

A STUDY OF
PROTECTIVE SERVICES AND
THE PROBLEM OF NEGLECT OF CHILDREN
IN NEW JERSEY

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by
CLAIRE R. HANCOCK

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A STUDY OF
PROTECTIVE SERVICES AND
THE PROBLEM OF NEGLECT OF CHILDREN
IN NEW JERSEY

by

CLAIRE R. HANCOCK

A report of the findings of a project sponsored by the New Jersey State Board of Child Welfare, Department of Institutions and Agencies, and conducted during the period from June 1957 through January 1958.

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January 24, 1958

Mr. F. Morse Archer, Jr.
President of the Board of Managers
State Board of Child Welfare
163 West Hanover Street
Trenton, New Jersey

My dear Mr. Archer:

In presenting this report to the Board on the Survey of Protective Services and the Problem of Neglected Children in New Jersey, I want to say that I am very much indebted to Mr. Joseph E. Alloway, Executive Director, and to the administrative staff of the State Board of Child Welfare for their able consultation and generous help in the development of the general plan of the survey, the selection of case material and in the arrangements they made for conferences with administrative staff of voluntary agencies, of the Council of Social Agencies, with officials and staff members of other administrative and official agencies of the state. It has been a privilege to work with the staff of the State Board of Child Welfare. The opportunity to examine the problems in this important area of service to children has been a most valuable experience.

It is my earnest hope that the material presented in this survey will contribute to the development of plans for further extension of protective services to the neglected children of the state. These children and their parents represent valuable human resources in the community. When their potentialities are wasted, it is costly to them and a burden to the community.

The interest and the concerted effort that many people in the state extended during this survey represented discerning awareness of the problem and a great desire to create appropriate social service resources that would be available when needed to families and children struggling with serious problems that well might lead to family breakdown.

Mr. F. M. Archer, Jr.

January 24, 1958

Acknowledgments are gratefully extended to members of the District Office staff of the State Board of Child Welfare who participated wholeheartedly in assembling this material. Acknowledgment is also extended to the superintendent of the State Reformatory for Women and to her staff for their generous cooperation in securing valuable information about the mothers at Clinton committed on Child Welfare charges. The cooperation of the Parole Bureau staff in identifying and making available records of the mothers committed on neglect charges during 1954 and 1955 is most appreciated.

The generous cooperation of the administrative staff of the voluntary family and children's agencies in the state, the councils of social agencies, the staff of the Bureau of Assistance, the county welfare board directors and directors of municipal departments of public welfare in selected areas of the state, the probation officers and court personnel who participated in discussion of the community problems in handling neglect situations made most valuable contribution to the study.

Very truly yours,

Claire R. Hancock

(Mrs.) Claire R. Hancock
Consultant

Protective Services Project

CRH/adc

In New Jersey the first direct legislative action to protect children from parental mistreatment was by statutes of 1880 and 1883. These may be described as a listing of specific offenses which were subject to summary and relatively mild punishment. It later appeared, however, that these statutes were effective only if the child's life was endangered or his health injured.

A comprehensive law was thereupon adopted in 1915 which provided for complaint against parents or parent figures for a variety of acts or neglects which threatened the physical, mental, social or moral growth of the child. This also provided a summary proceeding with limited punishment, but in order to increase the potential length of imprisonment for retraining of the parent a 1944 amendment now gives these offenses the status of crimes.

Another approach to the problem was initiated in 1895 by permitting the removal of rights of custody from a parent upon proof of certain inadequacies. This proceeding is civil, rather than criminal, in nature, and the custody of the child may be given by the court to an individual or a private and voluntary agency.

In 1899, the State Board of Children's Guardians (now the State Board of Child Welfare) was established as the state-wide public children's agency. This agency now administers a comprehensive program, including services on application of any person interested in the child. However, if a neglectful parent refuses to accept service voluntarily, recourse must be had to the criminal proceedings.

Companion programs for children and families are provided by private and voluntary agencies, with most of these agencies offering services to the neglected child. If any situation requires court intervention, these agencies may seek control of the child through civil proceedings in which evidence is given to justify the parents' loss of custody. Continuing service to such cases may impose a heavy financial burden upon private agency resources for care of the child, but if the parent will not voluntarily accept transfer of service to the public agency this can be accomplished only by resort to the criminal statute.

In the specialized field of protective services there are two sources of positive action - the social agency and the court. The former can potentially undertake a scope of service as wide as the needs of children, but it cannot involuntarily interfere with the rights of individuals. The latter can subordinate individual rights to the general welfare, but must recognize, indeed uphold, the limits which law may impose upon jurisdiction and decision. These are fundamental differences which can be complementary or conflicting.

The services of the social agency are directed basically toward determining, evaluating and improving the situation of the child. The attitudes and actions of the parent figures, although integral to the family relationship, are viewed as a source of causation and correction bearing upon the central problem of the child.

The protective statutes in New Jersey, whether criminal or civil in nature, are focused directly upon the attitudes and actions of the parent figures.

The issue before the court is whether proof can be made that the parent has done, or is doing, something which the law recognizes as justifying punishment or deprivation of parental rights. No matter what the interest of the court and social agency may be, service to the child becomes ancillary to condemnation of the parent.

What effects, direct and indirect, is the statutory situation having upon a productive program of protective services? What is the nature and extent of the problems which require these services, and what causes these problems to arise? How are the social agency and the court meeting these problems, and how could they work together more effectively? These are the questions inherent in every situation of every child who needs help to break through the influences which constrict his proper development in a democratic society.

Answers have been sought by the study here reported. Although conceived by the State Board of Child Welfare and made possible by the cooperation of the Federal Children's Bureau, this study has sought to serve all persons and agencies who bear the obligation of accountability for the welfare of children.

Fundamentally this is a question of people, not processes; of individuals, not institutions. Who are the parents who offend, and why are they what they are? Did they intend, or did they incline to stresses superior to their strength? Are they devoid of feeling within themselves, or are they responding to the absence of it within the community? How would they respond to reclamation rather than recrimination? By understanding we may move toward undertaking.

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1. THE WOMEN AT CLINTON

This section of the report is concerned with the 56 women who were in the New Jersey Reformatory for Women at Clinton at the end of July 1957 on conviction of neglect of children under the present New Jersey law (Revised Statutes Title 9, Chapter 6).

These women came to Clinton from 14 of the 21 counties of New Jersey. The largest group, 16, came from Essex County, the most populous urban county in the state. Seven of the group were from Middlesex County, six from Passaic, five from Union, four each from Hudson and Monmouth. The others were scattered between the more rural and the less populous areas of the state.

The fact that these women are in Clinton means that a family group has come to an end, at least temporarily, in a collision with the community and in defiance of a community's minimum standards of child care. It means that there has been gross failure on the part of one or both parents to carry out their task of child-rearing sufficiently effectively to protect their children from harm and to provide an atmosphere conducive to sound growth and development.

It would seem reasonable to suppose that there exist for all families in the modern and resourceful communities of this state adequate opportunity for appropriate help with serious problems that interfere with effective family living and threaten the well being of children. In face of the great variety of social welfare resources that now exist and are generously supported through both tax and Community Chest funds why do some families fail miserably? Why are some children seriously neglected?

The information that was assembled and is presented here about these women and their families and the children was collected in an effort to throw some light on those questions. This material was collected from three sources. First, through individual interviews with 35 of the 56 mothers in the institution. They responded most thoughtfully to these three questions: Who in their community had been available to help them with the serious troubles as they developed in their family life? Why did they think that nothing helped? What kind of service in their own community did they think ought to be provided to help families meet problems before the situation became so serious? In many instances the mothers talked freely about the difficulties that led up to their final court appearance. They did so at considerable cost to themselves; it undoubtedly opened old wounds and brought into focus again harsh scenes that were not easy to remember. They did so generously on the basis that this information which they could share might be of use in the future to some other families in serious trouble. Time after time, as the mothers left the interviewing room, they said they hoped they had been able to be of help. The second source of information was the institutional record that gave an uncommonly complete picture of the family's background, the mother's difficulties, her adjustment in the institution. The third source of information was the case records of the State Board of Child Welfare on those families and children who had come to the care of the Board because of the conviction of the parent.

To be convicted and committed to a prison on a charge of child neglect is a most miserable experience. Most of the women who were interviewed expressed a sense of deep shame and unworthiness. A few shouldered the full

burden of blame. More located the cause of their failures on forces outside of their control. Most expressed considerable feeling of having been unjustly accused. They did not intend to endanger the health and welfare of their children. They tended to minimize the circumstances described by those who testified against them. Generally, they had great concern about the future. Over and over again they asked of themselves, whether it would be possible to "live this down", whether they could ever hope to re-establish meaningful relationships with their children. They expressed these fears in their own individual ways. One mother described her great relief at receiving a letter from the foster mother of her children. The foster mother paid compliment to the children saying that they were nice children, had good manners. The mother's comment was "the foster mother is sure a fine woman. She must not think too bad of me".

Despite the personal and family tragedy of a mother's imprisonment, it was evident that for many of these mothers it was a relief to be in Clinton. They felt that the institutional personnel were concerned about them. This was in contrast generally to their feeling that nobody had really cared in the community in which they lived. Some had desperately needed public assistance and it had not been available. Some had desperately needed a reasonably decent place to live and there was no adequate housing to be found. Some had gone to court time after time to bring charges of desertion and non-support against their husbands and they had not been able to secure anything like adequate support. Regardless of the fact that they were in many instances the instigators of their own miseries they were overwhelmed by the responsibility that faced them. Some were worn out by too frequent pregnancies and child-bearing, some were ill-equipped intellectually and emotionally to carry the tasks that faced them. When one listened to mother after mother describe the burdens of her life, the failure of her marriage, the isolated loneliness in which she often lived, it was not at all surprising to hear her say that a prison was a haven. These mothers described the thoughtful attention they had received at Clinton. Their physical ailments were treated, they received extensive dental care. The daily routines were orderly. The food was good. A number of mothers described touchingly the kitchen equipment at Clinton and commented that they had never owned a refrigerator, had never worked at a shining white sink. They had often cooked on hotplates instead of a modern electric stove. They were, with satisfaction, learning new skills in food preparation, in personal hygiene, in sewing and housekeeping.

This would seem to present a picture of community indifference to at least a small percent of its membership who are seriously distressed and greatly in need of consistent and sustaining support if their problems are not to go from bad to worse, and if they are not finally to be swamped by these recurring crises in their lives.

There are undoubtedly many complex factors that create this situation for a small but significant percent of families in any community. It will require searching inquiry to unravel clear cut cause and effect relationships. However, there are some common characteristics, common problems that seem of considerable significance. The following data outlines some of these common problems and characteristics.

The Size of the Family Group

One of the most outstanding characteristics of these families was their size. These are large family groups: the 56 mothers at Clinton had a total of 260 children. Ninety-four of the children were young infants and toddlers under six years of age; one hundred two of the children were between the ages of six and 12; sixty-four were 12 years of age and over. The average number of children per family was between 4 and 5. However, 25 of the families or nearly half had five or more children in the family groups; these large families accounted for 176 or 68% of the children.

The Broken Home

The family is the primary social group in our community. In this setting parents are expected to provide for their children's physical necessities, protect them, teach them and create an atmosphere of concern and affection. This is recognized as a big task for both parents even when they feel secure in their relationships with each other and confident of their capacities.

One of the outstanding characteristics of this group of families is the fact that most homes are broken homes. Both parents are not available to look after children. The whole job falls on one. The chance of poor functioning under such circumstances is greatly increased.

Of the 56 mothers, there were only 18 living together with the fathers of the children at the time of conviction. This is only one in three. These families had 82 children. The others were either deserted, separated or divorced parents, or parents who had never married. In many instances it seemed parents had never had a chance to establish themselves as a functioning family group. Frequently, the mother's first marriage dissolved within a relatively short period of time. Usually this occurred after months of extreme discord. Often, fathers had been poor providers, their work records indicating poor work habits. Often the mother's second marriage was equally unsuccessful and after that there were a series of casual encounters with men who obviously had little concern for the mothers and no sustained interest in the children which they produced.

Not only were these homes characteristically broken by dissolved marriages or deserting fathers, but it was common to find that all of the children born to the mother were not immediately members of the family group. Thirty-six of the 56 families had children who were not living at home at the time of the mother's conviction. Twenty-seven children from 14 different families were living in the home of relatives. In a number of instances, relatives had raised the children, the mother never having taken major responsibility for the child's care. Forty children from 15 other families were living in substitute care, either in foster homes or in institutions under the supervision of public or private agencies. In the remaining 7 of the 36 families children were in other living arrangements.

These facts further bear out the picture of the lack of family cohesiveness.

The Factor of Destitution

Economic insecurity is too fancy a title to describe the financial problems of this group. A great many of these mothers lived with the problem of destitution. There had not been sufficient income to depend on regularly in an amount sufficient to meet even minimal needs. They have not had money with which to buy the essential commodities of every day living ...Food for the traditional three meals a day...Clothing for warmth and appearance. A few incidentals such as soap, (lack of cleanliness is often quoted in the neglect complaint...Soap has to be purchased too.) The source of income is significant. Income from earnings, pensions or benefits carry a different sense of values and status than income received from public funds.

Only eight of these families (with 20 children) had earned income that was adequate to meet the basic needs of the family group. In five of these instances the father was head of the household and his income was adequate to meet the family needs. In the remaining instances the mother's earnings supported the household. In 19 families, with a total of 96 children, the earned income on which the family was wholly dependent was inadequate. Nineteen families (with 105 children) had no earned income and were dependent on public support. Sixteen families (with 78 children) were receiving Home Life Assistance at the time of the mother's conviction. In ten instances, the source of income was not known or the household was already broken.

Many of these mothers as they described their efforts to secure help from the public assistance agencies in the community said such things as this:

"I went to the welfare lady several times but she couldn't help. I got \$50.00 a week from my husband. There were seven children. I couldn't make out. I went to work and the neighbors looked after the children."

"We were evicted. I called the welfare board to ask them to give me the money for rent but they told me they couldn't help that way."

"My husband was in the veterans hospital. I got \$37.60 a month from the Government. There were four children at home. I applied for assistance but I didn't get it. I took a domestic job and left the children with a baby-sitter and she went away and left them alone."

"My husband was a good provider. When he worked, he earned \$125.00 a week, but he was often sick; he has a nervous stomach. We were given public assistance for two months. They said that was all. We owed rent at the housing project and they put us out. The welfare lady made the complaint. She said I didn't feed the children."

One mother after another talked about the desperate frightening experience of having no money. They also described the growing sense of helplessness and hopelessness that overtook them. One mother said "I was too discouraged. I went out and got drunk.", and one said "It got so I didn't care anymore."

As these mothers described their sense of increased desperation, it seemed evident they had as individuals been made to feel powerless. This affected the whole personality; perception became distorted, the ability to act was paralyzed. The feeling of being overpowered by forces beyond their control created great fear, but it also offered a dangerous outlet. Once having accepted the status of utter weakness, the tendency was to abdicate from adult responsibility. When this had happened, the mothers lost their capacities to be independent people, and turned to all kinds of false outlets. They drank too much. There is a high incidence of alcoholism in this group. They moved from one casual relationship to another. There is a high incidence of promiscuity in this group. They had lost all sense of direction in their lives until everyday living seemed to have become a nightmare. Such potentialities and capacities as they might have had were lost before they were finally convicted and sent to prison for neglect.

