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A follow-up study of children released from child care centers

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A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF CHILDREN RELEASED FROM CHILD CARE CENTERS

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Concerned by the increase in the average daily populations at MacLaren School for Boys and Hillcrest School for Girls, Children's Services Division has requested research related to children who have been released from child care centers and private institutions.

Child care centers were originally developed as alternatives to the state institutions. As children were diverted to various child care centers, the populations of these two institutions decreased, and plans were made to merge the two schools, thus closing Hillcrest. With the increase in populations at both schools, this is no longer feasible.

As much time and effort is spent in placing children outside of the state schools, C.S.D. would like to have some measure of how effectively its workers are diverting children from the correctional system. A speculation exists among many C.S.D. workers that youngsters are not staying in these child care centers long enough to benefit from the varied programs the centers offer.

With these factors in mind, a research design was developed which would cover these variables:

1. The child's placement
2. His length of stay (including dates of placement and release)
3. His disposition upon release
4. His living situation one year following his release

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Background

The development of child care centers in Oregon reflects policies and issues that have evolved in the history of the treatment of juvenile delinquents. For a long time institutional philosophy was based on two principles: protection of society, and punishment for behavior that would threaten society. This may seem "inhuman" today, but it is necessary to understand it from the historical point of view. (13, p. 6)

Prior to the nineteenth century all ages were seen as equal before the law. If a child was charged with an offense which was triable by jury, he was liable to appear before a court higher than the petty sessional court. If convicted of the offense, he became subject to the same punishment as an adult. (2, p. 19)

When the courts dealt more leniently with children because of their age, this was due to the discretionary element in sentencing allowed to the court rather than to something specifically granted in the law. Therefore children might expect to be treated compassionately, but could not receive any differential treatment under the law as a right. (2, p. 19)

Before the opening of the Juvenile Court in 1899, any child convicted of a crime was known as a criminal, an enemy to organized society. Whether his sentence was lenient or harsh, he bore the label of "criminal," and very little prevented him from growing up to verify

this description in the fullest measure possible. (19, p. 82)

The severe treatment of children was influenced considerably by the prevailing moral view that crime was not only an offense against society, but also against God. As this offense was therefore a sin which had to be purged, harsh punishment was seen as a means of ultimate salvation. (2, p. 19)

Not only was punishment necessary for the salvation of the convict, but it could be put to good use for society. Much emphasis was placed on treating the culprit in such a manner that other persons would not be tempted to engage in criminal activity. (25, p. 16)

The thinking about institutions at this time was based on the problems which prevailed and the scientific knowledge available. The basic philosophy of "Help thy neighbor" was considered, but little was known about the cpapcity of human beings to grow and change, or the effective measures for bringing this about. (13, p. 6)

In England and in the United States, concerned citizens began questioning the advisability of placing convicted children in jail with convicted adults. England's Committee on Prisons and Penitentiaries considered it "highly inadvisable that young persons of twelve or thirteen should be exposed to the instruction of those who can initiate them in all the mysteries of fraud and villany." (2, p. 22) Unfortunately Parliament took no action on this critical statement as the State's alleged concern was with punishment.

In 1820 nearly 90 boys between the ages of fourteen and sixteen were reported to be in the penitentiary in the United States. Much comment was made that contact with old offenders was no way to reform "convicts." (19, p. 82) As a result reformatories for children were

eventually developed to protect and separate the child from adult criminals. However the social stigma associated with these reformatories also separated the child from society. Homer Folks wrote in 1891:

> Just as the criminal discharged from prison finds it difficult to reinstate himself in society, so the boy discharged from the reformatory finds himself branded with the trademark of crime. This perpetuates the evil of association, since the discharged boy seeks as his companions those who by similar discipline and education have the same interests and sympathies. (25, p. 62)

It was obvious that the reformatories were not "reforming" children since by their very nature reformatories were reinforcing the child's criminal behavior. In an attempt to deal with this problem the Juvenile Court was formed. Article XIV of the Children's Charter of 1930 summarizes the policy upheld by the Juvenile Court:

