of Department of Social Welfare and New Zealand Foster Care Federation representatives. Clearly, the report should not be regarded as a final statement on the scheme, since in many areas further data would be required before valid judgments can be made.

One other point should be made about the status of the present document. It is not only an interim report, but also very much in draft form. The report was compiled at great considerable speed (staff members were still conducting interviews as recently as August 1983), and this has meant that much of the comment may need further revision in the light of a more careful examination of the data. If it is intended to release the report to a wider audience, it would be necessary to carry out further development both of the analysis and of the text.

Comments about this report would be welcomed by the Research Division, as this would provide a useful perspective on the direction of further development.

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SECTION 1 BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE SCHEME

The Intensive Foster Care Scheme is a pilot social work programme which is being operated by the Department of Social Welfare in conjunction with the New Zealand Foster Care Federation. The scheme seeks to provide foster placements for more "difficult" children, who would not normally be eligible for foster care, through the provision of an enhanced form of care. The scheme was established on a four year trial basis in two districts - Auckland and Christchurch. During this period it has been monitored by the Research Division of the Department.

1.1 Background to the scheme

The origins of the scheme go back to 1977 when the New Zealand Foster Care Federation advocated the establishment of a professional fostering scheme to provide foster care for children with acute emotional or behavioural problems, who would not normally be placed in foster homes. The Federation's proposal provided for foster parents to be paid a salary and for placements to be made as limited term contracts between the foster parents, the natural parents of the child and the social worker as representative of the Department. By way of response, the Department produced, in 1978, a counter-proposal which represented a less drastic departure from existing fostering practice and suggested that the concept be tested by means of a four year pilot scheme to be operated jointly by the Department of Social Welfare and the Foster Care Federation. A joint working party (comprising Department of Social Welfare and Foster Care Federation representatives) was set up and a series of discussions was held to flesh out the lineaments of the scheme and to establish guidelines for its operation. The following is a brief account of the way the scheme was envisaged as a result of those discussions.

1.2 Types of children placed in the scheme

The scheme was conceived as providing an additional placement option for children in the care of the Department of Social Welfare (either by virtue of a guardianship order made by the Children and Young Persons Court or by agreement between the Director-General of Social Welfare and the parents of the child, in accordance with the provisions of Section 11 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1974). Within the broad category of children in care, the scheme was aimed at a target group of "severely disturbed" children who would not normally be candidates for fostering in that they "require more care than is currently available and who would normally be placed in institutions" (from the joint Department of Social Welfare/Foster Care Federation working party paper which established guidelines for the scheme). A number of criteria were declared by the working party to determine which children should be eligible for placement in the scheme.

* The primary criterion was envisaged as being emotional or behavioural disturbance which would make the child an unlikely candidate for conventional fostering. It was thought that this might include children with a prior history of multiple placement breakdowns, who would thus be unlikely to be placed in a conventional foster home.

- * The child should be between seven and fourteen years of age at the time of placement.
- * The child should have an IQ of over 85 (ie above the lower limit of the normal range).
- * The child should have an understanding of the nature and purpose of the scheme and should want to enter the scheme.
- * The child should be assessed as having some potential for development within the experience of a foster placement.
- * The child should be in contact with some member of his or her natural family. An important consideration in setting up the scheme was that the low ceiling on caseload size and the freedom from other social work duties should allow the social worker to work more intensively with the natural family of the child in order to maximise the chances of a successful return of the child to his or her family.

1.3 Recruitment, selection and training of foster parents

It was envisaged that foster parents would be selected to participate in the scheme separately from the normal system of recruitment and selection of foster parents in each district. As the children in this scheme were expected to be more demanding than most foster children, foster parents were to be sought who were expected to be able to cope with more difficult children, and who might have particular qualities and attributes which would enable them to handle more difficult children. Although it was expected that there would be an element of self-selection in the process by which foster parents were admitted to the scheme (the more suitable and committed applicants tending to be the ones who pursue their application to foster, and the less committed ones tending to drop out before final selection), the right was reserved to the social workers to make the final decision, if necessary, about each applicant's suitability.

All foster parents, including those who had fostered children previously, were to be required to undertake training before a child was placed with them. The format of the training sessions would be devised locally and would be aimed at informing prospective foster parents fully about fostering and what it meant for the child, the foster parents and the natural family of the child.

In addition to the training which was to be provided before a child was placed with them, the foster parents were also to be required to attend meetings of mutual support groups with the other foster parents in the scheme which would be held at regular intervals (every two or three weeks). On-going training and support would be carried out within the structure of these support groups once the foster parents had a child placed with them. It was expected that a social worker and a representative of the local Foster Care Federation would usually be present at support group meetings.

1.4 Increased board rate payable to foster parents

In recognition of the greater demands made on them, the foster parents would be paid a special board rate equal to double the standard rate. Furthermore, an initial payment equal to two weeks board was to be made prior to the placement of the child and a retainer fee equal to two thirds the standard board rate was also to be paid to foster parents between placements.

1.5 Social work staff establishment and caseload ceiling

A staff establishment of six positions was allocated for the scheme, comprising two social workers and one senior in each district. A caseload ceiling of ten children per social worker was set to enable the social workers to work more intensively with each child, with the foster parents and with the natural family of each child. Furthermore, each social worker was to have full-time commitment to the scheme, with no other social work duties outside the scheme.

SECTION 2 BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF THE INCEPTION OF THE SCHEME

The joint working party (of Department of Social Welfare and Foster Care Federation representatives) began meeting mid-way through 1978. A target starting date for the scheme was set at March 1979. Special social work positions for the scheme were established April 1979 and the first appointments were made in August and September 1979. At the same time, work was begun in the districts publicising the scheme, establishing local administrative structures, recruiting foster parents and selecting children for the scheme. Local advisory committees were established in Auckland and Christchurch in December 1979 and have met monthly since that time.

By December 1979 five children had been referred to the scheme in Auckland and two had been placed in foster homes. The first foster parent training group also began meeting in Auckland in December 1979. The training of foster parents began in Christchurch in March 1980 and the first child was placed in Christchurch in April 1980. The scheme was still not fully operational at this point, however, and it was not until October 1980 that the second social worker was appointed in Auckland and later still (November 1981) that the second social worker was appointed in Christchurch. Because of the delays in making appointments and also because there have been a number of changes in personnel in both districts since the original appointments were made, the numbers of children placed in the scheme have built up quite slowly in both districts. At the time of writing this report, a total of 23 children had been placed in Auckland and 19 in Christchurch, although a number of other children had been selected for the scheme and were awaiting placement.

SECTION 3 THE INTENSIVE FOSTER CARE SCHEME IN THE CONTEXT OF RECENT OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENTS IN FOSTERING

The Intensive Foster Care Scheme can be seen as part of a wave of new initiatives in both British and North American fostering during the 1970s. A number of specialist or professional fostering schemes were set up as both experimental and demonstration projects, to try out new ideas for fostering practice and to show that certain types of "unfosterable" children could in fact be successfully fostered. Many schemes were set up just for adolescents, while others took a wider range of children in need of substitute care, including physically or mentally handicapped children, and those with emotional or behavioural problems. (A selection of such schemes are listed in Appendix 1 to this paper, with references to written reports on the schemes.)

Several different factors seem to have been involved in this increase of interest in foster care. In the first place, it can be seen as the obverse of a concern about the institutionalisation of children in care. The British report "Children Who Wait" (1973) created a lot of concern in estimating that there were 6,000 children under eleven who needed foster homes, but who were growing up in institutions instead. Through the 1960s and 1970s increasing numbers of adolescents had been coming into care, and many of these children were considered too difficult to foster, which had further boosted the number of children in institutions.

The rising cost of residential care provided part of the impetus for looking for foster homes for these children, but more importantly there was increasing belief in the ability of foster families to provide more suitable placements than institutions. A notable example of this was the Kent Family Placement Project which explicitly aimed to demonstrate that delinquent adolescents could not only be maintained in foster homes, but would respond positively to the "normalisation" of family life rather than the segregation of "like with like" institutions.

Another growing concern in the 1970s was for children who had come into care, and who were made the subjects of placement decisions without any real planning for their future ever having been done. The term "adrift in foster care" was coined to describe the situation of children who settled into long-term foster care by default, because no clear decision was ever made as to whether they should eventually return to their natural family or whether they needed a new adoptive family. It was suggested that as a consequence such children grew up in a limbo having lost contact with their natural family, but with no permanent status in their foster family. This problem has been emphasised particularly in America, where a frequent theme has been the need for "permanency planning". This usually means involving the child's natural family in working towards the child's return to them, or in helping to settle on a permanent alternative.

The common theme of all such schemes can be summarised as a move towards professional or specialist fostering. Some schemes even use terms such as "foster care worker" rather than "foster parent" in order to emphasise that the foster parents are not expected simply to be substitute parents for the child. The term "professional fostering" in the context of these

schemes covers a wide range of meanings - some agencies have recruited only people with relevant professional qualifications (eg teaching, nursing) - but more usually the term denotes the expectation of a "professional" approach to the task of fostering. Just what this entails can be understood from the following summary of features often found in some form in these new schemes.

1. The foster parents are encouraged to see themselves as colleagues of the social worker, and any other professionals involved in the child's case. This sense of identification with the agency and fellow foster parents is supported by the use of groups for tasks such as recruitment, selection, training and on-going support. A striking example of this is the Cheshire Family Placement Project, where groups of about five couples have responsibility for placing particular children with particular families. The social worker has no more than equal rights within the group. Few other British agencies have been quite so bold as this, while amongst North American special schemes there has been more of a move towards foster parents rather than social workers as the "primary worker" with a child and his or her natural parents.
2. Both husband and wife are expected to take part in initial training programmes, as well as in on-going training which is usually conducted within the structure of the support groups mentioned above.
3. Payment in addition to the normal maintenance allowances is made in recognition of the greater commitment and extra duties expected of the foster parents. The higher payments are generally in the form of a salary payable to the foster mother (including sick leave and holidays) or placement payments when a child is actually living in the foster home, plus a lesser retainer fee between placements. This latter method (which is the one used in the Intensive Foster Care Scheme) is the more usual, giving most flexibility to both agency and foster parents.
4. A "task-centred casework" model is generally used, involving explicit goals, time limits for particular tasks and regular reviews of progress. This approach sometimes involves on the use of contracts signed by all the parties concerned.
5. Provision is made for careful recording and evaluation of the scheme as a whole, often involving an independent researcher during an experimental stage.
6. The schemes use specialised social workers and generally involve small caseloads and small numbers of families (frequently involving less than ten foster parents). This tends to produce a high degree of commitment from social workers and foster parents, but can also mean that the schemes are regarded with somewhat jaundiced eyes by other hard pressed social work professionals.

While it is possible to perceive these common themes and features in the range of schemes which have been described here as "professional" fostering schemes, there remain many differences between the schemes. One of the most obvious distinctions is in the types of children which the schemes cater for : most are designed for disturbed or delinquent

("hard to foster") adolescents, while some cater for children with physical or intellectual disabilities, and others again take children with other sorts of difficulties. Another important difference is in the duration and intention of the placements. Some schemes are intended to provide short-term assessment or "treatment" to prepare the child for a return home or to go on to a form of long-term substitute care, while other schemes actually provide long-term foster care. This latter type, with which the New Zealand scheme has most in common, have had more difficulty in defining their role and goals. They are less distinct from traditional fostering programmes than the short-term schemes, and basically differ only in that they have more resources and generally take more difficult children. The title of a report from the Wakefield District Professional Fostering Programme raises the question of whether such schemes are fundamentally different rather succinctly - "Professional Fostering - Just Good Fostering Practice?".

Another difficulty which these schemes have encountered is in measurement of outcomes. Although there is an invariably optimistic and confident quality to the accounts given of the schemes, there has generally been little effort to define and measure "success" either in relation to the scheme as a whole or in terms of individual outcomes of placements. This difficulty flows in part from the lack of clarity as to philosophy and goals in the schemes. Whatever the reasons for this, few of the schemes reported in the literature have been able to deliver respectable results as to their effectiveness in comparison with alternative types of care.

In summary, the New Zealand Intensive Foster Care Scheme is a development in fostering which mirrors initiatives which have been taken overseas over the last decade or so. While it has much in common with these overseas schemes, however, it remains a locally devised scheme with its own unique combination of features.

SECTION 4 THE RESEARCH COMPONENT OF THE SCHEME

Over the four year trial period, the Research Division has been responsible for monitoring the project, and reporting on its operation. At an early stage in the development of the design of the research, the Department advised the Research Division that it was considered not feasible to utilise an experimental control-group design. This meant that the research project was restricted in its scope, and became concerned primarily with collecting some descriptive and administrative data about the operation of the scheme. It was not designed with a view to making judgments about the effectiveness of the scheme as an alternative regime for providing for children, since the limitations on the design did not allow for effective comparisons to be made between Intensive Foster Care and other caring arrangements.

4.1 The objectives of the research

The research set itself to answer a restricted number of specific questions about the scheme. These were as follows :

- (i) What types of children are fostered under the scheme, and how do these children differ, if at all, from children under other care arrangements?
- (ii) What types of people are fostering children under the scheme, and how do these people differ, if at all, from people who foster children under conventional arrangements?
- (iii) What are the views of the various participants about the value of the scheme? In particular, what do each of the following parties think of the scheme :
 - the foster parents?
 - the foster children?
 - the social workers?
 - the natural families of the children?
- (iv) What level of social work support is provided under the scheme?
- (v) What level of training is provided to the foster parents under the scheme?
- (vi) How much planning is done for the future of the children, and how effective is this planning in the light of the outcomes of the placements?
- (vii) What are the outcomes of the placements made under the scheme?

4.2 The data collection forms

To address these questions, a total seven separate data collection forms were used. These were as follows :

- (i) Foster Child Recording Form
to collect information on the background of each child placed in the scheme, including prior life history, and details of any previous placements made by the Department. A parallel form was used to collect information on children placed in conventional foster placements, as well as on children in some other selected types of placements.
- (ii) Placement Record
to document the course of each placement made under the scheme, and provide details of any significant events or incidents and of the reasons for the end of the placement.
- (iii) Foster Parent Questionnaires
to collect information on the people fostering children under the scheme, including their attitudes towards the scheme. Questionnaires were filled in by foster mothers and foster fathers separately. Parallel forms were filled in by people fostering children under conventional arrangements.
- (iv) Foster Child Interview Schedule
to obtain the views and experiences of the children placed in the scheme. Interviews were also conducted with a sample of children in conventional foster placements.
- (v) Natural Family Interview Schedule
to obtain the views of the natural families of the children in the scheme. Again the families of a sample of children in conventional foster placements were also interviewed.
- (vi) Social Worker Questionnaire
to obtain the views and attitudes of the social workers involved in the scheme.
- (vii) Social Workers Log
to document the amount of social work support which was provided for each placement made under the scheme. Some information was also collected on the amount of social work support provided to foster parents caring for children under conventional arrangements.

4.3 The scale of the research

At the time the scheme was set up, it was considered that a four year trial period would allow time for sufficient numbers of children to pass through the scheme to permit the kind of analyses which would be necessary to address the questions listed above. In the event, the placement of children in the scheme has been rather slower than originally envisaged, and this has resulted in rather low numbers of children in the group on which this report is based. The low numbers mean that it is not possible to draw firm conclusions in many of the areas of interest. Nevertheless, as a commitment had been given by the Research Division to report to the joint committee at the end of the four year period, it was decided to produce the present document (which reports fully on the data collected to date) despite the rather severe limitations on what can be said caused by the paucity of the data.

SECTION 5 PROFILE OF THE CHILDREN IN THE SCHEME

A total of 42 children had been placed in the scheme at the time of writing this report - 23 in Auckland and 19 in Christchurch. A number of other children had been targeted for inclusion in the scheme and were awaiting placement. As has been noted in the previous section, these figures are very much smaller than it was originally envisaged would have passed through the scheme over four years, and this restricts the amount of comment that can be made and the conclusions that can be drawn. In general, the numbers do not permit effective comparisons between Auckland and Christchurch, nor between the scheme and conventional foster care, except on a small number of variables where very strong effects were noted. Despite these limitations, the data do provide a useful picture of children who have, so far, been placed in the scheme.

5.1 Demographic characteristics of the children

Sex

Similar proportions of boys and girls had been placed in Auckland, while rather more boys than girls had been placed in Christchurch.

Table 5.1 Sex of the children placed in the scheme

<u>Sex</u>	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>	
male	12	52%	12	63%
female	11	48%	7	37%
TOTAL	23	100%	19	100%

Ethnic origin

About half the Auckland children were European and about half were Maori or part Maori (with one Pacific Island child), while all but one of the children in Christchurch were European. The different distributions, of course, reflect the different ethnic compositions of the two districts.

Table 5.2 Ethnic origin of the children placed in the scheme

<u>Ethnic origin</u>	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>	
European	12	52%	18	95%
Maori or part				
Maori	10	44%	1	5%
Pacific Island	1	4%	-	
TOTAL	23	100%	19	100%

Age

The numbers are too small to allow comparison of the age distributions of children in the two districts. It is worth noting, however that the average ages of the children in both districts were similar (being just under 11 years in each case).

Table 5.3 Age of the children placed in the scheme

<u>Age (years)</u>	<u>Auckland</u>	<u>Christchurch</u>
4	-	1
5	-	-
6	1	-
7	1	3
8	4	-
9	-	3
10	2	1
11	2	3
12	8	1
13	5	4
14	-	3
TOTAL	23	19
average	10.8	10.6

Ex-nuptial children

About half the children in each district had been born ex-nuptially (12 out of 23 in Auckland and 9 out of 19 in Christchurch). Two of these children in each district had subsequently been adopted.

5.2 Family of origin of children in the scheme

The children in the scheme came from families that were slightly larger than the norm, on average (the average number of children in the child's family of origin was about four in both Auckland and Christchurch).

Two thirds of the Christchurch children and about 40% of the Auckland children had siblings who had also been the subjects of care orders. Furthermore, five of the Auckland children and four of the Christchurch children had a parent figure who had been a state ward. Clearly, many of these families had an intimate association with the local Department of Social Welfare office.

5.3 Main family of the child

For around half of the children in Auckland, but for somewhat fewer in Christchurch, the child had not lived with his or her natural parents for most of the time prior to the care order. Table 5.4 below indicates the relationship to the child of the parent figures in the family in which the child spent most time prior to the care order (which we shall designate in this report as the main family).

Table 5.4 Main care-givers of the child prior to the care order

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>	
	mother figure	father figure	mother figure	father figure
natural parent	13 57%	11 48%	16 84%	11 58%
adoptive parents	1 4%	1 4%	1 5%	2 11%
step parent	4 17%	3 13%	1 5%	3 16%
grandparent	2 9%	1 4%	-	-
aunt/uncle	2 9%	2 9%	-	-
other	1 4%	1 4%	1 5%	-
no parent figure	-	4 17%	-	3 16%
TOTAL	23 100%	23 100%	19 100%	19 100%

The table shows that, for the Auckland children, care-givers other than natural parents were likely to be step parents or other relatives, while four of the children had been brought up without a father figure. In Christchurch, most of the children had lived with their natural parents for most of the time prior to the care order, and three had been brought up without a father figure.

The families were generally located in the lower reaches of the socio-economic spectrum. Table 5.5 reports the SES (socio-economic status) score for each of the main families of children in the scheme using a standard measure of SES (W.B. Elley and J.C. Irving's Revised Socio-Economic Index for New Zealand, 1976). As the table shows, the families were, with only two exceptions, in the bottom half of the scale.

Table 5.5 Socio-economic status of the main family of the child

<u>SES score</u>	<u>Auckland</u>	<u>Christchurch</u>
1 (highest)	-	-
2	1 4%	-
3	1 4%	-
4	8 35%	4 21%
5	2 9%	7 37%
6 (lowest)	7 30%	6 32%
information missing	4 17%	2 11%
TOTAL	23 100%	19 100%
average	4.7	5.1

5.4 Contact between the child and natural parents prior to the placement

Even where the child had been brought up by his or her natural parents prior to the care order, in most cases the natural family was no longer together as a family unit by the time the child was placed in the scheme. Table 5.6 gives details of whether the parents of the child were still alive and if so whether they were still living together.

Table 5.6 Were the natural parents still alive and living together at the time the child was placed in the scheme?

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>	
both alive, and living together	4	17%	4	21%
both alive, but living apart	16	70%	11	58%
mother dead	2	9%	3	16%
father dead	1	4%	-	
both dead	-		1	5%
TOTAL	23	100%	19	100%

Where the parents were still alive, the children had often not lived with them for some time, and some had lost touch altogether.

Quite a sizeable group (about a third in Auckland and a quarter in Christchurch) had no contact at all with their mothers and even more had no contact with their natural fathers. Conversely, there were very few who were in close contact with their natural mothers (only five in Auckland and one in Christchurch). Only one in each district were in close contact with their natural fathers. It is clear that for most children in the scheme, the natural family connection was somewhat atrophied.

5.5 Number of changes in living situation prior to guardianship

All of the children had experienced at least one change of living situation in the years prior to the care order, and most had experienced several changes (either moving from one set of care-givers to another - for example from natural parents to grandparents or other relatives - or experiencing changes of care-givers within the family unit - for example when a parent figure left the home, frequently to be replaced by another step (or de facto step) parent). On average, the children had experienced between five and six such changes; and five children had experienced ten or more changes.

The children were usually quite young when they experienced their first change of living situation: 13 of the 19 Christchurch children and 12 of the 23 Auckland children were less than three years old at the time of the first change. The average age at the first such change was three.

5.6 Problems recorded for the main family of the child

In the period prior to the care order, the main families of the children had frequently experienced marital and financial difficulties, and a considerable number displayed signs of poor care of the child. Table 5.7 shows the frequency with which indications of selected types of problems were recorded on the families' files. The table includes only problems which were recorded as being present in 20% of more families in either district. There were other problems which were recorded less frequently than this. It should be noted in the table that the percentages do not sum, as each line reports the number and percentage of families who were recorded as having the designated problem.

Table 5.7 Problems recorded for the main family of the child

	<u>No. and percentage of families with the designated problem</u>			
	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>	
marital disruption/rows	15	65%	10	53%
parents separated	15	65%	9	47%
child neglected	13	57%	7	37%
financial problems	11	48%	9	47%
inadequate supervision of child	11	48%	5	26%
child's personal cleanliness inadequate	10	43%	7	37%
child's clothing inadequate	10	43%	7	44%
heavy drinking by father	9	39%	7	44%
child's nutrition inadequate	8	35%	7	37%
accommodation dirty	8	35%	8	42%
physical abuse of child by mother	8	35%	4	21%
heavy drinking by mother	8	35%	6	32%
mother left home	8	35%	2	11%
no interest in child from mother	6	26%	7	44%
physical abuse of child by father	6	26%	2	11%
father left home	6	26%	4	21%
unstable work record of father	5	22%	5	26%
accommodation overcrowded	5	22%	4	21%
criminal offending by father	4	17%	5	26%
other children physically abused	4	17%	4	21%
father in prison/borstal	4	17%	6	32%
frequent changes of accommodation	3	13%	5	26%
long-term illness of mother	1	4%	4	21%

The table shows that the families of the children in both districts had broadly similar profiles in terms of the types of problems that were recorded on their files. However, the two districts looked different in terms of the problems that were recorded specifically for the children. For example, large numbers of Auckland children had displayed behaviour rated as "uncontrollable" both at home and at school (i.e. around 80%), while fewer of the Christchurch children (less than half) had displayed such problems. This was a statistically significant result. Only a small proportion of the Christchurch children had offended prior to the care order, while a larger proportion in Auckland (nearly half) had committed property offences (although few had committed any other type of offences). The difference, however, was not quite statistically significant. Table 5.8 reports the number of children who had been involved in the various types of offending or misbehaviour prior to the care order.

Table 5.8 Problems recorded for the children prior to the care order

	<u>No. and percentage of children with the designated problem</u>		
	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>
offences against person	2	9%	1 5%
property offences	10	43%	3 16%
violent property offences	2	9%	2 11%
other offences	-	-	- -
ran away	10	43%	7 37%
uncontrollable at home	19	83%	9 47%
uncontrollable outside home	11	48%	3 16%
behaviour problems at school	18	78%	7 37%
truancy	2	9%	5 26%

5.7 Reason for the care order

Most of the Christchurch children (15 out of 19) had been taken into care primarily because of conditions in the home, while in the other four cases the primary reason for the care order had been the offending or misbehaviour of the child. In Auckland children were much more likely to have been taken into care because of their own misbehaviour or offending: only just over half the Christchurch guardianship orders had been made primarily because of conditions in the home, while the other half were all cases where the child's offending or misbehaviour had been the main reason.

Table 5.9 Social worker's rating of the primary reason for the care order

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>	
child's offending	6	26%	2	11%
child's misbehaviour	5	22%	2	11%
conditions in the home	12	52 %	15	79%
TOTAL	23	100%	19	100%

Table 5.10 gives more detailed reasons for the care order. The most frequently recorded reasons in both districts were the parents' inability to control the child and emotional neglect of the child. The emotional neglect was often accompanied by physical neglect and there were also fairly frequent reports of marital difficulties between the parents. The Auckland children were also frequently recorded as showing patterns of misbehaviour in the home and at school, while this was less frequent for Christchurch children. Once again, this was a statically significant result. Indeed, almost all of the reasons were more frequently endorsed for Auckland children than for those in Christchurch, apart only from lack of response to social work supervision and desertion by parents.

Table 5.10 Detailed reasons for the care order

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>	
parents unable to control child	16	70%	9	47%
misbehaviour of child at home	14	61%	5	26%
child emotionally neglected by parents	14	61%	7	37%
misbehaviour of child at school	13	57%	4	21%
child physically neglected by parents	9	39%	6	32%
marital problems of parents	9	39%	6	32%
child physically abused by parents	8	35%	1	5%
child ran away from home	8	35%	3	16%
child's offending	6	26%	2	11%
child's persistent truancy	5	22%	2	11%
no response to social work supervision	3	13%	4	21%
child requested to live away from parents	3	13%	2	11%
child sexually abused by parents	2	9%	1	5%
child deserted by parents	1	4%	3	16%
parent hospitalised	1	4%	1	5%
child living in detrimental moral environment	-	-	1	5%

The pattern of higher frequencies in Auckland for virtually all the categories is rather odd. There are two possible explanations for this pattern. First it is possible that the children in Auckland came from families which had a greater number and range of problems than those in Christchurch. Alternatively, it is possible that this pattern reflects a different response set adopted by the social workers in filling in the recording form, those in Auckland being inclined to give more detail while those in Christchurch recorded only the more salient factors. On the basis of the evidence available, it is not possible to distinguish between these two possible explanations.

All but three of the children in each district had come to the attention of the Department of Social Welfare on at least one occasion prior to the guardianship order and some had quite long histories of official notice to the Department. Seven children in Auckland (30%) and seven in Christchurch (37%) had come to the attention of the Department on at least three separate occasions prior to the care order. However, only five of the Christchurch children and six of the Auckland children, however, had appeared in the Children and Young Persons Court prior to the care order. Most had come to the attention of the Department other than by a court appearance.

5.8 Prior placement history with the Department of Social Welfare

Most of the children had had prior placements arranged by the Department of Social Welfare before being referred to the scheme: Over 80% of those in Christchurch and 70% of those in Auckland had had a prior placement. On average, the children had had just over two prior placements each.

The distributions of the number of prior placements were different in the two districts : most of the Christchurch children had had only small numbers of prior placements (i.e. one to three placements), but there was a small group of four Christchurch children who had had higher numbers of previous placements (seven, eight or nine). The Auckland children were rather more evenly spread on this variable, having had up to nine prior placements.

Table 5.11 gives details of the number and percentage of children who had had a prior placement and the number and percentage who had experienced on breakdown. The table also reports the probability of a child having experienced a breakdown (i.e. the number of children who had experienced a breakdown expressed as a proportion of those who had had a prior placement). The table also gives the same information specifically for foster placements.

Table 5.11 Prior placement history of the children

<u>Number of children who had had:</u>	<u>Auckland (n=23)</u>	<u>Christchurch (n=19)</u>
At least one prior placement	16 70%	16 84%
At least one prior breakdown	13 57%	10 53%
Probability that child had experienced a breakdown	p=0.81	p=0.63
At least one foster placement	10 43%	11 58%
At least one broken foster placement	8 35%	9 47%
Probability that child had experienced a foster placement breakdown	p=0.80	p=0.82

Most of the children had experienced the breakdown of a placement and many had experienced more than one broken placement. (One child in Christchurch had experienced five breakdowns, while two Christchurch children and one Auckland child had experienced four broken placements each.)

Not all of the children had been tried in foster homes. Less than half of the Auckland children and about 60% of the Christchurch children had had a prior foster placement. However, the children had not generally been successful in foster placements : 80% of those who had had a prior foster placement had also experienced the breakdown of a foster placement.

5.9 Personality characteristics of the children

The social workers were asked to make ratings of the children in terms of a number of personality traits (listed in Table 5.12 below). From the responses, it appeared that the children in the Auckland scheme were more likely to be regarded as difficult by the social workers than those in Christchurch. Over two thirds of the Auckland children were described as usually moody and attention seeking, while over half were described as usually resentful, easily led and anxious to keep in with friends. Over a third of the Auckland children were also described in terms of a wide range of other negative personality traits, including stubbornness, restlessness, untruthfulness, lack of acceptance by other children and a proneness to temper tantrums, showing off and playing foolish pranks.

By contrast, fewer than a half of the Christchurch children were considered usually to display negative personality traits. Just under half were described as usually moody and just over a third as attention seeking. Apart from this, fewer than a third of the Christchurch children were considered usually to display any other negative behaviours.

Once again, the pattern of higher frequencies in Auckland for virtually all of the categories (including the more positive ones such as "cheerful" or "a good mixer") raises the question of whether these differences between the districts are real or whether they are an artifact of different approaches to filling in the form by the social workers. Once again, it is not possible to know which of these is the correct explanation.

Table 5.12 Personality characteristics of the children

	<u>Auckland</u> <u>Is the child</u> <u>usually....?</u>		<u>Christchurch</u> <u>Is the child</u> <u>usually....?</u>	
moody	16	70%	9	47%
attention seeking	15	65%	7	37%
anxious to keep with friends	13	57%	4	21%
resentful	13	57%	3	16%
easily led	12	52%	6	32%
stubborn	11	48%	5	26%
prone to temper outbursts	10	43%	6	32%
prone to show off	10	43%	6	32%
restless	9	39%	6	32%
untruthful	9	39%	3	16%
prone to playing foolish pranks	9	39%	4	21%
unaccepted by other children	8	35%	3	16%

Table 5.12 Personality characteristics of the children
cont'd

unco-operative	7	30%	4	21%
cheerful	7	30%	3	16%
prone to isolate him/herself	6	26%	4	21%
a good mixer	6	26%	1	5%
quarrelsome	3	13%	6	32%
withdrawn	2	9%	3	16%
shy	2	9%	2	11%
helpful	1	4%	2	11%
well behaved	1	4%	1	5%

5.10 Educational characteristics of the children

In terms of their intellectual potential, the children were fairly well regarded by the social workers. Just as many Auckland children were considered to be above average as below average, while in Christchurch more of the children were considered to be slightly below average, although this difference was not statistically significant.

Table 5.13 Intellectual potential of the children

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>	
well above average	4	17%	-	-
slightly above average	4	17%	4	21%
average	7	30%	5	26%
slightly below average	7	30%	10	53%
well below average	1	4%	-	-
TOTAL	23	100%	19	100%

However, potential apart, most of the children were making poorer progress than would be expected. All but two of the Auckland children and all but four of the Christchurch children were described as making progress below the normal standard.

Table 5.14 School progress of the children

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>	
progress above expectation	-	-	-	-
normal progress	2	9%	4	21%
performance below potential	20	87%	15	79%
not known	1	4%	-	-
TOTAL	23	100%	19	100%

It appeared that this lack of progress could not be completely ascribed to poor attitude, since just as many of the children were considered to have positive attitudes as negative to both school work and attendance. Indeed, about half of the children who were performing below their potential did not display negative attitudes to either school work or attendance.

5.11 Assessment of the child in terms of the Intensive Foster Care Scheme

The social workers considered that all of the 23 Auckland children and all but one of the 19 Christchurch children placed more than usual demands on those taking care of them. However, less than half of the children were described as being usually very difficult to manage and two children in Auckland and one child in Christchurch were described as being usually not difficult.

Table 5.15 Social worker rating of child's behaviour

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>	
usually very difficult	9	39%	8	42%
usually quite difficult	12	52%	10	53%
usually not difficult	2	9%	1	5%
TOTAL	23	100%	19	100%

In all cases in Christchurch and in all but one in Auckland, the social worker considered that the Intensive Foster Care Scheme was the best way of providing for the needs of the child. In most cases in Auckland the child would probably have been placed in one of the national institutions or in a family home if the Intensive placement had not been available, although two children would probably have been placed in a conventional foster home. In Christchurch, most children would have been placed in a conventional foster home or in a family home if the Intensive placement had not been available.

Table 5.16 Where the social worker considered the child would have been placed if the IFCS placement had not been available

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>	
conventional foster home	2	9%	8	42%
family home	9	39%	8	42%
DSW national institution	10	43%	2	11%
DSW girls/boys home	1	4%	-	-
other	1	4%	1	5%
TOTAL	23	100%	19	100%

In most cases the purpose of the Intensive placement was to provide substitute family care until the child had reached an age where he or she could live independently. However, for a minority of cases (just under a third in Auckland and just under a quarter in Christchurch) the purpose of the placement was to provide substitute care until the child would be returned to his or her family or previous guardians.

For the most part, the social workers felt fairly confident about the chances of success of the placements they had made, and about the abilities of the foster parents to cope with the children. However, in four instances in Christchurch and one in Auckland the social worker expressed some doubts about the capacity of the foster parents to cope with the child. Moreover, in six cases in Auckland and seven in Christchurch doubts were expressed either about whether the long-term plan for the child would be fulfilled.

5.12 Summary of the characteristics of the children in the scheme

- In Auckland about half the children were pakeha and half Maori, while in Christchurch all of the children were pakeha, apart from one Maori child.
- Many of the children had not been brought up by their natural parents, and few were in close contact with their natural parents.
- The children had been subject to a considerable amount of disruption in their early lives, having experienced an average of between five and six changes of living situation (such as moving from one set of care-givers to another, or experiencing a change of parent figure in the home).
- The main family in which the child had lived prior to the care order had frequently experienced financial and marital problems, and had also frequently displayed a poor standard of care of the child.
- In Christchurch, most of the children had been taken into care because of inadequate conditions in the home, while in Auckland about half the children had been taken into care because of their offending or misbehaviour and the other half because of inadequate conditions in the home.
- Since the care order, the children had had (on average) about five placements arranged by the Department, although only about half of them had been tried in a foster placement. A third of the Auckland children and nearly half of the Christchurch children, however, had already experienced a broken foster placement when they were placed in the scheme.
- The Auckland children were more likely to be regarded by the social workers as difficult in terms of personality traits.
- The social workers were of the opinion that all but one of the children placed more than usual demands on those responsible for their care.
- If the scheme were not operating, children in Auckland would have been likely to be placed either in national institutions or in family homes, while those in Christchurch would have been likely to be placed in family homes or in conventional foster homes.

SECTION 6 COMPARISONS BETWEEN CHILDREN IN THE INTENSIVE FOSTER CARE SCHEME AND THOSE IN CONVENTIONAL FOSTER PLACEMENTS

Information has been collected to date on a total of 65 children in the care of the Department who have been placed in conventional foster placements in order to allow for comparisons between the type of children placed in the scheme and those placed in conventional foster care. 35 of these children are in the Auckland region and 30 in Christchurch. All of these children were placed within the period during which the Intensive Foster Care Scheme has been operating.

6.1 Demographic characteristics of the children

In the Christchurch sample two thirds of the children were male (20 out of 30), while in the Auckland sample three fifths were female (21 out of 35).

