

1969

A Survey of Public Opinion Concerning Etiology, Attitudes, and Feelings Toward Mental Retardation

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A SURVEY OF PUBLIC OPINION CONCERNING ETIOLOGY, ATTITUDES,
AND FEELINGS TOWARD MENTAL RETARDATION
(TITLE)

BY

Norma M. Keefe
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THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Science in Education

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1969

YEAR

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Without valuable assistance from many people, this study would not have been possible. The writer would like to express appreciation to the Illinois Association for Retarded Children, Edgar County Association for the Retarded, and Mrs. Robert Shephard, Director of the Workshop for Handicapped Children in Paris, Illinois.

Appreciation is extended to Mr. Phillip C. Keefer, Miss Sarah Kerrick, and Rev. and Mrs. Purl O. Stephens for their assistance and words of encouragement.

The writer would also like to express thanks and appreciation to Dr. Louis Grado, Dr. LeRoy Peterson, and Dr. William Crane for serving on her graduate committee.

Thanks to the countless number of individuals who gave assistance in obtaining the information needed for this survey.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

As a nation, we Americans have prided ourselves in progress. No other nation, as yet, has surpassed the United States in its widespread use of the "machine." Ours is an age of automation.

Could it be possible, however, that the changes in our social values may not have kept pace with the changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution? Have we come closer to treating each man as "brother"--regardless of his race, creed, religion, or mental ability? Now is the time for us to take stock of ourselves. Let us see, for example, if our attitudes and feelings for the mentally retarded have changed over the years.

An area for study that would prove very worthwhile is that of mental retardation. A study of feelings and attitudes toward mental retardation would prove very interesting as well as beneficial in determining just how far we have progressed in accepting and helping a once neglected people. It would be well to note whether people are hanging on to the old superstitions about mental retardation. Perhaps there are feelings and attitudes held by people that are

no longer valid in light of present day knowledge on mental retardation. If we know what concepts are held concerning mental retardation, we will better know what tasks lie ahead of us in educating the people and freeing a people once shackled by ignorance and superstition.

Need for the Study

The need for such a study is not to be denied. One need only look at the statistics concerning mental retardates to determine that this large group cannot be ignored in our nation.

In the United States alone, it is estimated that there are almost six million mental retardates.¹ This is approximately 3 per cent of our population. Whether such a sizable group of people become hopeless wards of the state or contributing citizens must be a concern of all.

Not only is such a study needful because of the prevalence of mental retardation, it is needful because the number of mental retardates is increasing each year. It is thought that by 1970, unless new preventative measures have had a far-reaching effect, there will be at least six and one-half million retardates in our country.² There are several reasons why this increase is to be expected. In the first place, the life expectancy in the United States

¹ National Association for Retarded Children, Facts on Mental Retardation (New York: NARC Press, 1967), p. 5.

² Ibid.

is much longer today. In 1920, the life expectancy in the United States was 54.1 years as compared to 70.2 for the year 1964.¹ This was a gain of 16.1 years. Nowadays, retardates, as well as other groups, are living longer.

In the second place, there is an increase in the general population of the United States. The population of the United States in 1940 was 132,164,569. In 1960, the population had risen to 179,323,175.² This is an increase of 47,158,606 during the 20 year period. It stands to reason that as the general population increases, so will the number of retardates in approximate proportion unless preventative measures are taken.

Thirdly, the mortality rate at birth is much lower today than it was a few decades ago. In 1945, the fetal ratio per 1,000 live births was 23.9. It was 16.4 for the year 1964 which shows a difference of 7.5. The neonatal mortality rate per 1,000 live births was 47.0 for 1940 but had lowered to 24.8 by 1965.³ Because of better trained doctors and safer equipment more infants, including the retarded, are surviving the complications of the birth process.

¹U.S. Dept. of Congress, Statistical Abstract of the United States 1966 (87th Annual Edition; Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1966), p. 53.

²Ibid., p. 9.

³Ibid., p. 55.

It is especially because of the prevalence of mental retardation that America must take notice. In this fast age of transportation and communication, no man is an island. Each person operates as a tiny spoke in the hub of our great universe. No man lives to himself nor dies to himself. Every family, then, is effected either directly or indirectly by the retarded.

A great many Americans are directly effected by the mentally retarded. With mental retardation so prevalent, many Americans have a retarded person as a relative or at least some in the neighborhood. All of us have retarded persons living in our towns and attending our public schools. We come in contact with them in homes, churches, schools, and at public facilities. We must know the facts concerning the mentally retarded if we are to understand and help them. Such a study as this should bring out new light concerning what a person knows about retardation as well as his feelings toward it. Knowledge helps conquer a great many fears. People often have a tendency to dislike or reject what they do not understand.

Another reason for this study lies deep in the heart of American ideology. Our nation is founded on the belief in the dignity and worth of each individual, regardless of who he is or what his capabilities are. Each person has something to contribute, however small, to society. Also, each person should be given maximum opportunity to develop

physically, socially, and mentally to the fullest degree. By tracing the mentally retarded from past to present, we can determine whether the retarded have been abused and perhaps their rights violated. We can then determine whether or not society is partly to blame for the economic and social burden the mentally retarded have been through the years.

America's greatest resource is her children. They will determine her future. If we do not train them for their place in life, all America must suffer the consequences. "One mentally retarded person in an institution can cost the state between \$100,000 and \$200,000 in the course of his lifetime."¹

Perhaps a great share of the economic burden of the mentally retarded is the fault of the American people themselves. Statistics tell us: "More than eight out of ten of the mentally retarded could be taught enough to go out into the world and live with other people, and even to support themselves."² Yet, our institutions are crowded with mentally retarded persons and there are long waiting lists for others to get in. There they will usually remain

¹The Mentally Retarded... Their New Hope (The Advertising Council, Inc., The President's Committee on Mental Retardation, NARC, The U. S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, and The Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation, [1967?], p. [6].

²Ibid., p. [8].

for the rest of their lives. Many of these might have become self-supporting with proper training and opportunities for employment in the community.

America also needs to face up to her responsibility for promoting the maximum opportunity for social and emotional growth for all her citizens. "Between 50 and 80 per cent of the retarded people in institutions also have some form of emotional disturbance. This comes about not only because the retarded person is more susceptible than the average but also because his life experience is less favorable."¹ It is high time America admitted her guilt, put down her prejudices, and faced up to new responsibilities for her retarded citizens.

Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study are threefold. First, there is an attempt to trace knowledge, attitudes, and feelings concerning mental retardation down to the present. In this manner, we can find out what has been accomplished as far as helping the mentally retarded. We can gain a better understanding of problems today by looking back at past treatment. We can also profit from our past mistakes.

Secondly, a study of present feelings and attitudes of a number of people toward mental retardation would prove

¹"Children Lost In Space And Time," The Lily Review XX(March/April, 1960), p. 13.

most profitable. By comparing recent findings with those of the past, one can see what has been accomplished for the mentally retarded. One can also determine whether some people are still clinging to superstitions and beliefs not valid in light of present day research and knowledge. Such a study should provide us with information that may give us an insight as to why many retardates behave in the way they do, since most people tend to behave in a manner expected of them. The study can also give us insight as to what constructive progress has been made for the retarded and what specific ideas and beliefs have hampered progress.

Thirdly, by studying mental retardation both in the past and present, it is hoped that some important recommendations can be made for the future. Many Americans are not aware of the invalid concepts concerning mental retardation they have. These can be noted and made public through mass media.

It is hoped that the information gathered in this study will go beyond merely pointing out the invalid concepts that are still being held. Even more important, it is hoped that such a study will provide new hope for many of the mentally retarded and their families. New goals can be set in light of what we now know and are providing for the retarded. It is much easier to set new goals when we can see what progress has actually been realized.

Most of all, it is hoped that information gathered in this study will show what the retarded can do with love, understanding, and a little help from everyone. The importance of continued research into mental retardation cannot be minimized. Neither can the fact that every man, woman, and child can play an important role in helping the retarded help himself.

CHAPTER II

RELATED RESEARCH

Defining Mental Retardation

For purposes of this study, it is pertinent to first gain an understanding of what the term "mental retardation" actually means. Mental retardation is a term which has been defined in many different ways. This fact has only added confusion to its understanding. Some of the more commonly accepted definitions will be given here with their implications.

A controversy has risen over the definition of mental retardation. Some authorities in the area define mental retardation in terms of the potential ability of the retarded person. Other authorities have defined mental retardation according to the retardate's present functioning ability. It would seem that those who propose to define mental retardation in terms of potential only, are quite vulnerable to error. It is difficult to accurately estimate the potentiality of every person. At the present, it seems more practical to define mental retardation in terms of a person's present functioning ability.

A. F. Tredgold has received much attention for his definition of mental deficiency. He termed it: "A state of incomplete mental development of such a kind and degree that the individual is incapable of adapting himself to the normal environment of his fellows in such a way as to maintain existence independently of supervision, control or external support."¹

In the above definition, two important implications are made. First, Tredgold brings out the fact that the mental development of the retardate is "incomplete." Due to some unfortunate circumstance, mental development was not completed as is the case with a normal person. The other point for contemplation is that some mental retardates are dependent upon others for guidance and help.

Leo Kanner, in his book Child Psychiatry, introduced two types of mental retardation: "absolute feeble-mindedness" and "relative feeble-mindedness."² Those that were "absolute" were grossly retarded and could be easily spotted in any society. Their fate was decided upon by those of superior intelligence in their culture.

Of the other type, Kanner has said: "It is preferable to speak of such people as intellectually inadequate rather

¹A. F. Tredgold, A Textbook of Mental Deficiency (Baltimore: William Wood and Co., 1937), p. 4.

²Leo Kanner, Child Psychiatry (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1957), p. 70-71.

than mentally deficient."¹ Those who are "relatively feeble-minded" generally go unnoticed in less complex societies. In our own society, these persons usually end up in occupations which require little thinking ability but a great deal of physical exertion. Among the occupations suggested as possible ones for the "relatively feeble-minded" were the following: miner, waitress, chicken feeder, garbage collector, and farm hand.

C. E. Benda, noted child psychologist, has defined mental deficiency in this way: "A mentally defective person is a person who is incapable of managing himself and his affairs, or being taught to do so, and who requires supervision, control, and care for his own welfare and the welfare of the community."²

Like Tredgold, Benda brought out the fact that the retardate must have help or supervision in managing his own affairs. However, Benda went one step farther. He states that it is important that a mental retardate receive supervision for the welfare of the community as well as his own. Without help, a retardate could become a juvenile delinquent and menace to society. Trained, he could become an asset to his community.

¹Leo Kanner, Child Psychiatry (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1957), p. 70-71.

²C. E. Benda, "Psychopathology of Childhood," Manual of Child Psychology, ed. by L. Carmichael, (2nd Ed.) New York: Wiley, 1954), p. 1115.

The modern definition accepted by the American Association on Mental Deficiency describes mental retardation as significant "subaverage general intellectual functioning which originates during the developmental period and is associated with impairment in adaptive behavior."¹ In this definition, attributed to R. F. Heber, there are two key words to be noted. The first is "subaverage" which describes the intelligence as one of degree from the normal. Actually, then, there is no clear-cut division between those who are considered normal and those considered mentally retarded. Those that are to be found on the extreme end of either can be easily distinguished. But those to be found in the middle or who are mildly retarded, are quite hard to distinguish.

The other key word to be noted in the above definition is "adaptive" which is used in connection with the behavior of the mentally retarded. Not only is the mentally retarded person's mental development less than those who are normal, it is also slower. Therefore, the retardate will have greater difficulty in applying what he has learned to ordinary living. For this reason, he will need special adaptive training to make the most of his capabilities.

The definitions of Tredgold, Kanner, Benda, and Heber give a much clearer picture as to what mental retardation

¹R. F. Heber, American Journal of Mental Deficiency, Monograph Supplement, 1961, p. 3.

actually is. For the purposes of this study, mental retardation will be defined in terms of the Heber definition accepted by the American Association on Mental Deficiency. Thus, having defined our subject, let us progress now to another important part of our study, that of past knowledge and treatment of the mentally retarded.

