

County Foster Home Plan Is Not Working

The foster home plan for dependent children set up by the board of supervisors last year is not working, the juvenile justice commission decided last night.

Complaints that foster homes are not able to take some dependent children when emergency situations arise prompted the commissioners to send a letter to the supervisors calling for a change.

Under the current plan, a dependent child is taken by probation officials to one of several foster homes on a special list prepared by the welfare department.

But probation officers have found the list inadequate on several occasions. Foster homes are either full, not operating any longer, or sometimes simply are not available.

"This can create a real problem for us when we try to place a child in a foster home at 3 o'clock in the morning," Probation Officer Tom King said today.

The problem seems to be that there are simply not enough foster homes to go around. Technically, there is supposed to be at least one open at each end of the county. But emergency placements are sometimes impossible.

The dependent children are not delinquents, but children whose parents might have been injured in an accident, arrested or kept from maintaining a home for various other reasons.

Commissioners are expected to recommend placement of the dependent children in a special section of the county juvenile hall in their letter to the supervisors. Such placement would be temporary only, however.

"Most counties have such a facility at their juvenile hall," King said. "But we may not have the room to do it here."

King said Architect C. T. Wong, now drawing preliminary plans for the county's new juvenile hall, is taking such a facility into consideration in the planning.