The children in conventional foster placements tended to be slightly older, on average, than the children placed in the Intensive Scheme. This difference was slight in Auckland (the mean age of scheme children was 10.8 and of non-scheme children was 11.0) but a little larger in Christchurch (the mean age of scheme children was 10.9 and of non-scheme children was 11.9). More adolescents had been placed in conventional placements than in the scheme, and more had also been placed in Christchurch than in Auckland: nearly 60% of the non-scheme children in Christchurch were aged 13 or 14 compared with 44% of those in the scheme, and a third of the non-scheme children in Auckland were aged 13 or 14 compared with about 20% in the scheme.

More of the children in conventional placements were non Pakeha than was the case with the Intensive Scheme children. In Auckland 63% of the children in conventional placements were Maori or part Maori compared with 43% in Intensive placements, while in Christchurch 23% of the children in conventional placements were Maori or part Maori, compared with only one child (5%) in the Intensive Scheme. There were also two Pacific Island children (one each in Auckland and Christchurch) placed in conventional foster placements.

6.2 Family background of the children

The children in conventional foster placements tended to come from larger families, on average, than those in the scheme. Table 6.1 below reports the number of children in the family of origin of each child in the scheme and each child in the non-scheme group. As the table shows, the difference was more pronounced in Auckland than in Christchurch.

Table 6.1 Comparison of size of family of origin for children in the Intensive Scheme and children in conventional foster placements

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>	
	IFCS placements	Conventional placements	IFCS placements	Conventional placements
average no. of children in family of origin	3.9	5.0	4.2	4.6

The Auckland scheme children were less likely to have siblings who were also the subjects of care orders than their counterparts in conventional foster placements, while the Christchurch scheme children were slightly more likely to have siblings in care.

Table 6.2 Number of children with siblings who were the subjects of care orders

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>	
	IFCS placements (n=23)	Conventional placements (n=35)	IFCS placements (n=19)	Conventional placements (n=30)
no. of children with siblings who were the subjects of care orders	9	22	13	17
	39%	63%	68%	57%

The scheme children came from homes which scored slightly lower, on average, on Elley and Irving's scale of socio-economic status than those in conventional placements. On average the families of the scheme children had SES scores of 4.7 and 5.1 for Auckland and Christchurch respectively, compared with 4.1 and 4.4 for the non-scheme children. Only two of the scheme children (both in Auckland) came from families with scores in the top half of the scale range, compared with eight non-scheme children in Auckland and four in Christchurch.

The children in the scheme in Auckland were more likely to come from families where the main care-givers were not the natural parents than were their counterparts in conventional placements. Roughly half of the Auckland scheme children came from homes where the main care-givers were their natural parents, compared with roughly three-quarters of the children in conventional placements. In Christchurch virtually identical proportions of children in the two groups had been mainly cared for by their natural parents.

Table 6.3 Proportion of children for whom the main care-givers prior to the care order had been the natural parents

<u>Proportion of children for whom:</u>	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>	
	IFCS placements (n=23)	Conventional placements (n=35)	IFCS placements (n=19)	Conventional placements (n=30)
<u>Mother figure was natural mother</u>	13 57%	27 77%	16 84%	26 87%
<u>Father figure was natural father</u>	11 48%	25 71%	11 58%	18 60%

6.3 Number of changes of living situation

The children in conventional placements had experienced, on average, more changes of living situation prior to the care order than children in the scheme had done. This difference was very slight in Auckland but more marked in Christchurch. The average number of such changes for the non-scheme foster children was 6.1 in Auckland and 6.7 in Christchurch, compared with 5.9 and 5.3 respectively for the children in the scheme. All of the non-scheme children had experienced at least three such changes of living situation prior to the care order, and in Christchurch 60% of these children had experienced seven or more such changes. By contrast only four of the children in the scheme in Christchurch (21%) had experienced seven or more changes.

6.4 Social worker's rating of the primary reason for the care order

In Auckland the scheme children were much more likely to have come into care primarily on account of offending than their counterparts in conventional placements. Nearly half the Auckland scheme children had been taken into care primarily on account of their offending or misbehaviour, compared with only 20% of the non-scheme children. In Christchurch, the situation was reversed, more non-scheme children (30%) coming into care primarily because of offending and misbehaviour than was the case in the scheme (20%). The difference in Christchurch was smaller, however.

Table 6.4 Reason for the care order

Reason	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	IFCS placements		Conventional placements		IFCS placements		Conventional placements	
offending	5	22%	4	11%	2	11%	4	13%
misbehaviour	5	22%	3	9%	2	11%	5	17%
home conditions	12	52%	28	80%	15	79%	21	70%
not known	1	4%	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	23	100%	35	100%	19	100%	30	100%

Examining the more detailed reasons for the care order, it appeared that factors such as the child's misbehaviour and being out of control of the parents were more frequently recorded for children in the scheme, while factors deriving from conditions in the home (e.g. physical neglect, desertion by the parents) were more frequently recorded for the non-scheme children. Again, these patterns were slight in Christchurch and more pronounced in Auckland. Table 6.5 takes a selection of the more frequently occurring detailed reasons for the care order and presents the frequency with which these were a factor in the care decision.

Table 6.5 Detailed reasons for the care order

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>	
	IFCS placements	Conventional placements	IFCS placements	Conventional placements
parents unable to control child	70%	34%	47%	50%
misbehaviour at home	61%	34%	26%	30%
misbehaviour at school	57%	17%	21%	7%
emotional neglect by parents	61%	25%	37%	30%
physical neglect by parents	39%	51%	32%	43%
marital problems of parents	39%	54%	32%	40%
child ran away from home	35%	17%	16%	10%
child deserted by parents	4%	34%	16%	33%

In Auckland, the pattern was clear: factors such as misbehaviour at home and at school, running away and being out of control were more likely to have been involved in the care decision for children in the scheme, while factors such as physical neglect, desertion and marital problems of the parents were more likely to have been involved in the care decision for children in conventional placements. In Christchurch, the proportions were much closer for the two groups: however, it did appear that misbehaviour at school was more likely to have been a factor in the care order for children in the scheme, while physical neglect and desertion were more likely to have been factors in the care decision for non-scheme children.

6.5 Prior notice of the children to the Department before the guardianship order

The children in conventional foster placements appeared more likely than those in the scheme to have had longer histories of official notice to the Department prior to the guardianship order. About three quarters of the non-scheme children in Christchurch and about half of those in Auckland had come to notice on three or more occasions prior to the care order, compared with only about a third of the children in the scheme. However, more of the Auckland children in conventional placements had not come to notice prior to the care order than was the case for their counterparts in the scheme.

Table 6.6 History of prior notice before the guardianship order

<u>No. of occasions of prior notice</u>	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	IFCS placements		Conventional placements		IFCS placements		Conventional placements	
none	3	13%	11	31%	3	16%	4	13%
one or two	13	56%	6	17%	9	47%	4	13%
three or more	7	30%	18	51%	7	37%	22	73%
TOTAL	23	100%	35	100%	19	100%	30	100%

6.6 Placement history of the children with the Department

There was not much difference between the two groups of children in terms of whether they had had a prior placement with the Department. Most had had such a placement. The children in the scheme, however, did appear to be more likely to have experienced the breakdown of a placement. Table 6.7 gives the number and percentage of children who had had a prior placement and the number and percentage who had experienced a breakdown. The table also gives the same data specifically for foster placements.

Table 6.7 Prior placement history of the children

Number of children who had had:	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	IFCS placements (n=23)		Conventional placements (n=35)		IFCS placements (n=19)		Conventional placements (n=30)	
At least one prior placement	16	70%	28	80%	16	84%	21	70%
At least one prior breakdown	13	57%	17	49%	10	53%	16	30%
At least one prior foster placement	10	43%	13	37%	11	58%	16	53%
At least one prior foster breakdown	8	35%	4	11%	9	47%	2	7%

A more striking result from Table 6.7 is that children in the scheme were much more likely to have experienced the breakdown of a foster placement. This was comparatively rare for children in conventional foster placements, but much more common for those in the scheme. We can compute the probability that a child had experienced a breakdown by expressing the number who had experienced a breakdown as a proportion of those who had had a prior placement. Table 6.8 reports the probabilities for children in the scheme and those in conventional care.

Table 6.8 Probability that the child had experienced the breakdown of a placement

Probability that child experienced	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>	
	IFCS placements (n=23)	Conventional placements (n=35)	IFCS placements (n=19)	Conventional placements (n=30)
placement breakdown	p=0.81	p=0.61	p=0.63	p=0.76
foster placement breakdown	p=0.80	p=0.31	p=0.82	p=0.13

The table shows that there was not much difference between the children in terms of the breakdown of any prior placement, but that the two groups were quite dissimilar in terms of prior foster placements. In Auckland, the scheme children were between two and three times as likely as those conventionally placed to have experienced a broken foster placement, and in Christchurch the scheme children were more than six times as likely as those conventionally placed to have experienced a broken foster placement.

6.7 Offending and misbehaviour patterns of the child

The children in the scheme in Auckland were more likely to have committed property offences and the scheme children in both districts were more likely to have engaged in other misbehaviour than their counterparts in conventional foster placements. The differences between the children in the scheme and the others were stronger in Auckland than they were in Christchurch. Table 6.9 reports the percentage of children in each of the sub-groups (Auckland and Christchurch, scheme and non-scheme) who had engaged in each of the listed types of offending or misbehaviour. (It should be noted that this list includes offending and misbehaviour before and after the care order up until the time of the current placement, and so the percentages for the children in the scheme differ from those given in the previous section in Table 5.14 (which includes only incidents prior to the care order).

Table 6.9 Proportions of children who had engaged in offending and/or misbehaviour

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>	
	IFCS placements	Conventional placements	IFCS placements	Conventional placements
offences against the person	17%	14%	11%	17%
property offences	57%	31%	26%	37%
violent property offences	13%	9%	16%	23%
other offences	-	-	5%	3%
ran away from home	48%	46%	42%	20%
uncontrollable at home	96%	51%	63%	40%
parents unable to control child outside home	57%	40%	21%	43%
misbehaviour at school	96%	57%	68%	57%
truancy from school	52%	34%	37%	30%

In Auckland, the scheme children had generally higher frequencies of offending (mainly property offences) and misbehaviour (particularly misbehaviour at school and uncontrollability at home). In Christchurch, the scheme children were less likely to have committed offences (although the differences were small) and were less likely to be considered uncontrollable outside the home, but were more likely to be considered uncontrollable in the home and to have run away from home.

Overall, the impression from the data in Table 6.9 is relatively clear for Auckland - the scheme children being generally more problematic in terms of their behaviour patterns - but less clear for Christchurch, where the scheme children were marginally less likely to have committed offences, but generally more likely to have been uncontrollable in the home.

6.8 Educational characteristics of the children

Only one piece of information was collected on the non-scheme children in this area: the intellectual potential of the child as assessed by the social worker. There did not appear to be any great differences between the children in this respect although a greater proportion of the Christchurch children in the scheme were regarded as below average (about half) as compared with the children not in the scheme (just over a third). This difference was not large, however, and the numbers are too small for much to be made of this result. Very few of these children (in or out of the scheme) were considered to be well below average in intellectual potential.

Table 6.10 Intellectual potential of the children

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	IFCS placements		Conventional placements		IFCS placements		Conventional placements	
well above average	4	17%	4	11%	-	-	2	7%
slightly above average	4	17%	4	11%	4	21%	5	17%
average	7	30%	13	37%	5	26%	12	40%
slightly below average	7	30%	12	34%	10	53%	11	37%
well below average	1	4%	2	6%	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	23	100%	35	100%	19	100%	30	100%

6.9 Assessment of the child in terms of the placements

Only a third of the children in conventional placements were regarded by the social workers as placing more their usual demands on their care-takers. This was in marked contrast to the children in the scheme all but one of whom were rated by the social worker as making more than usual demands.

Table 6.11 Does the child place more than usual demands on those responsible for his/her care?

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	IFCS placements		Conventional placements		IFCS placements		Conventional placements	
yes	23	100%	12	34%	18	95%	10	33%
no	-	-	23	66%	1	5%	20	67%
TOTAL	23	100%	35	100%	19	100%	30	100%

Furthermore, only one of the children in conventional placements (a child in Auckland) was rated as usually very difficult to manage, and only a quarter of the Auckland non-scheme children and 10% of the Christchurch non-scheme children were rated as usually quite difficult to manage. This was again in marked contrast to the scheme where two-fifths of the children were rated usually very difficult and over half as usually quite difficult. Indeed, only three children in the scheme were regarded as usually not difficult, compared with three quarters of the Auckland non-scheme children and 90% of the Christchurch non-scheme children.

Table 6.12 Social worker rating of the child's behaviour

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	IFCS placements		Conventional placements		IFCS placements		Conventional placements	
usually very difficult	9	39%	1	3%	8	42%	-	-
usually quite difficult	12	52%	8	23%	10	53%	3	10%
usually not difficult	2	9%	26	74%	1	5%	27	90%
TOTAL	23	100%	35	100%	19	100%	30	100%

Finally, the non-scheme social workers were asked whether the children placed in conventional placements would have been better off if they were placed in an enhanced foster placement such as is provided by the Intensive Foster Care Scheme. None of the Auckland social workers and only four in Christchurch said that such a placement would be better for the child than the current conventional foster placement. Thus, while social workers outside the scheme considered that the scheme had benefits for children placed in it, they were not generally convinced that these benefits were more than would be gained from conventional fostering arrangements, for the type of children on their own caseloads.

6.10 Summary of the comparison between children in the scheme and those in conventional foster placements

- The children in the scheme tended to be slightly younger, on average, than those in conventional placements (more so in Christchurch than in Auckland) and fewer came from older age groups (i.e. 13 and 14 year olds).
- Fewer children in the scheme were Maori than was the case in conventional foster care.
- The children in the scheme were more likely to have been brought up by persons other than their natural parents, but the children in conventional placements had experienced just as much disruption in terms of their living situation in their early lives as those in the scheme.
- In Auckland, children in the scheme were considerably more likely than those in conventional foster care to have been taken into care because of their misbehaviour or offending, while this was not the case in Christchurch.

- Factors such as misbehaviour at home and at school, running away and being generally out of control were more likely to have been considerations in the care decision for children in the scheme, while factors such as physical neglect, desertion and marital problems were more likely to have been considerations in the care decision for children placed in conventional foster homes. These effects were more marked in Auckland than in Christchurch.
- However, the children in the scheme had had much poorer records in prior foster placements than those in conventional foster care. In Auckland the scheme children were more than twice as likely as those in conventional foster care to have had a prior broken foster placement, while in Christchurch, the scheme children were more than six times as likely as those in conventional foster care to have experienced a broken foster placement.

SECTION 7 PROFILE OF THE FOSTER PARENTS AND THEIR VIEWS ON THE SCHEME

To date a total of 56 foster parents in the scheme (31 foster mothers and 25 foster fathers) have responded to the questionnaire issued to them. In all, 70 foster parents were issued with questionnaires and asked to fill them in, so the 56 questionnaires returned represent a response rate of 80%. The response rates for the foster mothers and foster fathers in Auckland and Christchurch were as follows: Auckland foster mothers (73%), foster fathers (65%); Christchurch foster mothers (94%) foster fathers (93%).

The questionnaires which have been received give us four roughly equal sized groups (foster mothers and foster fathers in Auckland and in Christchurch). Unfortunately, the numbers in each group are rather too small to allow for useful comparisons between the groups. For this reason, the results in this section have been presented primarily in terms of a breakdown between foster mothers and foster fathers, as this dimension seemed likely to yield more interesting comparisons.

About half of the foster parents responded while the child was still living with them in the placement (16 foster mothers and 14 foster fathers) while the others responded after the child had left the placement (15 foster mothers and 11 foster fathers). While this must have had some impact on the way the foster parents answered some of the questions, no attempt has been made in the analyses performed to date to control for this effect. This should, however, be kept in mind when reading the subsequent account of the results.

7.1 Demographic characteristics of the foster parents

When the figures were broken down into ten year age groupings, the biggest group (about 40%) were in their 30's and the next largest group (about 30%) were in their 40's. The average age of foster mothers was 40 and the average age of foster fathers was 41. Auckland foster parents tended to be a few years younger than those in Christchurch.

Table 7.1 Age of the foster parents

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
20 - 29	5	16%	2	8%	7	13%
30 - 39	12	39%	10	40%	22	39%
40 - 49	10	32%	8	32%	18	32%
50 - 59	3	10%	5	20%	8	14%
60 and over	1	3%	-	-	1	2%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

Virtually all of the foster parents in the scheme (at least those who responded to the questionnaire) were Pakeha. There were only three exceptions : a Maori foster father in Auckland, a Maori foster mother in Christchurch and another foster mother in Christchurch who was part Cook Island Maori.

The foster families had, on average, 2.7 children of their own. One foster family had no children, while three had as many as six children of their own.

7.2 Educational background of the foster parents

On average, the foster parents had had around three years secondary schooling. There was little difference, on average, between foster mothers and foster fathers in terms of length of secondary schooling, but there was some difference between the districts, Auckland foster parents having had over a year longer at secondary school, on average, than those in Christchurch. (For Auckland foster parents, the mean number of years secondary schooling was 3.6, compared with 2.5 for those in Christchurch). It appears from this that the Auckland foster parents in the scheme were a relatively well educated group, and the Christchurch group less so.

The majority of the foster parents had not attained any formal educational qualifications while at secondary school. However, eight had gained University Entrance or a higher qualification (14%), and a further quarter had achieved School Certificate.

The majority of the foster mothers had no academic, professional or trade qualifications; however, over half of the foster fathers did have such a qualification. These were mainly trade qualifications. Foster mothers who had such qualifications were likely to have teaching or nursing qualifications.

7.3 Socio-economic status of the foster parents

An SES (socio-economic status) score was assigned to each of the foster parents using Elley and Irving's index (as had been done for the families of the children earlier). There were virtually no differences, on average, in the scores between foster mothers and foster fathers or between the districts. The overall mean score for all of the foster parents was 3.6 and mean scores for each of the sub-groups were very close to this.

Table 7.2 Socio-economic status of the foster parents

<u>SES Score</u>	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>	
<u>TOTAL</u>				
1 (highest)	1	3%	1	4%
2	1	3%	4	16%
3	9	29%	7	28%
4	6	19%	4	16%
5	4	13%	9	36%
6 (lowest)	1	3%	-	-
Information missing	9	29%	-	-
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%
Mean score	3.6		3.6	

Clearly the foster families were from the middle range of occupational groups (most commonly in categories 3,4 and 5) with few from the categories at either extreme. The foster families, on average, were somewhat higher in status than the natural families of the children (who had mean scores of 4.7 and 5.1 in Auckland and Christchurch respectively and who were concentrated in groups 4, 5 and 6).

7.4 Previous fostering experience

The majority of the foster parents in the scheme had not fostered children previously, but there were 13 foster mothers who reported that they had. These foster mothers reported that they had fostered for an average of seven years each. The maximum length of time any of the foster mothers had been fostering was 30 years (a foster mother in Christchurch), but she was very much atypical, the next longest serving foster mother in Christchurch having fostered for eleven years. The maximum length of experience in Auckland was 15 years.

Table 7.3 Length of previous fostering experience

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
None	10	63%	8	53%	18	58%
1 year	1	6%	4	27%	5	16%
2-5 years	2	13%	1	7%	3	10%
6-10 years	2	13%	-	-	2	6%
More than 10 years	1	6%	2	13%	3	10%
TOTAL	16	100%	15	100%	31	100%

The number of children previously fostered by these foster parents ranged generally from one to eight (with the exception of the indomitable couple from Christchurch mentioned above who had fostered a total of 160 children in their 30 years involvement), the biggest group having had two children before entering the scheme.

Table 7.4 Number of children fostered previously

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
None	10	63%	8	53%	18	58%
1	-	-	2	13%	2	6%
2	2	13%	3	20%	5	16%
3	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	1	6%	-	-	1	3%
5	1	6%	-	-	1	3%
6	1	6%	1	7%	2	6%
7	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	1	6%	-	-	1	3%
160	-	-	1	7%	1	3%
TOTAL	16	100%	15	100%	31	100%

Eight of the 13 foster mothers who had fostered previously said they had fostered children for the Department of Social Welfare, while the other five had fostered for more than one agency.

7.5 The decision to foster a child

More than three quarters of the foster parents had considered fostering before they came to hear about the Intensive Foster Care Scheme. Just under 40% had either fostered before or were fostering at the time, while almost the same number had previously considered fostering but had not done anything about it.

Table 7.5 Had the foster parents considered fostering previously before joining the Intensive Foster Care Scheme?

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Had not considered fostering	6	19%	6	24%	12	21%
Had considered fostering but not done anything about it	12	39%	9	36%	21	38%
Were not fostering at the time but had fostered in the past	7	23%	3	12%	10	18%
Were fostering at the time	6	19%	6	24%	12	21%
No response	-	-	1	4%	1	2%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

The majority of those fostering in the scheme first heard about it through newspaper or radio advertisements, but there was a sizeable group (over a quarter) who heard about it directly from the Department of Social Welfare.

When they were asked about their reasons for deciding to foster a child, 70% of the foster parents gave reasons relating to the needs of the child, for example "wanting to help a less fortunate child", or "thought we had something to offer". A further quarter gave reasons relating to the needs of the foster family, such as "we were unable to have any more children" or "we wanted a companion for our youngest". There were virtually no differences between foster mothers and fathers or between districts in the proportion of foster parents making these responses.

Over 60% of the foster parents said they would be fostering a child even if the Intensive Foster Care Scheme were not operating, while a quarter said they would not. More of the Christchurch foster parents said they would be fostering a child if the scheme were not operating (72%) than did those in Auckland (52%).

Table 7.6 Would the foster parents be fostering a child if the Intensive Foster Care Scheme were not operating?

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Yes	21	68%	14	56%	35	63%
No	7	23%	7	28%	14	25%
Don't know	3	10%	3	12%	6	11%
No response	-	-	1	4%	1	2%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

7.6 Foster parents' views of the main aim of the Intensive Foster Care Scheme

There appeared to be something of a mixture of views as to the main aim of the Intensive Foster Care Scheme. - The biggest group of foster mothers thought it was to provide foster care for "hard to foster" children, and the next biggest group thought it was to provide extra support for foster parents. On the other hand, the biggest group of foster fathers thought it was to provide children with the stability and security of substitute family care (an aim which does not distinguish it from conventional fostering).

Among the foster mothers there was something of a regional split : those in Auckland were more inclined to view the main aim of the scheme as providing foster care for "hard to foster" children or enhancing the child's relationship with his or her natural family, while those in Christchurch were more inclined to view the main aim as providing extra support to foster parents or providing children with the stability and security of substitute family care.

Table 7.7 Foster parents' views of the main aim of the Intensive Foster Care Scheme

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
To provide extra support to foster parents	7	23%	6	24%	13	23%
To provide foster care for "hard to foster" children	8	26%	6	24%	14	25%
To provide children with stability, security and substitute family care	5	16%	7	28%	12	21%
To improve the child's relationship with the natural family	5	16%	1	4%	6	11%
Other	3	10%	4	16%	7	13%
Didn't answer	3	10%	-	-	3	5%
No response	-	-	1	4%	1	2%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

7.7 Foster parents' views of the role of a foster parent

The foster parents in the scheme were inclined to see themselves as most like an adoptive parent (out of all the options given in Table 7.8 below): just under half of the foster fathers saw themselves as most like an adoptive parent, and a third of the foster mothers.

The next most common response was a "friend" to the child, although as many foster mothers considered themselves to be most like a natural parent and as many again gave other responses not given in the list of options in the question. Few of the foster parents considered themselves to be most like a child care worker.

Table 7.8 Who did the foster parents think they were most like in their relationship with the child?

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Natural parent	5	16%	2	8%	7	13%
Adoptive parent	11	35%	12	48%	23	41%
Relative	2	6%	2	8%	4	7%
Friend	5	16%	3	12%	8	14%
Child care worker	2	6%	2	8%	4	7%
Other	5	16%	2	8%	7	13%
No response	<u>1</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>8%</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5%</u>
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

The foster parents were also asked to place themselves on a five point scale for each of a series of nine questions which contained two opposing statements about the nature of the fostering role. The first six were concerned with how the foster parents saw themselves and the final three were concerned with how the foster parents saw the social worker and the Department.

Table 7.9, on the following page, gives details of mean scores for each question, broken down by district and by foster mother or foster father. The table shows that the foster parents scored, on average, about two for the first six questions, indicating that they saw themselves as somewhat like the descriptor in the left hand column (i.e. that they saw themselves as more like parents than child care workers, that they saw fostering as more like a personal interest than an occupation, and so on). For the last three questions, the mean score was around 1.5 indicating that the respondents identified even more strongly with the left hand descriptor (i.e. that they saw the social worker fairly much as a consultant rather than as a job supervisor and that they saw the Department fairly much as a service organisation rather than as an employer).

Table 7.9 Mean scores for foster parents' views of the role of a foster parent

<u>(Score 1)</u>	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>		<u>(Score 5)</u>
Parent	FM	2.3	FM	2.0	FM	2.2	Child Care Worker
	FF	2.4	FF	1.7	FF	2.0	
	TOT	2.4	TOT	1.9	TOT	2.1	
Personal interest	FM	1.8	FM	1.7	FM	1.7	Occupation
	FF	1.8	FF	1.8	FF	1.8	
	TOT	1.8	TOT	1.7	TOT	1.8	
Another child	FM	2.3	FM	1.8	FM	2.0	Home Job
	FF	1.6	FF	2.0	FF	1.8	
	TOT	2.0	TOT	1.9	TOT	1.9	
Voluntary helper	FM	2.6	FM	2.5	FM	2.5	Professional Child Care Worker
	FF	1.5	FF	2.4	FF	2.0	
	TOT	2.1	TOT	2.4	TOT	2.2	
Department volunteer	FM	1.8	FM	1.7	FM	1.8	Department Employee
	FF	1.9	FF	2.6	FF	2.3	
	TOT	1.9	TOT	2.1	TOT	2.0	
Community Service	FM	2.1	FM	2.1	FM	2.1	Job
	FF	1.9	FF	2.0	FF	2.0	
	TOT	2.0	TOT	2.0	TOT	2.0	
Social Worker as Consultant	FM	1.3	FM	1.6	FM	1.5	Social Worker as Job Supervisor
	FF	1.6	FF	1.8	FF	1.8	
	TOT	1.5	TOT	1.7	TOT	1.6	
Social Worker as Equal	FM	1.7	FM	1.3	FM	1.5	Social Worker as Superior
	FF	1.3	FF	1.6	FF	1.5	
	TOT	1.5	TOT	1.4	TOT	1.5	
DSW as Service Organisation	FM	1.3	FM	1.6	FM	1.4	DSW as Employer
	FF	1.5	FF	1.9	FF	1.8	
	TOT	1.4	TOT	1.8	TOT	1.6	

The foster parents were also asked how they thought of their role as a foster parent in the Intensive Foster Care Scheme in terms of the range of options given in Table 7.10 below. The great majority of foster parents saw themselves as substitute parents for the child, although there was a small knot of foster mothers in Auckland who considered themselves primarily as trained resource persons for the Department of Social Welfare. Few foster parents had any other views on their role in the scheme.

Table 7.10 Foster parents' views of their role in the Intensive Foster Care Scheme

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Substitute parent	24	77%	20	80%	44	79%
Employee of the Department of Social Welfare	1	3%	-	-	1	2%
Trained resource person for the Department of Social Welfare	5	16%	2	8%	7	13%
Colleague of social worker	1	3%	2	8%	3	5%
No response	-	-	1	4%	1	2%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

7.8 Foster parents' preferences as to type of foster child

Only 30% of the foster parents had no preference as to the age of the foster child (more foster mothers had no age preference and less foster fathers). Children of primary school age were most commonly preferred (about half of the foster fathers and about 60% of the foster mothers had a preference for children of this age), while pre-school children were the next most commonly preferred (around a quarter), followed by children of secondary school age (around a fifth). Babies were least preferred (only 16% of the foster parents having a preference for children this young).

Slightly fewer than 60% of the foster parents expressed no preference as to the ethnic origin of the foster child, but there were 38% who said they would prefer to foster European children. Some of these foster parents also mentioned other ethnic types of children who they would prefer to foster, but there remained a group of more than a quarter who preferred to foster only European children.

Table 7.11 Foster parents' preferences as to ethnic origin of the foster child

	<u>Foster mothers</u> (n = 31)		<u>Foster fathers</u> (n = 25)		<u>TOTAL</u> (n = 56)	
European	12	39%	9	36%	21	38%
Maori	3	10%	3	12%	3	11%
Polynesian	2	6%	1	4%	3	5%
Child of other ethnic origin	2	6%	1	4%	3	5%
No response	1	3%	2	8%	3	5%
No preference	18	58%	14	56%	32	57%

Two thirds of the foster parents had no preference as to the sex of the foster child, but about 20% preferred to foster boys while about 10% preferred to foster girls.

The foster parents were also asked if there were any types of children they would prefer not to foster, from a list of given categories. Their responses are given in Table 7.12.

Table 7.12 Types of children foster parents would prefer not to foster

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
A child with a health problem	8	26%	7	28%	15	27%
A child who has a history of stealing	5	16%	6	24%	11	20%
A child who is destructive to property	9	29%	7	28%	16	29%
A child who is very hostile to adults	4	13%	2	8%	6	11%
A child who is aggressive to other children	7	23%	5	20%	12	21%
A child who is a persistent truant	1	3%	3	12%	4	7%
A sexually promiscuous boy	15	48%	9	36%	24	43%
A sexually promiscuous girl	13	42%	12	48%	25	45%
Other	2	6%	2	8%	4	7%
No response	1	3%	2	8%	3	5%
Would be prepared to foster any of these types of children	8	26%	5	20%	13	23%

7.9 Training of the foster parents

The foster parents were asked which aspects of the training they had received had been most significant for them. The aspects most frequently mentioned were the training of specific skills, and how to cope with particular situations (just under half mentioned these aspects of the training) while a significant number (just under a third) mentioned the illustrative material such as case histories, examples from other people's past experience and so on. About an eighth of the foster mothers and a fifth of the foster fathers did not give any answer.

The foster parents were then asked to give a rating of the degree to which the foster parents felt their skills, confidence and knowledge had been enhanced (or reduced) by such training. The rating was made on a five point scale (where score 1 = greatly improved, 2 = somewhat improved, 3 = neither improved or reduced, 4 = somewhat reduced and 5 = greatly reduced). The mean scores for the foster parents are given in Table 7.13.

Table 7.13 Mean scores representing foster parents' views as to the effect of training

	<u>Foster mothers</u>	<u>Foster fathers</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Confidence to deal with foster child	2.3	2.0	2.2
Confidence to deal with natural parents	2.4	2.8	2.6
Understanding of children's growth and development	1.9	2.0	1.9
Understanding of foster children's behaviour and feelings	1.7	1.6	1.6
Confidence in dealing with Department of Social Welfare	1.7	1.8	1.7

The most positive mean scores (indicating that the foster parents felt the training had its greatest positive effect) were in the area of understanding of foster children's behaviour and feelings. Only one foster parent felt that there had been a negative impact in this area. The next most positive score was in the area of the foster parents' confidence to deal with the Department of Social Welfare. Two foster parents (both in Auckland) felt there had been some negative impact in this area and both of these felt the effect had been to reduce their confidence greatly. In the next most highly scored area (understanding of the growth and development of children), no respondent felt there had been a negative impact. In the other two areas (confidence to deal with a foster child and confidence to deal with the natural parents of the child), five and three respondents respectively reported that the training had had a negative impact on them, and one in each area said the impact had been greatly negative. Overall, however, the response to the training appeared positive and few people were unhappy with the impact that it had had.

Eight foster mothers (26%) and nine foster fathers (36%) would have included other matters in the training course if they were organising it. The most frequently mentioned topics were how to deal with behaviour problems (mentioned by six respondents) and how to deal with natural families (mentioned by three). Other suggestions included information on how the Department of Social Welfare is run, information on Department of Social Welfare institutions, including visits to them, the legal position of foster parents with respect to their foster children's offending and truancy, and video films on fostering peculiar to New Zealand.

Eight foster mothers (26%) and six foster fathers (24%) said they would place more emphasis on some aspects of the training. Four mentioned the child's natural family, two mentioned money matters and one mentioned behavioural problems. Other topics included "being natural, honest and fair", "the stress on the foster parent's natural children" and the implications of a long term placement.

Only two foster mothers (6%) and two foster fathers (8%), all in Auckland, said they would give less emphasis to any aspect of the training. Comments here were mainly concerned with the negative aspects of fostering which some foster parents saw as overemphasised. One foster parent suggested there should be less referring to experts.

The foster parents were then asked to give a rating of how much value the training had been to them personally. Over half of the foster fathers and somewhat less (39%) of the foster mothers said it had been of considerable value, while almost all of the remainder said it had been of some value. One foster mother and two foster fathers demurred : they said it had been of little value. No one, however, said it had been of absolutely no value.

Table 7.14 How much value had the training been to the foster parents personally?

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Considerable value	12	39%	14	56%	26	46%
Some value	16	52%	8	32%	24	43%
Little value	1	3%	2	8%	3	5%
No value	-	-	-	-	-	-
No response	<u>2</u>	<u>6%</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5%</u>
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

7.10 Support groups

The foster parent were asked a series of questions about the regularly meeting support groups they were required to attend. The first question was concerned with the aims of the groups. About half the respondents viewed the groups as a means of enabling the foster parents to provide one another with mutual support and encouragement. However, a substantial majority (over a third) saw the support groups as having a more active or practical function, viz to provide training for foster parents and to serve as a forum for solving problems and a source of new ideas for foster parents.

Among the foster mothers there was a slight regional difference : those in Christchurch were more likely to see the group as providing a supportive environment, while in Auckland they were more evenly divided between the two views of the group. There were no differences apparent among the foster fathers.

About half of the foster parents thought the aims of the support groups were being fully met, while most of the remainder thought the aims were being partially met. Two foster mothers thought the aims were not being met and another seven foster parents did not answer this question.

Table 7.15 Foster parents' views of whether the support groups were meeting their aims

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Aims fully met	15	48%	12	48%	27	48%
Aims partially met	11	35%	9	36%	20	36%
Aims not met	2	6%	-	-	2	4%
No response	<u>3</u>	<u>10%</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>16%</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>13%</u>
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

Three foster mothers and four foster fathers thought the aims were not being fully met because of features of the whole group (for example "lack of structure" or "the format needs greater variety"), while six foster mothers and three foster fathers thought the aims were not being fully met because of individual problems (for example "people aren't always honest", "people don't come" or "foster children are too different").

The foster parents were asked what they thought should be the role of the social worker in the support group. Most thought the social worker should take a fairly active role in the support groups. The most frequently endorsed role was as an interpreter for the lines of discussion, while nearly as many thought the social worker should also instigate new fields of discussion. Over half of the foster parents also thought the social worker should chair the discussion. Only one respondent (a foster father in Auckland) thought the social worker should not attend support group meetings.

The foster parents generally had more restricted views of the role which should be played by the Foster Care Federation representative in the support groups. About a third thought the Federation representative should have a high profile role, attending regularly and taking an active part, while about 20% had a more limiting view of the role. Ten respondents were unsure about who the Federation representative was or what the Federation represented, and about a quarter didn't bother to answer this question. (It should be noted that this was an open ended question with no fixed options provided, so that responses here cannot be properly compared with those given about the social worker.)

Overall, the foster parents were less enthusiastic about the support groups than they had been about the training. 29% thought the support groups had been of considerable value, while a further half considered they had been of some value. Seven respondents thought they were of little value and another two said they were of no value at all.

Table 7.16 Foster parents' views of the overall value of the support groups

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Considerable value	9	29%	7	28%	16	29%
Some value	15	48%	12	48%	27	48%
Little value	3	10%	4	16%	7	13%
No value	2	6%	-	-	2	4%
No response	<u>2</u>	<u>6%</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>8%</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>7%</u>
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

7.11 Foster parents' views of the foster child

The majority of the foster parents reported that they got along with their foster child quite well, and about a third said they got on very well. Three foster fathers and two foster mothers said they got on badly with the foster child.

