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CHILD WELFARE DIVISION

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Denver 3, Colorado

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And a Look Toward the Future

With each passing year, the need to meet our full legal responsibility for providing basic services to every child in need of them becomes more urgent.

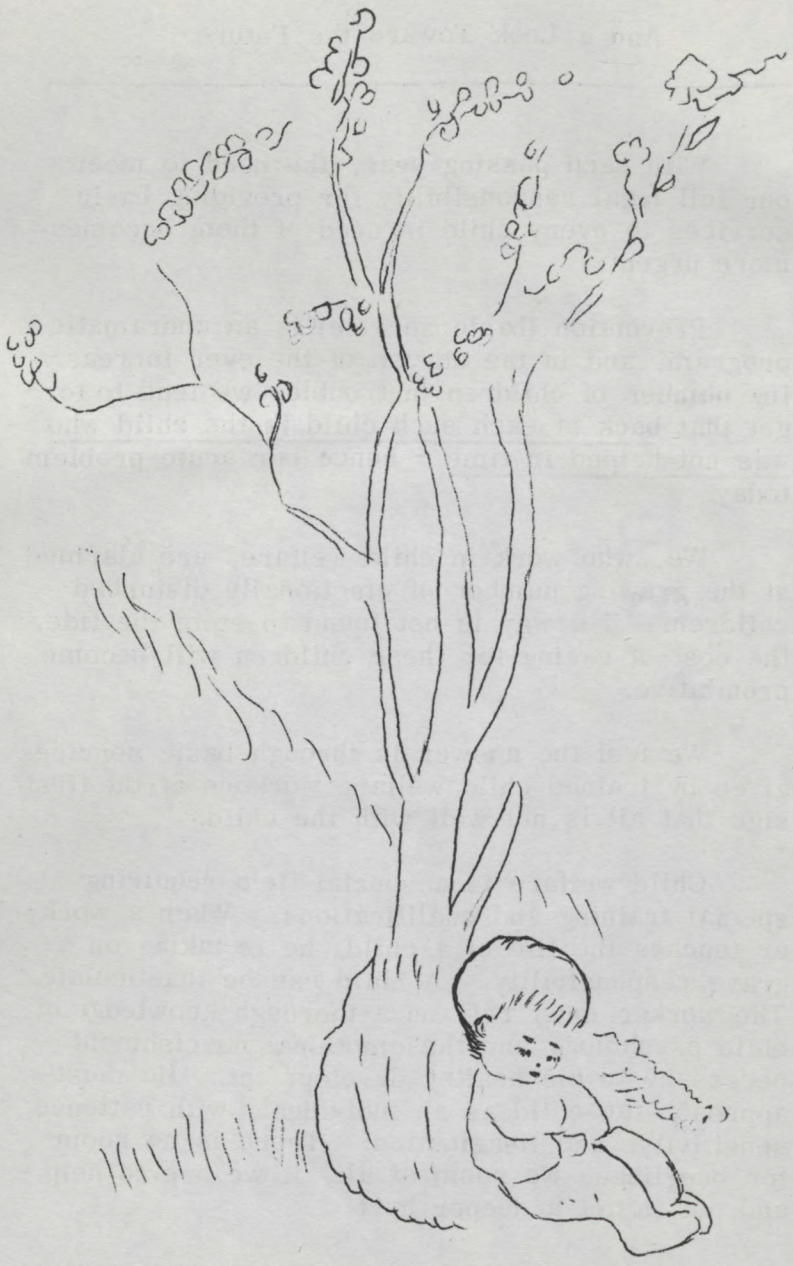
Prevention (basic service) is an undramatic program, and in the onrush of the ever increasing number of children in trouble, we tend to forget that back of each such child is the child who was not helped in time - hence our acute problem today.

We, who work in child welfare, are alarmed at the growing number of emotionally disturbed children. If a way is not found to stem the tide, the cost of caring for these children will become prohibitive.