No Place to Live

Seriously inadequate housing is one of the social problems that influences the incidence of neglect. Close to 50% of the mothers who were interviewed at Clinton had been living in housing that could only be described as dangerous and not fit for human habitation. The sanitary facilities were not dependable, the plastering was falling down, rooms were poorly heated and dimly lighted. Many of the large family groups were crowded into small quarters, where sleeping space was inadequate and there was no opportunity for privacy.

Twenty-seven of the mothers with 165 children were living in quarters totally inadequate for the family group. Twenty of the mothers with 68 children had reasonably adequate homes or apartments. In nine instances, it was not known what the housing situation was or else the household had already been dissolved. The family group with six or more children experienced the most severe difficulty in finding a decent place to live.

One of the mothers graphically described the effect of the problem on her life and the lives of her husband and children. She began by explaining that the family group had lived for 14 years on the same street and had never had serious trouble. Four years ago, the house was sold and since that time they have moved from place to place and never had adequate quarters. For ten months prior to her conviction, the family had lived in a four room tenement flat on the third floor. The rent was \$115.00 a month. The bathroom was on the fourth floor and it was shared with other families. The kitchen was on the first floor; it also was used by other people. There was no place to store food. Groceries had to be bought for each meal. The mother explained that the Board of Health had taken her to court for overcrowded conditions because there were 11 people living in these small rooms. The court had ordered the mother to vacate and she could find no other place to go. Her comment was that nobody wanted to rent to her because there were ten children.

The father of this family is in a mental hospital. The doctor had talked to the mother about his illness and explained to her that it was in part due to his worry about not being able to look after his family. This explanation came as something of a shock to the mother. She said, "I thought that he didn't care any longer about us. He came home drunk and we fought; sometimes, he didn't come home at all." The official records

bear out this description of the deterioration of this family group. Apparently, as the strain grew more severe, the relationships within the family crumbled. The serious problems developed after the loss of the home where the family had lived in conformity with community standards for a long time. The mother said, "It was not all easy during those years and we didn't always have enough money, but we lived together decent-like".

Many mothers, when they spoke to the question of what kind of service would have been useful to them, said that if they had had help in finding an adequate place to live, the problems of the family would not have been so serious. Mother after mother described the feeling of discouragement and frustration that came from hours of house-hunting with no success. This experience seemed to indicate that nobody wanted them; they were outcasts with no sustaining connections.

The Experience of Being Apprehended and Convicted

Forty-five mothers in this group were in Clinton on the first commitment. Ten mothers were there as second offenders, some in this group had been returned to Clinton as failures on parole. One mother was there on a third offense.

However, for the majority of this group, this was not the first experience of coming before the court on violation of the Child Welfare Act. Seventy five percent of the mothers had been on probation following an earlier conviction. Despite the fact that this was not the first time charges of neglect had been made against them, they had a sense of shock at having been "sent away". Many expressed the feeling of deep resentment, a feeling that they had been discriminated against. Many were confused about the legal processes; (these are intricate processes--not easily understood by the uninitiated). They were apprehended by police officers, confined to jail because they were not able to post bond, and finally committed to prison. The legal machinery seemed like a monstrous force against which they were weak and ineffective. Many felt that they had little or no opportunity to speak for themselves. They had vague concept of their right to trial by jury and their rights to have counsel. None of these mothers had chosen trial by jury and few had counsel to represent them. The weight of the testimony against them seemed overpowering. These mothers were well aware that complaints had been made about them before. Few had any feeling that the investigators were at all in sympathy with their problems and burdens. They felt that they had been under observation without any sense that the observers were concerned about them. Therefore, they had been resentful and resistive and inactive participants in examining the personal and family problems that were causing such serious trouble. The act of investigation seemed to carry with it a sense of threat and harm and a feeling that somebody was trying to take their children away from them. Their energies were used to fight this unfriendly force. They denied accusations in a childish and unreasonable way in opposition to observable facts. Many mothers expressed resentment about the fact that investigators talked to other people more than they did to the mother herself.

One mother described her feelings this way: She resented the insistence on the part of the nurse and social worker that her children were not getting the care and attention they needed. There were nine children to be looked after and she pointed out that it was hard for her to arrange to get the children to the clinic regularly. She worked part-time to supplement the

inadequate earnings of her husband. She acknowledged that her house was not well kept and that the children did not go to school neat and clean, but she felt a lack of understanding of her problems on the part of those who made the charges. She told with bitterness of being picked up by a police officer at her place of employment and held in jail several weeks pending a hearing. It was some time before she had any news of what plans had been made for her children. She does not know who explained to them what happened to her. She had not seen or heard from them and in fact, she somewhat dreaded the thought of seeing them again. She does not know, she says, what they may think of her.

This mother did not seem to understand clearly, at all, what had happened to her. She was a frail looking young woman who suffered a number of physical ailments and was subject to epileptic seizures. She had three children under school age, the youngest was 3 months old. Her husband had deserted her and later was committed to prison for forgery and theft. The household tasks and the responsibility for caring for an infant and young children were obviously beyond her. The children were not properly looked after and the baby was in poor physical condition. The mother remembered that the worker in testifying against her said that she did not stay at home with the children. The neighbors also complained that the children were left alone and cried. This mother was held in jail three weeks pending hearing. The baby was taken to the hospital. The mother remembers the judge saying to her when he sentenced her, that he was sending her to Clinton for treatment. She protested that she did not want to go to prison for treatment.

The next mother was a young woman of limited ability who had four illegitimate children. Since the death of her own mother, she had lived in the household with a sister and brother-in-law and felt unwelcomed. She described the atmosphere as unpleasant. Other members of the household were quarrelsome and impatient with her children. Her oldest child was ill, had to be hospitalized, later died of tuberculosis. This mother deserted her children. She was gone for two weeks. She told the interviewer that she just walked out of the house because she couldn't stand it any longer and she didn't even know where she was going to go. The police picked her up on a charge of desertion and non-support. She was held in jail three months before the case came to hearing. Her children were moved temporarily to a hospital and later transferred to foster homes. Her conception of what occurred at the court hearing is not very clear. She recalls vividly, the judge sentencing her to three years. She said "I thought I would never see my children again". Since she has been in Clinton, she has heard from the foster mother and has received pictures of her children and this is a great comfort.

Another mother described her court experience this way: "My husband made the complaint against me. It hurt me most to hear him testify". There were five children in this family group, all of school age, all had done well in school. The mother spoke with pride of the accomplishments of her children. She described the family problem as one of increased difficulties between herself and her husband. He was a good provider and a steady worker, but had been less and less interested in her. Over the past three years, she herself had had periods of feeling greatly depressed. For the last two years, she had been drinking to excess. She commented that this gave her husband good cause to be disgusted with her, and he finally took his things and moved back to his own family. She had made considerable effort to deal with this problem, by seeing a private physician and going several times to the mental hygiene clinic, but she did not keep

her appointments regularly. She was well aware that her drinking affected the way she managed the household and was upsetting to her children. She felt a great sense of remorse about her actions. During her stay in Clint, in her opinion, she had gained a great deal. She was attending Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and was hopeful that she could now control her drinking. She expressed great concern about the effect of her imprisonment on the lives of her children, and commented, "I keep wondering if they will always feel ashamed of me".

How Neglect Was Described Before the Court

The evidence presented to the court in support of the neglect complaints against these women provides a clue to their feeling that they had been dealt with in a punitive fashion with lack of concern for them as individuals.

It must be kept in mind that these are criminal charges brought against the mother. She stands as an accused person before the court. Testimony must establish her guilt or her innocence. This procedure is in contrast to usual procedures within a juvenile court setting where the principle of protection and treatment for children is the major purpose.

The facts presented to the court regarding unprotected children living under conditions harmful to their physical well-being, damaging to their personalities, apparently lacking attention and affectionate concern that is considered the natural right of childhood, draw a reaction of outrage against the individual who allows this to happen. The important question raised by facts presented on the condition of neglect that existed for the children in these family groups is this: Why were conditions permitted to become so serious before action was taken both for the protection of children and concern for parents who were adversely affected by their failures?

The two most frequent failures on the part of the mothers that was described for the court were these: First, the mothers had failed to run the family household with any degree of orderliness. The regularities that establish and support most of our daily lives seemed to be missing. The usual habits within a family group of getting up at a given time, having regular meals, going to bed at a certain hour, were not common practices. Many of those who testified reported that children were living in conditions of filth. Rooms and furniture and children were vermin infested. Clothes had not been washed. The dishes had been left standing in the sink. Refuse was strewn about the house. This presents a picture of gross disorder. It surely was uncomfortable for those who lived in the midst of it. It suggests lack of pride; a lack of concern about one's self. Somehow, somewhere, these mothers had lost any motivation to keep a family home in such a way that it would be pleasant and comfortable for those who lived there. It is well to remember that very often the mother had neither the equipment nor the space to carry out the ordinary routines that are required to keep a large family going.

A number of the mothers who were interviewed commented on their feeling of embarrassment at hearing the description of their failures as homemakers. They tended to make more excuses for these failures than any other. They said such things as this, "It was no use to keep picking up after the children; the house never looked nice anyhow". The furniture was broken up--it didn't look clean even after it was scrubbed. They said,

in effect, they didn't have what it took to make their homes look attractive. It seemed that these complaints made in the criminal court appeared to them the most unreasonable and unfair.

The second most frequent content of the complaint concerns the mothers' failure to look after the children. Children were left alone. Some of the young children were greatly endangered by the lack of attention. Children went unbathed, inadequately clothed. They were not properly fed. A few children in this group had to be hospitalized. They were described as dehydrated, malnourished. A few had burns and scars from accidents that happened when they were left without adult supervision. Four did not survive these hardships. Sometimes the complaint had to do with the children not being sent to school on time or regularly or being sent so dirty and poorly clothed that they were an annoyance in the school room and shunned by their schoolmates. Some children wandered the streets without anybody questioning where they were or what they were doing.

The mothers described various reactions at hearing this testimony of their failure in child care. Some did not see their actions as having the damaging effect on children that it undoubtedly had.

The lack of awareness does not necessarily mean a total lack of concern. For some mothers at least it meant that their natural concern had been lost through the months or years of hardship, and discouragement. The absence of comfort, security, affection in her own life had been disabling and she had lost the capacity to see and meet the needs of her children. For some mothers this potential capacity for parenthood had probably been dwarfed during her own childhood years when she had lived under the same conditions that now existed for her own children. She was repeating the only pattern she had ever known.

Nineteen of the 56 mothers were accused of desertion of their children. Six of these were unmarried mothers who had never established a family home. They had been living a haphazard existence; moving from place to place; sometimes staying in crowded quarters with relatives who did not want them.

The other deserting mothers had either been deserted by their husbands or their husbands were in prison or mental hospitals. This group represents a picture of severe family breakdown and long accumulation of difficulty. Their choice of escape from responsibility had been far from a happy choice. Frequently they were alcoholic and promiscuous. Now their potentiality for rehabilitation is probably slim.

Only 11 mothers in the group were accused of abuse of children. These mothers' lives had been the most severely deprived. In every instance the mother had a history of either mental or emotional disturbance or alcoholism or both.

One mother who was accused of severely beating her six year old daughter was not rational at the hearing. She had been known in the community as a queer person. She went to school and created disturbances. She frequently wore several coats and two hats at the same time. These parents had a long history of marital discord. The father of the children had previously been accused of beating his wife. Eight children belonged to this family group and it had been a chaotic disturbed household over a long period of time.

In another family group in which there were five children both parents had criminal records. Both had been held in jail as far back as 1950 on a charge of neglect. The mother had had a previous commitment to Clinton. Both parents were drinking to excess. These parents were abusive to each other and to their children. This mother had been known as a behavior problem since age ten when she first ran away from her own home, because of the cruelty of her own father. These two brief case accounts represent a typical picture of family groups in which actual abuse of children occurs.

The Legal and Social Agencies Who Had Known These Families Prior to the Mothers' Conviction

Fifty-one of the 56 families had been known to either legal or social agencies prior to the current complaint. Many families had been known to a number of agencies over a period of years. The largest group representing 40% were known currently to the public assistance agencies in the community.

The families who came from urban communities where there were private family and children's agencies generally had been known by these agencies, some for relatively long periods of time, most had been known only periodically at times of particular crises in their lives. The services available to them, they had obviously not used constructively. The mothers made thoughtful comments on the question of why they had not found the community services helpful. Those who had been receiving public assistance described the frequency with which there was a change of worker. Often they did not have one worker long enough to get to know her. A number of the mothers described their workers as appearing busy and in a hurry and not having time to sit down and talk to them.

There were a few notable exceptions that ought to be mentioned. One mother told of the sustained interest on the part of her worker. She had been visited more frequently than usual. The worker had warned her that the children were not getting the care that they needed or the agency expected them to get when they were recipients of Home Life Assistance. The mother commented, "She was honest, she warned me and she tried to help me but I resented her giving me advice. Now I wish I had listened to her and I hope she won't hold this against me."

The mothers who had been known to private protective agencies frequently expressed the fear that their children would be taken away from them. They apparently had never gained confidence that the purpose was to help before court action was necessary. It seemed likely that these mothers were typically resistive and hostile and had never gotten beyond this attitude which defeats constructive work with the family.

The mothers who had been known to family agencies and mental hygiene clinics expressed the problem they felt in getting to the agency. Some of them lived at considerable distance from the office, funds for transportation were scarce and there was nobody to leave with the children. Obviously these are mothers who are not well organized. They do not seek and stay with a casework service long enough for it to be useful to them. They are easily discouraged, easily frightened away or can find many excuses for not making use of the programs.

feelings of inadequacy, hampered by bitter, disquieting thoughts. Since their own parents did not love them and look after them, are they then unworthy of being loved? Is there no real place for them under the sun? Even with the most skillful and sustained help, some children will not be able to eradicate these disturbing attitudes. They represent the group most endangered, most likely to repeat as adults the failures that their own parents experienced. This is undoubtedly one of the principal sources from which the kind of individual problems develop that eventually lead to neglect. As these children reach adulthood and are confronted with the task of providing care for their own children, they have less maturity than it takes to carry child rearing responsibilities successfully.

Fifteen mothers are working and supporting themselves. Few are contributing regularly to the support of their children. A few visit their children fairly regularly in foster homes and remember them at birthdays and other important holidays. A few are making realistic plans to re-establish the family home and take over responsibility for their children, but the longer the span of separation, the more difficult the adjustments will be both for parents and children.

Another group of parents are still immersed in serious personal problems. Five mothers and six fathers are currently in jail or prison. Four mothers and three fathers are in mental hospitals. Two sets of parents are living together out-of-state having moved to escape warrants issued for their arrests. The prognosis for this group is not encouraging. The likelihood that they can ever make a stable home for their children is slim.

Summary

The conclusions to be drawn from this data are disquieting. Even fewer children in this group are back in a reasonably adequate family home than was true of the children of mothers convicted and committed to Clinton in 1954 and 1955. One is bound to conclude that this is representative of what happens to parents and children following separation after a neglect conviction. It would appear that only one out of ten homes will be re-established with satisfying relationships restored. The other nine homes will be forever broken. Children will grow up in foster care.

