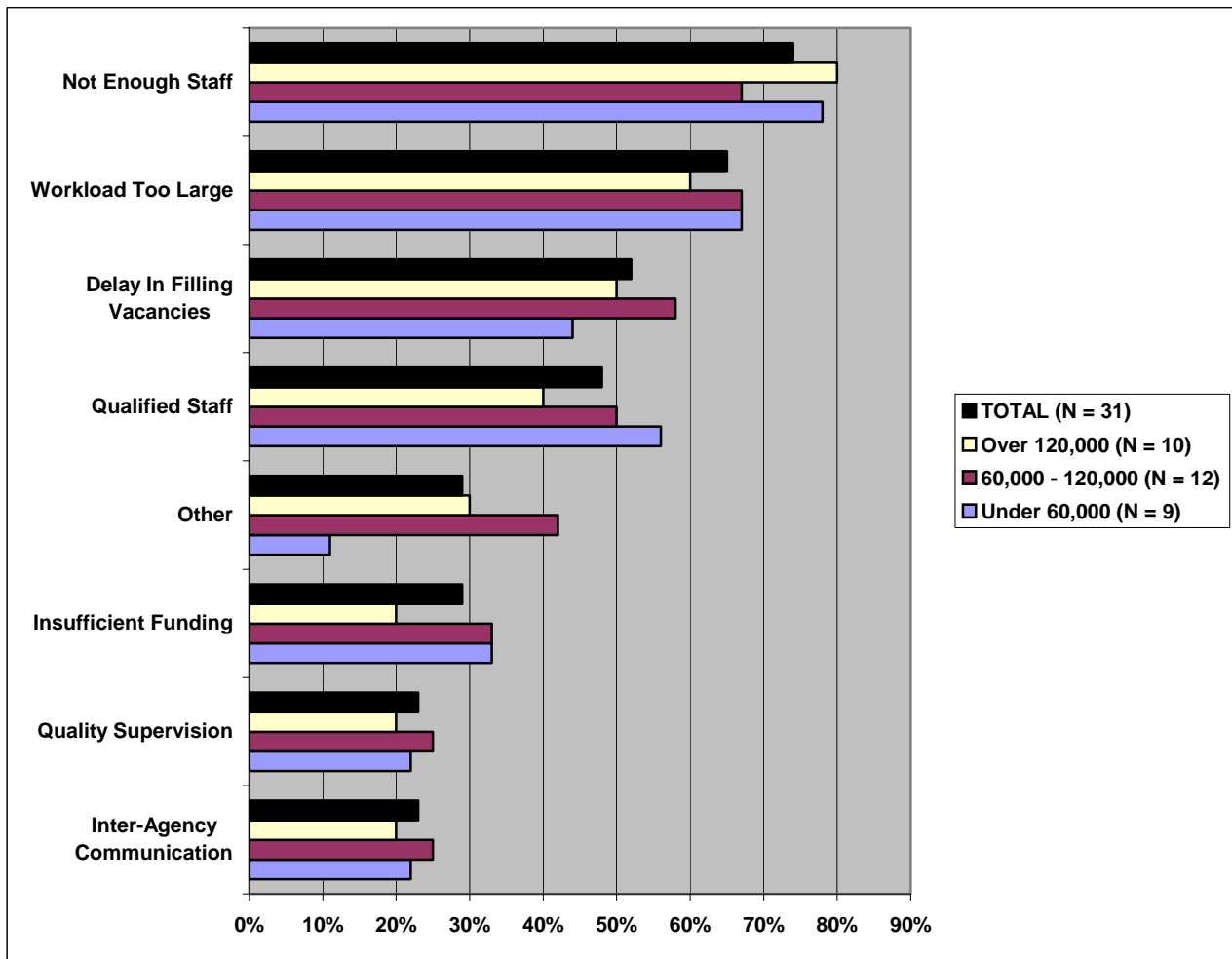


Eastern Citizen Review Panel Commissioner's Survey Report April, 2006

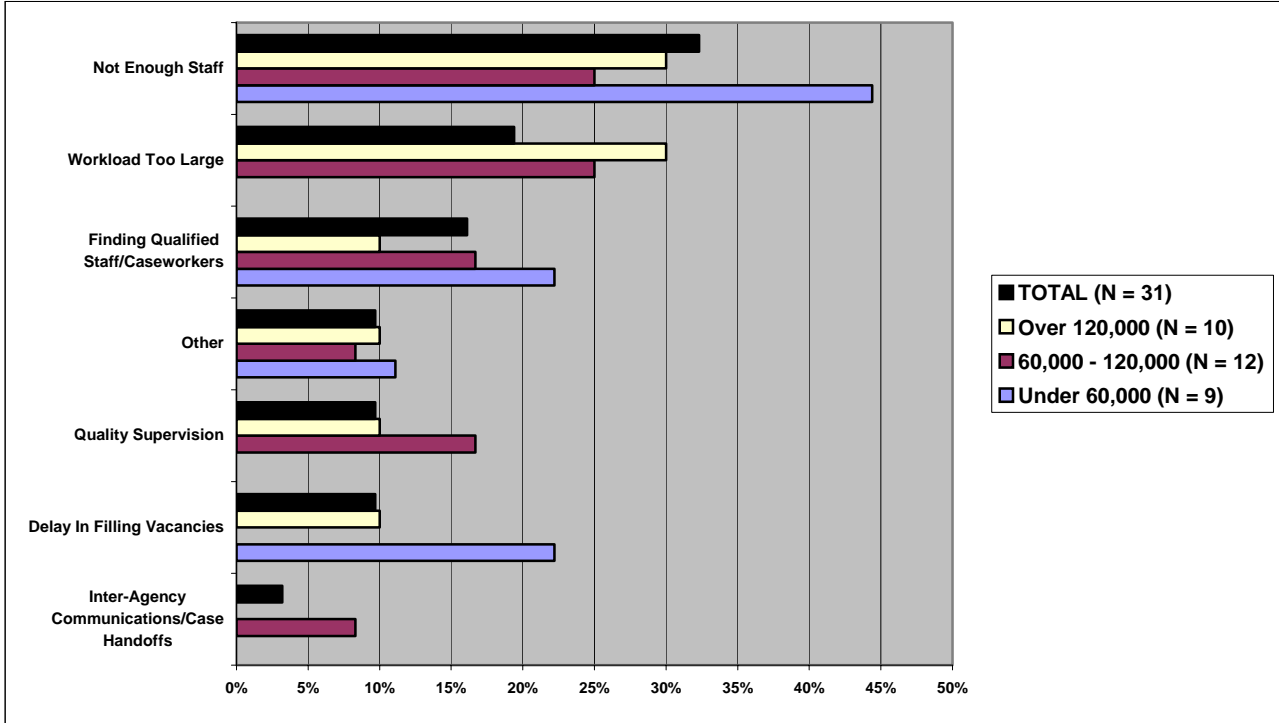
Question 1: What are the important CPS concerns or issues you face in your county?

