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U N I V E R S I T Y   O F   W I N D S O R

The School of Social Work

FIVE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES'  
EXPERIENCE WITH THE PLANNING AND  
INITIATING OF THEIR FIRST GROUP HOMES

by

M. Theresa Boland

A thesis submitted to the  
School of Social Work of the University of Windsor  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Social Work

August, 1975

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

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UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of five Children's Aid Societies in relation to the plans for and initiation of their first group home. The project was to explore the origin of the idea for the first group home, the timing and source of approval for this home, the information used in preparation for the service to be offered and the actual opening process. In addition, data was collected regarding budgetary considerations; the purposes of, and target population for whom the home was directed; the type of group home model employed and the actual physical facility as well as the staffing arrangements considered. Furthermore, opinions about the advantages and disadvantages of group homes and recommendations to those planning group homes were examined.

The research design used was exploratory descriptive. Data was collected through the use of an interview schedule developed by the researcher. The population was five Children's Aid Societies in Southwestern Ontario.

There was no apparent overall pattern to the way in which the societies planned their first homes, yet each developed an individual approach to the establishment of them.

It was found that societies were able to open their homes in less than four months after approval from their board. The earliest group home opened in December 1961, and the latest first home opened in September 1972. These first homes were operative for a period of at least two years,

and three of these homes remain in operation. Of these three homes, one has operated for eight years. There was no concensus about whether budgets formulated were accurate but all the societies had used a budget for their first group home. Teenagers and children with moderate behavior problems dominated as the populations to whom the group home was directed. All the societies used large single family homes in neighborhoods zoned to accommodate group living for their first group home. Two group home models were used by the societies, namely the foster family group home and the agency-operated group home. Foster families operated the first type of home and married couples, or individuals with child care training, staffed the second type of home.

All of these societies, except the one opening the most recent home, have opened at least one additional home. It would appear that, in the experiences of these five societies, group homes are considered an accepted form of providing residential care.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the process of this research project, the researcher received much help and encouragement from many people. She wishes to express her appreciation to them for their contributions to the realization of this study.

The five Children's Aid Societies, namely The Children's Aid Society of Kent County, The Children's Aid Society of Essex County, The Roman Catholic Children's Aid Society of Essex County, The Children's Aid Society of Sarnia and Lambton County and The Family and Children's Services of London and Middlesex County, are to be thanked for their encouraging interest and participation in this study of group homes.

The researcher wishes to thank her research committee members, Professor Trevor Price, Professor Valentin Cruz, and Dr. Lola Beth Buckley, the Chairman of the committee, for their guidance in the planning and writing involved in this project. She sincerely thanks Dr. Buckley for sharing this experience with her, her guidance and encouragement were gratefully received.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This study originated from the researcher's interest in the use of group homes as a form of substitute care. Despite this interest, the researcher initially was uncertain about which aspect of group homes to investigate.

In the Ontario media, there were recurring reports of community reaction to the placement of group homes in certain residential neighborhoods. In metropolitan areas, there were reports of community fear that concentrations of group homes would saturate neighborhoods. In Toronto, this concern led to the formation, in the summer of 1974, of the Metro Conference on Group Homes.<sup>1</sup>

The researcher, a former social worker in a mental health setting, was aware of the need for alternative forms of substitute care within the community, especially for adolescent clients.

These influences aroused curiosity about group homes. Several questions were suggested. How were group homes planned? What needs were they intended to meet? What were the purposes and the orientations of group homes in their service delivery? What were the experiences of

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<sup>1</sup>"Group Home Problems," Executive Newsletter, Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto, (September, 1974), p. 3.

agencies who planned and started group homes?

The researcher had a conviction that services should not come about haphazardly, but rather should be planned. This conviction was related to another about evaluating a group home service, that is, planning of such a service should affect, in some ways, the outcome of the services delivered, in the researcher's view. If a service was to be evaluated as to its total effectiveness, consideration must be given to how it was planned and to what its goals were. There would then be criteria with which to measure the service provided, thus the researcher would have a basis for a more potentially valuable evaluation.

In searching the literature, which was available on group homes, one main theme seemed to be a focus on the various ways group homes were being operated. The literature served to point out the many alternatives which were used in operating group homes according to the particular needs of the agency. There remained little in the literature about how a group home was planned and few recommendations were made about how this planning could be done more effectively.

Group homes are one alternative in the foster care field which has seen increased use over the past two decades. The varied ways in which group homes had been used by different child welfare agencies has contributed to confusion in defining and describing a group home.

The group home at present represents a concept more

than a consistent form of care. It is defined more specifically by size than by program, and the term is rather loosely applied to a variety of services.<sup>2</sup>

Possibly, the flexibility of the application of the group home concept was a reason for its use by increasing numbers and types of agencies. The group home was a combination of a building, staff, program, auxiliary community services and an overall administration. Agencies varied widely in choosing these particular aspects of the total service, so that it appeared to be very difficult to define what a group home was. Likewise, agencies also varied as to the client population they planned to serve in such homes.

Despite the dearth of available guidance in planning and operating group homes many groups in the public and private social services have become interested in group homes and have established them.

A problem arose for the researcher in the selection of a population for this study. It did not seem feasible to the researcher to try to include all types of group homes operated under all manner of auspices basically because of financial and time limitations.

Group homes are operated under the administration of five ministries in Ontario.<sup>3</sup> Each ministry has been

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<sup>2</sup>Rena Schulman, "Examples of Adolescent Group Homes in Alliance with Larger Institutions", Child Welfare, LIV, 5, (May 1975), p. 342.

<sup>3</sup>Mayor Gladys Rolling, "Group Homes -- Privilege or Responsibility." Paper presented at the 1974 Mid-Term Meeting of The Association of Counties and Regions of Ontario; Toronto, April 4, 1974.

involved, to some degree, with such homes. The degree to which each was involved was not known to the researcher. It was speculated that some had used group homes more extensively than others. One source of information, which the researcher found helpful in identifying the population used in her study, was The Monthly Statistical Bulletin.<sup>4</sup>

From this publication, the researcher obtained information as to the number of children placed in group homes operated by the Children's Aid Societies of Ontario. It also served to indicate which Societies had group homes.

The researcher chose to use five Children's Aid Societies in Southwestern Ontario as the population of the study. The researcher wished to study the experiences with planning and initiating the first group home of some Societies which served communities which did not have a wide range of services.

The design of the research was exploratory. An interview schedule was used to collect the data to answer the following research question. How did five Children's Aid Societies plan and operate their first group home; and based on this experience, what were their opinions about the use of group homes?

Despite the small size of the population, the researcher expected that the findings of the research would describe how group homes were planned by five Children's Aid Societies in Southwestern Ontario.

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<sup>4</sup>Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, Research and Planning Branch, Monthly Statistical Bulletin, (December 1974), p. 21.



## CHAPTER II

### THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There remain children whose needs could not be met by existing modes of care. Delaney wrote "the necessity produces action." The need to provide care away from home for these children was the impetus to develop "a different living setting -- the group home."<sup>5</sup> Since she wrote this article in 1949, group homes have been used and suggested for use for youth and adults with a wide range of needs. This research on group homes involved a literature review about such homes which were intended to serve children and adolescents.

The group home has seen increased use over the past two decades, but as a concept has been used earlier in both Britain and the United States. Canadian use of the group home concept as it is known today has occurred mainly within the past two decades.

At the beginning of this century, the use of institutions dominated the field of substitute care for persons needing removal from their homes. It was concluded eventually that this type of care was not the only kind required to serve the varied needs of people. Foster homes

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<sup>5</sup>Audre T. Delany, "Two New York Agencies Try Out Group Homes for Adolescents," The Child, XIV, 2, (August, 1949), p. 22.

were created and formed the backbone of the child care agencies. Group homes arose out of a need for new alternatives in the substitute care of children and adolescents. These homes seemed to combine some of the characteristics of both the institution and the foster home. They have taken their place beside these two types of services. The increased use of the group home has been influenced by the changes in institutional and foster care. There has been a demise of the large custodial care facility and an increase in support systems for families which aid in maintaining children in their family homes.<sup>6</sup> Institutions, which remained in existence, were more specialized in their problem focus and in the kinds of clients they served.

Foster homes have changed in that foster parents have asked for more support and recognition for their roles in caring for children. Foster parent education has received increasing attention by child welfare agencies.

Group homes are used differently by many agencies and groups. The extremely varied uses to which group homes have been put, has led to many different opinions and reports of the needs which group homes could serve. In the literature about the service orientations of group homes, there seemed to be two trends which follow the national lines of the literature. American literature on group homes seemed to link the group home with a treatment focus,

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<sup>6</sup>Martin Gula, "Community Services and Residential Institution for Children," Children Today, III, 6, (November -- December, 1974), p. 15.

while British literature seemed to be more concerned with residential group care and linked the group home with foster care rather than with a treatment focus.

Just as the uses for group homes have been varied, according to the types of agencies which have used them, the particular target population of group homes varied. Mostly recently, teenagers have represented an increasing percentage of the caseloads of child care agencies. These youth seemed to be one group for whom the group home was thought to be more appropriate than the foster home. It has also been suggested as a placement for children who had difficulties with too much closeness and the 'family style' orientation generally associated with a foster home.

Group homes were often used as "adjuncts to residential treatment."<sup>7</sup> These homes have been used as a means of helping children and adolescents adjust to community living in a more open environment or as a placement for children who were not expected to benefit from further institutional treatment.

Those children and adolescents who would benefit from more supervision because of delinquent behavior have also been placed in group homes which were oriented toward social control.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Linda Hoffman, et al., "A Group Home -- Hospital Treatment for Severely Disturbed Adolescents," Child Welfare, LIV, 4, (April 1975), p. 284.

<sup>8</sup>Michael Garber, "Neighborhood Based Child Welfare," Child Welfare, LIV, 2, (February 1975), p. 76.

For this varied target population, agencies have developed different styles of living all based on the group home concept. Basically three variations on the group home concept have been used. These are the foster family group home, the agency-operated group home and the small group residence.<sup>9</sup>

In the province of Ontario, group homes are administered and operated under four ministries and one department which were empowered by four different acts.

Although the literature on group homes has remained limited, there were presentations of how group homes have been operated. Recently there has been an increase in literature on how community agencies have cooperated with their communities in the provision of a group home service.

Group homes can take on a variety of definitions, staffing patterns and uses. Some are agency-owned and professionally staffed and provide complete internal care and casework services; others are basically a foster home designed primarily for the care and supervision of several children. In some types of group homes, provisions are made for long term care. Most group homes probably take on characteristics between these extremes, adapting the many possible variables to meet local needs, concepts, and community and/or agency realities (e.g., finances, zoning laws).<sup>10</sup>

Another area, which has been dealt with in only a limited way in the literature, was programming within the

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<sup>9</sup>Martin Gula, "Group Homes -- New and Differentiated Tools in Child Welfare, Delinquency and Mental Health," Child Welfare, LXIII, 8, (October 1964), p. 394-395.

<sup>10</sup>John W. Pearson, The Group Home Project: An Exploration into the Use of Group Homes for Delinquents in a Different Treatment Setting, State of California, Human Relations Agency, Department of the Youth Authority, (February, 1970), p. 4.

home. Although of interest, this aspect of group home life was not included in this review as it was outside the scope of this study.

### The Historical Development of Group Homes

In first approaching this subject, the researcher believed that group homes were a recent innovation, but found that they had been in wide use for the past two decades. They also existed prior to this period both in the United States and Great Britain.

Martin Gula noted,

In 1916 a New York Jewish orphanage established a pioneering group home for adolescent girls on a residential street, to help prepare "orphanage" girls for community living.<sup>11</sup>

This appeared to be one of the original homes using the group home concept.

In Britain, the model of the foster family group home was used.

A number of Homes of this type were in existence before 1948 and were known as "scattered Homes" because they were generally scattered around town and its surrounding countryside in order to avoid the difficulties inherent in accumulating numbers of children into a large unit.<sup>12</sup>

In the United States, The Child Welfare League published Group Home Programs in 1961. This publication reported the results of a questionnaire sent to thirty

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<sup>11</sup>Martin Gula, "Community Services and Institutions," p. 15.