Ancient Knowledge and Treatment

The history of the mentally retarded has been a search-- a search for survival and for recognition in a world where more intelligent people often have misunderstood and, therefore, mistreated them. For purposes of study, past knowledge and treatment of the mentally retarded has been divided into three rather distinct periods.¹ They are as follows:

1. Ancient Times-dating from primitive times to about 500 A.D.
2. Medieval Times-dating from around 500 A.D. to 1800 A.D.
3. Modern Times-dating after 1800 A.D.

During ancient times, mentally deficient persons were grossly misunderstood. Therefore, they were often neglected, punished, ridiculed, and cruelly mistreated. Nature herself often eliminated the mentally deficient by the process of the survival of the fittest. Since these persons were often

¹Merle E. Frampton and E. D. Gall, eds., Special Education For The Exceptional, I (Boston: Porter Sargent Publisher, 1955), p. 4.

unable to care for themselves adequately or to protect themselves from enemies, death many times came to them at an early age.

Many primitive tribes found their movements slowed down by the grossly retarded. Since they were unable to hunt or contribute to the tribe's supply of food, they were an economic burden. Their lives were in constant jeopardy from wild beasts or enemy tribes. During tribal wars, they were easily captured and often cruelly tortured to death. For these reasons, many tribes took measures to eliminate the handicapped themselves.

The ancient Greeks and Romans recognized the extreme cases of mental deficiency and made provisions for their elimination in many cases. The laws of Lycurgus allowed for the deliberate abandonment of "idiots." The Spartans are said to have cast the defectives into a river or have taken them into a mountain where they were left to perish. A socially inadequate person was not allowed to exist because he constituted a hazard to the group as well as to himself.¹ For the extremely retarded, then, euthanasia often became the rule rather than an exception.

Even the term "idiot," which is often used to denote a severe or profound retardate, finds its origin in Greek

¹Merle E. Frampton and E. D. Gall, eds., Special Education For The Exceptional, I (Boston: Porter Sargent Publisher, 1955), p. 5.

misunderstanding. Stanley P. Davies, well known for his work in mental deficiency, states: "The Greek Roots from which the word "idiot" is presumably derived are "idias," a private person, or "idios," peculiar, that is, a person set apart or alone. Thus the roots contain the concept of nonsocial or extrasocial, the idea that these persons live in a world by themselves, and are more or less outside the pale of society."¹ Since the retardates were considered misfits and thought not to have human feelings, it is little wonder that they were practically devoid of human rights and compassion.

Gradually, a more tolerant attitude toward the retarded emerged. For a while, it became practice to allow retardates to remain in society as objects of amusement and ridicule. This was especially true among the Romans. The wife of Seneca had a blind imbecile which she kept for entertainment. Some attempts were made to heal the retarded which, of course, failed. Priests, medicine men, and the famous physician-priests of the third century B.C. called Asclepiads all tried to heal the mentally defective. Some had thought the retardates were demon possessed or accursed by the gods and sought to break evil spells they thought the retarded were under.

Several religions and religious leaders admonished the people to help those that were less fortunate. The principle

¹ Stanley P. Davies, The Mentally Retarded in Society (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 8.

of family loyalty among the Chinese extended to the handicapped also. Confucius said, "Everyone calls his son his son whether he has talents or not talents." Likewise, the Hebrew laws admonished the people to help care for the handicapped and those less fortunate than themselves.

With the dawning of Christianity, there came also some relief and tolerance for the retarded. Christ taught that one should "love his neighbor as himself." Such teachings from One who was compassionate toward all Himself, had a tremendous effect on society. For the first time, many people saw the mentally retarded as a human being with feelings like themselves, only less endowed. Some felt compassion for the unfortunate ones and extended a helping hand.

The first recorded attempt to care for the mentally deficient was by the Bishop of Myra during the fourth century.¹ He is said to have shown them considerable compassion and to have provided them with shelter, food, and care. However, no efforts were made to educate or train the deficient during this era. Perhaps no training was given during this period because only the extremely deficient cases were so easily identified. Hence, only the extremely deficient were given custodial care.

¹"The Nature of Mental Retardation," Encyclopedia Americana, 1967, XVIII, p. 646.

Medieval Knowledge and Treatment

The early part of this era was characterized by its contrast of treatment toward the mentally defectives. The keynote was confusion. On one hand, defectives were considered by some religious orders as souls that could be saved through much effort. Therefore, they were to be treated with love and compassion.

On the other hand, the mentally defectives were often used by nobles as a source of amusement. Since imbeciles were unable to create jokes, they often were laughed at and ridiculed. Those retardates with distorted physical features usually found themselves ridiculed most, since many nobles found unusual physical features very amusing. Court jesters or simpletons, as they were often called, were an important source of entertainment for the rich during this period.

In some localities during the Middle Ages, people even thought the mentally retarded were sacred beings with magical powers. Unorganized speech from them was misinterpreted to be communications with the supernatural. Out of fear or reverence, the mentally retarded were allowed to roam at will in many parts of Europe and the Orient. They were not as physically tortured as they had been in the primitive days. However, superstitions prevailed everywhere and the elements of abuse had not died out.

The confusion in this age can easily be seen with the example of Tycho Brahe, the great astronomer of this era.

Thinking the mentally defective to be supernaturally blessed, he had one for a close companion. The great astronomer listened for hours vainly to the retardate's unorganized speech, thinking he was communicating with God.¹

In England, the mentally defective were given regal protection under Edward II (1307-1327). The enactment was as follows: "The King shall have the custody of the lands of natural fools, taking the profits of them without waste or destruction, and shall find them their necessaries, of whose fee soever the lands be holden; and after the death of such idiots he shall render the same to the heirs, so that such idiots shall not aliene, nor their heirs be disinherited, and a portion shall be distributed for his soul by the advice of the Ordinary."²

An enactment of this type, was a step in the right direction for the retarded. Clearly, a great many retardates were unable to administer their own estates and could easily have been cheated out of homes and land, were it not for the help of the State.

However, in the midst of superstition, the pendulum often swings back. Those misunderstood are often persecuted. We find this so even in the days of the Renaissance and the

¹Martin A. Barr, Mental Defectives: Their History, Treatment and Training (Philadelphia: P. Blakiston's Son and Co., 1904), p. 25.

²Laws of England, quoted in Ibid., p. 25-26.

Reformation. Both John Calvin and Martin Luther denounced the mentally defective as being "filled with Satan."

Martin Luther, in speaking of a severely retarded child, spoke of the child as having no soul as humanity does. He said he was "firmly of the opinion that such changelings were merely a mass of flesh, a massa carnis, with no soul. For it is the Devil's power that he corrupts people who have reasons and souls when he possesses them. The Devil sits in such changelings where their soul should have been."¹

Luther's concept of the mentally deficient appears to be very typical during the Reformation period. By many, the retarded were considered to be subhuman organisms, devoid of feelings typically ascribed to human beings. They were thought not to possess a soul and, therefore, did not require kindly treatment. Since they were often considered to be Children of the Devil, they were sometimes objects for cruelty.

During this time, there had been no real attempts made to train the retarded and very little had been done in the way of caring for them. The fact that mental retardation was confused with mental illness only added to further misunderstanding. During the thirteenth century, the

¹Martin Luther, Table Talk: A Selection of Conversation of Martin Luther, Vol. LIV of Luther's Works, ed. by Theodore Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p. 396.

retarded were given some attention and care in Flanders. However, the movement for specialized care of the retarded was not organized until the latter part of the fifteenth century.

The European movement was probably first started in France by Saint Vincent de Paul who cared for all kinds of defectives in the famous Bicêtre, an asylum in Paris.¹ Only care, not training was given and the homeless, feeble-minded, mentally deranged, and physically incapacitated all resided together. There was practically no attempt made to treat the condition or to scientifically study the mental condition of the retarded.

Early treatment of the mentally defective in the United States also had its origins in superstitions and ignorance. During seventeenth-century America, the belief in demoniacal possession led the Puritan to dispose of many deviants in the colony. The belief prevailed that deviance was the result of sin and was something to be destroyed. A law, enacted in 1642 stated that all men and women deemed to be witches, were to be put to death.² Anyone behaving in a peculiar way, could be thought to be a witch and executed by the group. When the witchcraft craze of 1691 had died

¹J. E. Wallace Wallin, The Education of Handicapped Children (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Riverside Press, 1924), p. 5-6.

²John M. Taylor, Witchcraft Delusion In Colonial Connecticut (New York: The Grafton Press, 1908), p. 24.

down, twenty-two lives had been sacrificed in Salem alone. Fear and ignorance had taken its toll.

Despite a few attempts to care for the mentally handicapped, the Middle Ages can be summed up as totally unprofitable for them. It is astounding to think that virtually nothing was done to treat or train the mentally handicapped during a period of 1,300 years. Rather, these unfortunate persons were victims of a society shackled by fears and superstitions.

Modern Knowledge and Treatment

The coming of the nineteenth century heralded a new beginning for the mentally retarded. With the century, came the scientific approach to mental retardation. As we have seen, up to this time, no attempts had been made to diagnose, cure, or train the retardates. The new age, heralded by J. M. Gaspard Itard, was to prove more profitable for the retarded.

In 1799, three sportsmen captured a wild boy living in the forest of Aveyron. The boy behaved in a crude, animalistic way. There existed two points of view concerning him. One point of view was held by Philippe Pinel. He said the boy was an idiot due to inheritance. J. M. Gaspard Itard disagreed and said the boy was an idiot because he was untaught.¹

¹ J. M. Gaspard Itard, The Wild Boy Of Aveyron (New York: The Century Co., 1932), p. 7.

To prove his point of view, Itard tried earnestly to educate the boy for five years. At the end of this time, the boy had not developed speech and Itard had failed in his efforts to socialize him. Nevertheless, Itard had stimulated scientific study and interest in the retarded and set the pace for further studies.

One of Itard's pupils, Edward Seguin, devoted his entire life to training the mentally handicapped. Seguin, who is considered to be the first great educator in mental deficiency, was a physician as well as a psychologist. Seguin, whose work was confined mainly from 1830 to 1850, founded the first feeble-minded school in Paris in 1837.

In the school, the whole-to-part learning approach was used and the technique of progressing from the known to unknown. Two types of retardation were diagnosed according to the degree of retardation. The physiological method was developed and used resulting in wide use of motor and sensory training for the retarded.

Seguin's work, The Moral Treatment, Hygiene, and Education of Idiots and Other Backward Children, was published in 1846 and received much acclaim by the French Academy. In 1850, Seguin came to America and helped establish the first institution here for the mentally deficient. Probably no other man exhibited such a profound influence on the first American institutions for the mentally deficient as did this man. As the famous psychiatrist, Esquirol,

expressed it: Seguin's mission was "The removal of the mark of the beast from the forehead of the idiot."¹

For the first time in history, attention was being focused on the mentally deficient with regards as to how he might be trained or educated. Many people were caught up with enthusiasm that the retarded might be "cured" at the schools whereupon he could return to society again--this time normal in every respect. For many, the mentally retarded became subjects for study rather than charitable pity.

While France is credited with originating the modern science of corrective education for the mentally defective, many other countries made important contributions during the first half of the nineteenth century also. In 1842, for example, Guggenbühl established a colony for cretins in Canton Berne, Switzerland. The cottage plan was introduced to the colony and received rapid acceptance. Retardates were educated as well as cared for in the institution. Nature's wonders were called upon to stimulate the interest and attention of those in the colony.² While this institution was not lasting, Guggenbühl, nevertheless, was a

¹ Esquirol, quoted in Martin W. Barr, Mental Defectives: Their History, Treatment and Training (Philadelphia: P. Blakiston's Son & Co., 1904), p. 19.

² Martin W. Barr, Mental Defectives: Their History, Treatment and Training (Philadelphia: P. Blakiston's Son & Co., 1904), p. 38-39.

pioneer in the education of the mentally retarded. His colony plan was a forerunner of many large institutions today.