Table 7.17 Foster parents' views on how they got on with their foster child

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Very well	11	35%	9	36%	20	36%
Quite well	16	52%	13	52%	29	52%
Quite badly	-	-	3	12%	3	5%
Very badly	2	6%	-	-	2	4%
No response	<u>2</u>	<u>6%</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4%</u>
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

Most foster parents thought the children fitted into their families "quite well", with a small number (just under a quarter) reporting that the child fitted in very well. More foster parents reported some problems with the way the child fitted in (nearly 20%) than had reported difficulties in how they got on with the child (only 5%). In some cases it seems that the foster parents felt they were getting on well enough with the child even though he or she was having some difficulty fitting in.

Table 7.18 Foster parents' views on how the foster child fitted into the home

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Very well	5	16%	8	32%	13	23%
Quite well	21	68%	12	48%	33	59%
Quite badly	5	16%	4	16%	9	16%
Very badly	-	-	1	4%	1	2%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

The foster parents were also generally of the view that the foster child liked living with their family, although over a quarter did not seem confident enough to judge or felt it may be too early to tell. Only five foster parents thought the child did not like living with their family. The Christchurch foster mothers were more confident than those in Auckland that the child liked living with the family (73% compared with 44%), while the Auckland foster mothers were more likely to think it was too early to tell (half gave this response).

Table 7.19 Foster parents' views on whether the child liked living with the foster family

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Yes very much	8	26%	8	32%	16	29%
Yes quite a lot	10	32%	10	40%	20	36%
Don't know or too early to tell	10	32%	5	20%	15	27%
No not very much	3	10%	2	8%	5	9%
No not at all	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

The reasons given for why the child did not like living with the foster family generally concerned the child's characteristics (e.g. "he's too old", "because he was determined, wilful and self centred") or the child's wishes (e.g. "she wants to go back to previous foster parents who don't want her", or "she would dearly love to return to her own people".)

The majority of the foster parents (over half) were reasonably satisfied with the progress the child had been making while he/she was in their home. A further third were very satisfied, while four foster mothers and four foster fathers (14%) said that they were not satisfied.

Table 7.20 Foster parents' views of the progress the child was making

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Very satisfied	9	29%	9	36%	18	32%
Reasonably satisfied	18	58%	12	48%	30	54%
Not satisfied	4	13%	4	16%	8	14%
TOTAL	<u>31</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>100%</u>

The foster parents were asked to rate their foster children on whether they thought they placed more than usual demands on those responsible for their care and on whether they thought the child was difficult to manage. As many as 80% of the foster parents (and even more of the foster mothers) thought the children placed more than usual demands on those caring for them, and over half also reported that they usually found the children difficult to manage.

Table 7.21 Foster parents' views of whether the child placed more than usual demands on those responsible for his or her care

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Places more than usual demands	27	87%	18	72%	45	80%
Does not place more than usual demands	4	13%	7	28%	11	20%
TOTAL	<u>31</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>100%</u>

Table 7.22 Foster parents' views of whether the child was usually difficult to manage

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Usually very difficult to manage	2	6%	1	4%	3	5%
Usually quite difficult to manage	14	45%	12	48%	26	46%
Usually not difficult	15	48%	12	48%	27	48%
TOTAL	<u>31</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>100%</u>

It will be noted that the foster parents were less likely to regard the children as difficult and demanding than were the social workers. The social workers recorded that they thought all the children placed more than usual demands on those responsible for their care, while 20% of the foster parents did not agree. Furthermore, the social workers considered that all but three of the children (93%) were usually (at least) quite difficult to manage, while the foster parents considered that nearly half the children were usually not difficult.

Most of the foster parents (nearly three quarters) thought foster care was the best way to look after children with these needs while few have had a negative view. Many of those who didn't reply positively here said they didn't know.

Table 7.23 Foster parents' views of whether foster care was the best type of care for the child

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Foster care best	22	71%	19	76%	41	73%
Foster care not best	4	13%	-	-	4	7%
Don't know	4	13%	6	24%	10	18%
No response	<u>1</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2%</u>
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

Those who thought fostering was not the best way to cater for the child's needs mainly thought the child would be better placed where there was more discipline - for example in an institution.

7.12 Foster parents' views on the planning for the future of the child

Just under three quarters of the foster parents (23 foster mothers and 18 foster fathers) said that a plan had been worked out for the future of the child. In view of the strong emphasis placed on planning in the scheme, this is a rather extraordinary finding : more than quarter of the foster parents were quite unaware that any plan had been made for the child.

Of those who were aware that a plan had been made, a large majority of the foster parents were satisfied with the part they had played in the planning process, although there were seven foster parents who thought they should have been more involved. Of the seven foster mothers who thought they had played a major part in the planning process, six were in Auckland and one was in Christchurch.

Table 7.24 Foster parents' views on whether they were sufficiently involved in the planning process

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Sufficiently involved	18	78%	16	89%	34	83%
Should have been a little more involved	5	22%	2	11%	7	17%
Should have been a lot more involved	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	23	100%	18	100%	41	100%

The foster parents generally considered that the child had played a fairly full part in the planning process also. Indeed fewer of the foster parents were dissatisfied with the part that the child had played in planning than had been the case with their own involvement. Only one foster mother and three foster fathers felt that the child should have been more involved.

Table 7.25 Foster parents' views of whether the child was sufficiently involved in planning

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Sufficiently involved	22	96%	15	83%	37	90%
Should have been a little more involved	1	4%	1	6%	2	5%
Should have been a lot more involved	-	-	2	11%	2	5%
TOTAL	23	100%	18	100%	41	100%

7.13 Contact between the foster parents and the family of the child

The foster parents reported that the child was typically in contact with his or her family every three or four weeks. About a sixth were in more frequent contact than this and about a third were in less frequent contact. Only two foster mothers reported that there was no contact at all between the child and his or her family. (The foster fathers were not asked this question.)

Table 7.26 Frequency of contact between the child and his or her family

No contact	2	6%
Every 1-2 weeks	5	16%
Every 3-4 weeks	13	42%
Every 1-6 months	9	29%
Less frequent than	2	6%
TOTAL	31	100%

The most common form of contact consisted of visits by the foster child to his/her own family (90% of the foster mothers reported that such contact occurred) followed by phone calls (just over half) and visits by the family to the child (just under a third).

More than half of the foster parents (61% of the foster mothers and 56% of the foster fathers and more of each in Auckland than in Christchurch) reported that the contact between the child and his or her natural family affected the child's emotional state. Most of these respondents reported a negative effect on the child, but two people reported that the child appreciated the foster home more after contact with the family.

Table 7.27 Foster parents' views of whether contact between the child and his or her natural family affected the child's emotional state

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Yes	19	61%	14	56%	33	59%
No	12	39%	10	40%	22	39%
No response	-	-	1	4%	1	2%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

The foster parents reported that they themselves were also in fairly frequent contact with the family of the child. Over half reported that they were in contact at least once every three or four weeks; a quarter reported contact at a lower frequency and 20% reported no contact at all. Most commonly this contact was by telephone (over half the foster parents reported such contact) followed by visits to the home of the child's family and meetings when the child visited and returned from visits to his or her family.

Most (55%) of the foster parents were satisfied with the amount of contact they had with the family of the child, although 29% felt they should see more of them. Only two foster parents (both in Christchurch) said they saw too much of the child's family.

Table 7.28 Foster parents' view of whether they saw enough of the child's family

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Not often enough	11	35%	5	20%	16	29%
Often enough	16	52%	15	60%	31	55%
Too often	1	3%	1	4%	2	4%
No response	3	10%	4	16%	7	13%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

Most of the foster parents felt reasonably comfortable (or at least were not uncomfortable) when in contact with the family of the child, but a small number (around a sixth) said they felt a bit uncomfortable. More of the foster fathers than foster mothers admitted to feelings of discomfort.

Table 7.29 Foster parents' attitudes towards contact with the family of the child

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Very comfortable	5	16%	3	12%	8	14%
Fairly comfortable	10	32%	9	36%	19	34%
Neutral	8	26%	4	16%	12	21%
A bit uncomfortable	4	13%	5	20%	9	16%
Very uncomfortable	-	-	-	-	-	-
Not applicable, not met family	4	13%	3	12%	7	13%
No response	-	-	1	4%	1	2%
TOTAL	<u>31</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>100%</u>

The foster parents also viewed the natural family's attitude to them in a fairly positive way. Only five foster parents thought the child's family had an outright negative attitude towards them, although more than a third thought the family had mixed feelings.

The foster parents were then asked if they thought their foster child wished to return to his/her natural family, if they thought the natural family would want him/her to return to them and if they thought such a return would be successful. Foster mothers were more likely to think the child wanted to live with the natural family while the foster fathers were more likely to think the child was indifferent about this.

Table 7.30 Foster parents' views of whether the child wanted to return to his or her family

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Child would like to return to own family	11	36%	5	20%	16	29%
Has mixed feelings both positive and negative	8	26%	7	28%	15	27%
Neutral or indifferent doesn't care either way	5	16%	9	36%	14	25%
Child would not like to return to own family	5	16%	4	16%	9	16%
No response	2	7%	-	-	2	4%
TOTAL	<u>31</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>100%</u>

The foster parents tended to think that the natural families were not enthusiastic about wanting the child back to live with them. Indeed, nearly half said they thought the family did not want the child back and a further quarter had mixed feelings. Only 20% said they thought the family did want the child back again.

Table 7.31 Foster parents' views of whether the child's family wanted the child back with them again

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Family would like the child to return	7	23%	4	16%	11	20%
Has mixed feelings both positive and negative	8	26%	5	20%	13	23%
Neutral or indifferent doesn't care either way	3	10%	3	12%	6	11%
Family would not like the child to return	13	42%	12	48%	25	45%
Don't know	-	-	1	4%	1	2%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

They also tended to think that in most cases a return would not be successful. Less than 10% thought it would be successful, while over 60% thought a return would be unlikely to succeed.

Table 7.32 Foster parents' views as to whether such a return would be successful

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Very likely	2	6%	-	-	2	4%
Fairly likely	1	3%	2	8%	3	5%
Don't know	6	19%	8	32%	14	25%
Fairly unlikely	11	35%	1	4%	12	21%
Very unlikely	10	32%	13	52%	23	41%
No response	1	3%	1	4%	2	4%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

The reasons most commonly given for this gloomy prognosis related to the home conditions of the family. Over half the foster mothers and about two thirds of the foster fathers gave reasons of this type (e.g. "his father couldn't cope" "her mother would reject her", while about a quarter gave reasons relating to the child's behaviour or problems. Three foster mothers and one foster father did not say why they thought a return home by their foster child would be unsuccessful.

7.14 Foster parents' views of the social work support

The great majority of the foster mothers (81%) reported that they were visited once a fortnight by the social worker while four reported visits once a week and two (6%) reported less frequent visits. (The foster fathers were not asked this question.) Almost all of the respondents said the social worker visited often enough. The only exceptions were two foster mothers and one foster father who said they were visited too often. No one said they weren't visited often enough.

The majority said they never felt uneasy discussing anything with the social worker: only six respondents said they occasionally felt uneasy, and one foster mother said she often felt uneasy.

Table 7.33 Did the foster parents ever feel uneasy discussing things with the social worker?

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Never uneasy	26	84%	22	88%	48	86%
Only occasionally uneasy	4	13%	2	8%	6	11%
Sometimes uneasy	-	-	-	-	-	-
Often uneasy	1	3%	-	-	1	2%
No response	-	-	1	4%	1	2%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

The foster mother who said she often felt uneasy said this was in discussion of the particular problems of the child.

The majority of the foster parents found that the social worker was easily available when they wanted to get hold of her or him, but around a third said they had some difficulty getting hold of the social worker, and one foster mother said he or she was usually quite hard to get hold of.

Table 7.34 Did the foster parents find the social worker easy to get hold of?

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Usually easy to get hold of	23	74%	15	60%	38	68%
Sometimes easy, sometimes hard to get hold of	7	23%	9	36%	16	29%
Usually hard to get hold of	1	3%	-	-	1	2%
No response	-	-	1	4%	1	2%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

The great majority of foster parents were pleased with the promptness with which the social worker usually tried to help with their problems (84% said the social worker usually acted very promptly) and there were only two foster parents who considered that their social worker usually reacted slowly.

Table 7.35 Did the foster parents find that the social worker usually acted promptly to help with any problems?

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Very promptly	26	84%	21	84%	47	84%
Quite promptly	4	13%	2	8%	6	11%
Not as promptly as I would like	-	-	-	-	-	-
Usually very slow to react	1	3%	1	4%	2	4%
No response	-	-	1	4%	1	2%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

Most of the foster parents also found the social workers very helpful with any problems they referred to them, although two foster mothers and two foster fathers said they didn't think the social worker was very helpful.

Table 7.36 Did the foster parents think the social worker was helpful?

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Very helpful	25	81%	18	72%	43	77%
Quite helpful	4	13%	4	16%	8	14%
Not very helpful	2	6%	2	8%	4	7%
Not at all helpful	-	-	-	-	-	-
No response	-	-	1	4%	1	2%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

7.15 The board rate and expenses of keeping a child

The great majority of foster parents thought the board rate paid to them under the Intensive Foster Care Scheme was about right with only a handful of people thinking it too high or too low (four thought it was too high and three thought it was too low).

Of those who thought the board rate ought to be at a different level, one foster mother and one foster father thought it should be \$30 a week, one foster mother thought it should be \$40 a week and one foster father thought it should be \$80 a week.

Most foster parents reported no delays or difficulties in getting payment when they have made claims to the Department of Social Welfare for expenses. No respondents reported frequent difficulties, but around a quarter stated that they had sometimes had difficulties.

Table 7.37 Had the foster parents ever experienced difficulties in getting payments when they had made claims to the department?

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Frequently had difficulties	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sometimes had difficulties	10	32%	5	20%	15	27%
Never had difficulties	20	65%	16	64%	36	64%
No response	1	3%	4	16%	5	9%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

Seven foster mothers (23%) and three foster fathers (13%) felt they should be able to claim for certain miscellaneous expenses they were not able to claim for at the time. Most often they wished to claim for damage to their property caused by the foster child, but one foster mother and one foster father considered they should be able to claim for driving lessons and one foster mother mentioned motel expenses on family holidays.

7.16 General impressions of the Intensive Foster Care Scheme

The foster parents were asked to assess the different aspects of the scheme as to how helpful they had been.

The majority found the training course quite helpful, while only two respondents considered it harmful. (Both of these, however, thought it had been very harmful).

Table 7.38 Foster parents' assessments of the training course

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Very helpful	7	23%	7	28%	14	25%
Quite helpful	17	55%	15	60%	32	57%
Neutral - neither helpful nor harmful	5	16%	1	4%	6	11%
Quite harmful	-	-	-	-	-	-
Very harmful	1	3%	1	4%	2	4%
Not applicable	1	3%	1	4%	2	4%
TOTAL	<u>31</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>100%</u>

Most of the foster parents found the support groups helpful, but only about a quarter were very enthusiastic about them. About a quarter had a neutral view. No respondents found the support groups harmful.

Table 7.39 Foster parents' assessments of the support group

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Very helpful	8	26%	8	32%	16	29%
Quite helpful	15	48%	9	36%	24	42%
Neutral - neither helpful nor harmful	7	23%	6	24%	13	23%
Quite harmful	-	-	-	-	-	-
Very harmful	-	-	-	-	-	-
Not applicable	1	3%	2	8%	3	5%
TOTAL	<u>31</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>100%</u>

Contact with the social worker was seen by the majority of the foster parents as very helpful. Only one foster parent dissented from the generally positive view of the social worker, although a further three took a neutral stance.

Table 7.40 Foster parents' assessments of the social worker

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Very helpful	23	74%	19	76%	42	75%
Quite helpful	6	19%	3	12%	9	16%
Neutral - neither helpful nor harmful	2	6%	1	4%	3	5%
Quite harmful	-	-	1	4%	1	2%
Very harmful	-	-	-	-	-	-
No response	-	-	1	4%	1	2%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

The majority of the foster mothers saw planning for the child's future as quite helpful while the foster fathers were more likely to see planning as neutral. There was, again, only one respondent with a negative view.

Table 7.41 Foster parents' assessments of the planning for the future of the child

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Very helpful	6	19%	6	24%	12	21%
Quite helpful	17	55%	7	28%	24	43%
Neutral - neither helpful nor harmful	5	16%	8	32%	13	23%
Quite harmful	-	-	1	4%	1	2%
Very harmful	-	-	-	-	-	-
No response	1	3%	1	4%	2	4%
Not applicable	2	6%	2	8%	4	7%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

While most foster parents were in favour of planning, they were generally less enthusiastic about the participation of the child's family. Only a quarter regarded this positively, while around 40% remained neutral and a quarter gave a negative response.

Table 7.42 Foster parents' assessments of the participation of the child's family in planning

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Very helpful	2	6%	1	4%	3	5%
Quite helpful	7	23%	4	16%	11	20%
Neutral - neither helpful nor harmful	11	35%	11	44%	22	39%
Quite harmful	8	26%	6	24%	14	25%
Very harmful	-	-	-	-	-	-
No response	1	3%	-	-	1	2%
Not applicable	2	7%	3	13%	5	9%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	56	100%

The foster parents who had fostered before for the Department of Social Welfare were asked to compare the Intensive Foster Care Scheme with Department of Social Welfare fostering in general. 13 foster mothers (5 in Auckland and 3 in Christchurch) and 11 foster fathers (3 in Auckland and 8 in Christchurch) answered these questions.

The foster parents with previous experience tended to think the training in the scheme was considerably better than that offered in conventional fostering. Only one foster mother thought it was worse.

Table 7.43 Foster parents' views on the training in the scheme compared with that offered in conventional fostering

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Considerably better	7	54%	5	45%	12	50%
A bit better	1	8%	2	18%	3	13%
About the same	2	15%	2	18%	4	17%
A bit worse	1	8%	-	-	1	4%
Considerably worse	-	-	-	-	-	-
No response	2	15%	1	9%	3	13%
Didn't have training	-	-	1	9%	1	4%
TOTAL	13	100%	11	100%	24	100%

The majority also thought the preparations for placing the child in their home were considerably better than those employed in conventional fostering. Again, only one thought it was worse.

Table 7.44 Foster parents' views of the preparations for placing a child as compared with those in conventional fostering

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Considerably better	8	62%	6	55%	14	58%
A bit better	1	8%	-	-	1	4%
About the same	2	15%	3	27%	5	21%
A bit worse	-	-	-	-	-	-
Considerably worse	-	-	1	9%	1	4%
No response	2	15%	1	9%	3	13%
TOTAL	13	100%	11	100%	24	100%

The foster parents thought the social work support under the scheme was also considerably better than that provided for conventional fostering. Here three foster parents thought it was worse.

Table 7.45 Foster parents' views of the social work support as compared with that in conventional fostering

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Considerably better	8	62%	7	64%	15	63%
A bit better	1	8%	-	-	1	4%
About the same	1	8%	1	9%	2	8%
A bit worse	1	8%	1	9%	2	8%
Considerably worse	1	8%	-	-	1	4%
No response	1	8%	2	18%	3	13%
TOTAL	13	100%	11	100%	24	100%

Planning for the foster child's future was also seen as better in the scheme than in conventional fostering by most of the foster parents. Once again, there was only one respondent with a negative view.

Table 7.46 Foster parents' views of the planning for the future compared with that in conventional fostering

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Considerably better	4	31%	6	55%	10	42%
A bit better	3	23%	1	9%	4	17%
About the same	4	31%	3	27%	7	29%
A bit worse	-	-	-	-	-	-
Considerably worse	1	8%	-	-	1	4%
No response	1	8%	1	9%	2	8%
TOTAL	13	100%	11	100%	24	100%

The foster parents also rated the support they received from other foster parents in the scheme as better than that they had experienced in conventional fostering. This was particularly the case for the foster fathers and particularly in Christchurch. One foster mother considered it worse.

Table 7.47 Foster parents' views of the support from other foster parents compared with that in conventional fostering

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Considerably better	5	38%	7	64%	12	50%
A bit better	2	15%	-	-	2	8%
About the same	4	31%	1	9%	5	21%
A bit worse	-	-	-	-	-	-
Considerably worse	1	8%	-	-	1	4%
No response	1	8%	3	27%	4	17%
TOTAL	13	100%	11	100%	24	100%

When they compared the participation of the child's family under the scheme with conventional fostering the most common response was that it was a bit better. Few considered it very much better, but only two considered it worse. A substantial number of foster parents did not bother to answer this question.

Table 7.48 Foster parents' views of the participation of the child's family in planning as compared with that in conventional fostering

	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Considerably better	1	8%	1	9%	2	8%
A bit better	4	31%	3	27%	7	29%
About the same	2	15%	1	9%	3	13%
A bit worse	-	-	-	-	-	-
Considerably worse	1	8%	1	9%	2	8%
No response	5	38%	5	45%	10	42%
TOTAL	13	100%	11	100%	24	100%

7.17 Summary of the characteristics of the foster parents and their views on the scheme

- On average, the foster parents were aged about 40, with a big group in their 30's (about 40%) and a slightly smaller group in their 40's (about 30%).
- The Auckland foster parents tended to be relatively well educated, having had three and a half years secondary schooling each on average, compared with the Christchurch group who had had two and a half years average secondary schooling.
- The foster parents were largely from the lower middle socio-economic groups.
- Most of the foster parents in the scheme had not fostered previously, but there was a relatively substantial group who had (more in Christchurch than in Auckland).
- Over 60% of the foster parents said they would be fostering a child even if the Intensive Foster Care Scheme were not operating, while a quarter said they would not.
- The foster parents in the scheme were inclined to see themselves as most like an adoptive parent in relation to the child, while smaller numbers saw themselves as most like a friend or a natural parent of the child. Very few saw themselves as most like a child care worker.
- The foster parents were also more inclined to see themselves as providing a service than doing a job, and they generally saw fostering as more like a personal interest than an occupation.

- Over half the foster parents said they preferred to foster children of primary school age.
- Over half of the foster parents said they had no preference as to the ethnic origin of the child, but more than a quarter of the parents preferred to foster only pakeha children.
- The foster parents had largely positive views about the training that had been provided to them under the scheme: over half of the foster fathers and slightly less of the foster mothers said the training was of considerable value, while almost all of the remainder were a little less enthusiastic but nevertheless indicated that it had had some value.
- The most significant parts of the training were generally considered to be the teaching of specific skills and how to cope with particular situations, and the illustrative material such as case histories and examples from other people's experience.
- The foster parents were somewhat less enthusiastic about the support groups than they were about training. About a third regarded the support groups as of "considerable value" while a further half of them considered they had "some value". However, nearly 20% were of the view that they had little or no value.
- Most of the foster parents had fairly positive views of the child and the way the placement was proceeding. Few said that they were getting on badly with the child, or that the child wasn't making much progress in the placement.
- The foster parents were generally of the view that their child was more demanding than usual: 80% said they thought this was the case. Even so, only just over half the children were considered to be usually difficult to manage, and only three foster parents said the child was usually very difficult to manage.
- A quarter of the foster parents were unaware that any plan had been written for the child. This is a somewhat startling result in view of the strong emphasis placed on planning within the scheme.
- The foster parents were generally satisfied with the part they had played in planning for the future of the child. They were also generally satisfied with the part the child had played in the planning process.
- The foster parents typically reported that the children were in contact with their families about once every three or four weeks, most commonly by going on a visit to them. It was less common for the child's family to visit the child at the foster home.
- Over half of the foster parents expressed the view that such contact with the family affected the child's emotional state and/or behaviour.

- The foster parents themselves were typically in contact with the child's family about once every three or four weeks. Few foster parents confessed to any difficulties about meeting the family of the child, although a small group (under 20%) said they felt a bit uncomfortable about it.
- Most of the foster parents (81%) reported that the social worker visited them once a fortnight and there were only two who reported less frequent visiting than this. All of the respondents were satisfied with the frequency of visits by the social worker (apart from two who said the social worker visited too often).
- The majority of the foster parents were happy with the availability and approachability of the social worker and the promptness with which the social worker responded to any call for assistance.
- The foster parents were generally happy with the level of the board rate, but less happy with the Department's procedures for paying out claims for expenses incurred in looking after a child: about a quarter of the respondents reported that they had experienced delays or difficulties in obtaining settlement of such claims.
- In summing up the scheme the foster parents expressed generally positive views about the training, the support groups, the social work support and the planning for the future of the child.
- Foster parents who had fostered previously were almost unanimously of the opinion that the scheme provided better service than the conventional fostering regime did.

SECTION 8 COMPARISON BETWEEN THE VIEWS OF FOSTER PARENTS IN THE SCHEME AND THESE FOSTERING UNDER CONVENTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The questionnaire used to obtain the views of foster parents in the Intensive Scheme was also distributed to the foster parents of the children in conventional foster placements to permit comparisons between the views of parents fostering under the two different regimes. A total of 39 foster mothers and 31 foster fathers have so far returned their questionnaires to the Research Division, a response rate of 74%, slightly lower than that for foster parents in the scheme. The response rates for the sub-groups were as follows: Auckland foster mothers (70%) foster fathers (60%); Christchurch foster mothers (80%) foster fathers (83%). Again, as for the foster parents in the scheme, the response rate from Christchurch was somewhat higher than that for Auckland.

8.1 Demographic characteristics of the foster parents

There did not appear to be much difference in terms of age between the foster parents in the scheme and those fostering under conventional arrangements. The mean age of the foster mothers was 40 for those in the scheme and was 39 for those in the comparison group, while foster fathers in the scheme were aged 41 on average, compared with 42 for those in the non-scheme group.

More of the scheme foster parents were pakeha than was the case with those fostering under conventional arrangements. Indeed, there were only three non-pakeha foster parents in the scheme (at least among those who returned the questionnaire) compared with 15 people in the non-scheme group (21%).

Table 8.1 Ethnic origin of the foster parents

	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>				<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>			
	<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>	
European	29	94%	24	96%	31	79%	24	77%
Maori or part Maori	1	3%	1	4%	8	21%	4	13%
Pacific Islander	1	3%	-	-	-	-	3	10%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	39	100%	31	100%

8.2 Educational background and qualifications of the foster parents

The scheme foster parents and those in conventional fostering had spent similar amounts of time in secondary school. Foster parents in the scheme had spent an average of 3.0 years at secondary school, compared with 2.8 for those in the non-scheme group. This is only a marginal difference which results almost entirely from a difference between the two groups of foster fathers. Foster fathers in the scheme had had, on average, 3.1 years secondary schooling compared with 2.6 years for those in the non-scheme group. The foster mothers from the two groups had spent very similar periods at secondary school on average (3.0 years for those in the scheme and 3.1 years for those in the non-scheme group).

The two groups of foster parents were very similar in terms of school qualifications : 41% of those in the scheme had School Certificate or a higher qualification, compared with 37% in the non-scheme group. Nor was there any difference between the groups in terms of professional, technical or trade qualifications : 44% of the foster parents in both groups had such a qualification.

8.3 Socio-economic status of the foster parents

There was also little difference between the two groups of foster parents in terms of their socio-economic status (as indicated by their scores on the Elley-Irving index). Both groups of foster parents had scores clustered in categories 3, 4 and 5 of that index, with few in groups 1, 2 or 6. The mean scores for the two groups were very close : 3.6 for foster parents in the scheme and 3.5 for those fostering under conventional arrangements. We can conclude that the foster parents in the two groups were largely similar in terms of socio-economic background.

Table 8.2 Socio-economic status scores of the foster parents

SES score	IFCS Placements				Conventional Placements			
	Foster mothers		Foster fathers		Foster mothers		Foster fathers	
1 (highest)	1	3%	1	4%	2	5%	-	-
2	1	3%	4	16%	2	5%	7	23%
3	9	29%	7	28%	12	31%	9	29%
4	6	19%	4	16%	8	21%	12	39%
5	4	13%	9	36%	7	18%	3	10%
6 (lowest)	1	3%	-	-	1	3%	-	-
information missing	9	29%	-	-	7	18%	-	-
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	39	100%	31	100%
Mean score	3.6		3.6		3.6		3.4	

8.4 Number of children in the foster parents' own family

The families of foster parents in the non-scheme group were, on average, quite a bit larger than those of foster parents in the scheme. On average, the foster parents fostering under conventional arrangements had 3.9 children each, compared with only 2.7 for those in the scheme. This was mainly due to a difference between the groups in Auckland. The Auckland non-scheme foster parents had an average of 4.5 children, while those in the scheme had only 2.4 on average. The Christchurch foster families had similar average numbers of children.

Table 8.3 Average number of children in the foster parents' own family

IFCS Placements		Conventional Placements	
Auckland	Christchurch	Auckland	Christchurch
2.4	3.1	4.5	3.3

8.5 Previous experience of the foster parents

The foster parents in the scheme were more likely to be first time foster parents than those fostering under conventional arrangements. Nearly 60% of the foster parents in the scheme had not fostered before, compared with only 41% of those in the non-scheme group. Once again, this difference was mainly due to a difference in Auckland. Only just over a third of the Auckland scheme foster parents had fostered before, while over two thirds of the Auckland foster parents in the non-scheme group had prior fostering experience. By way of contrast, in Christchurch about half of the foster parents in each group had fostered before. (It should be noted that only foster mothers were asked this question, so the table below includes only foster mothers' responses.)

Table 8.4 Had the foster parents fostered before?

	<u>IFCS Placements</u>				<u>Conventional Placements</u>			
	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>	
Yes	6	38%	7	47%	13	68%	10	50%
No	10	63%	8	53%	6	32%	10	50%
TOTAL	16	100%	15	100%	19	100%	20	100%

Among those foster parents who had fostered before, the non-scheme group had had more prior experience, on average, than those in the scheme. The non-scheme parents had been fostering for nearly nine years before the current placement, on average, and had fostered an average of about 20 children each. By way of comparison, the foster parents in the scheme had been fostering for an average of about seven years and had fostered about 15 children each. We should not put too much stock in these precise figures, as they were distorted somewhat by individual foster parents who had fostered very large numbers of children (one foster family in the scheme had fostered more than 160 children and one in the non-scheme group had fostered more than 200), but if we exclude these extreme values from our computation of the means, the difference in length of experience between scheme and non-scheme foster parents is further accentuated.

An appreciable minority of both groups (38% of those in the scheme and 30% of the non-scheme group) had had experience fostering for an agency other than the Department of Social Welfare.

8.6 The decision to foster a child

The foster parents in both groups gave similar sets of responses to the query as to why they had decided to foster a child. The great majority of respondents (70% in the scheme and 71% in the non-scheme group) gave responses relating to the needs of the child (such as "we wanted to help a less fortunate child" or "we thought we had something to offer"). There was a slight difference in the remainder of the responses in that more of the scheme foster parents (over a quarter) gave reasons relating to the needs of their own family (such as "we wanted a companion for our

youngest child" or "we were unable to have any more children") compared with only 12% of those in the non-scheme group. This difference was almost entirely due to the small number of foster mothers in Auckland in the non-scheme group who gave reasons relating to the needs of their own family.

Table 8.5 Why did the foster parents decide to foster a child?

	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>				<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>			
	<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>	
needs of the child	22	71%	17	68%	29	74%	21	68%
needs of the foster family	8	26%	6	24%	2	5%	6	19%
other	1	3%	1	4%	8	21%	3	10%
missing	-	-	1	4%	-	-	1	3%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	39	100%	31	100%

8.7 Foster parents' perceptions of their role as a foster parent

The foster parents in the scheme had slightly different perceptions, on average, of their role as a foster parent from those fostering under conventional arrangements. The scheme foster parents tended to have higher average scores on the 1 to 5 scale for the series of questions relating to the foster parent role. This means that the scheme foster parents tended to place themselves further towards the right hand descriptors in table 8.6 below (that is towards the more "professional" end of the continuum) than did people fostering under conventional arrangements. Thus the scheme foster parents saw themselves as more like a child care worker and less like a parent than the non-scheme parents did.

Even so, the scheme foster parents still scored less than 3 (the midpoint) on average and so they still identified more with the left-hand descriptor than with the right, only to a lesser degree than the non-scheme parents.

The differences showed up chiefly for the first six items in the series of questions and were not so evident in the later questions concerned with the role of the social worker and the Department vis-a-vis fostering. Thus while the scheme foster parents saw themselves in a slightly more professional light than did non-scheme people, they nevertheless cherished their independence in the task as much as the non-scheme people, and equally with non-scheme parents tended to regard the Department and the social worker as service organisation and consultant rather than as employer and job supervisor.

Table 8.6 Mean scores for the foster parents' perceptions of the role of a foster parent

	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>		
	<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>	<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>	<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>	<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>	
Parent	2.2	2.0	1.5	1.7	Child care worker
Personal interest	1.7	1.8	1.5	1.4	Occupation
Having another child	2.0	1.8	1.4	1.3	Having home job
Voluntary helper	2.5	2.0	2.3	1.8	Professional child care worker
Department volunteer	1.8	2.3	1.8	1.5	Department employee
Community service	2.1	2.0	1.8	1.7	Job
Consultant	1.5	1.8	1.5	1.6	Job supervisor
Equal	1.5	1.5	1.3	1.5	Superior
Service organisation	1.4	1.8	1.5	1.6	Employer

The foster parents in the non-scheme group were also more likely to report that they felt most like a natural parent in their relationship to the child (around a quarter reported this compared to about an eighth of the scheme parents), while the scheme parents were more likely to report that they felt most like adoptive parents. Few of the foster parents (in either group) saw themselves as most like a child care worker. However, these differences were not large and too much should not be made of them.

8.8 Foster parents' preferences as to type of foster child

There were no real differences between the two groups of foster parents in their preferences concerning the sex of a foster child, and indeed most of the foster parents in both groups (about two thirds) said they had no preference in this regard.

There were some slight differences in terms of preference as to the age of the child. Parents in the non-scheme group were more likely to say they had no preference, while those in the scheme were more likely to prefer primary school age children and less likely to prefer to foster babies.

Table 8.7 Foster parents' preferences as to the age of the child

	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>				<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>			
	<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>	
baby	6	19%	3	12%	10	26%	6	19%
pre-school child	7	23%	6	24%	10	26%	4	13%
primary school child	19	61%	12	48%	14	36%	13	42%
secondary school child	7	23%	4	16%	10	26%	7	23%
no preference	11	35%	6	24%	18	46%	10	32%

There were larger differences evident with respect to preferences as to the ethnic origin of the child. Foster parents in the non-scheme group were more likely to have no preference with respect to ethnic origin, while those in the scheme were more likely to report that they preferred to foster European children.

Table 8.8 Foster parents' preferences as to the ethnic origin of the child

	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>				<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>			
	<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>	
European	12	39%	9	36%	3	8%	6	19%
Maori	3	10%	3	12%	3	8%	4	13%
Polynesian	2	6%	1	4%	2	5%	1	3%
Other	2	6%	1	4%	1	3%	-	-
No preference	18	58%	14	56%	33	85%	21	68%

There were no great differences between the two groups of foster parents in terms of types of foster children they would prefer not to foster.

8.9 Foster parents' views on training

Nearly two fifths of the foster mothers and just under half the foster fathers in the non-scheme group said they had received no training or preparation for becoming a foster parent. The most common form of training or preparation for those who had had some was an individual briefing by the social worker (about a quarter of the non-scheme group had received such preparation). There remained about a third by the non-scheme group who had attended either a training course or a group meeting.

Table 8.9 Training received by foster parents fostering under conventional arrangements

	<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
attended a training course	7	18%	4	13%	11	16%
attended a group meeting with other foster parents and social workers	7	18%	6	20%	13	19%
individually briefed by social worker	10	26%	6	20%	16	23%
received no training	15	38%	14	47%	29	41%
no response	-	-	1	3%	1	1%
TOTAL	39	100%	31	100%	70	100%

In Auckland few foster parents had attended a training course and more had attended group meetings or had individual briefings by social workers, while in Christchurch, foster parents were more likely to have been to a training course.