Some will make satisfying stable connections in their foster homes and will reach adulthood with reasonable capacity to be self-supporting and to make meaningful relationships in adult life. For many it will not turn out that way. They will shift from foster home to foster home. Some will move on into correctional institutions and failing there, will be in and out of adult prisons. Their potentialities will have been wasted, they will lead unhappy lives. Their failures will be costly and dangerous to the community at large.

Both public and private child placing agencies have been aware for a long time of the dangers inherent in the placement of children from badly disturbed family homes. It is well known that despite concerted effort, some parents will drift away from contact both with the agency staff and their children before clear-cut decisions have been achieved on long range plans for the care of the children.

This is one of the reasons that prevention of family breakdowns is consistently stressed, although not always achieved.

The Care Program of the State Board of Child Welfare

In January, 1952, the New Jersey State Board of Child Welfare was empowered to administer a new program of child care under a new statute, Chapter 138 of the Laws of 1951.

Mr. Edwin F. Hann, Jr., Assistant Executive Director of the New Jersey State Board of Child Welfare, described the progressive and forward looking purpose and intent of the new law this way: "The law extends and makes services more flexible. It is founded on the belief that problems affecting children should be coped with as early and as quickly as possible before the unity of the home has been affected. Previously, no child could be accepted for supervision unless an independent authority had approved and released an order granting assistance or an order creating guardianship. In both of these situations the payment of money for maintenance of the child was part of initial authorization. After Chapter 138 became law, the children could come to the attention of the agency whose problems were evaluated in terms of service needed. Granting assistance and creating orders of guardianship, therefore, became methods of treatment, not requirements for intake. The agency also became available upon direct application from parents or from those appropriately concerned and responsible for the child. This is entitled the Care Program."*

In this way now legislation widely extended the resources and services of the state-wide public child welfare agency in the interest of providing needed services for the children of the state, hopefully at a point where it would have the most preventive, protective value.

This program has now been in operation for six years. Some 4,000 children have been served for longer or shorter periods of time since the initiation of the program. As the number of children served increased in the Care program, it declined in the Guardianship program. Fewer children came by order of the court which divested parents of rights and most responsibilities for the child. Probably more important than the volume of service is the different status maintained by parents and children who received help on the basis of a voluntary application. A basic change in philosophy concerning public child welfare service had taken place. This change in philosophy affected the whole agency, not just the staff who were assigned to the task of carrying out the new program. Obviously, this shift in attitude in the concept of the role parents could carry in decision making about their own children, even though the decision was for final separation from the child, did not develop overnight. In fact, it is still in the process of evolving. Many staff members have supervised children under the guardianship of the agency for a long time. The differences in degree of responsibility, in the ever present possibility of parents terminating a plan that seems good for the child or withdrawing from supervision of the agency before substantial changes have occurred, requires major re-adjustment including a re-examination of well-accepted principles. Nevertheless, positive new elements have been introduced that would not affect just one group of children, but would have its impact on all of the children that the agency served.

* First Year's Experience with a New Investment in Children - Child Welfare, Journal of the Child Welfare League of America, Inc., Dec. 1954

out of the group of 37 families who filed applications for service in the first quarter of 1957, few came to the agency at a point where family problems seemed readily soluble. Nevertheless, the parents came, voluntarily filed applications, and participated in discussing plans for the future of their children in a way that had usually not been possible in the past.

In 25 of the 37 families either mother or father or both made the direct application. A number were referred by the court after the court had received complaints of neglect. The court was in effect offering the parent opportunity to take responsibility to do something about the problem before an official charge was filed. Eleven mothers were being held in jail pending a neglect hearing. They were offered an opportunity to apply for foster care for their children pending the disposition of the charge of neglect. This may seem like a very unlikely place from which to be asked to share in plans for one's children. Its positive value is undoubtedly dependent very much on the attitude of the case worker and her conviction of its importance for the future both for the mother and the children.

Ten of the mothers were receiving Home Life Assistance at the point they made application for service. The records indicated that the Home Life Assistance worker was concerned about the kind of care the children were receiving, discussed the problems with the mother who in turn was able to take at least some steps in positive action toward improving the situation both for her children and herself.

Common Problems

These families had many problems and characteristics in common with the other three groups that have been discussed.

These are also large family groups. The average number of children per family is 4.8. Close to 50% of the families have five or more children in the family group.

These families are beset by serious economic problems. In only five family groups with 15 children did parents have earned income that was adequate to meet the family needs. In nine families with 61 children the earned income was the only source of support and it was inadequate. Fourteen families with 75 children had no earned income and were dependent on public funds for the major portion of their support.

These families also had serious housing problems. Only ten families with 33 children were living in either public housing projects or in reasonably adequate homes and apartments.

The incidence of family breakdown was equally high. Only seven families with 48 children were intact with both parents married and living together in the family home. In 22 families with 103 children, the mother only was in the home. Parents had been separated or divorced or fathers had deserted. Eight mothers were unmarried. Although the great majority of parents in these 37 families had not achieved a stable enduring relationship, the children belonging within the family group were less scattered than was true of the other three groups that have been examined. Only ten of the families had children living separate from a parent and brothers

and sisters at the time of the application. This suggests less breakdown in inter-family relationships, stronger ties, more potential strength and cohesiveness in the family group than was true of the others.

The problems that the parents brought to the agency as they initiated an application for service were serious, complicated problems charged with strong emotions. Many parents were suspicious, doubtful of the outcome of their contact with the agency. The difficulties that were disturbing effective family life and efficient care for children would challenge the resourcefulness of the most adequately equipped agency. Despite the manifold handicaps that stood in the way of successful problem-solving through the Care program, the spirit of individualized social service processes predominated rather than the purely legal judicial processes. The staff were not testing guilt or innocence, the legal status of the parent-child relationship was not in question. The emphasis was on planning for children. Very often the focus of the plan was toward placement for the child. Sometimes the emphasis moved in that direction too fast. However, many children needed at least temporary foster care. The discussion of such a plan did not carry with it the sense of finality that was often present in the reception of children under Guardianship. Frequently the records said the worker explained that the agency would provide foster care until parents had an opportunity to straighten things out at home. The worker would expect them to keep in touch with her so that children would not be in foster care any longer than necessary. This had in it the spirit of joint endeavor, of a continuing relationship in behalf of the children in the interest of restoring family groups whenever that was at all possible. Obviously, that goal was not always achieved; however, a good foundation had been laid that suggested more potentiality for the use of foster care as an enabling resource and not an end in itself.

These parents came to the agency as applicants burdened with similar personal problems and personal failures as was true in the other groups. Seventeen mothers were reported as either alcoholic or faced with serious problems of excessive drinking. Thirteen mothers had been reported as promiscuous and their irresponsible relationships with casual acquaintances interfered with their family duties and responsibilities. Seven mothers were limited, lacking the capacity to efficiently manage a household and carry responsibility for a number of children. Seven mothers had had periods of mental illness or severe emotional disturbance.

Many of these mothers were not doing well at managing their households. Homes were poorly run, not well kept; however, the degree of disorganization seemed in most instances somewhat less than had been true in the other groups. These mothers have also often failed to look after the needs of their children. Supervision was not consistent, children were sometimes left alone, sometimes they had not been sent to school regularly and were considered problems in the school group.

Many of the basic factors that had been described in the neglect complaint for the other groups of mothers who had been convicted were present in these family groups. However, the disorganization in personal and family lives seemed not to have gone as far. It is true that in some instances the differences were probably a matter of slight degree. If there had not been a social service program to which they could be referred, the matter would very likely have gone for immediate court review.

Frequently these families had been known to social service agencies prior to this current application. Some families had previously been known to the Care program. Service had been terminated without effective solution of the problem. However, these families had come back. Some of them freely out of their experience with the agency in the past and their knowledge that the program was available to help them.

Plans Developed for the Children

Following the acceptance of the application, 116 of the 181 children were placed in foster homes under the supervision of the State Board of Child Welfare. Thirty-two children remained in their own home and service was provided for parents and children within the family setting. Eligibility for Home Life Assistance was established for 18 children. The staff participated in planning for 21 children to live with relatives.

Many of the 116 children came from the kind of situation that would have led to commitment to guardianship in the past. For a few children the staff have petitioned for guardianship since acceptance under the Care program. This step was taken thoughtfully as a means of providing essential protection for the child against the irresponsible whim of parents unable to make sound decisions in relation to planning for their children.

The following is an example of the kind of circumstances that obtained and required the protection of guardianship. There were four children involved, all under school age. The mother is a young woman who was known to the State Board of Child Welfare since the age of five when she was committed as neglected. As a child this mother never did well in foster care. As an adolescent she was seriously delinquent and in 1949 was committed to the State Home for Girls. She returned there twice as a parole violator and was finally committed to Clinton. Two of her children are illegitimate, two are by her husband who is equally unstable and who has been in and out of prison since their marriage. The agency made every effort to help this mother establish a home for herself and her children. She was granted Home Life Assistance on two separate occasions, but was not able to manage a grant efficiently or to provide reasonably adequate care for her children. One child was born with a serious physical handicap and this created additional strain for the mother. She was not able to meet the extra demands that an ill child made upon her, she failed to keep clinic appointments, and became more and more distraught as the burdens increased.

She agreed to foster care placement reluctantly and changed her mind after a few months and insisted that the children be returned to her care. She had made no realistic provision for their return and was caught in an unproductive struggle against the agency. The decision to override the mother's wishes was not an easy decision to make. It was done in the interest of protecting young children and safeguarding them from experiencing the same kind of difficulty that had beset the mother's life. Adoption is being considered for two of the children; long time foster care will probably be required for the other two. There is little possibility of this mother's being able to take responsibility for rearing her children.

Several children from these family groups were accepted for placement because their presence in the family home was creating particular strain and their position in the family group was detrimental to them. One child was being cruelly treated by a stepfather. The mother was unable to deal with the situation effectively. The child was showing severe behavior disturbances.

Once she was removed from the home, the mother seemed to be able to provide better care for her other children and the child seemed to be relieved to be able to live apart from the family. Her mother visits her and takes considerable responsibility for helping her to make an adjustment in her foster home.

Two infants were accepted for placement out of a family of nine children. This was a Home Life Assistance family that had been known since 1949. The father is physically handicapped, the mother limited and overburdened with the care of too many children. After she was relieved of the extra burden of caring for infant twins, the family situation improved. The parents were able to provide reasonably adequate supervision for the other children.

The use of foster care in these instances has been constructive and useful in preserving and not jeopardizing the bonds between parents and children. Children who come to foster care following responsible planning and participation on the part of their own parents surely come with less fear and suspicion, with more capacity to make use of the service provided them.

The possibility of preserving some family groups and helping parents to provide more adequate care for their children within the family home is well exemplified by this case situation.

This is a family of six children. The oldest is 14 years, the youngest two.

The parents were married in 1943. The mother is a high school graduate and a capable person. She has had a long series of health problems and at the moment is greatly discouraged by a variety of problems that have upset the family over a period of time. The father of this family is somewhat ineffective. He is a mild, gentle person, ill-equipped to get along in a competitive labor market. He has never had high earning capacity. He tends to change jobs frequently, seems to be the first to be laid off when there is reduction in labor force.

The children of this family group are lively, energetic, often in mischief. Just prior to the application, the nine and ten year old boys were picked up by the police taking mail out of a mailbox. The chief probation officer referred the mother to the agency and requested that he receive a report back. This action was taken before any official record was filed against the boys.

The mother was very much upset by the boys' behavior and alarmed by the possibility that delinquent charges might be made against them. When she discussed the family group, there was indication of strong, affectionate ties between parents and children and considerable family solidarity. The housekeeping standards were poor as was the housing. The mother apologizes for the condition of the home and excuses it on the basis that she is not well.

The case worker visited this family regularly for the first two months following acceptance of the application for service to the children in their own home. Conditions improved steadily. The mother made better use of medical care than she had done before. She has held to a diet that reduced her weight and she feels better. During the following months, visits to the home were not as regular. When the worker came after a two months'

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s lapse between visits, standards in the home seemed to have slipped again and the mother was complaining and nagging the children. The worker is concerned about what is happening and suggests that she will plan for another appointment in a short time.

This is a good example of what is required if adequate service is to be provided. Contacts need to be planned, consistent, carried out with regularity; otherwise, gains will be lost, problems will multiply. Investment, however, in this kind of service is sound investment and, in the long run, far less costly than the consequences of complete family breakdown.

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m. There were no significant differences in the problems and characteristics between 112 families described earlier and the 57 families whose children came under supervision of the State Board of Child Welfare from July of 1953 to June of 1954 following conviction of their parents on neglect charges. There were a few noticeable differences in the 37 family groups known to the agency through application for service during the 1st quarter of 1957. The fact that fewer children within these groups were already separated from their parents suggests less severe family breakdown, more potential strength in the family ties. The degree of disordered living within the family household appeared somewhat less. In short, for this group the potentialities of parents being able to make good use of the help a case worker could give seemed distinctly better.

ae- One of the most common problems that upset the lives of neglected children was the problem of identity. They could not with profit follow the patterns laid down for them by their parents. Many homes were fatherless, therefore, the boys were without intimate everyday guides that helped them learn masculine ways. The girls had no experience to suggest what to expect of a husband and father that matches the usual normal expectation. Despite these deficiencies in their own family relationships, they did not with ease associate themselves with a new family group whose habits and values were different. Many children suffered the conflict of divided loyalties. While foster care is necessary and a most important resource for neglected f. children it is no panacea. It has hazards and hardships as well as protection and comfort.

er There is an ever present risk that once neglected children are separated from their parents, their ties will be dissolved, family homes will never be re-established. Once a home is broken, the chance of its being restored recedes, the longer parents and children live apart.

.- Parents divested of responsibilities for their children tend to be drifters. Their lives are unproductive, they are a burden to themselves and a costly group to the community. The Care program in contrast to the Guardianship program offers a wholly different base on which to carry relationships with parents, and affords much more opportunity for parents to participate actively in planning soundly on the care of their children. This does not mean that guardianship is not essential and protective for many children. It does mean that parents have full opportunity to share in decision-making before the status of the parent-child relationship is drastically changed by a transfer of legal guardianship.

ts Fewer families are spared separation than one might hope would be the case, but some are, and experience in this area brings new convictions about some still unrealized potentialities of the program.

IV. THE DISTRICT STAFF'S ANALYSIS OF NEGLECT PROBLEMS

In July of 1957, the District Offices of the State Board of Child Welfare were notified of the general plan of the survey and were issued a questionnaire that was designed to provide a picture of the resources available to help families whose care of children was considered seriously inadequate to secure their opinion on the effect of existing laws relating to neglect, and to indicate inadequacies in existing programs in quantity and coverage. The district supervisors were asked to discuss the questions with their staff so that major problems could be identified and an opportunity afforded for the staff to make recommendations on solutions.

In the midst of an already burdensome workload, the staff responded generously and thoughtfully to this additional assignment.

The State Board of Child Welfare has probably had longer, more concentrated experience, in providing care for badly neglected children than any agency in the country. They are very often shocked and distressed at the conditions in which children come to them for placement following a guardianship commitment. Day after day, the staff, under great pressure, were faced with staggering problems. They were attempting to make suitable plans for children whose lives were all tangled up, whose needs were desperate, often beyond the resources available to meet them. Their endurance, their consistent effort to do the very best they could under the circumstances, commands one's admiration as well as sympathy for the strain and discouragements that was common experience.