> For every child who is in conflict with society, the right to be dealt with intelligently as the society's charge, not society's outcast; with the home, the school, the church, the court, and the institution when needed, shaped to return him whenever possible to the normal stream of life. (8, foreword)

The Juvenile Court operated under the principle that the focus of attention was the child and not the offense, and consequently, that treatment and not punishment was the core of the Juvenile Court work. (8, p. 3) The child was not accused of a crime, but was offered assistance and guidance. Intervention in his life was not supposed to carry the stigma of a criminal record as judicial records were not generally available to the press or public and hearings were conducted in relative privacy. Proceedings were informal and due process safeguards were not applicable due to the court's civil jurisdiction. (25, p. 137)

The institutions, also, changed from the idea of pure custody to that of treatment. Convinced of the necessity and the therapeutic value

of a happy family relationship, the reformers sought to reproduce it in an institutional setting. This was a great step forward, compared with the impersonal, regimented, unindividualized, large custodial institution. (13, p. 13)

The value of the family relationship is seen in the principle of *parens patriae*, which is an important basis of the modern juvenile court. The idea underlying this principle is that the state is a parent to its children when the natural parents are unable or unwilling to assume responsibility. In this way the state carries the joint responsibility of helping the children to develop into responsible citizens and for protecting the community. (22, p. 321) Oregon's juvenile system has incorporated this ideal in its philosophy of individualized justice with the goals of rehabilitation and social protection.

Present Situation in Oregon

There has been a trend nationally to improve and develop services to delinquent and maladjusted children in their own communities. Improved probation services, community based residential treatment centers and combinations of services all are aimed at interrupting the traditional pattern of committing delinquent boys and girls to state training schools until it is absolutely necessary. (20, p. 2)

Oregon has not gone as far as other states in the development of state juvenile institutions, but has set a new direction for services to children in a strong partnership with the local communities throughout the state. The child care center is in keeping with the historical and political traditions in Oregon in which both state and community can participate fully in helping youngsters to adjust and grow

successfully in their home communities. (22, p. 318)

Oregon's agency-operated youth care center program was initiated by the 1965 Oregon Legislature with the appropriation of $20,000 to support Pitchford Boys' Ranch in Douglas County. In a review of the Pitchford program, the Corrections Division determined that over a period of years the number of commitments to MacLaren School for Boys had been reduced from a high of 23 youngsters in 1961 to an average of six youngsters for the years 1964 through 1966. (20, p. 2)

Based on the Pitchford experience, the Oregon Legislature appropriated $125,000 in 1967 to partially subsidize ongoing and new youth care centers throughout the state. Later, through the combined efforts of the Corrections Division, the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the public and private agencies throughout Oregon, a total of 18 youth care centers were established. (20, p. 4)

In 1971 the Children's Services Division of the Department of Human Resources was created by legislative action. (ORS 184.805) Children's Services Division was a combination of the child welfare section of the Public Welfare Division, the juvenile corrections component of the Corrections Division, and the Child Study and Treatment section of the Mental Health Division. (4, p. 1)

The mission of C.S.D. is to administer, coordinate, develop, and provide social services for children and their families essential to assure the physical, mental, emotional and social well-being of children, while exercising minimum intervention in the family. The law (ORS 418.015) provides that C.S.D. ". . .<u>shall</u> accept any child placed in its custody by a court . . . and <u>shall</u> provide such service for the child as the

division finds necessary . . . ." (4, p. 1)

C.S.D. took the place of the Corrections Division in the involvement with the youth care centers, and the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, reaching the limit of its funding, was no longer involved in the program. ORS 420.855 defines a youth care center as follows:

> . . . 'Youth Care Center' or 'Center' means a facility established and operated by a public or private agency or a combination thereof, to provide care and rehabilitation services to children committed to the custody of the youth care center by the Juvenile Court or placed by the Children's Services Division, but does not include detention facilities established under ORS 419.602 to 419.616. (20, p. 1)

C.S.D. designated their programs as child care centers in order to distinguish their programs from Pitchford Boys' Ranch which was still publicly owned and locally funded. Today, Pitchford Boys' Ranch is the only youth care center in Oregon. Douglas County has elected to continue this facility without federal aid, whereas all other centers have become private non-profit agencies.