Figure 1. Important CPS Concerns



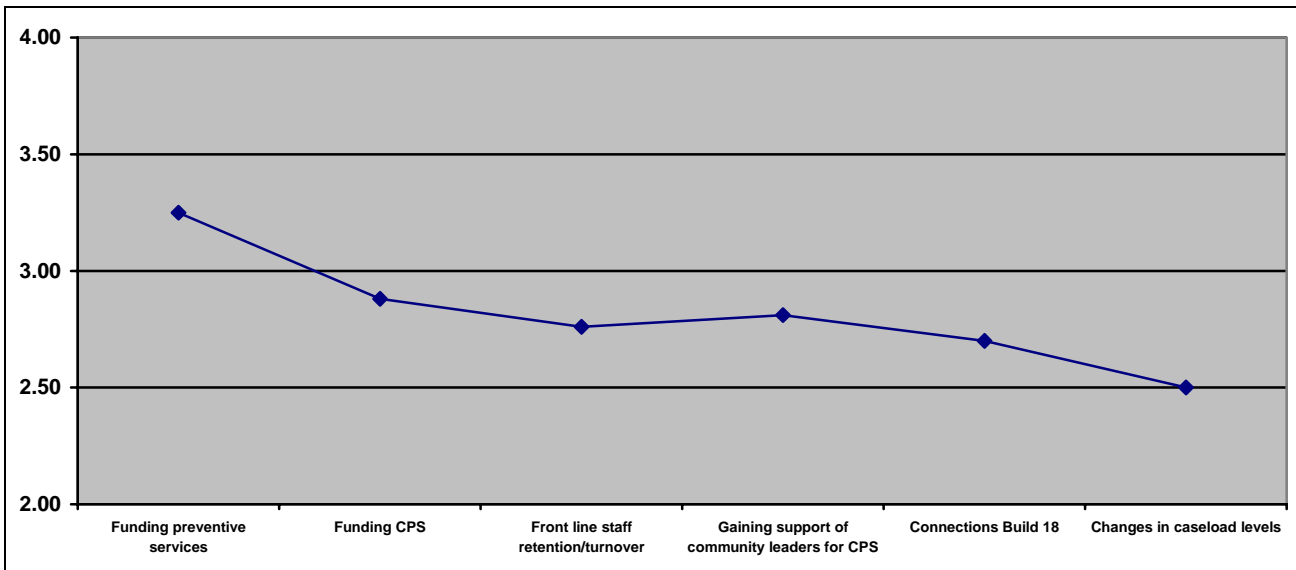
Multiple responses were accepted. Many indicated an overriding concern regarding staffing issues through their multiple answers. Also indicated was the relationship between the length of time it takes to bring new caseworkers up to speed through training. Other comments made include a mention about the lack of Spanish speaking staff, limited labor pool, lack of mental health services, timeframe for completing investigations, caseworker stress levels, the need for support from other systems, and the time those less severe cases takes away from severe cases.

Figure 1a. MOST Important CPS Concerns



Question 2: Assess the progress your county has made in the following areas:

Figure 2. Mean (average) assessment of progress in key CPS areas:
 (4 = "Significant Progress," 2 = "Little or No Progress") *
 (ALL RESPONDENTS)

