**Policy Critique**

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**Introduction**

There are a lot of social issues within the world of social work and social work policies. The more one narrows it down to more specific subjects and policies within the social work world, the more social issues can be found. In this paper, the specific topic is foster care and its policy with temporary entrustment. The policy will be dissected and there will be discussion on its pros and cons, in what ways it is impactful, whether or not its beneficial, and if it should be modified and if so, how.

**Policy**

 Temporary entrustment is the voluntary request made by the parents for the local department of social services to have custody of their child for a temporary period. The entrustment agreement can last up anywhere from 90 days to 180 days (Family and Child Services Manual). There are simple conditions to be met for a temporary entrustment. To start, the main goal is for the child to return home. Rights and obligations for the child, the parents or guardians, and the local department of social services should be specificized. Entrustment also cannot be used as for educational purposes, and it cannot be made for the child to be eligible for Medicaid (Family and Child Services Manual). It is also emphasized that parents or prior custodians or the local department of social services can terminate the entrustment agreement within ten days with a written notice.

 If a child is entrusted into someone else’s care, there are specific qualifications that the person must have in order to care for that child. To start, that person must be not only willing, but also qualified to receive and care for the child (Family and Child Services Manual). They need to be willing to have a positive, continuous relationship with that child and they have to be committed to provide and care for that child with a permanent, suitable home. They also must be willing and able to protect that child from abuse and neglect (Family and Child Services Manual).

 If the local department of social services makes the decision to get rid of the entrustment and seek court commitment during the first ninety days of the entrustment, then the local department of social services would have to petition the court for custody and also submit a service plan for approval. For the entrustment agreements that are not for the termination of parental rights might be able to be revoked by birth parents or custodians or local board prior to the court’s approval of the agreement (Family and Child Services Manual).

**Strengths and Weaknesses**

 Strengths and weaknesses can be found in almost any policy if one looks hard enough. There are plenty of both strengths and weaknesses within the entrustment policy. As for strengths, it allows the family to focus on getting track. The families are able to tone in on and focus on their needs as a family. It also allows the department of social services to facilitate and help guide the family into the fight direction, offering the child some sense of stability. It can also give parents control still because they can terminate the agreement within ten days. After strengths comes weaknesses, which could be that an abrupt change may negatively impact the child; however, that also depends on the age and developmental stage of the child. For the parents, it could make them also feel inadequately as a parent. Time constraints can also be pressuring.

**Social Problems**

 With some policies, there can be a social problem or issue that connects to it somehow. With entrustment, it is possible that the family could be penalized for their social status. Also, there could be social perceptions of the child if they are older, showing the child an environment that is better than their parents which might cause behavioral issues. On the temporary entrustment form, there is a checkbox that says the parents need to pay a sum amount of money for their child while they are in entrustment. Many families may be having to do an entrustment agreement because of their financial status, so one might question if the agreement is really benefitting those parents at the end of the day if they still have to pay an agreed upon sum amount.

**Social policy versus public policy**

Social policy is related to economic, social, and political. They are meant for education, health, housing, employment, and food for people. Social policy does play apart in public policy; however, public policy is much more than all of that. Public policy is what has to do with systems of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action, and funding priorities concerning a given topic promulgated by a government entity or its representatives.

The main difference is that social policy usually deals with issues that involve social justice, it involves family and benefit structures. Public policy deals more with broad, state-oriented concerns and topics and it is usually more political matters. Social policy, however, is still a type of public policy. If one were to think about it, almost all of public policy is social because it deals with managing society and making some kind of an effort to better and fix or improve society for the good of the people.

**Policy Critique**

 While there are beneficial factors to the entrustment policy, it can have negative impacts for the family in a few different ways. As discussed before, it can impact the child’s mental health in a negative way, it could cause a financial burden on the parents, or it could negatively affect the ego and overall mental health for the family. The best way to help solve these issues would be to offer as many resources as possible for the family while they are going through the entrustment policy and offering any necessary support. There is not much that can be done, but it is possible to lessen the impact the policy has on the family by offering those resources and the needed support.

**Conclusion**

 Entrustment can be beneficial in many instances, but it can also cause some issues for families who are just seeking assistance because of the fact that it may be a financial burden, it might impact the child negatively, or it might impact the family in a negative way mentally. Although there are negative aspects to this policy, it is overall beneficial because there are many families who need help and guidance while trying to get back on track and focus on what is most important, which is the child.

**Reference Page**

*Engaging the child, family, and significant adults - virginia*. Child and Family Services Manual. (n.d.). Retrieved February 26, 2022, from https://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/division/dfs/fc/intro\_page/guidance\_manuals/fc/11\_2018/section\_2\_engaging\_the\_child\_family\_and\_significant\_adults.draft.pdf