<sup>12</sup>Kenneth Brill and Ruth Thomas, Children in Homes, (London, England: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1964), p. 158.

agencies on their use of group homes.<sup>13</sup>

Also, in the early 1960's, the Children's Bureau, a federal department of the United States government, encouraged the development of group homes along with other community services.<sup>14</sup> Group homes of the foster family model enjoyed a similar sort of support in Britain. This was accomplished by financial restrictions which ensured priority to small homes.<sup>15</sup>

In Canada, Ernest Hirschbach reported that plans for a boys' group foster home were begun in 1955 but the home was not opened until 1960.<sup>16</sup>

The orientation of the American group home concept, as suggested by the literature, was treatment. The articles put together in Group Homes in Perspective<sup>17</sup> all indicated a definite interest in using the group home as a placement for disturbed children or for children who would otherwise have been placed in institutions for delinquency.

Although this researcher was not able to obtain very much British literature, what was available indicated a rather different view of group homes. The literature's description of group homes indicated a tendency to regard

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<sup>13</sup>Group Home Programs, A Study of Some Programs Operated by League Member Agencies, (New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc., 1961).

<sup>14</sup>Martin Gula, "Community Services and Institutions" p. 15

<sup>15</sup>Brill and Thomas, Children in Homes, p. 159.

<sup>16</sup>Ernest Hirschbach, "A Group Foster Home," Canadian Welfare, XXXIX, 1, (January-February 1963), p. 13.

<sup>17</sup>Group Homes in Perspective, (New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc., 1964).

these as a part of the foster care approach with an emphasis on group living.<sup>18</sup>

Brill and Thomas noted that these foster family group homes were used for children who could not have been placed in foster homes. One example given was that of brothers and sisters who would not be helped by separation.<sup>19</sup>

The Canadian literature tended to follow the American example of having a particular treatment orientation. This treatment orientation was that of having psychiatric and social work treatment augment the program in one case.<sup>20</sup>

The rise of the use of the group home has also paralleled the change in types of needs from custodial care to treatment and the popularity of the use of groups as a treatment form.

We are now past the debate of the thirties, when the argument was foster homes versus institutions, and into a new era in which child welfare agencies have sought and used other alternatives in substitute care for children and adolescents.<sup>21</sup>

Group homes have been built on the concepts of the

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<sup>18</sup>Janet Montgomerie, Services for Children and Their Families, (Oxford, England: Pergammon Press, 1973), p. 131.

<sup>19</sup>Brill and Thomas, Children in Homes, p. 158.

<sup>20</sup>Paul Steinhauer, "A Group Home That Emphasizes Treatment," Journal of the Ontario Children's Aid Societies, IX, 6, (June 1966), p. 2.

<sup>21</sup>Ernest Hirschbach, Group Homes for Children, (Rev. ed.; Ottawa: Family and Child Welfare Division, The Canadian Welfare Council, 1967), p. 2.

institution and the foster home to provide for a population of children and adolescents with special needs. Historically, the unique needs of youth have been increasingly recognized and, as well, the special needs for services required by them. Alternative services to families and youth have developed from this recognition and built on the previous experiences in service delivery

There has been increasing difficulty in recruiting foster parents "who are willing and able to accomodate and serve disturbed children". This has been coupled with a move away from large institutions in child care.

Historically, child welfare has developed through a series of movements on behalf of the child, from almshouses, industrial schools, free homes, institutions, foster homes, adoption, specialized treatment homes, to group homes.<sup>22</sup>

In the following section, the uses of group homes are presented.

#### Group Home Uses

Although it has been agreed generally that group homes were not replacements for either foster care or institution which provide treatment, they have been used as part of the services, or the only service, of many child welfare agencies. In the literature, there were several reasons suggested for the use of the group home. Such a facility could be based in the community; it was smaller

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<sup>22</sup>Mareaner Applebaum, "Discussion," Child Welfare, LXIII, 8, (October, 1964), p. 398.



and therefore less visible than an institution; the agency was in control of the placement as well as the length of stay of the youth for whom placement was required; it was felt to be less expensive than institutional placement; and it was a placement for children and adolescents for whom other existing services were not considered to be suitable placements.

Group homes did not attempt to develop a close familial relationship but it was expected that they could maintain and enhance the functioning of its residents in the community in which they lived. In most cases, group homes were planned to be located on residential streets. Clients were expected to be able to use the social, educational, health and recreational services available within the community.

By situating the group home within the community, and using the established community schools, doctors, parks and pools, and the counselling services of the agency, it was expected that the group home residents would feel more comfortable in these contacts and therefore enhance their social development.

For the adolescent, this is most important, since this is his final placement, and he must be prepared to function in the environment to which he will go when placement terminates.<sup>23</sup>

The desire to have services, such as group homes, based in the community rather than in an isolated area, has

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<sup>23</sup>Irving Rabinow, "Agency-Operated Group Homes," Group Homes in Perspective, (New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc., 1964), p. 25.

become very popular. Agencies seemed to be moving towards services which help to maintain people, if not in their own homes, in their own communities. The trend seemed to be an attempt to maintain some relationship with the community, which the CELDIC Report, One Million Children, called the provision of a home base.

This concept of the separate function of the home base is designed to retain a foothold in the community for children, who have multiple problems and who, otherwise, lead a transient life in a series of foster homes or in segregated residential care without any sense of a continuity of agency or community interest.<sup>24</sup>

A group home, based in the community, made it possible for workers previously involved with the child before placement to maintain contact with him. Often in the past placement for these youth meant removal from their community and thus breaking all ties.<sup>25</sup>

Most group homes care for four to twelve children in one group.<sup>26</sup> This size made it physically possible to accommodate the residents in housing similar to that of the rest of the neighborhood in which it was situated. The group home was able to maintain relatively low visibility in comparison to an institution, by using such housing.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Commission on Emotional and Learning Disorders in Children, One Million Children, (Toronto: Macdonald-Downey Ltd., 1970), p. 204

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 330.

<sup>26</sup>Martin Gula, Agency Operated Group Homes, (Washington, D.C.: Children's Bureau, Government Printing Office, 1964), p. 4.

<sup>27</sup>Norman Herstein, "What is a Group Home?", Group Homes in Perspective, p. 21-22.

This rather low profile had the advantage of limiting the stigma attached to living in such a facility for both the residents and the house parents.

Although group homes were not found to be as inexpensive as foster care, their cost compared favorably with that of institutional care.<sup>28</sup> Herstein suggested one possible reason for interest in use of group homes, which cannot be discounted.

So long as cost entails only a small percentage of community expenditures there is little controversy about "saving" children.<sup>29</sup>

The literature on group homes stressed repeatedly that in using such homes, the agency operating them has more control over admission, duration and termination of the placement. For the agency which was adding group homes to its many other services for families and children, this control was valuable. Negotiations for placement and the degree of control after placement in another agency's facility were possible problems which an agency operated group home could help to alleviate.

For the child, the advantage an agency operated group home held was that he would be less likely to be moved in such a facility, when difficulty arose within the home or the house parents left the program. Moves were

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<sup>28</sup>Oliver Keller and Benedict Alper, Halfway Houses: Community Centered Correction and Treatment, (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Company, 1970), p. 91.

<sup>29</sup>Norman Herstein, "The Challenge of Evaluation in Residential Treatment," Child Welfare, LIV, 3, (March 1975), p. 146.

felt to be disturbing and this made the use of a group home more attractive for children and adolescents who were difficult to place.<sup>30</sup>

The group home offered a placement for youth who did not tolerate well the 'family style' orientation. They were also of value for those for whom institutional placement was not considered to be appropriate.<sup>31</sup> For these particular clients, the agency could use a group home concept and build into it a program suited to the needs of its clients.

Group homes were used in a wide variety of ways in the service of children and adolescents. The characteristics of the client population had as much variation as the uses of the group homes established to serve them.

#### Client Populations

As there was little British literature available to the researcher, American and Canadian sources provided the major reference for this section on the target population of group home services. These references tended to regard group homes as a 'treatment entity' and this is what distinguished group homes from foster homes.<sup>32</sup>

Generally group homes were expected to serve youth whose needs were such that neither the traditional foster

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<sup>30</sup>Gula, "Group Homes -- New and Differentiated Tools", p. 394.

<sup>31</sup>Hirschbach, Group Homes For Children, p. 7.

<sup>32</sup>Applebaum, p. 399.

home nor the treatment institutions were considered to be suitable placements.

The resident of a group home was expected to be able to manage himself while attending school, and could be able to use the usual community services, such as the doctor, dentist and the public recreation programs.

The group home has been suggested as the treatment of choice for adolescents. This choice seemed to be a process of eliminating foster homes and institutions and basically stating that group homes are the next alternative for serving this particularly difficult group.

Many adolescents who are emotionally moving away from dependance on parental figures and therefore can better adjust to the less intimate adult-child relationships of a group home. This is particularly valid in the case of children who have to leave their own homes for the first time at age 15 or over.<sup>33</sup>

The group home was also considered an appropriate placement for children in need of removal from their own homes but

who have such close ties to their families that they are unable to accept or tolerate placement in a substitute family group.<sup>34</sup>

Wilgosh, in a study on the use of group homes for boys with delinquent behavior, found that the most important variable which influenced the success of group home placement for these boys was the parental attitude towards the placement. If the parental attitude towards the group home

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<sup>33</sup>Hirschbach, Group Homes for Children, p. 7.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

placement was positive the outcome of the placement was positive.<sup>35</sup>

Hirschbach described another category of potential clients for the group home as those children who have had such a negative experience in their own family that it would be very difficult for them to relate to a substitute family. Adjustment to a group was considered more possible than to a family.<sup>36</sup>

Children with behavior disorders that were serious were considered to be more accepted in group homes than they would be in foster homes. These children were those who had enuresis, soiling problems, who demonstrated very aggressive behavior or frequently ran away. For these children, a group home was considered more suitable.<sup>37</sup>

These children and adolescents were in need of a service such as a group home which provided longer term care.

There were other children and adolescents for whom the group home was considered to be valuable. Children and adolescents who were ready to leave or have benefited as much as they could from an institution's program were considered to be suited to the type of living situation a

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<sup>35</sup>Lorraine Wilgosh, "A Study of Group Home Placements as a Possible Correction of Delinquent Behavior," Canadian Journal of Criminology and Correction, XV, 1, (January, 1973), p. 100.

<sup>36</sup>Hirschbach, Group Homes for Children, p. 7.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

a group home could offer. The programs of the group homes would be different for the person who was to make further adjustments towards a goal of living independently than for the person who was to receive a more custodial type of care. In the first case, the group home may be a short term placement for youth making a transition from an institution to community living, or a long term placement for youth who have benefited as much as possible and could live in a group home, but were not intended to leave it.<sup>38</sup>

The group home could also be used by agencies who were providing 'emergency and shelter care' for children and adolescents who needed these types of care. Berman also suggested group homes as a form of diagnostic assessment.

...a period of care to test the child's ability to function in school, on the job, and in the community in general.<sup>39</sup>

The institutional point of view is somewhat different.

...the group home can provide a home when no home is available, a home when a home is temporarily unavailable, an opportunity to live in the community and receive further treatment, a transitional protective environment, and a base which enables the child to become reacquainted with his parents on a more realistic basis than an institutional climate permitted.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Rena Schulman, "Examples of Adolescent Group Homes in Alliance with Larger Institutions," p. 345 - 347

<sup>39</sup>Samuel Berman, "Discussion," Child Welfare, LXIII, 8, (October, 1964), p. 402.

<sup>40</sup>Arthur Greenberg and Morris F. Mayer, "Group Home Care as an Adjunct to Residential Treatment," Child Welfare LI, 7, (July, 1972), p. 43.

There were at least two other view points, that of the foster home and the 'fall between the logs' view point. From the foster home vantage point, group homes are a resource for children and adolescents who are unable to adapt to a family environment and "relate to substitute parents", or who have parents whose involvement with them was positive or negative and because of their involvement a foster home would have difficulty dealing with the child's natural parents.<sup>41</sup>

For some children and adolescents the level of disturbance manifested, be it emotional or social, was not severe enough to warrant placement in an institution. Nor did the level of their disturbance make them easy to place and maintain in a foster home.