We feel the answer is through basic services given by trained child welfare workers at the first sign that all is not well with the child.

Child welfare is a special field requiring special training and qualifications. When a worker touches the life of a child, he is taking on a grave responsibility. A child can be inarticulate. The worker must rely on a thorough knowledge of child psychology and the emotional nourishment necessary to his healthy development. He must approach the child as an individual, with patience, sensitivity, and imagination. There is no room for bungling. No room at all, if we are to help and not inflict a deeper hurt.

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As we study the situation from all angles, we begin to see there is no full solution to the problem without the intelligent and active interest of people in each community. There is a shortage of trained child welfare workers and too few resources of the right kind. This could be partly due to today's attitude of "let the Government do it".

Even if money alone could do the job, there won't be that much available if the situation remains unchanged. We can't continue to shift the entire burden to federal, state and local governments. As we are discovering -- there is no substitute for human, individual concern expressed through each community for its own.

Have you ever, for one timeless moment,
Dwelt in a world swept clean
Of every other living soul,

One unit of eternity
In vast, unending emptiness
With no sheltering kinship anywhere?

Then you must know
You are your brother's keeper.

Following the brief resume of public child welfare services in the state during 1958, is a case history entitled, BACK OF THIS CHILD.

This case is one of many tragic stories, and illustrates the cause of our distress and alarm.

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Even if money alone could do the job, there won't be that much money. The situation remains unchanged unless we continue to shift the entire burden of child welfare to local governments. As we have seen, there is no substitute for human judgment, but we can express our own substitute for it.

Have you ever seen one timeless moment? Dwell on it. It is a clean, clear, unbroken moment. It is a moment when the world is still and the heart is clean.

Following the case history of public child welfare service during 1958, is a case history entitled "A CHILD'S STORY". This case is one of many tragic stories and illustrates the cause of our distress and alarm.

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IN THE 63 COUNTY DEPARTMENTS OF PUBLIC WELFARE 5,356 CHILDREN WERE GIVEN BASIC SERVICES AS FOLLOWS:

Services to 2,318 children in their own homes.

This means working with children and their families so that known difficulties in the child's life may be resolved without removing him from his own home.

Sometimes this service calls for a slow, painstaking process of gaining confidence, then teaching inadequate parents what their responsibilities are, and how to discharge them. It may be helping children and parents to understand each other, or getting them to take advantage of community resources, such as recreation, child guidance clinics, school activities, church activities - whatever seems helpful.

Determining the cause of trouble and guiding parents and children to the solution of their problems, requires knowledge of child development and of human nature, skill, time, patience and understanding.

Homemaker Service

Keeping children in their own homes sometimes calls for securing a homemaker for a family when the mother is unable temporarily to care for her home and children, or in some cases because of the death of the mother. Choosing the right homemaker for a particular family and supervising that placement likewise calls for special training and experience. In 1958, 81 children were given homemaker services.

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Services to 2,957 children outside
their own homes.

It is not always possible to keep a child in his own home. When a child has to be removed, the type of placement - foster boarding home, institution or group care, or adoption - is determined after a study of the child and an evaluation of the situation.

Sometimes a bad situation has progressed to the point where temporary removal of the child is necessary; other times, a child may have been so hurt that he is distrustful of and hostile to all adults; or so emotionally disturbed as to require placement in a treatment center. (We have 14 such children in care now and a waiting list.)

Whatever the placement, it is considered temporary, in most instances, as the goal is a permanent home for the child - either a return to his own home or adoption.

Adoption

When parental rights are severed, either voluntarily or involuntarily, and a child is legally free and ready for adoption, he is placed as soon as possible in an adoptive home.

With many children there are always several suitable homes from which to choose. With the so-called hard to place child, the story is different. The time and effort required to find homes for these children is multiplied many times over.

However, last year of the 316 children placed for adoption 83 of them were in this hard to place category.