The foster parents in the non-scheme group were asked to assess how the training they had undergone had affected their confidence and understanding in various aspects of fostering, the questions paralleling those asked of the foster parents in the scheme. The rating was made on a 1 to 5 scale (with score 1 representing "greatly improved" and score 5 representing "greatly reduced"). Table 8.10 gives mean scores for both sets of foster parents for each rating area.

Table 8.10 Mean scores representing foster parents' views as to the effect of training

	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>	
	<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>	<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>	<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>	<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>
confidence to deal with foster child	2.3	2.0	2.5	1.9
confidence to deal with natural parents	2.4	2.8	2.2	2.1
understanding of children's growth and development	1.9	2.0	2.3	2.1
understanding of children's behaviour and feelings	1.7	1.6	1.9	1.4
confidence in dealing with Department of Social Welfare	1.7	1.8	2.0	2.1

The table shows that there were only slight differences between the two groups of foster parents. The scheme foster parents tended to score lower (i.e. more positively) on most measures, except for their "confidence to deal with the natural parents" on which they were quite a bit higher (i.e. more negative). Overall, however, the differences were quite small.

The foster parents' assessments of the overall value of the training were very similar in the two groups. Slightly more of the scheme parents thought that the training had been of considerable value, but there were also three scheme parents who thought that the training had been of little value, whereas all of the non-scheme group thought that the training had been at least of some value.

Table 8.11 Foster parents' assessment of the overall value of the training

	<u>IFCS Placements</u>				<u>Conventional Placements</u>			
	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>	
considerable value	12	39%	14	56%	10	42%	6	38%
some value	16	52%	8	32%	9	38%	9	50%
little value	1	3%	2	8%	-	-	-	-
no value	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
no response	2	6%	1	4%	4	17%	2	13%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	24	100%	16	100%

8.10 Foster parents' views on the foster child

The non-scheme foster parents tended to have a more positive view of how they got on with the child than those in the scheme, although it was not the case that more scheme parents thought they got on badly with the child. The difference was chiefly that more non-scheme parents said they got on very well (over half compared with only a third of the scheme parents) while foster parents in the scheme tended to think they got on quite well (over half compared with a third of the non-scheme groups).

Table 8.12 Foster parents' views of how they got on with the child

	<u>IFCS Placements</u>				<u>Conventional Placements</u>			
	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>	
very well	11	35%	9	36%	20	51%	15	48%
quite well	16	52%	13	52%	16	41%	11	35%
quite badly	-	-	3	12%	3	8%	3	10%
very badly	2	6%	-	-	-	-	-	-
no answer	2	6%	-	-	-	-	2	6%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	39	100%	31	100%

A similar effect (only more pronounced) showed up in relation to the question about how well the foster child fitted into the family. Here again over half of the non-scheme group felt the child fitted in very well compared with only 23% of those in the scheme, while over 60% of the scheme group felt that the child fitted in quite well, compared with just over a third of the non-scheme group.

Table 8.13 Foster parents' views of how well the child fitted into the family

	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>				<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>			
	<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>	
very well	5	16%	8	32%	20	51%	17	55%
quite well	21	68%	12	48%	14	36%	9	29%
quite badly	5	16%	4	16%	4	10%	3	10%
very badly	-	-	1	4%	1	3%	-	-
no answer	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	6%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	39	100%	31	100%

The two groups were more similar in their assessment of whether the child liked living in the foster home: approximately equal numbers in each group (a bit over a quarter) thought the child liked living with them very much, while a bigger group about 40% thought the child liked it quite a lot. More of the non-scheme foster mothers were inclined to think the child like it quite a lot, while those in the scheme were more likely to record that it was too early to tell whether the child liked living with them. Similar numbers (about 10%) thought the child didn't like living with them.

The foster parents in the non-scheme group were much more inclined to think that the child was progressing well in the foster home than were foster parents in the scheme. This was particularly the case for the non-scheme foster mothers who were much more positive in this respect than the foster fathers. However, once again the main difference was between the numbers who were very satisfied and those who were only reasonably satisfied: over half of the non-scheme foster mothers and about 40% of the non-scheme foster fathers were very satisfied compared with about 30% of the foster parents in the scheme, while over half of the scheme parents were reasonably satisfied (compared with about a third of the non-scheme group). Once this difference was taken account of, there was little difference between the two groups, similar proportions of each group recording that they were not satisfied with the child's progress (14% of those in the scheme and 16% of the non-scheme group).

Table 8.14 Foster parents' views on how the child was progressing in the foster home

	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>				<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>			
	<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>	
very satisfied	9	29%	9	36%	21	54%	12	39%
reasonably satisfied	18	58%	12	48%	11	28%	13	42%
not satisfied	4	13%	4	16%	7	18%	4	13%
no answer	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	6%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	39	100%	31	100%

There were large differences between the two groups of foster parents when they rated their foster children on whether they were more than usually demanding or difficult to manage. The children in the scheme were rated as much more difficult and demanding. It is also noticeable that the foster mothers in both groups were more likely to rate the child as more than usually demanding than the foster fathers.

Table 8.15 Foster parents' views on whether the child places more than usual demands on those responsible for his or her care

	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>				<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>			
	<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>	
yes	27	87%	18	72%	17	44%	11	35%
no	4	13%	7	28%	22	56%	18	58%
no answer	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	6%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	39	100%	31	100%

More than half of the scheme children were also judged by the foster parents to be difficult to manage compared with only about 20% of those in conventional placements. Only a small minority of the children in both groups were considered usually to be very difficult to manage, however. (Three children in the scheme and two in conventional placements were rated usually very difficult.)

Table 8.16 Foster parents' views of whether the child was usually difficult to manage

	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>				<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>			
	<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>	
usually very difficult to manage	2	6%	1	4%	1	3%	1	3%
usually quite difficult to manage	14	45%	12	48%	7	18%	5	16%
usually not difficult	15	48%	12	48%	31	79%	23	74%
no answer	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	6%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	39	100%	31	100%

The last results, that the scheme children were generally considered more difficult and demanding, means that the preceding results about how the child was getting on in the placement are relatively encouraging. Although the foster parents were not as strongly positive about how the children in the scheme were getting on, at least they were not more negative. It would appear that the scheme children were getting on nearly as well in their placement as the type of children placed in conventional foster homes, despite the fact that they were generally perceived as being more difficult.

Most of the foster parents in both groups considered that foster care was the best way of caring for the needs of the child. Only eight disagreed (four in each group) although a further group of about 13% said they didn't know.

8.11 Planning for the future of the child

Slightly more foster parents in the scheme were aware that a plan had been written for their child (three quarters) than was the case among those fostering conventionally (two thirds). Nevertheless, this is only a small difference, and it remains striking that as many as a quarter of the scheme foster parents were unaware of any plan for the child, in view of the emphasis placed on planning within the scheme.

Of the foster parents who were aware that a plan had been written, both groups had similar views on the part they had played in the planning process. About 40% thought they had played a major part. Somewhat more thought they had played some part, and few thought they had played little or no part (12% in the scheme and 16% in the non-scheme group).

The foster parents were generally satisfied with the part they had played in the planning process, around 80% having the view that they were sufficiently involved. A handful of foster parents (between 10% and 20%) in both groups thought they should have been a little more involved, while only one foster father in each group thought they should have been a lot more involved.

Table 8.17 Foster parents' views on whether they were sufficiently involved in the planning process

	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>				<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>			
	<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>	
sufficiently involved	18	78%	16	89%	24	86%	15	71%
should have been a little more involved	5	22%	2	11%	3	11%	4	19%
should have been a lot more involved	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5%
no answer	-	-	-	-	1	4%	1	5%
TOTAL	23	100%	18	100%	28	100%	21	100%

The foster parents of children in the scheme generally thought that the child was somewhat less involved in the planning process than did foster parents of non-scheme children: about a third of the scheme group said the child played a little or no part compared with less than 20% of the non-scheme group. This could have been due to age differences in the two groups of children. (The scheme children tended to be younger, on average, than those in conventional placements.)

Despite the fact that they perceived their foster child as slightly less involved in planning than did non-scheme parents, the foster parents in the scheme (and particularly the foster mothers) were more likely to have the view that the child was sufficiently involved in the planning.

Table 8.18 Foster parents' views of whether the child was sufficiently involved in planning

	<u>IFCS Placements</u>				<u>Conventional Placements</u>			
	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>	
sufficiently involved	22	96%	15	83%	20	71%	15	71%
should have been a little more involved	1	4%	1	6%	2	7%	1	5%
should have been a lot more involved	-	-	2	11%	1	4%	2	10%
no answer	-	-	-	-	5	18%	2	10%
TOTAL	23	100%	18	100%	28	100%	21	100%

8.12 Contact between the foster parents and the family of the child

The foster parents of children in conventional placements reported that the children were in more frequent contact with their families, on average, than children in the scheme: 40% of the non-scheme children saw their families at least once a fortnight, compared with less than 20% of the scheme children. Conversely about a third of the scheme children saw their families less frequently than once a month, compared with about a quarter of those in the non-scheme group.

Table 8.19 Frequency of contact between child and family as reported by the foster mothers

	<u>IFCS Placements</u>		<u>Conventional Placements</u>	
Every one or two weeks	5	16%	16	40%
Every three or four weeks	13	42%	6	15%
Every one to six months	9	29%	7	18%
Less frequently than every six months	2	6%	4	10%
No contact	2	4%	4	10%
No answer	-	-	5	13%
Total	31	100%	40	100%

The preceding question was asked only of foster mothers. However, the total for the non-scheme group is not the same as in other tables because it included two foster fathers from families where there was no foster mother, and excluded the foster mother of a child that had no family at all.

The form of contact between child and family varied a little between the scheme and non-scheme children. Children in the scheme were rather more likely to go on visits to their families (90% did so compared with only two thirds of the non-scheme group), but were less likely to be visited by their families, to communicate with them via letter or telephone with them or to go on outings with them.

Foster mothers in the scheme were more likely than those in the non-scheme group to think that the child's emotional state was affected by the contact with the family. Over 60% of the scheme mothers thought that the child was emotionally affected by this contact, compared with just over 40% of those in the non-scheme group. The foster fathers in both groups held similar views, just over half thinking that the child was emotionally affected by contact with his or her family.

Table 8.20 Foster parents' views of whether the child was affected emotionally by contact with his or her family

	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>				<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>			
	<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>	
Yes	19	61%	14	56%	17	44%	16	52%
No	12	39%	10	42%	18	46%	14	45%
No answer	-	-	1	4%	3	8%	1	3%
No family	-	-	-	-	1	3%	-	-
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	39	100%	31	100%

Foster parents in Auckland were more likely to think that this contact affected the child emotionally, while those in Christchurch were more likely to think it did not.

There appeared to be little difference between the two groups of foster parents in terms of the amount of contact they had with the family of the child. The foster parents of non-scheme children seemed, if anything, marginally more likely to report frequent contact with the child's family, but this difference was very slight. There did, however, seem to be differences between the two groups of foster parents in terms of the type of contact they had with the child's family. Those in the scheme were more likely to visit the home of the child's family (about 45% did so compared with less than 30% of those in the non-scheme group) but appeared to be considerably less likely to have the child's family visiting their own home (less than a quarter did so compared with 40% of the non-scheme group).

Both groups of foster parents were relatively satisfied with the amount of contact they had with the child's family. About half of the foster mothers and more (about 60%) of the foster fathers said they were satisfied with the current amount of contact. The foster mothers were slightly more likely to say they wanted to see more of the child's family (about a third did compared with about 20% of the foster fathers). Very few of the foster parents (only two in the scheme and none in the non-scheme group) said they wanted to see less of the family of the child.

The foster parents in both groups had similar views on whether the child would like to return to live with his or her natural parents, although foster mothers in the scheme were more likely to think the child wanted to return to his or her family.

Table 8.21 Foster parent's views of whether the child would like to return to live with his or her family

	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>				<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>			
	<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>	
Would like to	11	36%	5	20%	11	28%	8	26%
Mixed feelings	8	26%	7	28%	11	28%	10	32%
Indifferent	5	16%	9	36%	4	10%	4	13%
Would not like to	5	16%	4	16%	10	26%	8	26%
No answer	2	7%	-	-	2	5%	-	-
No family	-	-	-	-	1	3%	-	-
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	39	100%	31	100%

The foster parents in both groups also had broadly similar views on whether the child's family wanted to have the child back living with them again. About 40% thought the family did not want the child back again while about 20% thought they did.

Table 8.22 Foster parent's views of whether the child's family want the child back with them again

	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>				<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>			
	<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>	
Would like to	7	23%	4	16%	8	21%	8	26%
Mixed feelings	8	26%	5	20%	10	26%	7	23%
Indifferent	3	10%	3	12%	3	8%	3	10%
Would not like to	13	42%	12	48%	15	38%	11	35%
Don't know	-	-	1	4%	2	5%	2	6%
No family	-	-	-	-	1	3%	-	-
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	39	100%	31	100%

There were some differences between the different sub-groups of foster parents in their assessment of whether such a return would be likely to work out. Very few of the foster parents in either group (only three foster mothers and two foster fathers in the scheme and only three each in the non-scheme group) were of the opinion that a return of the child to his or her family would work out. Foster mothers in the scheme, on the other hand were less likely than those in the non-scheme group to think such a return would be very unlikely to work out.

Table 8.23 Foster parent's views of whether a return of the child to his or her family would be successful

	<u>IFCS Placements</u>				<u>Conventional Placements</u>			
	<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>		<u>Foster mothers</u>		<u>Foster fathers</u>	
Very likely	2	6%	-	-	1	3%	1	3%
Fairly likely	1	3%	2	8%	2	5%	2	6%
Don't know	6	19%	8	32%	6	15%	10	32%
Fairly unlikely	11	35%	1	4%	12	31%	9	29%
Very unlikely	10	32%	13	52%	15	38%	8	26%
No answer	1	3%	1	4%	2	5%	1	3%
No family	-	-	-	-	1	3%	-	-
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	39	100%	31	100%

8.13 Contact between the foster parents and the social worker

The foster parents in the scheme reported a much higher frequency of visits from their social workers than those in the non-scheme group. All but two of the foster parents in the scheme reported that the social worker visited at least once a fortnight compared with less than 20% of those in the non-scheme group. It also appeared that visiting frequencies in Christchurch for the non-scheme group were lower than those for Auckland. These frequencies were only collected from the foster mothers except in the two cases in the comparison group where there was no foster mother. In these cases the foster father answered the question.

Table 8.24 Frequency of visits by social worker

	<u>IFCS Placements</u>		<u>Conventional Placements</u>	
every week	4	13%	2	5%
every fortnight	25	81%	5	12%
every three or four weeks	2	6%	15	37%
less frequently than every four weeks	-	-	8	20%
no contact	-	-	2	5%
no answer	-	-	9	22%
TOTAL	31	100%	41	100%

The foster parents in both groups were, by and large, content with the frequency with which the social worker visited them. None of the scheme foster parents thought the social worker didn't visit often enough, while there were just two mothers and one foster father (all in Auckland) who felt that the social worker visited too often. On the other hand, none of the non-scheme group felt that the social worker visited too often, but there was a group of six foster mothers and three foster fathers (all but one in Christchurch) who thought the social worker did not visit often enough. This group, however amounted to only about an eighth of the non-scheme foster parents.

Table 8.25 Foster parents' views on whether the social worker visited often enough

	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>				<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>			
	<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>	
too often	2	6%	1	4%	-	-	-	-
often enough	28	90%	23	92%	29	74%	26	84%
not often enough	-	-	-	-	6	15%	3	10%
no answer	1	3%	1	4%	4	10%	2	6%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	39	100%	31	100%

There were no differences at all between the two groups in terms of how the foster parents felt about discussing things with the social worker. Over 80% of each sub-group of foster parents (foster mothers and foster fathers, in and out of the scheme) said they never felt uneasy discussing things with the social worker. Only one foster mother (in the scheme) said she often felt uneasy talking with the social worker and two foster parents (in the non-scheme group) said they sometimes felt uneasy.

The foster parents had broadly similar views on how easy it was to get hold of the social worker, but there were some differences of detail. Slightly more of the foster mothers in the scheme said they usually found it easy to get hold of the social worker, while more of the foster fathers in the scheme said they usually found the social worker to be quite hard to get hold of.

Table 8.26 Foster parents' views on how easy the social worker was to get hold of

	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>				<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>			
	<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>	
usually easy to get hold of	23	74%	15	60%	25	64%	18	58%
sometimes easy, sometimes hard to get hold of	7	23%	9	36%	10	26%	6	19%
usually hard to get hold of	1	3%	-	-	3	8%	3	10%
no answer	-	-	1	4%	1	3%	4	13%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	39	100%	31	100%

The foster parents in the scheme were much more likely to have a high regard for the promptness with which the social worker helped them with any problems they were having. Over 80% of both foster mothers and foster fathers in the scheme said the social worker was very prompt with her or his assistance, compared with two thirds of the foster mothers and less than half the foster fathers in the non-scheme group. However, very few of the foster parents in either group had any real complaints about the social worker in this respect: only two foster parents in the scheme and three in the non-scheme group voiced any dissatisfaction about the speed with which the social worker responded to any call for assistance.

Table 8.27 Foster parents' views of the promptness with which the social worker helped them with problems

	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>				<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>			
	<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>	
very promptly	26	84%	21	84%	27	69%	14	45%
quite promptly	4	13%	2	8%	9	23%	11	35%
not as prompt as would like	-	-	-	-	1	3%	1	3%
usually very slow to react	1	3%	1	4%	-	-	1	3%
no answer	-	-	1	4%	2	5%	4	13%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	39	100%	31	100%

The foster parents were also all fairly well agreed about the usefulness of the assistance provided by the social worker, foster fathers being slightly less enthusiastic here (those in the non-scheme group in particular). Very few of the foster parents had any real complaints about the social worker in this respect.

Table 8.28 Foster parents' views of whether the social worker was very helpful

	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>				<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>			
	<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>	
very helpful	25	81%	18	72%	31	79%	14	45%
quite helpful	4	13%	4	16%	7	18%	11	35%
not very helpful	2	6%	2	8%	-	-	1	3%
not at all helpful	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
no answer	-	-	1	4%	1	3%	5	16%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	39	100%	31	100%

8.14 Foster parents' views on the board rate and expenses of keeping a child

Both groups of foster parents generally felt that the board rate paid to them was set at about the right level, although there was a group of about 20% of non-scheme foster parents who felt that they were not receiving sufficient by way of board payments. None of the non-scheme group thought that the board rate was set at too high a level, while of the scheme foster parents who thought that the level was inappropriate, about equal numbers thought it was too high and too low. However, there were only seven scheme foster parents in total who considered that the board rate was not set appropriately.

Table 8.29 Foster parents' views on the level of the board rate

	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>				<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>			
	<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>	
too high	2	7%	2	8%	-	-	-	-
about right	27	87%	21	84%	33	85%	23	74%
too low	2	6%	1	4%	6	16%	7	23%
no answer	-	-	1	4%	-	-	1	3%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	39	100%	31	100%

Similar proportions of the foster parents in both groups reported that they sometimes had difficulties or delays in getting payments when they had made claims to the Department of Social Welfare for expenses. Around 20% to 30% of the foster parents said they sometimes experienced such difficulties. However, there were only two respondents (both foster mothers in the non-scheme group in Christchurch) who said they frequently had such difficulties.

Table 8.30 Had the foster parents experienced difficulties in getting payments when they made claims to the Department?

	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>				<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>			
	<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>mothers</u>		<u>Foster</u> <u>fathers</u>	
frequently	-	-	-	-	2	5%	-	-
occasionally	10	32%	5	20%	10	26%	10	32%
never	20	65%	16	64%	23	61%	17	55%
no answer	1	3%	4	16%	3	8%	4	13%
TOTAL	31	100%	25	100%	39	100%	31	100%

Difficulties or delays were more frequently reported in Christchurch than they were in Auckland. Indeed, of the 37 people who said they had experienced delays, 29 were in Christchurch.

Finally, similar proportions of foster parents in the two groups also felt they should be able to claim for miscellaneous expenses they were currently not entitled to. Approximately 20% of the foster mothers in both groups and approximately 10% of foster fathers in both groups said there were such expenses which they felt they should have been entitled to be recompensed for.

8.15 Summary of the comparison between the views of foster parents in the scheme and those fostering under conventional arrangements

- Foster parents in the scheme were more likely to be pakeha than those fostering under conventional arrangements. There were only three non pakeha foster parents in the scheme compared with 15 of those fostering under conventional arrangements (21%).
- There was little difference between the two groups in terms of length of secondary schooling or qualifications gained.
- There was little difference between the two groups in terms of socio-economic status.
- Auckland foster families in the scheme had much smaller families than those fostering under conventional arrangements, while in Christchurch there was no difference in family size.
- Scheme foster parents in Auckland were less likely to have fostered before than those fostering under conventional arrangements, while there was no difference between the groups in Christchurch.
- The foster parents in the scheme were more inclined to see their role in professional terms than those in the non-scheme group, although they were still more inclined to regard fostering as a personal interest than a job. The difference was that they identified less strongly with the non-professional model than those fostering under conventional arrangements.
- Foster parents in the scheme were inclined to prefer to foster primary school children and pakeha children.
- Foster parents in the scheme received more training or preparation prior to fostering than those fostering under conventional arrangements.
- The foster parents in the scheme were more likely to think that the preparation they had received for fostering had enhanced their ability or confidence to undertake various tasks associated with fostering.

- Foster parents in the scheme generally had less positive views on how they got on with the child than those in the scheme. It was not the case, however, that more scheme parents thought they got on badly with the child. Rather the difference was that more of the people fostering under conventional arrangements said they got on very well with the child, while those in the scheme were more likely to think they got on quite well with the child.
- Foster parents in the scheme were more likely to consider that their children placed more than usual demands on those responsible for their care (about 80% were so rated compared with only 40% of those in the conventionally fostered group).
- People fostering in the scheme were slightly more likely than those fostering under conventional arrangements to be aware that a plan had been written for the future of the child. However, this difference was not large. The striking finding here was that as many as a quarter of the foster families in the scheme were unaware of any plan, which is rather disconcerting in view of the strong emphasis placed on planning within the scheme.
- The foster parents of children in conventional placements reported that the children were in more frequent contact with their families than those in the scheme. (40% of the conventionally placed children saw their families at least once a fortnight compared with less than 20% of those in the scheme.)
- Foster mothers in the scheme were more likely to think the child's emotions or behaviour were affected by contact with his or her family, while there was no difference in the views of the two groups of foster fathers.
- The foster parents in the scheme were no more likely than those in the conventional foster care group to be in more frequent contact themselves with the child's family, but there were differences in the type of contact for the two groups. Those in the scheme were more likely to visit the home of the child's family, but they were considerably less likely to be visited in their own home by the child's family.
- The foster parents in the scheme reported much high frequency of visits from the social worker. All but two of those in the scheme said the social worker visited at least once a fortnight, compared with less than 20% of those fostering under conventional arrangements. It also appeared that visiting frequencies for the non-scheme group in Christchurch were lower than those in Auckland.
- The foster parents in both groups were fairly content with the availability and helpfulness of the social worker, but those in the scheme were more likely to report that the social worker acted very promptly in response to any request for assistance.

SECTION 9 INTERVIEWS WITH THE CHILDREN IN THE SCHEME

A total of 30 children in the scheme were interviewed - 16 in Auckland and 14 in Christchurch. 23 (77%) of the interviews were conducted while the child was still in the placement and 7 (23%) were conducted after the child had left the placement. This means that of the 39 children placed in the scheme to date, 7 in Auckland and 2 in Christchurch have not been interviewed. There were various reasons why these children were not interviewed.

In the first place, it was part of the research strategy not to interview children until they had been in a placement for sufficient time to have a settled view. (In practice this meant that children were usually not interviewed until they had been in a placement for three months.) The two Christchurch children and one child in Auckland were not interviewed because the placement was still too recent. Of the six remaining cases in Auckland, four children were no longer living in the Auckland area, one child absconded prior to the interview and could not be located for subsequent interviews and the other child had been placed two years previously and had only remained in the placement for four days, so that it was decided that there would be no real value in conducting this interview.

The following section presents the responses of the 30 children with whom interviews were conducted.

9.1 The child's first impression of the foster home

The children were first asked what they had found hardest to get used to when they first moved into the foster home. The thing most children found hardest was "getting used to all the people", "getting to know the other kids in the family", "fitting in with a family" and such like. A third of all the children gave such answers. Smaller numbers of children found the hardest thing was getting used to the different standards of discipline expected of them ("getting used to their rules", "being a good boy"); others found it hard to accept the way they were regarded in the home ("she put her kids first"); while others again mentioned purely practical things (one child found that the most difficult thing was "going up the hill to the letter box"). Three of the children found nothing was hard to get used to.

The children were also asked what they thought was best about the foster home when they first moved in. In Christchurch, the children tended to mention the social advantages of the placement, such as "making new friends" or just "having friends", while in Auckland the children were more likely to cite practical advantages, such as having "bikes to ride", "the farm" or "working in the restaurant". Smaller numbers of children cited the different disciplinary expectations (one child liked "the freedom") and emotional advantages (simply "being here"). Two children considered there was nothing especially good about moving into the home.

Many of the children in the Intensive Foster Care Scheme knew their foster parents fairly well before moving in with them. Over a third had had at least a month's prior contact with the foster parents and had stayed with them for at least two weekends before moving in, while just under a further third had had at least an overnight stay. About 10% of the children had met the foster parents but had not stayed with them, while to about a quarter the foster parents were strangers. All of these cases (children to whom the foster parents were strangers) were children who had been placed in the scheme in its earlier stages (1980 or 1981).

When they were asked how they felt about it when they first knew they were moving into the foster home, about two thirds of the children indicated they had had positive feelings. The others said that they felt at least nervous about it and two had had quite negative feelings.

9.2 The child's feelings about living in the foster home

The children were asked whether they liked living with the foster family: 24 (80%) responded positively, while three gave ambivalent responses and only two gave clear negative responses. Table 9.1 gives details.

Table 9.1 Did the child like living with the foster family?

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
definite positive response	11	69%	13	93%	24	80%
ambivalent response	2	13%	1	7%	3	10%
definite negative response	2	13%	-	-	2	7%
no response	1	6%	-	-	1	3%
TOTAL	16	100%	14	100%	30	100%

Most of the children (around two thirds) said they got on reasonably well with the other children in the foster family, while a quarter expressed mixed feelings and about 10% said they did not get on well with other children in the family. When asked if there was anyone in particular they didn't get on with, about 60% said there wasn't. Of the twelve children (41%) who said there was, eight named one of the children in the foster family, three named one of the foster parents and one mentioned another household member. Two thirds of the children also mentioned members of the family they got on particularly well with: eleven mentioned one of the children in the foster family, six mentioned one of the foster parents and two mentioned several people.

Almost all of the children (just under 90%) found their foster mothers friendly, while somewhat fewer (three quarters) found the foster father friendly. Two of the children expressed mixed feelings about the foster mother and one expressed a negative view, while four children expressed a negative view of the foster father and another had mixed feelings.

When they were asked to describe the best thing about living in the foster home, again the Christchurch children tended to mention things such as having friends to play with, while the Auckland children tended to mention practical or physical advantages such as going to the beach. Smaller numbers mentioned the way they were regarded in the home ("they care about me") or the different disciplinary expectations ("the freedom"). Two children found nothing good about the home and three said they didn't know.

When they were asked what was the worst thing about living in the foster home, the biggest group said there was nothing bad about it (a third of the children). Other responses were fairly spread : not getting on with other children in the home, the threat of being sent away, the discipline and practical matters (such as having to collect the firewood) were all mentioned.

9.3 Communication with the foster parents

A majority of the children (55%) said they found it easy to talk to their foster parents, while 31% said they sometimes found it easy, and 14% said they did not find it easy. The children were least likely to talk with their foster parents about things they didn't like in the foster home (nearly three quarters didn't) and about being picked on by other children if this were to occur (over half wouldn't). The children were more likely to talk about their own family, their school work and their relationships with teachers: 40% or more said they talked with the foster parents frequently about these matters.

A majority of the children (55%) found it helpful to discuss things with their foster parents, while 14% said they sometimes found it helpful and 31% said they didn't find it helpful.

9.4 Contact between the child and natural family

The children were asked a series of questions about the amount of contact they had with members of their natural family. Questions were asked separately about contact the child had with his or her parent figures and about contact with siblings. The parent figures about whom these questions were asked were usually the child's natural parents, but in some cases were other substitute parent figures, such as step parents, grandparents or other relatives. They were generally the main care-givers in the child's life prior to coming into care. It was these family members who were interviewed in the natural family interviews. They will be referred to throughout the following section for convenience as the child's parent figures.

A third of the children indicated they maintained a high degree of contact with their parent figures (seeing them at least fortnightly, or staying over for a weekend at least once a month). A smaller group also reported regular contact at a slightly lower frequency (seeing their parent figures once a month, or staying with them during school holidays). Together these two groups in relatively regular contact with their parent figures amounted to half the children interviewed. At the other end of the scale, four children (13%) had no contact at all with their parent figures and another 30% had only low levels of contact. Table 9.2 gives full details of contact between the child and parent figures.

Table 9.2 How often does the child usually see parent figures?

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
fortnightly or more frequently or staying the whole weekend at least once a month	4	25%	6	43%	10	33%
regular high level of contact, for example, once a month, or every school holidays	3	19%	2	14%	5	17%
moderate contact recurring contact sufficient for some continuity of relationship to be maintained, but not as frequent or sustained as would be possible with greater commitment	1	6%	1	7%	2	7%
low level of contact	5	31%	4	29%	9	30%
no contact	3	19%	1	7%	4	13%
TOTAL	16	100%	14	100%	30	100%

When they were asked if they enjoyed seeing their parent figures, over two thirds said they did while about a quarter said they did not. Two children were indifferent. Nearly half wanted to see the parent figures more frequently, while about a third were happy with the current level of contact and the remainder (13%) wished to see their parents less frequently.

Most of the children considered that both the foster parents and the social workers liked them to have contact with their natural families (the social worker slightly more so). Just over 70% reported that the foster parents encouraged such contact and just under 80% that the social worker encouraged it. Three children thought the foster parents disapproved and one child thought the social worker disapproved, while four children didn't know what the foster parents thought of it, and five didn't know what the social worker thought.

The children were somewhat split over whether they would like to go back to live with their parent figures although a majority wished to do so : 55% said they would, while a third said they would not and the other 14% remained ambivalent or indifferent. However, a higher proportion of children had a negative view of whether such a return would work out : 45% thought it would not, while 36% said it would and 14% didn't know.

9.5 Contact between the child and siblings

All but one of the children interviewed had siblings, and over three quarters had siblings living in the same area. This section reports responses from the 29 children with siblings.

Contact between the child and his or her siblings was less frequent on average than contact with parent figures. Only a quarter reported a very high level of contact, while over half had little or no contact with their siblings. (It should be noted that the category labels in Table 9.3 below are simply abbreviated forms of the more detailed labels in Table 9.2, but that the same coding was used in both cases.)

Table 9.3 How often does the child usually see siblings?

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
fortnightly or more frequently	3	20%	4	29%	7	24%
regular high level of contact	1	7%	1	7%	2	7%
moderate contact, recurring contact at lower level	2	13%	2	14%	4	14%
low level of contact	7	47%	3	21%	10	34%
no contact	2	13%	3	21%	5	17%
not known	-	-	1	7%	1	3%
TOTAL	15	100%	14	100%	29	100%

Three quarters of the children said they would like to see more of their siblings, while only one child wished to see less of them. The remainder were happy with the current amount of contact. Nearly 80% of the children thought the foster parents liked them seeing their siblings and nearly 90% thought the social worker approved of this. No child thought the foster parents or the social worker disapproved, but four children didn't know what the foster parents thought and one didn't know what the social worker thought.

9.6 Relationship between the child and the social worker

The children were also asked some questions about their relationship with the social worker. First they were asked whether the social worker usually spent some time talking to them on their own when he or she visited. It appeared that it was usual in Auckland for the social worker to spend time talking to the child alone, but that this was not usual in Christchurch.

Table 9.4 Did the social worker usually talk to the foster child alone on a visit to the home?

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
yes, usually	8	50%	2	14%	10	33%
yes, occasionally	6	38%	3	21%	9	30%
no	2	13%	8	57%	10	33%
no response	-	-	1	7%	1	3%
TOTAL	16	100%	14	100%	30	100%

It appeared that the responses here were at least partly related to the age of the child. All of the children who usually saw the child on their own were 11 years or older when they were placed with the scheme. However, some of the older children (particularly in Christchurch) never saw the social worker on their own.

The children were asked why they thought the social worker came to visit the foster home. Here, their responses fell mainly into two groups : over a third thought that the social worker came to see how the child was getting on in the placement, or to deal with particular problems that had arisen for the child and his or her natural family. More than half the children, however, thought the social worker came to see the foster family and the effect the child was having on the family. Three children said they didn't know why the social worker visited.

The children were most likely to talk to the social worker about their natural family (over 60% did so at least occasionally and 45% frequently). However, they were less likely to talk about things that were worrying them (64% did not) or their relationships with school teachers (52% did not). Over half of the children said that they found it helpful to discuss things with the social worker, while only 13% said it was not helpful. A further 10% were ambivalent and 7% were indifferent.

Table 9.5 Did the child find it helpful to discuss things with the social worker?

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
positive response	10	63%	7	50%	17	57%
ambivalent response	2	13%	1	7%	3	10%
neutral (indifferent) response	1	6%	1	7%	2	7%
negative response	1	6%	3	21%	4	13%
no response	2	13%	2	14%	4	13%
TOTAL	16	100%	14	100%	30	100%

9.7 Child's view of the reason for the care order

Half of the children thought they had come into care because of conditions in their home. A sixth thought they had come into care because of their own behaviour problems and the other third did not know why they had come into care. The Christchurch children were more likely to have a view on the reason they came into care. (It should be noted that, due to time constraints, it has not been possible to examine this question in relation to the official reason for the care order, although this is probably the main interest in this piece of information).

Table 9.6 Child's view of the reason for the care order

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
child's behaviour	3	19%	2	14%	5	17%
conditions in home	6	38%	9	64%	15	50%
don't know	7	44%	3	21%	10	33%
TOTAL	16	100%	14	100%	30	100%

Nearly three quarters of the children thought that being taken into care was the best thing for them at the time, while only one child said it was not. The other children were unsure or ambivalent about this.

Table 9.7 Child's view of whether being placed in care was the best thing at the time

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
positive response	10	63%	12	86%	22	73%
ambivalent response	1	6%	1	7%	2	7%
neutral (indifferent) response	3	19%	1	7%	4	13%
negative response	1	6%	-	-	1	3%
don't know	1	6%	-	-	1	3%
TOTAL	16	100%	14	100%	30	100%

9.8 Planning for the child's future

Eight of the children (about a quarter) said that they would make any decision about when they would leave the foster home, while another quarter said the foster parents would decide and about a fifth thought the social worker or the Department would make this decision. Over and above the eight children who said they would make the decision, a further five thought they would be asked what they wanted : only two of these, however, felt their views would be taken into account. This means that only 13 of the children thought they would have any input into any decision about moving from the foster home (43%) and only 10 of these (33%) thought that their views would have any impact on the decision.

A third of the children had talked with the social worker about what was going to happen to them in the future, while more (over 40%) had talked with their foster parents and with a member of their natural family about this.

Three fifths of the children had been to a planning meeting, while a third said they had not. In all cases, the social worker had attended the meeting, while attendance of other participants was reported by the children as follows: foster mother - 89% of meetings; foster father - 67%, natural mother - 67%; and natural father - 50%.

The children were asked if they thought the foster home would turn out to have been good for them in the long-term. The majority of the children (nearly three quarters) gave a positive response, while only four gave a negative response and two felt ambivalent about this.

Table 9.8 Did the child think the foster home would turn out to have been a good thing in the long-term?

