**From the Encyclopedia of new york state (Peter Eisenstadt, E-i-C, Laura-Eve Moss, Managing Editor**

Children and Family Services, Office of - state agency created in 1998 that took over certain functions of the Department of Social Services and Division of Youth, which were abolished by the 1997 NYS Welfare Reform act. The office's responsibilities include foster care, adoption aid, preventative health services for children and families, and protective services for children and vulnerable adults. Many of these services trace their origin to the Children's Law of 1875, which succeeded in removing children from ineptly run poorhouses. The system of child welfare further improved in 1915 when mothers began to receive cash allowances and in 1922 when statewide children's courts were developed. The 1940 Social Welfare Law consolidated state authority and created the pattern of local responsibility for many social services functions. The office is also responsible for services performed by the State Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped, established in 1913. The office's Native American Services unit is a liaison between local social services districts and tribal groups and Indian nations regarding the implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act.

(omitted the next sentences on troubled youth)

Children's Aid Society - This child welfare institution formed in NYC in 1853 and was directed by one of its founders, Charles Loring Brace, until his death in 1890. Striving to improve working conditions and provide housing for children at risk, the society became facmous for its orphan trains, which carried homeless children from NYC to Midwestern farm families who needed laborers. Between 120,000 and 150,000 children were placed in homes by the end of the program in 1929, after which the society's foster program was limited to placing children within NYS. In NYC, the society established industrial schools and, for working children, night schools and lodging houses. (sentences omitted on present day work).

child welfare - Colonial Period

In the early colonial period, poor children with parents were usually supported in their own homes by the town, and orphaned children were placed in homes under terms of a written agreement called an indenture. Occasionally poor children were 'boarded out' to a family paid to care for them. During the 18th century, almshouses became popular, with NYC establishing the first publicly supported one in 1736. After the 1788 poor law authorizing all towns and cities to establish them, they spread througout the state. In these overcrowded, unsanitary institutions, some children lived with people who were insane, senile, or suffering from incurable diseases, but most lived with at least one parent.

An 1856 NYS study reported the appalling condition of children in almshouses and recommended that they be placed in orphanages instead, a shift in policy that reflected a change in attitude toward the poor. In the colonial era, poverty was seen as a misfortune that could befall anyone. By the 1850s its persistence led reformers to attribute it to a lack of morals that was apparetly hereditary, given that the children in families given public relief often grew up to make their own claims to relief. To 'save' children from this life, it was necessary to separate them from their parents' influence.

The Rise of the Orphanage

The first orphanage opened in NYS in 1806. Most orphanages were charitable institutions administered by sectarian religious groups (Protestant, Catholic, & Jewish). There were few of them until after the Civil War, when 64 operated in NYS. Many of these privately run orphanages received financial support from the state until it was discontinued in 1872, and several institutions were in danger of closing for lack of funds. The state legislature then passed the Children's Act of 1975, requiring all children between the ages of 2 and 16 be removed from almshouses and placed in orphanages or other institutions, which then received a per capita fee from the appropriate locality. This locally based public support for private children's institutions became known as the New York System. By 1885 there were 204 orphanages in the state, some caring for more than 1,000 children.

Most orphanages in NYD were congregate institutions consisting of one building where children lived, workd, and went to school. Because of their emphasis on uniformity and discipline, orphanages came under attach in the late 19th century by philanthropists who believed children belonged in families. The most famous of these was Charles Loring Brace, who headed the NY Children's Aid Society, which he helped establish in 1853. His efforts in support of family homes contributed to a new movement aimed at preserving families.

reference:

David M. Schneider & Albert Deutsch, The History of Public Welfare in New York State, 1967-1940