Some agencies have been able to arrange for several homes in which to place their children and adolescents. These group home programs were able to accomodate only those children who could be placed together not just because of their particular characteristics but because they mesh well as a group.

Leonard observed boys in one group home and used sociometric methods of analyzing communication and interaction patterns of these boys. He found that group cohesion and integration was low. This suggested that the boys in this home had little group feeling.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Hirschbach, Group Homes for Children, pp. 6-7.

<sup>42</sup>Wilbert Leonard, "A Sociometric Analysis of a Group Residential Treatment Home," Small Group Behavior, V, 3, (August, 1974), pp. 278-282.



The above study and the infrequent mention of the group in the group home literature suggested to this researcher that, though called a group home, possibly not enough attention was paid to the group, nor did its potentials seem to be capitalized upon.

Just as the group home has been considered to be a placement for children and adolescents with different circumstances influencing their placement, the placement itself has arisen out of different circumstances. The group home is a concept and agencies have used many variations of it in order to provide service to their clients.

In the next section, the types of group homes are discussed.

#### A Comparison of Six Major Group

##### Home Innovations

A comparison of five major group home innovations, described by Gula<sup>43</sup> along with my own addition, follows.

These variations are compared according to payment of 'in house' staff, facility ownership, qualifications of the 'in house' staff, goal of service, admission decisions, the auspices of services used, and number of children accommodated.

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<sup>43</sup>Gula, "New and Differentiated Tools," pp. 394-395.

CHART 1

COMPARISONS OF SIX MAJOR GROUP HOME INNOVATIONS

|   | Specialized or Professional Foster Homes  | Foster Homes Agency Owned  | Foster Family Group Homes  | Agency-Operated Group Homes   | Group Residences   | Group Homes (Non-Profit Corporation)                 |
|---|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| Payment Arrangement for foster or house parents   | monthly service fee or board rate or salary   | free room and board plus board rate or salary                                      | board payment, subsidies, or salary  | salary  | salary   | salary   |
| Facility ownership                                | private   | agency or institution  | private  | agency or institution   | institution  | private  |
| Special qualifications of foster or house parents | professional background and special capacity for working with children handicapped physically or mentally | married couple live in, round the clock responsibility                             | knack for constructive handling of groups of children  | child care workers (called house parents or counsellors)                                | child care workers (called counsellors)  | varies   |
| Goal  | care and treatment  | care and treatment   | care, and children may have special needs  | care and treatment  | halfway house nature; adjunct to treatment of institution                              | care and treatment                                   |
| Admission and discharge responsibility            | foster family shares decision with agency; if parents resign, children leave                              | agency makes major decision; if foster parents resign, they leave, children remain | foster family shares decision with agency or institution; if foster parents resign, children leave | parent agency institution is responsible for administration, and supervision of service | parent agency institution is responsible for administration and supervision of service | group home negotiates with the agency or institution |
| Service use predominance                          | community services  | community services   | community services   | agency/institution services   | agency/institution services  | community services                                   |
| Number of children in care                        | one or two children   | four to eight children   | four to six children   | one group of four to twelve children  | thirteen to twenty-five children in two groups   | varies   |

The Different Acts under which Group

Homes are Administered

Group homes are administered and funded under the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the Department of the Attorney General, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Correctional Services. They may also be funded municipally or "privately by individual societies" of the Children's Aid Societies.

Under Community and Social Services, group homes are operated under The Children's Boarding Homes Act. Such homes are registered with the Ministry but are funded one hundred per cent by the municipality. Group homes are operated under The Charitable Institutions Act. These homes are funded eighty per cent, or up to a maximum of eleven dollars per day by the province, but this maximum does not apply to C. A. S. use of group homes under this act according to Mayor Rollings. Group homes are operated under The Retarded Persons Act, and such homes are funded eighty per cent by the province.

Also under Community and Social Services, group homes are funded and administered under The Child Welfare Act. These homes are run privately by individual Children's Aid Societies and funded sixty-five per cent provincially and thirty-five percent municipally. Also, under The Children's Institutions Act, group homes are funded up to eighty per cent by the province, but when C.A.S. uses these homes the province pays sixty-five per cent and the municipality

thirty-five per cent.<sup>44</sup>

The Ministries of Health, Correctional Services, and the Attorney General's Office also administer and fund group homes. These group homes are funded one hundred per cent by the particular Ministry or Department.

Group homes are operated under a variety of funding schemes and legislation which only adds to the confusion surrounding the term group home. Not any less important is the concern for accountability which is again met by confusion, because many Acts and Ministries are involved.<sup>45</sup>

#### The Children's Institution Act

Under this act,

Children's institution means a building or building maintained and operated by an approved corporation for children (under 18) and other persons requiring specialized or group care....<sup>46</sup>

This act requires one competent full time staff member on duty for every four residents. "Schedule Three Facilities", under this act, requires one child care worker per ten residents and also one social worker.<sup>47</sup>

#### The Children's Boarding Homes Act

Under this act,

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<sup>44</sup>Mayor Gladys Rolling, "Group Homes -- Privilege or Responsibility".

<sup>45</sup>Rolling, p. 4.

<sup>46</sup>The Children's Institutions Act, Revised Statutes of Ontario, Vol. 2, Chapter 50, Section 19.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

Children's boarding home means a premises in which five or more children, not of common parentage, reside away from the homes of their parents, primarily for the purpose of receiving lodging, boarding or care but does not include foster homes of the C.A.S. under the Child Welfare Act....<sup>48</sup>

This act requires one competent full-time staff member for every five children in care. The staff qualification includes a sympathetic attitude to the welfare of children, adequate knowledge and experience to recognize and meet the needs of children, and an ability to cope with their problems. The staff member must be of suitable age, health and personality to carry out his or her duties.<sup>49</sup>

These acts provided broad guidelines under which group homes have been initiated but still provide little indication of what group homes are.

In the next section, several definitions of group homes are presented.

#### Definitions of Group Homes

In my research, I have not been able to find an all-encompassing definition for group home, but rather definitions of the group homes which Gula has identified -- the Agency-Operated Group Home and the Foster Group Home. Gula did not, however, mention the private group home which is operated as a non-profit corporation. Definitions for these types of group homes have been influenced by the

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<sup>48</sup>The Children's Boarding Homes Act, Revised Statutes of Ontario, Vol. 2, Chapter 50, Section 18.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

agency control of the program of the group home and the preservation of the small group autonomy which Herstein stated as the characteristics of the group home. Agency control meant the agency's participatory role in coordinating the 'on-grounds personnel', for example the houseparents, and the 'off-grounds personnel', such as social workers, administrators, and consultants.<sup>50</sup>

Much of the literature promoted the agency-operated group home as the ideal, as the agency may control the administration of the home and especially its admission policy.

The small group autonomy characteristic meant that "all the members of the [home] are accessible to each other within a minimum of social distance."<sup>51</sup>

One problem with defining the group home is the necessity to differentiate it from the foster home and the institution. The group home is expected to straddle the gap between these two types of care which are ever changing and moving closer to each other.

#### The Agency Operated Group Home

Hirschbach used the Child Welfare League of America definition which described the group home as an agency-operated home,

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<sup>50</sup>Norman Herstein, "What is a Group Home?", Child Welfare, LXIII, 8, p. 406

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 410

...providing care for a small group of children in a family-type setting where the emphasis is on meeting the specialized needs of adolescents or seriously disturbed youngsters for whom institutional care is contraindicated, or on the study and/or treatment of disturbed children through the use of this setting.<sup>52</sup>

#### The Foster Group Home

Herstein presented Greenberg's definition which states the goal of foster group homes as one:

...to provide a small family-type setting that enables children to remain in the community and to retain as much of normal community living as they are able to use.<sup>53</sup>

#### The Private Group Home

Schwartz and Kaplan defined their group home with an accent on the term group: A small autonomous unit, in the community, in which children who have a reasonable level or tolerance for a group and who, as a group, have heterogeneous problems but "have sufficient inner controls to function independently away from the home"<sup>54</sup> live together with house-parents who develop a treatment plan with the children and help to prepare them for as normal a life as they can manage.

#### The Planning and Operation of Group Homes

Group homes have been operated by many different types of agencies for different reasons. They have provided

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<sup>52</sup>The Child Welfare League Group Home Programs as quoted by Hirschbach, Group Homes for Children, pp. 4-5.

<sup>53</sup>Arthur Greenberg as quoted by Herstein, "What is a Group Home?", p. 403.

<sup>54</sup>Miriam Schwartz and Isidore Kaplan, "Small Group Homes -- Placement of Choice for Adolescents," Child Welfare, XL, 8, p. 10.

care for children and adolescents who required placement but could not be served in the foster home or the institution. When an agency planned to provide a group home service, it had to combine several variables according to the orientation which the home was expected to have and the resources available to the agency and the community which it served. For each agency, there were many choices to be made. The orientation of the program, the budgetary considerations, the physical facility, the staffing and the **auxiliary services** to the program had to be arranged. The admission criteria had to be set and there were several considerations in this decision.

#### The Orientation of the Group Home

As was stated previously, American literature on group homes has laid heavy emphasis on using the group home as a treatment facility. One such agency, the California Youth Authority, used The Interpersonal Maturity Classification as a treatment model in the eight homes of their group home project. The client population for these group homes was delinquent teenagers. In the planning of this project several homes were anticipated. These were a containment home, a boarding home, a temporary community care home, and a restriction home.<sup>55</sup>

Other agencies have used their group homes for

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<sup>55</sup>John W. Pearson, "A Differential Use of Group Homes for Delinquent Boys," Children, XVII, 4, (July-August, 1970), pp. 143-148.



treatment purposes but have not followed this elaborate scheme. Some group homes could not be confined to just one specific purpose because this may have been the only alternative resource the agency had for placement.

Although Thornley was speaking of a group home for the mentally retarded, her description of what a group home orientation ought to be applies more generally.

...a group home should be a best effort to provide the best home living and training experience possible that would enable the residents to successfully enter the mainstream of the community.<sup>56</sup>

Besides the particular orientation chosen for the home, other decisions must be made.

#### Budgetary Considerations

At the Group Home Conference, held in New York in 1973, many specific suggestions were made about the financing of group homes. The first decision is the choice to buy or to rent. For some agencies, there may be no choice. There are several arguments for either buying or for renting. The major determinant is the locating of a suitable physical facility for a price that is reasonable.

In preparing a budget for a group home, consideration should be given to the size of the house, the number of residents and the type of resident (dependant and neglected, mentally disturbed, addicted, etc.), as to the effect these conditions would have on household furnishings and space requirements of home and

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<sup>56</sup>Margo Thornley, "Group Homes: A Blessing or a Curse," Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, VIII, 3, (October 1973), p. 161.

supporting staff.<sup>57</sup>

These are just a few of the considerations about financing. The next aspect of the planning is the physical facility.

### The Physical Facility

In planning for the choice of the setting for a group home program, there are several choices.

Although both apartments and one-family houses have been used quite successfully for group homes, our own experience has led us to favour the detached, one-family house. It seems more satisfactory to have six or eight boys with somewhat deviant behavior live not too closely to other families. However, this reasoning would not apply in communities in which apartment living prevails.

The location of the group home, since it was intended to use community resources, should be close to schools, public transportation, churches, recreation facilities, stores, part-time jobs, and the agency offices.<sup>58</sup>

Municipal zoning regulations limit group living to certain areas of the city. This caused some difficulty for homes in the Toronto area, which were the subject of complaints in the summer of 1974. These homes were placed in an area zoned for group living but there was fear that in increasing numbers, they might saturate the neighborhood.

These considerations really only apply to the agency owned or rented group home, as the foster family group homes

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<sup>57</sup>Paul A. Guerard, ed., Group Homes for Children and Youth, A Report on the Group Home Conference, 1973, (New York: Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, Inc., 1973), p. 10.

<sup>58</sup>Hirschbach, Group Homes for Children, p. 12.

are chosen because of the couples' suitability for the job.

Staffing is a crucial aspect of the group home program.

