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ANNUAL REPORT

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ANNUAL REPORT - -

OF THE CHILD WELFARE DIVISION OF THE
STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

State Capitol Annex
Denver, Colorado



There are children everywhere. The helplessness of the unwanted, unloved, abused and neglected child speaks to the adult world. Our goal is that in Colorado their unvoiced plea will not fall on deaf ears. To that end we bend our energies.

How are we doing it?

Turn to the next page.

A FOSTER HOME FOR --

-- the small seven year old boy whose mother had died several years previously and who had been taken from his father because of his brutal treatment of him. The child seemed to boil with an inner fury at life. Successively two foster homes, the hospital, industrial school and detention home all sounded distress signals, admitting their defeat, and asking that he be removed. The child seemed destined for the State Hospital - until, through the State office, the right foster home was found for him. The foster mother was willing and able to devote her entire time to the child for an indefinite period of time. Now we have a child on his way to a normal and wholesome life.



-- the unwanted baby who tested below normal in development and whose chances for adoption were not bright. After tender, loving care in a foster home the baby began to blossom. A second test showed normal development, a later one above normal. Now we have a baby cherished by his adoptive parents.

During 1954, 152 children were placed for adoption through county departments of public welfare.

-- a four year old boy who had been badly beaten by his father and ignored by his mother. The child was hospitalized. The parents falsely claimed the boy was not theirs and the parents and the other four children disappeared. The boy was declared dependent and neglected. Now he has developed into an attractive and likeable child and no doubt will be placed for adoption.

HELP FOR --

-- a teen age boy with a long history of rejection and hardship. He could not adjust to a foster home, nor would he stay in a boys' home. He could not remain in his own home. It was a case of the mother having to choose between the boy and his step-father. She chose the step-father. The boy was placed in a small treatment center. A report six weeks later showed marked improvement.



-- a nine year old boy whose father was in jail and whose mother said he was insane, a thief and she didn't want him at home. A foster placement was made temporarily until the caseworker could find out the reason for the mother's rejection of him. He was taken to the child guidance clinic. The psychiatrist found that the boy was stealing in order to get money to buy gifts for school mates. He was trying to "buy" attention and friendship to fill an aching void in his life. The boy was returned home. The worker assured the mother the boy was not insane and explained his need for attention. She tried to make the boy understand that adults (his parents) had problems too. She made practical suggestions for providing more fun in the home. Relationships in the family were much improved and the boy is finding some fulfillment for his emotional needs.

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-- Mary - a four year old girl nobody wanted. Her mother said she hated her. Neighbors report brutal treatment of Mary by her mother and step-father. The child was half sick all the time, undernourished and unattractive. She had lost one eye. She was afraid to talk, stood with her head hanging, seemingly dull. The child was considered unadoptable. She was placed in a foster home. The foster mother, although Mary was four years old, realized her need to be treated like a baby. She would take her on her lap and rock her. The first I.Q. test given Mary indicated dullness. However, the worker and foster mother continued with Mary. Subsequent I.Q. tests showed improvement until she finally tested above normal. When Mary was eight years old she was placed for adoption. Both Mary and her adoptive parents are happy.

During 1954 there were 453 active, approved foster homes, Children cared for averaged 607 per month.



During 1954 an average of 1,116 children a month were given services in their own homes. This was in addition to those given homemaker services.



A SUBSTITUTE HOMEMAKER --

-- for a family of small children. The mother was going to the sanatorium for months - perhaps longer. The children were frightened. To them their mother's care and presence was as sure as the air they breathed. To see her ill and helpless rocked their world. The father wanted desperately to keep the family together. But there were no relatives or friends who could take over the care of the children and the management of the household. Someone suggested asking help from the department of public welfare. The caseworker, the "approved homemaker" (chosen because she was the kind of person who would fit into this particular home), and the father talked the situation over. Result - a family together, and the caseworker standing by ready to help with any problems which might arise.

During 1954, thirty-three families were given homemaker services. Number of children in each family varied from 1 to 9, with a total of 123 children cared for. The length of service given to each family varied from 1 to 8 months.

SOMETHING TO DO --



-- Boredom is no picnic for anyone. Children just won't tolerate it. If their growing bodies and budding personalities cannot find wholesome outlets, they will manage the other kind. The law of nature is growth - whether whole and straight or stunted and warped.

Communities all need good recreation programs conducted by trained personnel capable of arousing and holding the interest of young people, and securing community cooperation. Our group work consultant, at the request of various communities, has worked with them in setting up such programs.

During 1954 -- In April the first county-wide recreation program in Colorado (Lake County) celebrated one year of successful operation under a full-time, year-round director of Recreation. By the end of 1954 two more counties (La Plata and Logan) had completed plans for county-wide programs and were in the process of hiring directors.

During the summer of 1954 a Camp Visitation project was undertaken for the Colorado Camping Association. All camp members of that organization were visited and evaluated according to national standards. This was part of the planning for the improvement of camp standards in Colorado.

During the year work was begun with the Southern Ute Tribe at the Indian Reservation schools at Ignacio and Towaoc focusing on the development of leadership among the older high school boys and girls, and the planning of a recreation program for the younger children.



The State Child Welfare Division maintains a state-wide register of approved foster and adoptive homes. Any of the 63 counties may call upon the state office for help in:

- Finding the right foster or adoptive home for a child
- In securing medical or psychiatric treatment
- Consultation on child welfare problems
- Community organization
- Recreation programs
- Interviews with adoptive applicants.

The state reimburses the county 50 per cent on placement of children in approved foster homes, and institutions.



The Advisory Committee to the Child Welfare Division is a group of about 20 persons representative of the state as a whole and whose interest in children is known.

The committee works with the director of the Division, helping to interpret the work of the division to their own communities and making known the needs as they see them.

The committee also sponsors meetings and workshops with voluntary agencies and organizations having a children's division. It is believed that public and private agencies and organizations united in their efforts can

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a normal child to the State Home and Training School at
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al school whose need is not understood. The diagnostic center
direction - but Colorado has a great need for a treatment
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accomplish great things. Certainly the job is too big and too complicated to be handled by either group alone. By reinforcing, supplementing and supporting one another, greater purpose, strength and effectiveness are generated.

In 1954 the Advisory Committee sponsored workshops in the following counties: Denver, El Paso, Jackson, La Plata and Pueblo.

A bill has been passed by the Legislature creating a diagnostic center for children to be used before commitment to a state institution. The Advisory Committee has long been advocating a diagnostic and treatment center for maladjusted, delinquent or so-called feeble minded children to prevent such tragedies as commitment of a normal child to the State Home and Training School at Ridge or Grand Junction, or a delinquent to the industrial school whose need is not discipline but a little understanding. The diagnostic center is a step in the right direction - but Colorado has a great need for a treatment center in addition.

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In closing this report, we wish to say

Citizens of Colorado -- this is your program. We
are anxious that
doing it, and
Colorado's share

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