In nine of the 21 counties of New Jersey, the State Board of Child Welfare represents the major social service resource available to children who need foster home placement or service in their own homes. In some of these counties there are scattered special children's services such as adoption placement available through private agencies operating on a state-wide basis or on a regional basis.

In eight of the 21 counties, there were agencies that operated Protective Service programs. Eight private agencies held charters designating them as societies for the protection of children from cruelty and granting them the authority to enter a home to investigate conditions of neglect and to take corrective action as required. Three agencies under public auspices, one administered by a County Welfare Board, one by county officials and one by a Department of Education are operating similar programs. Some of these protective programs operate on a county-wide basis. Others are limited to specific areas or municipalities and do not cover the entire geographic area of the county.

Since there are many areas in the state that are not covered by specific protective service programs with clearly designated responsibility to accept complaints of neglect, there is considerable confusion about what agency or official is expected to take appropriate action in response to neglect reports.

Very often such complaints come directly to the District Offices of the State Board of Child Welfare. Frequently, the community expects this agency

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to carry a degree of responsibility in these situations that the current legal structure does not permit it to carry. Following the enactment of Chapter 138 which established the Care program under the administration of the State Board of Child Welfare, there was general expectation that the State Board would carry a more active, well-defined role in the field of neglect. In order to clarify misunderstandings on the legal limits imposed by this law, the State Board of Child Welfare issued a policy statement in October 1954 that defined the area of its responsibility in relation to the protection of children.

The following excerpts are briefed from that policy statement.

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It is generally agreed that social agencies should offer service to families at an early state in the family difficulties, that such service should be offered on a voluntary basis to as many families as can accept them. The concern before us here however is how to devise methods of providing service to families and children whose difficulties have progressed beyond the point where parents can or will accept voluntary service. It is for this group that the State Board of Child Welfare offers a statement of policy as provided by law and administrative procedure.

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1. A person interested in a situation where a parent is believed to be neglecting his child may apply at a District Office of the State Board. After hearing the situation described, if the staff believes agency service is needed, the interested person will be asked to sign a Care application. On the basis of that application, an attempt will be made to contact parents. If in the process of investigating and providing service, in such a case, the worker secures first-hand evidence of conditions that seriously endangered children, the staff will take responsibility to file a petition with the court of proper jurisdiction.
2. The State Board of Child Welfare may file a complaint against the Home Life Assistance parent if it had full and complete information about the situation that seemed dangerous to the well-being of children.

If the State Board of Child Welfare does not have first-hand evidence of neglect because a parent has not permitted contact, it is not in a position to file a complaint and it cannot continue service to a family unwilling to accept such service.

The State Board of Child Welfare cannot offer its service to any family referred anonymously. *

This does not provide an adequate legal or administrative framework within which to operate a protective program that has continuous responsibility for families in which serious neglect exists and who though greatly in need of service are not able or willing to retain contact with the agency sufficiently long to be of benefit to them or safeguarding for their children.

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* Services Related to Protective Service as Rendered by the New Jersey State Board of Child Welfare--October 27, 1954.

The provisions are quite adequate to serve many families with serious troublesome problems in child care. Once they know a resource exists and are met with sympathy and skill, they will gladly and willingly participate in the casework process.

There probably are other groups who will be less than willing to involve themselves with the agency. They will do so somewhat reluctantly. The lack of clarification on the basis on which their relationship with the worker will continue may well be a stumbling block both to their use of the program and the worker's effectiveness in dealing with them. There will be a third group who will not come willingly and who need the strength of an authoritative position that requires them to work on the problems disrupting their homes and endangering their children unless they wish the children to be removed from their care. Once such an authoritative position is clearly established, it can be used effectively to help people. It can provide the means of preserving some family homes for children. Since this group will represent the parents who are most disturbed, least able to take responsible action in their own behalf there will be failures, but the percentage of success certainly will justify its existence.

The district staff's comments upon the hope and aspiration for the Care program as well as its shortcomings in meeting some of the needs as they became more evident year after year are as follows:

One district supervisor covering a large rural area where there are few other social service resources commented that her staff had been reasonably successful in working with families after the application had been initiated by an outsider. Their goal has been a diplomatic approach to the situation with careful explanation of the agency program. Usually this has been acceptable to the family. However, the tendency is to carry the case for a relatively brief period. Parents frequently say that conditions are better and they are ready to go on on their own. Sometimes this is true, but often it is not true, and the same family comes to the attention of the agency again; the problems are more serious and the likelihood of children needing placement away from home has increased.

Another district supervisor makes the statement that the community generally looks to the State Board of Child Welfare to act in behalf of children. It is hard to explain the shades of difference between the cases where voluntary action is accepted and where it is refused. Because there are few other resources in the community the district staff sometimes act probably beyond the intention of the defined policy. This makes for a feeling of uncertainty on the part of the workers. The supervisor believes this is undoubtedly transmitted to families, resulting in cases not coming to a clear cut conclusion. Another district supervisor reports that the community looks to the State Board of Child Welfare to deal with most problems concerning children. The staff is constantly in the position of interpreting the limitations of the program. Without a clear cut request for service the staff cannot act despite the needs of the children in a precarious family situation. Since no other avenues of help to the family are open, problems grow worse, eventually come to the court and children are committed to the guardianship of the agency. Once that has happened the possibility of rehabilitation is lessened.

The District Staff's Concern About Court Procedures

11 The great majority of the district supervisors and their staff are dissatisfied with the current provision that requires criminal action against the parent before a child can be committed to the State Board of Child Welfare. The staff graphically describes the effect of this law on their own decision to bring a family to court on a neglect complaint. One supervisor says that there have been very few instances in her experience where parents were wilfully neglecting their children. As she knew the families there were many social and personal factors involved in the deterioration of the home and the absence of adequate care and protection for children. In many situations, the mother is known to be emotionally disturbed or too limited to carry the responsibility of managing a large family group. To file a neglect complaint in the criminal court under such circumstances seems completely unjust. At the same time, the supervisor is well aware that their reluctance to use the legal machinery provided means children are unprotected and do remain in damaging circumstances when removal from the home would certainly be to their best interest.

As one after the other of the district's staff described their reluctance to invoke criminal proceedings in order to secure protection for children, it seemed quite clear that they were not wishing to escape responsible fact presentation to the court. They were, however, frequently unable to assemble required information to convict a parent of criminal neglect. To clarify the staff's position in these matters it needs to be said that they were in no way minimizing the importance of legal proceedings to fully uphold the rights of parents and not interfere carelessly with parent-child relationships. What they were recommending was access to legal procedures that could be used constructively in behalf of the child needing protection without making allegation that the parent's action was intentional and wilful.

Following initiation of the Care program many courts of the state have referred parents to the agency who have come to the attention of the court on a neglect complaint. When parents sign application for service under such circumstances their action is often less than voluntary, but there is an element of choice imposed in such a situation. Usually the court has made clear to the family that either they work with the agency in the interest of providing better care for children or proceedings on the criminal charge of neglect will have to be carried out. For some of the staff this basis of their relationship with the client seems quite workable and they proceed with security. In other instances there is a sense of uncertainty. The staff are overanxious to assure themselves that the client is acting as a matter of free choice. Sometimes this is confusing to the parents. He is not sure of his ground and he does not make good use of the opportunity provided him.

The staff who expressed their desire for a more clear-cut definition of responsibility in this area of protection if it is one of the functions to be carried out by the State Board of Child Welfare is making a very important request. It is the worker's job day after day to select what it is she does, how she does it. She must answer the question, is she carrying out the policy of the agency appropriately? Since the basic policy must conform to the statutory authority, the worker is faced with determining what action is possible in relation to the attitude of the parent rather than the needs of the child. This requires sensitive decision making. A different pattern of action could well be required in dealing

with family situations that presented quite similar problems for the children within the family group. She wants to provide the sense of direction that helps parents make profitable use of available service, and is inclined to feel that failures are due to her own shortcomings when in many instances that is not the case. The basic authority that both she and the client needed did not exist.

Confusion in Divided and Undelegated Responsibility

One of the outstanding problems in securing proper care for neglected children reported by the majority of the district staff of the State Board of Child Welfare was the confusion which existed in many communities in the state about who was expected to take action in behalf of children.

Except for a few communities, where there is clearly delegated responsibility for receiving complaints of neglect and acting on them, neglect complaints may originate in a variety of social and legal agencies. The common outcome of such scattered ill-defined responsibility is described by the old maxim: Everybody's job is nobody's job.

In some communities, the usual pattern is for neglect complaints to go to the juvenile divisions of police departments. In some communities, police officers are assigned special duties to make investigations, to adjust the problem if possible and to take the case to court when required.

In other communities, the two agencies most active in the protective field are the municipal departments of public welfare and the probation departments of the court. Either one of the agencies makes investigation on complaints, sometimes provides emergency care for children, prepares and presents charges before the court.

In most communities where the law enforcement agencies take the initial and primary responsibility for accepting and processing neglect complaints they are usually also authorized to make emergency placements for children. Some communities provide a shelter home where any public official may place a child pending the court's review of the situation. The principal objective in such activity carried on by the agency is one of investigation of establishing evidence and bringing the charges under the legal procedures. Constructive planning to meet the social needs of the parents and children involved is necessarily a secondary consideration. The primary duty of these officers and public officials is not to administer programs for the placement of children or social services designed to help family groups meet serious problems.

Very often these agencies do seek service for the families and children involved through the social service resources of the community. Sometimes these services are not readily available. Agencies' definition of function and responsibility exclude some. A number of the public officials described considerable sense of frustration and wasted time and effort that tended to discourage the search for appropriate services for a needful family.

The staff of the State Board of Child Welfare frequently spoke of their concern about their inability to meet emergency situations. Eligibility for service must be established. Expenditure of funds for maintenance require involved processing on some occasions. It was their feeling that in some instances, the policies and administrative procedures did not operate in the best interest of the families and children who needed immediate service.

The district staff made the following recommendations for solution to some of these problems that occur in communities where there is confusion and no clear-cut delegation of responsibility for protective service:

1. Clear-cut allegation of responsibility whether it is to one agency or several agencies with specific definition of area covered or other special eligibility requirements.
2. Initiation of community planning activity in order to coordinate the various services in the community and establish clear procedure to assure effective service for each family group in need of service.

In response to the question of who should provide protective service, the district staff expressed the opinion that there ought to be one agency assigned responsibility for coordination of services to multiple problem families, however, they did not feel that one single agency ought to be designated by law to carry full responsibility for protective service. They felt that the variety and seriousness of problems occurring in families where neglect existed required the joint effort of a number of resources. They felt a sense of community responsibility was imperative if families were not to be shifted from place to place and eventually become lost in the complexity of social service programs. The district staff wanted to carry their full share of responsibility. At the same time they were well aware of the inadequacies that existed in their ability to administer the services now clearly delegated to them. They did not want to be assigned additional responsibility without the means of carrying it out effectively.

Financial Need and Neglect

In the neighborhood of 20,000 children in the State of New Jersey are currently dependent in whole or in part on Home Life Assistance for basic maintenance. One of the stated basic goals of this assistance program is to maintain and strengthen family life. The following policy statement from the manual of the State Board of Child Welfare expresses the general intent of the program:

"Services to children in Home Life Assistance are focused on the parents' role in the family. Generally families apply for assistance after a tragic experience created by such causes as a father's death, desertion, imprisonment, physical or mental handicap. The effectiveness of service in Home Life Assistance is dependent upon the parents' recognition and acceptance of his need and upon his knowledge of service available through this agency and through other community resources."

In order to accomplish the purpose of this program, one must assume that assistance is available in amounts sufficient to meet the basic cost of food, rent, clothing, household supplies and other incidentals. One must assume also that it is available when children are in need. Therefore, it is not restricted by numerous other technical eligibility factors that exclude some children even though they are without any visible means of support.

The manual also recognizes another important element in effectiveness of Home Life Assistance in strengthening and preserving family life. The following excerpts from the manual recognize the important quality of the interpersonal relationship between the case worker and the members of the family group. "Successful supervision depends on the case worker's

knowledge of the programs and policies and their application and on the soundness of the relationship between the worker and the family. To a great extent good supervision depends on the worker's interest, his ability to work with families objectively and yet with warmth and friendly concern for their problems and a degree of courtesy and consideration that they are shown. Problems brought to the worker during supervision will best be solved by joint planning, even if in some instances, the participation of the person is limited."

Despite the well established purpose of the Home Life Assistance program and the obvious benefits that accrue from it not only to the persons assisted but to the community at large, it seems to be constantly under attack. Devastating charges are leveled against it. It is said that fraud is encouraged, that immorality is condoned, that it creates attitudes of indifference and dependency so that the individual's normal incentive toward self-support is lost. At moments when these attacks are most severe the community exerts great pressure for the establishment of restrictive policies that in the long run contribute to defeat the major purpose of the program by sometimes excluding these children most in need, not only of money but of supportive services.

In New Jersey a child deprived of parental support because of the desertion of his father is eligible for assistance under some circumstances and not under others. If he is in need at the point of his father's desertion he is eligible for Home Life Assistance. He continues eligible so long as the whereabouts of his father is unknown. Once the father is located, apprehended and a support order placed against him, the child is no longer eligible even though his father is still absent from the home and the amount of the order is not sufficient by any reasonable standard to support him or the family members dependent on his single source of income. Such a policy serves to create for some families and some children a condition of destitution and the consequence of such a condition can be far more costly to the taxpayer than a grant of assistance supplementing the inadequate income derived from the father's order of support.

Similarly, a New Jersey child whose father has been imprisoned is eligible for assistance if in need during the full term of his father's imprisonment, however, the statute provided that he is not eligible beyond the month of his father's release, even though the release may come a few days before the end of the month and any income from the father's earnings could not be available for some weeks.

This is obviously a period of particular strain in a family's life. A man has an adjustment to make back in the community. A family group has an adjustment to make to the return of the father. If one adds to all these strains the additional concern of not having enough money to pay the rent and buy food for the family, it would be small wonder if further serious trouble did develop.

As the district staff discussed both the potentialities and the problems in the Home Life Assistance program insofar as they related to the incidence of neglect these two policies were most frequently mentioned as adversely affecting family adjustment.

It is generally recognized that the characteristics of the families now receiving Home Life Assistance are very different than they were 10 years ago. Many more people are covered by Old Age and Survivors Insurance

benefits. Fewer families are broken by the death of the father. Need is created in the majority of families because of separation, desertion or imprisonment of a father, or it is created because the mother of the child is unmarried and the natural father is not known or not available to provide support.

The primary reason why need exists is in itself an indication of multiple problems within the family group. These families are not only handicapped by a single simple condition that created dependency, they are struggling with manifold personal and social problems that cannot be discounted if the aim is to strengthen and preserve parent-child relationships. The wonder is not that a percentage of families break down under these burdens and children receive inadequate care, the wonder is that so many families do well in the face of heavy burdens, many hardships.

It has never been possible to clarify exactly how one carries responsibility for the protection of children in relation to public assistance. Nothing affronts a community more than to have a Home Life Assistance mother unmindful of the needs of her children and spend her money in foolish and inappropriate ways. A few such instances will lead people to say that most assistance families are like that. This is not only a false and dangerous premise, it stigmatizes and adversely affects many families who do exceptionally well, who care deeply about their children and who have no more intention of committing fraud than the average man has of robbing a bank.