### The Staffing Arrangements

Although the tasks of the group home staff are not within the scope of this study, some of the general considerations about the choices to be made in regards to staffing are presented. One category of staffing is the 'out-of-house' staff. These are the people who provide the administrative and supervisory tasks related to the home.

The director's responsibilities include administering the personnel practices and the internal economic, medical-dental, and home management machinery.<sup>59</sup>

There have been many variations in the selection of the 'in-house' staff. MacIntyre noted that they felt "young couples on their way up seemed best." The wife would work in the home and the husband would attend school or work outside the home.<sup>60</sup> Goldstein reported that house parents could not be found so two housemothers were used.<sup>61</sup>

In regard to the 'in-house' staff, the Group Home Conference did not attach any age, marital status,

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<sup>59</sup>Herstein, "What is a Group Home?", p. 16.

<sup>60</sup>J. McEwan Macintyre, "The Adolescent and Out-of-Home Care," Journal, XV, 10, (December, 1972), p. 13.

<sup>61</sup>Harriet Goldstein, "The Role of a Director in a Group Home," Child Welfare, XLV, 9, (November, 1966), p. 501.

education or experience requirements in particular to the recommended staff for the group home. They did, however, attach importance to the person's interest in working with children, and his or her ability to provide firmness and consistency along with flexibility in dealing with situations in the home. Needed was warmth in relationship and an ability to tolerate low gratification from his work.<sup>62</sup>

A further consideration in the planning of the group home service is the relationship with the larger and the more immediate community in which the home is located.

#### Community Relationship

As the group home is intended to be dependent, to some extent, on the community in which it is situated, it does have a relationship with this community. Lawder described some of the fears neighbors may have about the presence of a group home on their street. The clients in group homes are not 'success stories' and people do not hold them in high regard. People do have a fear that they and their neighborhood will be 'contaminated.'

While these fears are operating among the general public, the agencies and workers are also affected by their own ambivalence about the value of group homes and even foster care as a whole.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Guerard, "Group Home Conference," p. 14.

<sup>63</sup>Elizabeth A. Lawder, et al, Five Models of Foster Family Group Homes, (New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc., 1974), p. 5.

Despite these fears, some agencies have worked with a neighborhood and other community agencies in providing a group home service. Although the problems may only be particular to New York, Garber described one approach to involving a Dominican neighborhood in a group home program. As a result of a survey, the neighborhood's wish for such a home to be located within their neighborhood was identified and implemented.<sup>64</sup>

The Group Home Conference recommended that

Much of community resistance can be alleviated by openness and considerate response.

Another factor of success will be the careful choice of children to go into the group home. ...they must be prepared to live in a community. They must also be supported in the realization that they might face community hostility.<sup>65</sup>

#### Summary

Group homes, historically, can trace their origin back to a Jewish home in New York, operated in 1916. British use of group homes began even before 1948, while their use in Canada has been mostly in the past two decades. There have been changes in the method of service delivery to families and children and specifically changes in the approach to substitute care.

Many reasons have been given for the use of group homes. They could be based in the community and located

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<sup>64</sup>Garber, "Neighborhood Based Child Welfare," p. 76

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., pp. 37-38

on neighborhood streets enhancing their ability to help their residents adapt to community life or maintain their skills in community living. The group home offered a placement for children and adolescents who could not be best served in a foster home and who did not require institutional care.

The client population, for whom the group home was considered a more appropriate placement, included both children and adolescents with many different circumstances and problems. Adolescents have been one group for whom the group home was recommended as a placement of choice.

A chart is used to present a comparison of six major group home innovations.

There were four different acts, under which group homes may be operated. Two of these acts are examined more closely for the directions they give about the facility and staffing.

Group homes are constantly being defined and yet this has been a difficult task because group homes vary according to the agencies' needs, the program offered, the staffing arrangements and the nature of the residents of the home. Several definitions were presented.

There are several considerations in planning a group home. The orientation of the group home, the budgetary considerations, the physical facility, the staffing arrangements and the group home's relationship with the community are discussed as the general considerations in planning.

Group homes are not a panacea, but just one alternative in the provision of substitute care for children and adolescents.

## CHAPTER III

### THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As was stated previously, several experiences contributed to the researcher's interest in group homes. These experiences suggested a number of questions about the use of group homes and, from these, a research question was developed.

The researcher felt that too little was known about group homes to attempt an evaluation of service and chose to investigate instead, the planning and initiating of the first group homes of five Children's Aid Societies.

As little prior research existed on the subject of group homes, an exploratory design using a research question was chosen.

The population of the study was small and therefore, an interview schedule was used as the data collection instrument. The administration of this instrument was pre-tested before its actual use in collecting the data from representatives of the five Societies, in five interviews.

The statistical analysis of the findings was very limited because the population's size did not warrant it. Some simple statistics were used where appropriate.

There were several limitations of the research methodology. The exploratory design and the limited



applicability of the findings were among some of these limitations.

The questions suggested from the initial interest in group homes were the first step in formulating the focus of the research.

### Problem Formulation

There were many questions about group homes which could possibly have been investigated. How did group homes develop as a service for which agencies were willing to spend money, hire staff and place all sorts of people with all sorts of needs? What needs did the agency intend to serve through the group home? What gaps in existing services was it expected to fill?

What is a group home? It seemed that each social agency differed, however slightly, in its purposes for a group home. Some focused this type of service on social control and others on treatment. Group homes were operated by many different agencies and organizations which had public or private funding.

The researcher chose to investigate one type of agency with respect to its group homes. This was the Ontario Children's Aid Society group homes. The population was further limited to five Children's Aid Societies in South-western Ontario.

These societies served both children and adolescents and provide the major foster care services for these groups in the province of Ontario. Many of the fifty societies

had been using group homes.<sup>66</sup>

In investigating this area, the researcher was aware that a descriptive study of sixty-three group homes in Ontario was completed by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Children's Services Branch. At the time of writing, this report was unavailable to the researcher but indications were that it was focused more on the present operations of such homes rather than their beginnings.

There remain many unknowns about group homes in terms of research, such that the researcher chose to formulate a question rather than a hypothesis. This study was not aimed at contributing to the proof or disproof of anything but rather was aimed at contributing to the research knowledge of group homes, with a view to suggesting further areas of needed investigation.

#### Focus of the Research

This investigation was centered on the original planning of the first group home. This planning would encompass several choices and decisions about the group home. The intended purpose of the group home, the target population of this service, the staffing arrangements, and the intended use of auxiliary services to the home were examined. The budgetary considerations, the relationship with other community services were further aspects of planning upon which

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<sup>66</sup>Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, Research and Planning Branch, Monthly Statistical Bulletin, (December, 1974), p. 21.

this study was focused.

Finally, the investigation considered comments and opinions of the respondents about these areas of the planning. It also asked the opinions of respondents about the advantages and disadvantages of group homes for their agency.

The next part of the discussion focused on the research question and the operational definitions used in the methodology.

#### The Research Question

The research questions used in this exploratory descriptive study were summarized in the following question: How did five Children's Aid Societies plan and operate their first group home; and based on this experience what were their opinions about their use of group homes?

#### Operational Definitions

These were the definitions of terms used in this study.

A Children's Aid Society is a social agency chartered, in Ontario, under The Child Welfare Act, 1965, to serve and protect children and their families.

Plan was used to mean set goals, collect information, consider alternatives to reach these goals and select an alternative which would be implemented.

Operate referred to the actual implementation of the plan chosen and specifically the original opening and use of the first group home.

Group home in this study referred to the homes operated by an agency to provide alternate foster care for children and adolescents, the aims of which may have been to provide boarding, social control, emergency placement or treatment. The home may have housed from four to twelve children. It was community based so that residents would use the general services of the community such as schools, recreation facilities, and health care services. Through this use of the community the group home could serve to enhance and/or maintain the community functioning of the child or teenager. An agency-operated group home referred to the type of group home which was owned or rented by the agency and which housed from four to twelve youth.

A foster family group home referred to the type of group home which was owned or rented by the foster family who provided care for a small number of youth.

A group residence referred to a home owned by the agency and which cared for from thirteen to twenty-five children.

The next section describes more fully the nature of the population examined in this study.

#### The Population

For this study, five Children's Aid Societies of Southwestern Ontario were used as the population. These were the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Essex County, the Children's Aid Society of Essex County, the Children's Aid Society of Kent County, the Children's Aid Society of Sarnia and Lambton County, and the Family and Children's

Services of London and Middlesex County.

This study was restricted to these agencies as the researcher was limited by the considerations of time and financial cost. The researcher felt that this population would be valuable to consider as these were agencies which served small and middle-sized cities which did not have the wide variety of alternative services a city such as Toronto would have, to provide substitute care for children and adolescents.

The researcher first planned to administer the interview schedule to the Executive Director and the agency staff more directly associated with the group home, including the staff who worked directly with the residents in the home. Later this was changed at the time the appointments were made. The researcher administered the schedule in three cases to the Executive Director and the group home supervisor in a joint interview. In one case, the Executive Director was interviewed alone and in another case, the Assistant Director and a former group home supervisor were interviewed although the latter was not present during the entire interview.

Choosing the appropriate respondents was a difficult task, especially when discussing an event in the past. Since the researcher did not know at what level the group home was planned or whether people involved in the initial planning were available, she chose to ask the Executive Director and to have them decide whether they wanted to

include the group home supervisor.

Since only these five Societies were used as the population, this population became the sample for the study and the N is therefore five.

The findings of this study are limited to this population but the findings have some implications for the group home services of other Children's Aid Societies.

The exploratory nature of the study and the size of the population suggested the use of an interview schedule.

#### The Method of Data Collection

The researcher first contacted the five agencies by letter (see Appendix A) asking if they would participate in this study. Within a seven day period this letter was followed by a telephone call to the Executive Director. On the telephone the researcher answered any questions about the project and received a very encouraging positive reply from all five agencies. The researcher then followed this call with another letter (Appendix B and C) asking that the Director sign a form indicating that the agency agreed to participate. These were all returned, signed as requested.

This correspondence preceded the actual interview by about two-and-one-half months. Approximately one week prior to the appointment, another telephone call was made to set the date and time for the interview. This was followed by a letter (Appendix D) which outlined the subjects to be covered in the interview.

### The Scheduled Interview

The questionnaire and the interview were the two methods of data collection considered. A combination of these two methods which was the interview schedule was the method chosen. An interview had the advantage of giving the researcher an opportunity to clarify what was being asked of those who participated in the study. The questionnaire had the advantage of allowing the researcher to direct and focus questioning to answer the researcher's question.

The researcher was also aware that the return of the data would be controlled with the use of an interview.

The type of interview chosen was that of a scheduled interview which was standardized so that the data collection procedure would be uniform.

The researcher chose to ask the respondents the questions and from their answers she filled out the schedule. The interview schedule rather than just an interview was chosen to limit the researcher's influence of interpretation of the respondents' answers. It also served to standardize the order in which the questions were asked as well as the wording of the questions.<sup>67</sup>

Through the use of an interview guide, certain items of information were obtained from the respondent about each agency's experience in planning the first group home.

The guide:

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<sup>67</sup>Selltiz, et al., Research Methods in Social Relations, p. 255.

allows the interviewer to rephrase the question in keeping with his understanding of the situation. This permits the interviewer to express the question in such a fashion that the respondent can understand it most easily.

This was one of the advantages of using this type of interview schedules. It allowed for "a more adequate interpretation of the answers to the questions."<sup>68</sup>

In formulating the questions, two types of questions were used. The "fixed-alternative question" predominated. In this type the response alternatives are limited even though the category of other was used. This type of question had the advantage "of being 'standardizable,' simple to administer, quick and inexpensive to analyze."<sup>69</sup>

The second type of question was the "open-ended question." This type of question was used when opinions were asked and when further expansion on Yes or No questions was desired. The "open-ended question" had the advantage of limiting bias in presenting alternatives when the researcher was not sure that these alternatives were known to her.<sup>70</sup>

The researcher formulated forty-six questions using both fixed-alternative questions and open-ended questions.

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<sup>68</sup>William J. Goode and Paul K. Hatt, Methods in Social Research, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1952), p. 186.

