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CHILD WELFARE DIVISION

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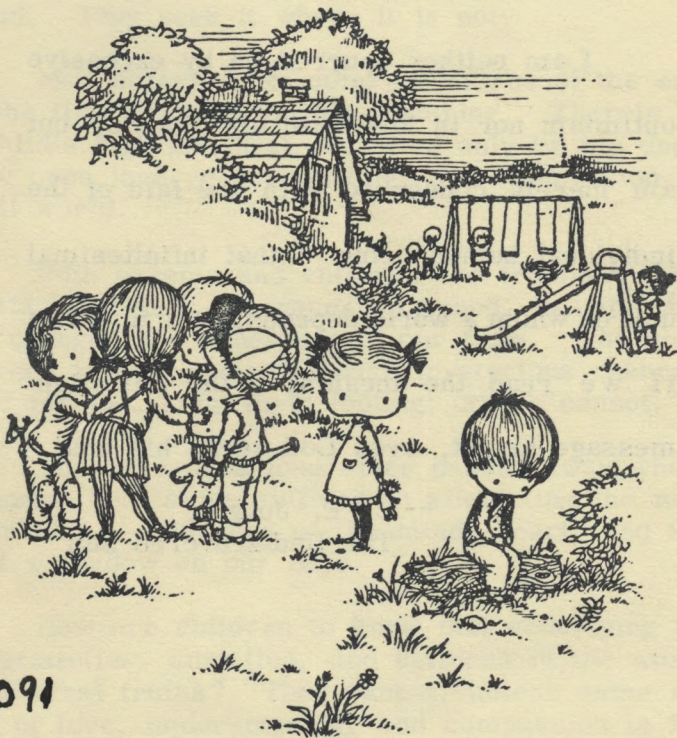


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I am neither spurred on by excessive optimism nor in love with high ideals, but am merely concerned with the fate of the individual human being - that infinitesimal unit on whom a world depends, and in whom if we read the meaning of the Christian message aright, even God seeks his goal.

-- C. E. Jung
The Undiscovered Self

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PROLOGUE

In this uncertain, fast changing world we are all psychologically uprooted. Children sense it as a nameless fear, and grope for solid ground beneath their feet, not knowing what it is, or where it can be found. They seek it where it is not.

Man differs from other creatures of the earth in the time allotted for his maturing. Therein lies a child's high potential, equalled only by his dependence upon love, understanding, and compassion in an adult world.

Both parents and children are troubled. No strata of society, no race, no creed, is untouched by the changes and upheavels of our time. The only difference is that some, through mysterious chance, or good fortune, keep their footing; others cannot.

The days have long since passed away when financial help alone suffices in alleviating the miseries of mankind. Burdens of the mind, heart, and soul cast a shadow on our days.

How are children to know that underlying the uncertainties, anxieties, and ugliness in the world, lie eternal truths? They cannot, unless some measure of love, understanding, and compassion is interwoven in the fabric of their lives.

Who does this for the child who is dependent, neglected, abused, rejected, or defenseless in adverse circumstances? In addition to the church and voluntary agencies, it is done through the child welfare service programs in counties and state.

The stories of Lennie and Mark, which follow, illustrate casework services in only two different categories.

There are three broad classifications for child welfare services:

1. Services to support or reinforce ability of parents to meet the child's needs.
 - a. Services in the child's own home
 - b. Protective services
 - c. Counseling unmarried parents
2. Services to supplement care received from parents or to compensate for inadequacies.
 - a. Homemaker services
 - b. Day care
3. Services designed to substitute for natural parental care, either partially or wholly.
 - a. Foster family care
 - b. Group care services - children's institutions, receiving homes, group care services for the problem child who is not seriously disturbed emotionally, residential treatment centers, institutions for the physically handicapped child and for the mentally defective child.
 - c. Adoption service
 - d. Interstate placement of children

However, each case in each category has unique differences, both in the children themselves and

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in the circumstances.

It is, therefore, easy to understand why a child welfare worker must have knowledge and skills that are unique to the field. The child's total dependence makes him more vulnerable to decisions that have to be made on his behalf.

The increasing demand for these services is shown by figures supplied to us by our Division of Research and Statistics.

For example: Compare June 1960 with June 1961

Total child welfare case-load:	3,675	4,441
Protective service cases:	1,606	1,900
Total number of days care provided children during the month:	34,132	40,283
Average cost per case:	\$ 72.79	\$ 77.86
Total obligations for foster care:	\$89,821.76	\$114,458.76

As of July 1, 1961, of the 1,148 children in foster care over the state, 287 were emotionally disturbed. 113 were in institutions staffed to handle disturbed children.