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
positive response	11	69%	11	79%	22	73%
ambivalent response	1	6%	1	7%	2	7%
neutral response	-	-	1	7%	1	3%
negative response	3	19%	1	7%	4	13%
no response	1	6%	-	-	1	3%
TOTAL	16	100%	14	100%	30	100%

9.9 Summary of the results from the interviews with children in the scheme

- The children who were interviewed were, on the whole, quite positive about living in the foster home: 80% expressed strong positive views, - and only two expressed outright negative feelings.
- Almost all of the children (around 90%) found the foster mother friendly, and slightly fewer (around three quarters) found the foster father friendly, while about two thirds said they got on reasonably well with the other children the home.
- Just over half the children found it helpful to talk things over with their foster parents, while just under a third didn't find it helpful.
- Over half the children found it helpful to talk things over with the social worker, while only about an eighth did not find this helpful.
- It appeared to be usual in Auckland for the social worker to spend some time talking to the child alone in the course of a visit, but not usual in Christchurch.
- About half the children were in reasonably regular contact with their own families, but over 40% had little or no contact with their families. Nearly half the children wanted to see more of their families, and about an eighth wanted to see them less frequently.
- Over half of the children said they would like to return to live with their own families, while a third said they would not. However, they were not sure that such a return would work out: only a third said it would, while nearly half said it would not, the others remaining unsure.
- Nearly three quarters of the children thought the care order had been the best thing for them at the time and only one child said it was not. (The others remained either ambivalent or unsure about this.)
- The children did not appear to be totally involved in the process of planning for their future. About a third said they had talked with the social worker about what might happen to them in the future, and about 40% had talked with the foster parents and with their own family. More of the children (about 60%) had attended at least one planning meeting.
- Most of the children did not feel they had much control over their future. Less than half thought they would have any input into decisions about their future and only a third thought their views would be taken into account.
- The majority of children (three quarters) felt that the foster home would turn out to have been a good thing for them in the long term, and only four children had outright negative views here.

SECTION 10 COMPARISON OF THE VIEWS OF CHILDREN IN THE SCHEME AND THOSE
 IN CONVENTIONAL FOSTER PLACEMENTS

In all, 49 of the children in conventional foster placements were interviewed (25 in Auckland and 24 in Christchurch). 12 of these interviews (24%) were done retrospectively and 37(76%) while the child was still in their foster home. This section presents comparative information from the interviews with the two groups of children (those in the scheme and those in conventional placements) in selected areas of interest.

10.1 What was the best thing and what was the hardest thing for the
 child to get used to on first moving into the foster home?

The children in conventional placements were largely in agreement with the scheme children about the hardest thing to get used to on first moving into a foster home: for just under half of the children in conventional foster homes, the hardest thing to get used to centred around getting to know everyone in the house and establishing relationships. This had also been the hardest thing for the scheme children to handle.

Practical advantages in the placement were the most frequently nominated "best thing" about the home (a quarter in Auckland and a third in Christchurch mentioned such advantages), but around 20% in both districts mentioned things such as having friends to play with and a further 20% in both districts mentioned things such as having people who cared about them. This was in some contrast to the scheme children where few children in Auckland mentioned anything other than practical advantages while few children in Christchurch mentioned anything other than social advantages.

10.2 How well did the child know the foster parents before moving in?

The children in conventional placements appeared to have had at least as good an acquaintance with the foster parents prior to moving in with them as those in the scheme. 45% of the conventionally placed children said they knew their foster parents well before moving in (having known them for at least a month and having spent at least two weekends with them), compared with 37% of the scheme children. Furthermore, to about 20% of both groups, the foster parents had been strangers when they moved in. Most of the scheme placements in this latter group, however, had been made quite early in the operation of the scheme, and more recently few scheme placements had been made where the foster parents were unknown to the child.

The children in both groups felt similar on first learning they were to move into the foster home : around two thirds in each group expressed positive responses. Most of the remainder were somewhat ambivalent or at least nervous, but few expressed outright negative feelings.

10.3 How did the child like living in the foster home?

The majority of children in both groups expressed positive feelings about living with the foster family : among the conventionally placed children, the proportion was about three quarters in both districts, while there was some difference between the two districts within the scheme (Christchurch

having a higher percentage who expressed positive views (93%), compared with 69% in Auckland).

Only two (7%) of the scheme children (in Auckland) expressed negative views, compared with seven (14%) of the conventionally placed children (five in Auckland and two in Christchurch).

Table 10.1 How did the foster child like living in the foster home?

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>	
definite								
positive responses	11	69%	19	76%	13	93%	19	79%
ambivalent responses	2	13%	1	4%	1	7%	3	13%
negative responses	2	13%	5	20%	-	-	2	8%
no response	1	6%	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	16	100%	25	100%	14	100%	24	100%

The pattern of responses of the conventionally placed children to the questions about how friendly they found the foster mother and the foster father was virtually identical to that for the children in the scheme. Almost all found the foster mother friendly, and slightly fewer found the foster father friendly. Two conventionally placed children had mixed feelings about the foster mother and only one expressed a negative view (identical numbers as were found for children in the scheme on this question), while three conventionally placed children had negative feelings about the foster father and another two had mixed feelings (compared with four and one respectively of the scheme children).

There were also similar responses from both groups when asked about how they got on with other children in the family. Two thirds of the children in the scheme gave positive responses, as did two thirds of the conventionally placed group in Auckland, while just under 90% of the Christchurch conventionally placed children gave positive answers. Most of the remaining children had mixed feelings about the other children in the family : there were few in any group who had outright negative views.

About a third of the conventionally placed children identified someone in the foster home whom they didn't get on with. This compares fairly closely with the 40% in the scheme who nominated someone they didn't get on with particularly well, most of whom were Auckland children. In the great majority of cases (for all the subgroups of children) the individual identified was another child in the home.

Two thirds of the conventionally placed children also identified someone in the home whom they got on well with (the same proportion as had been found within the scheme). In both groups, the responses which identified the individual were generally split between another child in the home and, to a lesser extent, a foster parent.

Overall, the responses to these questions seem to indicate that there was little difference in this area between children in the scheme and children in conventional placements : the children in the scheme appeared to be responding to, and forming relationships with, the various members of the foster family in very similar ways to the children in conventional foster placements.

10.4 Communication with the foster parents

Around two thirds of the children in the conventional placements found it easy to talk frequently to their foster parents. This is about the same proportion as in the Christchurch scheme group, but the proportion for the Auckland scheme group was lower (less than half). On the other hand, about 20% of the non-scheme children never found it easy to talk to their foster parents (about the same as in the Auckland scheme group) while only one of the Christchurch scheme group never found this easy. Table 10.2 gives details.

Table 10.2 Did the child find it easy to talk to the foster parents?

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>	
yes, frequently	7	44%	17	68%	9	64%	16	67%
sometimes	5	31%	3	12%	4	29%	3	13%
no, never	3	19%	5	20%	1	7%	5	21%
no response	1	6%	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	16	100%	25	100%	14	100%	24	100%

The sort of things the children were likely to discuss with the foster parents were similar to those recorded for children in the scheme (school work, relationships with teachers, their natural family and what they did with their friends).

A bigger majority of children in conventional placements (71%) said they found it helpful to discuss things with the foster parents when compared with the scheme children (55%). However, the same proportion in both groups (14%) were either ambivalent or non-committal about this.

10.5 Contact with natural family

The children in conventional placements were on the whole more commonly in touch with their natural families than their counterparts in the scheme, and were rather more enthusiastic about this contact. These differences between the two groups of children were small but consistent, running right through this sequence of questions.

First, slightly more of the conventionally placed children appeared to be in regular and frequent contact with their families (46%) compared with children in the scheme (33%), while fewer of the conventionally placed children had very little or no contact with their families (23%) compared with the children in the scheme (43%).

Nearly 80% of the conventionally placed children said they enjoyed seeing their parents (or other family members) compared with two thirds of the scheme children. Furthermore, two thirds of the conventionally placed children wanted to see more of their families compared with just under half of the children in the scheme.

Similar proportions of children in both groups (about 70%) said they thought the foster parents approved of their contact with their natural family. Just under 80% of the children in the scheme reported that the social worker approved of their contact with their family. This compared roughly with 84% of the non-scheme children in Auckland, but was considerably larger than the 61% of non-scheme children in Christchurch. It was noticeable that a large group of conventionally placed children in Christchurch (about a third) said they didn't know what the foster parents or the social workers thought of their contacts with their families.

In summary, it appeared that the children in the scheme were rather less in contact with their families than children in conventional placements and were a little less enthusiastic about such contact.

When asked how they would feel if they were to be placed back with their families again, just under half (45%) of the conventionally placed children responded positively. More of the Auckland children were keen to return to their families (52%) than was the case in Christchurch (38%). This distribution of responses was broadly similar to that for children in the scheme: 40% had positive feelings about the idea of returning to their families. However, it is somewhat difficult to make meaningful comparisons in this area, because of the rather more "unattached" background of the scheme children. A number of the children in the scheme had no contact at all with their natural parents and had no real prospect of any return to a family. In these cases, the family members who were interviewed as part of the research were persons who had never had responsibility for the care of the child. It did not make sense to ask of these children "would you like to return to live with this person?", so that this question was not asked of all the scheme children. Of the children who were asked, more than half (55%) responded positively.

10.6 Contact between child and siblings

All but two of the conventionally placed children (both in Christchurch) had siblings, and the vast majority of these (90%) were living in the same area. About half the children were in regular and frequent contact with their siblings, which compares with only a quarter of the scheme children. Only just over a quarter of the conventionally placed children had little or no contact with their siblings, compared with over half of their counterparts in the scheme.

Three quarters of the children in the scheme indicated that they would like to see more of their siblings, compared with 60% of those in conventional foster placements. Few of either group wished to see their siblings less frequently.

10.7 Relationship between the child and the social worker

A similar split between Auckland and Christchurch was evident in social work patterns for the children in conventional placements as had shown up for the children in the scheme. Over half of the conventionally placed children in Auckland said that the social worker usually spent some time talking to the child by him/herself in the course of a visit to the foster home, while only a quarter of the Christchurch children said this was usually the case. (These figures compare quite closely with the figures for children in the scheme, although even fewer of the Christchurch scheme children said the social worker usually spent some time alone with them during the course of visits).

Over half of the Christchurch children (both in the scheme and in conventional placements) said the social worker did not see them by themselves, while in Auckland this proportion was less than 20%. Although some of these differences within the scheme can be accounted for by the age of the children (older children were more likely to see the social worker on their own), those differences between Auckland and Christchurch for the conventionally placed children cannot be accounted for in this way. It appears therefore that the differences here were variations in district practices rather than differences between the scheme and conventional fostering practice.

Table 10.3 Did the social worker usually talk to the foster child alone on a visit to the foster home?

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>	
yes, usually	8	50%	13	52%	2	14%	6	25%
yes,	6	38%	8	32%	3	21%	5	21%
no	2	13%	4	16%	8	57%	13	54%
no response	-	-	-	-	1	7%	-	-
TOTAL	16	100%	25	100%	14	100%	24	100%

These differences carried over to the topics the children were likely to talk to the social workers about. The conventionally placed children were more likely to talk to the social workers about their own families, but while nearly three quarters in Auckland said they frequently discussed their family with the social worker, only a third of the Christchurch children did so frequently.

Furthermore, while half of the conventionally placed children in Auckland said they frequently discussed how they were getting on in the foster home and 40% frequently discussed things that were worrying them, only just over 10% of the Christchurch children said they frequently discussed such things with the social worker. Some children said that they occasionally had such discussions, but there remained a third of the Christchurch children and 20% of the Auckland children who never discussed their family with the social worker, while three quarters of the Christchurch children and a quarter of the Auckland children never discussed how they were getting on in the foster home with the social worker.

The majority of children in the scheme and in conventional placements found it helpful to discuss these things with the social worker (57% and 67% respectively). Again the Auckland children in both groups were more enthusiastic than the Christchurch children.

Table 10.4 Did the children find discussing things with the social worker useful?

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>	
positive responses	10	63%	19	76%	7	50%	14	58%
ambivalent responses	2	13%	3	12%	1	7%	2	8%
neutral responses	1	6%	2	8%	1	7%	3	13%
negative responses	1	6%	1	4%	3	21%	3	13%
no response	2	13%	-	-	2	14%	2	8%
TOTAL	16	100%	25	100%	14	100%	24	100%

10.8 Child's view of the reason for the care order

The children's perceptions of the reason they were taken into care varied from one sub-group to another. The Christchurch children were inclined to the view that the care order had been made primarily because of conditions in the home: half of the children in the scheme advanced this reason and more (nearly two thirds) of the conventionally placed children.

In Auckland, the children were less inclined to see the conditions in the home as the primary reason for the care order: of the children in conventional placements, the biggest group (44%) thought they had been taken into care primarily because of their misbehaviour, while of the children in the scheme, the biggest group said they didn't know why they had been taken into care.

Table 10.5 Children's perceptions of the reason for the care order

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>	
misbehaviour	3	19%	11	44%	2	14%	5	21%
home conditions	6	38%	6	24%	9	64%	12	50%
don't know	7	44%	6	24%	3	21%	7	29%
no response	-	-	2	8%	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	16	100%	25	100%	14	100%	24	100%

Just under 70% of the conventionally placed children thought this was the best thing for them at the time, not much different from the three quarters of children in the scheme who shared this view. However, only one of the children in the scheme had an outright negative view of this (the others being either ambivalent or non-committal) while seven conventionally placed children in Auckland and six conventionally placed children in Christchurch (over a quarter of each group) gave negative responses. The Christchurch children in both groups tended to be more positive.

Table 10.6 Children's view of whether the care order was the best thing for them at the time

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>	
positive responses	10	63%	17	68%	12	86%	17	71%
ambivalent responses	1	6%	-	-	1	7%	-	-
neutral responses	3	19%	1	4%	1	7%	1	4%
negative responses	1	6%	7	28%	-	-	6	25%
no response	1	6%	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	16	100%	25	100%	14	100%	24	100%

10.9 Planning for the future of the child

About a quarter of the conventionally placed children thought they themselves would make any decision about leaving the foster home, about the same proportion as in the scheme. However, a larger group of the conventionally placed children (just under half) thought that this decision would be made by the social worker or the Department, compared with the 20% of children in the scheme who thought this.

Taking into account both children who thought they would actually make any decision about a change of placement and children who thought they would be asked for their view, a greater proportion of the conventionally placed group (69%) thought that they would have some input into this decision. (Only 43% of the scheme children thought this.) The conventionally placed children were also more likely to think their views would be taken into account (51% compared with 33%).

There were differences both between the districts and between the scheme and conventional fostering in the numbers of children who reported having had discussions with their foster parents and their social workers about their future and there were also differences in the numbers of children involved in planning. The Auckland conventionally placed children were more likely than those in the scheme to have discussed their future and been involved in planning, while the reverse was the case in Christchurch.

Table 10.8 below demonstrates this pattern: in Auckland the children were more likely to have had discussed their future with the social worker and were more likely to have attended a planning meeting. In other respects, there was little pattern to the results in Table 10.8.

Table 10.7 Proportions of children involved in discussions about and planning for their future

	<u>Christchurch</u>				<u>Auckland</u>			
<u>Proportion of children who had had:</u>	<u>IFCS Placements</u>		<u>Conventional Placements</u>		<u>IFCS Placements</u>		<u>Conventional Placements</u>	
	(n=16)		(n=25)		(n=14)		(n=24)	
discussions with social worker	6	38%	14	56%	4	29%	4	17%
discussions with foster parents	7	44%	11	44%	6	43%	6	25%
discussions with family members	8	50%	11	44%	5	36%	6	25%
attendance at planning meetings	12	75%	20	80%	6	43%	10	42%

The children were asked whether they thought the foster home would turn out to have been a good thing for them in the long term. Similar patterns showed up for both groups and both districts. A large majority of the children thought the placement would turn out to have been good for them and very few gave negative responses.

Table 10.8 Child's view of whether the placement would turn out to have been a good thing in the long term

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>	
positive responses	11	69%	20	80%	11	79%	17	71%
ambivalent responses	1	6%	-	-	1	7%	-	-
neutral responses	-	-	-	-	1	7%	3	13%
negative responses	3	19%	4	16%	1	7%	4	17%
don't know	1	6%	1	4%	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	16	100%	25	100%	14	100%	24	100%

10.10 Summary of the comparison of the views of children in the scheme and those in conventional foster placements

- The children in conventional placements appeared to have had at least as good an acquaintance with the foster parents prior to moving in with them as children in the scheme had done.
- There appeared to be little difference of any note between the two groups of children in terms of their feelings about the foster home: around 70% to 80% of the children in all groups had positive feelings about living in the home. The responses of the children to the foster parents were almost identical in both groups: virtually all found the foster mother friendly and slightly fewer found the foster father friendly.
- The children in the scheme were rather less in contact with their families than children in conventional placements and were a little less enthusiastic about such contact, but despite this they had a more positive perception of the attitudes of their foster parents and social workers towards such contact.
- Similar proportions of children in the scheme and in conventional placements found it helpful to discuss things with their social worker, but Auckland children (in both groups) were more enthusiastic about discussions with the social worker than Christchurch children.
- The children in the scheme (particularly in Christchurch) were more likely to think that the care order had been the best thing for them at the time, while those in conventional placements were more likely to have a negative view. Only one child in the scheme had a negative view of this, compared with over a quarter of the non-scheme children.
- The children in both groups had similar views about whether the foster home would turn out to have been a good thing for them in the long term.

SECTION 11

INTERVIEWS WITH THE FAMILIES OF THE CHILDREN

A total of 30 members of the families of the children placed in the Intensive Foster Care Scheme were interviewed - 15 in Auckland and 15 in Christchurch. Most of these family representatives were natural parents, but there was a sprinkling of other family members : 15 natural mothers, seven natural fathers, one step mother, two step fathers, one grandmother, one aunt, two sisters and one brother. At least one family member was interviewed for 22 of the 42 children placed in the scheme to date. 70% of the interviews were about placements that were current and 30% were about placements that had ended.

11.1 Family members' knowledge of the Intensive Foster Care Scheme.

Nineteen of the family members interviewed (63%) knew their child was placed in a special foster care scheme. However, few of them knew very much about the scheme. When asked to describe the special features of the scheme, four mentioned the extra social work input, three mentioned the extra contact between the child and natural family, three mentioned the special emphasis on planning, one knew it was a scheme for more difficult children and three described other features of the scheme. Eight of those who knew of the scheme described features which were not aspects of the scheme at all. Only eight of those who knew their child was involved in the scheme knew what the scheme was called.

The interviewers made a summary rating of the overall amount of knowledge each respondent had about the scheme. The distribution of these ratings is given in Table 11.1 below. The table shows that none of the family members had a comprehensive view of the scheme and only three had a reasonable idea of one or two features of the scheme. There was another handful of people who had a vague idea of the scheme or were at least aware of its existence, but as many as 60% knew nothing at all about the scheme.

Table 11.1 How much did family of the child know about the scheme?

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Knew a lot (Comprehensive view of scheme)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Knew a certain amount (reasonable idea of one or two points)	1	7%	2	13%	3	10%
Knew a little (very vague idea of scheme)	1	7%	2	13%	3	10%
Knew nothing specific	4	27%	2	13%	6	20%
Knew nothing of the scheme at all	9	60%	9	60%	18	60%
TOTAL	15	100%	15	100%	30	100%

11.2 Family members' views on whether child liked living in the Intensive Foster Care Scheme placement

Over 60% of the family members thought their children liked living in the Intensive Foster Care Scheme placement, while less than 20% thought the child did not like living there. The remainder thought the children were ambivalent or neutral about this, or were unable to give a view. The Christchurch respondents were more likely than those in Auckland to report the child liked living in the foster home.

Table 11.2 Family members' views on whether the child liked living in the Intensive Foster Care Scheme placement

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
positive response	8	53%	11	73%	19	63%
ambivalent response	1	7%	2	13%	3	10%
neutral response	1	7%	-	-	1	3%
negative response	3	20%	2	13%	5	17%
don't know	2	13%	-	-	2	7%
TOTAL	15	100%	15	100%	30	100%

11.3 Family involvement in planning for the child's future

Four fifths of the family members had been to at least one planning meeting. Three fifths had discussed the child's future with the social worker and a similar proportion had discussed this with the child. However, less than half (47%) had discussed this with the foster parents.

The family members were further asked if they thought they would be consulted about any such decision, and if they thought their views would affect the decision. 62% thought they would be asked, but only a quarter thought their views would have any effect on the decision. These results suggest that the families regard themselves as relatively powerless when it comes to decisions about the future of their children: 14% thought they would actually make any such decision (which is probably unrealistic) but only a quarter of the remainder thought that their views would have any impact on the decision.

11.4 Family members' views of the reason for the care order

Most of the family members interviewed (57%) reported that the child had been taken into care primarily because of conditions in the family home (for example, the child was being abused, a parent had died or was hospitalised, or the parents were simply not able to cope with the child). The remainder of the respondents considered that the main reason for the care order were related to the child rather than the home surroundings (for example, behaviour problems, offending, health or physical problems). There were differences between the two districts on this question with those in Auckland more likely to suggest the child came into care because of the child's behaviour. The distribution of responses here was somewhat different from that for the children themselves, but this was primarily because many of the children had not been able to give an answer.

The main interest in this information is, of course, in whether the families' views were realistic. However, due to the lack of time available, no analysis of the data has yet been carried out to address this issue. It is intended that further analysis of the data will be carried out in pursuit of such issues.

Table 11.3 Family members' views of the reason for the care order

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
reasons associated with the home	6	40%	11	73%	17	57%
reasons associated with the child	8	53%	4	27%	12	40%
no response	1	7%	-	-	1	3%
TOTAL	15	100%	15	100%	15	100%

The majority of the family members (over 60%) thought the care order was the best thing for the child at the time, but five thought it was not the best thing (17%), and another three had mixed feelings about this (10%). Christchurch family members were more positive than those in Auckland. Table 11.5 gives details.

Table 11.4 Family members' views on whether the care order had been the best thing for the child at the time

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
positive responses	8	53%	11	73%	19	63%
ambivalent responses	1	7%	2	13%	3	10%
neutral responses	3	20%	-	-	3	10%
negative responses	3	20%	2	13%	5	17%
TOTAL	15	100%	15	100%	15	100%

11.5 Family members' views on the possibility of the return of the child to the family

Over half of the respondents (54%) said they would like to have the child back living with them again, while just under a third (31%) said they did not want the child back. (This question was asked only of family members who had previously been care-takers of the child: there were some family members - generally brothers and sisters - where this was not the case, and who were not asked this question.)

Again, over half of the respondents (58%) thought that the child would want to return to them, while only three (10%) thought that the child did not want to return. Around a quarter said they didn't know what the child thought.

The family members were generally equally divided over whether such a return would work out: 42% thought it would and the same proportion thought it wouldn't, while the remainder either didn't know or had mixed feelings.

11.6 Contact between the child and family members

Nearly half the family members interviewed (47%) had a very high level of contact with their children, seeing them at least fortnightly or for a whole weekend at least once a month. A further 20% reported regular contact at a slightly lower level, for example once a month or every school holidays. Another quarter (23%) reported moderate or recurring contact sufficient for some continuity of relationship, but not as frequent or sustained as would be possible with greater commitment. The remaining 10% had a low level of contact. None of the family members reported that they had no contact with their child.

When asked if they would like to see more of their child, two thirds (67%) said they would, while about a quarter (27%) were happy with the current arrangement. Two of the family members (7%) said they would like to see less of their child.

11.7 Relationship between foster parents and family members

Half of the family members were reasonably well acquainted with the foster family, having met them on five or more occasions. Two of the remainder had never met the foster family and the others had met them less than five times.

Seventy five per cent of the family members said they got on well with the child's foster parents, while four (14%) said they did not get on well with them. The other respondents were either ambivalent, indifferent or non-committal.

Table 11.5 How did the family members get on with the child's foster parents?

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
positive responses	9	69%	12	80%	21	75%
ambivalent responses	1	8%	-	-	1	4%
neutral responses	-	-	1	7%	1	4%
negative responses	2	15%	2	13%	4	14%
no response	1	8%	-	-	1	4%
TOTAL	13	100%	15	100%	28	100%

Over two thirds of the family members (68%) said they discussed how the child was getting on with the foster parents, while just under a third (29%) said they never discussed this with the foster parents (one family member gave no response).

Nearly half the family members (47%) said they would like to get to know the foster parents better, while only four (13%) said they would not. Three (10%) felt ambivalent about this, while another 30% said they didn't need to get to know the foster parents better because they knew them very well already.

11.8 Effect of the foster placement on the child

All but two of those interviewed had noticed some changes in their children since being placed in the Intensive Foster Care Scheme. Most (57%) thought the changes had been mainly positive, but about half as many (29%) thought the changes had been mainly negative. A smaller proportion (14%) reported positive and negative changes in about equal measure. There were no differences between the districts on the reporting of mainly positive changes but more of those in Auckland (36%) than Christchurch (21%) reported mainly negative changes.

The most commonly reported improvements were psychological, behavioural or social: for example, "he's calmed down", "he has better manners, more adult", "she's more natural for her age, not so uptight". Changes in health and cleanliness were reported by three respondents and one reported an improvement at school. The most commonly reported negative changes were also psychological, behavioural or social: for example: "she's very bored, very depressed and easy to upset". Some respondents reported the lack of change in a negative way: "he's still stealing".

All but two of the respondents said they got on well with the child last time they saw him or her.

When they were asked if they thought the foster home would turn out to be good for the child in the long term, a little over half said yes, and about a quarter said no. The remainder thought the foster home would have mixed effects or no effect.

Table 11.6 Did the family members think the foster home would turn out to have been a good thing for the child in the long term?

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
positive responses	8	53%	9	60%	17	57%
ambivalent responses	1	7%	2	13%	3	10%
neutral responses	1	7%	1	7%	2	7%
negative responses	5	33%	3	20%	8	27%
TOTAL	15	100%	15	100%	30	100%

11.9 Contact between family members and social worker

Typically, family members reported that they saw the social worker about once every two months: 20% said they saw the social worker every month, 40% reported between one and two months, and 30% reported seeing the social worker every three to six months. One respondent had never seen the social worker.

Somewhat less than half (43%) said they would like to see more of the social worker, while most of the remainder (47%) were happy with the current amount of contact with the social worker. Two respondents wanted to see less of the social worker.

Two thirds of the family members thought that the social worker's visits were beneficial, while a fifth thought they didn't do any good.

Table 11.7 Did the family members think the social worker's visits were of any use?

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
positive responses	10	71%	10	67%	20	69%
ambivalent responses	-	-	-	-	-	-
neutral responses	-	-	1	7%	1	3%
negative responses	4	27%	2	13%	6	21%
no response	-	-	2	13%	2	7%
TOTAL	14	100%	15	100%	29	100%

11.10 Summary of the results from the interviews with the families of the children

- About two thirds of the family members knew the child was placed in a special scheme, but few knew very much about the scheme.
- Most of the family members thought the child was happy in the scheme placement, and fewer than a fifth had a negative view of this.
- The families viewed themselves as comparatively powerless when it came to decisions about the future of the child. Nearly two thirds thought they would be consulted about any such decision, but only a quarter thought that their views would be taken into account.
- The majority of the family members (over 60%) thought the care order was the best thing for the child at the time, but just under 20% thought it was not and another 10% had mixed feelings about it.
- Over half of the respondents wanted the child back with them again while a third did not, and they were equally divided over whether such a return would be successful or not.
- Nearly half the family members had a high level of contact with their children and few had a low level of contact although it is likely that the group of family members who were interviewed was biased in favour of those more in contact with their children. Despite the relatively high level of contact among this group, two thirds said they wanted to see more of their child.
- The family members were reasonably well acquainted with the child's foster family (only two of them having not met the foster parents). Most of them said they got on well with the foster parents while few gave an outright negative response here. Nearly half of the family members said they wanted to get to know the foster parents better.
- Almost all of the family members said they had noticed some changes in their children since they had been placed in the Intensive Foster Care Scheme: most reported positive changes but about a third reported negative changes.

- Over half of the family members thought the foster home would turn out to have been a good thing for the child in the long term, while only a quarter demurred.
- The family members also had a fairly positive attitude to the social worker's visits. Two thirds of them thought that such visits were beneficial, while only a fifth thought they didn't do much good.

SECTION 12 COMPARISON BETWEEN THE VIEWS OF FAMILIES OF CHILDREN IN THE SCHEME AND THOSE IN CONVENTIONAL PLACEMENTS

A total of 35 family members of children in conventional placements have been interviewed to date (21 in Auckland and 14 in Christchurch). All but one of these family members were natural parents (fifteen natural mothers in Auckland and eleven in Christchurch, five natural fathers in Auckland and three in Christchurch). The other interviewee was the grandmother of a child in Auckland. Thus, the family members of conventionally placed children who were interviewed were more likely to have been natural parent figures than those of children in the scheme (eight of the 30 family members of scheme children were not natural parents). 80% of these interviews concerned current placements compared to 70% within the scheme. At least one family member was interviewed for 31 out of the 65 children. This section compares the responses to the interviews of the families of children in the scheme and those in conventional placements.

12.1 Family members' views of whether the child liked living in the current placement

Most of the family members (of both scheme and non-scheme children) were of the view that the child liked living with his or her current foster parents. It seemed that the families of conventionally placed children were more likely to respond positively than those of children in the scheme, and also that Christchurch families were more likely to respond positively than those in Auckland. Thus the most positive group was made up of the families of Christchurch children in conventional placements, all but one of whom gave a positive response to this question (93%), while the least positive group was made up of the families of Auckland scheme children just over half of whom gave positive responses (53%).

Table 12.1 Family members' views of whether the child liked living in the current placement

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	<u>IFCS</u>		<u>Conventional</u>		<u>IFCS</u>		<u>Conventional</u>	
	<u>Placements</u>		<u>Placements</u>		<u>Placements</u>		<u>Placements</u>	
positive responses	8	53%	16	76%	11	73%	13	93%
ambivalent responses	1	7%	-	-	2	13%	-	-
neutral responses	1	7%	-	-	-	-	-	-
negative responses	3	20%	1	5%	2	13%	1	7%
don't know	<u>2</u>	<u>13%</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>19%</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
TOTAL	15	100%	21	100%	15	100%	14	100%

12.2 Family involvement in discussions and planning for the future of the child

On average, somewhat more than half the family members (both of children in the scheme and those in conventional placements) had been involved in discussions with various parties and planning meetings relating to the future of the child.

In both districts, the family members of scheme children were somewhat more likely to have attended planning meetings (seven out of eight had done so in Auckland and three out of four in Christchurch, compared with three out of five for children not in the scheme). However, the picture was less clear for information about discussions between the family and various other parties, with differences being relatively small and no clear pattern being displayed.

Table 12.2 Proportion of family members who had participated in discussions or planning for the future of the child

<u>Number of family members who had had:</u>	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	<u>IFCS Placements</u> (n=15)		<u>Conventional Placements</u> (n=21)		<u>IFCS Placements</u> (n=15)		<u>Conventional Placements</u> (n=14)	
discussions with social worker	10	67%	11	52%	8	53%	8	57%
discussions with foster parents	7	47%	9	43%	7	47%	8	57%
discussions with child	10	67%	12	57%	8	53%	9	64%
attendance at planning meetings	13	87%	13	62%	11	73%	8	57%

12.3 Family members' views of the reason for the care order

Most of the family members of children in conventional placements thought the care order had been made because of conditions in the home (three quarters of those in Auckland and two thirds of those in Christchurch). Within the scheme, however, there was a difference between the districts: in Christchurch most (three quarters) thought the child had been taken into care because of conditions in the home, but in Auckland more (over half) thought the care order had been made because of the behaviour of the child. Once again, no analysis has yet been performed on these data to investigate whether the families' views were realistic, although it is intended this will be done eventually.

Table 12.3 Family members' views of the reason for the care order

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>	
child's behaviour	8	53%	3	14%	4	27%	5	36%
home conditions	6	40%	16	76%	11	73%	9	64%
don't know	1	7%	2	10%	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	15	100%	21	100%	15	100%	14	100%

The families of children in conventional placements were more inclined to think the care order had been the best thing for the child at the time than those of children in the scheme. As well as this, there appeared to be a general difference between districts, with Christchurch people being more likely than those in Auckland to think the care order had been the best thing for the child. Thus the most positive group was made up of the families of Christchurch children in conventional foster placements (all but one of whom had positive views, amounting to 93%); while the least positive group was made up of the Auckland families of children in the scheme (about half of whom had positive views).

Table 12.4 Family members' views of whether the care order was the best thing at the time for the child

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>	
positive responses	8	53%	14	67%	11	73%	13	93%
ambivalent responses	1	7%	2	10%	2	13%	-	-
neutral responses	3	20%	1	5%	-	-	-	-
negative responses	3	20%	4	19%	2	13%	1	7%
TOTAL	15	100%	21	100%	15	100%	14	100%

12.4 Family members' views of the possibility of a return of the child to the family

About three quarters of the family members of the conventionally placed children said they would like to have the child living back with them. The same proportion of families of scheme children in Christchurch also wanted the child back, but the proportion was much lower for the families of scheme children in Auckland (40%). These families were also the least positive about whether a return home by the child would work out. Most of the families thought the child would probably want to live with them again (between half and two thirds of each group had positive views here).

Table 12.5 Family members' views on a possible return of the child home

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u> <u>(n=15)</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u> <u>(n=21)</u>		<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u> <u>(n=11)</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u> <u>(n=14)</u>	
Does family want child home again?	6	40%	16	76%	8	73%	10	71%
Does family think child wants to come home?	8	53%	14	67%	7	64%	7	50%
Does family think it would work out?	4	27%	14	67%	7	64%	6	43%

Note: The table above reports the number and percentages of respondents who said yes in each case. The figures for the scheme are based on a slightly reduced total of cases, since this question was only asked of the family members with whom the child had previously lived as care-takers, which excluded four family members of Christchurch scheme children.

12.5 Contact between children and their families

For all groups, the majority of family members (more than three quarters) reported at least a moderate level of contact. No pattern of differences is evident, although the number of respondents in the groups is too small for satisfactory comparisons to be made.

Table 12.6 How often do family members see the child?

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>	
fortnightly or more frequently	5	33%	7	33%	9	60%	6	43%
regular high level contact	3	20%	6	29%	3	20%	2	14%
moderate recurring contact	5	33%	3	14%	2	13%	4	29%
low level contact	2	13%	1	5%	1	7%	2	14%
no contact	-	-	4	19%	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	15	100%	21	100%	15	100%	14	100%

Similarly, no consistent pattern was evident concerning views on whether the level of contact was satisfactory or not. However, few of the families wanted to see less of the child - a total of only three from all of the groups.

Table 12.7 Family members' views on whether current level of contact is satisfactory

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>	
want to see more of child	8	53%	13	62%	12	80%	6	43%
want to see less of child	1	7%	1	5%	1	7%	-	-
content with current contact	6	40%	7	33%	2	13%	7	50%
no response	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	7%
TOTAL	15	100%	21	100%	15	100%	14	100%

12.6 Relationship between foster parents and family members

The families of children in the scheme (at least those interviewed) tended to know the foster parents better than those of children in conventional placements. 80% of the scheme family members in Auckland and over 90% of those in Christchurch had met the foster parents on three or more occasions, compared to just under two thirds of those in conventional placements.

Table 12.8 How well did the family members know the foster parents?

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>	
had not met	2	13%	5	24%	-	-	1	7%
met once	1	7%	-	-	1	7%	2	14%
met twice	-	-	2	10%	-	-	2	14%
met three times or more	12	80%	13	62%	14	93%	9	64%
no response	-	-	1	5%	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	15	100%	21	100%	15	100%	14	100%

Most of the family members reported that they got on fairly well with the foster parents. The Christchurch respondents tended to be more likely to give positive responses here: all of the families of children in conventional placements and all but three of those of scheme children did so, while around two thirds of the Auckland respondents answered positively.

Table 12.9 How did the family members get on with the foster parents?