In Germany, experiments were being conducted with the mentally defective by Saegert. His teaching methods were primarily of a physiological nature. Saegert founded the first school in Germany for the mentally defective which was called the "Institution for the Cure and Education of Idiots." The name of the institution suggests its major goal--cure through education.

The success of this institution led to the establishment of others. Between the years 1846-1881, no less than 35 institutions were established for the feeble-minded in Germany.

In early American history, deviants of all kinds often were confused and classed together. For example, the first house of correction in Connecticut in 1722 was for all kinds of deviants including the mentally afflicted. As late as 1820, mentally afflicted persons were publicly sold to anyone that would care for them for the lowest amount of public finances.¹ Once purchased, the mental retardates were at the mercy of their guardians.

During the nineteenth century, America was profoundly influenced by a crusader for humane rights by the name of

¹Albert Deutsch, The Mentally Ill In America (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1937), p. 117.

Dorothea Dix. In 1841, Miss Dix started teaching a Sunday School class at the East Cambridge House of Correction. She was horrified at the dirt, filthy and evidences of brutality she saw. Human beings were caged like animals and given no heat in the middle of winter. When she asked that they be given heat, she was told they didn't need heat. At this time, an old myth prevailed that mental deviates were insensible to extremes of cold and heat.¹ For this reason, many mentally afflicted persons were sometimes placed in unheated cells or sheds where their fingers and toes often froze if they were "lucky" enough to survive the winter.

To such ideas, Miss Dix was greatly opposed. She insisted that mentally afflicted persons had feelings like all human beings and that the mentally afflicted were being punished by being put in cells instead of cared for and cured. Miss Dix began an investigation of all kinds of institutions throughout the country. At Medford, she noticed one mentally retarded person in chains and another that had been in a close stall for seventeen years.² Everywhere she went, she found deplorable conditions for deviates of all kinds. This was due more often to ignorance rather than intended cruelty.

¹ Albert Deutsch, The Mentally Ill In America (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1937), p. 159.

² Ibid., p. 166.

Miss Dix devoted the rest of her life to helping establish reforms at home and abroad. When she died in 1887, she had helped establish 30 asylums. More important, she had helped dispel some of the old myths and helped promote better methods of treatment for all deviates, including the retarded. She had also encouraged prominent men and women, such as Samuel G. Howe, to take their stand for reform.

In 1828, the first experimental school, Perkins Institute, was established in Boston. Fourteen years later, the Syracuse State School was founded in New York. Both schools were forerunners to the first state institution for the mentally deficient in America. This institution, The Massachusetts School for Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Youth, was opened in 1848.

Chosen as superintendent of the Massachusetts institution was Samuel G. Howe, forerunner of special education in America today. Howe was ahead of many educators of his time. He saw the need for public education for all children. Concerning the school for retardates, he said: "It is a link in the chain of common schools...the last indeed, but still a necessary link in order to embrace all the children in the state."¹

Howe reminded the American people that something else was needed besides good intentions for these children. In

¹Samuel G. Howe, Third and Final Report on the Experimental School for Teaching and Training Idiotic Children (Cambridge, Mass.: Metcalf and Company, 1852), p. 15-16.

his 1866 dedication address, he stated, "Good intentions, and kind impulses, do not necessarily lead to wise and truly humane measure."¹

With the help of Seguin, Howe worked for better treatment and training for the retarded. He recognized the need for specially endowed teachers in the field of special education. To this end, he worked to secure only those teachers who had the highest degree of moral qualities as well as intellectual capabilities.

Despite social reform in the mid 1800's, the idea that mental retardation was the result of sin still was prevalent. Even Samuel Howe was confused on this issue. Howe said: "It appeared to us certain that the existence of so many idiots in every generation must be the consequence of some violation of the natural laws;...that where there was so much suffering, there must have been sin."²

Many other leaders voiced similar opinions during this period. One school of thought blamed the sins of parents for mentally retarded children. H. H. M. Green said: "Our wards are innocent of crime or fault. In the

¹ Samuel G. Howe, In Ceremonies on Laying the Cornerstone of the New York State Institution for the Blind (Batavia, New York: Genesee Co., 1866), p. 13-16.

² Samuel G. Howe, Report Made to the Legislature of Massachusetts upon Idiocy (Boston, Mass.: Collidge & Wiley, 1848), p. 4.

large majority of instances, they are the feeble and deformed expressions of parental sins or sorrows."¹

Another major cause of retardation during this time was thought to be parental alcoholism. If a parent drank alcoholic beverages excessively, it was thought that the children could be born with a damaged body or mind. Isaac Kerlin brought out this idea in his 1866 report.²

Still prevalent in the mid 1800's was the idea that mental retardation could be cured. Institutions were not just to care for and train the retarded. The retardates were to be cured so they could return to society normal. To illustrate this point, let us recite a prime example. In speaking of Fernald State School, Samuel Howe made this statement: "This establishment being intended for a school, should not be converted into an establishment for incurables."³

Other directors of similar institutions guarded their schools against becoming just custodial care institutions. In 1851, the first state school for the mentally retarded in New York was opened at Albany with Dr. Hervey B. Wilbur as

¹H. H. M. Greene, "The Obligation of Civilized Society to Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Children," Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction (St. Louis, 1884), p. 270.

²Isaac Kerlin, "Report of the Committee on Provision for Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Persons," Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction (St. Paul, Minn., 1886), p. 297.

³Samuel G. Howe, Journal of Insanity, 1852, p. 31, quoted in Robert B. Kugel and Wolf Wolfensberger, eds., Changing Patterns in Residential Services For The Mentally Retarded (Wash., D.C.: President's Committee on Mental Retardation, 1969), p. 90.

superintendent. As Dr. Wilbur put it: "We do not propose to create or supply faculties absolutely wanting; nor to bring all grades of idiocy to the same standard of development...but rather to give to dormant faculties the greatest practicable development."¹ The key word in this statement is "dormant." It denotes an inactive state which the school has a responsibility for awakening.

Whereas earlier institutions had grouped together deviates of all kinds, institutions in the mid 1800's for retardates were selective. Severely retarded children as well as those with multiple handicaps were usually excluded if more favorable subjects could be obtained. An attempt was made to distinguish between epilepsy, mental illness, and mental retardation.

All through the mid 1800's, there was a great deal of enthusiasm concerning mental retardation. Thinking cure was in sight, many new institutions were founded for the training of the retardates. After 30 years of experience, Seguin himself is reported to have said: "Idiots have been improved, educated, and even cured...not one in a hundred who has not been made more happy and healthy."²

¹Hervey B. Wilbur, quoted in Stanley P. Davies, The Mentally Retarded in Society (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 23.

²Edward Seguin, quoted in J. C. Carson, "Prevention of Feeble-Mindedness From a Moral and Legal Standpoint," Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction (New York, 1898), p. 294-295.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, however, we see the pendulum changing back again. Where we once found enthusiasm and optimism, we now find skepticism and disillusionment. Even though many retardates had received valuable training, they had not been "cured" as some early pioneers had prophesied.

Results of training the retarded had not been far reaching enough to suit most people. For example, in 1884, about 3 per cent of those from the state institution in Kentucky were discharged from the institution where they found community employment.¹ As W. E. Fernald put it: "It was found that only a small proportion...could be so developed and improved that they could go out into the world and support themselves independently."² Plainly, some retardates just could not handle the jobs given them in the community.

When word about several failures got out, many new jobs did not open up to the retarded. Work could often be done by normal persons without as much supervision required. Many times it was done more quickly and efficiently too.

¹Isaac Kerlin, "Report of Standing Committee," Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction (Washington, D.C., 1885), p. 166.

²W. E. Fernald, "The History of the Treatment of the Feeble-Minded," Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction (Chicago, 1893), p. 210.

C. T. Wilbur does a good job of summing the problem up.

He said:

In the race of life, where an individual who is backward or peculiar attempts to compete with those who are not, the disadvantages are so great that the graduate from the idiot asylum really has no chance to succeed. The capacity of the individual is not at fault; but the world is not full of philanthropic people who are willing to take the individual from the asylum and surround him with the proper guardianship which his case demands.¹

Moreover, the state institutions found that some higher-grade retardates would require some shelter or care for the rest of their lives. After keeping the residents for some time, it also became apparent that many parents wanted their children to stay permanently at the institution where special help could be given them. Also, some parents had passed away or couldn't be found, so many retardates had no place to return to. Residence at the institutions was fast becoming a permanent thing rather than what it had set out to be--a temporary training center, a stepping stone to self-maintenance.

Since ideologies had changed between 1870 and 1880, the institutions, as well as the retarded themselves, were bound to feel the impact. The term "asylum" began being substituted in place of "school." Institutions became concerned mostly with the custodial care of the retardates.

¹C. T. Wilbur, "Institutions for the Feeble-Minded: The Result of Forty Years of Effort in Establishing Them in the United States," Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction (Buffalo, N.Y., 1888), p. 110.

A prime example of the new ideology could be seen in the naming of a new institution in 1893. The new institution, founded in Rome, New York, was called the "Custodial Asylum for Unteachable Idiots." The name itself infers two things. First, the word "asylum" was used instead of "school." It would be a place of refuge, then, rather than a training center.

Secondly, the word "untoachable" denotes a pessimistic view as far as the future is concerned for the retarded. It seemed as if all hope had been abandoned for the retarded and the directors of the institution were publicly admitting it by its very name.

The trends during the latter part of the nineteenth century were detrimental to the retarded. Three such trends can clearly be seen: "isolation," "enlargement," and "economization."¹

The first trend, isolation, proved a dangerous foe to mental retardation. For it was felt now that the retarded should be moved out of society for his own protection. Institutions were to be hedged in or fenced about to shut out the rest of the world.

Many leaders such as Howe and Seguin had advocated the placement of these institutions near the center of a large

¹Robert B. Kugel and Wolf Wolfensberger, eds., Changing Patterns In Services For The Mentally Retarded (Washington, D.C.: President's Committee on Mental Retardation, 1969), p. 97.

population. There they could be considered out of urban life and not hidden as though society were ashamed of them. Being in an urban area, they were close to doctors, educators, and leaders in many walks of life. In disapproving of the new isolationist trend, Seguin said: "In locating these schools through the country...they have put them out of the reach of concourse of scientific men and means, which are concentrated in capital cities."¹

By 1890, fourteen states had institutions for the mentally deficient. Since the idea of isolating the mentally retarded had been well formulated, little attempt was made to try to educate them. In 1883, Governor Butler of Massachusetts stated: "Give them an asylum, with good and kind treatment; but not a school. A well-fed, well-cared for idiot, is a happy creature. An idiot awakened to his condition is a miserable one."²

Since the trend had taken a rural setting, it seemed only natural that farming and gardening should follow. In the years that followed, new emphasis was given to both of these. Institutions hoped to become self-supporting this way, but none ever accomplished this feat.

The idea of enlargement, developed during the late 1800's, also proved detrimental to mental retardation. Since

¹Edward Seguin, New Facts and Remarks Concerning Idiocy (New York: William Wood and Company, 1870), p. 43.

²Governor Butler of Massachusetts, 1883, quoted in A. C. Rogers, "Does the Education of the Feeble-Minded Pay?", II Journal of Psycho-Asthenics, 1898, p. 152-153.

the major duty of the institution was to provide protective care, it was thought advantageous to concentrate large numbers of retardates together rather than try and operate several small institutions. People rationalized that it would be better for the retardates since they would be congregated more with their own kind.

The second trend of enlargement was really an outgrowth of the third--economization. For many persons, a concentration of great numbers in large institutions represented a measure of economization. Since mental retardation was now considered incurable, people were not as willing for their money to be spent for the care of hopeless defectives. An act in Pennsylvania clearly illustrates this fact. The act, passed around 1887, raised the number of state-supported residents from 400 to 500 and at the same time, reduced the per capita expenditure from \$200 to \$175.¹ It was less expensive and more practical to add on a few more room than to build a new institution.