Presently these centers are financed through a combination of Federal Social Security Title IV-A and Title 20 funds and state funds. During the past several years, L.E.A.A. funds have been awarded to many of the centers for construction, building modification, start up and phase-in costs. (22, p. 319)

The designation "Child Care Center" has become cumbersome in that these programs are often confused with programs for younger children and day care. Equally confusing is the designation "Licensed Private Child-caring Agency." The difference between a private child-caring agency and a child care center is basically historical in that the agencies are private institutions and are much older, many dating back to the 1800's. Also, many of these agencies, while providing services

for children, are not residential in their care. The distinctions between the private child-caring agencies and child care centers were not found in any written form, but were abstracted from personal observations and conversations. For the sake of clarity, those agencies which provide group residential care shall be categorized as "Child Care Centers" or "Centers" as their programs and funding procedures are basically the same as the child care center, although the agencies usually house larger numbers of children.

C.S.D. developed a standard operational definition of a child care center based upon guidelines described in the Children's Bureau publication, *Agency Operated Homes*. A child care center is usually a single dwelling or facility owned or rented by an agency, institution, or other organization, which provides care and services for approximately six to fifteen children, ideally, forming a nucleus group which makes for convenient supervision and takes advantage of the maximum potential for group interaction. These centers are usually indistinguishable from nearby homes when located in an urban area, but may take the form of ranch or farm-type facilities depending on the community and available resources. (20, p. 15)

Approval of the child care center, according to statute is based on reasonable and satisfactory assurance that adequate physical facilities exist which comply with the rules of health and fire authorities, and that there is employment of capable or trained or experienced personnel, and that the program includes educational, vocational, recreational, and counseling opportunities. (20, p. 14)

Presently there are 32 of these centers operated throughout Oregon by 25 community-based organizations. (20, p. 4) The child care centers

serve children who cannot remain in their own homes because of various law violations, and because their parents are unable to provide consistent supervision, or cannot control their children's behavior.

These children ordinarily cannot tolerate close family ties due to their feelings toward their own parents; consequently the less structured atmosphere of a child care center proves less upsetting to them. A child selected for the center must be able to live in a group living facility with youngsters his own age, since he will not have the close security of an institution.

The program in a child care center focuses on youngsters who can participate in a regular school program and who can take advantage of other training, vocational, and recreational opportunities in the community. (22, p. 17)

Children in child care centers have individual responsibilities in maintaining the facilities and in assisting with specific work assigned in the center. The center's staff maintains a close liaison with public schools, and works with school officials to gain maximum support for the child's successful school adjustment. The center also provides optimum use of community resources. Some youngsters are permitted to work on a part-time basis. Such employment is designed to acquaint the youngsters with future employment opportunities and help them develop future vocational skills.

There are a variety of staffing patterns utilized by the centers, and although some are managed by a married couple employed as houseparents, most are managed by a combination of resident staff and staff working on a shift basis.

These staff have various duties including cooking, secretarial work, supervision of the youngsters, recreational and program planning, and treatment responsibilities. In addition, each staff member must be able to perform many of these duties during the day.

Group work techniques are important in providing the therapeutic group process, which is the essential core of the program. Counselors are employed to work with the youngsters in carrying out the day-to-day operations and group dynamics are utilized in helping the youngsters to involve themselves in community activities. Houseparents particularly, have a major responsibility to limit a child's activities. (23, p. V-114)

The child care center program is based on the assumption that many youngsters previously committed to MacLaren or Hillcrest do not need the kind or degree of program offered by these institutions. By law, youngsters are committed to these centers "in lieu of commitment" to the state training schools. Youngsters are first committed to the care and custody of C.S.D. by the Court, then placed by C.S.D. in one of the centers. Admission to a center is based upon staff conferences between the Juvenile Department's staff, the child care center's staff, and persons from other related agencies. (22, pp. 3, 18, 20)