The district staff expressed great concern about their responsibility in administering Home Life Assistance and about the lack of resources they had at hand to deal with the problem families in the Home Life Assistance caseloads. They described those problems with courage and forthrightness to the consultant. They felt the community had every right to be critical of some of the conditions that existed in some families. They earnestly desired to find a way to help these families more effectively. They were handicapped by a number of factors. The size of the Home Life Assistance caseload carried by any case worker in the agency makes it difficult to meet even the statutory requirements of quarterly visits. For problem family groups this is obviously not sufficient contact to provide service that would consistently help meet difficulties as they develop and before they became extremely serious.

Not only are the caseloads high, the turnover of staff has been high. Therefore, cases have been uncovered and new inexperienced workers have had to deal with serious situations that they were ill-equipped to handle.

Despite the agency's intentions that the Home Life program should be child-centered and meet the various needs of children, the principle and time consuming emphasis has had to be on maintaining eligibility. One district supervisor commented on this dilemma by observing, "This really does not provide the kind of development of relationship with a family that helps solve problems and prevent them."

One district supervisor was distressed by the fact that she found herself frequently being defensive about the Home Life Assistance program. It was her opinion that staff turnover was somewhat related to the frustration the case workers felt when they saw serious problems in the caseload and were unable to do anything really constructive about it. This district had been seriously understaffed for several months and the workers were constantly moving from one emergency to another which often had been created because there had been no continuity of service to the family.

One district made an effort to identify the problem families and establish a plan of more frequent visits, more consistent effort to help families straighten out some of the difficulties. Under this plan, some few families received a great deal of attention and then it was discovered that others had suffered because of lack of attention. They found that deadlines for quarterly reviews had passed for a percentage of their caseload and they were open to criticism because they had not fully met their primary obligation of re-establishing eligibility for public funds.

None of the choices open to the staff seemed to be happy choices. They were constantly having to make decisions on what was most important. This was often frustrating, tended to depress the morale of the staff and moved them toward a kind of routine dealing with situations that was not rewarding to them or of maximum usefulness to the families they wanted so very much to serve.

All of the district staff spoke with pride of the excellent potentiality that existed in this program. They felt that it offered an opportunity to identify problems early and deal with them before they became insoluble. They were quite willing to stand between the family and community criticism if there seemed to be potential strengths within a family group that could be nurtured and stimulated to operate more effectively.

A Home Life Assistance family is a family in which children are in financial need. Because of the circumstances creating that need, the family may be disturbed and upset with less than adequate capacity to function unaided in safeguarding the children's healthy development. In a percentage of Home Life Assistance families there is serious question about the adequacy of care provided. The district staff is greatly concerned about these families--whether the percentage seems small, as it does in some districts or larger in others--such as in the congested urban areas. It is the staff's opinion that truly preventive measures applied to this group would be most effective and often forestall costly family disintegration.

Summary

The District Office staff of the State Board of Child Welfare has broad and diversified responsibilities for the welfare of the children of the state. In the past ten years the number of functions they carry has been extended. They are faced constantly with most serious complicated, long standing problems concerning children. The number of families and children being served by the agency has increased steadily year by year. The allocation of staff has never been able to match the increased demands. The time that could possibly be allocated for staff training and development has not been sufficient, so that staff felt they were carrying a burdensome load. Not only did the size of the caseload seem unmanageable, the staff were concerned about their capacity to cope with the manifold problems that came to them.

In the course of their day by day work they see and plan for many neglected children. They know many precarious family situations. They see families constantly under great stress and they see some of these families finally disintegrate. It is part of their daily experience to receive and plan care for malnourished, sick, upset, frightened youngsters, in the face of a never quite adequate supply of foster homes and other resources available

for their placement. They are in somewhat the unenviable position of a physician whose patients are all seriously ill and he knows of no sure cure for their ailments.

It is small wonder if they retreat sometime toward mechanical, routine procedures. They have many tasks, over and beyond direct work with their needful clients. Budgets must be set up, records prepared, forms filled out, reports completed for countless deadlines.

It is to their very great credit that they identified clearly and sensitively the problems of people which they wished they might meet, more helpful through any one of the programs they administered.

The District Offices carry heavy responsibilities in an atmosphere that is often critical. They have many complicated relationships with other community agencies and individuals. They suffer from the fact that they are identified by some as in a state agency a little removed, not fully belonging to the communities they serve. The children they supervise are tagged as "state children" which suggests that somehow the community has ceased to count them among those who belong.

V. NEGLECT AND COMMUNITY AGENCIES

Neglect is not only a serious social problem, it is a violation of the law. It is therefore a legal matter in which judicial agencies have well-defined jurisdictions. Police, Municipal, County and Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts, Probation Departments, all have certain specific duties to discharge in a neglect situation.

The Municipal Departments of Public Welfare also have authority under the New Jersey law to make investigations and file complaints against parents, especially in instances where desertion or non-support may lead to the child's dependence on public funds for maintenance.

Under the existing laws of the state voluntary family and children's agencies who have as one of their stated objectives the care and protection of children are granted powers to inquire into neglect reports and to file complaints before the court when necessary. Exercising such powers is permissive, not mandatory, under the statutes so that voluntary agencies may choose and define the area in which they will function in the protective field.

Therefore, in each county in the State of New Jersey, even in each municipality, there may be a complex array of both public and private agencies involved in neglect cases. This very diversity can well be confusing, not only to the individual family concerned, but to the staff of the various agencies as well as to the communities at large.

Unless it is well understood, what agencies are designated to accept and act on reports of neglect of children, what agencies are empowered and prepared to provide appropriate service despite the family's initial unwillingness to apply for such service, what agencies have authority to present a petition charging neglect to the court and what responsibility is assumed when such complaint is filed, there will be much wasted time and effort before appropriate action is taken. In many communities such a situation is discouraging and frustrating both to public officials and to social service staff. It is also potentially a dangerous situation for children who are living under serious conditions, harmful to their health and welfare. Delay and inconclusive action in their behalf clearly does not afford children the concern and protection that they are due.

In the course of this survey, the administrative staff of the voluntary agencies carrying responsibility in this field, staff and members of the councils of social agencies and a representative number of probation officers and municipal public welfare administrators were consulted in an effort to develop a general state-wide picture of the resources available to provide protection to neglected children and an estimate of their adequacy in relation to the size and the complexity of the problem. Their opinion was sought on corrective measures that would seem most likely to contribute to solutions of major difficulties encountered in dealing with problems of neglect.

Among these groups, representative of a variety of interest in this problem and responsibility in relation to it, there was considerable common agreement on one important point. It was their opinion that the usual authoritative means of control that the community exercises over

families who fall below the expected minimum standards in child care, does not achieve the whole purpose that the community desires. Police action is often essential. Apprehension, conviction and imprisonment may be unavoidable in some circumstances. Before such drastic action is taken, everybody hoped that families could have opportunity to make use of professional casework services designed to help parents solve serious problems before a family group is dissolved. Most felt that the administration of such a program was an appropriate function of the social service agencies of the community. Such location of responsibility frees the judicial agencies to carry their distinct and different role in the protection of children.

Most of the public officials and the private agency staff members consulted expressed the same reluctance as the district staff of the State Board of Child Welfare described about the requirement to file a criminal complaint of neglect against disturbed, inadequate parents who were struggling to assume responsibilities beyond their capacity. They reported delaying such action, often unwisely, in the hope of finding a solution that presented less risks of serious damage to parent-child relationships. They wished for a legal structure that could be used in a corrective, enabling way to secure protection for children apart from legal action against an adult. They pointed out that currently the juvenile court has far more leeway in selecting and requiring social treatment for the delinquent child than is true for the neglected child.

Police officers, probation officers and public welfare administrators reported extensive efforts to secure appropriate treatment resources for the families and children that come to their attention. Their efforts were not always successful; the absence of needed services, or the unavailability for such services for a given family, discouraged their continued attempt to make referrals. In some instances this led to police departments or municipal departments of public welfare attempting to carry full responsibility for a solution. Parents were warned by the police, cautioned to correct the conditions detrimental to children. This rarely was a final solution. Not infrequently, the same family was reported again for similar disturbances.

Excerpts from a letter written by the Bureau of Assistance to a municipal welfare department graphically highlights this problem of postponing adequate inquiry and action on the part of agencies whose major responsibility is not child care or child protection.

This case came to the attention of the staff of the Bureau of Public Assistance on a routine review of certificates covering hospitalization. Hospital expense for a 4 year old child was assumed by the municipality over a period of $2\frac{1}{2}$ months during 1957. A review of the fiscal records indicated the same child at age 3 had been hospitalized for two months. The diagnosis at the time of both admissions was severe malnutrition and dehydration. At the second admission the child was in a coma when he came to the hospital and was immediately placed on the danger list.

Further search of the records indicated that the child's family was not receiving public assistance at the time of either admission. These facts suggest that "either the parents of the children were through ignorance or wilful inattention guilty of serious neglect in their care of the child or that parents even though competent, simply did not have sufficient income or resources to feed the child adequately."

The Bureau of Public Assistance suggested in its letter to the municipality that in either instance the situation was serious enough to require the concern of the office and referral of the matter to proper authority.

Such serious situations as this can lead to recrimination between agencies--misunderstandings develop, energies are wasted in justification and explanation. At the same time nobody in the community wants a child's life to be endangered either because parents did not have the means to feed him or did not take the trouble to see that he has adequate nourishment.

There are probably many complicated factors that lead to the development of such a situation. The pathway to simple straight forward corrective action is frequently not well marked. Therefore, it is always well to remember that neglect occurs in a family home where a family lives, whether in a crowded city tenement district or on a rural country road. It occurs in a municipality and in a county, within the boundaries of a state. Possibly there are too great a variety of organized ways to record concern about one's neighbor, distress about one's pupil or parishioner or patient. Most people in their various roles within the community uphold the important values and mores in family life. Sometimes misunderstanding is the chief source of lack of cooperation and coordination when unified action is the most essential. Fundamentally, the nurse, the teacher, the doctor, the social worker, the police officer are not at cross purposes. The teacher wants children to learn. She is charged with a great deal of responsibility. When children come to school ill-kempt, consumed with problems of lack of care in their own homes, she is distressed and sometimes affronted. She wants such conditions improved for the child as promptly as possible. The nurse wants the child to be a well child. She knows all the modern accumulation of knowledge that, if appropriately applied, keeps him well. She is understandably impatient when those responsible for him do not get him to the clinic and do not apply the measures that the doctor recommends.

Wise forward looking social engineering is one of the challenging requirements if more constructive planning is to be undertaken and accomplished to meet more effectively the many faceted problems of neglect. So long as there is fruitless debate on where responsibility lies, so long as the source of funds for the care and maintenance of the child is the major factor in determining who shall place the child and where he shall be placed, there will be major stumbling blocks to creating a sound program of child protection.

The voluntary family and children's agencies that carry responsibility for the protection of children and attempt to provide adequate opportunity for parents to have professional casework service to help them deal with personal problems and restore their family lives to more adequate functioning, describe a number of serious problems that stand in the way of their accomplishing their purpose in offering to the community the quality and quantity of service that is needed.

All of the private agencies report serious handicaps in securing and holding adequate staff to meet the demands of a well-developed protective program. With but one exception all of these agencies carry responsibility for other family and child welfare programs. Family counselling, child placement, adoption service, services to unmarried mothers, all make their own claims on the financial and staff resources of the agency. Most of

the administrators reported that the needs and demands of these services often overshadowed the needs of the protective service. It is often true that staff is reluctant to accept such an assignment. It is considered less rewarding, it is beset by many difficulties, its clients are frequently indifferent if not actually hostile to the efforts of the caseworker.

Some agencies are inclined to feel that other more preventive aspects of their program will be adversely affected if it becomes generally known that the agency acts authoritatively by filing neglect petitions and participates in the decision to remove children from their family homes.

One of the factors that seems to stand most formidably in the way of private agencies administering and developing protective service programs is the problem of financing such endeavors. It is reported that funds from Community Chest drives are not easily attained for this purpose. This program appears less inviting to the contributor than do many of the other social service functions. Tax funds from the municipal and county governments are sometimes appropriated to supplement private funds but these funds too are frequently inadequate, and not readily available.

It is said that the extent and seriousness of the problems occurring in these family groups where neglect exists requires constant and frequently long-term supervision. This adds to the cost of maintaining the service. Some of these families will not be able to function sufficiently adequately to justify children remaining in the home. Temporary and sometimes emergency placement of children is required. The cost of care and maintenance of the child away from his own home is too heavy a burden for the private agencies to meet for any length of time. Their budgets are not sufficient to cover such expenditures. The administrators report that on occasion there is considerable delay on the part of the State Board of Child Welfare in establishing the child's eligibility for public funds and care through its auspices. The very fact that such delays occur increased the feeling of reluctance on the part of private agencies to undertake responsibility for a family when a situation is precarious and the likelihood of children needing placement is ever present. In effect this means that some families are excluded from service when it might have been used to preserve a family home. No protective service can operate adequately if it has to stand in constant fear that the specific needs of the children within the family group cannot be provided unless the family itself can meet the cost.

In the face of these mounting problems a number of agency executives have discussed with their boards the advisability of discontinuing the agency service in the protective area. Some say that official action dissolving that part of their charters covering authority to act in the protection of children would have been taken if there had been any other provision in the community to meet this need. They would like to expand service in other directions where they feel their resources can be used more fruitfully. They are well aware that the multiple problems within these family groups challenge the very best of skill the caseworker has. At the same time they are dissatisfied with the way the job is currently being carried. Some feel that possibly discontinuing an inadequately supported and financed function might clarify the issues and promote better overall community coverage.

This attitude on the part of volunteer agencies is a matter of concern. The families who are not receiving the service they need or not receiving the continuity of service required are usually large families with serious long untreated difficulties. The very best of knowledge and skill possess in the field of social casework should be readily at their disposal. It would seem that the absence of service is far more costly than adequate financial commitment to maintain and encourage the development of appropriate programs specifically designated to serve this group.

One other irritating difficulty was frequently described by the private agency executives and is best presented by the following case situations. The problem has to do with the complicated machinery and administrative processes that are involved in securing for a family financial or other resources that are needed and cannot be supplied by any one agency.

This family group consist of a father and 4 young children. The mother died two years ago. Since then the father has struggled desperately to keep his children together and to make a home for them. His earning capacity and his ability to manage the family home effectively is limited because he is subject to epileptic seizures. He has tried a variety of housekeepers who have not been responsible. At the present time he has a young unmarried mother living in the home to look after the children during the day.

This family situation was referred to the volunteer agency by the municipal department of public welfare, who had supplied the family with funds during a period of unemployment. They had not found the father too cooperative, and had received several complaints of neglect. Because of the father's evasiveness and unwillingness or inability to clear the situation, they had come to the conclusion that public assistance could not continue indefinitely.

This situation was further complicated by the fact that the unmarried mother, employed as caretaker for the children, had no means of support beyond what the father could pay for her services. This whole arrangement was viewed with skepticism.