In the adoption program in 1954, 187 children were given into the permanent custody of county departments of public welfare. In 1960, this number was increased to 409. In 1954, 152 were placed in adoptive homes; in 1960, 357 were placed in adoptive homes.

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It is estimated that in the first ten months of 1961, there were 417 children placed in legal custody of county welfare departments by the courts for adoption.

Of the 409 children released during 1960, as of April 1, 1961, 87 had not been placed in adoptive homes. (This does not include those relinquished in 1961). Of this number, only 16 had much chance of ever being adopted, and the number of children in the hard-to-place category is increasing.

Although we have concentrated on finding homes for these children, few applicants are interested. The counties and state will be responsible for these children until they are able to care for themselves.

LENNIE

Lennie's troubles began at the age of five when he threw a small puppy into a burning incinerator. At the age of eleven he was committed to the Industrial School because no one was able to control him, and his behavior was becoming intolerable to the community.

Lennie's mother and father had been divorced and his mother was incapable of handling him. She had half-heartedly taken him to the Child Guidance Clinic - sometimes keeping appointments, but more often not. She wanted his father to take him, but he refused. Sometimes she was afraid Lennie would be taken away from her, and at other times wanted to be relieved of his care. After she re-married Lennie's behavior became worse.



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From the age of five to eleven Lennie's life story could be summed up in two words - trouble and flight. He had been in constant conflict in school, a familiar figure to the local police, known to the sheriff's office and the Detention Home. He stole, set fires, and was a frequent runaway.

The Child Guidance Clinic considered him a seriously disturbed child of immature and unstable parents. During his short stay at the Children's Home, he was a problem with which they could not cope. They asked that he be examined by the Children's Diagnostic Center. The findings of the Center indicated brain damage. These findings were explained to the mother. She asked permission to take Lennie to another state where they would live with her brother until the grandparents also moved there. She thought getting him away from his stepfather would help. Permission was given. Lennie was about ten at this time.

Through the grandparents the probation officer learned that Lennie and his mother were getting along fine.

Then, many months later, out of the blue, the probation officer got a call from the sheriff's office, saying that Lennie was back with his grandparents, and had set fire to a home in the neighborhood. When he was caught by the sheriff, he had a .22 caliber revolver, a switchblade knife, and a ten dollar bill, all taken from the home which he had set on fire.

When asked how Lennie happened to be back with

them, the grandparents said that a few weeks before Lennie's mother had died without warning of a brain hemorrhage and Lennie had been returned to them.

Lennie was now about eleven years old. There was no place for him other than with his grandparents and they could not control him. Since he was a delinquent child, the judge committed him to the Industrial School for Boys.

The psychological examination at the School pictured a boy who felt responsible for the death of his mother. It was the day he ran away that she died, and she had told him once that if he did not behave, the Lord would take her away. He prayed to join his mother in Heaven. He would like to "kill his stepfather". The Devil sat on his left shoulder and God, on his right shoulder. Sometimes he hit the Devil when he tempted him, and didn't do what he wanted him to; other times, the Devil won out. He couldn't depend on himself or on anyone else. So he ran and ran. He could not be still, was ruled by every wayward impulse; and consumed by fantasies of a hostile and morbid nature. He felt pressured by imagined motives of adults.

Clinical examinations suggested brain damage with psychotic reaction. He was a potential candidate for either the State Hospital or prison.

The Industrial School was not, of course the right place for this brain damaged child, whose

handicap had worsened into psychotic reaction because of inadequate parents and lack of understanding of the cause of his behavior.

The Industrial School called on the county welfare department and the State Child Welfare Division to help in getting treatment for the boy while he could still be reclaimed, and returned to normal living.

The State Child Welfare Division presented Lennie's case to residential treatment centers, both in and outside the state. Either there was no vacancy, or they did not feel they could help the boy.

Wallace Village for Children was asked. They read his case history, but said if he were as disturbed as he appeared to be, they were doubtful about taking him. However, they do have a number of psychotic children who are improving markedly. They wanted to make their own evaluation of Lennie, which they did, and accepted him.

Lennie was paroled to the county welfare department for placement in Wallace Village. He was eager to go.

Quarterly reports from Wallace Village show gradual but steady improvement. Lennie is developing self-confidence so that he no longer needs to run. He is also learning to control his temper and feelings in general, and to get along with other children. He is showing a definite interest in art, and is expressing himself through this work rather than in frantic efforts to escape his nameless fears. He likes competition in academic work and reacts

normally to it. He does a good job in working with power machines and takes pride in what he is doing.