Services to 3,957 children outside
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It is not always possible to place a child in his own home. When a child is placed in an institution or group, the type of placement is determined after a study of the child's situation. Sometimes a child is placed in an institution because of the child's behavior. In some cases, the child's behavior is so bad that it is necessary to place the child in an institution. In other cases, the child's behavior is so bad that it is necessary to place the child in an institution. In some cases, the child's behavior is so bad that it is necessary to place the child in an institution. In other cases, the child's behavior is so bad that it is necessary to place the child in an institution.

STATE SERVICES TO COUNTY DEPARTMENTS

The child welfare program in Colorado is county-administered, state-supervised.

In addition to the supervisory aspects of the program, the State offers certain other services to county departments of public welfare.

1. A register of approved foster family boarding homes, numbering 617.

After a foster home is evaluated, results of the study are sent to the State office. If the home meets standards set by this Department, recommendation for licensing is made to the Board of Standards of Child Care.

With such a register available, any county without a foster home suitable for a particular child can call on the State office for help in placing the child in a foster home in another county.

2. A register of approved adoptive homes.

A county having custody of a child legally free for adoption, sends the child's case history to the State office. One or more studies of suitable, approved homes are sent to the county from which they may make a selection.

The Child Welfare Division supervises the county child welfare workers in understanding basic principles involved in every adoption study. In counties where there is no experienced child welfare worker, one of the State Child Welfare field staff holds first interviews.

STATE SERVICES TO COUNTY DEPARTMENTS

The child welfare program in Colorado is county-administered, state-supervised.

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1. A register of approved foster-family residing homes, numbering 617.

After a foster family is evaluated, results of the study are sent to the State office. If the home meets standards of this Department, a recommendation for placement is made to the Board of Standards.

With such a register available, any county without a foster family for a particular child can call the State office for help in placing the child in a foster family in another county.

2. A register of adoptive homes.

A county may apply to the State for a child legally free for adoption and the child's case history to the State office. One or more studies of suitable, approved homes are sent to the county from which they may make a selection.

The Child Welfare Division supervises the county child welfare workers in understanding basic principles involved in every adoption study in counties where there is no experienced child welfare worker, one of the State Child Welfare field staff holds first interviews.



Also, the State Child Welfare Division has on its staff a consultant on group work, a consultant on group care, and a state child welfare caseworker.

Group Work Consultant

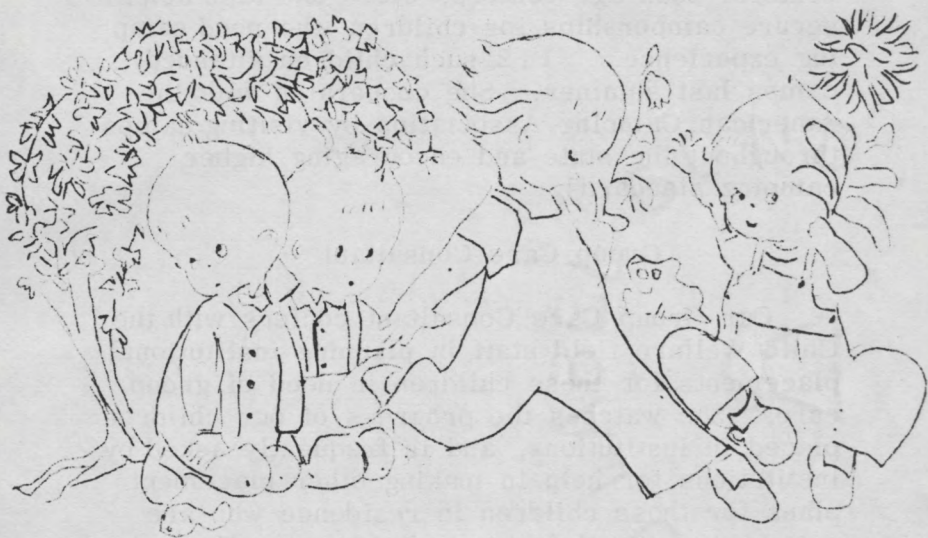
Recreation is important to the healthy development of children. The Consultant when requested by counties, helps organize recreation centers, teen-age centers, etc. She also helps secure camperships for children who need camping experience. 112 such children attended camps last summer. She cooperates with the American Camping Association by visiting camps throughout the state and encouraging higher camping standards.