One result of this policy of diversion from the state training schools is that those youngsters who do arrive as a "last resort" to MacLaren or Hillcrest generally have more failures or have committed acts too severe for the court to utilize alternative resources. One conclusion reached is that while numbers will drop to a new plateau level, the youngsters involved will be more difficult to work with, and more difficult to reach. (23, p. V-110)

New commitments, average daily population, and gross expenditures for the MacLaren campus for each of the last five fiscal years are presented in the table below: (23, p. V-110)

TABLE I

POPULATION & EXPENDITURES
FOR MACLAREN AND HILLCREST 1969 - 1974

Fiscal Year	New Commit.	Aver. Daily Population	Gross Expenditures
1969-1970	413	330	2,630,197
1970-1971	377	265	2,718,281
1971-1972	264	229	2,890,522
1972-1973	263	230	2,956,983
1973-1974	307	266	5,019,304*

*Combined estimate for Juvenile Training Schools.

Despite the rise in the past year, these figures indicate generally that fewer new commitments are being made from the counties. Since many variables affect these figures, it is probably impossible to totally explain the reason for the drop or how permanent it is. Child care centers have been credited as an important source of the drop in new admissions, suggesting that with the development of an increasing number of alternative community resources, the population at the state schools will decrease. (23, p. V-110)

Children's Services Division, however, has not overlooked the rise in population over the past year. Administrators at the Division have questioned the effectiveness of the workers in diverting youngsters from the state training schools, and have speculated that youngsters are not staying long enough in the centers to benefit from the programs the centers offer. Concern over these issues has caused C.S.D. to request

research related to children who have been released from child care centers.

The concern over the length of time a child spends at a center is supported by Wilgosh (28), who investigated the effectiveness of group home placements for juvenile delinquents in the Toronto area. He found that longer placements appear to be more beneficial, that is, if a placement lasts for more than six months, the outcome will likely be positive. This is so despite the fact that children are placed where there are vacancies, and are not necessarily placed in the most appropriate group home, given the nature of their problems.

Whether or not the correctional institution has any actual impact on juveniles regardless of length of stay has been questioned by Eynon, et al. (6) This research showed that the failure or success of youngsters once they are released from an institution is probably independent of the impact of the institutional stay. Similarly, Jesness (11) conducted a study whose results suggested that whatever rehabilitation is accomplished in an institution must be complemented by supportive community services to be effective.

Feldman (7) takes a dim view of the treatment of delinquents in traditional agencies. He maintains that an overwhelming number of factors militate against effective rehabilitation in correctional institutions: multiple and conflicting organizational goals, overcrowding, deviant peer group composition, low transferability of changed behavior to the open community, labeling of former inmates, and high cost.

It is important to bear in mind that all these studies except Wilgosh's were conducted in group homes, which are very similar in

nature to the child care centers involved in this study.

In summary, the main philosophical trends in the treatment of juvenile delinquents have evolved from punitive measures to the ideal of *parens patriae*. Currently there seems to be a pull, nation-wide, toward deinstitutionalization. Oregon is evaluating this trend, and in doing so, is examining the effects of child care centers on the total treatment of children.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Statement of Problem

The recent increase in the population at MacLaren School for Boys as well as the Governor's request for cutbacks in the child care centers have caused Children's Services Division to evaluate the effectiveness of its out-of-home services, particularly in the area of child care centers. A speculation arising from the population increase at MacLaren is that the child care centers are not diverting many of the youngsters from the state schools, but are merely postponing their eventual referral to MacLaren or Hillcrest. If so, this implies that the staffing procedures for determining a child's referral may need to be revised.

The original intent of this research was to determine whether or not a large number of youngsters who are placed in centers are referred to MacLaren or Hillcrest within one year after their release from the center. It was hoped that this would address the question concerning the effectiveness of the diversion policies and tactics.

Another aim of this research was to determine whether or not a relationship exists between the length of time a child spends at a center and his pattern of living arrangements once he is released. Many workers have voiced concern that the time most youngsters spend in centers is not long enough for them to benefit from the therapeutic

value of these centers. Were this proven true, it might provide answers to the questions raised by the rising population at MacLaren.