Freed from agonizing guilt and fears, (and with teaching geared to his peculiar needs), this once tortured little boy is at last finding peace. He is well on the way to becoming a self-sufficient and useful member of society.

MARK

A call from the police to the county welfare department brought a child welfare worker to an apartment where the police officer was waiting for the mother of an eight-year old boy, Mark, to return. Neighbors had reported the mother frequently beat and cursed the child, and left him locked in the bathroom, sometimes for an entire day.

When the police answered the call they got no response to the door bell so asked the apartment manager for a key. The officer found the boy locked in the bathroom, but when he unlocked the door, Mark tried to hold it shut, saying his mother told him to stay there. He denied being beaten, although there were scars and marks about his head and body. He obviously was in great fear of his mother.

The officer turned the boy over to the child welfare worker, Miss Lee, for placement in a foster home pending a court hearing. Before taking Mark away, she tried to reassure him, saying she



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would explain to his mother that it was not his fault. The officer left a note telling Mrs. Jones what had happened and where she could ask about Mark. On the way to the foster home Miss Lee stopped by the court to file a petition.

Mrs. Jones didn't call the welfare office until the next morning, saying she had been too upset to call before. Her first question when she got to the office was whether her ADC payments would stop if Mark were taken away from her. Miss Lee said they would. Mrs. Jones vowed she would never mistreat Mark again. Miss Lee explained that the judge would determine the outcome. Mrs. Jones said she would get a lawyer.

Mark seemed content in his foster home. While he didn't warm up to the foster parents, he could hardly be separated from the boys in the home and in the neighborhood. He was starved for playmates. He asked few questions about his mother, and gave no sign of wanting to go home.

The first night the foster mother wanted to wash his hair which was matted down with grease and dirt. Mark put up a fight. He said his mother would beat him if anyone washed his head. After considerable gentle persuasion, the shampoo was accomplished. The foster mother found numerous scars. Miss Lee said his scalp was the worst she had ever seen on a child.

The boy was described by his teachers and others who knew him as a polite, alert, and intelligent little boy. However, in the presence of his mother, he was tense and there was a noticeable twitching of his facial muscles - not observable except in the presence of his mother.

On the day of the hearing, July 27, 1959, the mother appeared with her attorney. The judge heard the testimony of the three neighbors, the police, and the social worker; also arguments of Mrs. Jones' attorney. He found the child dependent within the legal definition, but awarded custody to the mother, subject to certain court orders: The county welfare department to furnish protective services, and to be given ready access to visit with, view the child, or take him from the family residence for a short period at all reasonable times. The mother was forbidden to use vile or obscene language in the presence of the child, to lock him in a room or in the apartment or other dwelling, to administer excessive or unusual punishment, to use a belt or other object in administering discipline. The child was to be permitted to have regular medical care and treatment as arranged for by the Welfare Department.

In studying the record, Miss Lee found Mrs. Jones had first contacted the agency in 1955 because Mark's father was not supporting them and her poor health kept her from working. She was put on ADC but her health problems continued, most of which seemed to be psychosomatic. Her visits to the clinic served partially to fill her driving need for attention.

During Mrs. Jones' childhood she had received little love, attention, or encouragement, though much was expected of her. The man she married was a drug addict. Mark served as a target toward which she directed her bitterness and anger, but at the same time she wanted to shine as a mother and was callously determined to shape him into her image of a paragon of virtue.

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After the hearing Mark was returned home. Miss Lee saw him weekly in the office playroom. He talked readily until the subject of his mother came up. By observing Mark while he played by himself and with her, she learned much that he could not communicate to anyone.

In playing house, he would bombard the mother, and after killing her would jump up and down in glee. However, before leaving, he put mother back in the house intact. In boxing matches with the worker, and other games calling for physical exertion, he released some of his pent up emotions. However, after a consultation with the psychologist and psychiatrist who had examined Mark, playroom activity was focused on competitive games so Mark would learn to control his impulses and to realize that he would be accepted and loved whether he won or lost.

He learned such games as checkers quickly and was alert, although he was compulsively careful in his moves. When he lost, he became tense and apprehensive, evidently expecting the worker to scorn him. She would tell him he had played a good game and if he kept on he would win next time.

Miss Lee had Mrs. Jones come to the office and showed her what she and Mark were doing. Then she left them alone. Through the one-way glass, she could see them playing together. Mrs. Jones seemed pleased to be included.