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>	
positive responses	9	69%	11	65%	12	80%	13	100%
ambivalent responses	1	8%	1	6%	-	-	-	-
neutral responses	-	-	2	12%	1	7%	-	-
negative responses	2	15%	3	18%	2	13%	-	-
no response	1	8%	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	13	100%	17	100%	15	100%	13	100%

NOTE: The above table is based on slightly reduced total figures, since a small number of family members had not met the foster parents.

About a third of the family members in each group said they would like to get to know the foster parents better, except in the case of the Christchurch scheme group (where two thirds of the families said they wanted to get to know the foster parents better).

Overall, about two thirds of the family members discussed with the foster parents how well the child was getting on. Table 12.10 shows that there was some variation between the groups but no pattern was evident.

Table 12.10 Did the family members discuss how the child was getting on with the foster parents?

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>	
yes frequently	10	77%	10	59%	9	60%	12	92%
yes occasionally	-	-	1	6%	-	-	1	8%
no never	3	23%	5	28%	5	33%	-	-
no response	-	-	1	6%	1	7%	-	-
TOTAL	13	100%	17	100%	15	100%	13	100%

12.7 Effect of the placement on the child

The families of the children in the scheme were more likely to report that they had noticed changes in the child since the placement: all but one in each district (93%) said they had. This compared with 71% and 53% of the children in Auckland and Christchurch respectively in conventional placements.

Table 12.11 Had the respondents noticed any changes in the child recently?

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>	
yes	14	93%	15	71%	14	93%	8	57%
no	1	7%	2	10%	1	7%	5	36%
not seen child recently	-	-	4	19%	-	-	-	-
no response	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	7%
TOTAL	15	100%	21	100%	15	100%	14	100%

Of the respondents who reported that they had noticed recent changes, the family members of scheme children appeared somewhat less likely than non-scheme families to report that the changes were positive. About three quarters of the non-scheme families reported that the changes they had noticed were mainly positive (compared to under 60% of the scheme families) and only three of the non-scheme families (an eighth) reported negative changes, compared with eight of the scheme families (nearly 30%).

Table 12.12 Were the changes positive or negative?

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>	
mainly positive	8	57%	11	73%	8	57%	8	73%
mixture	1	7%	3	20%	3	21%	-	-
mainly negative	5	36%	1	7%	3	21%	2	18%
no response	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	9%
TOTAL	14	100%	15	100%	14	100%	11	100%

The vast majority of family members who had seen the child recently reported that they had got on well with him or her, there being only one respondent with a child in the scheme and three with children in conventional placements who gave negative responses.

The families were also generally of the view that the placement would turn out to have been a good thing for the child in the long term. More than half of each group were of this view, with the Christchurch non-scheme families having a much higher percentage (with all but one responding positively, in fact).

Table 12.13 Did the family members think the placement would turn out to have been a good thing for the child in the long term

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>	
positive responses	8	53%	12	57%	9	60%	13	93%
ambivalent responses	1	7%	3	14%	2	13%	-	-
neutral responses	1	7%	2	10%	1	7%	-	-
negative responses	5	33%	4	19%	3	20%	1	7%
TOTAL	15	100%	21	100%	15	100%	14	100%

12.8 Contact between the family and the social worker

Approximately a quarter of of the family members reported that they had been in contact with the social worker once a month or more frequently. At the other extreme, a little less than a tenth had never seen the social worker. The results provide no evidence of systematic differences between the groups in the level of contact with the social worker.

Table 12.14 How often did family members see the social worker

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>	
monthly or more frequently	4	27%	6	27%	2	13%	5	36%
3-5 times/ six months	3	20%	5	24%	9	60%	1	7%
1-2 times/ six months	6	40%	8	38%	3	20%	6	43%
not in last six months	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
never	1	7%	2	10%	-	-	2	4%
no response	1	7%	-	-	1	7%	-	-
TOTAL	15	100%	21	100%	15	100%	14	100%

In interpreting the following results on the families' contacts with social workers, it should be kept in mind that they may exaggerate the level of contact as families with little or no contact might have been less likely to have been interviewed, since the interviews were arranged through the social workers.

Few of the families (around a tenth) wanted to see less of the social worker. There was some variation between groups in the results, but no clearly discernible pattern.

Table 12.15 Did family members want to see more or less of the social worker?

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>	
more	5	33%	9	43%	8	53%	3	21%
less	-	-	3	14%	2	13%	2	14%
same	10	67%	7	33%	4	27%	9	64%
don't know	-	-	2	10%	1	7%	-	-
TOTAL	15	100%	21	100%	15	100%	14	100%

Around two thirds of the family members felt that the visits they received from the social worker did some good. Not very many families had a negative view: there were four such cases in Christchurch and six in Auckland.

Table 12.16 Did the family members think the social worker's visits do any good?

	<u>Auckland</u>				<u>Christchurch</u>			
	<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>IFCS</u> <u>Placements</u>		<u>Conventional</u> <u>Placements</u>	
positive responses	10	71%	10	53%	10	67%	8	67%
ambivalent responses	-	-	2	11%	-	-	-	-
neutral responses	-	-	2	11%	1	7%	-	-
negative responses	4	29%	2	11%	2	13%	2	17%
no response	-	-	3	16%	2	13%	2	17%
TOTAL	14	100%	19	100%	15	100%	12	100%

12.9 Summary of the comparison between the views of family members with children in the scheme and those with children in conventional placements

- Most of the family members interviewed (of both scheme and non-scheme children) were of the opinion that the child liked living with his or her current foster parents. Families of non-scheme children and Christchurch families appeared to be more likely to have a positive view here.
- The families of children in conventional placements were more likely to think the care order was the best thing for the child at the time. There was also a district effect here, with Christchurch people being more likely to think the care order was the best thing for the child.
- In Christchurch, equal proportions of scheme and non-scheme families said they would like to have the child living with them again, while in Auckland, considerably fewer of the scheme families said they wanted the child back.
- The Auckland scheme families also felt most pessimistic about how such a return would work out, while the Christchurch scheme families had a more positive view of such a return than their non-scheme counterparts.
- The families of children in the scheme tended to be better acquainted with their foster parents than those with children in conventional placements. However, neither group appeared to get on better with the foster parents than the other.
- The families of children in the scheme were more likely to report that they had noticed changes in the child since the placement had been made. However, of those who reported changes, while the non-scheme families were more likely to report positive changes.
- The families in both groups were generally of the view that the placement would turn out to have been a good thing for the child in the long term.

SECTION 13 VIEWS OF THE SOCIAL WORKERS ON THE SCHEME

At the time this report was written, a total of eleven social workers (including Senior Social Workers) had been employed in the scheme since its inception in 1980 (five in Auckland and six in Christchurch). All of these people were interviewed by Research Division staff members during July and August 1983, to gather information on their views about the scheme, how it was operating and what its strengths and weaknesses were. Only four of the social workers were still actually employed on the scheme at the time of the interview, and one further staff member has left the scheme since the interview. Of the eleven respondents, seven were employed as basic grade social workers and four as Senior Social Workers. This section presents results from the interviews.

13.1 Qualifications and experience of the social workers

Seven social workers (three seniors and four basic grade) out of the eleven had some type of professional social work qualification (e.g. a diploma, degree or certificate in social work). All the staff members had some type of university degree apart from social work qualifications - generally a B.A. with the major subjects usually being in the social sciences, but also including Commerce, Theology and Engineering. Four people (three seniors and one basic grade social worker) also had teaching qualifications.

The four senior social workers had had prior professional social work experience ranging from six to nine and a half years, with the average being seven and a quarter years. Their experience in the specific area of foster care prior to working in the scheme ranged from nil to seven and a half years, with the average being four and a quarter years.

The basic grade social workers had less prior social work experience on average, ranging from one year of voluntary work to six years, with an average of four years. Three of the basic grade workers had had no previous foster care experience: among those who had, the length of experience ranged from three to five years. The average length of prior experience specifically in foster care for all the basic grade social workers was two and a quarter years.

Generally then, the social workers were fairly well qualified in terms of professional qualifications and prior experience.

13.2 Length of service on the scheme

The average length of time spent on the scheme by the eight staff members who have now left the scheme was 2 years and ranged from 7 months to 3 years. The staff currently employed on the scheme (3 basic grade social workers, as at August 1983) had served an average of 1 year, the various lengths of service ranging from 10 months to 16 months.

The above data constitute all the background information that was collected on the social workers. The remainder of this section presents the social workers' responses to the various questions put to them in the course of the interview.

13.3 Major aims of the scheme

The social workers viewed the scheme as having two major aims. The first was to provide stable foster care for as long as needed for children who would not otherwise be considered for fostering, or who would be likely to go through a series of unsuccessful placements. The second major aim was to explore what could be achieved in foster care through the more intensive approach of a smaller caseload and more support for the placement.

There was a high level of satisfaction with the scheme in respect of both of these aims, although it was a little lower for the second aim. In both Auckland and Christchurch it was felt some very good placements had been made and maintained for children whose chances for successful foster care would otherwise have been poor. There had, however, been some unsuccessful placements which the social workers considered to have resulted most commonly from inaccurate assessment of particular children's needs and/or foster parents' abilities. Particular difficulty was experienced in finding suitable homes for older children.

13.4 Age restrictions on children entering the scheme

All of the basic grade social workers believed there should be restrictions on the age of children entering the scheme, but some suggested modifications to the original 7-14 years limits. The changes which were suggested differed somewhat between the two districts. Christchurch social workers were generally happy with the maximum of 14, although some had a preference for lowering the maximum to 12 or 13; but their main interest was in lowering the minimum age - specific minimums suggested were 4 years, 18 months, or no lower limit at all. Auckland social workers wanted to lower the maximum to 12 or 13 years and lower the minimum to 4 or 5 years.

Amongst the four Senior Social Workers, two felt there should be no age restriction at all; the third Senior expressed the view that 5 to 12 or 13 year olds were most appropriate for the present scheme and adolescents needed a special scheme of their own. The fourth Senior suggested 7 - 16 years as the most appropriate age range, and commented that adoption or return home rather than long term foster care were better options for young children (which was a view shared by several Auckland staff members).

13.5 I.Q. restrictions on children entering the scheme

Seniors and basic grade social workers were all agreed that there should be restrictions on the I.Q. of children accepted. The specified lower I.Q. limit of 85 was felt to have been generally appropriate, but it was emphasised that this had been interpreted flexibly, bearing in mind that environmental factors can cause underachievement. As one social worker said, "there is no magic number", but it was agreed that including children with definite intellectual handicaps would require specialist staff and foster parents.

13.6 Difficulty of the children

All eleven of the social workers agreed that the children in the scheme were difficult or demanding but only seven (64%) considered they were more difficult or demanding on average than children in ordinary foster care. The four respondents who disagreed or had doubts that the scheme children were more difficult pointed out that there were a lot of similarly difficult children in ordinary foster care. The social workers who thought the scheme children were more difficult said these children had more frequently had traumatic past experiences - family disruption, multiple placement breakdowns, institutional placements - which caused them to have a lot of difficulty forming close relationships. Foster parents caring for such children needed more support and social workers found it harder to get to know and work with the children. "Acting out" and entrenched behavioural problems were common. Some children had natural families who were difficult to cope with but who needed to be accommodated as they were active in the child's life.

13.7 Recruitment and retention of foster parents

Recruitment of foster parents was described as a major difficulty by all the staff in both regions. Auckland staff mentioned the isolation of Regional Office from the pool of existing foster parents that district offices generally have; this meant the scheme was not able to get many people with previous fostering experience. Response to advertising varied: for instance, after a long period of few responses a recent advertising campaign produced 70 replies. This in turn created problems in trying to cope with many applications at once. A major concern in Auckland was the lag between accepting children onto the scheme and having a foster home to place them in.

The Christchurch scheme is not so isolated from conventional departmental fostering - the social workers share an office with the Christchurch district Fostering Officer - but there too recruitment was found to be the most difficult task, especially for older children.

The chief recruitment method in Christchurch has been direct advertising, with some change of style during the pilot period. Initial advertisements involved general descriptions of the scheme itself or featured specific children. People were attracted by both these styles, but current advertising is always written in relation to a specific child. Christchurch tries to have two couples per child go through the training programme, and people who emerge as suitable for fostering but not within the scheme are referred to conventional fostering.

Recruitment has required a major investment of time in both districts, and the general feeling at best was one of "just managing" to recruit sufficient people.

The question of retaining foster parents once they have fostered within the scheme was not so much of an issue. It was suggested by several social workers that this question assumed a view of the scheme whereby people fostered a child for a period and were then available to foster another, and in fact this possibility had not generally arisen. Although there had been a few foster parents with whom this has been the case

(more so in Auckland than Christchurch), generally people have left the scheme and continued fostering the same child under ordinary arrangements, or the placement had ended for reasons which made it undesirable for the foster parents to continue within the scheme.

The social workers were asked if the scheme had attracted people not attracted to ordinary fostering. In Auckland it was felt this had been the case to some extent - people had been attracted by factors such as the challenge, extra social worker support and involvement with other foster parents, and extra money for those who would otherwise have been working. There were less positive responses: one respondent offered the comment that the style of advertising had attracted some people who weren't really suitable.

In Christchurch it was felt extra people had been attracted to some extent, largely as a result of more active advertising. While the extra support was thought to be appealing, especially for new foster parents, the prevailing opinion in Christchurch was that people had generally responded to a particular child rather than to the type of fostering.

13.8 Characteristics of the foster parents

Eight (73%) of the social workers from both regions felt that the scheme did not need foster parents with different qualities or attributes from those needed for fostering generally. It was felt that ideally all foster parents should have the qualities sought for the scheme - the scheme was setting standards for what could be achieved in foster care and had the time to be more selective. Particular strengths or weaknesses would show up more because of the extra demands of the scheme - "a goldfish bowl existence".

The three dissenting views came from the Auckland basic grade social workers who saw scheme foster parents as requiring additional qualities to cope with more difficult children and the additional demands of the scheme. These additional qualities included an extra degree of commitment, the ability to work closely with the social worker as a colleague, the ability to work in groups, and knowledge about child development and difficult behaviour. One person pointed out that some of these things could be developed by training.

Seven (64%) of the social workers said the scheme foster parents were not in fact any different from ordinary foster parents, and four (36%) thought they were. Almost everyone felt their "ideal" had been achieved however - those who thought the scheme needed "good ordinary foster parents" thought such people had been recruited, and the social workers in Auckland who wanted foster parents with extra qualities felt the scheme foster parents were such people. One person disagreed, suggesting that the scheme had attracted a higher proportion of solo mothers, who had companionship needs which they fulfilled through the scheme. Some disappointment was also expressed at the continuing high proportion of middle class foster homes.

Nine of the eleven social workers (82%) said that people who had fostered before were more likely to be successful under the scheme than those who had not. Previous fostering experience meant they had some idea of what they were undertaking and the range of children's behaviour. The two people who were less positive in response to this question agreed that experience was important but felt the match of foster parent and child could be more important, and that in some cases people with no previous experience could accept the scheme's ways of doing things more easily.

13.9 Training of foster parents

The value of the training given to scheme foster parents was rated very highly by the social workers. Given a five point scale ranging from "very helpful" to "very harmful", eight of the social workers (73%) rated it "very helpful" and the other three (27%) rated it "quite helpful", the second highest category.

The social workers were asked if there was a need for training on the scheme different from training generally given in that region. The question produced different results in Auckland and Christchurch because of differences in general training available. In the Auckland region, because foster parent training did not appear to be widely available, the scheme social workers were all very definite that special training was necessary, reflecting their view that all foster parents need training. In Christchurch all new foster parents (both conventional and scheme) attend a group training and selection programme. The scheme training is similar to the conventional programme but with some additional material on the particular commitments and emphasis of the scheme. The scheme programme is several weeks longer and uses small groups in order to develop supportive relationships between the foster parents. Thus, in Christchurch the social workers did not feel as strongly as those in Auckland that special training for scheme foster parents was necessary, mainly because they were more satisfied with the adequacy of the basic training provided to all foster parents.

In both regions the training offered by the scheme was consistently felt to be better or more appropriate than what was generally available to foster parents.

In both areas training was considered to have successfully fulfilled several different functions. One of these was "consciousness raising" - clarifying for applicants what fostering was as opposed to adoption or bringing up their own children. Training also helped people to understand their role with respect to the social worker, the Department and the child's own family. Foster parents built up trust between each other as a group, and the social workers. A successful feature of the training, mentioned particularly by the Auckland social workers, was that it encouraged people to assess their motives for wanting to foster. Finally, in both regions self-selection has been a major function of the groups - by the end of the training it was felt that generally people could realistically assess whether they could foster or not, and if so, what sort of child.

Opinions on less successful aspects of the training varied more between the districts. In Auckland, having to start a training programme from scratch had required the social workers to learn as they went along. The use of "encounter group" techniques had in some cases uncovered personal problems leading to a client/counsellor relationship between foster

parents and social workers. It was found to be difficult to make the transition from a state where the foster parents depended on the social workers as the experts, to one where they had confidence to take responsibility themselves. Two specific criticisms that were made of the content of the training were that too little emphasis was given to specific behavioural problems, and that the overall tone was too negative and tended to put off those receiving it.

The actual form and timing of the training programme was of concern to staff on the Auckland scheme particularly. Problems had arisen matching the intake of foster parents with the intake of children, and it had been frustrating to run through a six week programme and have only a few couples willing to go on. It was also felt by some social workers that training might be more successful if it could be related to foster parents' experience with a child who was already with them.

There were discussions on this topic at the October 1982 annual review meeting and it was subsequently decided to try a shorter programme in Auckland consisting of two Saturday morning seminars followed by some home visits for informal interviews. More detailed training would be provided to foster parents via a support group during their first year with a child. At the time of the interviews, this proposal had not been fully implemented because there were not enough new foster parents for a new support group.

In Christchurch the social workers were satisfied with the format and timing of their present training programme (consisting of six evening sessions immediately prior to placement) although people commented that it was possible to add indefinitely to the content, and training needed to be ongoing. Content on natural families and child development in particular had been increased. It was also acknowledged that the self-selection aspect of the training had not always functioned very well in that some people who were not suited to fostering had come through the selection without recognising this.

In both districts it was found to be difficult to get people to understand what fostering was really like beforehand. People could come through the training without really hearing what was said because they were still responding emotionally to the particular child advertisement, or they couldn't see the information as relevant to themselves.

Overall, it was felt that there were limits to what could be achieved with training. Prospective foster parents still had to have the "raw material" to be successful. One person commented that though "training raises awareness, 'how to do it' comes with practice." However, it was expected that training could teach how fostering differed from ordinary parenting and could also explain specific emphases of the scheme, especially natural family contact. It was also considered to be important that people should be trained to expect problems and to understand that encountering problems did not necessarily imply failure.

13.10 The role of foster parents in the scheme

The social workers were asked questions paralleling those asked of the foster parents concerning their role (see Table 7.9 of this report). The following table presents the results from a block of questions which

offered a choice across a five point scale between each of the given pairs of "roles". The social workers were asked to fill it out according to their impressions of how the scheme was actually functioning. The results are presented as mean scores on the five point scale. The mean scores of the foster parents in the scheme are given in brackets beside their social work counterparts to enable direct comparison.

The table shows that the social workers generally tended to take a slightly left of centre position on each of the scales, identifying somewhat more closely with the left hand descriptors than the right. The mean score over the nine categories was 2.4 which is rather less than the middle score of 3. This indicates that the social workers saw the foster parents as a little more like parents than like child care workers, a little more like volunteers than like employees (and so on), although they also felt that the role had something in common with both of these models. The Auckland social workers generally scored quite a bit higher than those in Christchurch, indicating that Auckland generally tended to view the foster parenting task in a more "professional" light. Comparing the social workers' responses with those of foster parents, it will be seen that the social workers scored higher on average than the foster parents, indicating that they had a more "professional" view of the foster parent role than the foster parents themselves generally had. This was the case both in Auckland and in Christchurch, but was more pronounced in Auckland. The mean difference between foster parents' and social workers' scores was 1.0 in Auckland compared with only 0.24 in Christchurch.

Table 13.1 Mean scores for social workers' views on the role of a foster parent

		<u>AUCKLAND</u>	<u>CHRISTCHURCH</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
		<u>Staff</u>	<u>Staff</u>	
1. A parent	A child care worker	4.2 (2.4)*	1.7 (1.9)*	2.8 (2.1)*
2. A personal interest	Occupation	3.6 (1.8)	2.5 (1.7)	3.0 (1.8)
3. Another child	Home job	3.2 (2.0)	1.5 (1.9)	2.3 (1.9)
4. Voluntary helper	Professional child care worker	2.6 (2.1)	2.7 (2.4)	2.6 (2.2)
5. Department volunteer	Department employees	2.4 (1.9)	2.0 (2.1)	2.2 (2.0)
6. Community service	Job	2.8 (2.0)	2.7 (2.0)	2.7 (2.0)
7. Social worker as consultant	Job supervisor	1.4 (1.5)	2.0 (1.7)	1.7 (1.6)
8. Social worker as equal	Superior	3.0 (1.5)	1.7 (1.4)	2.3 (1.5)
9. DSW as service organisation	Employer	2.4 (1.4)	2.3 (1.8)	2.4 (1.6)

*NOTE: The mean scores for the foster parents in the scheme are given in brackets for comparison purposes.

The social workers were also asked who they felt scheme foster parents were most like in relation to their foster child, being given a set of options to choose between. The Christchurch social workers all chose either the "adoptive parent" or "relative" options. The Auckland social workers were much more diverse - every option was mentioned by at least one person. Two people made a distinction between those who had children on a long term basis, who had a more parental role, and those with whom children were placed on a short-term basis, who had a "child care worker" role.

13.11 Support groups

Support groups have been a problematic feature of the scheme for all the social workers in some way or another. However, there was more agreement on what had gone right than on what had gone wrong.

At the time of writing (August 1983) both groups were in a state of change. In Auckland it was hoped to begin a new group but there have not been enough new people and the old group presently meets without the social worker. In Christchurch the group is experiencing a change in membership with an influx of new foster parents.

In both regions it was widely felt that the groups had been successful in breaking down feelings of isolation and providing some support by bringing the foster parents together to share their common feelings and experiences, especially their difficulties. Other successful aspects mentioned were ongoing training, personal growth for the foster parents and regular meetings with foster fathers who were generally not seen on afternoon home visits.

A wide range of specific problems with the support groups were described. The common theme seemed to be a lack of definition of the function of the groups, with accompanying problems in finding an appropriate structure and leadership. In both areas the groups have been heavily dependent on the involvement and leadership by the social workers, a situation which was generally regarded as unsatisfactory. Specific problems mentioned included:

- too much negativism, emphasising problems and difficulties
- clashes of personality
- foster parents not knowing how to use the groups
- the group becoming too involved with the policy and administration of the scheme
- the group members being so diverse it was difficult to find any common ground between them
- dependency on the social workers being maintained.

An interesting difference emerged between the "first" and "second" generation of scheme staff members. Several of the earlier appointees considered the compulsory attendance at the group meetings to be

unsuccessful, whereas all of the more recent appointees commented on the good attendance despite all the difficulties: "people keep coming". It seemed that a more relaxed attitude now prevailed about compulsory attendance.

The question about the preferred role of the social worker in the meetings produced a wide range of ideas. Responses ranged from those who felt that the social workers should not attend at all, through intermittent attendance for training sessions, through more passive "facilitator" roles, to a more formal "chairman" type of role. The Christchurch staff consistently favoured a more active role than the Auckland staff, but in both regions it was generally agreed that responsibility should be increasingly handed over to the foster parents.

The preferred role of the Foster Care Federation representative in the support group turned out to be a rather theoretical question. In Christchurch the representative had attended very few meetings, and the Auckland representative's recent role had been complicated by being a scheme foster parent as well. Apart from this, views on the role of the Federation representative as such, were almost as diverse as those on the social worker role. Several felt the representative should not attend, but the majority thought this person could make a worthwhile contribution, with suggested roles including co-leader, facilitator or resource person.

Most of the social workers felt that the groups were of some value to the foster parents, but there was also a feeling that their potential had not been realised.

When asked to summarise the realisable aims of a support group, in addition to the successful aspects mentioned above, the following aims were suggested: to develop informal links to give support apart from that provided by the social workers; to perform an educative role outside the scheme; and to lobby for improvements in fostering.

13.12 Natural family contact

The social workers were asked whether the scheme had led to improvements in the quality of contact between the children's natural families and the children, the foster parents and the Department. The social workers' answers were strongly positive for all types of contact. Contact between the children and their families was considered to be clearly established on a predictable basis, often prior to the actual placement. The foster parents were also prepared from the beginning for contact with natural families.

For the social workers themselves, having extra time was the crucial factor - difficulties still remained but the social workers could feel they had made their best efforts.

13.13 Placement methods

The placement method used in the scheme was felt to be both different from and better than that generally used. It was considered to differ from the standard technique in that a gradual introduction was made, with a series

of visits and overnight stays before the final placement. This gave time for those involved, including the child and the natural family, to prepare for the placement. Another difference was that the whole process from initial foster parent recruitment to ongoing support of the placement was done by one social worker, who also had a thorough knowledge of the child.

The only difficulty mentioned was the delay experienced by some children, because of the problems with recruitment mentioned earlier (see section 13.7).

13.14 Planning

The Department of Social Welfare's planning procedures were used from the early stages of the scheme. There was a lot of enthusiasm for the methods and objectives of this planning process. As one social worker said, planning was "part of the practice philosophy rather than an administrative imposition". It was felt that planning could be done at more depth than was generally possible, because there was more time to work with everyone involved.

The social workers were asked how much attention was given within the planning process to short and long term goals respectively, and the means of achieving them.

Table 13.2 Social workers' perceptions of amount of attention given to goals

	<u>Short term goals</u>	<u>Long term goals</u>
Considerable attention	8	10
Some attention	3	1
Little attention	-	-
No attention	-	-
TOTAL	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>

Table 13.3 Social workers' perceptions of sufficiency of attention to goals

	<u>Short term goals</u>	<u>Long term goals</u>
Sufficient attention	9	9
Insufficient attention	2	2
TOTAL	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>

Those who said insufficient attention was being given to goals cited a need for more specific short term goals and a need for more co-ordination between the two types of goals. Several people said the long term goals received more attention at the beginning of a placement. Once set, they were reviewed in the light of the progress with short term goals, and sometimes needed to be changed.

There had been some difficulties with children for whom the initially set long term goals proved to be unrealistic once intensive work had begun. In the last year a consistent policy of pre-selection meetings had been established whereby scheme social workers were involved in a planning meeting prior to a child's acceptance into the scheme. This was to try to ensure that foster care was indeed an appropriate step for the child, rather than for instance immediate return home or referral to Special Needs Adoption.

Two questions were asked about the degree to which the children, natural families and foster parents respectively were involved in planning. The results are presented in the following tables:

Table 13.4 Social workers' perceptions of overall part in planning

	<u>Children</u>		<u>Natural family</u>		<u>Foster family</u>	
A major part	3	27%	6	55%	8	73%
Some part	7	64%	4	36%	2	18%
A minor part	1	9%	1	9%	1	9%
No part	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	11	100%	11	100%	11	100%

The children were generally seen as having only some part in planning, while the foster families were generally considered to play a major part, with the natural families somewhere in between.

Table 13.5 Social workers' perceptions of sufficiency of involvement in planning

	<u>Children</u>		<u>Natural family</u>		<u>Foster family</u>	
Should have been a lot more involved	2	18%	1	9%	-	-
Should have been a little more involved	2	18%	1	9%	1	9%
Sufficiently involved	7	64%	9	82%	10	91%
Should have been less involved	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	11	100%	11	100%	11	100%

About a third of the social workers thought that the children should be more involved, but there was general satisfaction about the degree of involvement of the natural families and the foster parents.

When asked to what extent the planning done had helped to bring about the desired goals of the plan, nine out of the eleven staff chose the option "planning process helps a lot". The other two social workers chose the next most positive option - "...helps a little". One said it was not the six monthly meetings as such but a continuous process that was needed.

There were some critical comments about planning and some possible harmful side effects were described:

- social workers needed to take time to work and plan for desired goals, not simply react;
- planning meetings needed to be handled carefully, otherwise they were potentially destructive;

- having a grand plan could give the illusion that the plan was working;
- the review meetings were artificial.

Most of comments about the planning process and its side effects were positive however. Useful side effects mentioned were:

- it clarified things so that everyone knew where they stood;
- the children, rather than the natural family or the foster family, were kept in the centre of the casework;
- it improved communication and relationships between all parties;
- the child saw the reality of his or her situation;
- it made the social worker and the Department more accountable.

13.15 Board rates

All the staff said that the scheme foster parents should be paid more than conventional foster parents because of the extra requirements of the scheme, but several people added that all board rates ought to be higher. The double board rate presently paid was generally thought to be appropriate, although again there were several who felt it should be higher still. The highest suggestion was four times the conventional rate, so that it was more of a wage than a board payment. Comments were made that the extra money itself was not a motivation, but could be a cushion for the extra pressures on the family - people at least knew they were not being disadvantaged financially, and there might be money over for extras such as "time-out" holidays.

The question of what to do about board rates when people left the scheme and kept the child had been a difficult one for many social workers. It was acknowledged that a reduction might be justified out of fairness to conventional foster parents, and to enable other children to go onto the scheme, but it was very "uncomfortable" to have to stop the extra money and support all at once. Also this practice could be interpreted as causing foster parents to be "punished for succeeding". Five (45%) people (several of them reluctantly) supported the present compromise of one and a half times the conventional rate with an annual review. The other social workers made the following suggestions:

- twice the conventional rate with annual review;
- one and a half to two times the conventional rate with no annual review (three people suggested this);
- paying a separate fee for support group attendance and a higher board rate, with only the support group fee stopping when people left the scheme.

A further comment was made that the policy should be stated to foster parents at the beginning of a placement and should not be negotiable.

13.16 Social worker caseload

The staff were asked what the smaller caseload and freedom from other duties had enabled them to do that was not generally possible for social workers outside the scheme. The constant theme was "being able to do the whole job more thoroughly". Frequently mentioned were: more work with the child's natural family (including the extended family); regular fortnightly foster home visits; being able to develop better working relationships with foster parents; being able to get to know the children better; and having time to plan.

The social workers were asked if there was sufficient time with a caseload of 10 children to do all the work that they thought ought to be done for each case. Only four (36%) people said yes, and one of these people qualified that by saying they had restricted the intake into the scheme so that the caseload did not get to 10 until they could manage that number. Three people said there was enough time for casework, but not for file notes and foster parent recruitment and training. Another three people said they had had to leave some casework undone, for instance - time with natural families, time with children individually, liaison with schools, and life story books. One of these social workers had had a caseload of 13 for some time, while another found travelling time around Auckland and time taken to work with the whole foster family created real pressure with a caseload of 8 children. One person was unable to answer this question, saying that work expanded to suit. It was for this reason that someone else said it was dangerous to lower the caseload size without defining the purpose of the extra time for other than casework.

The following table gives the social workers' thoughts on the ideal and maximum caseload size:

Table 13.6 Preferred caseload size

<u>Number of children</u>	<u>Ideal caseload</u>	<u>Maximum caseload</u>
10	2	9
8-10	3	-
8	3	2
6	2	-
No response	1	-
TOTAL	II	11

The ideal caseload for most social workers was 8-10 and the maximum 10.

A point was made very strongly by a number of the social workers that the answer to these questions depended on the stage of the placement. Cases involving a child awaiting placement, and even up to the first year of a placement, took much more time than an established placement. It was considered that any worker should have no more than two or three cases at an early stage within a caseload of existing placements.

"Job satisfaction" was a consistent response to the question "In what ways is the scheme a good scheme for social workers to work under?" This was described as the result of having time to do a thorough, more professional job. Other gains mentioned were the chance to acquire specialist skills and knowledge, and several people had appreciated the challenge of being accountable to all the parties involved.

Many of the negative aspects of the scheme for the social workers were the "other side of the coin" of the positive features. The degree of specialisation and the small caseload of difficult children meant the work had little variety and was very intense. Scheme staff members were also isolated from generic social work and peer support from other social workers. This was a difficulty particularly at stages when there was only one social worker on the scheme in a district, and a continual problem in Auckland with the scheme being situated in Regional Office. The fact that the scheme was a pilot scheme meant pressures of high expectations, a lot of visitors and Head Office monitoring, which created a feeling of being in a fishbowl and a lot of additional paper work. The small team of social workers on the scheme meant a lot of overtime in the evenings and weekends for regular activities such as support groups, as well as emergencies. Having control of all aspects of a case from foster parent recruitment to ongoing social work in the foster home was a heavy personal responsibility.

In Christchurch all the staff members thought that the gains from the extra social work input were commensurate with the extra work involved. Several people remarked that the foster parents were also putting in extra work. The Auckland people were generally less positive (two "on the whole probably"; two "yes and no" and one "no"). It was agreed that the gains for some children had been worth the additional effort, but doubts were raised about the value of involvement in the scheme for some children who, in retrospect, had proved to be too difficult.

Other negative comments were that the sheer pressure and difficulty of the scheme had allowed the acceptance of "sloppy work" at times; it was still difficult to take casework initiatives rather than being "reactive"; and there was a need to develop foster parents' own resources further and to minimise social work input.

13.17 Time limits for children being in the scheme

Some regional differences were apparent in the questions concerning limits on the time children should be in the scheme. In Auckland one person thought the limits should be flexible, but the other four said there should be a maximum of two or two and a half years (three said two years, one said two and a half years). Accompanying comments were that children who could not be helped within that time should not be taken on; and that limits should be individually related to each case so that people did not just "sit out" their two years.

All of the Christchurch staff mentioned the need to be flexible and were prepared to increase the length if needed. Two years was seen by most as a good time limit, but not an absolute one. Other comments and suggestions were:-

- in practice two and a half years had been the maximum;
- there should be an annual review, but no absolute deadline;
- children should go off the scheme as soon as it was apparent they were not suitable for fostering;
- a child's time on the scheme should be counted from when they were placed in a scheme foster home, not from when they were first accepted onto the scheme.

13.18 The effect of the scheme on the future of the children

There was a lot of hesitation over the question of whether the scheme had improved the chances of a permanent return home for children for whom there was such a goal. Answers on a "yes-no" basis were -

Table 13.7 Social workers' views on whether the scheme had improved the chances of return home for the children

yes	4	36%
qualified yes	3	27%
doubtful	2	18%
no	2	18%
TOTAL	<u>11</u>	<u>100%</u>

There was no clear regional difference. Several people commented that they had had few, if any, such cases and some of these "H" status goals had been inappropriate. One person commented that most of the children were referred too late for a return home to be possible but that the scheme improved their chances of maintaining a relationship with their natural families.

There was complete agreement that in the case of children for whom a return home was not intended, being on the scheme had improved their chances of a permanent alternative home.

13.19 Administrative difficulties

Operating the scheme within the existing departmental system did cause some difficulties.

At times "decisions from above" had reduced the social workers' autonomy and freedom to work intuitively, and weakened the concept of foster parents as colleagues. Lack of availability of cars was a continual problem with the amount of travelling involved, especially in Auckland. Additional clerical support was needed, particularly to service the Advisory Committee. There had also been staffing problems at some stages, for instance a considerable delay in the appointment of a second social worker in Christchurch.

Some of the aims and policies of the scheme as a pilot scheme were felt to have been too vague and not related to the realities of fostering. Social workers in the earlier stages of the scheme had felt unsure about what they were supposed to be aiming for specifically and had had to work out the specifics for themselves. In particular, social workers had been unsure as to the scheme's philosophy on what sort of children were to be taken on, and what would happen to children who could not return home. The role of the Advisory Committee and the Foster Care Federation had also had to be worked out in practice.

13.20 Lessons for foster care generally

The social workers were asked what had been learnt from the scheme that could be applied to foster care generally. Much of what was said in response to this question has already been covered in relation to the

specific aspects of the scheme : the value of lower caseloads; a gradual placement process; thorough ongoing planning involving the child, natural family and foster parents; and training and support groups for foster parents.