Research Design

In order to answer questions raised, some measure of a child's adjustment upon release from a center was needed. For the purpose of this research, a child's adjustment was to be determined in part by his living situation one year following his release. This one-year time period has been used in previous research as a measure of successful adjustment, with the understanding that this measurement is fraught with numerous variables which are unrelated to the particular institutional experiences of the subject. (6) The rationale behind using the one-year time period is that the first few months following a child's release from a center are much like a "honeymoon period," and a truer picture of the child's adjustment is seen one year later.

For these reasons the child's living situation one year after his release was used as the dependent variable in this research, and the independent variable was the length of time the child resided in a center. It was hoped that this might provide some answers to the controversy over the length of time a child spends in a center. It is well worth noting, however, that this research did not concern itself with all the moves each child made, but noted only the disposition upon release, and the living situation one year later. Data was not available to consider all the living situations of each child.

In response to the request from Children's Services Division a research design was developed which would cover these variables: the child's placement, his length of stay, his disposition upon release, and

his living situation one year following his release. It is expected that the data collected will address the following questions:

1. In what child care centers did the children reside?

2. During what months are the children placed in and released from centers?

3. How long are children staying at the child care centers?

4. Where do children go upon release from a child care center?

5. How many children are being referred to MacLaren and Hillcrest upon release from a child care center?

6. Where are the children one year later?

7. How many children are residing at MacLaren and Hillcrest one year following their release from a center?

8. Is there any relationship between the length of time a child spends in a center and his disposition upon release?

9. Is there any relationship between the length of time a child spends in a center and his living situation one year following his release?

10. Is there any relationship between a child's disposition upon release and his living situation one year later?

This research is basically descriptive, showing possible relationships between variables and offering tentative conclusions. It is objective in that it deals with facts. The design itself is retrospective, as this research looks back at the adjustments of its subjects rather than following them through a period of time.

Population

The target population in this project consists of all youngsters

in Polk, Yamhill and Marion Counties who were released from child care centers between July 1974 and June 1975. Children's Services Division in Salem has data on children from this tri-county area, hence the selection of these three counties. Children in treatment centers will be excluded as this research is aimed primarily at the juvenile delinquent and status offender. Mid-Valley Adolescent Treatment Center, despite the name "Treatment," is actually considered a child care center and is therefore included in this study. Unwed mothers in child caring agencies were not excluded if they were under the age of eighteen.

Each month C.S.D. publishes a list of children who are residing in centers as well as those just released. From this list the population for this project was derived. A total of 109 children met the established criteria, 58 from Marion County, 26 from Yamhill County, and 25 from Polk County. As this is not an overly large number, all subjects were used, and no sampling took place.

These children had resided in 24 various child care centers and child caring agencies throughout Oregon. A breakdown of these centers' characteristics is given in Table II which appears on the following page. Although a distinction is made on this table between the child caring agency (or private institution) and the child care center, both will be referred to as a "child care center" or simply "center." Other characteristics noted in this table are the age and sex of the residents.

There are twice as many child care centers as child caring agencies in this study. This ratio is quite similar to the total picture on a state-wide basis. Seven of these centers accept both boys and girls; nine accept boys only, and eight accept girls only. As for age classification, only four of these centers accept children under twelve

TABLE II

CHILD CARE CENTERS AND CHILD CARING AGENCIES IN THIS STUDY AND SEX AND AGES OF RESIDENTS

NAME	AGENCY	CENTER	SEX (M	F)	AGE (0-12	12-14	14-16	16-18)
Belloni Boys' Ranch		X	X			X	X	X
Boys' and Girls' Aide Society	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Chehalem House		X		X			X	X
Children's Farm Home	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Christie School for Girls	X			X	X	X		
Frontier House		X	X			X	X	X
Harbor House		X		X			X	X
Inn Home for Boys		X	X				X	X
J-Bar-J Ranch		X	X				X	X
Louise Home	X			X		X	X	X
Mid-Valley Adolescent Treatment Center		X	X			X	X	X
Mountainview Boys' Ranch		X	X				X	X
Phoenix House		X		X		X	X	X
Rainbow Lodge		X	X				X	X
Salvation Army White Shield	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
St. Mary's Home for Boys	X		X		X	X	X	X
Stargulch Ranch		X	X	X			X	X
The Next Door		X	X	X		X	X	X
Tri-County Girls' Home		X		X		X	X	X
Umatilla County Boys' Ranch		X	X			X	X	X
Villa St. Rose	X			X		X	X	X
Waverly Children's Home	X		X	X	X			
Youth Adventures		X	X	X			X	X
Youth for Christ		X	X	X		X	X	X