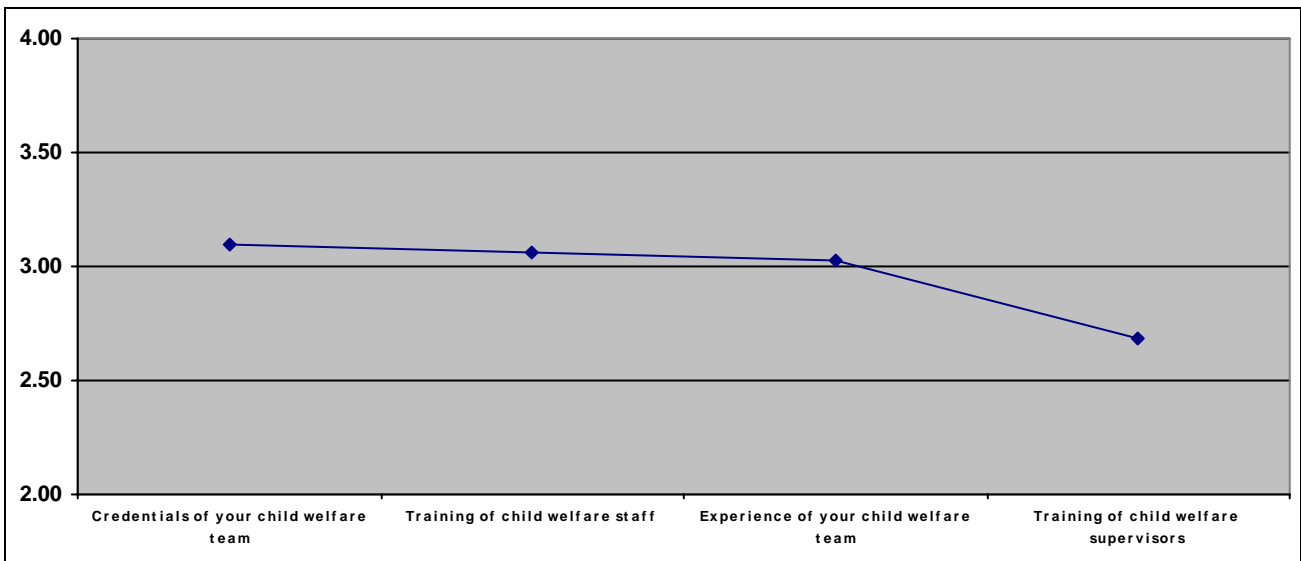


* - "not sure" responses were excluded from this analysis

Received comments about problems related to Connections Build 18 taking too much time. One reported ability to add CPS staff, another reported progress made with a Child Advocacy Center, and another reported progress made on overdue reports.

Question 3: How would you assess the following?

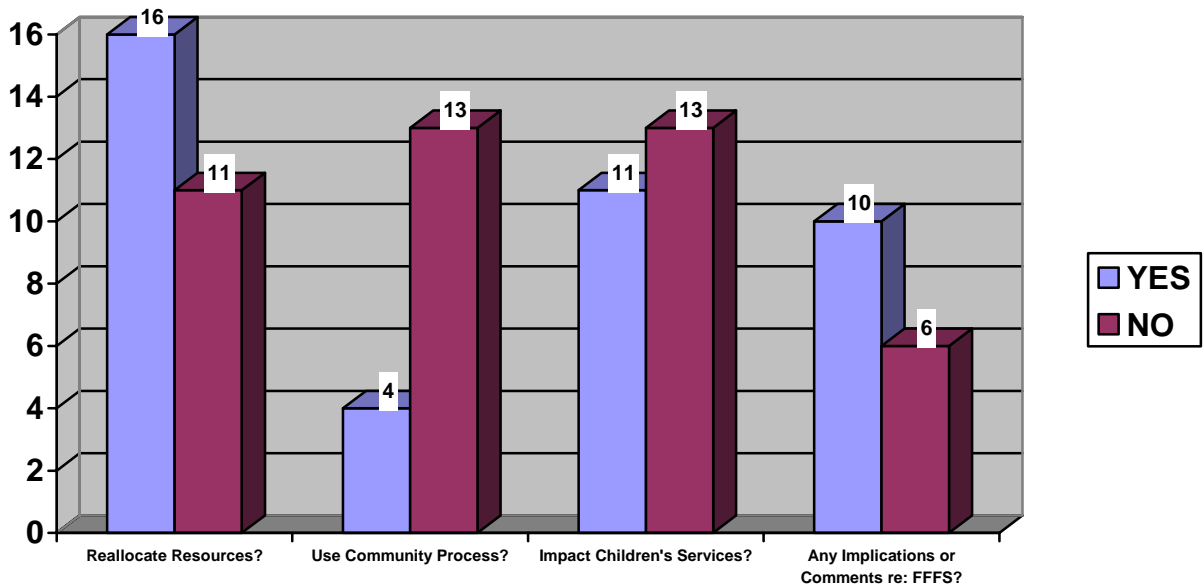
Figure 3. Mean (average) assessment of training, experience, & credentials:
 (4 = "Excellent," 2 = "Fair/Poor") *
 (ALL RESPONDENTS)



* - "not sure" responses were excluded from this analysis

Question 4: Regarding the Flexible Fund for Family Services (FFFS):

Figure 4. FFFS Number of Responses



- Regarding the *reallocate resources* most commented that the fund lacked flexibility and that dollars were used to cover mandated services. Three reported they were able to extend services. Three reported reductions in service. One reported reallocation of staff.

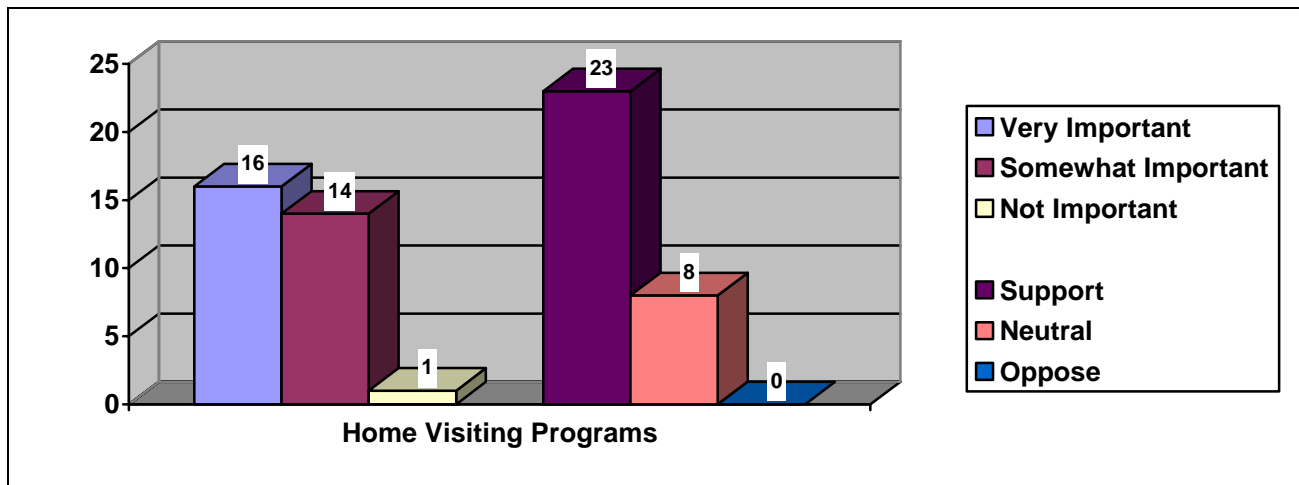
- Regarding the fund's *impact on children's services*, comments are mixed with 7 counties reporting an ability to add services and/or staff and 4 reducing services including one with a reduction in child care.