The dangerous trends of the late 1800's had resulted from pity for the retarded. However, when pity is extended to the sufferer, there is often the involvement of time and money on the part of others. These demands on others can

¹Isaac Kerlin, quoted in Robert B. Kugel and Wolf Wolfensberger, eds., Changing Patterns in Residential Services For The Mentally Retarded (Washington, D.C.: President's Committee on Mental Retardation, 1969), p. 99.

cause resentment which may lead to mistreatment or even brutality. This is just what happened.

When pity gave way to resentment, the American people became more concerned with protecting society from the mentally defectives rather than giving the best of care to them. Since the deficient had been moved to rural areas, they were out of sight. They might have been out of mind had it not been for the financial burden the taxpayer had to bear.

In order to lighten this burden, large institutions became overcrowded and understaffed. Many retardates were badly treated at home and in institutions. It was felt a waste of time and money to come to the aid of an "incurable" who was deemed a menace to society.

Nevertheless, the nineteenth century had witnessed some progress for the retarded. Many scientific studies had been conducted in their behalf. Society had resumed a responsibility for the retarded too. Many institutions had been built with public taxes to care for these less fortunate. Most of all, the people had been forced to face up to the fact that mental retardation was not really curable.

During the early 1900's, several factors were instrumental in influencing public thinking on mental retardation. One of these, the "Montessori system," profoundly influenced American education.

Both Itard and Seguin were responsible for influencing an outstanding modern educator at the turn of the century. An Italian, Maria Montessori, became interested in educating the mentally deficient while at the University of Rome. In 1897, she reached the conclusion that the problem of mental deficiency was an educational rather than medical one.

After studying the physiological method of Itard and Seguin, she devised the "Montessori system" which emphasized sensory and motor training.¹ Montessori gave important emphasis to the role of development and individuality in children. She emphasized the need for studying behavior and interests in children. Freedom of expression among children was considered important. Such an educational philosophy was to become firmly rooted in the heart of American education.

Another factor that contributed greatly to the public's understanding of mental retardation was the invention of tests to measure intelligence. Up to this time, there had been many problems connected with classifying and determining mental retardation. In 1905, Albert Binet and Thomas Simon devised a scale for determining mental age. The test was composed of several parts with varying levels of difficulty. If a child could not pass what was expected of him for his chronological age, he was regarded as retarded.

¹ J. E. Wallace Wallin, The Education Of Handicapped Children (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Riverside Press, 1924), p. 20.

In 1909, the Binet-Simon Test was introduced in America by Henry H. Goddard, director of the Research Laboratory at the Training School at Vineland, New Jersey. Goddard was surprised to learn that the results of the test corresponded very closely to the school's own groupings.

Dr. Goddard along with Dr. F. Kuhlmann, of the Minnesota School for the Feebleminded, is credited with adapting the Binet-Simon Scale so that it could be given to American children. As to Goddard's importance, Stanley P. Davies, author of The Mentally Retarded in Society, has this to say: "Goddard made the Binet tests practical, applied them to thousands of normal and retarded children and so interpreted the results that the world will forever be his debtor."¹

A few years later, L. M. Terman revised the Binet-Simon Scale. The revised scale, called the Stanford Scale, introduced the intelligence quotient. The new scale was much more practical and useful. Of special value was the fact that children could now be placed in a certain classification according to their intelligence quotient scores.

The introduction of intelligence tests in our schools had a profound influence on American thinking. Most people had not realized how prevalent mental retardation actually was.

¹ Stanley P. Davies, The Mentally Retarded in Society (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 29.

Dr. Walter E. Fernald, active in the leadership of the State School at Waverly, Massachusetts, for many years, has done an excellent job of summing up the importance of intelligence tests on mental retardation. Of the tests, Dr. Fernald said: "The theory and practice of mental testing and the discovery of the concept of mental age did more to explain feeble-mindedness, to simplify its diagnosis, and to furnish accurate data for training and education, than all the previous study and research from the time of Seguin."¹

Another factor which influenced public opinion during the early 1900's was the eugenics movement. Sir Francis Galton, father of the eugenics movement, had put forth the idea that society could be bettered by checking the birth rate of defectives. In this way, the inborn qualities of the human race could be improved upon.² The long-forgotten Mendelian principle of heredity was revised and applied to generations of feeble-minded persons. Many persons concluded that the human race did, indeed, need a "weeding out."

Studies of family histories of the feeble-minded proved to be an important factor in shaping up public opinion during the early part of the twentieth century. Those conducted by such men as Dr. Henry Goddard, Dr. Charles Davenport, and

¹Walter E. Fernald, "Thirty Years Progress in the Care of the Feeble-minded," Journal of Psycho-Asthenics, XXIX (1924), p. 209.

²Stanley P. Davies, The Mentally Retarded in Society (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 33.

R. F. Tredgold furthered the idea that the large majority of feeble-minded persons were so because of heredity.

In 1912, one of the most famous studies was published by Dr. Henry Goddard on "The Kallikak Family." Having made a study of 480 descendants of a feeble-minded mother, Goddard found 143 proven cases of feeble-mindedness. Despite the fact that the father was normal, only 46 descendants were regarded as normal. From this study, Goddard concluded that Mendel's Law did apply to human beings. As he put it: "Feeble-mindedness is hereditary and transmitted as surely as any other character."¹

Although many of the family studies were later questioned as far as validity was concerned, they had a great impact on public opinion concerning mental retardation. Until this time, heredity had not assumed such a prominent place in the causation of retardation. Now, it took pre-eminence--often a solitary place. For example, when asked if mental deficiency could result from malnutrition or environment, Goddard replied: "There is not the slightest evidence that malnutrition or any environmental condition can produce feeble-mindedness."²

¹Henry Herbert Goddard, The Kallikak Family (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), p. 117.

²Henry Herbert Goddard, "Discussion," Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction, 1912, p. 283-284.

The contributing factors discussed above resulted in a period of indictment against the mental retardates which reached its peak between the years 1908 and 1912. During these years, public opinion had been built up greatly against the retarded. They were blamed for most, if not all, the social ills of the day. One writer made this statement concerning the indictment period: "In any society that places high value on intelligence and achievement, there is probably a predisposition to brutalize and dehumanize the inadequate deviate."¹

Mental defectives were blamed for the social problems of the day--crime, immorality, and diseases--as well as constituting a heavy burden on the taxpayer. Many people felt that our social problems would practically be solved if the mentally defective could be eliminated by one means or another. In speaking of the moron, Goddard made this statement: "He is a menace to society and civilization...he is responsible to a large degree for many, if not all, of our social problems."²

During this period, the belief was commonly held that the mentally defective had natural tendencies toward crime

¹Robert B. Kugel and Wolf Wolfensberger, eds., Changing Patterns In Services For The Mentally Retarded (Washington, D.C.: President's Committee on Mental Retardation, 1969), p. 104, 106.

²Henry Herbert Goddard, "The Possibilities of Research as Applied to the Prevention of Feeble-Mindedness," Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction (Baltimore, 1915), p. 307.

and immorality. One of the most eminent writers of this era had this to say concerning the matter: "Every feeble-minded person, especially the high-grade imbecile, is a potential criminal, needing only the proper environment and opportunity for the development and expression of his criminal tendencies...feeble-mindedness is the mother of crime, pauperism and degeneracy."¹

Concerning immorality tendencies, W. E. Fernald stated: "Feeble-minded women are almost invariably immoral..."²

M. G. Schlapp referred to "The feeble-minded pregnant woman who is, naturally, unmoral."³ There is no doubt but that these writers were reflecting the opinions of their times. In fact, Wolfensberger did not find one writer or speaker, between the years 1890 and 1918, who opposed the existing views of the retardate as a real menace to society.⁴

Public opinion had been aroused to the point that action was to be taken. The problem of mental retardation had been completely blown out of proportions. For example,

¹ W. E. Fernald, quoted in Robert B. Kugel and Wolf Wolfensberger, eds., Changing Patterns In Residential Services For The Mentally Retarded (Washington, D.C.: President's Committee on Mental Retardation, 1969), p. 104.

² Ibid., p. 103.

³ M. G. Schlapp, "Available Field for Research and Prevention in Mental Defect," Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction (Baltimore, 1915), p. 323.

⁴ Kugel and Wolfensberger, Changing Patterns, p. 126.

M. G. Schlapp made this statement concerning feeble-mindedness: "The problem itself is the most serious facing the country today."¹

Action, during the first two decades of the present century, was to be taken in three directions. The first was that retardates, once committed to the institution, became wards of the state. Since the state was now the legal guardian, retardates could no longer come and go as they chose. Release would be by trial. "Apparently, Illinois was the first state to require court commitments, as of 1915, to the exclusion of all other types of admission."²

Secondly, action was taken to segregate the mentally deficient even more from society than they had already been. Mental retardation was to be treated like a communicable disease such as small pox or diphtheria--by quarantine. For example, J. M. Murdoch had an article printed in 1909 entitled "Quarantine Mental Defectives."

For some, retardation was to be wiped out at any means. Barr went as far as to suggest that the mental retardates be given a reservation to live on similar to that of an Indian. As he put it: "A reservation set apart, affording facilities for agricultural pursuits as well as

¹Schlapp, "Available Field for Research," p. 320-321.

²Robert B. Kugel and Wolf Wolfensberger, eds., Changing Patterns In Residential Services For The Mentally Retarded (Washington, D.C.: President's Committee on Mental Retardation, 1969), p. 116.

all the varied industries of a town, would provide an outlet for the surplus population of our institutions..."¹

So desperate were some to rid America of this unwanted "disease," an extreme form of action was even hinted at.

Alexander Johnson, who served as president of the National Conference on Charities and Correction, made this statement:

"I do not think that, to prevent the propagation of this class, it is necessary to kill them off or to resort to the knife; but, if it is necessary, it should be done."²

Another mode of action was sterilization. Many felt that laws limiting marriage, or at least limiting propagation were essential. Indiana was the first state to pass a law for eugenic sterilization. Twenty-three states had passed such laws by 1926. "From the passage of the first law in 1907 to 1925, a period of eighteen years, a total of 6,244 eugenic operations were performed in the United States..."³

Respect and consideration was all but lacking for the mentally retarded during the first two decades of this present century. Pity having turned to resentment, retardates were lashed upon both at home and in institutions. Feelings about the retardate were typically expressed by Stanley Johnson:

¹Martin W. Barr, "President's Annual Address," II Journal of Psycho-Asthenics, 1897, p. 13.

²Alexander Johnson, "Discussion on Care of Feeble-Minded and Epileptic," Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction (Washington, D.C., 1901), p. 410-411.

³Stanley P. Davies, The Mentally Retarded in Society (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 52.

"Some of these have not advanced with the race but have inherited backwards and possess all the characteristics of the savage."¹

Mentally retarded persons were often referred to as animals or used in connections with animals during this period. Wines did not think a woman chained by the neck was receiving brutal treatment because she was just a "mere animal."² A. F. Tredgold, a leading English authority on mental deficiency, spoke of the life of the extremely retarded as "On a lower plane even than the beasts of the field."³

In institutions, mental retardates were greatly overworked to make the farm colonies self-supporting and lessen the taxpayers' load. When people dislike something, they do not like to contribute to the support of it. "Most people would rather keep their money and have the idiots removed from the face of the earth."⁴

¹ Stanley Johnson, "Segregation of Unusual Pupils In New York," Journal of Education LVIII (December 3, 1908), p. 595.

² F. H. Wines, "Discussion on Care of the Feeble-Minded," Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction (San Francisco, 1889), p. 323.

³ A. F. Tredgold, Mental Deficiency (Baltimore: William Woods & Co., 1929).

⁴ Lionel S. Penrose, Mental Defect (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1934), p. 4.

Retardates at the institutions were also crowded and accorded few medical benefits. Many believed that the retarded were suited to do work not profitable for normals and that they could not be overworked. Besides, if they were worked hard, they would be too tired to get into mischief.

Since medical care was poor in the institutions and communicable diseases often took their toll on the retarded, the budget was minimized. If the patient died, there would be one less burden on the taxpayer. If he lived, he had not required medical care after all.