<sup>69</sup>Selltiz, et al, Research Methods in Social Relations, p. 257.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 261.



### The Pretest

As well as preparing the questions the researcher also prepared introductory remarks which were to be given before each group of questions. In the pretest, these data collection instruments were tested on two classmates. The pretest was used to determine whether the questions were understood and could be answered.<sup>71</sup>

The pretest experience offered the researcher an opportunity to correct errors. One adjustment made after the first interview, was an alteration in the grouping of some questions such that their order was changed. After the first pretest, one or two questions were moved as they appeared to be out of place.<sup>72</sup>

Another problem which needed to be corrected was that of limiting the rather verbose respondent. This was difficult as the researcher could also fall into the trap of asking 'leading questions' or offering her opinions. The introductory statements were helpful in guiding the interviewee in regards to what would be asked next. This helped to limit responses to the questions asked, more effectively.<sup>73</sup>

This experience also gave the researcher practice in giving the questions so that they would be asked in the

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>72</sup>Goode and Hatt, Methods in Social Research, p. 158

<sup>73</sup>Selltiz, et al. Research Methods in Social Relations, p. 70.

same order and the same wording. The timing of the questioning was also modified from the pretest. The interview dragged in the first experience and later was done more quickly.

The pretest also provided the researcher with experience in recording the content of the interview on the guide which was prepared. No alterations were made in this procedure.

The researcher then collected the data in five interviews following the adjustments made from the pretest experience.

The researcher administered the interview schedule (Appendixes E and F) as was stated previously to the various agency personnel as determined by the Executive Director.

The next area of the methodology considered was the method of data analysis.

#### The Method of Data Analysis

The five Children's Aid Societies constituted the whole population of the study, rather than a sample. Because of the small sample, no tests of significance were used.

Some descriptive statistics were used in the data analysis. Since the number involved in responding to the interview schedule was small, the researcher chose to report the findings in discussion form.

### Limitations

In regarding a piece of literature, it is important to be aware of its limitations not just from the point of view of the researcher, but also from that of the consumer of the research. This study has several limitations.

The first one is in the design. Selltiz et al pointed out that exploratory research is often regarded as "unscientific" because it is not as rigorous and well-defined as an experimental design.<sup>74</sup>

A second limitation was that the design was ex post facto. The variables studied have "varied under naturally occurring conditions" and this meant that "there was no planned control" of the study's variables. The limitation which arose in this type of design was that since there was no control, the results may have been contaminated.<sup>75</sup>

The third limitation was related to the ability to generalize from the study's findings. Technically, these findings only related to the five Children's Aid Societies who participated in the study. Despite this, it was hoped that these findings may be some indication of the planning and operation of the first group homes operated by others of the fifty Children's Aid Societies in Ontario.

A fourth limitation was the dearth of theoretical

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>75</sup>Harris K. Goldstein, Research Standards and Methods for Social Workers, (rev. ed., Northbrook, Ill.: Whitehall Company, 1969), pp. 76-77.

and practical knowledge about group homes. Many articles repeated the same information. Other literature was not available even after a search in three major libraries in the Windsor-Detroit area.

A fifth limitation was that this investigation did not intend to report what the actual situation was, but what it was thought to be. It did not attempt to find out how group homes were actually planned, but what the present staff thought the case to be.

A sixth limitation was that of staff turnover. Many who had been most involved in the original planning and opening of the first group home had left the agency. This made it necessary to rely on the reports of staff who may not have been present, nor been in a position to know of the planning for the first group home, when this was conducted.

These were the anticipated limitations of the study. Others may arise with further experience.

#### Summary

Questions about the use of group homes arose out of the researcher's experience with the difficulty of placing younger patients in suitable living situations in their own communities and from reports by the media of the complaints of neighborhood saturation by different types of group homes.

This led to the application of research techniques to develop an understanding of how group homes were planned

and begun. An exploratory descriptive design was used as the researcher felt that the theoretical and practical knowledge about group homes was very limited. The researcher chose to limit the scope of the study to the experiences of five Children's Aid Societies in Southwestern Ontario.

The research question was, how did five Children's Aid Societies plan and operate their first group home, and based on this experience, what were their opinions about the use of group homes?

These five Children's Aid Societies were the population of the study.

An interview schedule was employed as the method of data collection. It was administered to the Executive Director and group home supervisors of the five agencies involved.

The data analysis was done using parametric statistics because these agencies were the whole population considered in the study.

There were several limitations in the study. The design has been considered to be unscientific. The study was done ex post facto and therefore a plan for the control of the manipulation of variables could not be made. The findings were not generalizable beyond the five agencies studied. Staff involved in the planning phase of the group home may have left the agency. The study attempted to report what the planning was thought to be.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine the nature of the planning and initial operation of the first group homes of five Children's Aid Societies in Southwestern Ontario. Through the use of an interview schedule, data was obtained from executive and supervisory staff of each society.<sup>76</sup>

First characteristics of the five Societies will be discussed. Information obtained from these interviews encompassed the origin of the idea for the group home, the approval and opening of the first home, the budgetary considerations, the purpose of the home and its target population. The style of the group home, the zoning and other considerations affecting the location of the actual physical facility for the first group home were discussed. Included, as well, were the staffing arrangements planned and made. Opinions regarding the influence of the first experience with group homes and opinions of the advantages and disadvantages of such homes were asked. Finally suggestions were obtained as possible guidelines for those starting group homes.

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<sup>76</sup>Hereafter, society will be used to refer to Children's Aid Society.

This information will be presented and some inferences will be made from the data, but the findings will be described more fully in the fifth chapter.

#### Characteristics of the Agencies

Five Children's Aid Societies in Southwestern Ontario participated in this research study on the planning of their first group homes.

The Children's Aid Society of the County of Kent was chartered in 1895. It serves the city of Chatham and the surrounding county which has a total population of 97,146.<sup>77</sup> The society has sixteen social workers and four child care staff. In 1974, this society had 117 children in care during the year. There were 98 protection cases open during the year and 339 "brief service investigations."<sup>78</sup> This society presently operates one group home for six children and adolescents.

The Children's Aid Society of the County of Essex was chartered in approximately 1897. It serves the city of Windsor and the surrounding Essex County, which has a total population of 299,318. The society has thirty-six social work staff, twenty child care staff and five support staff. In 1974, the society had 636 children in care

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<sup>77</sup>Ministry of Community and Social Services, Research and Planning Branch, Expenditures by Counties, Year Ending March 1973. All population figures quoted were for the year 1972.

<sup>78</sup>The Children's Aid Society of the County of Kent, Annual Report, 1974.

during the year. There were 1,667 children served in their own home during the year.<sup>79</sup> This society presently operates a group foster home, a treatment group home and a teen center for boys, serving sixteen children and adolescents at the time of this study.

The Roman Catholic Children's Aid Society of the County of Essex was chartered in 1934. It serves the Roman Catholic population of the city of Windsor and surrounding Essex County. The society has thirty social work staff. In 1974, the society had 207 children in care during the year. There were 1,455 children served in their own homes during the year.<sup>80</sup> This society presently operates four foster family group homes and three agency-staffed group homes.

The Family and Children's Services of the City of London and the County of Middlesex was formerly a Children's Aid Society, chartered in 1893, and a Family Service Bureau, begun in 1937, which merged January 1, 1968. It serves a population of 276,074 in the city of London and the surrounding Middlesex County. It has thirty-nine social workers and nineteen child care workers. In 1974, there was a total monthly average of 552 children in care.<sup>81</sup> This society

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<sup>79</sup>The Children's Aid Society of the County of Essex, Annual Report, 1974.

<sup>80</sup>The Roman Catholic Children's Aid Society of the County of Essex, Annual Report, 1974.

<sup>81</sup>The Family and Children's Services of the City of London and the County of Middlesex, Annual Report, 1974.



presently has eight agency-operated group homes.

The Children's Aid Society of the County of Lambton was chartered in 1898. It serves the city of Sarnia and surrounding Lambton County, which has a population of 112,646. The society has seventeen social work staff. In December 1974, there were 121 children in care.<sup>82</sup> This society presently has a group home for boys aged 12 to 16 and a foster home for girls aged 12 to 16 years.

In the next section, the origin of the idea for the first group home of these agencies and the approval and opening of their first group home is presented.

#### From the Beginning Idea to the First Group Home

There was little uniformity among the five Children's Aid Societies about the source of the idea for the first group home. Two societies reported that the idea came from direct line staff. A senior supervisor and a child care supervisor were the sources reported by two other societies. The remaining society credited the executive director as the source of the idea for the first group home.

In preparation for the group home, staff in all five societies reported having read some available literature on group homes. In addition, two societies visited existing group homes. One society had staff who participated in workshops on group homes. Other sources of information were used such as the Toronto Children's Aid Societies, which were

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<sup>82</sup>Monthly Statistical Bulletin, December, 1974, p. 14.

consulted by three of the societies studied. Two of the five societies obtained information from other Children's Aid Societies, which operated group homes and one of these also obtained information from private group homes.

Two societies discussed their plan for a group home with the Child Welfare Branch staff, while one had their director as a resource, as this person had prior experience which had familiarized him with the substitute care services for children and as well, he was interested and familiar with the group home concept.

#### Approval and Opening of the First Group Home

Among the five Children's Aid Societies studied, the earliest group home was approved in 1961. The approval came from the Board of Directors, the staff team, the municipality and the fire marshall. The latest approved initial group home received its approval from its Board and the Child Welfare Branch of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, in June 1972. One society received approval for its first group home from its Board of Directors. Another society received approval from the Services Committee of its Board while yet another received approval after three meetings with its Board and then later received approval from the Child Welfare Branch.

While one society opened its initial group home before any approval was given, the other four societies opened their first group home within less than four months after approval was obtained. This suggested that despite

the impression that such homes take a long time before they can be opened, these societies were able to mobilize quickly once approval was granted.

Among the five societies studied, the earliest group home opened in December 1961, and the latest home opened in September 1972. One of the five societies opened two such homes at the same time. It appears that it has been within the last fifteen years that group homes have been used by these five Children's Aid Societies.

Three respondents felt that the brief time lapse between the approval and opening of their first group home was appropriate. The factors that contributed to such a brief time lapse were varied. In one case, six difficult to place boys were in need of a home and this need sped up the process of establishing a group home. In another case, the society purchased the service from a couple who would provide the service in their own home. Another society had a home that has previously been a foster home, children were already in this home and it was a matter of changing payment arrangements. In this case, the "push" for a change from a foster home to a group home came from the foster parents due to their financial need and they were also providing a good quality of care for the children and were seen as capable of handling more.

Two societies felt the time lapse may have been too short. One society found itself with a home that had been the society's receiving home, children needed placement and

staff just had to be recruited. The other society did not elaborate why they felt the time lapse had been too short.

Three of the five societies had planned only one group home. The remaining two societies had planned two homes to be opened at the same time but one of these societies actually opened only one group home.

#### The Opening of the Second Group Home

One of the five societies had not opened a second group home but the remaining four societies had. The time between first and second group home openings was within two years. For most of these societies, there appeared to be an interest in extending the group home service as the need arose.

#### Length of Service of the First Group Home

In response to the question about whether the first group home was still open, three societies stated that they are still operating their initial group home. Of these three societies, one opened two homes at the same time. One of these two closed, while the other remained open. Reasons suggested for the closing of one of the group homes was that the needs of the children placed there had changed, the home was felt to be "more of a foster home." It was felt that the couple found it difficult to cope. This group home remained open for four years. Two first group homes of the other two societies were no longer in operation. Reasons given for the termination by one society

was that this group home had served its purpose and there is "only so long a couple can work in a group home." This group home operated for two years. The first group home of the other society ceased operation as the society's home after five years and became a private children's institution.

It would seem that despite that rapidity with which these homes were started, they served the society's purpose for a period of time.

#### Budgetary Considerations

All the five societies studied reported that they had formulated budgets for their first group home. One respondent felt that the budget had been satisfactory. Two respondents felt that the budget had been underestimated. Of these two societies, one said that everything in the budget had been underestimated, while the other said that they planned for two child care staff and found, in practice, that they needed four. Another respondent felt that his society had overestimated its budget. It is interesting that this particular society received no provincial funding but did receive financial help with rent from a service club. The remaining respondent felt he could not answer whether the budget was overestimated or underestimated.