Group Care Consultant

Our Group Care Consultant confers with the Child Welfare field staff in planning institutional placements for those children in need of group care. She watches the progress of our children placed in institutions, and is frequently asked by institutions for help in making other placement plans for those children in residence who are not making a satisfactory adjustment. Upon request, she consults with the staffs and boards of directors of institutions in planning program changes which will offer more effective help to the child in becoming a happy, well-adjusted, socially responsible person. A number of day-care centers have also made use of her services.

State Child Welfare Caseworker

This is the first year the State has placed a child welfare caseworker on the State staff to give direct services in a county or counties. This is being done on a demonstration basis in 5 counties in the La Plata Basin and Conejos County; and because there are fewer trained child welfare workers in rural areas now than in 1950.



The Child Welfare Division, in cooperation with the University of Colorado Medical Center, offers psychiatric consultation to selected counties. Such service is being given in Delta County now. Service in another county had to be discontinued due to loss of trained child welfare workers.

COUNTY DEPARTMENTS OF PUBLIC WELFARE SERVICES:

In addition to giving direct services to children, county departments of public welfare cooperate with other agencies and public officials in matters concerning children:

1. A tremendous number of social histories on children are prepared each year. This requires considerable time and skill. Such studies are requested by the courts (Colorado law requires a social history on every child referred to the Diagnostic Center), by superintendents of children's institutions and other agencies. Also, a county director acts as probation officer if so requested by the Judge.
2. Offers reciprocal casework services to other states in investigating resources and supervising placement in this state of dependent and neglected children. In 1958 17 such placements were made in Colorado, and Colorado placed 1 child in another state.
3. Colorado is a member of the Interstate Compact on Juveniles, which provides for cooperative supervision of delinquent juveniles on probation or parole, the return from one state to another of delinquent juveniles who have escaped, or return of non-delinquent juveniles who have run away from home. In 1958 there were 19 such children.

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ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1958

COUNTY DEPARTMENTS OF PUBLIC WELFARE SERVICES

- Mrs. Lester Garner, Chairman, Sterling
- Mrs. Alva B. Adams, Pueblo
- Mrs. R. J. Arnold, Denver
- Mrs. Joe Autry, La Junta
- Mrs. Geo. B. Berger, Jr., Denver
- Mrs. Everett Barden, Haxtun
- Mrs. Ruth B. Clark, Fort Collins
- Mr. Charles R. Conklin, Delta
- Mr. Vincent DeFrancis, Denver
- Mrs. Lon T. Fidler, Denver
- Mr. L. M. Lopez, Denver
- Mrs. Henry Luby, Denver
- Mrs. George Mosier, Greeley
- Mrs. Edmond F. Noel, Denver
- Mrs. Dale Rea, Durango
- Mrs. Robt. H. Showalter, Alamosa
- Miss Marie C. Smith, Denver
- Mrs. Benjamin Stapleton, Jr., Englewood
- Reverend Justin A. Van Lopik, Denver
- Reverend Edward Wichmann, Pueblo

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ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE CHILD WELFARE DIVISION

The Advisory Committee to the Child Welfare Division is a committee composed of 20 individuals representative of different parts of the state and known to be actively interested in the welfare of children.

This committee serves the welfare of children through their advisory capacity to the State Child Welfare Division, through the work of its subcommittees and individual members, and through interpretation of child welfare services, each in his own community.