Education of the retarded during the early part of the twentieth century was often scoffed at. Since retardation was now considered incurable, it was thought a waste of time and money to try to educate them. Some thought it, in fact, harmful because they could sneak notes in and out if they had learned to write. "Thus, education came to be viewed as worthless."¹

During the 1920's, workers in the area of mental retardation began to recognize two important things. "Firstly, studies of the community adjustment of retardates showed that they were not the menace as had been thought; and secondly, it was realized that the aims of segregation could not be achieved."² The pendulum was slowly swinging back.

¹Robert B. Kugel and Wolf Wolfensberger, eds., Changing Patterns In Residential Services For The Mentally Retarded (Washington, D.C.: President's Committee on Mental Retardation, 1969), p. 126.

²Ibid., p. 128.

Some had begun to realize that mental retardates were not necessarily a menace to society as they had previously believed.

During the 1930's, there was considerable confusion as to what course should be taken in handling mental retardation. Some writers still clung to hopes of sterilization or segregation in coping with the problem. Others placed their confidence in the identifying and registering of retardates in the community as a type of control. Even euthanasia was advocated by some writers during the 1930's. One article written by William G. Lennox stated: "They are the congenital idiots or monsters, the result of some slip of the hand of Him who made them; lumps of matter in human form but without human mind... Mercy is my plea, partly for the miserably living defectives, partly for the curable who suffer for the lack of money now wasted on the incurable."¹

The retarded continued to be exploited during this period. For example, a study conducted by Dr. Leo Kanner, revolved around a shortage in domestic help for the wealthy. In this scandal, 102 women were released from the Baltimore Training School for the Feeble-Minded on writs of habeas corpus. The women then became "slaves" to work for their wealthy guardians. Not a one of the 102 women received normal wages. Prostitution, early death, prison, and mental

¹William G. Lennox, "Should They Live"?, The American Scholar, VII (October, 1938), p. 457-458.

illness claimed many of the women. Some were brutally mistreated. Only 13 of the 102 women adjusted normally to their new environment.¹

Education of the retarded was seriously hampered by the depression and World War II. In times of crises, it is always those prejudiced against that money is withheld from first. Although some advocated special classes, about 80 per cent of the feeble-minded were still in regular classes.²

During the last thirty years, more progress has been made for the mentally retarded than has been made in all its history. Two important factors have shed new light on the subject. Scientific research and organized movements on behalf of the retarded have brightened the outlook for the future.

Scientific research has shown that there are many other causes of mental retardation besides heredity. Scientists have already identified well over 100 causes of retardation.³ This has helped dispel the old belief that retardation was always the sign of "bad blood." People began to realize that any family could have a member that was retarded.

¹"Scandal: Legal Routine Used to Get Cheap Servants Charged; Human Misery Bared," Literary Digest, CXXIII (May 22, 1937), p. 34.

²"Mentally Deficient Children," Science New Series LXXV (June 3, 1932), p. 9.

³National Association for Retarded Children, Facts on Mental Retardation (New York: NARC Press, 1967), p. 7.

Research went farther than determining that retardation was due to factors before, during, or after birth. It was established that pre-natal care, accidents, care during delivery, metabolic disturbances, and diseases such as German measles were important factors in retardation. Now the American people were given something concrete they could do for the prevention of mental retardation.

Dr. Stafford Warren, who served as Special Assistant on Mental Retardation under both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, stated: "The toll of mental retardation could be reduced by fully one half today if all we now know could be applied."¹ Some states have passed laws to aid in this prevention campaign. For example, phenylketonuria can be detected by means of a simple, inexpensive test and can be corrected if detected early enough. "The desirability of testing infants at birth for phenylketonuria (PKU) is now accepted in legislation in thirty-eight states and carried out voluntarily by physicians in several others. Anti measles campaigns are being conducted in nearly all of the fifty states... The first year of the measles immunization program saw a reduction from 4 million to 2 million cases."² These two causes of mental retardation may soon be eliminated.

¹Dr. Stafford Warren, quoted in Albert Q. Maisel, "Mental Retardation-Avoidable Affliction"?, Reader's Digest LXXXV (September, 1964), p. 168.

²President's Committee on Mental Retardation, MR 67 (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1967), p. 10.

Scientific research has been aided along its way by the parents of the retarded themselves. Parents became dissatisfied with the fact that practically nothing was being done for their children. They were tired hearing that nothing could be done for them. Since no one else seemed that interested, they carried the torch for the retarded themselves.

Early parental movements began in the 1930's. Parents found strength in one another's company and sought to improve welfare for their retarded children. The movement mushroomed until there were 125 such groups in the United States and Canada by 1951.¹

In 1950, a national organization, the National Association of Parents and Friends of Mentally Retarded Children was formed to further progress for the mentally retarded. In 1953, the organization changed its name to the National Association for Retarded Children, Inc. "By 1965, its membership exceeded 100,000. There were over 1,000 Local and State Associations."² Acting as a nonprofit organization, its services to the retarded have been unlimited.

The federal government and private foundations such as the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation have contributed

¹"Associations for Parents of Mental Retardates," Encyclopedia Americana, 1967, XVIII, p. 645.

²National Association for Retarded Children, Voices in Chorus (New York: NARC Press, 1966), p. 3.

greatly to research and leadership in the area of mental retardation. The latter was founded in 1946 in memory of Lt. Joseph P. Kennedy. Since it began, there have been fourteen institutions for mentally retarded children established.¹ As far as the federal government is concerned, "Over \$400 million a year is now appropriated for federal programs benefiting the retarded."²

Individuals, as well as groups, have helped set the pace for mental retardation. Prominent families that have a retarded member, such as the Joseph Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey families, have greatly helped the cause of mental retardation. By facing up to retardation, they have shown the world that mental retardation is nothing to be ashamed of. Their stand on the subject has, no doubt, greatly influenced public thinking and action.

The use of mass media has been important in informing the public about mental retardation. Many public and private organizations have distributed pamphlets or sponsored radio and television programs on the subject. The idea that something can be done for the retarded is being spread from one corner of our nation to the other.

In the area of education, the retarded have definitely made advancement. John Dewey's slogan, "learning by doing," has found an important place in special education. Today,

¹Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation, Education For The Mentally Retarded: what You Should Know: What You Can Do:, [1964].

²President's Committee on Mental Retardation, MR 67 (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1967), p. 1.

it is recognized that the handicapped child must have special adaptive training to suit his particular needs.

Several states have passed laws making it mandatory that school districts provide special education classes for handicapped children. Colleges are stepping up programs to train special education teachers. However, "Half the nation's 25,000 school districts offer no classes for pupils having special learning problems and needs. Many of the existing special education classes do not offer retarded students the opportunity to learn and achieve to their full capacity."¹ There is also a great shortage of qualified special education teachers.

Treatment of residents in institutions for the mentally retarded has greatly improved. Retardates are receiving better medical care than ever before. For example, at the state institution at Lincoln, Illinois, each retardate is given a complete physical examination every six months. Statistics show that epidemics are now better controlled too. In the past eleven years, for instance, deaths from tuberculosis in our Illinois hospitals for the mentally ill and schools for the retarded have dropped by 88 per cent.²

¹ President's Committee on Mental Retardation, MR 67 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967), p. 3.

² Otto L. Bettag, The Mentally Retarded: A Changing Picture (State of Illinois: Department of Public Welfare, 1956), p. 7.

Many institutions also offer training programs for those that are trainable and academic programs for the educable. In adults, manual skills are often developed so that many are becoming partially or completely self-supporting. In addition, recreational therapy has found an important place in the institutions of today.

Despite advances made in institutional training and care, many institutions are still overcrowded and understaffed. "Three-quarters of the nation's 201,000 institutionalized mentally retarded live in buildings 50 years old or more--many of them "hand-me-down" mental or tuberculosis hospitals or abandoned military installations...The 81,000 full-time staff in public facilities for the mentally retarded must be almost doubled to reach minimum adequacy."¹

In the community, many more jobs have opened up to the retarded in the last few years both in industry and government. In industry, many supervisors are finding trained retardates among their best workers. Until five years ago, examination procedures eliminated retardates from working for the federal government. Now, over 3,000 are employed in federal agencies. However, "An estimated 2 million retarded persons capable of learning to support themselves need job training and placement services. Even

¹President's Committee on Mental Retardation, MR 67, (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1967), P. 3.

at minimum wage, these individuals have a potential annual earning capacity of \$6 billion."¹

Despite needed improvement, it has finally been realized that a problem ignored does not go away. Rather, it enlarges itself. A real campaign is now on to combat mental retardation. In 1967, the President's Committee on Mental Retardation made this statement: "From these and other, special studies, we can report that the last five years have seen an historic emergence of mental retardation and the mentally retarded from isolation and public indifference."²

¹President's Committee on Mental Retardation, MR 67, (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1967), p. 3.

²Ibid., p. 8.

CHAPTER III

PLAN AND PROCEDURE

Description of the Materials

If we are to know what tasks lie ahead of us in educating the American people concerning mental retardation, we must first know what incorrect concepts are being held. Modern day research has shown us that many past concepts on retardation were false. Since mistreatment of the retarded down through the ages has largely been due to fear, ignorance, and superstition, it is mandatory that we find out the present day concepts that are being held on mental retardation. It is only through facing the issues and bringing to light invalid concepts that we can hope to make real progress in the future for the retarded.

In connection with this study, a survey instrument was developed to survey present knowledge, attitudes, and feelings toward mental retardation. There were 49 items on the survey instrument. The items were typed on two long stencils which were mimeographed. Items were clearly numbered and double-spacing was left between each item for easy readability and to avoid confusion. A separate page of directions was enclosed along with an IBM answer card and a stamped, self-addressed envelope for returning.

Each survey item could be answered by "yes," "no," or "undecided" with the exception of items one through four. Item one was an easy sample item which was correctly marked for the participant. In this way, he could see how to mark his IBM answer card correctly.

Item two asked the participant to check whether he was a parent of a retarded child, an educator in mental retardation, or neither. This was an important item since all three groups were given the survey and the answer cards were scored accordingly.

Items three and four were personal items which were designed to find out what age range the participant was in and also what sex. On scoring the answer cards, it proved very interesting as well as beneficial to find out whether it was worthwhile to note whether there were significant differences between the answers of men and women.

The rest of the items on the instrument were designed to survey three separate but related parts. They are given as follows:

- I. Knowledge Concerning Mental Retardation
(Items 5-19)
- II. Attitudes Toward Mental Retardation
(Items 20-34)
- III. Feelings Toward the Education of the
Mentally Retarded
(Items 35-49)

It was decided to divide the survey instrument into three separate but related parts for two important reasons.

First, there is a real need to determine what some people actually know about retardation. Sometimes there is a great difference between what scientific research has proven and what the people actually believe to be true. Finding and pointing out such differences are paramount in advancing the cause of mental retardation.

Secondly, a comparison of knowledge of mental retardation with the other two parts would prove very beneficial. For example, it would be worthwhile to note whether those who better understand mental retardation have more tolerant attitudes toward the retarded. Also, a survey of feelings toward the education of the mentally retarded may give us some idea of what future course may be taken in this area.

Description of the Population

The survey instrument was given to three groups in Illinois: parents of the retarded; educators in the area of mental retardation; and the general public. In this way, each group could be evaluated separately as well as comparatively.

It would be of considerable value to find out the present attitudes and understandings of parents of the retarded. In the past, a great many parents were ashamed of their retarded children and sought to keep them in hiding. Do parents now clearly accept their retarded children or do they inwardly resent them? These are important items that must be assessed because retarded children

sense how parents really feel toward them and react accordingly. Perhaps some parents do not have a clear understanding of what mental retardation really is.

Educators in the area of mental retardation should be the most informed group about mental retardation. They should also rate very high in their acceptance of retardates as individuals. As to the education of the retarded, they should be fervent in their demands that retardates be given every opportunity to develop to their maximum potential. However, many teachers of the retarded throughout the United States have had no specialized training to teach the retarded. In fact, some of the older teachers have had very little college training at all. Perhaps there are areas that even some educators have misunderstood concerning education. Do all of the educators really accept their retarded children or are some merely tolerating them for the paycheck? These are things we must find out.