(Question #4: FFFS comments continued)

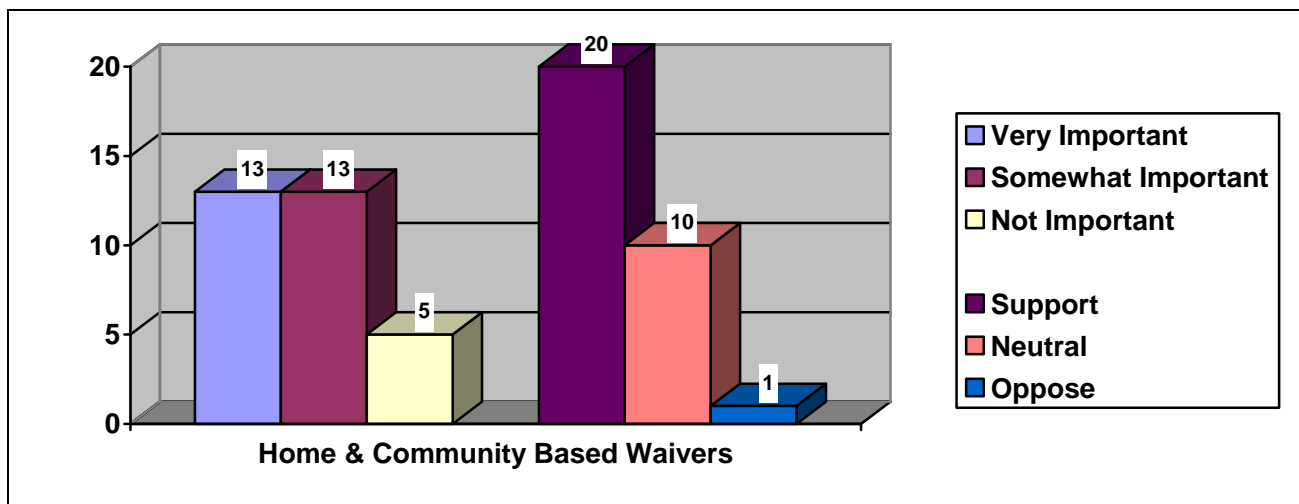
- Regarding *implications*, comments overwhelmingly referred to a lack of flexibility with the fund. Other comments made included a mention that it is too complicated and that they incurred reduced dollars for administration costs. One stated that the publicity led local agencies to think they could call on their local district and receive funding. Another expressed concern over the future, and whether or not the fund will have adequate resources to fund priorities. Another was concerned about blending child welfare operating funds into FFFS.

Question 5: Indicate the degree of importance and support for the Panels' Recommendations