The following points were made which have not been covered in the earlier sections:

- children being fostered needed their own rooms;
- children should not be placed in families with children of the same age;
- children being placed after a placement breakdown needed a "breathing space", somewhere neutral from which to be introduced to a new foster family;
- the same social worker should arrange the placement and provide the ongoing casework with the foster and natural families;
- this type of fostering was not generally suitable for Maori or Polynesian children, as it was primarily a middle-class Pakeha scheme.
- the greatest successes had occurred with the younger children, while adolescents had been very difficult to place in foster families.

13.21 Future development of the scheme

With regard to the future of the scheme after the four year pilot period, there was a clear feeling in Christchurch that the scheme should be expanded to include all children during their first few years in the care of the Department. With this aim it was seen that the scheme would not remain so much a distinct entity but that its methods would be incorporated into ordinary fostering.

There was a strong opinion amongst the Auckland social workers that the scheme should not continue in the Regional Office. The sheer geographical size of the Auckland region meant that social workers spent considerable time travelling. More importantly, it was felt that the Regional Office location had accentuated isolation from the district offices and contributed to the difficulty in recruiting foster parents, particularly experienced ones. This view was supported by several Christchurch social workers who mentioned the value of their district office location in increasing understanding and sympathy for the scheme amongst generic social workers.

Of particular concern to the Auckland social workers was the possibility that the scheme could run contrary to "permanency planning", by causing children to be maintained in long term foster care, without providing the security of a permanent home. It was suggested by several of the social workers that thorough planning was needed earlier in these children's lives, and that long term goals should be implemented within two years. Subsidised adoption was suggested as a better alternative than long term foster care.

Specific suggestions for modifications to the scheme (from both regions) included:

- the Senior Social Worker should have fulltime commitment to the scheme;
- foster parents should have automatic mileage payments;
- support groups should meet four weekly;
- the scheme should become more "community" based, with not so much emphasis on "expertness". The scheme could follow the Maatua Whangai model, encouraging social workers to develop specialist skills in a district office, rather than becoming remote specialists;
- an adapted version of the scheme should be established specifically for adolescents.

In both regions, the social workers' opinions as to whether the scheme should be implemented in other regions followed their opinion as to whether it should continue at all, and if so, in what form. Several people considered that a distinct scheme was better than nothing at all (particularly for regions with few facilities, such as Hawkes Bay and Masterton), but the general preference was to incorporate the scheme's principles into ordinary district casework as widely as possible.

13.22 Summary of the social workers' views on the scheme

- The social workers described two major aims of the scheme: to provide stable foster care for children who would otherwise not be fostered and to explore the possibilities of foster care. Overall, it was thought the first aim had been achieved to a large extent, while there was some doubt as to how far the scheme had gone towards achieving the second.
- Most of the social workers wanted the age limits for the scheme lowered, to let younger children in and to restrict the entry of older children (i.e. 13 and 14 year olds).
- It was generally agreed that the children on the scheme were difficult or demanding, mainly because of traumatic past experiences resulting in emotional and behavioural problems. Only two thirds of the social workers, however, felt that the children in the scheme were more difficult or demanding than other children in foster care.
- Recruitment of foster parents emerged as the major problem for the scheme in both districts. A lot of time had been spent on recruitment, often with little success, particularly in attracting experienced foster parents.
- Most of the social workers said the scheme did not need foster parents who were any different from good "ordinary" foster parents but three people felt additional qualities were needed. Overall there was a high level of satisfaction with the capabilities of the foster parents who had been recruited.

- The value of the training given to foster parents was rated highly, and felt to be better or more appropriate than what was generally available.
- The social workers tended to have a more professional view of the role of a foster parent than the foster parents themselves. This trend was more pronounced in Auckland than in Christchurch.
- Most social workers felt that the support groups were of some value to the foster parents, but all of the social workers had found problems with the groups (in particular the lack of definition of the function of the groups).
- The quality of contact between the children's natural families and the children, foster parents and the Department respectively, was thought by all the social workers to be definitely better than it would have been if the children had not been in the scheme.
- There was general satisfaction with the gradual placement method used, and with the Department of Social Welfare's planning procedures which were in use throughout the scheme.
- All the social workers thought that scheme board rates should be higher than conventional board rates because of the extra demands, and most of the social workers thought double the conventional rate was appropriate. About half the social workers thought that foster parents who kept the child but moved off the scheme should continue to receive one and a half times the board rate, while the others thought that more generous provision was required.
- The ideal caseload size for most social workers was 8-10, and no one thought the maximum should be any higher than 10. It was also felt that no worker should have more than two or three cases at an early stage of placement within a caseload of existing placements.
- Two years was seen by most social workers as a good time limit for a child being on the scheme, but the Christchurch people were more sympathetic to increasing this if necessary.
- All respondents thought that being on the scheme had definitely improved children's chances of a permanent alternative home, but there was much less confidence that it had improved their chances of returning home permanently. Very few children on the scheme so far had had realistic "H" status goals.
- With respect to the future of the scheme, the Christchurch social workers generally hoped that the scheme could be expanded to include all children during their first few years in the care of the Department. There was a strong opinion in Auckland that the scheme should not continue in the Regional Office.
- The general preference in both districts was to incorporate the scheme's principles into ordinary district casework as widely as possible.

SECTION 14 LEVEL OF SOCIAL WORK SUPPORT PROVIDED THROUGH THE INTENSIVE
FOSTER CARE SCHEME AND COMPARATIVE DATA FOR CONVENTIONAL
FOSTERING

14.1 How the information was collected

The social workers on the scheme were originally asked to keep logs of all their social work activity in respect of the scheme, including details of each contact made with the foster parents, the child, members of the child's family and any other parties, the duration of the contact, the reason for it and any outcome from it. Keeping these logs proved to be onerous to the social workers, so a simplified log was introduced in June 1981. The data collected by means of the first logs was recoded into the new format.

The simplified logs required social workers to record a simple count of contacts of four specific types - visits to the foster home, contacts with the child other than foster home visits, contacts with the foster parents other than foster home visits, and contacts with members of the child's natural family. "Contact" was defined as "direct personal communication, whether face to face or by telephone". A count of each of these types of contact was kept for each child for each week. In January 1983 a further change was made to the logs, so that data was also collected on the total amount of time, and the amount of time out of normal working hours spent on the four types of contact for each case, each week.

The records kept did not cover all the casework provided for each case: for instance information was not sought on consultation with other professionals concerned with the child. Also the record of time worked outside normal working hours did not include time spent on the support group meetings which generally met for 2 to 3 hours, every 2 to 3 weeks.

The data in the following tables describe contact (of the types specified) by the basic grade social workers, with children who were actually placed in scheme foster homes. Contact involving senior social workers has not been included in the analysis. Contact which occurred while a child was awaiting placement was also excluded - information was collected on this type of contact but has not been presented in this report. The scheme information has been edited in this way so that it will be directly comparable with the information collected about conventional foster placements.

The contact variables are expressed in units of "contacts per child per week". For instance, a figure of 1.00 for foster home visits means that the foster homes of the children were visited on average once a week, while 0.50 would mean they were visited once a fortnight on average. Time is expressed in units of hours - the social workers had been asked to record time spent to the nearest quarter of an hour.

14.2 Information from the scheme

The data show that the social workers in the scheme were visiting each foster home on average about once a fortnight (a figure which is in substantial agreement with the frequency of visits reported by the foster parents): that they were in contact with the foster parents by other means about once a week on average; and that they were in contact with the family of the child about once every three weeks, on average. These various contacts amounted to a total of approximately an hour and a third per case per week on average (about 15% of this outside normal working hours). Table 14.1 also shows that more time was required in the early stages of a placement, and that placements required almost two hours social work time per week over the first two months.

TABLE 14.1 Mean amount of social work contact per case per week by scheme social workers

	<u>First eight weeks of each placement</u>	<u>Over entire placement</u>
Foster home visits	0.59	0.47
Other contacts with child	0.21	0.18
Other contacts with foster parents	1.21	1.02
Contacts with child's family	0.48	0.36
Total of all types of contacts	2.49	2.03
 Total hours per case per week	 1.9 hours	 1.3 hours
 Hours outside normal working time	 0.3 hours	 0.2 hours

Breaking down these figures by district, it appears that the Auckland social workers had a higher number of contacts with each of the parties (on average) per case, but that the Christchurch social workers were devoting a similar amount of time to each case per week. Table 14.2 gives details.

TABLE 14.2 Mean amount of social work contact per case per week by region

	<u>Auckland scheme</u>	<u>Christchurch scheme</u>
Foster home visits	0.49	0.46
Other contacts with child	0.23	0.13
Other contacts with foster parents	1.10	0.94
Contacts with child's family	0.40	0.31
Total of all types of contacts	2.22	1.83
Total hours per case per week	1.2 hours	1.4 hours
Hours outside normal working time	0.3 hours	0.2 hours

14.3 Comparisons between the scheme and conventional fostering

Parallel data were collected for conventional placements, by asking the social workers responsible for each of the children in the non-scheme comparison group to keep identical log forms to those used in the scheme, for a period of twelve weeks. Comparison group log information is based on 42 children - 18 in Christchurch and 24 in Auckland. Data were not available for 23 comparison group children for three main reasons -

- their foster placement had ended before the data collection began (10 cases)
- the placement was receiving social work support from a private welfare agency (6 cases)
- forms were not returned in time for inclusion (7 cases)

Manukau has been separated from the rest of the Auckland districts. This is because Manukau offers a specialist fostering service for the South Auckland area (covering Otahuhu, Otara and Mangere) resulting in a different pattern of contact from that for Auckland district generally, particularly with respect to visits to the foster home. Manukau placements made up 38% of the Auckland comparison sample (9 out of 24).

The comparative data for the scheme and for conventional placements in Auckland showed that scheme social workers were visiting the foster home about 25% more frequently than social workers working under conventional arrangements (although their visiting rate was only two thirds as high as that achieved in Manukau). In relation to contact with the child other than through home visits (e.g. visits by the child to the office) the level of contact was similar for social workers in the scheme and those fostering under conventional arrangements. However, the scheme social workers were having a great deal more contact with the foster parents other than through home visits (about 60% more on average). The scheme social workers also seemed to be having a similar amount of contact with the child's family as those outside the scheme.

The difference between Manukau and other Auckland districts was interesting: despite the much higher level of home visiting in Manukau, the total number of contacts was not different for the two groups. Rather the frequency of other types of contacts was lower in Manukau than elsewhere in Auckland. It seems that Manukau was placing a much greater emphasis on home visits than other districts in Auckland.

Overall, social workers in the scheme in Auckland were able to devote about a third as much time again to each case as social workers working under the conventional regime, (excluding Manukau) but a similar amount of outside normal working hours time. The difference in total time input between the scheme and Manukau only was not statistically significant, but scheme social workers were spending more time outside normal working hours.

TABLE 14.3 Mean amount of social work contact in Auckland for the scheme and for conventional fostering

	<u>Auckland scheme</u>	<u>Auckland districts (excluding Manukau)</u>	<u>Manukau only</u>
Foster home visits	0.49	0.39	0.71
Other contacts with child	0.23	0.29	0.20
Other contacts with foster parents	1.10	0.67	0.40
Contacts with child's family	0.40	0.45	0.42
Total of all types of contacts	2.22	1.79	1.74
Total hours per case per week	1.2 hours	0.9 hours	1.0 hours
Hours outside normal working time	0.3 hours	0.2 hours	0.0+ hours

+ Too small to register

In Christchurch, the differential between the visiting rates of scheme social workers and their non-scheme counterparts was greater than in Auckland. The scheme workers were visiting the foster home more than twice as frequently as those operating under conventional arrangements, and they were also making more frequent contact with the foster parents outside of home visits (about 80% more frequently on average). On both of these measures, the difference between scheme workers and those working under conventional arrangements was bigger in Christchurch than in Auckland. The Christchurch scheme social workers, like those in Auckland, actually had a lower rate of contact with the child outside of home visits. They had more frequent contacts with the child's family than their non-scheme colleagues (which had not been the case in Auckland), but this difference was not statistically significant.

Overall, the Christchurch social workers were able to give each placement more than twice as much time as those working under the conventional regime, but they were spending a similar amount of time outside normal work hours. However, the Christchurch scheme workers were not spending as much time outside normal work hours, on average, as the scheme workers in Auckland.

It is clear from an inspection of the data, that the bigger percentage differences between scheme and conventional social work in Christchurch than in Auckland derives from generally lower levels of social work support in the conventional system in Christchurch, rather than from differences within the scheme. The conventional fostering system in Christchurch appeared to involve less social work support to its foster parents than was the case in Auckland.

TABLE 14.4 Mean amount of social work contact in Christchurch for the scheme and for conventional fostering

	<u>Christchurch scheme</u>	<u>Christchurch district</u>
Foster home visits	0.46	0.21
Other contacts with child	0.13	0.19
Other contacts with foster parents	0.94	0.52
Contacts with child's family	0.31	0.25
Total of all types of contacts	1.83	1.17
Total hours per case per week	1.4 hours	0.6 hours
Hours outside normal working time	0.2 hours	0.1 hours

14.4 Summary of the level of social work support provided through the scheme and comparisons with conventional fostering

- On average, the social workers in the scheme were visiting each foster home about once a fortnight. They were also in contact with the foster parents apart from home visits about once a week, and they generally had some contact with the family of the child about once every three weeks.
- Overall, the social workers were devoting on average about an hour and a third of direct casework per week to each case (with about 15% of this work time out of normal hours).
- The earlier stages of a placement required more time input (about two hours per week over the first two months).
- The Auckland social workers were achieving a higher frequency of home visits and other contacts than the Christchurch workers, but in Christchurch, the average amount of time given to each case was higher.
- The scheme social workers in both districts were delivering a higher level of social work support than their counterparts working under the conventional regime, the difference between the scheme and conventional fostering being greater in Christchurch than in Auckland. In Auckland, the scheme social workers were visiting the foster home about 25% more frequently and were giving about a third more time than social workers in the conventional system, while in Christchurch the scheme workers were visiting the foster home more than twice as frequently and spending more than twice as much time as their non-scheme colleagues.
- The greater contrast for Christchurch, however, derived more from the fact that the conventional fostering system in Christchurch was providing less support to foster parents than was the case in Auckland, rather than from differences within the scheme.

SECTION 15 NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS MADE UNDER THE SCHEME AND OUTCOMES OF PLACEMENTS WHICH HAVE NOW ENDED

A total of 53 placements have been made to date in the Intensive Foster Care scheme since it came into operation in 1980. This is greater than the number of children placed in the scheme (reported in Section 5) since several of the children have had more than one placement in the scheme. Thirty placements have been made in Auckland (where 16 children have had one placement and seven children have been placed twice) while 23 placements have been made in Christchurch (where 15 children have had one placement and four children have been placed twice).

Figures 15.1 and 15.2 on the following pages give graphical presentations of the placements which have been made to date in each of the two districts. Each placement is represented by a horizontal bar, the duration of the placement being represented by the length of the bar. The dates of the placement can be read off from the scales at the top of the figures. The period of employment of each of the social work staff members on the scheme is also shown on the figures, which allows a visual estimate of the size of caseloads carried by staff engaged on the scheme.

The figures show the relatively slow rate at which placements have been made (particularly in Christchurch) and demonstrate that the scheme has rarely been able to approach its aim of supporting twenty children in placements concurrently in each district. No doubt the slower placement rate in Christchurch is due in large part to the fact that there has usually been only one basic grade social worker over most of the four years the scheme has been operating. In Auckland, placements have been made at a much higher rate (the figure showing periodic bursts of activity in which a large number of placements have been made in a short space of time), but Auckland, too, has only occasionally had more than ten children in placements at any one time for more than a short period. Contributing to the difficulties in Auckland, at least in the early stages, was the fact that a number of placements were made which ended relatively quickly, and new placements were not able to be made sufficiently quickly to ensure that the numbers kept up.

1979		1980					1981					1982					1983							
Sep	Nov	Jan	Mar	May	Jul	Sep	Nov	Jan	Mar	May	Jul	Sep	Nov	Jan	Mar	May	Jul	Sep	Nov	Jan	Mar	May	Jul	Sep

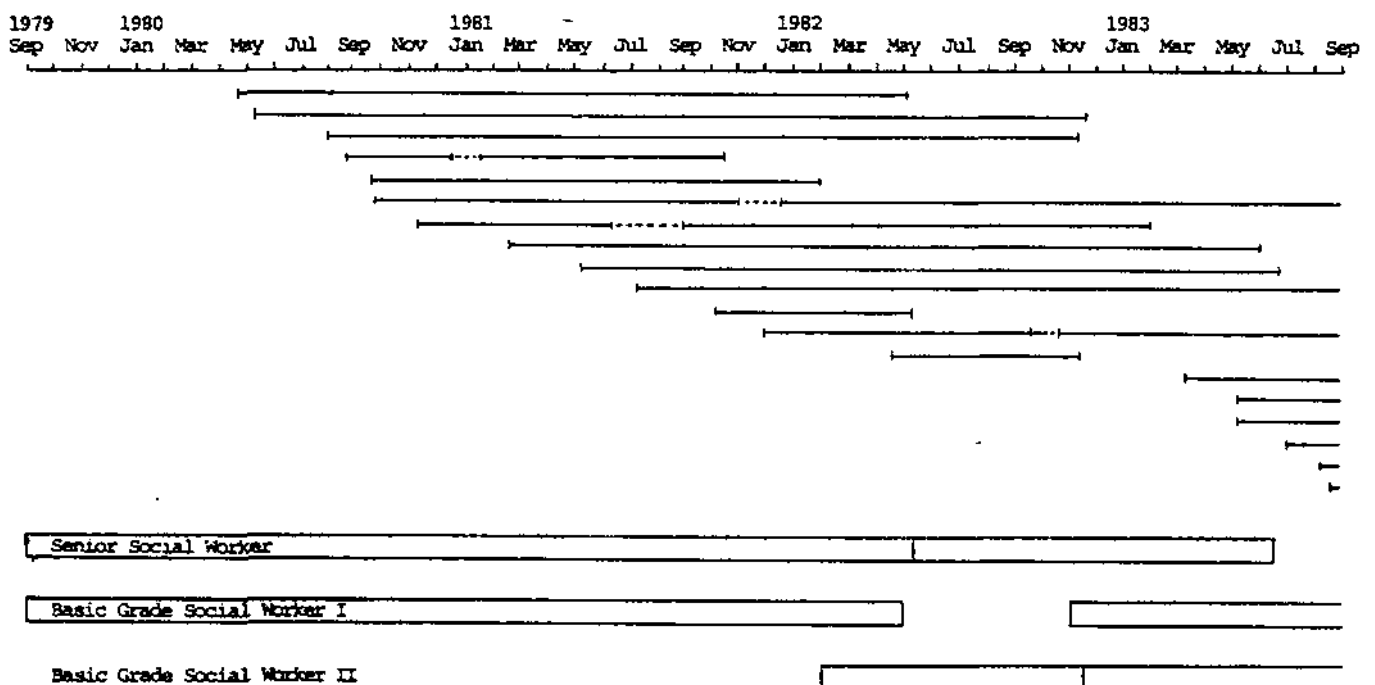
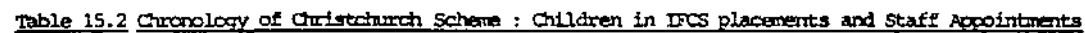
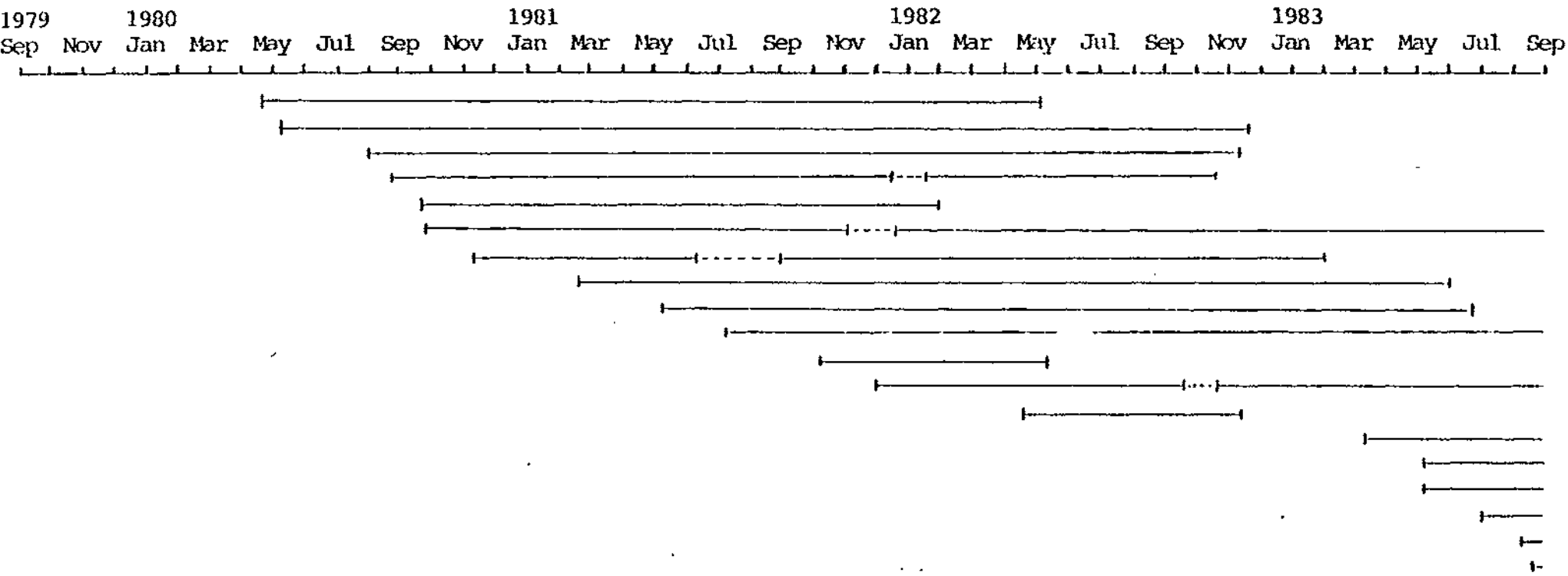


Table 15.2 Chronology of Christchurch Scheme : Children in IFCS placements and Staff Appointments

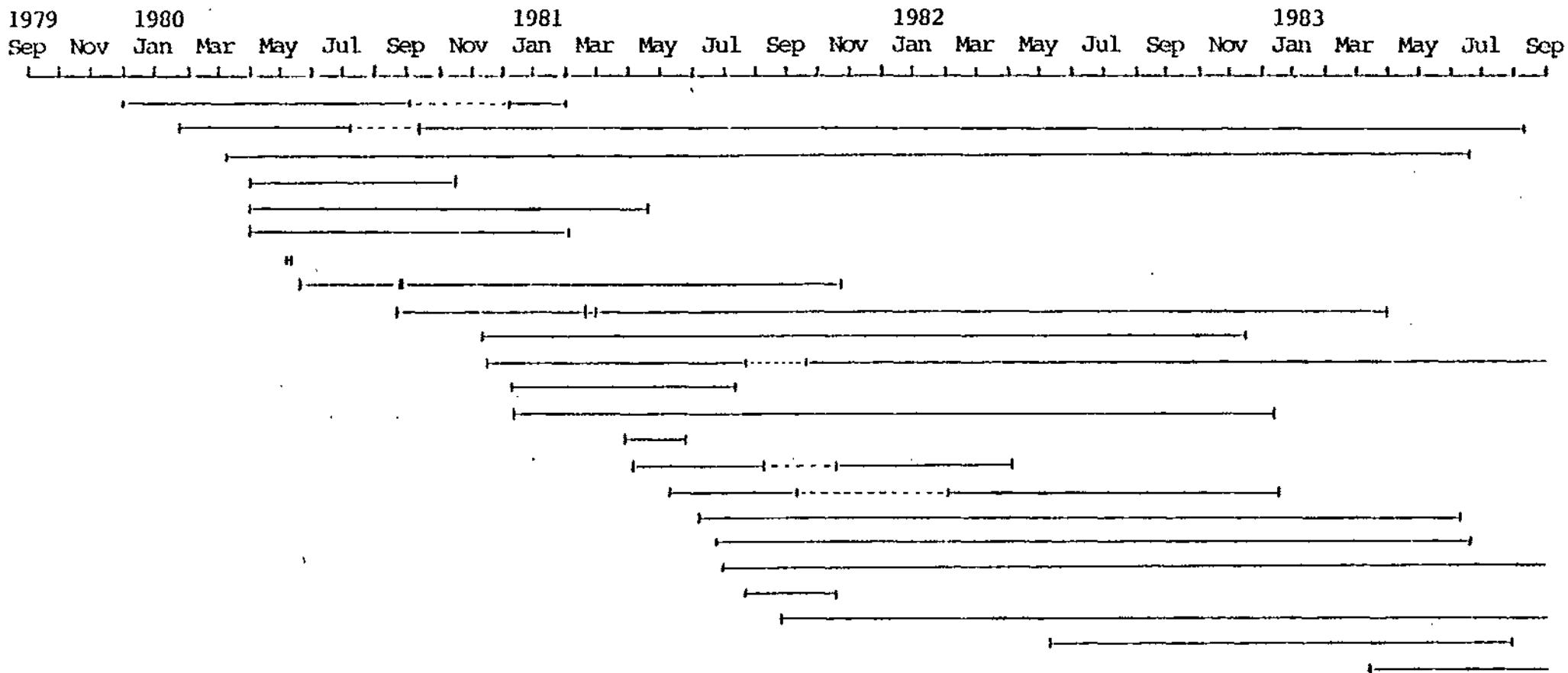


Senior Social Worker

Basic Grade Social Worker I

Basic Grade Social Worker II

Table 15.1 Chronology of Auckland Scheme : Children in IFCS placements and Staff Appointments



Senior Social Worker

Basic Grade Social Worker I

Basic Grade Social Worker II

15.1 Duration of placements which have now ended

Of the 53 placements made to date, there were 36 which have now ended and for which documentation has been provided to the Research Division. A number of other placements have ended, but no documentation of these had been provided to the Research Division at the time this report was written. The following results are, therefore, based on the 36 cases for which we have documentation. These comprised 22 Auckland placements (five of which were the second placement of a child in the scheme) and 14 Christchurch placements (two of which were a child's second placement).

It should be noted at the outset that this set of placements is probably somewhat negatively biased, since placements which ended quickly due to a breakdown were more likely to have been included in this group, while placements which had lasted and were still continuing successfully would not have been included. Thus, the following results should be treated with caution.

The placements which had ended ranged in duration from four days to two and a half years. It is clear from Table 15.1 below that a fairly high proportion of placements in Auckland had only lasted for a short time : half of those that had ended had done so within six months, and another quarter with a year. Although this table is subject to the bias mentioned above, a brief inspection of the data showed that any correction for this would not substantially alter the distribution in the table. The distribution of the duration of Christchurch placements which had ended was quite different : none had ended within six months and two thirds had lasted for more than a year (as compared with only a quarter of those in Auckland).

Table 15.1 Duration of the placements made in the Intensive Foster Care Scheme which have now ended

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Less than 6 months	11	50%	-	-	11	31%
6 months - 1 year	5	23%	5	36%	10	28%
1 - 2 years	4	18%	4	29%	8	22%
2 - 3 years	2	9%	5	36%	7	19%
TOTAL	22	100%	14	100%	36	100%

15.2 Where did the child go at the end of the placement?

A quarter of the children whose placements had ended (nine in number) returned to live with their families. For a slightly smaller group (seven children) the placement did not actually end: rather the child stayed in the foster home, but was transferred out of the scheme onto the caseload of district office staff. The other children were placed either in family homes, other foster homes or institutions, apart from one child who was living independently after leaving the placement and another who was in borstal. Table 15.2 presents information on the situation of the child at the end of the placement.

Table 15.2 Situation of the child at the end of the placement

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Child stayed in same foster home but transferred out of Intensive Foster Care Scheme	3	14%	4	29%	7	19%
Returned to natural family	6	27%	3	21%	9	25%
Other IFCS foster home	3	14%	1	7%	4	11%
Family home	3	14%	3	21%	6	17%
DSW short stay institution	2	9%	2	14%	4	11%
DSW long stay institution	2	9%	-	-	2	6%
Independent living	1	5%	-	-	1	3%
Boarding school	1	5%	1	7%	2	6%
Justice Department Institution	1	5%	-	-	1	3%
TOTAL	22	100%	14	100%	36	100%

In addition to the four children placed straight into another Intensive Foster Care Scheme foster home, seven other children out of the 36 were placed again in the scheme. These included two children in Auckland and one in Christchurch who were placed initially in a family home, one child in Auckland and two in Christchurch who were placed initially in a DSW short-term institution, and one of the Auckland children who had been placed at home after the first placement. In all this makes eleven children (31%) who were placed again in the scheme following the end of the first placement. (Documentation on all of these subsequent placements, however, was not available to the Research Division at the time this report was written).

15.3 Circumstances surrounding the end of the placements

To document the course of the placement (and in particular to provide a picture of how it ended), the social workers were asked to fill in a placement record when each placement came to an end, giving their assessments about events in the placement and factors which had brought about its end.

From the information provided in the placement record, research staff made a judgment as to the primary reason for the end of the placement, recording this in terms of the options given in Table 15.3 below. As the table shows, over 60% of the placements ended in what will be described as a "breakdown": either because of the child's behaviour, or because of the foster parents' inability to cope or for other reasons. The remaining placements (about 40%) did not break down: in the case of about 20% the child remained in the placement but was transferred out of the scheme and in the case of a further 20% the placement ended according to plan.

Table 15.3 Reasons for the end of the placement

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
<u>Placements which did not break down</u>						
Child remained in placement but transferred out of the scheme	3	14%	4	29%	7	19%
Placement ended according to plan	6	27%	1	7%	7	19%
<u>Placements which broke down</u>	13	59%	9	64%	22	61%
TOTAL	22	100%	14	100%	36	100%

This assessment by research staff of the reasons for the end of the placements coincided precisely with the social workers' views. The social workers also recorded that only 14 placements had ended according to plan while the remaining two thirds all broke down in one way or another. Furthermore, the 14 placements considered to have ended according to plan were precisely the same in both cases.

The social workers made a rating of how successful they considered the placement to have been overall. The judgments here were more positive than negative, on balance. Over 40% of the placements were considered to have been successful and a third were rated very successful. At the other end of the scale, just over 20% were rated unsuccessful, with about 10% judged very unsuccessful. The remainder (about a third) were regarded by the social workers with somewhat mixed feelings.

Table 15.4 Social workers' assessments of whether the placements had been successful

	<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
very successful	6	27%	6	43%	12	33%
fairly successful	3	14%	-	-	3	8%
in between - successful in some ways but not in others	9	41%	4	29%	13	36%
fairly unsuccessful	1	5%	3	21%	4	11%
very unsuccessful	3	14%	1	7%	4	11%
TOTAL	22	100%	14	100%	36	100%

However, this view of the placements was not entirely substantiated by other more detailed results (particularly those relating to the end of the placement given later. It was also noticeable that social workers' prognoses for the placements (which were made at the time the initial Child Recording Form was filled in) tended to err on the optimistic side. Placements about which the social workers expressed doubts almost always broke down, but there were rather a lot of other placements, about which the social worker had initially been quite confident, which also broke down.

Table 15.5 reports the outcome of the placement classified by the social worker's initial rating of the degree of confidence she or he had in the foster parents' ability to cope. (It should be noted that we do not have a full set of results here, as the rating was made only for a child's first placement and some of the children had had more than one placement. This means that the total number of placements included in the table (27) is less than that in previous tables.) Because the total number was now getting rather small, this information was not provided separately for Christchurch and Auckland but was grouped together.

The table shows that all four of the placements where the social worker had some doubt about the ability of the foster parents to cope broke down, but that this accounted for only just over a fifth of the breakdowns.

Table 15.5 Outcome of placement by social worker's confidence in the foster parents' ability to cope

	<u>Non-breakdown</u>		<u>Breakdown</u>	
very confident	3	33%	1	6%
fairly confident	6	67%	13	72%
a bit doubtful	-	-	4	22%
very doubtful	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	9	100%	18	100%

All but one of the placements where the social worker expressed doubts about whether the placement would continue to its planned conclusion did break down, and this accounted for close to half the breakdowns. However, there remained more than half the placements which the social worker had felt confident about which also broke down.

Table 15.6 Outcome of the placement by social worker's confidence in whether the placement would continue to its planned conclusion

	<u>Non-breakdown</u>		<u>Breakdown</u>	
very confident	2	22%	-	-
fairly confident	6	67%	10	56%
a bit doubtful	1	11%	8	44%
very doubtful	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	9	100%	18	100%

Similarly, all but one of the placements where the social worker had had doubts as to whether the long-term goals would be achieved also broke down. This again accounted for only a minority of the breakdowns, and two thirds of the placements which broke down were ones where the social worker had been fairly confident about the long-term goals.

Table 15.7 Outcome of placement by social worker's confidence in whether the long-term goals for the child would be achieved

	<u>Non-breakdown</u>		<u>Breakdown</u>	
very confident	-	-	-	-
fairly confident	8	89%	12	67%
a bit doubtful	1	11%	6	33%
very doubtful	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	9	100%	18	100%

The social workers also made a number of ratings about whether certain factors (such as misbehaviour of the child, emotional disturbance of the child, a change in the foster parents' circumstances, reluctance on the part of the foster parents to continue with the placement) had occurred during the course of the placement, and whether these factors were considered to have been a contributing cause of the end of the placement. In the case of about half of the placements the social workers considered that the foster parents were reluctant to continue the placement. In about three quarters, the misbehaviour of the child had been giving cause for concern. In Auckland, the child had been considered to be exhibiting emotionally disturbed behaviour in over 80% of the placements, while this was recorded for only about a third of the Christchurch placements. However, there were few cases where the foster parents' circumstances had changed so that they were no longer able to continue looking after the child.

Table 15.8 gives information on the number of cases in which each of the listed factors was considered by the social worker to have occurred in the placement.

Table 15.8 Factors occurring in the placement

	<u>Auckland</u> (n=22)		<u>Christchurch</u> (n=14)		<u>TOTAL</u> (n=36)	
Foster parents reluctant to continue placement	10	45%	7	50%	17	47%
Circumstances of the foster parents changed	3	14%	-	-	3	8%
Child's misbehaviour gave cause for concern	16	73%	11	79%	27	75%
Child exhibited emotionally disturbed behaviour	18	82%	5	36%	23	64%
Child had been involved in offending	3	14%	1	7%	4	11%

Not all of these factors, however, were considered to have been a contributing cause of the end of the placement, although in most instances they were. Table 15.9 gives the number of cases in which each was considered to have been a cause of the end of the placement.

The child's misbehaviour was judged to be a cause of the end of the placement for over half the placements which had ended. In over a third of these cases, it was considered to be a major cause. In Auckland, the social workers considered that emotionally disturbed behaviour on the part of the child had been a cause of the end of about two thirds of the placements, and in about two fifths, this was considered to have been a major cause. By way of contrast, emotionally disturbed behaviour was considered to have been a cause of the end of only a third of the Christchurch placements. In over 40% of the placements, the reluctance of the parents to continue looking after the child was considered to have been a cause of the end of the placement.

Table 15.9 Causes of the end of the placement

		<u>Auckland</u>		<u>Christchurch</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
Foster parents reluctant to continue placement	minor cause	4	18%	2	14%	6	17%
	major cause	6	27%	4	29%	10	28%
Circumstances of the foster parents changed	minor cause	2	9%	-	-	2	6%
	major cause	1	5%	-	-	1	3%
Child's misbehaviour gave cause for concern	minor cause	4	18%	3	21%	7	19%
	major cause	7	32%	6	43%	13	36%
Child exhibited emotionally disturbed behaviour	minor cause	5	23%	-	-	5	14%
	major cause	9	41%	4	29%	13	36%
Child had been involved in offending	minor cause	3	14%	1	7%	4	11%
	major cause	2	9%	-	-	2	6%

Overall, these results do not provide a very rosy picture of the outcomes of scheme placements. However, it should be remembered that the group of placements which had ended at the time this report was produced was probably somewhat negatively biased, so that these results should not be used as a means of making a judgment about the scheme. Such a judgment should wait until further data are available. Even so, it is clear that a substantial number of placements made under the scheme had not been successful.

15.4 Summary of the outcome of placements

- A total of 53 placements have been made in the Intensive Foster Care Scheme to date (30 in Auckland and 23 in Christchurch). These include eleven cases where children have had two placements in the scheme.
- Only 36 of the placements made to date have now ended. (22 in Auckland and 14 in Christchurch). This is a small number on which to base firm conclusions, and this is the part of the report most badly affected by the small numbers.
- The placements which have ended ranged in duration from four days to two and a half years. A high proportion of placements in Auckland lasted only for short periods; half of those which had ended did so within six months and another quarter had ended within a year. The distribution of duration of placements was different in Christchurch: none had ended within six months and two thirds had lasted for more than a year.
- About a quarter of the children returned to their natural families at the end of their placements in the scheme, while about a third were placed again within the scheme. A smaller number (about 20%) stayed in the same foster home but were transferred out of the scheme onto the district office books. The remainder were placed in other situations (family homes, institutions) apart from one child who was living independently at the end of the placement and another who was sentenced to borstal.
- The social workers were of the view that more of the placements which had ended had been successful than otherwise. The social workers considered over 40% of the placements which had ended to have been successful and a third were rated very successful. Around 20% were rated unsuccessful and only about 10% were rated very unsuccessful. The remainder, around a third, were considered partly successful.
- In the case of about half the placements which had ended, the foster parents were reluctant to continue with the placement. This was considered to have played a part in the end of most of these placements, and was thought to be a major factor in over a quarter of all the placements which had ended to date.
- The misbehaviour of the child had been a concern in even more of the placements (three quarters) and was considered to have been a factor in the end of the placement in over half of those which had ended.

- Emotionally disturbed behaviour on the part of the child was common in Auckland but less so in Christchurch. This was considered to have been a factor in the end of about two thirds of the Auckland placements, but only about a third of the Christchurch placements.
- Although these results present the scheme in a somewhat gloomy light, it should be noted that unsuccessful placements were more likely to be represented among the group of placements which have so far ended and that the more successful placements (which were still continuing) would not have been not included in the data just reported on. From this point of view, it is still too early to base judgments on the outcomes of placements, and assessment of this aspect of the scheme should await the accumulation of further data.

SECTION 16 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The mass of information in the fore-going report provides a fairly rounded picture of the way the scheme has been operating, in so far as this can be done within the constraints imposed by the small numbers of children placed to date. What remains to be done is to re-examine this information in the light of the original questions underlying the design of the research. This summary and discussion section will be framed by that list of questions and will attempt to provide an answer to each, as far as this is possible.

16.1 What type of children have been placed in the scheme and how do they differ, if at all, from children in conventional foster care?

The children placed in the scheme were slightly different in the two districts in terms of their demographic characteristics: in Auckland there were roughly equal numbers of boys and girls and about half were Maori and half Pakeha, while in Christchurch there was a preponderance of boys and all of the children were Pakeha (apart from one Maori child).

The backgrounds of the children formed a familiar, if depressing, picture. Many of the children had not been brought up by their natural families and even those who were, had frequently lost contact with their natural parents by the time they were placed in the scheme. Their natural families tended to be large, with parents predominantly in the lower socio-economic groups, and they often had a history of involvement with the Department of Social Welfare. There was a consistent pattern of disruption in the child's early family life: on average, the children had experienced five or six changes of care-givers prior to the care order (e.g. moving from one set of parent figures to another or experiencing a change of parent figures in the home). Their average age at the time of the first such change was three years old.

Commonly recorded features of the families included marital and financial difficulties, poor standards of care of the children (amounting to neglect in many cases), heavy drinking by the father and poor standards of accommodation: each of these problems was experienced by at least half of the families.

The children in Auckland were more likely to have been taken into care for offending or misbehaviour (about half) while in Christchurch the great majority of care orders (80%) had been made because of conditions in the child's home. Since the care order, the children had had, on average, just over two placements arranged by the Department, although only about half had been tried in a foster placement. They had not generally been successful in foster placements, however: most of those who had been tried in a foster home had experienced the breakdown of a foster placement.

The Auckland social workers tended to regard their children more negatively in terms of personality traits: they were considered to be usually moody and attention seeking, with other negative forms of behaviour also being noted. The Christchurch children were less likely to be characterised in negative terms by their social workers. The children in both districts were fairly normally distributed in terms of

intellectual potential, with slightly more of the Christchurch children below average than above. The children were not, however, considered to be achieving up to their potential. This did not appear to be predominantly a consequence of poor attitude, since the social workers thought as many children had positive attitudes to school work and attendance as had negative attitudes.

Finally, the social workers were of the opinion that all but one of the children placed more than usual demands on those caring for them, although there were many who did not present extreme problems of management. Less than half were considered to be usually very difficult and most were considered to be usually quite difficult. In all cases but one, the social workers believed the Intensive placement was the best possible option for the child. The social workers thought that if the scheme had not been operating, the Auckland children would most likely have been placed either in national institutions or in family homes, while the Christchurch children would most likely have been placed either in family homes or in conventional foster placements.

This, then, is a capsule picture of what the children in the scheme were like. We can note a slight tendency for Auckland children to be somewhat more "difficult" than those in Christchurch: they were more likely to have been taken into care for offending or misbehaviour and they were more likely to be regarded negatively in terms of personality traits by their social workers. How did the children differ from those in conventional foster placements?

First, it was not the case that the scheme was taking older children than are usually placed in foster care. If anything, indeed, those in the scheme were younger, and included a smaller proportion of adolescents than found amongst those in conventional placements. The scheme children were also more likely to be Pakeha than those in conventional placements.

The children placed in conventional foster homes tended to come from families which were both slightly larger and slightly lower in socio-economic terms than those in the scheme. However, these differences were small and could have been due to chance fluctuation. The children in the scheme were more likely to have been brought up by persons other than their natural parents, but those in the conventionally fostered group had experienced just as much disruption in their early family lives as those in the scheme.

In Auckland there was a difference between the two groups in terms of the reason for the care order. There was a tendency for factors such as the child's misbehaviour at home and at school, running away and being generally out of control to have been considerations in the care decision for children in the scheme, while factors such as physical neglect, desertion and marital difficulties were more likely to have been considerations in the care decisions for conventionally fostered children. There were no strong differences in Christchurch, but there were statistically significant differences in Auckland, where nearly half the care orders of the scheme children were for offending or misbehaviour, compared with only a fifth of the care orders of the conventionally fostered group, who had predominantly come into care because of unsatisfactory home conditions.

The children in both groups were (roughly) equally likely to have had a prior placement with the Department. Those in the scheme, however, had much poorer records in prior foster placements: of those who had had prior foster placements, the scheme children in Auckland were more than twice as likely to have experienced a breakdown and those in Christchurch were more than six times as likely to have experienced a breakdown as those in the conventionally fostered group.

There was also a difference between the two groups in terms of the social worker's assessment of their general manageability. Only a third of the conventionally fostered group were considered by the social workers to place more than usual demands on those responsible for their care. This was in marked contrast to the children in the scheme, all but one of whom were considered to be more than usually demanding. Most of the conventionally fostered children (three quarters in Auckland and 90% in Christchurch) were considered to be usually not difficult, whereas all but three of the scheme children were considered to be usually quite difficult.

In summary, then, proportionately fewer of the scheme children were adolescents than those placed in conventional foster homes, and they were more likely to be Pakeha. They were not from markedly different family backgrounds. The Auckland scheme children were more likely to have been taken into care because of offending or misbehaviour, than were the conventionally fostered children. This difference was not found in Christchurch. Overall, however, the main ways in which children placed in the scheme differed from those placed in conventional foster homes were that they were more likely to have had previous unsuccessful foster placements and were more likely to be regarded by the social worker as difficult or demanding.

16.2 What type of foster parents were fostering under the scheme and how did these people differ, if at all, from those fostering under conventional arrangements?

On average, the foster parents in the scheme were aged about 40, with about 30% in their 30's and 30% in their 40's. They were not noticeably different as a group, in terms of age, from those fostering under conventional arrangements. There were differences, however, in terms of ethnic characteristics: all but three of the foster parents in the scheme (94%) were Pakeha, while about 20% of those fostering under conventional arrangements were Maori or Polynesian.

The foster parents had spent, on average, about three years at secondary school, but had not generally gained any qualifications (about a quarter had School Certificate and another 15% had a higher qualification). The Auckland parents in the scheme tended to have spent longer at secondary school (three and a half years on average) than those in Christchurch (two and a half years on average). There was not much difference between the groups in terms of length of secondary schooling or qualifications.

Both groups were also similar in terms of socio-economic position, being largely in the lower middle part of the socio-economic range. In Auckland, those fostering under conventional arrangements tended to have rather larger families (4.6 children on average), than those in the scheme (2.4 children on average), while both groups in Christchurch had an average of about three children each.

In Auckland, only a minority of the foster parents recruited to the scheme (a third) had not fostered before, while most (three quarters) of the conventional fostering group had prior fostering experience. There was no difference in this respect in Christchurch: about half of both groups had prior fostering experience. It was further found that among the foster parents who had had prior experience, those who were fostering conventionally had more experience, on average.

The foster parents in the scheme were more inclined to see their role in professional terms than those fostering conventionally. In the series of questions relating to the role of a foster parent, the parents in the scheme placed themselves closer to the child care worker/occupation end of the scale than did those in the conventional fostering group. Even so, they remained, on average, closer to the non-professional end (parent/personal interest) than the professional end of the scale, the difference being that they identified somewhat less strongly with this model than did the conventional fostering people. It should also be noted that the scheme foster parents were very similar to those in conventional fostering in their responses on the items relating to the role of the social worker and the Department, indicating that both groups equally cherished their independence in the task, and that they saw the social worker and the Department more as consultant and service organisation, respectively, than as job supervisor and employer.

There were no real differences between the two groups in terms of their preferences as to the sex of a foster child, but foster parents in the scheme were more likely to have preferences as to age and ethnic origin. Primary school children were the most preferred age category for foster parents in the scheme, and they were also inclined to have a preference for fostering only Pakeha children.

To summarise briefly then, the scheme foster parents were no different in terms of age, educational background or socio-economic status from those fostering under conventional arrangements. They were, however, more likely to be Pakeha. There were some differences between scheme and conventional foster parents in Auckland which were not evident in Christchurch: the conventional group in Auckland tended to have larger families and were more likely to have prior fostering experience than those in the scheme. (This last difference may have been partly due to the fact that in Auckland the scheme was based in the Regional Office and thus was isolated from the pool of existing foster parents available to district office social workers.) The foster parents in the scheme tended to have a more "professional" view of their role as a foster parent than those fostering under conventional arrangements, but this did not extend to their relations with the Department and the social worker and they were not more inclined to see themselves as paid employees. Finally, the scheme foster parents were more inclined to have preferences as to the type of foster child they would like to care for: the most favoured type of child was a Pakeha child of primary school age.

16.3 What were the views of the various parties about the value of the scheme?

(i) The foster parents

The scheme foster parents were generally of the view that their foster child was more demanding than usual: 80% said they thought this was the case. Even so, only just over half the children were considered to be usually difficult to manage, and only three foster parents said the children was usually very difficult. This means that the foster parents were less inclined to view the child as difficult than the social workers were. In the case of all but three of the children, the social worker had recorded that the child was usually at least quite difficult to manage, while only about half the foster parents agreed with this. Most of the foster parents thought that foster care was the best means of caring for the child, despite the fact that they generally considered the child to be more than usually demanding: only four people thought that foster care was not best.

When the scheme foster parents' views of the manageability of their children was compared with the views of those fostering conventionally, it was evident that the scheme children were regarded as more difficult and demanding. Only 40% of the conventional fostering group said their children placed more than usual demands on them, compared with 80% of the scheme parents. Furthermore, only 20% of the conventional fostering group rated their children usually difficult to manage, compared with half of those in the scheme. Thus, although the foster parents in the scheme were not so inclined to rate their children difficult as the social workers, they still considered their children more difficult than foster parents caring for children under conventional arrangements.

Despite the fact that they generally perceived the children as demanding, the foster parents in the scheme had fairly positive views on how the child was progressing in the placement. Only about 10% said they got on badly with the child, although rather more (about 20%) said they were a bit concerned that the child was not fitting into the home very well. Only 15% said they were concerned that the child wasn't making much progress in the placement.

The foster parents in the conventional fostering group had, on the whole, more positive views of how they were getting on with the child and of the progress the child was making in the placement. It was not the case, however, that more of the scheme parents said they were getting on badly with the child, or that more said the child was not making any progress. Rather the difference was that more of the conventional fostering group said they were getting on very well with the child and that the child was making very good progress.

It is relatively encouraging then, in view of the greater perceived difficulty of children in the scheme, that they were not generally seen in more negative terms by their foster parents with respect to the progress they were making in the placement and their relationships with members of the foster family.

The foster parents in the scheme reported that the child was typically in contact with his or her family about once every three or four weeks. The most common form of contact was a visit to the family. 90% of the children visited their families, although not all visited as frequently as once every three or four weeks. It was less common for the child's family to visit the child at the foster home (only 30% did so). The conventional fostering group reported that their children were in more frequent contact with their families than those in the scheme. Over 40% of the conventional group reported that the child saw his or her family at least once a fortnight compared with less than 20% of those in the scheme.

Over half the foster parents in the scheme (and slightly less in the conventional fostering group) thought that such contact between child and family affected the child's emotional state, usually in a negative way. Foster mothers in the scheme were more likely to think this, while there was little difference between the two groups of foster fathers.

There was no difference between the two groups of foster parents in how frequently they were in contact, themselves, with the child's family, but there were differences in the type of contact. Those in the scheme were more likely to visit the home of the child's family, but they were considerably less likely to be visited in their own home by the child's family. Both groups were equally satisfied with the current level of contact they had with the child's family and with their relationship with the family.

The foster parents in the scheme reported a much higher frequency of visits from the social worker than those fostering under conventional arrangements. All but two of those in the scheme said the social worker visited at least once a fortnight, whereas only 20% in the conventional group reported visiting frequency at this level. Almost all of the scheme foster parents were satisfied with the frequency of visits: none said the social worker did not visit often enough and the only dissenters here were two foster mothers and one foster father who said the social worker visited too often. However, it was also the case that few of the conventional foster parents were discontent with the level of visiting they were receiving: none said the social worker visited too often and there were only nine (13%) who said the social worker did not visit often enough.

The foster parents in both groups had fairly positive views about the helpfulness of the social worker (although the conventional foster fathers were rather luke-warm). Those in the scheme, however, had quite a higher opinion of the speed with which the social worker responded to any request for assistance.

Overall, the foster parents in the scheme were fairly well satisfied with the various aspects of the scheme. They expressed generally positive views about the training, the support groups, the social work support and the planning for the future of the child: not more than three individuals had negative views of any of these. However, there were about a quarter who had a negative view of the participation of the child's

family in the planning. Foster parents who had experience of fostering under the conventional regime as well as in the scheme were largely of the view that things were better under the scheme. Once again, no more than three individuals thought that any aspect of the scheme was worse than in the conventional system.

(ii) The foster children

The scheme children who were interviewed were, on the whole, quite positive about living in the foster home. As many as 80% expressed positive views, while another 13% had mixed feelings or were non-committal, and only two expressed outright negative feelings. Most of the children (around two thirds) said they got on reasonably well with the other children in the home, but 40% of the children identified someone in the home with whom they didn't get on particularly well: in most cases this was another child in the home. Almost all of the children (around 90%) found the foster mother friendly, and slightly fewer (around three quarters) found the foster father friendly. Only a few children expressed negative feelings about the foster parents. One didn't find the foster mother friendly and four didn't find the foster father friendly.

The scheme children were not greatly different in their responses here from children in conventional foster placements: between 70% and 80% of both groups of children (both in Auckland and in Christchurch) had positive feelings about living in the foster home. There was a slightly higher proportion of conventionally placed children who expressed negative feelings (mainly in Auckland). Both groups responded to the foster parents in a similar way: virtually all found the foster mother friendly and slightly fewer found the foster father friendly. Overall, it appeared that the children in the scheme were responding to, and forming relationships with, the various members of the foster family in every similar ways to the children in conventional foster placements.

Just over half of the scheme children said they found it easy to talk to the foster parents, while a third said they found it easy sometimes, and 14% said they did not find it easy. The children were most likely to talk to the foster parents about their own family and how they were getting on at school, and least likely to talk about things they didn't like in the foster home or about getting picked on by other children (if this occurred). Just over half the children found it helpful to talk things over with their foster parents, while just under a third didn't find it helpful. There was no discernible pattern to the variation between the two groups in this report.

The scheme children were also reasonably positive about talking to the social worker: over half found this helpful, while only about an eighth did not find it helpful. It was interesting to note here an apparent difference in social work patterns between Auckland and Christchurch: it appeared to be usual in Auckland for the social worker to spend some time talking to the child alone in the course of a visit, but not usual in Christchurch.

There was little difference between the scheme children and conventionally placed children in terms of their response to the social worker. The main difference here was the regional one indicated above, which showed up for both groups.

About half the children in the scheme were in reasonably regular contact with their own families, but over 40% had little or no contact with their families. Nearly half the children wanted to see more of their families, and about an eighth wanted to see them less frequently. The children generally thought that both the social worker and the foster parents encouraged this contact, and they were more likely to think the social worker approved than that the foster parents approved. The children were, on average, in less frequent contact with their siblings, and three quarters of them said they wanted to see more of their brothers and sisters.

It appeared that the children in the scheme were rather less in contact with their families than children in conventional placements and were a little less enthusiastic about such contact.

The majority of children in both groups (round about three quarters) felt that the foster home would turn out to have been a good thing for them in the long term, and only four children had outright negative views here. Overall, these results suggest that the foster children in the scheme were fairly well content in their current foster homes, and that they were adjusting to the foster home about as well as children in conventional foster placements.

(iii) . The social workers

The social workers viewed the scheme as having two major aims: first to provide stable foster care for children who would otherwise not be fostered, or who presented special difficulties as prospects for fostering; and secondly, to explore what could be achieved in foster care through a more intensive approach. Overall, it was thought the first aim had been achieved to a large extent, while there was some doubt as to how far the scheme had gone towards achieving the second.

Most of the social workers wanted the age limits for the scheme lowered, especially to let younger children in. There was also some concern about the particular difficulty of placing older children, and consequently, some support for lowering the upper limit from 14 to 12 or 13. The specified lower I.Q. limit of 85 was considered appropriate if interpreted flexibly.

It was generally agreed that the children on the scheme were difficult or demanding, mainly because of traumatic past experiences resulting in emotional and behavioural problems. Only two thirds of the social workers, however, felt that the children in the scheme were more difficult or demanding than other children in foster care.

Recruitment of foster parents emerged as the major problem for the scheme in both districts. There was some feeling that the scheme had attracted people not usually attracted to ordinary fostering - in Auckland by the special features of the scheme but in Christchurch more by the advertising of specific children.

Most of the social workers said the scheme did not need foster parents who were any different from good "ordinary" foster parents but three people felt additional qualities were needed. Overall there was a high level of satisfaction with the capabilities of the foster parents who had been recruited. The social workers were also asked questions which paralleled those asked of the foster parents concerning the role of foster parents. The social workers tended to have a more professional view of the fostering role than the foster parents themselves. This trend was more pronounced in Auckland than in Christchurch.

The quality of contact between the children's natural families and the children, foster parents and the Department was thought by all the social workers to be definitely better than it would have been if the children had not been in the scheme.

There was general satisfaction with the gradual placement method used, and with the use throughout the scheme of the Department of Social Welfare's planning procedures. Scheme social workers had adopted the practice of trying to be involved in planning prior to the acceptance of any child onto the scheme to ensure that foster care was the most appropriate option for the child, rather than - for example - immediate return home or adoption.

Everyone thought that scheme board rates should be higher than conventional board rates because of the extra demands placed on scheme foster parents, and most of the social workers thought double the conventional rate was appropriate. About half the social workers supported the present policy of the Department paying a special rate of one and a half times the conventional board rate (with an annual review) for those who keep the child after leaving the scheme. The others made alternative, more generous, suggestions.

Most social workers thought the ideal caseload size was 8-10, and no one thought the maximum should be any higher than 10. It was also thought that no worker should have more than two or three cases at an early stage of placement within her or his caseload. The lower caseload meant that the social workers felt they had been able "to do the whole job more thoroughly". "Job satisfaction" was a consistently mentioned positive feature of the scheme for social workers personally; common negative features were isolation, lack of variety, heavy pressure of expectation, and high levels of accountability and personal responsibility for cases. Generally the Christchurch social workers felt the gains from the extra social work input had been worth it; some of the Auckland social workers had doubts about it with respect to some of their cases.

Two years was seen by most social workers as a good time limit for a child being on the scheme, but the Christchurch people were more sympathetic to increasing this in certain circumstances. All respondents thought that being on the scheme had definitely improved children's chances of a permanent alternative home, but there was much less confidence that it had improved their chances of returning home permanently. Very few children on the scheme so far had had realistic "H" status goals.

With respect to the future of the scheme, the Christchurch social workers generally hoped that the scheme could be expanded and modified so that all children in the care of the Department would spend the first part of their time in care in such a scheme.

There was a strong opinion in Auckland that the scheme should not continue in the Regional Office. The general preference in both districts was to incorporate the scheme's principles into ordinary district casework as widely as possible.

(iv) The families of children in the scheme

About two thirds of the family members who were interviewed knew the child had been placed in a special scheme, but few knew very much about the scheme. Most of the family members thought the child was happy in the scheme placement, and fewer than a fifth thought the child had a negative view of it. The families of conventionally placed children were more likely to have a positive view of whether the child was happy in the placement, and Christchurch families (both of scheme children and conventionally placed children) were generally more likely to have a positive view than Auckland families.

The majority of the family members of scheme children (over 60%) thought the care order had been the best thing for the child at the time, but just under 20% thought it had not been, and another 10% had mixed feelings about it. The families of children in conventional placements were more likely to think the care order had been the best thing for the child at the time. There was also a general difference between districts with Christchurch families being more likely than Auckland families to think the care order had been the best thing for the child.

Over half of the families of scheme children wanted the child back with them again while a third did not, and they were equally divided over whether such a return would be successful or not. In Christchurch, there were equal proportions of scheme and conventional group families who said they would like to have the child living with them again, while in Auckland considerably fewer of the scheme families said they wanted the child back.

Nearly half the family members of scheme children had a high level of contact with their children and few had a low level of contact. (It is possible, however, that the group of family members who were interviewed was biased in favour of those more in contact with their children). Despite the relatively high level of contact among this group, two thirds said they wanted to see more of their child. There did not appear to be very clear patterns of differences between scheme and conventionally placed children with respect to contact between the child and his or her family.

The families of children in the scheme tended to be better acquainted with the foster parents than those with children in conventional placements. However, neither group appeared to get on better with the foster parents than the other.

Almost all of the family members said they had noticed some changes in their children since they had been placed in the Intensive Foster Care Scheme: most reported that the changes had been mainly positive but about a third reported that the changes were mainly negative. The families of scheme children were more likely to report that they had noticed changes in the child since the placement was made. However, the scheme families were also more likely than conventional group families to report that the changes were negative.

Over half of the family members thought the foster home would turn out to have been a good thing for the child in the long term, while only a quarter demurred. The Christchurch conventional fostering families stood out from the other respondents on this question: all but one gave positive responses, compared with endorsement rates of 50% and 60% for the other groups.

The family members also had a fairly positive attitude to the social worker's visits. Two thirds of them thought that such visits were beneficial, while only a fifth thought they didn't do much good. There were no discernable systematic differences between the groups here.

Overall, the family members of children in the scheme displayed largely positive attitudes towards the scheme, the foster parents and the social worker. They did not appear to have markedly different attitudes from families of children in conventional foster care. It may be that both groups of family members who were interviewed were somewhat biased as a consequence of the fact that family members with more negative views were more likely to refuse to do the interview. Nevertheless, the fact remains that within the group of family members actually interviewed there were very few people who expressed negative views.

16.4 What level of social work support was provided through the scheme and how does this differ from that provided under conventional fostering?

On average, the social workers in the scheme were visiting each foster home about once a fortnight. They were also in contact with the foster parents apart from home visits about once a week, and they generally had some contact with the family of the child about once every three weeks. Overall, the social workers were devoting about an hour and a third of direct casework per week to each case on average (with about 15% of this work time out of normal hours). The earlier stages of a placement required more time input, on average (about two hours per week over the first two months).

The Auckland social workers were achieving a higher frequency of home visits and other contacts than the Christchurch workers, but in Christchurch, the average amount of time given to each case was higher.

The scheme social workers in both districts were delivering a higher level of social work support than their counterparts working under the conventional regime, the difference being greater in Christchurch than in Auckland. In Auckland, the scheme social workers were visiting the foster home about 25% more frequently and were giving about a third more time than social workers in the conventional

system, while in Christchurch the scheme workers were visiting the foster home more than twice as frequently and spending more than twice as much time as social workers in conventional fostering. The bigger percentage differences for Christchurch, however, derived more from the fact that the conventional fostering system in Christchurch was delivering support to its foster parents at a considerably lower level than was the case in Auckland, rather than from differences within the scheme.

16.5 What level of training was provided to the foster parents under the scheme?

No systematic information was collected on the training that was provided to foster parents in the Intensive Foster Care Scheme. Thus we are not in a position to report on the form the training took, the content or coverage provided, or on how the training may have evolved or developed over the four year period of the pilot scheme. However, the foster parents and the social workers were asked for their assessment of the training that was provided and their views constitute the main body of information we have on the training.

The Intensive Foster Care Scheme undoubtedly provided foster parents with more training than would otherwise have been available to them. About 40% of the conventional group foster mothers and about half of the conventional group foster fathers reported that they had not received any training or preparation at all prior to fostering. Among those in the conventional group who had received some training or preparation, the most common form this took was simply an individual briefing by a social worker.

The value of the training that was provided in the scheme was rated highly both by the foster parents and by the social workers, and the foster parents in the scheme tended to rate the training they had received slightly more highly than did the conventional group foster parents who had received some training or preparation. The foster mothers in the scheme were more likely to think that the preparation they had received for fostering had enhanced their ability or confidence to undertake various tasks associated with fostering (in particular their understanding of children's development and behaviour and their confidence to deal with the child and with the Department). However, the foster mothers in the scheme were less inclined to think that their confidence to deal with the child's natural family was enhanced. These differences between the groups were not large and should not be overemphasised. Furthermore, there were no systematic differences between the two groups of foster fathers in terms of their response to the training.

The foster parents in the scheme reported that the most significant parts of the training were the teaching of specific skills, such as how to deal with particular behaviours, and the use of illustrative material, such as case histories. The social workers, on the other hand, when they were describing where training had been most successful, focussed on the self-selection aspects, as well as the clarification of the foster parents' role in relation to the social worker, the Department and the child's natural family.

In addition to the training that was provided for foster parents prior to their taking a child, the foster parents were also required to attend regular meetings of support groups with other foster parents in the scheme. Both the foster parents and the social workers were less enthusiastic about these support groups. Although the majority of the foster parents thought the groups were of value, nearly a fifth thought they had little or no value. Similarly, although most of the social workers thought the groups had had some value to the foster parents, they had all found some problems with the groups. There was no clear consensus among either foster parents or social workers as to the aims or functions of the support groups. Neither were there any common views on the role of the social worker or the Foster Care Federation representative at the support groups, although the social workers tended to think that the responsibility for the groups should be handed over to the foster parents. The foster parents, on the other hand, mainly thought the social worker should play an active part in the groups although a substantial minority (about a third) thought the social worker should have a passive role. The groups were considered to be successful in breaking down isolation and providing some support to foster parents, enabling them to share experiences and feelings. The social workers also thought that the support groups had been a useful forum for providing ongoing training for the foster parents.

16.6 How much planning was done for the future of the children and how effective was this planning in the light of the outcomes of placements?

Greater emphasis on planning for the child's future was intended to be a feature of the Intensive Foster Care Scheme from the beginning. No systematic information was collected on such matters as the frequency of planning meetings, attendance of the various parties or the value of the plans which were made. However, all of the parties involved (the foster parents, the social workers, the foster children and their families) were asked for their views on the planning that was done for the child's future. These views constitute the main body of data that we have on planning.

There was a lot of enthusiasm from the social workers for the methods and objectives of the planning process. They thought that planning could be done in more depth in the scheme than outside it because there was more time to work with everyone involved.

The evidence from the interviews with the children did not seem to show that the planning system in the scheme was involving them to a significantly greater degree than was the case outside the scheme, although it did appear that foster parents and family members of children in the scheme were more involved in planning, than those in the conventional group. Approximately 60% of the children in the scheme reported having been to planning meetings and this proportion was not very different from that reported by the conventionally placed children. (There were, however, regional differences both inside the scheme and outside it. The children in Auckland were more likely to report they had attended a planning meeting than those in Christchurch.) About 80% of the family members interviewed had attended at least one planning meeting and this was somewhat higher than that found for family members of

conventionally placed children (60%). The foster parents in the scheme tended to be a little more aware of the planning that had been done ; three quarters of the scheme foster parents said that a plan had been made compared to two thirds of those fostering conventionally.

The social workers tended to feel that the children should have been more involved in planning, although this view was not shared by the foster parents who were generally very satisfied with the level of involvement by the child. The children themselves did not appear to feel that they were in a position to affect decisions about their future. Less than a half thought they would have any input into such decisions and only a third thought their views would be taken into account. The foster parents were mainly satisfied with their own level of involvement in the planning. The social workers also thought the foster parents were sufficiently involved in planning on the whole.

The social workers also expressed some feeling that the children's natural families were not sufficiently involved in planning for the child's future. This is supported by the responses of the family members who were interviewed. Over 62% thought they would be asked for their views, but only a quarter thought their views would have any impact on future decisions concerning their child.

The social workers generally held the view that sufficient attention was paid to both long term and short term planning goals. They tended to be fairly confident that these long and short term goals would be achieved for most of the children in the scheme, although in the case of a quarter of the children some doubts were expressed about the short term goals and, in the case of a third, about the long term goals.

Discussion about the effectiveness of the planning procedures (in the light of the outcomes of placements) will not be given here, but in the subsequent section which is concerned with placement outcomes.

16.7 What were the outcomes of placements made under the scheme?

A total of 53 placements have been made in the Intensive Foster Care Scheme to date (30 in Auckland and 23 in Christchurch). Of these 36 have now ended. This is not a large base on which to form judgements about the scheme, and we should be cautious about any conclusions drawn from these results, since it is likely that failed placements would tend to be over-represented in this group, while successful placements (which are still continuing) would not be included.

The placements ranged in duration from four days to two and a half years with a mean length of one year. The placements in Auckland tended not to last as long as they did in Christchurch : the mean duration of placements in Auckland was nine months, compared with one year five months for Christchurch.

About a quarter of the children returned to their natural families at the end of their placements in the scheme, while about a third were placed again within the scheme. A smaller number (about 20%) actually stayed in

the same foster home but were transferred out of the scheme into the district's ordinary fostering programme. The remainder were placed in other situations (family homes, institutions) apart from one child who was living independently at the end of the placement and another who was sentenced to borstal.

The social workers were of the view, on balance, that more of the placements which had ended had been successful than otherwise. The social workers considered over 40% of the placements which had ended to have been successful and a third were rated very successful. Around 20% were rated unsuccessful and only about 10% were rated very unsuccessful. The remainder, around a third, were considered partly successful.

The data relating to the reasons for the end of the placements do not completely substantiate the social workers' view, however. In the case of about half the placements which had ended, the foster parents had been reluctant to continue with the placement. This was considered to have played a part in the end of most of these placements, and was thought to be a major factor in over a quarter of all the placements which had ended to date. The misbehaviour of the child had been a concern in even more of the placements (three quarters) and was considered to have been a factor in the end of the placement in over half of those which had ended. Emotionally disturbed behaviour on the part of the child was fairly common, more so in Auckland than in Christchurch. This was considered to have been a factor in the end of about two thirds of the Auckland placements, and about a third of the Christchurch placements.

Although these results present the scheme in a somewhat gloomy light, it should be kept in mind that the frequency of unsuccessful placements is likely to be artificially inflated among the group of placements which have so far ended as some of the more successful placements are not included because they were still continuing at the time of the data collection. It is still too early to make firm judgments on the outcomes of placements, and assessment of this aspect of the scheme should await the accumulation of further data.

APPENDIX ONE

REFERENCES TO SECTION THREE - OVERSEAS
DEVELOPMENTS IN FOSTERING

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INTENSIVE FOSTER CARE SCHEME

The following forms were used to collect the data for the research into the Intensive Foster Care Scheme.

Data Collection Forms For Children in the Scheme

- (i) Child Recording Form
- (ii) Placement Record.
- (iii) Foster Parent Questionnaires.

Questions were issued seaprately to foster mothers and foster fathers.

[The foster father questionnaire was the same as the foster mother questionnaire except that questions 9, 10, 45 and 46 were not included and question 55 was reworded as given below.

How often do you see your social worker on his/her visits to your home?

Often
Sometimes
Only occasionally
Never

In some cases, foster parents were interviewed in respect of a child after the placement had ended and the child had left the home. In these cases, a slightly modified version of the questionnaire was used, which asked the questions retrospectively.]

- (iv) Foster Child Interview Schedule.
- (v) Natural Family Interview Schedule
- (iv) Social Worker Questionnaire
- (vii) Social Workers Log.

These were collected every week from 15:12:80 until the present.

Data Collection Forms For Children in the Comparison Group

The comparison group comprised all foster placements made in the Auckland region (Takapuna, Auckland, Henderson, New Lynn, Mangere, Otahuhu, Otara, Manukau, Papakura and Pukekohe) between September 1982 and February 1983 and all foster placements made in the Christchurch region (Christchurch, Rangiora, Papanui and Hornby) between September 1982 and June 1983.

(viii) Child Recording Form

This was a condensed version of that used for children in the scheme, collecting parallel information but in a summarised form.

(ix) Foster Parent Questionnaire.

The questionnaires for the foster parents in the comparison group were the same as those for the scheme foster parents except that questions 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 20, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 43b and c, 64, 65 and 66 were not included and question 23 was replaced by the question given below.

Were you provided with any training or preparation for becoming a foster parent?

Yes
No

If yes what did the training or preparation consist of:

attended a training course
attended a group meeting with other foster parents and social workers
was individually briefed by a social worker.

(x) Foster Child Interview Schedule.

This was identical to the form used for children in the scheme.

(xi) Natural Family Interview Schedule.

This was the same as the interview schedule for the scheme group except that question 2 was omitted.

(xii) Social Workers Log.

This was the same as the log used by social workers in the scheme. These logs were collected for 12 weeks during each comparison placement.

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PAGE

- 13 2nd paragraph. "Quite a sizeable group (about a third in Christchurch and a quarter in Auckland) had no contact...with their natural mothers(only five in Auckland and two in Christchurch)....."
- 15 Table 5.8 "truancy 9 39% 5 26% "
- 1st para. ".....only just over half the Auckland guardianship orders had been made primarily because of conditions....."
- 17 1st para. "....rather more evenly spread on this variable, having had up to eight prior placements."
- 21 6th point. "Since the care order, the children had had (on average) just over two placements....."
- 47 1st para. "....social workers recorded that they thought all but one of the children placed more....."
- 48 Table 7.26 " Less frequent than 2 6%
every six months "
- 62 2nd point. "....from three who said the social worker visited too often)."
- 76 Last para. "....his or her family would work out. Foster Fathers in the scheme, on the other hand were more likely than those....."
- 78 2nd para. "....fathers in the scheme said they sometimes found the social worker to be quite hard to get hold of."
- 142 Graphs should be labelled "Figures".
Figure 15.1. Change over of Auckland Senior Social Workers occurred 12 months later than shown, ie Nov 82 to Jan 83.

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