In any country where there is majority rule, public opinion is of prime importance. Such is the case of mental retardation. Public opinion will shape the destiny of mental retardation more than any other factor in this present century. For this reason, we must find and bring to light any invalid concepts or intolerant attitudes toward mental retardation.

Procedure Used

In developing the survey instrument, a study was first made of past concepts held on mental retardation. Then a comparison was made of the concepts with present day research findings. Some of the concepts were determined invalid in light of present day research findings.

Questions were carefully worded on the survey instrument to find out whether or not people were still clinging to the old invalid concepts. Other questions were worded in such a manner as to bring out tolerant or intolerant attitudes that were held. Still others attempted to detect feelings toward the education of the retarded.

When the instrument was completed, it was given as a trial to fourteen selected parents of retarded children in Edgar County. The wording of a few questions was revised. The rest of the questions appeared to be valid. It was found that the parents scored high in attitudes and feelings toward mental retardation but low in knowledge of mental retardation. It was decided to give the test to selected parents of retarded children, educators in the area of mental retardation, and the general public in Illinois.

Letters were sent out to the directors of special education in Illinois stating the purposes of the survey and asking for their cooperation. Each director was to select the names of ten parents and ten educators they thought might participate in such a study. Several directors

responded with lists. The remaining educators were selected by sending letters containing the survey instrument in care of the school system of randomly selected towns in Illinois.

The Illinois Association for Retarded Children was most helpful in the study. They selected and addressed over 100 envelopes to parents of retarded children in Illinois. Without their encouragement and cooperation, the study might not have been a success.

In selecting the general public participants, phone directories from many different areas of Illinois were consulted. Names were selected so that all social and economic classes could be represented. Large urbanized areas, such as the Cook County area, were included in the study as well as small rural areas.

For the survey to be truly reliable, it was felt that at least 100 answers would be needed from each of the three groups. Because some participants had moved, died, or did not answer, 132 survey instruments were sent to educators, 135 to parents, and 138 to the general public in order to secure 100 results. Only the first one hundred results received in each group were used as a part of this survey.

Each participant was sent a letter explaining the purposes of the study and directions for taking the survey. Also enclosed were the survey instrument, and IBM answer card, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope for returning the answer card. Each participant was to read each question

carefully, blacken in the appropriate answer on the answer card, and mail only the answer card back in the provided envelope.

Each participant was asked not to sign his name or converse with anyone while taking the survey. In this way, all answers would remain anonymous and each answer would be the participant's own. It was thought that a participant would more easily express his true feelings about retardation if he did not need to sign his name.

After all IBM answer cards were in, results were easily tabulated for each group. Each group was then checked for any significant differences in answers due to age or sex. Answer cards were double-checked to make sure the findings were accurate. The tabulations were converted to percentages so that they could be more easily reported.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

Knowledge of Mental Retardation

As it has been previously stated, items 5-19 on the survey instrument dealt with knowledge and understandings concerning mental retardation. On the next two pages, Table 1 gives a summary of the results to those questions. There were several significant findings in this area.

It appears from the survey that the only persons who really understand the difference between mental illness and mental retardation are the educators in mental retardation. The survey showed that while 95 per cent of the educators could distinguish between mental retardation and mental illness, only 64 per cent of the parents and 31 per cent of the general public could tell the difference.

In these days of mass media with a television, radio, and scores of printed materials in most every home, people are still confused as to what mental retardation actually is. Apparently, the ways previously and currently used have failed, at least in part, to adequately inform the people. New and better ways must be sought. If progress is going to be made for mental retardation, the people must first know what it is. In addition, they must know what

TABLE 1
KNOWLEDGE OF MENTAL RETARDATION

ITEMS	EDUCATORS***		PARENTS***		GENERAL PUBLIC***	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
5. Mental retardation is a type of mental illness.	2%	95%	25%	64%	63%	31%
6. There are several <u>million</u> Americans who are mentally retarded.	91%	7%	88%	6%	74%	20%
7. All types of mental retardation are hereditary--that is passed from parents to children.		100%	1%	97%	2%	95%
8. The great majority of retardates are also physically handicapped.	21%	64%	63%	25%	74%	12%
9. Mongolism is a special type of mental illness which usually occurs in mothers under 40 years of age.	8%	91%	12%	82%	41%	41%
10. It is possible for two very intelligent parents to have a retarded child.	100%		100%		92%	1%
11. Retarded children respond to love and hate as normal children do.	99%		95%	1%	84%	12%
12. A mother's care during pregnancy is an important factor in preventing mental retardation.	92%	2%	71%	5%	64%	11%

*Undecided omitted.

**N = 100

TABLE 1--Continued

ITEMS	EDUCATORS		PARENTS		GENERAL PUBLIC	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
13. The medical profession is adequately trained to diagnose the problem of mental retardation.	4%	89%	9%	75%	21%	62%
14. The retarded person's mental development is slower than the development of others.	98%	1%	97%	1%	89%	4%
15. A child is always mentally retarded if he scores low on an intelligence test.	1%	99%	2%	92%	5%	89%
16. Mental retardation is a condition that can be changed significantly.	34%	36%	46%	38%	52%	24%
17. Use of X-rays or German measles contracted by the mother during pregnancy can cause a child to be born mentally retarded.	97%	1%	85%	6%	31%	12%
18. There are more boys in educable mentally handicapped classes than there are girls.	78%	1%	27%	52%	35%	31%
19. Anyone who scores low on an intelligence test should be sterilized.	5%	84%	4%	78%	13%	60%

it is not. Education is the key to acceptance of mental retardation.

While the majority of people were confused as to what mental retardation actually was, they were aware of its prevalence. Over 84 per cent of the respondents thought there were several million retardates in America. Perhaps this is due to the fact that more retardates are seen out in the open these days. Few are chained in barns or hidden in attics as had been the case in the past. Practically every person has had some direct contact with the mentally retarded.

Apparently, there has been much progress in eliminating the idea that mental retardation is always hereditary. Fully 97 per cent of those surveyed thought two very intelligent parents could have a retarded child.

Likewise, over 97 per cent of all those taking the survey indicated they did not feel all types of mental retardation were hereditary--that is passed from parents to children. Evidently, many persons are coming into contact with some of the over 100 other types of mental retardation.

One of the greatest fallacies concerning mental retardation is that the great majority of mentally handicapped persons are also physically handicapped. Nothing is farther from the truth. "The great majority of mentally

retarded persons are neither physically deformed nor socially unacceptable."¹

Despite this fact, the survey showed that several educators, as well as parents and the general public, were confused on this issue. It was interesting to note that 36 per cent of educators actually working in the area of mental retardation did not know the majority of retardates are not physically handicapped. It was not surprising, then, to find that over 80 per cent of the others also did not know this.

The above findings have brought us to an interesting question. What mental picture does the average person visualize in his mind when the words "retarded person" are mentioned? Could it be that the words invoke a mental image of a puny, sickly person who is crippled or cannot speak? From the results of the survey, it appears this may well be the case. If so, much work is needed in educating the people in order to change this erroneous mental concept.

In order to determine whether or not people are familiar with the types of mental retardation, one of the more common types, mongolism, was included in the survey. From

¹The Mentally Retarded...Their New Hope (The Advertising Council, Inc., The President's Committee on Mental Retardation, The National Association for Retarded Children, The U. S. Health Education, and Welfare, and the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation, [1967?]), p. [2].

the results, apparently educators and parents of the mentally retarded are familiar with mongolism but the general public, as a whole, is not. There were 91 per cent of the educators and 82 per cent of the parents surveyed that knew mongolism was not a type of mental illness which occurs in mothers under 40 years of age.

This item contained two fallacies. First, mongolism is not a type of mental illness. Secondly, it more often occurs when the mother is over 40 years of age. However, 41 per cent of the general public thought this was true and another 18 per cent were undecided about the matter. This being the case, while the general public appears to realize that there are other types of mental retardation, they are largely unaware of these types and the own characteristics of each.

One other point should be kept in mind concerning this item. Although over 28 per cent of the people did not know the appropriate answer to it, nearly two-thirds of those persons were over 50 years of age. This leads us to an interesting question. Was it an accident that the two younger age groups had more correct responses? Probably not, in my opinion. Today's younger age groups have gone to school longer and probably are the most informed people in the history of the world.

The fact that nearly 93 per cent of those taking the survey realize that retarded children respond to love and

hate as normal children do is a heartening thing. Once, retardates were thought to be devoid of human feelings and were treated accordingly. When others begin to realize that mental retardates have feelings like our own, a step has been taken in the right direction toward a better understanding of mental retardation.

A mother's care during pregnancy is an important factor in preventing mental retardation. This fact was backed up by 92 per cent of educators taking part in the survey. Among the remaining two groups, about 68 per cent felt it was important too. However, this leaves over 30 per cent of parents and the general public that did not know a mother's care during pregnancy was important in preventing mental retardation.

It has definitely been established that care during pregnancy is a factor in many types of mental retardation. "A month before her due date...an expectant mother can face the cold statistic that during the next eight weeks there is a one-in-ten chance that she will not have a perfect baby. Few illnesses carry a comparable 10 per cent chance of death or damage."¹

If this survey is an accurate sampling of the American people, there must be care taken to inform the remaining

¹Allan C. Barnes, "Reducing the Hazards of Birth," Harper's Magazine, CXXVIII (January, 1964), p. 31.

more than 30 per cent of our people about the importance of care during pregnancy. Every year, many cases of mental retardation could have been prevented had the prospective mother taken proper health precautionary measures. In several cases, the prospective mother had not followed doctor's orders or, perhaps, did not even bother to consult a doctor until the latent stages of pregnancy. Sometimes the expectant mother needlessly exposed herself to drugs, X-rays, or diseases without realizing the possible consequences on her unborn child.

It is quite evident that many people do not know about the causal relationship between X-rays or German measles and mental retardation. It has been established, without a doubt, that such a relationship exists. Yet, it seems almost a tradition to look upon such diseases as German measles with little concern and often amusing regards. Perhaps this is because German measles, along with mumps and chicken pox, are often considered childhood diseases. No doubt, this is due to the fact that many persons have these diseases when a child and the cases are often less severe. Therefore, many persons have labeled such diseases as harmless and think all children should have them while they are young so they will not get more severe cases when they are older.

In the survey test, 97 per cent of the educators were well aware of the effects of X-rays and German measles on an unborn child. Eighty-five per cent of the parents of

retarded children were also aware of this relationship. However, only 31 per cent of the general public were aware of it. Twelve per cent of the general public thought there was no causal relationship. Surprisingly, 57 per cent (over half the general public) did not know whether such a relationship existed or not. Of this last group, almost two-thirds of the participants were over 50 years of age.

Approximately 75 per cent of those surveyed did not feel the medical profession adequately trained to diagnose the problem of mental retardation. This comes as no surprise when every day some new scientific findings are brought to light. Doctors cannot be specialists in everything. What we do badly need, however, are clinics and specialists who are specifically trained to diagnose and treat the mentally retarded.

Ninety-eight per cent of the educators realized that the mental development of retardates is slower than that of others. They were backed up by 89 per cent of the general public and 97 per cent of the parents surveyed. Evidently, this fact is well-accepted today.

Once, many people felt that a child was always retarded if he scored low on an intelligence test. Today, this idea is no longer accepted. Ninety-three per cent of those who participated in this survey felt a child was not necessarily retarded just because his score was low on an intelligence test. No doubt, other factors, physical and psychological, do enter in.

Since most participants were aware of those other factors, they were opposed to sterilizing those who scored low on intelligence tests. Eighty-four per cent of educators, 78 per cent of parents, and 60 per cent of the general public were against sterilization. More men than women favored sterilization. Perhaps they were thinking of themselves as taxpayers. At any rate, the majority of participants did not believe sterilization was the key to solving the problem of mental retardation.

Generally speaking, mental retardation is a condition which cannot be significantly changed. Once actual damage has been done to the brain, it is irreparable. However, many people on the survey felt the opposite was true. Of those surveyed, 34 per cent of the educators, 46 per cent of the parents, and 52 per cent of the general public felt mental retardation was a condition which could be significantly changed.