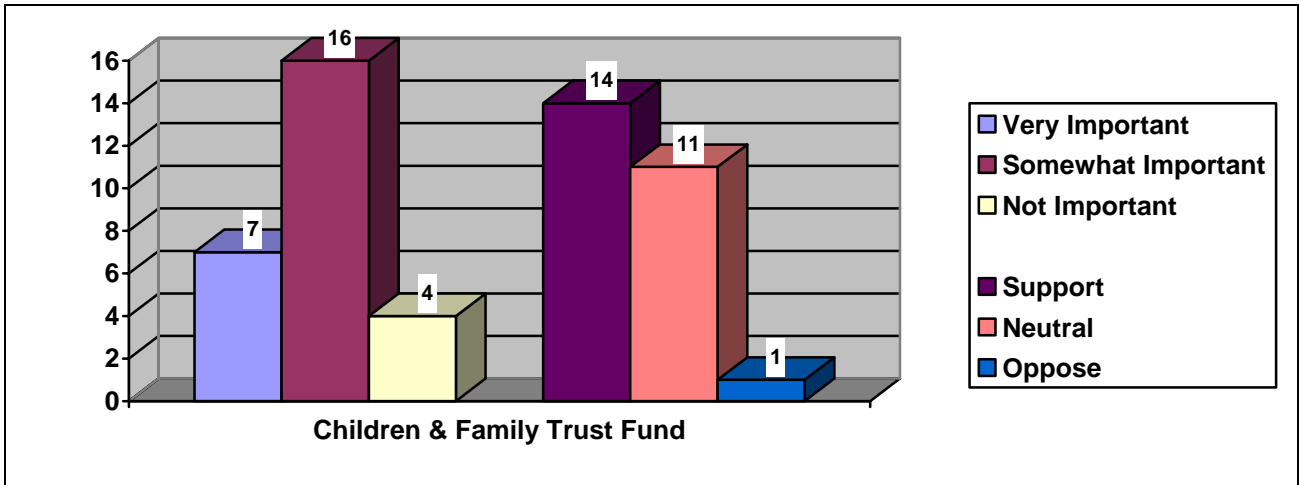
Figure 5a-j. Number of Responses



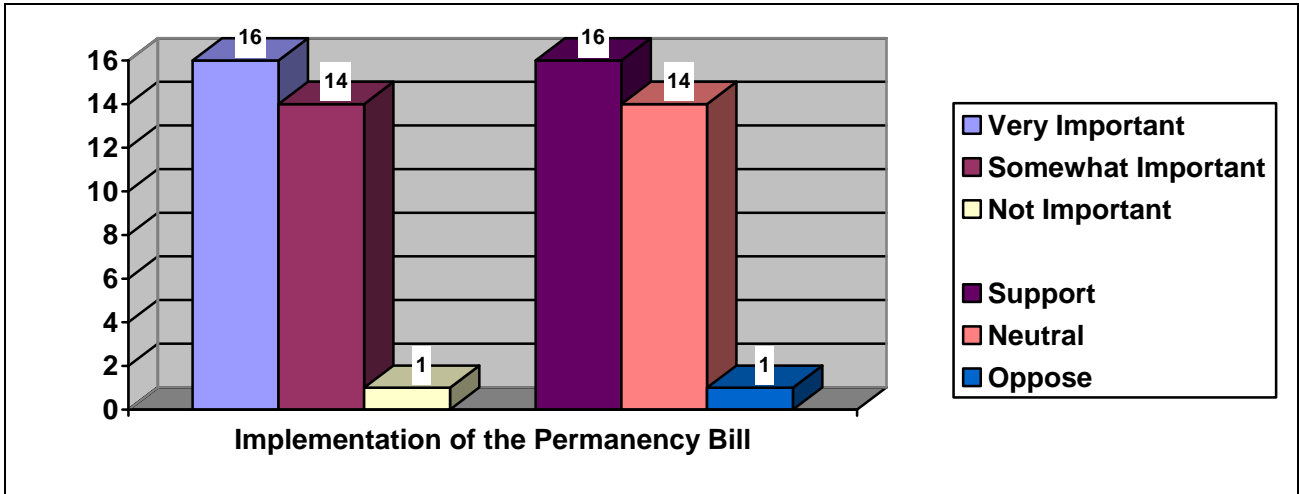
Good program but several mentioned not being able to access it because of lack of funding and staff. One county commented on the need for services for undocumented families. One stated that in home services is "where it is at."



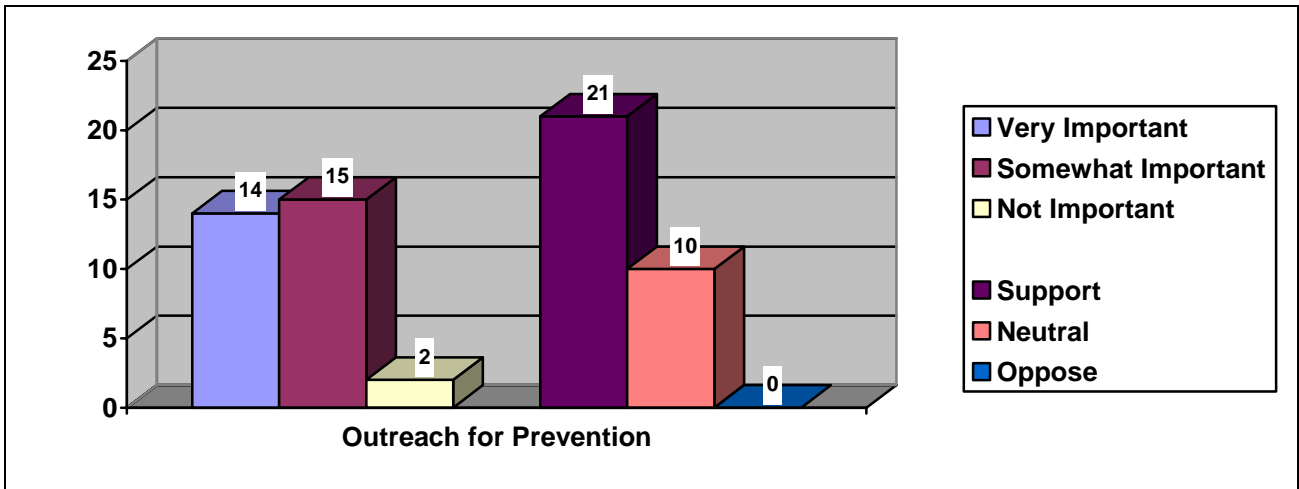
Most liked the waivers and see their potential, though two did not see the potential for their clients. The need for adequate funding and staff was mentioned as well. One stated opposition to 65% preventive funding when historically Medicaid funded these services. Another stated the need to allow time to plan their local budget, especially with a 50% share. One stated they are beginning to see the benefit of these slots. One mentioned the need for Mental Health to step up with funding. Another stated that these slots are difficult to administer. Couple of others find too many constraints. They would like more flexibility.



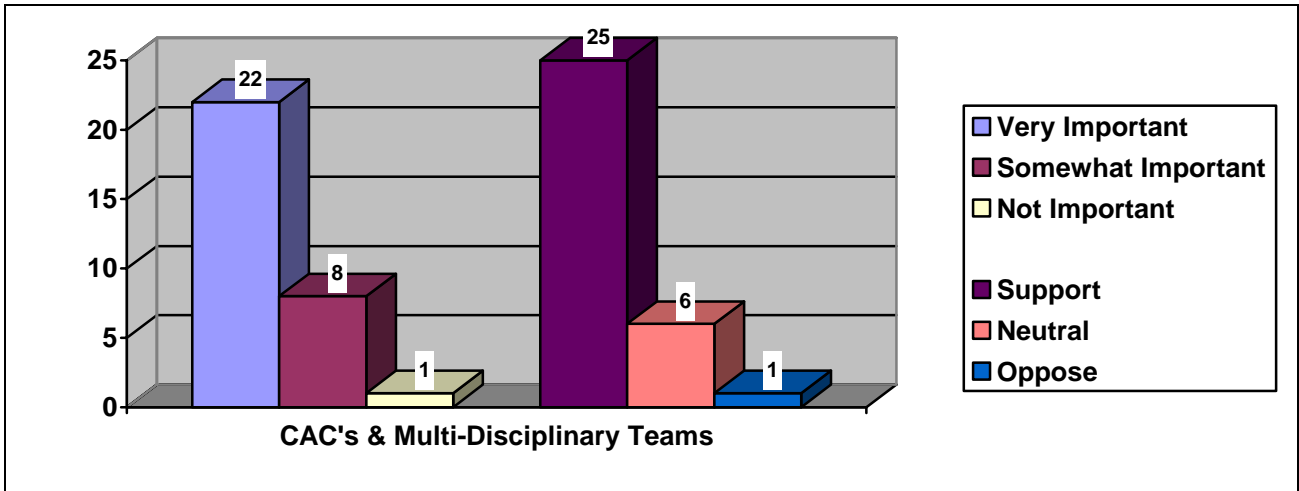
Comments were mixed regarding the fund. Many did not know what the fund is and others stated that they could not access this funding. One comment indicated confusion about what the fund supports, thinking it went for home visiting and family prevention in a manner that limits new program development.