The volunteer agency accepted this referral somewhat reluctantly. It was faced with the task of helping to solve a bad situation at a time when the family group were without adequate funds and their eligibility for continued public support was questioned. It is obviously impossible to do anything constructive with people who do not have enough income to buy food and to pay the rent.

The case was finally accepted on the basis that the caseworker would attempt to evaluate with the father the kind of plan he was making for his children and help him accept placement for the children through the State Board of Child Welfare if he were unable to work out any better arrangements at home. The caseworker recognized the father's long and earnest effort to care for his own children, not to have them separated from him and each other following the loss of their mother. The father failed to keep two appointments, and created further difficulty for himself with the municipal department of public welfare by failing to report there.

Meantime the social worker discussed the situation with the school authorities. The children were known in school as coming from a deprived home. The nine year old boy, and the oldest of the four, clearly reflected the unhappy, upset situation. He was insecure, quick to fight. His school record was poor and the father reportedly punished him for school failures.

Finally the father called the caseworker, apologized for a broken appointment, and said that he had not received the letter mailed to him; one of the children had taken it out of the mailbox and had failed to give it to him. By this time his assistance check had been discontinued and he was in desperate straits. The children were still with him and he was depending on an inadequate plan for the care of the children through the day. The mother who had been living in the home was replaced by a young woman who came in to prepare meals, and look after the children during the day. The father pleads that he is trying to do the best he can. He has secured several odd jobs of short duration, but the wages are insufficient to meet the family needs. The father agreed to and kept an appointment at the agency office the following day. At that point, he described wearily his extended effort to keep things going. He showed the worker a card from the clinic indicating he was an epileptic. From the clinic he had been sent to another hospital for a chest X-ray and further blood tests.

The worker describes him this way. "He presented a picture of a man who felt beaten down and considerably pushed around. Despite this fact, he was determined to keep his children with him. He acknowledged some difficulty in keeping adequate housekeepers but he is not willing to see this as dangerous for his children as it would seem to appear." He was opposed to considering placement through the state agency saying "it is bad enough for a man to lose his wife, but to also be separated from his children is just too much."

The father consented to make re-application to the municipal department of public welfare and attempt to establish continued eligibility for assistance. He agreed also to regular visits on the part of the caseworker and felt that the young woman who was looking after his children would be also willing to cooperate.

Following this last interview, the private agency made a decision to continue service to the family to help the father function more adequately if possible and if not to come to a better understanding of the needs of his children which might have to be supplied away from their own home.

This situation involves a number of community agencies. Each one of them must allocate staff to service this family. Each must keep an official record. Each plays an important part in the continued life of the family. There would seem to be considerable duplication of effort here. The father is a simple man with certain obvious weaknesses in his ability to do what he most wants to do to maintain a family home for his children. In view of the long array of people with whom he must deal, the various offices where he must go, it would be little wonder if he became confused, discouraged and appeared hostile and evasive.

Some duplications are probably essential in an effort to meet the various needs of any one family. However, if confusion is not to swamp this man, he surely needs sustaining contact with a worker he can come to know and trust, who will help him make use of the community services he needs under whatever auspices they are administered.

It seems reasonable to predict that the outcome for this family might have been quite different if a protective agency had not been available and willing to be of help. Quite likely the problems would have grown worse. The father would further have alienated himself from the source of financial support and a neglect complaint might have been filed. Quite possibly the children would have been committed for foster care. The father's bitter opposition to such action could mean that his children would have come to foster care convinced that they had been deprived, therefore, resistive to efforts made in their behalf.

Several of the staff of the State Board of Child Welfare described incidents where it seemed to them that irreparable damage had been done because of too hasty court action. They had never been able to engage the parents' cooperation, never been able to overcome this feeling of having been unjustly treated, and unreasonably deprived of parental right. This adversely affected children and made for difficulties in their adjustment in foster homes.

Availability of financial resources for families in need is a most important aspect in the prevention of family breakdown. At the point when families are in a period of financial crisis, they tend to panic and be impatient about technical eligibility requirements. They know only that they have insufficient money to live independent of public support. Most clients dislike being dependent people. Most will find their way again toward independence or into responsible use of assistance provided that their dealings with the staff are marked by courtesy and regard for them as individuals, and if every effort is made to help them understand the policies of the agency and their rights as well as their obligations. Soundly administered assistance programs contribute much to the protection of children from neglect.

There is one other official agency whose role in this field has not been discussed.

The major responsibility of the 21 County Welfare Boards in the state is the administration of Old Age Assistance, Aid to the Blind and Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled. The County Welfare Boards also share administrative responsibility with the State Board of Child Welfare for the operation of the Home Life Assistance program. Therefore, they too are concerned with children. Children may be in any one of the households with recipients of the various categories. Since the County Welfare Board is a county-wide agency identified as a source of help with social and personal problems situations of neglect are often referred to them. The degree of responsibility they take depends in part on the other resources available in the community to deal with this problem.

Three County Welfare Boards have a Child Welfare Worker as a member of their staff. These workers are paid in part through Federal Child Welfare Funds. The State Board of Child Welfare provides consultation and guidance in standards of good child welfare practice, but the workers are administratively responsible to the directors of the County Welfare Board. This requires a high degree of cooperative effort between two administrative agencies to maintain effective service. These workers are located in predominately rural areas where there are few if any volunteer child welfare resources within the community. One of the positive factors in having a child welfare worker attached to a County Welfare Board staff is

the fact that she is identified in the community as belonging to the county. The community generally looks to her to solve children's problems. This sense of belonging is an important factor. It is less easily achieved by a state-wide agency with District Offices that in some instances serve two or three counties. Rural communities generally have a tendency to be suspicious of state agencies and they may well be used to put problems outside of their jurisdictions rather than deal with them forthrightly as a part of their own community life.

The three Child Welfare workers report that in each county there are a few families that seriously neglect their children. Often these families have been known as public charges for many years. Crises of one kind or another re-occur in these same groups. There is a general tendency to be impatient with these family groups and they are labeled as failures and troublemakers. The children in these groups are sometimes not welcome in the district schools. They are stigmatized by their ties of kinship and never really have an opportunity to be valued for their own assets or criticized for their own individual shortcomings.

The administrative and supervisory staff in the rural areas feel that a protective service needs to be community-centered so that there would be adequate stimulation to tackle the problems as they exist and take responsibility for conditions that contribute to them.

Unique in the state-wide resources available for the protection of children is the special protective service program administered by a County Welfare Board. This is a county-wide program supported and financed by the Freeholders of the County. The County Welfare Board in conjunction with this service also provides shelter-care for children who need emergency or temporary placement away from their own homes. All neglect reports are referred to this unit; it is used by other official agencies such as police and probation department. It takes responsibility for filing complaints of neglect when the situation warrants such action. It makes every effort to work with families constructively before court action is taken. This county is spared the confusion that occurs in many other areas of the state because of the lack of a clearly designated agency that serves the community on a county-wide basis. It too suffers from staff problems and sometimes the volume exceeds the resources available to meet the needs adequately.

Summary

As yet a comprehensive community pattern has not generally been established to reach and serve effectively these hard to reach multi-problem family groups in which neglect endangers children.

The diversity and seriousness of the problems to be met obviously submit to no easy solutions. There is not a simple way to resolve the current difficulties and duplicity of effort. It will require community-wide planning, concerted effort toward cooperative endeavors if these families are to have the opportunity they need for rehabilitation that will preserve family groups, maintain parent-child relationships wherever possible.

There are many excellent resources available in the counties, the cities and towns of the state. Some, especially rural areas, have less service available than others, and less than is needed. Nevertheless, there is

a potential framework for the development of the services necessary for families and children who run into one serious problem after another.

The interest shown in the examination of the problems of neglect as it affected the individuals and the community and the generally expressed concern for troubled adults and children on the part of the staff of public and private agencies, both social and legal, suggests strong incentive to find new strategic ways to meet this puzzling problem.

VI. SUMMARY AND GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The data assembled and presented in the preceding sections of this report was accumulated in an effort to answer in general these four questions:

1. What are some of the characteristics of the social problem of neglect of children as it exists in the communities of New Jersey?
2. What are the legal and social provisions currently in use throughout the state which represent community-wide effort to meet the problem and to provide protection for children?
3. Are these current provisions reasonably adequate to cope with the problem? Are needed services available state-wide? Is the quantity of service available to meet the volume of need? Does the legal structure provide a sound base for the operation of social service programs that are designed to help problem families and neglected children?
4. Are there gaps and inadequacies in the current social and legal resources that would need to be dealt with if the children of the state are to receive adequate protection and their family homes preserved for them whenever possible?

Over the past few years, there has been considerable state-wide interest in this problem. Many facets of the problem have been discussed, reviewed, and carefully examined by various groups responsible for social planning. The special committees of the New Jersey Welfare Council have contributed much to the definition of the problem and suggestion of means of coping with it. Some communities through the efforts of the Councils of Social Agencies have examined the problem as it exists locally. Their findings and their procedures for better coverage, more adequate service to needful families have not only been of importance locally, but have provided valuable experience of general interest. The efforts of these groups, both state and local, have contributed very much to this current survey.

It is not possible to report precisely on the extent of the problem of neglect as it exists in the various communities of the state. There is no overall uniform statistical reporting on the number of neglected children or the number of parents coming before the court on neglect complaints. By contrast the statistical reporting on delinquency is exceptionally accurate. Despite the absence of precise counting, there is every indication that no community is free of the problem. In each county, probably in each municipality, there are a few families whose standards of child care fall below the expected minimum. The number of families is possibly not as significant as the size of the family groups and the serious extent of the problems and maladjustments that have developed and adversely affect each individual within the group.

The data from the social case records of the State Board of Child Welfare, New Jersey Reformatory for Women and the Parole Bureau gives every indication that neglect has far reaching consequences, that it well may affect generation after generation of children. There is no indication that this comes about primarily from inherited weaknesses. It comes about through the experience of the individual during his formative years and his adult years. This material supports the findings in other related professions. Behavior is learned in daily living. How a person acts and

thinks and feels grows out of his experience in a family group, in a community as a participating citizen of a state and a nation.

All the families covered in this report were distressed families. The parents were sad, unhappy people, but not primarily because they had been accused and found guilty of violation of a law. They were sad and lonely people because they had not been able to find satisfaction within the medium of the family group. They had not been able to create for themselves secure, enduring, inter-personal relationships with each other and with their children. The disaster of a broken home falls as heavily on the shoulder of parents as it does on children. They too become dislocated people drifting from place to place and job to job. Their lives become rootless without purpose or direction. The causes of such tragedies in human lives are obviously many and complex. However, there seemed to be some identifiable common burdens that the community must share with the individual if individual family groups are to be protected and not subject to intolerable strains.

There are two social problems that stand out significantly. One is the problem of destitution. Many of these families were without sufficient funds for basic maintenance, for food, clothes, shelter, household supplies. Out of the total group only a slim 8% had earned income sufficient to meet reasonable family budgets. This is not to say that poverty is a direct cause of neglect. One could undoubtedly identify other families facing the same hardship who nevertheless manage to look after their children ably. It must be said, however, that this problem of poverty co-exists with neglect and affects both the physical, emotional and spiritual development of the individual. Any community that does not provide basic maintenance through well administered assistance programs for families who are in need runs the risk of increasing the incidence of neglect.

Grossly inadequate housing was a serious problem to more than 60% of these families. This factor was particularly pertinent to the large family groups. A community that cannot provide decent housing and does not exercise adequate control to protect families from exploitation and from living in dangerous situations certainly runs the risk of increasing the neglect problem.

Generally speaking, these families are multiple problem families. Their failures and maladjustments have developed over the years. The multiplicity of problems means that they have been known to a great variety of agencies, both social and legal. Characteristically, they have been served at periods of crisis. Rarely was a family continuously in touch with an agency that attempted to examine the total family situation with a family oriented approach. It was much more common for a given agency to be primarily interested in one member of the family. For some families, this meant that they were dealing with as many as four or five different agencies at the same time. Yet, it is well known that an individual's problem affects all members of the family group, both because he does not carry his role within the family successfully and because his difficulties are usually the result of faulty interfamily relationships. A piecemeal approach to any of these problems can be confusing and less than effective in assisting the family group to a more healthy, satisfying existence.

1- The neglected child removed from his own home and committed to the guardianship of others is a child in danger. He is in danger of losing all meaningful connections with his own parents and relatives. He is in danger of not being able to establish new connections that are stable and meaningful. New problems are created for him by the very fact that his own parents were considered unfit to rear him. These are not minor problems. The case records reviewed in the course of the survey indicated the difficulties many children met, even in the best of foster homes.

d Of the children received each year by the State Board of Child Welfare, 28% come under supervision following the conviction of parents on charges of neglect. The average age of the child who is accepted for supervision is seven years. The average length of supervision under the Guardianship program is nine years and ten months. The typical child is a small boy (or girl) who has lived a number of years in a disorganized household with less than the attention he needed from his parents. Frequently, he comes to foster care in poor physical condition and in a state of emotional upset. He stays a long time. The State Board of Child Welfare and its staff are greatly concerned about him and earnestly hoped to provide him a foster home setting conducive to his sound development. It is not always possible to do that, neither is he always able to make use of what is provided. It will require consistent, time-consuming, skillful attention, if this child is to solve the problems that he brought with him and that he will face as he lives apart from his own people. The risks are great, therefore, it would seem a matter of urgent importance to find every possible way to avoid the necessity of asking children to make adjustments to such major losses. It would seem appropriate to invest time, money and energy in saving family groups, in keeping parents and children together when that seemed reasonably possible.

se Voluntary family and children's agencies, Child Welfare Services, mental hygiene clinics, public assistance, each of these make a unique and important contribution to the well-being of children. These agencies form the first line of defense against disaster. It is, however, for the families who do not and cannot use such programs voluntarily that a second line of defense is imperative. This is the group for whom a specialized protective service program with an element of an authoritative position is essential. It is this second line of defense that does not appear to be sufficiently strong throughout the New Jersey communities to protect children and to help families maintain continuous contact with the case worker long enough to tackle the problems that disrupt the family and disturb the personal lives of the individuals within the family group.

10 The fact that the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court has limited jurisdiction in relation to a neglected child and cannot generally declare him a child in need of care and protection apart from the processes that accuse and convict his parents is a drawback to the positive use of the authority of the court in situations that demand both legal and social action.

in There are limitations both legal and administrative in the ability of the Care program of the State Board of Child Welfare to meet the needs of this particular group of families. Unless parents act voluntarily in behalf of their children the guardianship provisions of the law must be

applied. Once parents have been divested through a transfer of guardianship of most of their responsibility to their children and left only with the duty of support, the possibility of restoring family groups, of maintaining parent-child relationships, is considerably lessened.

Those private agencies that have authority under their charters to operate in the interest of protection of children cover only a relatively small portion of the state and are handicapped by lack of staff and lack of financial resources to carry on the sustained job of providing service while children are still in their own homes. A great part of their effort has to be expended in the initial investigation of complaints and in the preparation of evidence to present to the court on the family groups whose failures are extreme enough to endanger children.

Probation departments and public welfare departments commonly are dealing with the family situations in which there is severe breakdown. They are not staffed to provide the kind of service that is required and generally speaking the major functions these departments are expected to carry are in other directions.