Attitudes Concerning Mental Retardation

On the survey instrument, items 20-34 dealt with attitudes concerning mental retardation. On the next two pages, Table 2 gives a summary of the results to those questions. While there were no significant differences in sex or age in this area, there were several pertinent findings.

In the not too distant past, many people were ashamed of retardates and some even felt ashamed to be in company with them. This is not true today. Ninety-six per cent of

TABLE 2

ATTITUDES CONCERNING MENTAL RETARDATION

ITEMS	EDUCATORS**		PARENTS**		GENERAL PUBLIC**	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
20. If I had a normal child of similar age, or younger, I would allow him to play with a retarded child.	98%		98%		84%	4%
21. I would favor having a Boy Scout or Girl Scout group composed of retarded children in my community.	92%	3%	91%	3%	82%	7%
22. If I had a retarded child, I honestly feel I could love him as much as I do my normal children.	98%	1%	97%		87%	1%
23. If I wanted to adopt a child, I would consider adopting a mentally retarded one.	12%	80%	8%	55%	2%	56%
24. If my best friend had a retarded child, I would feel embarrassed to be seen in public with them.		100%	3%	93%	4%	95%
25. It would be best to place most mentally retarded persons in an institution.	2%	93%	10%	86%	6%	78%
26. I am willing to take an active part in my community to help the retarded-- either by helping financially or by giving of my time and talents.	100%		94%	6%	70%	10%

*Undecided omitted.

**N = 100

TABLE 2--Continued

ITEMS	EDUCATORS		PARENTS		GENERAL PUBLIC	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
27. If I operated a business, I would be willing to hire a mental retardate.	96%	1%	84%	4%	62%	10%
28. All parents of retarded children accept their children.	2%	98%	4%	89%	4%	89%
29. How we accept and treat a retarded child will play an important role in how he will accept himself.	99%		98%	1%	97%	2%
30. Mentally retarded persons should be treated as much as possible like normal persons.	100%		96%	4%	74%	8%
31. Retarded children have an inborn instinct for destruction.		96%	6%	84%	8%	74%
32. I would favor having a recreational center in my community for the retarded.	95%	2%	92%		90%	2%
33. Most retarded children want to please adults.	99%		86%	6%	70%	4%
34. More jobs should be made available for retardates in my community.	96%	2%	88%		63%	31%

all those surveyed felt they would not feel embarrassed to be seen in public with retardates. Almost that many (93 per cent) were even willing for a retardate to play with their children.

Virtually gone is the old idea that mentally retarded persons do not have feelings as normal persons and, therefore, need not be treated like them. Ninety-eight per cent of all those surveyed realized that the way retardates are treated and accepted plays an important role in how they will accept themselves. Only 4 per cent of those tested did not favor treating mentally retarded persons as much as possible like normal persons.

It is a well-known fact that some parents do not accept their retarded children. Perhaps this fact is due to a misunderstanding of what mental retardation really is. Also, the parents who feel this way may feel their retarded child has cost them extra hardships. At any rate, 92 per cent of those surveyed were aware that all parents do not accept their retarded children.

It is a heartening thing to learn that most people no longer feel retarded children are naturally inclined toward crime and destruction. Over 84 per cent of those surveyed felt retarded children do not have an inborn instinct for destruction. That many also realized that most retarded children want to please adults.

The great majority of those surveyed would not be interested in adopting a mentally retarded child. This

fact was indicated by 80 per cent of the educators, 55 per cent of the parents, and 56 per cent of the general public. Most people would not deliberately ask for untold hardships to be placed upon themselves. It is interesting to note that more educators were unwilling to adopt a retardate than the other two groups. Perhaps they, more than any other group, realize the work, time, and patience involved in helping the retardate develop to his fullest potential. Only about 7 per cent of all the participants indicated a real interest in adopting a retarded child if they were considering adoption.

Although only a few were willing to adopt a retardate, 94 per cent of the participants felt they could love their retarded child as much as their normal ones if they did have one. It is encouraging to learn that most retarded children will not have to take second place to their normal brothers and sisters. They will be loved in spite of their handicap.

The policy of isolation of retardates which developed during the late 1800's was carried well up into the 1900's. It was once felt best to put them in institutions for the sake of society as well as their own. This is no longer considered best. The survey results showed that only 2 per cent of educators, 10 per cent of parents, and 6 per cent of the general public actually favored the placement of most mentally retarded persons in an institution today. No doubt, many people are beginning to see that the retarded can adjust and contribute to society too.

Participants were well aware of the need for recreational facilities for the retarded. Over 92 per cent of those surveyed favored having a recreational center in their community for the retarded. Almost that many were in favor of having a Boy Scout or Girl Scout group composed of retarded children in the community. From these results, it appears that a great many people now consider mental retardates an integral part of their community.

Many Americans now realize that most retardates can be trained to help themselves. Almost 90 per cent of all the retarded can learn to do productive work.¹ It is much better to train them to support themselves. Ninety-six per cent of educators, 88 per cent of parents, and 63 per cent of the general public felt more jobs should be made available for retardates in their communities.

Several participants went farther than merely favoring more job opportunities for the retarded. Sixty-two per cent of the general public surveyed stated they would be willing to hire a retarded person if they operated a business. It is an encouraging sign when we see others shouldering some responsibility for helping the retarded. In the future, no doubt, we will see many more new jobs open up to the retarded.

¹ President's Committee on Mental Retardation, MR 67 (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1967), p. 32.

When the American people are really concerned about something, they don't mind personal involvement. Participants in this survey are concerned about the mentally retarded and want to help. This can be seen by the fact that 100 per cent of educators, 94 per cent of parents, and 70 per cent of the general public surveyed were willing to help the retarded financially or give of their time and talents to help them.

Education of the Mentally Retarded

The last section of the survey instrument, items 35-49, dealt with opinions concerning the education of the mentally retarded. Table 3, on the following two pages, gives a summary of those opinions. Some of the more significant findings will be mentioned now.

From the results of this survey, it appears that the great majority of people do not feel it a waste of time and money to try to educate retarded children. Fully 94 per cent of those surveyed did not consider it a waste. Perhaps the American people are beginning to see that handicapped children need training just as much as normal children if they are to make the most of their capabilities.

Most of the participants favored free public education of retardates supported by the taxpayers' money. It is not surprising that 98 per cent of educators and 100 per cent of parents were in agreement with this item since educators realize the value of education and parents are

TABLE 3

OPINIONS CONCERNING EDUCATION OF THE MENTALLY RETARDED

ITEMS	EDUCATORS**		PARENTS**		GENERAL PUBLIC**	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
35. Mentally retarded youngsters should receive an education within the framework of the public school system supported by the taxpayers' money.	98%	1%	100%		83%	6%
36. A teacher specially trained for the mentally retarded should receive a larger salary than regular classroom teachers.	93%	2%	52%	30%	74%	18%
37. Trying to educate retarded children is probably a waste of time and money in the long run.	1%	98%	4%	95%	2%	90%
38. Many mentally retarded persons can learn to become completely self-supporting.	91%	4%	80%	8%	68%	18%
39. Recent Illinois legislation has made it compulsory that school districts provide free public education for all exceptional children from ages 5 to 21. I am in agreement with this law.	89%	4%	100%		73%	12%
40. I would favor more government grants for scientists to do research in the field of mental retardation.	99%	1%	96%	4%	82%	8%

*Undecided omitted.

**N = 100

TABLE 3--Continued

ITEMS	EDUCATORS		PARENTS		GENERAL PUBLIC	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
41. Most mentally retarded persons turn out to be behavior problems.	1%	97%	6%	79%	25%	66%
42. Mentally retarded children are incapable of being educated properly in the regular classroom.	87%	11%	74%	18%	55%	28%
43. Mentally retarded persons should receive a different kind of high school diploma.	45%	45%	54%	24%	86%	4%
44. Mentally retarded children should, whenever possible, attend some classes with normal children.	97%	2%	54%	30%	75%	9%
45. Retardates should receive the same kind of academic program as normal children.		99%	9%	81%	18%	47%
46. Retarded children should be required to attend school too.	92%	4%	44%	29%	46%	20%
47. Teachers of retardates need special training in the psychology and problems of the retarded.	89%	8%	96%	2%	91%	6%
48. Repetition or drill is an important method in teaching the retarded.	95%	5%	93%	3%	83%	4%
49. A class for the mentally retarded should be held in a separate building of its own.	8%	88%	42%	40%	53%	38%

taxpayers too. We are discriminating when we provide education for only part of our children. Even 83 per cent of the general public were in agreement with this item.

Recent Illinois legislation has made it compulsory that school districts provide free public education for all exceptional children from ages 5 to 21. All of the parents, 89 per cent of the educators, but only 73 per cent of the general public were in agreement with this law.

In discussing the law with several persons in the community, it was found that disagreement was to be found along two lines. First, some of the people favored the education of exceptional children but resented the idea of the school districts being "forced" to provide education for them by a certain time. Secondly, some were not in agreement with the age range from 5 to 21. They felt it too wide. They thought the age range from 6 to 18 more practical.

In spite of some dissent, America has come a long way in providing public education for the retarded. Perhaps this is due, in part, to the fact that many people now know a great many retardates can learn to become partly or totally self-supporting if given the proper training. Ninety-one per cent of educators, 80 per cent of the parents, and 66 per cent of the general public surveyed realized that many mentally retarded persons can learn to become completely self-supporting. However, 32 per cent of the general public apparently did not know this fact.

This is one area in which the general public needs some enlightening on. If more taxpayers could realize that we save money in the long run by training and educating mental retardates, the cause for mental retardation could be greatly advanced.

Many people no longer feel the mentally retarded will turn out to be behavior problems or juvenile delinquents, in spite of educational opportunities. Over three-fourths of those surveyed now have more confidence in the mentally retarded than that. However, this is another point in which some of the people need some enlightenment.

More people need to realize that retardates are followers, not leaders. Retardates are often easily influenced by others. "They have no more criminal tendencies than the rest of us, probably less...If they are led into criminal behavior, then chances are that the criminal intent may be found in the leader."¹

As to the type of educational program best for retarded children, there is some confusion. Only 55 per cent of the general public realized that mentally retarded children were incapable of being educated properly in the regular classroom. Also, less than half of the general public knew that retardates should not receive the same kind of academic

¹Evelyn Hart, How Retarded Children Can Be Helped (New York: Public Affairs Committee, Inc., 1967), p. 7, 10.

program as normal children. There were quite a few undecided answers too. While many people seem willing for the mentally retarded to receive a public education, they were unaware of what just such a program would consist of.

Ninety-two per cent of the educators surveyed felt that retarded children should be required to attend school just as normal children. This group, better than any other group, has seen what continued absences can do to hamper the learning process. This point must be explained to the other two groups. Less than half of them realized the importance of retarded children being required to attend school.

Ninety-seven per cent of the educators and 75 per cent of the general public thought mentally retarded children should, whenever possible, attend some classes with normal children. However, 30 per cent of the parents were in disagreement. Of this 30 per cent, all were women except for one.

Perhaps some mothers have developed an over-protective attitude toward their children. In their desire to protect them from any possible ridicule, they may not realize that they are depriving both the retarded and normal children. The retardate must learn to adjust to a society full of people with superior intelligence. At the same time, the normal child must learn to respect and tolerate those of lesser capabilities. This can be accomplished, for the most part, through interaction with each other.

Some people feel that special education teachers should be paid more. This is undoubtedly due to the short supply of such teachers and the tremendous demand for them. This fact is best understood by the 93 per cent of educators who thought so. Oddly, while 74 per cent of the general public thought the specially trained teachers should receive a larger salary, only 52 per cent of the parents were in agreement. Evidently, some parents do not realize how much extra time and money is involved in acquiring a degree in special education.

Ninety-two per cent of those surveyed felt that teachers of the mentally retarded needed special training in the psychology and problems of the retarded. Evidently, the old idea that most anyone can teach the retardate is no longer held. Incidentally, all of the 8 per cent of educators who disagreed with the idea that teachers of retardates needed special training were women over 50 years of age. Perhaps they had not received this special training and, therefore, did not consider the training essential in order for one to do an effective job of teaching.