years of age, with the majority of them accepting children between the ages of 14 and 18.

Instrumentation

Information concerning the child's name, the name of his worker, the child's placement, the date he was placed, and the date he was released was usually available from the list of children in centers which was published by C.S.D. The disposition and later living situation of each child was originally designed to be derived from the case file on each child. However, many problems arose as a result of this manner of collection, mainly in incomplete or missing files.

An alternative to collecting data from the files was to interview each caseworker individually. Forty-two caseworkers were consulted; seven from Yamhill County, eight from Polk County, and 27 from Marion County. Although some of the workers were difficult to reach, all were cooperative and were good sources of information. The major difficulty encountered occurred whenever a child's case had been closed for some time, and the worker had no way of knowing where the child was. This occurred in a few cases, but presented only a minor problem.

Since this project studies an area in which little research has been done and so many variables are involved, the research is descriptive and doesn't attempt to provide generalizable data which can answer questions for the rest of the state. Hopefully it will give the reader a clearer picture of the situation of children in this tri-county area who are released from child care centers.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter will address the research questions stated in the Review of the Literature.

1. In what child care centers did the children reside?

Table III, shown on page 21, describes the number of children from each county who resided in specific child care centers. Although percentages and frequencies are supplied, the reader is reminded that percentages related to small frequencies found on this table can be misleading.

Twenty-one of the centers were utilized by Marion County, 13 by Polk County, and 11 by Yamhill County. Despite the above warning concerning percentages, it is difficult with over twice as many children from Marion County as from either Polk or Yamhill Counties, to make comparisons except on a percentage basis. Thirty-five percent of the subjects from Yamhill County resided at Rainbow Lodge, the highest percentage found on this table. This is understandable since Rainbow Lodge is in Yamhill County and is obligated to give first preference to youngsters from the tri-county area. It is interesting that none of the other three centers in the tri-county area (Chehalem House, Mid-Valley Adolescent Treatment Center, and Tri-County Girls' Home) show similarly high percentages. However, on a map it can be seen that the majority of these centers are located in the northwestern section of Oregon, as are

TABLE III

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF CHILDREN LIVING
IN EACH CENTER BY COUNTY
OF RESIDENCE

NAME	MARION		POLK		YAMHILL		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Belloni Boys' Ranch	3	5	0	0	0	0	3	3
Boys' and Girls' Aide Society	2	3	0	0	0	0	2	2
Chehalem House	2	3	1	4	2	8	5	4
Children's Farm Home	8	13	4	16	1	4	13	11
Christie School for Girls	2	3	0	0	0	0	2	2
Frontier House	3	5	0	0	0	0	3	3
Harbor House	2	3	0	0	0	0	2	2
Inn Home for Boys	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1
J-Bar-J Ranch	0	0	1	4	0	0	1	1
Louise Home	3	5	3	12	5	20	11	10
Mid-Valley Adolescent Treatment Center	4	7	2	8	1	4	7	6
Mountain View Boys' Ranch	1	2	1	4	0	0	2	2
Phoenix House	0	0	0	0	2	8	2	2
Rainbow Lodge	3	5	2	8	9	35	14	12
Salvation Army White Shield	1	2	0	0	1	4	2	2
St. Mary's Home for Boys	3	5	1	4	1	4	5	4
Stargulch Ranch	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1
The Next Door	2	3	0	0	0	0	2	2
Tri-County Girls' Home	2	3	1	4	1	4	4	4
Umatilla County Boys' Ranch	0	0	1	4	0	0	1	1
Villa St. Rose	5	9	3	12	2	8	10	9
Waverly Children's Home	4	7	1	4	0	0	5	4
Youth Adventures	5	9	4	16	1	4	10	9
Youth for Christ	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	58	*	25	*	26	*	109	*

*Figures may not total 100 due to rounding.