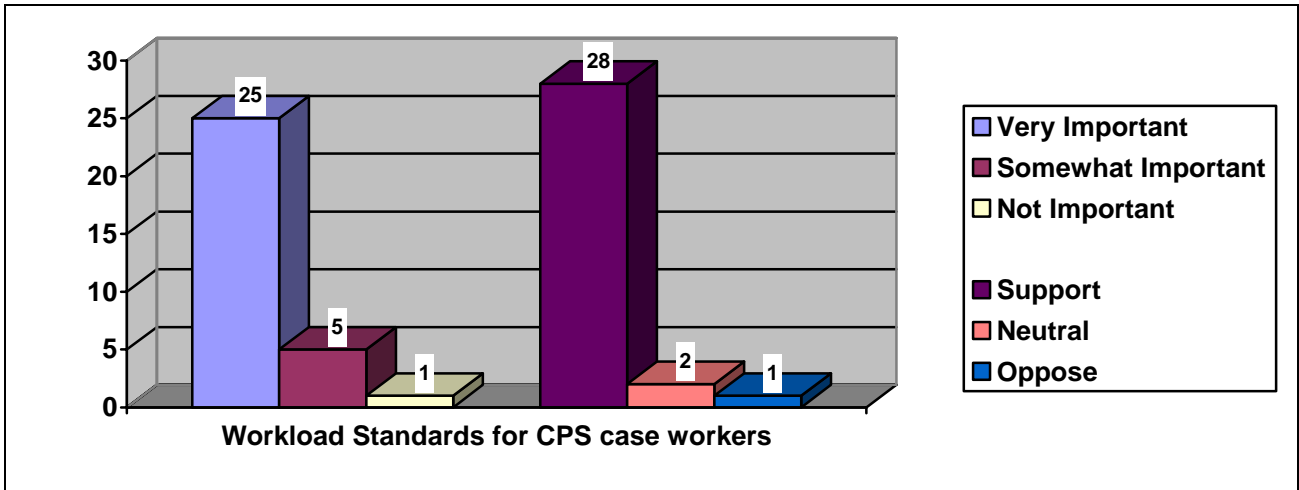
Local districts are very concerned with the amount of time needed to make court appearances and prepare petitions, for record keeping, and duplication of reporting requirements; the lack of staff; and lack of funding. Suggestions included the need to monitor OCA, having permanency reports coincide with FASP and Connections reports, and seeing a state report on implementation. One mentioned the bad timing with Build 18. Another that it creates two sets of operational guidelines for children, one for JD/PINS and another for abuse.



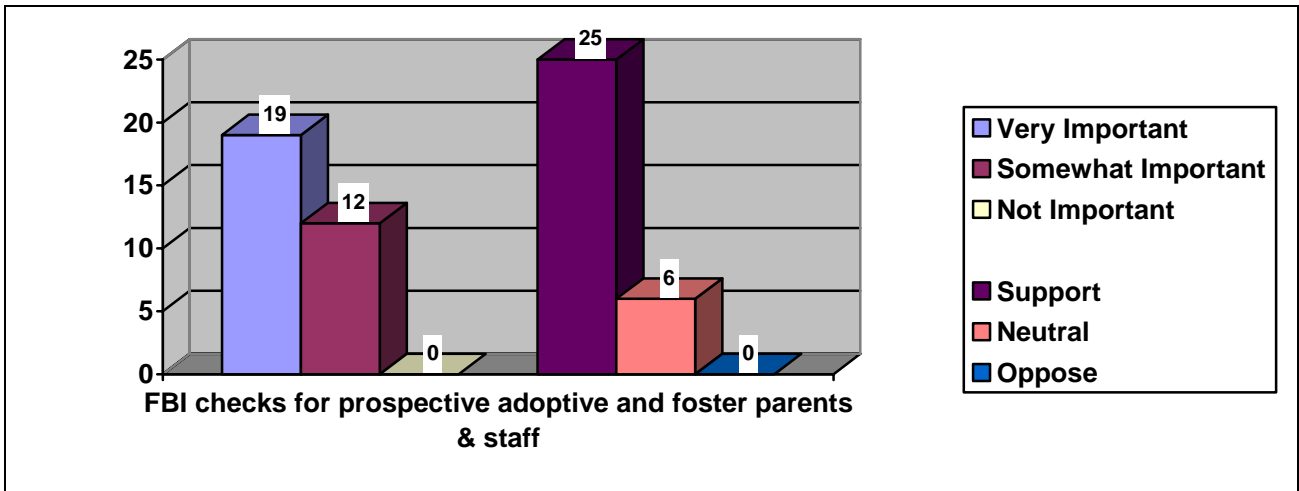
Support is there but lack resources, staff, and funding. One suggested a partnership with Health Dept.