Three questions which related to budgetary considerations for renting arrangements were found to be not applicable to the societies studied. None of the societies indicated that finances led them to choose to rent facilities. Two societies rented their accommodation for their initial

group home. However, no difficulties with their rental arrangements were noted.

Of the societies studied, one owned its facility for the first group home, one backed the lease of a foster couple who would run their group home, one contracted their group home service from a couple who owned the home, one rented its facility with the financial help of a service club and the remaining society rented without any outside help. However, the facility for this society's second group home was rented to it by a benefactor for a nominal fee.

#### Purposes Envisioned for the First Group Home

The responses to the purpose for which the group home was being designed was similar to the question of the target group for the group home. One society's group home was intended to be multipurpose, providing both long and short-term care as an alternative to foster homes. Two other societies' first group homes were intended to provide long term care as an alternative to foster care. One of these societies actually specified a period of care of from two to four years.

Three of the societies studied said that the group home was to be used for children who were difficult to place in foster homes. Two societies specified children and adolescents who had difficulty with parental figures. Two other societies saw their group home as an aid for children and adolescents who had gone through a succession of foster

homes or for those likely to experience such a process.

One society said that the purpose of their group home was to provide a positive group living experience. A similar reply was given by another society who said that they were trying to provide residential group care. Both of these societies indicated that they did not expect to have a treatment orientation to their group home.

There were other purposes stated by respondents. One group home was intended to provide an assessment of teenagers about whom the society knew little. Another group home was intended for children and adolescents, whom the society felt, could not benefit from foster home placement. This society also expected to serve teenagers from age "thirteen to seventeen who were moving towards independent living." One society stated that they hoped to use the group home as a placement for "difficult children." One final comment on the type of group home envisioned was stated by one society as having a facility where the house parents will "stick with it" and the children will know that the home was to be permanent and secure and they would not be removed.

#### The Target Population

Two of the societies, which participated in the study, had specific individual children in mind when they decided to open a group home. One society directed their first group home at serving six boys who were in the society's receiving home and who "could not live in a foster home" and

were regarded to be "on the verge of delinquency." The other society directed their first group home at serving an ethnic group for whom the society had difficulty finding foster parents. It also planned to serve other hard to place children of school age.

Another society planned two homes: one for girls aged twelve to sixteen and another for boys aged ten to fourteen. This second home, however, was not opened until about two years later. They planned to direct their group home at those children who attended school and were able to manage themselves for the most part. They planned to serve both moderately withdrawn as well as "acting out" children and adolescents.

Another society planned its group home to serve teenagers primarily. They set an agency policy that prospective residents would attend school.

One other society shared this target group. They planned to serve teenagers aged thirteen to seventeen. It was felt that a group home placement would enhance the "normal striving for independence" more than would a foster home placement. They envisioned serving children and adolescents with a variety of presenting problems. They saw no barrier to children with physical problems. This group home was planned to serve children who had either such positive or negative feelings towards their natural parents that a foster home placement was not feasible. Children referred from the courts were also considered as clients to



be served in this society's group home. The prospective residents of this group home were also to be evaluated as to whether he or she could benefit from casework services and group living.

Teenagers seemed to predominate as the prospective recipients of the first group home services offered by the five societies. Particular gaps prompted the five agencies to augment their services with a group home. For several agencies, there was an attempt to serve children who were not able to be placed in foster homes.

All the societies stated that their first group home was intended to serve both "Crown and temporary wards."

With regard to mixing boys and girls of different ages, two societies planned to mix by both age and sex. One society planned to place boys of like ages in their first group home. Another society planned to have children of like ages but both sexes, while another planned to place children of like sex, but did not plan about mixing ages.

Four of the societies planned that the group home residents would attend school, but the fifth society did not specify plans regarding attendance at school, training programs or regular employment.

One society reported that they expected that their group home residents would attend programs offered by the regular school system and said at the time of planning "it was conceivable that they might attend community college". Three of the other societies stated that they expected their

residents to attend the school program which the school authorities considered appropriate, depending on what was available to them in the community schools. One society's planning did not encompass this area.

According to one society, group home residents were expected to attend both elementary and high schools, either separate or public.

#### Other Uses of the First Group Home

Two of the societies studied intended that their first group home would be used for other outside referrals. One society agreed, in their contract with the couple who ran the home, that should the society not fill the home, the couple could take referrals from elsewhere. Another society stated that they would take referrals to their group home from other Children's Aid Societies but not from the courts. Another said they would not take any other referrals except those from other societies. Two societies stated that their first group home was just for their own use.

#### Admission Criteria for the First Group Home

The reported criteria for the admission of residents to the group home were of a rather general nature. Three societies stated that age was one criterion. One of these specified girls aged twelve to sixteen while another specified a general age range of thirteen to seventeen.

Other criteria was an evaluation that the child could not cope where he was, and could not be placed in a

foster home, according to one society.

Another society included in their criteria an evaluation that the adolescent could accept casework services and group living. This society accepted teenagers whose behavior was moderately disturbed.

One society stated that admission to their first group home was based on whether the child would fit in the group and whether there was a bed available.

Two societies had a flexible admission policy. One said that their home was to be multipurpose and therefore they kept their criteria general while the other stated that they accepted children and adolescents whose "behavior makes them unsuitable for foster homes" and yet did not require they be placed in an institution. Also one society stated that the prospective resident be of average intelligence.

All of the societies recognized that there were youth whom they did not feel they were able to serve in their first group home.

#### Youth not Expected to be Served

##### in the First Group Home

All of the five societies stated that the severely disturbed child could not be served in their first home. One society stated that their group home was not able to serve "a child whose behavior was so disturbed that treatment was required."

All the five societies said that they also did not expect to serve the severely mentally retarded in their

first home.

Four of the five societies stated that their group home could not serve a child with a physical problem that was not controlled. One society stated that the group home could not be a placement for "a child whose physical handicap made it difficult for him to manage the living situation in a group home." Another society described children "whose physical problems were not controlled medically" as unlikely to be placed in their group home.

One society also added that they did not expect to provide care in their group home for unplanned admissions and children referred from the court for detention.

#### The Style of the Group Home and the Physical Facility

For their initial group home, two societies used their former receiving homes and two used former foster homes. The remaining society found another house for the group home.

Three societies planned four foster family group homes and the two other planned agency operated group homes. Of the latter two societies, one planned that their home would be treatment oriented.

Of the actual facilities opened, two were single family homes rented by the agency, one was a building built by the society for their receiving home, and the remaining three were homes of the foster families. One of the societies backed a foster family's lease on the home this family was renting.

An average of six children were placed in each of the first group homes.

Three of the societies located their first group homes in areas zoned to accommodate group living. Another society stated they experienced no difficulty with zoning regulations and that they had dealt with zoning when the house was built as a receiving home. The remaining society experienced no difficulties as they placed only five children in their first home and did not have to deal with zoning regulations.

#### Considerations Affecting the Location of the First Home

Three societies planned to locate their first group homes close to schools. One stated that it planned to place the home "in an average residential area, with no signs to distinguish the home." Two societies used the homes of the foster families so plans were not made about the location of the home. Other considerations which influenced the selection of the first group homes' locations were zoning regulations, the availability of a house, its size, the home's proximity to recreational facilities, hospital and churches and the agency.

Two of the societies noted that they had difficulties with regard to the location of the first group home. Of these two societies, one stated that "neighbour reacted to the presence of the home and the house itself was in poor condition." The other society stated that they tried to

buy a home but found it too expensive and therefore decided against purchase. The remaining three societies stated that they had not had difficulties about the location of their first group home. Of these three, one society said "they knew what they might be up against" for example they chose to locate according to the zoning regulations instead of challenge them. Another of these stated that they had dealt with difficulties when the home was originally opened as a receiving home. At that time, neighbours feared that the children would be running over their property, that the home's proximity to their own would deflate their property values, and also that the neighborhood would no longer be peaceful. The society worked with the neighbours of the receiving home to alleviate their concerns, such that a good rapport was developed.

### Staffing

#### Administration and Supervision

In one society the administration and supervision tasks were shared by the executive director and a supervisor. For example the director was responsible for arranging for repairs and capital cost equipment and the supervisor was responsible for casework supervision.

In two societies, the same staff member was responsible for the administration and supervision of the group home. One of these societies did not specify the tasks involved. The other society specified the tasks as

maintenance of the house and household. "In the beginning this person was involved in setting up the home."

Another society stated that in the "initial phase the group home was administered as part of the foster home program" and a social worker was attached to the home for supervision.

The fifth society assigned a staff member for administration of the group home. The tasks were negotiation of contracts with the foster parents, dealing with concerns about occupancy levels and arbitration about community issues and problems beyond the scope of the caseworker. An example of this last task was talking with the school about their concern that they were being overloaded with problem children. This society did not feel that they should provide supervision to the foster parents. The caseworker assigned to the home offered a supportive relationship to the foster family.

#### Admission Responsibility

One society stated that the final responsibility regarding admission was a joint one shared by the group home supervisor and the child care staff. The decision to admit a child was the responsibility of the supervisor in charge of the group home in two of the societies. In one society, the social worker attached to the group home made the decisions regarding admission. In the fifth society, this responsibility was shared by the social worker attached to the home and the foster home supervisor.

## Relationship of the Group Home and Other Society Services

One society considered their group home to be **relatively autonomous** although it was regarded as a specialized foster home. Another society regarded their first group home as part of the society's foster care program. A third society described the group home's relationship with the rest of the society's services as "collegial." It stated that there was no particular relationship between the foster home parents and the group home house parents.

Another society stated that the group home staff felt isolated from the rest of the society. Likewise the other society staff regarded the group home as a separate entity. The society reported that the group home staff felt that they worked longer hours for less pay and that their work was unappreciated. The society reported that they were working on a closer relationship between these two segments of staff.

Another society shared this situation. It reported that social work staff and group home staff had misapprehensions about each other. It stated that the group home staff was regarded as an agency team but there was limited interaction between this team and the rest of the society services.

## Counselling in the Group Home

Three of the five societies assigned trained staff to provide counselling in the group home. Two of the



societies had the child's original worker continue with the child after admission. Of these two societies, one tried using an assigned worker but reverted back to the earlier arrangement.

#### "In-House" Staff

Two of the five societies planned to employ foster families in their first group home program. Two others planned to employ married couples. One of these societies hoped they could find "a childless married couple with experience". While one society specified that the husband would work outside the home, this society stated that the husband could work full time within the home or work outside the home. The remaining society planned to employ child care workers.

All five societies employed two full time staff to work in the home. Two of the societies also employed a part-time staff member to work with the children. Four of the societies made arrangements for help with cooking and cleaning. All societies planned that the "in-house" staff would live in the home.

#### Relief Staff Arrangements

Four of the societies stated that the house parents were to make their own arrangements regarding relief staff. One society set aside money for "babysitting." Another of these societies stated the couple could call upon the agency if they could not obtain a substitute. The remaining society

specified one weekend off a month for the couple but provided no financial assistance for paying a substitute.

#### Staff Status of Foster Parents

Three of the societies did not regard the foster parents who operated their group home as regular staff members. One society did. Another society employed child care workers so this question was not applicable.

#### Types of Staff Now Employed in the Societies' Group Homes

Four child care staff on shifts now operate the group home of one society. Qualifications vary from child care diploma to mental retardation counsellor certificate.

Foster families staff the foster family group homes of another agency. This society also has agency operated group homes which are staffed by people whose qualifications range from child care diplomas to university degrees. University students are also employed. Experience with youth served in such homes is also a qualification.

Two societies presently employ married couples in their group homes. The remaining society employs individuals with child care diplomas and foster families.

One society asks that the group home staff remain with the program for one year, while another society specifies a two year limit of employment.

Advantages of a Group Home

One society said that the group home provided a service for youth for whom there is no other service. According to another society the group home made it possible to deal with a "sharply increased demand for adolescent services." The group home provided a placement for youth who "could not function in the close setting of a foster home," and another stated "the group home offered a way of caring for youth who cannot handle a family." It offered a choice of placement for older children and adolescents.