Following conviction and imprisonment, there is no central focus of responsibility designated to evaluate the potential capacity of parents to resume their parental duties and to help parents through the crucial period of re-establishing connections with their children following a long period of separation. Parole service is available to help the parent make a satisfactory adjustment in the community. In some instances the Bureau of Parole is legally limited in the time that it can retain contact with either parent. If for instance a parent has served his full sentence he is not subject to continued supervision by a parole officer. The parole period may well end at a point where parents still need sustained support if the reunited family group is to continue functioning adequately.

The confusion created by the absence of clear cut delegation of duty in relation to problems of neglect results very often in delayed, ineffective and inconclusive action. Valuable staff time is dissipated in an effort to take appropriate action or locate necessary resources. Families are confused by the complexity of the social machinery in which they are involved. Often this provides a means of justification for continued irresponsible action. Parents do not have an opportunity for the kind of help that assists them in identifying their present dilemma with their own destructive ways of meeting the responsibilities and problems before them. Therefore, the efforts made in their behalf are often less than problem-solving. No reliable change has taken place in their ability to manage family affairs. Frequently, they turn up months or years later in a situation that has gone from bad to worse.

Remedies for the weaknesses in the second line of defense can only be found through concerted coordinated efforts on the part of all agencies and staff that carry responsibility for the welfare and protection of children. No single pattern of action would be appropriate in all areas of the state. There are, however, general principles and requirements that are suggested out of the information assembled in the course of the survey.

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VII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING THE SECOND LINE OF
DEFENSE FOR THE PROTECTION OF NEGLECTED CHILDREN

There has been a steady rise in the juvenile delinquency rates in New Jersey over the past decade as there has been in the whole country. This fact has been of great concern to many groups and individuals within the state. Extensive expenditures have been made to understand and control this serious problem. An impressive volume of data has been accumulated about these young people whose destructive and anti-social actions are an ever present danger to the community.

Most of these delinquent youths come from deprived backgrounds without, as Dr. Studt of Rutgers reports "A home base which satisfied the need to belong". *

Most delinquent children have first been neglected children. Whatever protects and effectively helps the neglected child will make a distinct contribution to the control of juvenile delinquency.

The major premise on which these recommendations rest is this - many neglectful parents are people with potentialities and capacity for parenthood which if fostered and encouraged can respond to the needs of children. Parents who have seriously failed in their child caring responsibilities can be helped to manage family homes better and care for their children more efficiently and with greater satisfaction.

A social service program designed for the protection of children needs to be focused primarily on the task of preserving family homes. This means that those parents who are unable or unwilling to avail themselves of voluntary services are afforded an opportunity for appropriate service before court action removes children from their custody.

The following general provisions are essential to support an adequate protective service designed with these purposes in mind:

- I. AN ENABLING STATUTE - The effectiveness of a protective service is dependent upon a sound legal framework. The law must provide the basic definition of neglect, locate jurisdiction and fix the powers of the court to carry out the public policy expressed in the statute. Most state laws delegate jurisdiction of neglected children to the Juvenile Court where matters of custody and treatment can be considered in the best interest of each individual child. Appropriate action on the part of the Juvenile Court should not be dependent on the conviction of parents of willful intentional failure to provide adequately for children. Separate criminal proceedings are usually established to assure appropriate legal action against those parents who do with willful intent disregard the welfare of their children. However, such action ought not to be required either to remove custody of children from parents or to impose an order on parents that expects them to maintain a relationship with a supervising agency for a designated period of time.

Once proceedings are available for prompt action in situations that are harmful to children, it reduces the need for apprehension and

* "The Nature of Hard-To-Reach Groups" Elliot Studt, DSW, "Children" November-December 1957, Volume 4, No. 6.

detention of parents and summary action removing a child from his own home. This is now a common practice in juvenile courts hearing delinquency cases. A summons is issued to parents of delinquent children to assure their presence in court. This would seem an equally workable procedure to assure that parents of neglected children appear at the appropriate time. If such legal procedures were available, many of the difficult problems created by following criminal processes in an effort to protect children would be eliminated.

- II. DELEGATION OF OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY - It is generally accepted that the state both inherently and through established laws has a duty to assure proper care and protection for the children of the state who may be dependent, neglected, or in danger of becoming delinquent. This responsibility is generally defined in the public welfare laws of the state which delegates to one or several state agencies responsibility to administer certain child welfare programs. The law also usually assigns responsibility to a state agency for the development of standards to assure that equitable and adequate service be provided by both public and private child welfare agencies. Standard setting usually also includes the duty to encourage the development of necessary resources for the protection of children on a state-wide basis.

Unless such responsibility is clearly fixed and assigned and appropriations allocated to carry out the program, there will be gaps and inadequacies which will be wasteful both of tax funds and of human lives and potentialities.

- III. COMMUNITY CENTERED CONCERN - A state agency cannot by itself assure adequate coverage and be the sole administrator of a protective service program. The data accumulated in the course of this study indicated multiple needs on the part of the families in which neglect existed. No single agency could meet this variety of need. Neglect is a community problem. It requires a high sense of community concern and responsibility. Both public and voluntary agencies have an important contribution to make. It is possible for a protective service program to be administered under either auspices with good results. The problems present a challenge to all social service organizations including community planning groups, such as the councils of social agencies. Coordination of services and cooperation between various agencies is essential if the quantity and quality of service sufficient to meet the need is to be developed.

- IV. ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A QUALIFIED PROTECTIVE SERVICE - These characteristics of a protective service need to be taken into account to assure good standards of practice:
1. A protective service will be prepared to accept and act on all reports of neglect situations within the jurisdiction served by the agency, whether they come from the police, the Department of Education, another agency, or a responsible citizen of the community. The Protective Service staff must hold itself accountable for the proper screening of reports and for appropriate action on these reports. A protective agency is obligated, just as the court is obligated, to uphold parental rights and to avoid intrusion on family privacy without good cause. There is an obligation to explain to people the basis of the concern, the reason responsibility is assumed for initiating contact with a family without their request. It must be clear by what authority

a family is required to work with a protective service unless they choose court review or removal of the children from their custody, whichever the case may be.

2. The policies under which the program operates need to be clearly defined. The policy statement should specify who is to be served and under what circumstances. It needs to outline in general terms how the agency works and what changes are required in the way parents are meeting their responsibilities for children. Clear policy provides the case work staff the opportunity to carry out their relationship with the family effectively. These are difficult relationships to initiate and to maintain. A firm base is an important element to success.
3. To function adequately a protective service requires sufficient staff to provide regular, continuous contact with its clients until such time as the family situation has improved sufficiently to safeguard children or a decision is reached that children cannot remain at home. The size of the case load must be established to enable the worker to give each family the opportunity it needs if it is to make the best use of the service. If contacts are regular and well planned, some family groups will be able to restore themselves to adequate functioning within a reasonably short period of time.

The total number of families served in any given year by an individual case worker will not be reflected in an average monthly case load figure. Adequate service will mean termination of some cases as others are received for service. The size of the case load depends on a number of factors such as the amount of travel time necessary to make visits in a family home. Parents in these family groups cannot be expected to hold to office appointments in the same way that clients using other social services are expected to do.

Generally speaking, provision should be made for more frequent contacts when the service is initiated. Less frequent contacts may be required as the family begins to be able to carry more responsibility on its own. A general guide to the size of case load is suggested. Experience elsewhere indicates that the best results are achieved when a worker is not asked to carry more than 35 to 40 families at a time. Some experienced workers who are well acquainted with the program and skillful in their ability to handle this kind of problem can carry more families effectively than the beginning worker who has much to learn.

4. A sound protective service requires adequate staff supervision which recognizes the kind of demands that this kind of program makes upon the workers. Regular individual supervisory conferences are necessary. Group discussions and in-service training programs are an essential part of staff development activities. This provides the best opportunity for workers to learn from day-to-day experience and to profit by the experience of their colleagues.
5. An effective protective service requires financial support with sufficient allocation of funds to meet the budgeted needs. This includes professional staff, clerical staff, supplies and equipment.

6. When a protective service is established as a part of a larger program, the board and the administrative staff of the agency will need to make a particular effort to assure that the needs of the program are not overshadowed by other areas of service. If the same case worker is expected to meet the demands of children living away from their own homes and also do a prompt and efficient job of providing financial assistance to families in need she has a heavy load. When a worker's case load requires her to carry a variety of services, she may easily be subject to pressures which means that the supervision of neglected children in their own homes receives less than the necessary allocation of her time.
7. The protective agencies need access to appropriate resources for the placement of children. These are explosive family situations. Some families will go to pieces before effective work can be accomplished. Time and effort will be wasted if provision for the care of the child away from his own home is not available when the child needs it. Neglected children very often require emergency placement. Adequate resources for such placement are essential, and should be administered by child placement agencies.
8. Protective services need to be available to a family at a point where the situation is first known to be detrimental to children. Early identification and action on such problems is the best safeguard against complete breakdown of the family home; however, families ought to have an equal opportunity to make use of the program following a court hearing that establishes the fact that children are neglected. Parents who have been committed to prison on a neglect conviction ought also to have an opportunity to make use of the protective service program when they are ready for release and want to re-establish a family home and resume parental responsibilities.
9. Protective services should maintain an effective statistical reporting system. Some collection of uniform reports on a state-wide basis would be of substantial assistance in analyzing problems, identifying special characteristics and special needs of this group. This kind of information provides a reliable base for adequate community-wide planning from year to year.
10. A protective service program operates in the midst of many other social services. It needs to fit into the overall community pattern. In order to avoid duplication and overlapping of service, cooperative effort is essential. Community planning bodies, such as councils of social agencies, can be of substantial help in developing the kind of community wide understanding of the purpose and goals of this program so that it may have the continuous moral and financial support it needs. When several social agencies within the boundary of one county administer a protective service specific geographical areas covered need to be clearly defined. If there are other social or personal factors which must be taken into account such as religious affiliations,

these, too, need to be defined so that families may be referred to the proper agency and not be shifted from place to place. These families need to feel strongly that they are accepted and acceptable clients and that this service is there for their use.

These are exacting demands that have been recommended. In some measure they represent goals and will require a period of sustained effort to reach them. Even under the best of circumstances all of the families served by an efficient protective program, will not succeed. Many families, however, will find it possible to use such a service to their own satisfaction and to establish greatly improved care for their children. Even limited success would seem to justify a substantial investment of both funds and effort. The experience gained in operating such a service can be profitably used to develop a body of knowledge that is of value to each new family that comes with similar problems to solve, if children are to be protected and parents helped to find satisfaction in the all important task of child rearing.

A P P E N D I X

TABLE 1
SIZE OF THE FAMILY GROUP

| Number of Children Per Family | TOTAL | | CLINTON MOTHERS | | | | SBCW ADD. TO SUPERV. | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-----|------------------------|-----|--------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|-----|---|-----|
| | | | In Inst. July 57 | | Com. to Inst. 54 - 55 | | Jan.-Mar. Quarter 1957 | | Fiscal Yr. 1953 - 54 Convict. of Neglect | |
| | Fam. | Ch. | Fam. | Ch. | Fam. | Ch. | Fam. | Ch. | Fam. | Ch. |
| Total | 206 | 938 | 56 | 260 | 56 | 239 | 37 | 181 | 57 | 258 |
| 1 to 5 | 110 | 290 | 31 | 84 | 33 | 76 | 18 | 52 | 28 | 78 |
| 5 to 9 | 79 | 478 | 19 | 117 | 19 | 120 | 15 | 90 | 26 | 151 |
| 10 or More | 17 | 170 | 6 | 59 | 4 | 43 | 4 | 39 | 3 | 29 |

TABLE 2
AGES OF THE CHILDREN

| Children by the Group | TOTAL | | CLINTON MOTHERS | | SBCW ADD. TO SUPERV. | |
|--------------------------|----------|--|------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|
| | | | In Inst. July 57 | | Jan.-Mar. Quarter 1957 | |
| | Children | | Children | | Children | |
| Total | 938 | | 260 | | 181 | |
| Under 6 Years | 365 | | 94 | | 66 | |
| 6 to 12 Years | 318 | | 102 | | 70 | |
| 12 and Over | 255 | | 64 | | 45 | |

TABLE 3
**MARITAL STATUS OF FAMILIES AT TIME
OF MOTHERS CONVICTION AND/OR ACCEPTANCE
OF CHILDREN**

| Marital Status of Parents | TOTAL | | CLINTON MOTHERS | | | | SBCW ADD. TO SUPERV. | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|-----|------------------------|-----|--------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|-----|---|-----|
| | | | In Inst. July 57 | | Com. to Inst. 54 - 55 | | Jan.-Mar. Quarter 1957 | | Fiscal Yr. 1953 - 54 Convict. of Neglect | |
| | Fam. | Ch. | Fam. | Ch. | Fam. | Ch. | Fam. | Ch. | Fam. | Ch. |
| Total | 206 | 938 | 56 | 260 | 56 | 239 | 37 | 181 | 57 | 258 |
| Married Couple | 53 | 250 | 18 | 99 | 11 | 47 | 7 | 48 | 17 | 56 |
| Widowed | 13 | 54 | 4 | 12 | 3 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 34 |
| Sep. Desert. Div. | 99 | 487 | 21 | 106 | 30 | 131 | 23 | 103 | 25 | 147 |
| Unmarried | 41 | 147 | 13 | 43 | 12 | 53 | 7 | 30 | 9 | 21 |

TABLE 4
FAMILY INCOME - SOURCE AND ADEQUACY
NUMBER

| Source and Adequacy of Income | TOTAL | | CLINTON MOTHERS | | | | SBCW ADDED TO SUPERVIS | | | |
|---|-------|-----|-----------------------|-----|------------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|-----|--|-----|
| | | | In Inst. July 1957 | | Committed to Inst. 1954 - 55 | | Jan.-Mar. Quarter 1957 | | Fiscal Yr. 1953 - 54 Convicted of Neglect | |
| | Fam. | Ch. | Fam. | Ch. | Fam. | Ch. | Fam. | Ch. | Fam. | Ch. |
| TOTAL | 206 | 938 | 56 | 260 | 56 | 239 | 37 | 181 | 57 | 258 |
| Earned Income: Total | 69 | 301 | 17 | 66 | 21 | 78 | 14 | 76 | 17 | 81 |
| A. Adequate | 23 | 68 | 8 | 20 | 7 | 16 | 5 | 15 | 3 | 17 |
| B. Inadequate | 46 | 233 | 9 | 46 | 14 | 62 | 9 | 61 | 14 | 64 |
| Income: Other Sources: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 91 | 469 | 29 | 155 | 23 | 112 | 14 | 75 | 25 | 127 |
| A. Insurance and Pensions | 4 | 16 | 3 | 12 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| B. Home Life Assistance | 60 | 300 | 16 | 78 | 15 | 66 | 10 | 55 | 19 | 101 |
| C. Dept. of Public Welfare | 27 | 153 | 10 | 39 | 7 | 42 | 4 | 20 | 6 | 26 |
| Household Broken: Income or Source Unknown | 46 | 168 | 10 | 39 | 12 | 49 | 9 | 30 | 15 | 50 |