As the playroom activity continued, Mark became less rigid, but as he relaxed he tended to go overboard. This had to be controlled without

throwing him back into rigidity. He showed considerable imagination and artistic ability. In this he was encouraged.

In talks with Mark's teacher, Miss Lee found that Mark was a good student, but inclined to act up in order to get attention. He could also be something of a bully.

The prognostic impression of the psychiatrist was that Mark was well on the way to forming a psychopathic personality in his present home atmosphere. Miss Lee realized that progress made in the playroom would not hold without a change in the mother.

In Miss Lee's visits to the home to observe the interaction between Mark and his mother, she saw that the relationship was strained. When Mark came home from school, Mrs. Jones acted as if she expected a bad report. When he showed her his work, obviously hoping for encouragement and compliments, he got none. She was impatient and critical of everything he did.

Sometimes in the home visits, Miss Lee arrived before Mark got home from school so she could talk with Mrs. Jones alone. She talked to her about Mark's progress and how Mrs. Jones could help him. In these visits Mrs. Jones began to understand what she was doing to Mark and why; also, that Mark needed some encouragement, just as we all do.

As weekly visits with Mrs. Jones continued, Miss Lee found her responding more and more. She gained some insight into her behavior toward Mark and what it was doing to him. (Some of this

was brought out during games the three of them played together.) Also, she was beginning to see how wrong it is to expect perfection in either Mark or in herself. She began to see something of Mark's needs, and complained less and less of her ailments. She actually said she felt good and talked rather positively about life. She moved into a small house so Mark would have a yard to play in. The other boys in the neighborhood had bicycles and Mark yearned for one. Miss Lee arranged to get one for him through the generosity of the Kiwanis Club. He could hardly speak for joy.

While the mother improved markedly, Mark progressed more slowly, as could be expected.

In the beginning Mrs. Jones had refused Mark any outside contact, except school. Now she was willing to have Miss Lee get information about Big Brothers, and allowed him some recreational activities.

Miss Lee began to talk to both Mark and his mother about his going to camp. (Mark needed some time to be free to be himself, but not without some limitations on that freedom).

Mrs. Jones finally consented. During the time Mark was in camp, Miss Lee continued to visit Mrs. Jones weekly, and found she was missing him and looking forward to his return. She displayed, with pride, a bracelet he had made for her.

In one of Miss Lee's visits with the mother she talked about a rabbit Mark once has as a pet. The worker said perhaps she would like for Mark to have another pet. Mrs. Jones readily agreed. The three of them went to pick out a pet. Mark chose a guinea pig. Mrs. Jones took an active interest in the proceedings and seemed to enjoy it as much as Mark did. On the way home, they decided one guinea pig would be lonesome, so the next week they picked out another. Mark named them Mr. and Mrs. Cuddlebug because they were so cuddly.

After more than a year of intensive casework with Mark and his mother, Mrs. Jones said she felt she could be a good mother now because she wanted to be and not because of the court order. She seemed to think her troubles were over.

Miss Lee tried to explain that the past cannot be undone in a matter of months, and that Mark would continue to have his difficulties. (The worker realized that Mrs. Jones would need further support if she were to hold on to her new found understanding and resolves.) However, they both decided the court order had served its purpose.

Miss Lee report to the court, recommending that jurisdiction of the court be terminated. The judge agreed.

Mrs. Jones told Miss Lee she would still want help from the agency even though there was no court order now. Casework services for Mark and his mother are being continued.



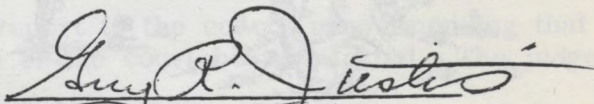
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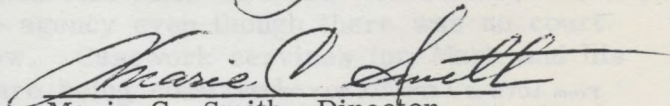
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The Advisory Committee to the Child Welfare Division numbers twenty persons from different parts of the state. Members are chosen for their active concern for children in Colorado who are dependent, neglected, abused, rejected, or defenseless in adverse circumstances.

Since the Child Welfare Division was created in 1936, the Advisory Committee has been of vital help in strengthening, developing, and expanding child welfare services throughout the state.

Its accomplishments over the years would fill many pages, and neither time nor a changing world dampens the enthusiasm with which each succeeding committee tackles the year's crop of "special urgencies" -- more foster homes, treatment for emotionally disturbed children, protective or corrective legislation -- whatever the need, the committee is on the job!


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


Marie C. Smith, Director
Child Welfare Division

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