Four of the five societies reported that the group home made it possible to maintain children in their own community. One of the societies stated that "the group home in the community makes it possible to help the residents learn to cope with community living so that they may function independently."

Two societies said that the group home had therapeutic value. One regarded their home as an intermediate treatment facility.

Two societies stated that the group home offered a positive living experience. One of these added that it provided peer contact for adolescents, while another stated that it helped the youth grow towards independence.

Four societies reported that having an agency operated group home gave them more control over the admission and care of the residents. One society found that assessment of youth done in the group home was more satisfactory.

Three other advantages were reported. One society stated that staff can relate more easily with staff than with foster families. Another society stated that natural parents of residents found the group home less threatening than foster homes.

A final advantage reported was that the group home was less expensive than an equivalent private group home in the community.

#### Disadvantages of a Group Home

Four of the societies reported difficulty with interpreting the need for a group home and the service it provides. One society said they had difficulty with interpreting to other community groups what could be expected from their group home.

Finding qualified staff, and difficulties with providing a continuity of care because of staff turnover, were disadvantages reported by four of the five societies.

Other disadvantages reported were isolation experienced by the "in-house" staff, the problem of "providing for a physical facility within the regulatory codes," and difficulties in getting the group home program started. One of the societies stated that they would purchase service if a private group home existed in its community. Another disadvantage was reported by one of these societies and this was that "the group home cannot replace family ties for these children even though they cannot handle a family well."

One society reported that for couples there is a lack of privacy, little job satisfaction and long hours. It also stated that the cost of operating a group home is more expensive than foster homes.

Notably, the remaining society stated that they found no disadvantages in using group homes.

Despite these disadvantages, all the societies were encouraged by their first group home experience. One said that there is still no other alternative. The societies reported that their group homes have changed since their first experience. One said they now had a more formalized group home service and more agency operated group homes.

#### Recommendations

The societies offered several suggestions to those starting group homes about aspects of the group home service not included previously in the interview schedule.

Placements should be screened. One society added that the group home should not be used as an assessment centre but preplacement should be used as a tool for evaluating whether the group home will be an appropriate placement for the youth.

Another society suggested that the home should be filled gradually. One society noted that it is difficult to coordinate admission and discharges.

Another suggestion was that the program in the home should be carefully planned, and that there should be an emphasis on structure so that the residents know what the

limits are. This society reported difficulty with using public recreation facilities for the group home residents.

Relief arrangements should be formalized and the facility should have accommodations which allow privacy for the couple in the home. Visits by other agency staff should be more formalized so that the home's schedule is not disrupted.

One society stated that eighty per cent of their group home budget was spent staffing the home with child care staff on shifts.

Another society recommended two things. One was that the group home should be community based and the other was that societies and other agencies providing a group home service should be concerned with the outcome of their service. By this the society meant that they should be concerned with where residents go after they leave the home.

Finally one society felt that the group home should not be regarded as a panacea.

#### Summary

In this chapter, the research findings were presented. Among these five societies, the group home seemed to be accepted as a means of service delivery. There did not seem to be any overall pattern to the way in which these societies planned their first group homes, yet each developed an individual approach to establishing these first homes.

Information on the characteristics of the agencies were obtained from annual reports. Data was obtained about

the planning and initiating of the first group home of these five agencies from responses given in the interviews. Where possible some conclusions were drawn.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the researcher's interest in the provision of alternate living arrangements for youth who could not remain in their own homes, this study on group homes was done. Through the use of an interview schedule, data was obtained from five Children's Aid Societies. This schedule explored the planning and initiating of the first group home of these five Societies.

From this population, data was obtained about the source of the idea for using such a home, the approval and opening of the first group home, the budgetary considerations the intended purpose and target population for the first group home, the style and physical facility for the home, including considerations about location of the home, and the staffing arrangements. Opinions were obtained about the advantages and the disadvantages of group homes. Finally, recommendations to those planning to use group homes were received.

In this chapter, the findings of this research will be summarized and recommendations will be made. It appeared that group homes were an accepted form of service delivery among these Societies.

#### Opening of the First Group Home

The use of a group home was suggested by different levels of staff, from a director to direct line staff. Within



four months after approval, all of the five societies had opened their first group home. This suggested to the researcher that despite the impression that such homes take a long time in getting under way, all of these societies opened their first homes rapidly.

The earliest group home opened in December 1961, while the latest first group home opened in September 1972. The original homes were operative for at least two years, but three of the six homes first started remain open at the time of writing. Despite the researcher's impression that group homes are usually short lived operations, none closed in less than two years and one has existed for eight years.

#### The Budgetary Considerations

While all of these societies formulated budgets, there was no concensus about whether the budgets had been estimated accurately. From the findings, it appeared that financing was not an influential factor in the decision to rent or purchase the facility for the group home.

#### The Purposes and Target Population

Although one society specified that its group home would provide both long and short-term care for youth as an alternative to foster care, the researcher inferred that for the remaining four societies long term care was the purpose for which the group home was initiated.

The two societies which were the last to open their first homes stated that their group home was to be treatment

oriented. However, the societies which opened their first homes at an earlier date stated that their first homes were oriented toward group care. The present literature does not describe the group care approach as it applies to the group home, nor does it adequately describe the treatment possibilities for group homes other than for those homes which were established as 'halfway houses' by treatment centres. Although the programming of the group home was not within the scope of the study, it is interesting to note that such homes have not solely emphasized treatment but have as well given attention to group living.

Teenagers seemed to dominate as the target population for the group home. This coincides with an increase in the percentage of teenagers becoming involved with the Children's Aid among these societies. Another reason for this phenomena may be the age restrictions on children's institutions and adult institutions which limits the number of adolescents who may use these services. Also existing services are not necessarily geared to the special needs of adolescents, nor do staff often feel comfortable working with teenagers.

Children who could not be placed in foster homes because of moderate disturbances in behavior also were another target population for the group home. From the literature, the researcher inferred that these children are placed in group homes after all considerations were made and traditional foster care was rejected. The literature suggested that it was difficult to find foster parents

willing to care for children who were having behavior problems and relationship problems with adults. The researcher inferred that these considerations were the same for some societies, in this study, who initiated their first group homes.

These societies did not feel that they could offer placement to certain youth in their first group home. Categories considered unsuitable were youth who were severely retarded or who had serious physical handicaps. These were not considered to be able to benefit from these first group homes nor were youth whose disturbance was so severe that they required special residential treatment. These societies were aware that they could not serve all youth in group homes, and had developed some criteria by which they limited their target population.

#### The Style and Physical Facility of the First Group Home

The foster family group home and the agency-operated group home were the two styles of homes used by the five societies. These were two models described by Gula. Although there appeared to be no pattern among the five societies about the ways in which they developed their group home, each society developed a particular style in their planning and initiation of their first group home.

All of the societies chose to use large single family homes as the physical facility for the group home. This suggested that such homes were available in the

community. Possibly the use of apartments and duplexes are more likely to occur in larger urban areas where the single family home is more difficult to obtain.

#### Staffing Arrangements

All five societies assigned regular agency staff to carry administrative responsibility for the group home. Four societies assigned supervisory responsibility for the home to regular agency staff. Administrative tasks were, for example, negotiation of contracts with foster parents and arranging for repairs. The assignment of such staff indicated, to the researcher, that the task of operating such a home was sufficiently large that these five societies designated staff to carry the responsibility for the group home.

Foster families operated one model of the societies' first group homes and married couples or individuals with child care training and experience staffed the agency-operated models of group homes. Married couples or individuals with child care diplomas were preferred as staff to work with the group home residents.

All the societies expected that only two staff were required to care for the youth on a full-time basis. Additional staff were not always assigned to care for the youths in the home but often arrangements for household help were made. Arrangements for relief staff became the responsibility of the houseparents. The literature offers little guidance about the numbers of staff needed or how

relief time can be arranged. To the researcher, these arrangements are crucial to the operation of the home.

There were indications that the group home staff felt isolated from the rest of the agency. Also the findings indicated that there were some misapprehensions felt by both the group home staff and the other agency staff about each other. This indicated that work needs to be done to incorporate the group home program more adequately into the mainstream of agency interaction, such that understanding and respect for the work of all agency staff can be enhanced and therefore strengthen the concept of group homes.

Among the five societies, the assignment of responsibility for decisions regarding admission of residents to the group home varied. Some basic criteria might aid social workers in determining which clients might best be served by a group home.

Three of the societies assigned a social worker to provide counselling for its group home residents. Little mention of the use of groups as a treatment modality was made by any of the societies. Such absence would seem to defeat one of the primary possibilities inherent in group living.

An opportunity for the society to control admission and care in their group home was considered advantageous by all the societies. Likewise all agreed that obtaining and maintaining adequate staff in the group home was a considerable problem. One society reported that the job of

houseparent offered little privacy or job satisfaction.

In conclusion, all five societies felt that they had been encouraged by their first experience in using group homes.

Based on the experience of this research project, the researcher would add the following recommendations regarding group homes.

#### Recommendations

Group homes are used to serve a comparatively small percentage of the number of children in care. Nevertheless further research on this style for providing group care is needed. The use of group homes by agencies involved in different aspects of service delivery to youth, such as correctional institutions and agencies, mental health and mental retardation services and agencies serving the physically handicapped must document their experiences and make them known so that the uses of the group homes and the operation of such homes can be better understood. In addition, evaluation of the services provided in group homes should be researched and made public.

Most present literature on group homes describes the use of the group home to be that of a 'halfway house' or a protective home for youth who could no longer benefit from other treatment. However, the group homes which were opened by these five societies suggest that they are using the group home concept differently. Experiences of homes of this nature should be studied and documented. Furthermore

it would be very beneficial if a guide could be written which would include how to start and operate group homes. Such a guide would be able to be more specific to the needs and limitations of the Canadian child care services.

Agencies, both public and private, should join together to prepare guidelines for the minimal as well as maximal quality of care to be provided in such homes. Present legislation, under which group homes are operated, should be examined for its contributions in regulating the type of care offered in group homes.

Staffing within the home is an important element in the quality of group home life. For multifunctional agencies there is a need to foster understanding and respect among staff for the part they play in the total care of the child. Alienating group home staff from the rest of the agency is a problem which must not be overlooked. Such staff division can also be communicated outside the agency and create further problems with the community understanding of a valuable means of service to youth.

As the staff in the home face a very demanding daily workload, relief staff arrangements should be formalized so that time away from the children can be planned. The facility for the group home should be chosen for the privacy it can offer to the staff who live with the residents.

Group homes are useful to agencies because they can use community services such as schools, medical and dental care and recreation services. These services should be used

In such a manner that the residents do learn independence and are not always sent out together as an identifiable group when they are part of the larger community.

Pride in the home and its relationship with the rest of the neighbourhood must be inspired in the residents of the group home. Involving the residents in the responsibilities of the maintenance of the home can contribute to their growth as responsible self respecting citizens.

The group home is a setting in which group interaction can be used to enhance the human growth of the residents. The use of the group as a decision making and a treatment modality should become a regular occurrence within the group home. This demands that staff be trained to provide this skill as well as philosophy.

#### Conclusion

It appears that group homes are an accepted form of providing out-of-home care for children and teenagers. The group home services presently in use should be documented and made available so that a knowledge base for the applications of the group home concept can be developed.





UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR

WINDSOR, ONTARIO N9B 3P4  
TELEPHONE: AREA CODE 519  
253-4232

School of Social Work

March 25, 1975

Dear Sir:

I am a graduate student at the University of Windsor School of Social Work and I am engaging in a research study on agency-operated group homes.

Increasingly, group homes are being used by child welfare agencies as part of their substitute care services for children and adolescents. In this study, I am interested in the planning and the first phase of the operation of the group home service. Further, I am interested in some opinions, in retrospect, about your agency's experience in planning and operationalizing group homes.

In order to proceed with this study, I request permission to interview you and some of your staff involved with your group homes. I hope you will choose to participate in this research and I will see that your agency receives a copy of the research. I shall call you in a week to answer any questions you have have and receive your reply. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Theresa Boland, B.S.W.