PERCENT

| Source and Adequacy of Income | TOTAL | | CLINTON MOTHERS | | | | SBCW ADDED TO SUPERVIS | | | |
|---|----------|----------|------------------------|----------|------------------------------------|----------|------------------------------|----------|--|----------|
| | | | In. Inst. July 1957 | | Committed to Inst. 1954 - 55 | | Jan.-Mar. Quarter 1957 | | Fiscal Yr. 1953 - 54 Convicted of Neglect | |
| | Children | Children | Children | Children | Children | Children | Children | Children | Children | Children |
| TOTAL | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Earned Income: Total | 32 | 25 | 33 | 42 | 32 | | | | | |
| A. Adequate | 7 | 8 | 7 | 8 | 7 | | | | | |
| B. Inadequate | 25 | 17 | 26 | 34 | 25 | | | | | |
| Income: Other Source | 50 | 60 | 47 | 41 | 49 | | | | | |
| Household Broken: Income or Source Unknown | 18 | 15 | 20 | 17 | 19 | | | | | |

TABLE 5
FAMILY HOUSING

| TYPE OF HOUSING | TOTAL | | CLINTON MOTHERS | | | | SBCW ADD. TO SUPERV. | | | |
|--|-------|-----|------------------------|-----|--------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|-----|---|-----|
| | | | In Inst. July 57 | | Com. to Inst. 54 - 55 | | Jan.-Mar. Quarter 1957 | | Fiscal Yr. 1953 - 54 Convict. of Neglect | |
| | Fam. | Ch. | Fam. | Ch. | Fam. | Ch. | Fam. | Ch. | Fam. | Ch. |
| Total | 206 | 938 | 56 | 260 | 56 | 239 | 37 | 181 | 57 | 258 |
| Grossly Inadequate (Tenement, fur- nished rooms, poor repair, inadequate heat, light, plumbing, unsafe, overcrowded) | 105 | 584 | 27 | 165 | 31 | 152 | 20 | 117 | 27 | 150 |
| Reasonably Adequate (Safe, sanitary reasonably equipped in housing project) | 72 | 252 | 20 | 68 | 24 | 85 | 10 | 33 | 18 | 66 |
| Unknown | 29 | 102 | 9 | 27 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 31 | 12 | 42 |

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN - TYPE OF HOUSING

| | TOTAL | | CLINTON MOTHERS | | SBCW ADD. TO SUPERV. | |
|---------------------|----------|----------|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| | | | In Inst. July 57 | Com. to Inst. 54 - 55 | Jan.-Mar. Quarter 1957 | Fiscal Yr. 1953 - 54 Convict. of Neglect |
| | Children | Children | Children | Children | Children | Children |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Grossly Inadequate | 62 | 64 | 64 | 65 | 58 | |
| Reasonably Adequate | 27 | 26 | 35 | 18 | 26 | |
| Unknown | 11 | 10 | 1 | 17 | 16 | |

TABLE 6

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF CHILDREN
AT POINT OF MOTHERS CONVICTION AND AT
POINT OF ACCEPTANCE FOR SUPERVISION BY SBCW

| Living Arrangements | TOTAL | CLINTON MOTHERS | | SBCW ADD. TO SUPERV. | |
|------------------------|----------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--|
| | | In Inst. July 57 | Com. to Inst. 54 - 55 | Jan.-Mar. Quarter 1957 | Fiscal Yr. 1953 - 54 Convict. of Neglect |
| | Children | Children | Children | Children | Children |
| Total | 938 | 260 | 239 | 181 | 258 |
| At Home - Both Parents | 243 | 82 | 40 | 45 | 76 |
| At Home - Mother Only | 418 | 99 | 135 | 74 | 110 |
| At Home - Father Only | 17 | 0 | 9 | 3 | 5 |
| With Relatives | 88 | 27 | 14 | 28 | 19 |
| Substitute Care | 120 | 40 | 27 | 31 | 22 |
| Other | 30 | 8 | 11 | 0 | 11 |
| Unknown | 22 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 15 |

ORIGINAL AND CURRENT PLAN FOR THE CARE OF CHILDREN
FOLLOWING PARENTS CONVICTION

| Plan for Care of Children | TOTAL | | CLINTON MOTHERS | | CONVICTED PARENTS 1953 - 54 | |
|---------------------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| | Original Plan | Plan as of Nov. 57 | Original Plan | Plan as of Nov. 57 | Original Plan | Plan as of Nov. 57 |
| | Children | Children | Children | Children | Children | Children |
| Total | 497 | 497 | 239 | 239 | 258 | 258 |
| At Home - Both Parents | 0 | 16 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 10 |
| At Home - Mother Only | 0 | 72 | 0 | 45 | 0 | 27 |
| At Home - Father Only | 19 | 12 | 8 | 6 | 11 | 6 |
| With Relatives | 125 | 60 | 91 | 30 | 34 | 30 |
| Foster Care | 267 | 227 | 82 | 89 | 185 | 138 |
| Institutions | 44 | 34 | 33 | 23 | 11 | 11 |
| Other | 33 | 69 | 22 | 36 | 11 | 33 |
| Died | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Unknown | 6 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 |

TABLE 7

FACTORS OF NEGLECT DESCRIBED IN CHARGES

| FACTORS OF NEGLECT | CLINTON MOTHERS | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------|-------|----------------|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|----------------------|-------|----------------|-----------------------------|---|
| | IN INSTITUTION - JULY 1957 | | | | | | COMMITTED TO INSTITUTION - 1954-55 | | | | | |
| | Total Mothers | INCIDENCE OF FACTORS | | | | | Total Mothers | INCIDENCE OF FACTORS | | | | |
| | | Total | Abuse | Deser- tion | Lack of Physical Care | Lack of House- keeping Standards | | Total | Abuse | Deser- tion | Lack of Physical Care | Lack of House- keeping Standards |
| ONE FACTOR ONLY | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Abuse | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | 2 | 2 | 2 | | | |
| Desertion | 8 | 8 | | 8 | | | 7 | 7 | | 7 | | |
| Lack of physical care | 4 | 4 | | | 4 | | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | |
| Lack of housekeeping standards | 3 | 3 | | | | 3 | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 |
| TOTALS | 16 | 16 | 1 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 11 | 11 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| TWO FACTORS | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Desertion;lack of physical care | 1 | 2 | | 1 | 1 | | 5 | 10 | | 5 | 5 | |
| Desertion;lack of housekeeping standards | 4 | 8 | | 4 | | 4 | - | - | | | | |
| Lack of physical care;lack of housekeeping standards | 19 | 38 | | | 19 | 19 | 21 | 42 | | | 21 | 21 |
| TOTALS | 24 | 48 | | 5 | 20 | 23 | 26 | 52 | | 5 | 26 | 21 |
| THREE FACTORS | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Abuse;lack of physical care;lack of housekeeping standards | 10 | 30 | 10 | | 10 | 10 | 4 | 12 | 4 | | 4 | 4 |
| Desertion;lack of physical care;lack of housekeeping standards | 6 | 18 | | 6 | 6 | 6 | 14 | 42 | | 14 | 14 | 14 |
| TOTALS | 16 | 48 | 10 | 6 | 16 | 16 | 18 | 54 | 4 | 14 | 18 | 18 |
| FOUR FACTORS | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Abuse;desertion;lack of physical care and lack of housekeeping standards | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| GRAND TOTALS | 56 | 112 | 11 | 19 | 40 | 42 | 56 | 121 | 7 | 27 | 46 | 41 |
| Average number of factors per family 2.0 | | | | | | | 2.2 | | | | | |

TABLE 8

PERSONAL PROBLEMS OR FAILURES OF MOTHERS

| PROBLEMS (OR FAILURES) | CLINTON MOTHERS | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| | IN INSTITUTION - JULY 1957 | | | | | | COMMITTED TO INSTITUTION - 1954-55 | | | | | |
| | Total Mothers | INCIDENCE OF PROBLEMS | | | | | Total Mothers | INCIDENCE OF PROBLEMS | | | | |
| | | Total | Intel- lectual Limita- tion | Emo- tional Disturb- ance | Alco- holism | Promis- cuity | | Total | Intel- lectual Limita- tion | Emo- tional Disturb- ance | Alco- holism | Promis- cuity |
| ONE PROBLEM ONLY | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Intellectual limitation. . . | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | - | - | | | | |
| Emotional disturbance. . . | 4 | 4 | | 4 | | | 4 | 4 | | 4 | | |
| Alcoholism | 9 | 9 | | | 9 | | 7 | 7 | | | 7 | |
| Promiscuity. | 4 | 4 | | | | 4 | 10 | 10 | | | | 10 |
| TOTALS | 18 | 18 | 1 | 4 | 9 | 4 | 21 | 21 | - | 4 | 7 | 10 |
| TWO PROBLEMS | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Intellectual limitation; emotional disturbance. . . | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2 | | | - | - | | | | |
| Intellectual limitation; alcoholism | 3 | 6 | 3 | | 3 | | - | - | | | | |
| Intellectual limitation; promiscuity. | 2 | 4 | 2 | | | 2 | 3 | 6 | 3 | | | 3 |
| Emotional disturbance; alcoholism | 6 | 12 | | 6 | 6 | | 3 | 6 | | 3 | 3 | |
| Emotional disturbance; promiscuity. | 3 | 6 | | 3 | | 3 | 2 | 4 | | 2 | | 2 |
| Alcoholism and promiscuity | 11 | 22 | | | 11 | 11 | 21 | 42 | | | 21 | 21 |
| TOTALS | 27 | 54 | 7 | 11 | 20 | 16 | 29 | 58 | 3 | 5 | 24 | 26 |
| THREE PROBLEMS | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Intellectual limitation; emotional disturbance; alcoholism | - | - | | | | | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Intellectual limitation; alcoholism;promis- cuity. | - | - | | | | | 2 | 6 | 2 | | 2 | 2 |
| Emotional disturbance; alcoholism;promis- cuity. | 1 | 3 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 6 | | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| TOTALS | 1 | 3 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 15 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 4 |

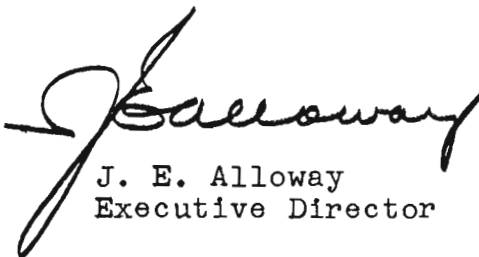
TO All Supervisors DATE 7/30/57
FROM Executive Director SUBJECT Protective Services
Project

In June we let you know that Mrs. Claire Hancock would be working on a survey of Protective Services in New Jersey. The purpose of the survey is to get as complete a picture as possible of the resources now available to help families whose care of children is considered seriously inadequate.

From this information we hope to be able to evaluate the effect of existing laws, the adequacy of current programs to meet the need both in quantity and coverage. We want to identify major problems in the field and to recommend steps to be taken to solve the problems.

Mrs. Hancock will be setting up a schedule of visits to District Offices. We are attaching to this memorandum a questionnaire. We want to give you an opportunity to review these questions and to discuss them with your staff. Mrs. Hancock will then be discussing them with you. She will ask your help in identifying case records that will provide examples of practice and problems in this area.

We will use all of the available data, including statistical reports, that are in Central Office. We will ask you for information that will fill in and further clarify the picture.


J. E. Alloway
Executive Director

JEA/WHC

I. Resources available in the community to provide protection to neglected children

- A. What agencies in your district provide services to families whose standard of care for children is inadequate to assure basic protection for the children in the family group?

Name of Agency

Geographic Area Covered

- B. Is it generally known in the community that these agencies provide such service? (That is, they receive reports of neglected children from private citizens, other agencies, etc.)

- C. What are the outstanding problems in securing proper care for neglected children that are unsolved?

- D. What factors would contribute most to solving these problems, such as:

(1) Revision in existing laws, explain and give examples of legal stumbling blocks.

(2) Expansion of existing services.

(a) To families whose care of child is inadequate.

(b) For the care of children away from their own homes.
(Indicate to which one of these you would give priority; both are important.)

II. Who should provide Protective Services?

- A. Do you think that a single agency in the community ought to be designated by law to provide service to families whose care of children is inadequate? What agency? Why do you believe the agency ought to be designated?
- B. Do you think responsibility for such services ought to be shared by several agencies in the community? How would you suggest definition of responsibility if several agencies are to operate in this field?

III. Relationship between the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court and the social agencies concerned with providing Care for neglected children.

- A. Does the court request that you provide service to a family following a hearing on neglect?
- B. Does the court set a date for a report to be submitted on such cases?

- C. Has service to families referred by the court made it possible for some children to remain in their own homes?
- D. How often is it necessary to recommend the children of such families be placed?
- E. How frequently do you have children committed to Guardianship whose families have never had service from any social agency?
- F. Have you known of children who have suffered because there was a long wait between the time a neglect petition was filed and the case heard by the court?

IV. District Office experience in providing service for neglected children

- A. In the last year have you received reports of neglect from people who refuse to identify themselves? If so, approximately how many? Did you take any action on such reports?
- B. What kind of policy do you think should be followed in relation to anonymous complaints of neglect?
- C. What response do people make, who are reporting neglect, to the requirement that they sign an application in behalf of the children? How many people have refused? On what basis?
- D. What response do you get from people reporting neglect to the requirement that the family needs to know who filed application in behalf of the children?
- E. What has been your experience in working with families when the application was initiated by another person? How many have refused service? How many have withdrawn before the problems could be clarified? Have these parents been harder to work with than those who initiated their own application?
- F. Do you think that the requirement that parents voluntarily accept service and indicate their acceptance by signing an application exclude some families from having the help they need in providing better care for their children? Do you think this results in children receiving care away from their homes when it might have been possible to preserve a family group?
- G. In your opinion, what percentage of families receiving Home Life Assistance in your district are not providing adequate care for the children?
- H. What effort have you been able to make to help families with serious problems, such as provision for more frequent visits, referral to other agencies in the community?
- I. In the last year, how many Home Life cases had to be closed or rejected because the home was unsuitable? What alternate plans were made for the children?
- J. Have you filed a neglect petition against a Home Life recipient in the last year?
- K. In your opinion, what would be of most help in meeting the problems in the Home Life Assistance cases?

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
BOARD OF CHILD WELFARE
163 West Hanover Street
Trenton, New Jersey

PROTECTIVE SERVICE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

for
purpose of discussion at meeting

I. Resources in the community to provide protection to neglected children.

- en.
- A. What agencies receive and act on complaints or reports that children are being neglected, or abused, or left without adult supervision?
- B. How generally is it known in the community where to make such a report?
- C. What agencies are available to provide service to families whose care of children is seriously inadequate?
- D. How successful are these services in reaching the families who need them most?
1. Do intake policies exclude some families?
 2. Is the family's lack of desire and ability to use the agency service a problem?
 3. What happens to the children in the families who need service and do not use it?
- E. What agencies provide foster care in institutions or in foster family homes for neglected children?
- d
1. How many neglected children have to be placed on an emergency basis?
 2. What facilities are available for emergency placement?

II. What are the outstanding problems in securing proper care for neglected children?

III. What factors would contribute most to solving these problems, such as:

1. Changes in existing laws
2. Expansion of existing services, etc.

CASE READING SCHEDULE

Family Name: Race: Age of Mother: Ages of Children: Case No.:

Mother: Court Record: Personal Problems:

Father: Age: Occupation: Personal Problems:

Neglect---Factors Described in Neglect Complaint:

Who Made Complaint or Application?

Major Family Problem and Duration:

Plan for Care of Children:

Remarks or Analysis: