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# FAMILY PRESERVATION JOURNAL

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A Publication of the *Family Preservation Institute*

Volume 5 Issue 2 2001

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## ARTICLES

*What is Family Preservation and  
Why Does it Matter?*  
J. McCroskey

*Family Preservation Research: Where We've  
Been, Where We Should Be Going*  
Jane Yoo and William Meezan

*Safety of Intensive In-Home Family Workers*  
Gwendolyn D. Perry-Burney

*Family Preservation Services to At-Risk Families:  
A Macro Case Study*  
Charles A. Sallee and Alvin L. Sallee

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PLUS a review of current resources



## **FAMILY PRESERVATION INSTITUTE**

School of Social Work

New Mexico State University

Box 30001, Department 3SW

Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003-8001 USA

*eddie bowers publishing co., inc.*

P. O. Box 130

Peosta, IA 52068-0130

*eddie bowers publishing co., inc.*

P. O. Box 130

Peosta, IA 52068

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eddiebowerspub@aol.com

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## General Information

### Manuscripts

The *Family Preservation Journal* is a refereed biannual publication. The *Journal* provides a forum for practitioners, administrators, researchers and educators to present and critically review programs, policy, practice methods, and research findings in the areas of family preservation and family support. The *Journal* is intended to positively impact the type and manner of services provided to families. Research and case studies from those delivering services are encouraged.

Manuscripts should conform to American Psychological Association style, with an optimal length of 18 pages, not to exceed 25 typed, double-spaced pages (excluding tables and figures), with an alphabetical list of references. Also include a diskette copy using WordPerfect v 5.1 or v 6.1, or v 8.0 for PC.

Provide five copies of the manuscripts; the title page only should list the author's name, affiliation, address, and telephone number. The author's name must not appear after the title page; only the title should appear on the abstract and first page of the text. Include an abstract of about 100 words.

Please submit all materials to **Family Preservation Journal**, *Family Preservation Institute, School of Social Work, New Mexico State University, P.O. Box 30001 Dept. 3SW, Las Cruces, NM 88003- 8001.*

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## Editorial

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### Family Preservation Issues

Over the past 25 years plus of Family Preservation programs, several issues have emerged, sometimes over and over. In fact, whether or not a family focus will exist continues to be discussed in some quarters.

This Journal through numerous articles has explored these critical controversies. This Journal issue provides an overview of these issues and by doing so provides insight into the ongoing support and need for Family Preservation principles, programs, and values.

What is Family Preservation, what does the research show is effective practice, is there funding, and what policies should there be, are some of the questions addressed in this issue. Through reviews and responses to reviews, we are able to gain a better understanding of this still, developing multi-service, interdisciplinary methods of working in partnership with families.

Jacquelyn McCroskey addresses the first questions directly in her article, “What is Family Preservation and Why Does It Matter?” by reviewing more than 100 years of family services and philosophy. The questions raised by evaluations and research is the topic of the article, “Family Preservation Research: Where we have been and where we should be going,” by Jane Yoo and William Meezan.

A major practice issue—safety—is explored in-depth by Gwendolyn Perry-Burney in her article, “Safety of Intensive In-home Family Workers.” A survey of workers not only identified concerns, but also suggests for a training curriculum.

At the program and policy level, the implementation of Family Preservation in the nation’s second largest state (and home of current President Bush) is reported in “Family Preservation to At Risk Families: A Macro Case Study,” by Charles Sallee and Alvin Sallee. Funding streams, including titles IV A&B, XX, and TANF, are explained as well.

An expanded review of “Supporting Families through Short Term Foster Care,” by Anthony Maluccio sheds light on this important approach in child welfare. LeRoy Pelton responds to William Epstein’s reply regarding Epstein’s book, *Children Who Could Have Been: The Legacy of Child Welfare in Wealthy America*.

It is hoped that this sharing of information and discussion will contribute to the improvement of the lives of children and families. While some may question, as we should, the effectiveness of Family Preservation it continues to be practiced from a family centered value base that is adopted more and more by individual practitioners, agencies and policy makers. And finally the real judge—families.

*Alvin L. Sallee*



# What Is Family Preservation and Why Does It Matter?

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**Jacquelyn McCroskey**

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This paper describes competing ideas about family preservation, defined both as a defined program of social services and a philosophical approach to helping troubled families. A straightforward definition has become almost impossible because the phrase has taken on so many different meanings, provoking controversy about its “real” meaning and value. Indeed, “family preservation” has become the proverbial elephant whose splendors and horrors are described with great certainty by those impressed by only one of its aspects. While skirmishes between “child savers” and “family preservers” have been part of the child welfare field since its beginning at the turn of the last century, recent debates over family preservation have been especially heated, generating more confusion and animosity than might be expected from the ranks of the small and usually mild-mannered social work profession. The debate is so heated that the director of one of the nation’s largest child welfare agencies said recently that he is afraid to “even use the two words on the same page.” <1>

While the debate about the value of family preservation is unresolved, experimentation with different approaches to service delivery over the last two decades has helped to lay the groundwork for a resurgence of interest in family and community-centered reforms. Better understanding of the family preservation “debates” may be helpful if these reforms are to be successful over the long term. The paper discusses the competing ideas, values, and perceptions that have led observers to their different understandings of family preservation. It briefly chronicles the history of child welfare and examines key theories that have helped lay the groundwork for the resurgence of interest in family-centered services. It concludes with observations about how the competing values at stake in family preservation may affect the next generation of reforms.

## **Competing Ideas, Values, and Perceptions**

### **How Do Family Preservation Services Fit into Child Welfare?**

Responsibility for providing social services for troubled children and families rests with the 50 states, some of which have devolved operational responsibility to counties. Thus, although commentators sometimes refer to “the child welfare system,” there are actually many more than 50 different child welfare systems in this country, each of which has its