The program of prevention is all important, and one of the more pressing state-wide problems is an acute shortage of trained child welfare workers. Through its subcommittee on Recruitment and Retention of Staff, the Committee is making headway through studies made, material prepared, and recommendations made to the State Board.

The subcommittee on Career Recruitment made appointments with many of the state's junior and senior colleges for speaking engagements to talk about social work as a career.

Mrs. Adams and Father Wichmann worked with other citizens of Pueblo to make possible a study by the National Probation and Parole Association of what is needed for detention home, and other services to children in that county.

Because of the dearth of Negro adoptive homes, Mrs. Noel called together a committee of key people to interest prospective Negro adoptive applicants. Positive results are beginning to show.

The Sterling Coordinating Council on Services for Children and Youth, organized by Mrs. Garner, continues its interest and work.

Committee members in the seven districts in which hearings were held by the Legislative Council's Subcommittee on Children's Laws, cooperated with the Council.

Five workshops sponsored by the Committee in 1958 were held in Colorado Springs, Grand Junction, Fort Morgan, Durango and Pueblo. Voluntary agencies, committees and individuals interested in children cooperate in planning these workshops. The subject chosen is one of particular interest to the local community. The State Child Welfare Division brings in an outstanding person in the chosen field to conduct the workshop.

BACK OF THIS CHILD

In a small farming community there was an eleven year old boy with a gnawing hunger in his heart.

Jim, we will call the boy, was the eleventh in a family of thirteen children. At the time of the tragedy, the five youngest children were living at home in a two-room house with a semi-basement bedroom - no central heating, no inside water. In the home you found no toys, no books, no magazines, no baseballs - none of the things which are a part of childhood.

The father was considered a good man and a hard worker. According to their lights, the father and mother were good parents. They knew nothing of emotional neglect.

The years of drouth, depression, and dust storms had taken their toll. This family's life had been grueling to the point of emotional starvation. The boy brought neither his hurts nor his hopes to his mother. He never asked for help with his problems. His mother knew little of his thoughts or feelings. Her own had long since become numb with hopelessness.

After the tragedy, Jim's mother could remember only twice that he had expressed a wish for something. The first was to join the 4-H Club in his area, but his father felt the bull calf which Jim was going to use for his project was not of 4-H quality. If Jim's disappointment was more than he could bear, he did not show it.

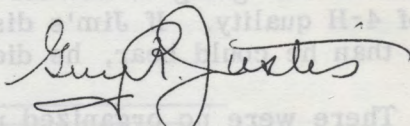
There were no organized recreational activities in the community for Jim and his sisters and brothers to take part in. They went to school, went home, changed their clothes, worked, went to bed. The next day and the next were all the same. They were punished, as all children are, but there were no balancing rewards for good behavior.

On Monday morning Jim decided (despite his father's refusal to permit it) to quit school and go to work for a neighbor to earn money. His father promptly brought him home and sent him back to school. It was then, apparently, the boy decided to kill his father, and the next day's papers headlined the story of an eleven year old boy charged with murder.

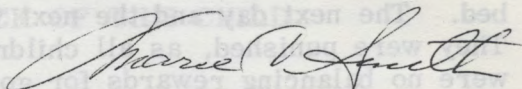
When the sheriff, district attorney and defense attorney went to the home they were appalled that in this day and age anyone could

lead so barren a life. Children cannot grow and mature normally with so little in their lives above the level required to keep life in the body. As the psychiatrists' examinations showed, the boy had no conception of the enormity of his crime. He did not hate his father and felt no particular grudge against him.

In the community the family was generally considered "different" or "queer" because they gave no expression to their feelings. Such abnormal absence of response was indeed a silent plea for help. In the 27 years the family had lived in that community, no one had noticed or heard this silent cry - and so a little boy killed his father.



Guy R. Justis, Director
State Dept. of Public Welfare



Marie C. Smith, Director
Child Welfare Division

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