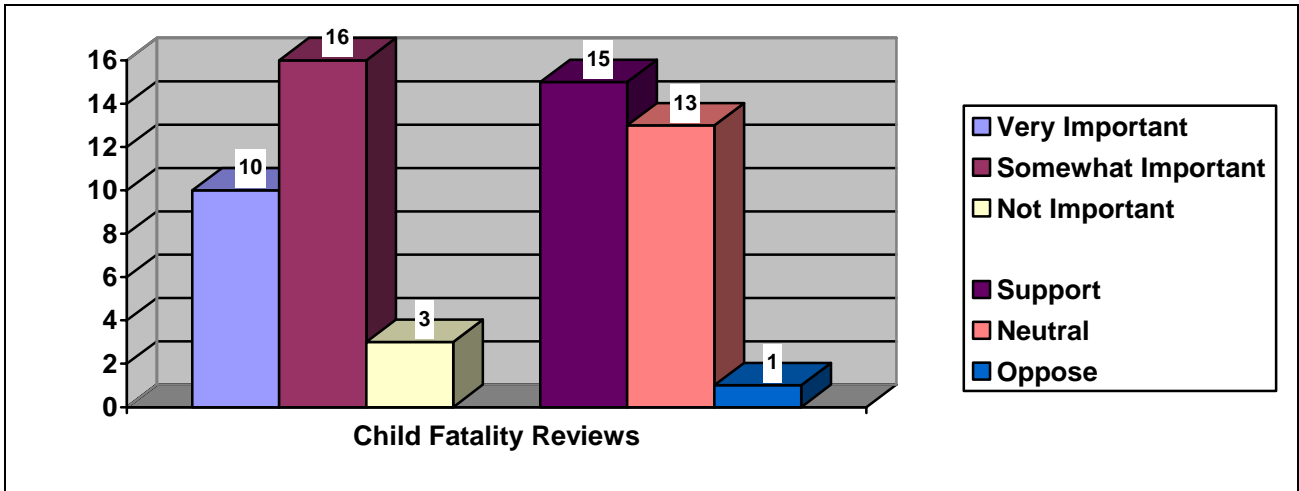
Strong support for CAC's. Again, concern about lack of funding and reliance on generosity. Smaller communities can not support one on their own. One indicated that cross-county centers are very complicated. Another, lack of support from law enforcement. Another, the need for training annually and regionally.



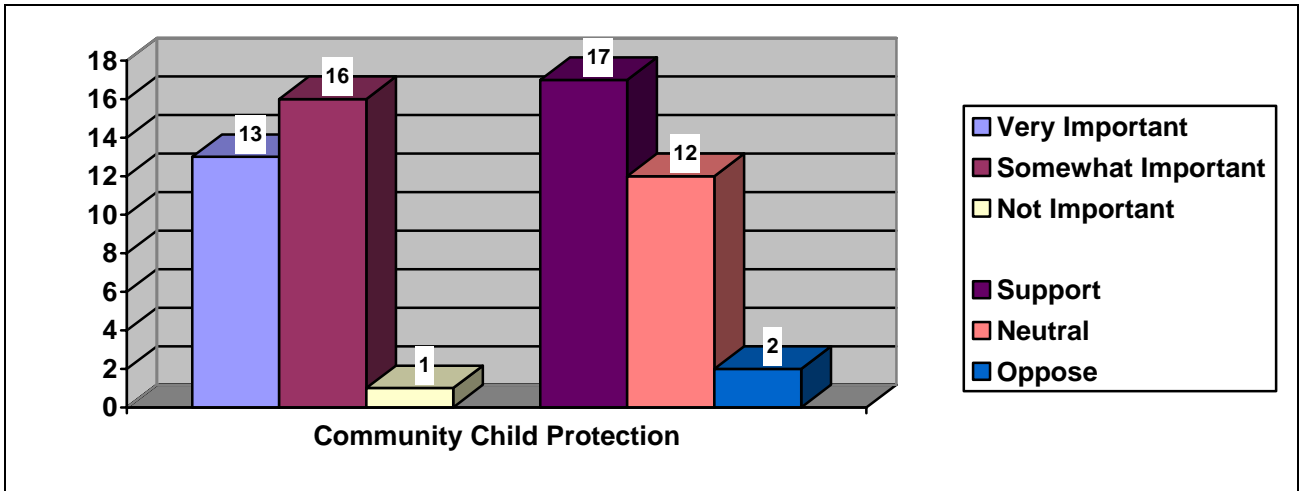
Tremendous support for such standards with adequate funding attached. One mentioned how the Enhanced Reimbursement Plan had supported lowering workloads. Two stated that this will not fully alleviate the problem. One stated the solution is in clear, measurable standards in performance. Careful about an unfunded mandate.



Comments indicated very strong support for such legislation (with funding). A few mentioned extending such checks to child care staff at residential institutions and to family members seeking custody. One had a concern that people will opt out because of this added complication. A few rarely have families from out of state.



