

**FAMILY PRESERVATION: AN ALTERNATIVE TO
OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT**

*Adopted by Convention Delegates May 1990
Reviewed by Board of Managers January 2010*

- WHEREAS,** In 1988-89, 122,000 children appeared in California Juvenile Courts as a result of abuse or delinquency; and
- WHEREAS,** In the same period, 56,433 children were placed into foster care and correctional institutions; and
- WHEREAS,** Out-of-home care is projected to increase by 12% per year over the next five years; and
- WHEREAS,** The cost to California for out-of-home care was \$776,912,000 in 1988-89; and
- WHEREAS,** Out-of-home placement frequently does not address the underlying symptoms of dysfunctioning families; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA seek and support legislation that would require parents of abused juveniles and juvenile offenders to attend comprehensive parent education, parenting skills or parenting classes in order to improve their chances of a successful family life; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That PTA units, councils and districts increase awareness of family preservation services which can be instituted to avoid much of the need for out-of-home care; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That PTAs promote the awareness of newly enacted legislation that sets a priority, unless the child's safety is at risk, of family reunification and family preservation as appropriate goals of the juvenile court; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA submit this resolution to the National PTA for consideration at the June 1990 National PTA Convention.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

More and more young people in California and in other states are being removed from their homes and placed elsewhere because of personal and family difficulties that include abuse, neglect and problems with the law. Costs are mounting rapidly and facility needs are becoming critical. Large numbers of young people and families continue in a cycle of trouble and dysfunction in spite of placement efforts to intervene.

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Studies in California and in various other states on alternatives to out-of-home placements indicate growing success in treatment of many personal and family difficulties through home-based services. Intervention is delivered in the family's home whenever possible. Programs are focused on family preservation and reunification unless there is clear evidence that this is not in the **child's best interest** or if safety is an issue. Services to the family include counseling, parenting, job skill training and helping the family to obtain other necessary services, resources and support.

PTA believes in the family unit and in strengthening the family's nurturing skills and ability to cope with day-to-day living, as well as the capacity to function effectively in the community. PTAs can work with schools to provide ongoing programs that help parents develop more effective parenting skills, and promote cooperation between schools and community agencies to provide the earliest possible support services to families. It is essential that early intervention be provided to families experiencing difficulties so that unnecessary out-of-home placements can be prevented.