Approximately 90 per cent of all the participants thought repetition or drill was an important method in teaching the retarded. The majority of those that objected were in the younger age range. Routine is an important

method in teaching. "The teacher uses many repetitions in a variety of experiences."¹

Eighty-eight per cent of the educators did not favor having classes for the retarded in a separate building. No doubt, they saw the values in making the retarded feel an integral part of the school system. Normal children must learn to work and play with the handicapped.

Forty-two per cent of the parents and 53 per cent of the general public surveyed favored a separate building for retardates. Over three-fourths of the parents who favored a separate building were women. Once again we see the protective attitude of the mothers coming out.

There was quite a difference of opinion as to whether a mentally retarded person should receive the same kind of high school diploma. The educators were split down the middle on the issue--45 per cent for and 45 per cent against. Fifty-four per cent of the parents and eighty-six per cent of the general public did not favor retardates receiving the same kind of diploma.

The results of one item in this section were especially encouraging. Approximately 92 per cent of all the participants favored more government grants for scientists to do research in the field of mental retardation. Statistics like these prove that many people are concerned about mental retardation and want to see something done about it.

¹Samuel B. Kirk, Educating Exceptional Children (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962), P. 121.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The history of the mentally retarded has been a search--a search for love and recognition in a society which has misunderstood and, therefore, mistreated them. No other group in the history of the world has been so neglected and mistreated. No other group on earth has been blamed more for the social blights: crime, immorality, poverty, and degeneracy.

In first defining mental retardation, it must be remembered that there is no one definition which has been universally accepted. Some of the better known definitions have been offered by Tredgold, Kanner, Benda, and Heber. There seems to be general agreement that mental retardation has three important concepts: "(1) Marked limitation of intelligence, which is due to (2) lack of normal development rather than to mental disease or deterioration, and which manifests itself in (3) some degree of social and economic inadequacy."¹

¹Stanley Powell Davies, The Mentally Retarded in Society (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 3.

During ancient times, the mentally retarded were often cruelly mistreated and ridiculed. Nature herself often eliminated the mentally handicapped by the process of survival of the fittest. Since these persons were often unable to care for themselves adequately or to protect themselves from enemies, death often came to them at an early age. During tribal wars, they were easily captured and often cruelly tortured to death. For this and other reasons, many tribes took measures to eliminate the handicapped themselves.

The Middle Ages was characterized by its contrast of treatment toward the mentally handicapped. Confusion as the result of ignorance abounded everywhere. Some thought the retarded were sacred beings with magical powers. Others considered them sources of amusement or entertainment for the rich. Treatment of the retardates ranged from worship to cruel mistreatment depending on one's own philosophy toward them.

The coming of the nineteenth century heralded a new beginning for the mentally retarded. With this century, came the scientific approach to mental retardation. The cause for mental retardation was greatly aided by the contributions of such people as Itard, Seguin, Howe, and Dix. Social reform came as a relief in the mid 1800's. Institutions were created to train and "cure" the retarded.

The enthusiasm of the mid 1800's changed to skepticism as pity gave way to resentment. As a result, the

early 1900's were characterized by three dangerous trends: isolation, enlargement, and economization. Retardates were largely removed from society and placed in large overcrowded institutions during this indictment period against the retarded.

Several factors were instrumental in influencing public thinking and action on mental retardation during the twentieth century. The invention of the intelligence test, the "Montessori system," the eugenics movement, and several family studies of the feeble-minded all had a profound influence on the understanding and treatment of the mentally retarded. Retardates were blamed for the ills of society and were badly treated.

Gradually there emerged a more tolerant attitude toward the retarded. This attitude was largely due to two important factors: scientific research and organized movements on behalf of the retarded. For present-day knowledge and attitudes toward the retarded, it is necessary to look at the results of the survey instrument given parents, teachers, and the general public for that purpose.

In summarizing the present knowledge of mental retardation, it can be said that there is still much confusion as to what mental retardation actually is. It is still confused with mental illness. While the majority of people realize that there are other types of retardation besides the inherited, they are largely unaware of these types and

the nature of each. Many people incorrectly believe the majority of mentally retarded persons are also physically handicapped. A large per cent of the general public does not know the importance of such factors as German measles, X-rays, and prenatal care in eliminating many kinds of retardation.

Concerning present-day attitudes toward the retarded, the survey showed that the great majority of people now accept the retarded person. He is considered by most to be a person with feelings like our own. He is no longer considered by many to have an inborn instinct for crime and destruction. Society is no longer ashamed of him. The majority of people seem willing to give of their time and means to assist the retarded.

In summarizing present opinions on the education of the mentally retarded, it can be said that most people favor public education of retardates. They have learned that many retardates can be trained to become partially or totally self-supporting. The need for a special type of education is recognized along with teachers who have had special training.

Recommendations

From this study, there are five important recommendations for the future that should be made. Each of these will be briefly mentioned.

First of all, there is a need for greater public understanding of mental retardation. Education is the key to the acceptance of mental retardation. It is also essential to the prevention of it. Both public and private agencies need to join forces and use every available means to inform the public concerning mental retardation, its nature, and its prevention.

Secondly, more laws must be passed to help curb retardation, protect the rights of the retarded, and provide for their education. Laws can often accomplish what nothing else can. For example, all states should have laws requiring the testing of infants at birth for phenylketonuria. Also, they should all have organized anti-measles campaigns. Each state should require every school district to provide special education for all its exceptional children. Laws should also be passed to protect the retarded and see that their rights are not violated.

Thirdly, major focus must be given to the early identification and treatment of mental retardation. Throughout the United States, there is a vast shortage of medical and social service agencies to aid the mentally retarded and their families. There is also a vast shortage of doctors, psychologists, teachers, and other personnel who are adequately prepared to work in this area. Both government and private agencies need to work together to establish more clinics to diagnose and treat the problem. More scholarships

should be appropriated to encourage young people to choose some area of mental retardation as a profession.

Fourthly, our institutions for the retarded must be carefully examined. Many of them are old, over-crowded, and under-staffed. The gap between knowledge and practice must be closed. Future planning must take more into consideration the specific needs of the mentally retarded. We must do more than provide care for them.

Last of all, we must do everything within our power to encourage continued research into mental retardation. Even yet, far too little is known about the causes and prevention of mental retardation. Additional government grants are needed for research in this area. The greatest possible encouragement should be given scientists to conduct research studies in the area. Perhaps someday we can reach our ultimate goal--the prevention of mental retardation.

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Eastern Illinois University
Faculty for Professional Education
Charleston, Illinois

November 15, 1967

Dear Director of Special Education:

As an educator, I am vitally interested in helping the mentally retarded. Currently, I am doing research work at Eastern Illinois University in the area of mental retardation. A survey is being conducted to measure understandings and abilities concerning mental retardation some of which are not valid. The results will be tabulated and the findings reported. The survey test will be given parents, educators in the area of mental retardation, and the general public. All areas of Illinois will need to be represented.

Your cooperation is greatly needed. Please choose at random and list on the provided sheet the names and addresses of 10 educators in the area of mental retardation and 10 names of parents of retarded children from your area. A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

It is my sincere hope that, through this study, we will know what has been accomplished in informing the parents and public about mental retardation and what definite areas we need improvement in. If you so desire, a report shall be sent to you when this study has been completed.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Norma Keefer
Graduate Student
Eastern Illinois University

Eastern Illinois University
Faculty for Professional Education
Charleston, Illinois

October 28, 1968

Dear Participant:

As an educator, I am vitally interested in helping the mentally retarded. Currently, I am doing research work at Eastern Illinois University in the area of mental retardation. A survey is being conducted to measure understandings and abilities concerning mental retardation. It will be given a number of parents of the retarded, educators of the retarded, and lay people. The results will then be tabulated and the findings reported.

You have been one of the persons selected to participate in this research study. Your cooperation is greatly needed. Please read each item on the survey test and mark your answer on the small answer card. Blacken in the right answer, whether A, B, or C. The first one has been done for you.

It is important that no consultation be made while taking the survey test. Do not sign your name. Please keep the survey test. Return the small answer card in the stamped, self-addressed envelope within one week.

Thank you for your cooperation. It is my sincere hope that, through this study, our retarded boys and girls everywhere may be benefited.

Sincerely yours,

(Mrs.) Norma M. Keefer
Graduate Student
Eastern Illinois University

SURVEY ON MENTAL RETARDATION

1. Sample: Chicago is a (A) country, (B) city, (C) state.
2. I am a (A) parent of a retarded child, (B) educator in mental retardation, (C) neither.
3. My age is in the range (A) 20-35, (B) 36-50, (C) over 50.
4. I am a (A) male or a (B) female.
5. Mental retardation is a type of mental illness. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
6. There are several million Americans who are mentally retarded. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
7. All types of mental retardation are hereditary--that is passed from parents to children. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
8. The great majority of mentally retarded persons are also physically handicapped. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
9. Mongolism is a special type of mental illness which usually occurs in mothers under 40 years of age. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
10. It is possible for two very intelligent parents to have a retarded child. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
11. Retarded children respond to love and hate as normal children do. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
12. A mother's care during pregnancy is an important factor in preventing mental retardation. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
13. The medical profession is adequately trained to diagnose the problem of mental retardation. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
14. The retarded person's mental development is slower than the development of others. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
15. A child is always mentally retarded if he scores low on an intelligence test. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
16. Mental retardation is a condition that can be changed significantly. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
17. Use of X-rays or German measles contracted by the mother during pregnancy can cause a child to be born mentally retarded. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
18. There are more boys in educable mentally handicapped classes than there are girls. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
19. Anyone who scores low on an intelligence test should be sterilized. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
20. If I had a normal child of similar age, or younger, I would allow him to play with a retarded child. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
21. I would favor having a Boy Scout or Girl Scout group composed of retarded children in my community. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
22. If I had a retarded child, I honestly feel I could love him as much as I do my normal children. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
23. If I wanted to adopt a child, I would consider adopting a mentally retarded one. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
24. If my best friend had a retarded child, I would feel embarrassed to be seen in public with them. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
25. It would be best to place most mentally retarded persons in an institution. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided

26. I am willing to take an active part in my community to help the retarded-- either by helping financially or by giving of my time and talents. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
27. If I operated a business, I would be willing to hire a mentally retarded person. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
28. All parents of retarded children accept their children. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
29. How we accept and treat a retarded child will play an important role in how he will accept himself. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
30. Mentally retarded persons should be treated as much as possible like normal persons. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
31. Retarded children have an inborn instinct for destruction. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
32. I would favor having a recreational center in my community for the retarded. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
33. Most retarded children want to please adults. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
34. More jobs should be made available for retardates in my community. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
35. Mentally retarded youngsters should receive an education within the framework of the public school system supported by the taxpayers' money. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
36. A teacher specially trained for the mentally retarded should receive a larger salary than a regular classroom teacher. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
37. Trying to educate retarded children is probably a waste of time and money in the long run. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
38. Many mentally retarded persons can learn to become completely self-supporting. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
39. Recent Illinois legislation has made it compulsory that school districts provide free public education for all exceptional children which would include the mentally handicapped from ages 5 to 21. I am in agreement with this law. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
40. I would favor more government grants for scientists to do research in the field of mental retardation. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
41. In spite of educational opportunities, most mentally retarded persons turn out to be behavior problems or juvenile delinquents. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
42. Mentally retarded children are incapable of being educated properly in a regular classroom. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
43. Mentally retarded persons should be graduated from high school with a different kind of diploma. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
44. Mentally retarded children should, whenever possible, attend some classes with normal children. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
45. Mentally retarded persons should receive the same kind of academic program as a normal child. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
46. Retarded children should be required to attend school just as normal children are so required. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
47. Teachers of retarded children need special training in the psychology and problems of the retarded. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
48. Repetition or drill is an important method in teaching the retarded. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided
49. A class for the mentally retarded should be held in a separate building of its own. (A) Yes, (B) No, (C) Undecided