Lola Beth Buckley, D.S.W.

TB:ER



UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR

WINDSOR, ONTARIO N9B 3P4  
TELEPHONE: AREA CODE 519  
253-4232

School of Social Work

April 22, 1975

Dear Sir:

Enclosed is a form which upon your signature will indicate that you give consent to participate in my research project for the Thesis requirement on group homes.

Thank you for the interest you have shown.

Sincerely,

Theresa Boland, B.S.W.

APPENDIX C

The Children's Aid Society of \_\_\_\_\_  
agrees to participate in the research project of Theresa  
Boland on the Planning and Operation of Group Homes.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director

APPENDIX D

May 29, 1975.

Dear Sir:

The following are some aspects of the interview on your agency's initial experience in planning and operating your first group home: What was the source of the idea for your first group home? What was the source and date of approval for your group home? When did your first home open? You may want to look these things up.

The rest of the interview schedule deals with the choices made about the purpose, the target group, the budgetary considerations, the actual physical facility, and the staffing arrangements for your first group home.

Finally, your opinions about the advantages and disadvantages of a group home will be asked, as well as suggestions you may have for agencies planning to open a group home.

I will see you June 4, at 10:30 a.m. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Theresa Boland, B.S.W.

## APPENDIX E

### PREPARATORY REMARKS

Preparatory remarks were given, which were similar to the following, prior to each group of questions.

This study is focused on looking at some facets of the initial planning and operation of the group home service of your Children's Aid Society.

In our interview, the researcher will ask questions about the following aspects of your initial planning and operationalization of a group home: the suggestion of a group home as an additional service, the approval and the opening of your first group home, the budgetary considerations, the purpose and target population of your group home, the planning and opening of the physical facility, the staffing considerations, and finally your comments on the advantages and disadvantages of group homes.

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of administrative staff of five Children's Aid Societies as they planned and first operated group homes. This information will contribute to understanding what choices were made about group homes in a small number of Children's Aid Societies in Ontario. At a time when many agencies are planning and opening such homes, there remains little information about group homes.

The first questions deal with the suggestion and approval of the plan for a group home.

## Questions 1 - 11

A new service involves budgetary considerations. This may involve funds for buying or renting a home, monies for renovation and upkeep, furnishings, food and the personal needs of the residents; and it may involve finances for the staffing complement which includes administration, counseling, child care and housekeeping.

## Questions 12 - 14

The group home is a flexible concept and can be adapted to your agency's particular purposes. The service can be directed at particular target groups and can be planned to deal with particular needs of such groups. Group homes are community based in the sense that they rely on existing community resources to augment their program.

## Questions 15 - 24

There are numerous choices to be made about the style of the group home and the actual facility. Location has a definite influence on the community situation of the group home. There are regulations which influence the location of a group living program. Your agency may have experienced some difficulties about the physical setting of your group home.

## Questions 25 - 30

Staffing is a crucial element in service delivery.

In a group home service, there are two areas of staffing to be considered: There must be "in-house" staff which are involved in the provision of the day-to-day care of the children or adolescents in the group home, such as house-parents, housekeeping staff, *et cetera*. There must also be "out-of-house" staff which provide the support from the agency regarding general administration of the group home service and the coordination of other auxiliary services to the home and its residents.

Questions 31 - 42

After some initial experience with planning and operating a group home you may have some opinions about the advantages and disadvantages of your group homes. In retrospect, there may be things about your experience which influenced your opinion about group homes.

Questions 43 - 45

Thank you for your participation in this study.

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Where did your idea for a group home originate?  
(Check all that apply.)
  - a) with an individual \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) through outside community interest \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) through the board \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) through administration \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) other(describe) \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. When was approval given for a group home service?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. What was the source of approval for your group service?
  - a) Board of Directors \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Staff team \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) Administration \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. What sources of information did your staff use in preparation for your group home? (Check all that apply.)
  - a) visit established group homes \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) attend conferences \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) participate in workshops on group homes \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) read the literature \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) use consultants on group homes \_\_\_\_\_
  - f) other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_



5. What time period elapsed between the initial approval of the group home and the opening of your first group home?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. If there was a long period of time between these two events, what factors contributed to this time lapse?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. In retrospect, do you think this was too long or too short a time? (explain) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. On what date did you open your first group home?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. In your original planning did you anticipate  
a) one home \_\_\_\_\_  
b) more than one group home \_\_\_\_\_
10. If you have more than one group home, how soon after the first did you open the second group home?  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Is your initial group home still in existence?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
If not, what happened?  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. In the initial planning of your group home service, was a budget formulated? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, did you find that the budget was  
a) overestimated \_\_\_\_\_  
b) underestimated \_\_\_\_\_

13. If you rented your facility, were there budgetary considerations for doing so? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. Did you have difficulties with a renting arrangement?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what were the budgetary problems you encountered? \_\_\_\_\_

15 In your original planning for what purpose(s) was your first group home designed? (Check all that apply.)

a) as an alternative to foster homes with an expectation of long term care \_\_\_\_\_

b) as an alternative to foster homes with an expectation of short term care \_\_\_\_\_

c) as a treatment facility for children and adolescents who experience interpersonal difficulties \_\_\_\_\_

d) for children and adolescents needing care yet still able to function in school and community \_\_\_\_\_

e) for children and adolescents for whom the atmosphere of the foster home was too permissive and open \_\_\_\_\_

f) as post-institutional care for children and adolescents, i.e. after discharge from training schools, treatment centres, psychiatric hospitals, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

g) other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_

16. In the initial planning of your group home, to what group(s) did you plan to direct your service? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
17. Were there groups you felt could not be served in this setting? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, please describe. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
18. What sorts of problems did you envision a group home service handling? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
19. In planning your group home at what wardship group(s) was it aimed? (Check all that apply.)
- a) Crown wards who were teenagers \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Crown wards who were under teenage \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) Temporary Society wards who were teenagers \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) Temporary Society wards who were under teenage \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) Non-wards who were teenagers \_\_\_\_\_
  - f) other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_
20. Did you envision your group home as a placement to be used for any other groups in the community? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, from what community groups did you anticipate referrals? (Please explain.) \_\_\_\_\_
21. What were your criteria for intake eligibility for the group home? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

22. In your initial group home, how did you envision mixing the residents according to age and sex?

- a) mixed age groups \_\_\_\_\_
- b) like age groups \_\_\_\_\_
- c) mixed sexes \_\_\_\_\_
- d) like sexes \_\_\_\_\_
- e) mixed ages and mixed sexes \_\_\_\_\_
- f) like ages and like sexes \_\_\_\_\_
- g) like ages and mixed sexes \_\_\_\_\_
- h) mixed ages and like sexes \_\_\_\_\_

23. Did you plan that your residents in your group homes would (Check all that apply.)

- a) attend school \_\_\_\_\_
- b) attend training programs \_\_\_\_\_
- c) be regularly employed \_\_\_\_\_

24. What types of school or training programs in your community did you anticipate your residents using? \_\_\_\_\_

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25. Was your initial group home either a foster home or a receiving home previously? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, which one? \_\_\_\_\_

26. In the planning phase for your first home, what type of group home did you plan to use?

- a) a foster family group home (This type is owned by the family and cares for fewer children. \_\_\_\_\_)
- b) an agency-operated group home (This type is owned or rented by the agency and cares for four to twelve \_\_\_\_\_)

children.) \_\_\_\_\_

- c) a group residence (This type is owned by the agency and cares for twelve to twenty-five children.) \_\_\_\_\_

27. What type of facility did you actually open? \_\_\_\_\_

- a) a foster family owned home \_\_\_\_\_
- b) an agency rented apartment \_\_\_\_\_
- c) an agency rented large single family home \_\_\_\_\_
- d) an agency rented duplex \_\_\_\_\_
- e) an agency owned apartment \_\_\_\_\_
- f) an agency owned large single family home \_\_\_\_\_
- g) other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_

28. How did your agency originally deal with any municipal zoning by-laws regarding group living? (check one)

- a) located in an area zoned to accommodate group living \_\_\_\_\_
- b) located in a restricted residential area but were not challenged \_\_\_\_\_
- c) located in a restricted residential area and requested and received a waiver of regulations \_\_\_\_\_
- d) located in a restricted residential area and called your group home a foster home \_\_\_\_\_
- e) located in a restricted residential area and placed five residents or less in your group home \_\_\_\_\_
- f) other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

29. What considerations were used in choosing the location for your group home? (Check all that were considered.)

- a) close to school \_\_\_\_\_
- b) house was given by a benefactor \_\_\_\_\_
- c) a neighbourhood where other children or adolescents lived \_\_\_\_\_
- d) close to a hospital or residential treatment centre \_\_\_\_\_
- e) house of foster family \_\_\_\_\_
- f) close to your agency office for social work and supervisory services \_\_\_\_\_
- g) other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

30. Did you encounter difficulties in regards to locating your group home? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what kinds of problems did you encounter?

\_\_\_\_\_

31. Were regular agency staff assigned to carry administrative responsibility for your group home operation?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what were the tasks assigned? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If no, were there reasons staff were not assigned?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

32. Were there regular staff assigned to carry supervisory

responsibility for the group home house staff?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what were the tasks assigned? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If no, were there reasons staff were not assigned?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

33. Who was responsible for the final decision regarding admissions? \_\_\_\_\_

34. How did you envision the relationship between the group home and your other agency services? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

35. Did you plan for trained social work staff to be assigned specifically to your group home for counselling?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If no, how did you plan to provide counselling? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

36. What type of staff did you expect to employ in the group home?

a) married couple (husband working outside) \_\_\_\_\_

b) adult individuals with experience in child care \_\_\_\_\_

c) adult individual without experience in child care \_\_\_\_\_

d) child care workers \_\_\_\_\_

e) other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_

37. How many "in-house" staff were anticipated for your group home?
- a) full-time basis \_\_\_\_\_
- b) part-time basis \_\_\_\_\_
38. How was staffing coverage to be arranged?
- a) live-in staff \_\_\_\_\_
- b) shifts of staff \_\_\_\_\_
39. Were arrangements for relief staff formalized?
- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- If yes, what were the arrangements? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
40. If you planned to employ foster parents in your group home were they to be regarded as staff of your Children's Aid Society? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
41. What types of staff do you employ now in your group home(s)? (Check all that apply.)
- a) foster family \_\_\_\_\_
- b) married couple (husband working outside) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) individuals without C.C.W. certificate \_\_\_\_\_
- d) individuals with C.C.W. certificates \_\_\_\_\_
- e) other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_
42. Would you rank order the following, according to your present preference for employment? (No. 1 is most desirable.)
- a) foster family \_\_\_\_\_
- b) married couple (husband working outside) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) individuals without C.C.W. certificates \_\_\_\_\_



d) individuals with C.C.W. certificates \_\_\_\_\_

e) other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_

43. What advantages do you feel a group home service has?

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44. What disadvantages do you feel a group home service has?

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45. Did your initial experience encourage you or discourage you about the use of group homes? (Please explain.)

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46. Are there areas of concern you feel would be important to those considering group homes that you feel have not been covered and might be discussed now?

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## VITA AUCTORIS

Marie Theresa Boland was born May 13th, 1949 in Sliema, Malta. She came to Canada in 1951 with her parents. She attended elementary school at St. Gregory's Girls School in Oshawa and St. Paul's Separate School in Whitby Township. In September 1963, she entered secondary school at Anderson Collegiate and Vocational Institute in Whitby and graduated from Grade XIII in June 1968. In September of that year, she entered the University of Windsor in the undergraduate Social Work program and completed her B.S.W. in 1972. She was employed as a social worker at Brockville Psychiatric Hospital and then at the Whitby Psychiatric Hospital. In September 1974, she returned to the University of Windsor and enrolled in the M.S.W. program. Her graduate year field placement was with the Outpatient Team of The Regional Children's Centre at Windsor Western Hospital. During the academic year, she was also a teaching assistant for the first year social work class at the University of Windsor. She plans to graduate in October 1975 and will join the staff of the Roman Catholic Children's Aid Society of Metropolitan Toronto.