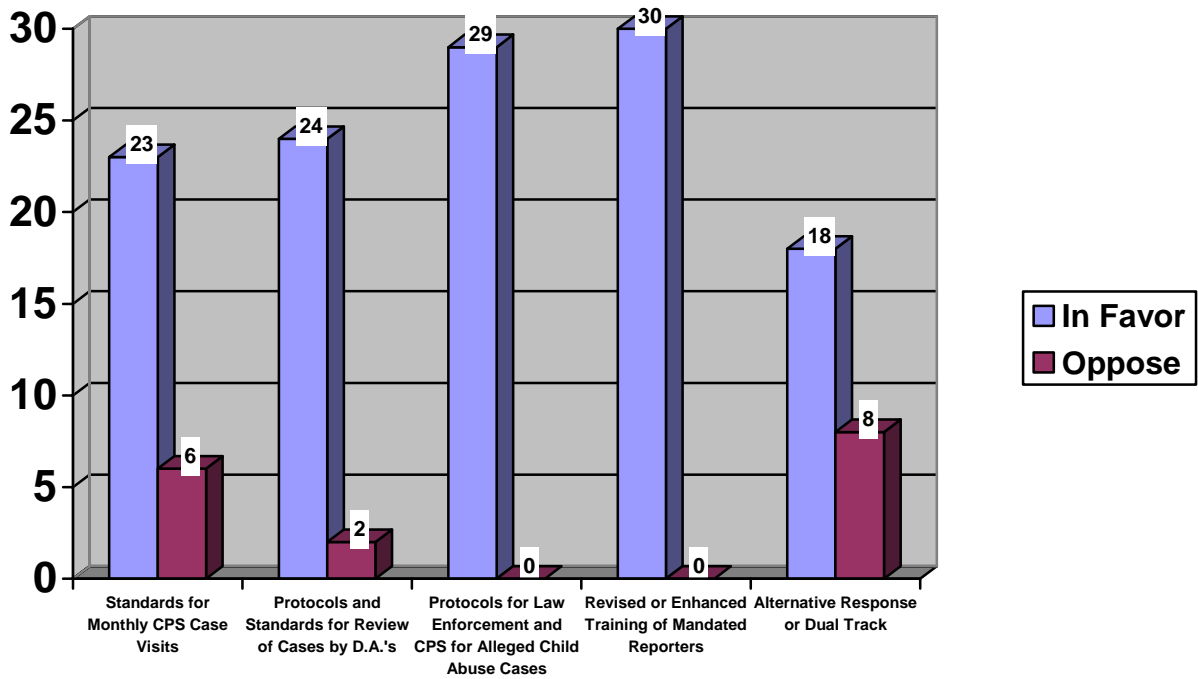
Received mixed comments about the reviews and teams. Need for clear direction, standards, and training from the state were mentioned. Concern was expressed that such reviews occur too late, that side by side assistance would be helpful, but at the same time could bog down the system. With one case in 1,000, has limited usefulness.



Received mixed comments about moving towards a system of Community Child Protection that was expressed in the comment “could be great, or could be a nightmare”. Some seemed unsure as to how it would work or how you would monitor or evaluate.. Others know of model approaches or are on the road towards that goal. One stated that anonymous reporting should be suspended. Another referenced Dual Track. One mentioned that Chapin Hall research findings were not as strong as hoped for. Another would like community child “prevention”. One reported already doing it and that it benefited children.

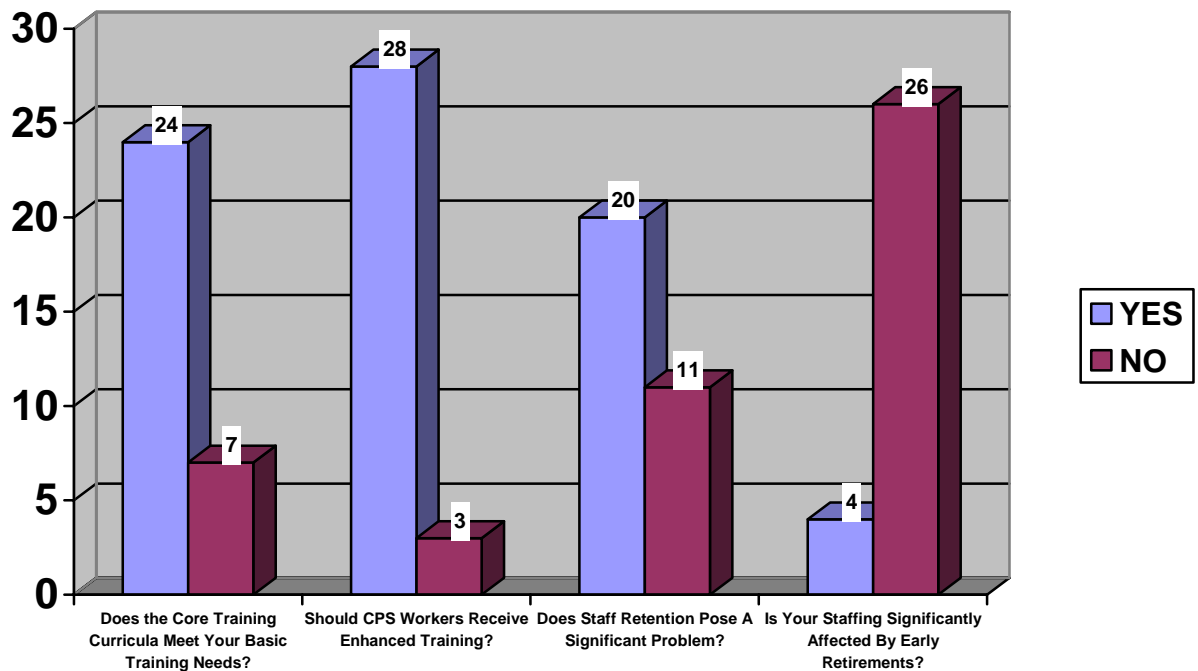
Question 6: What is your opinion of the following ideas?

Figure 6. Number of Responses



Question 7: Other

Figure 7. Number of Responses



Question 9: Comments for the Eastern Panel Members

Panels and their operations:

- Continue what you are doing. If you accomplish ½ your goals, you are helping tremendously.
- Panel members need to reach out to local Children's Services Units personally.
- Feel supported by the panel's work. Interested in more frequent dialogue. Have mutual interests and concerns that can only benefit each other through dialogue.
- Would love a site visit and opportunity for face to face conversation. Thank you for this opportunity to share our views.
- Higher level of networking desirable – perhaps exploring teleconferencing and regional meetings.
- Serving as an advocate for CPS in terms of staffing, caseload sizes, training, financing.

Representation on the panels:

Need for rural communities to be represented on the panel.

Services:

- Workload standards should be based on number of children, not cases
- Caseload issue is very important
- Enhanced funding for CPS staff. Dual Track system. Funding to support case review/quality control in medium to small counties.
- Mental Health: should be able to get into RTF's quickly and access out of state placements quicker.
- Panel should assist local districts in developing community awareness and education around child abuse and neglect issues.
- Upstate counties still operate in silos. MDTs and CAC's get us in the right direction. Need mandates to force these systems.
- Need for legislation that allows caseworkers to access premises. Can't force police to accompany workers.