Polk, Yamhill, and Marion Counties. This suggests that youngsters are being placed somewhat close to their homes.

2. During what months are children placed in and released from child care centers?

It was thought that there might be a particular month in which a majority of the children were either placed in or released from centers. Since the question was aimed primarily at the category of month, the year was disregarded. This means that a child placed in June 1972 and a child placed in June 1974 would be considered in the same category.

Since most of the children attend public school, it was expected that the school calendar might have some impact on this table. For this reason and for the purpose of clarity, the months are grouped according to season. Table IV, on page 23, shows the results.

In no single month was a majority of children placed or released. The largest group of placements occurred in February (13 youngsters), and the largest group of releases occurred in June (14 youngsters). Because these numbers are so close to those of other months, they cannot be viewed as meaningful.

However, when the months are grouped according to season, more meaningful results are visible. Thirty-one percent of the placements occur in the fall months when school has begun, and there is a possibility that this may be due to the influence of school. For example, a child might be moved if he is experiencing difficulties at home and is apparently not adjusting well to the school he is attending.

Also possibly school-related is the fact that 32% of the releases occur during the summer months. Many of the children who are released have come to a point when they can return to their own community, and

TABLE IV

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF CHILDREN PLACED AND RELEASED DURING EACH MONTH

	MONTH	PLACED		RELEASED	
		No.	%	No.	%
Fall	September	10	9	9	8
	October	12	11	3	3
	November	12	11	12	11
	TOTAL	34	31	24	22
Winter	December	8	7	10	9
	January	8	7	11	10
	February	13	11	7	6
	TOTAL	29	25	28	25
Spring	March	6	5	6	5
	April	7	6	13	11
	May	9	8	3	3
	TOTAL	22	19	22	19
Summer	June	7	6	14	12
	July	7	6	8	7
	August	10	9	13	11
	TOTAL	24	21	35	30
	TOTAL	109	*	109	*

*Figures do not total 100 due to rounding.

it is logical that their workers would wait until the school year was over to release them.

Both the winter and spring months showed approximately as many placements as releases. These figures suggest that the populations of the child care centers remain fairly constant during winter and spring, but fluctuate somewhat during summer and fall.

3. How long are children staying at the child care centers?

This question arose out of the concern that children were not staying at the centers long enough. Table V, on page 25, shows how long the children actually stayed.

The largest groups of children (12%) spent one month and three months at the centers with the median length of stay being five months. Almost half (49%) of the children spent six months or less, with 78% spending a year or less. Only 3% spent over two years at a center, the longest of these stays being 41 months.

On the whole it can be said that the majority of children spend less than a year in centers, with most spending six months or less.

4. Where do children go upon release from a child care center?

5. How many children are being referred to MacLaren and Hillcrest upon release from a child care center?

Both these questions deal with the child's disposition upon release from a center. The distinction is made between the two only because of the particular interest in the rising populations at the state institutions. Table VI, shown on page 26, addresses both questions.

The category "home" means that home of either parent regardless of who has custody, in the case of a divorce. If a child was placed with any relative other than his parents, this was noted as "relative's

TABLE V

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF CHILDREN IN THIS STUDY BY NUMBER OF MONTHS SPENT IN CENTERS

NUMBER OF MONTHS	NUMBER	PERCENT
Less than 1	6	5
1	14	12
2	9	8
3	14	12
4	6	5
5	5	4
6	3	3
7	9	8
8	2	2
9	4	4
10	8	7
11	4	4
12	5	4
13	1	1
14	7	6
15	4	4
16	2	2
17	1	1
18-23	2	2
24-35	1	1
36-48	2	2
TOTAL	109	*

*Figures do not total 100 due to rounding

TABLE VI

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF CHILDREN IN EACH DISPOSITION UPON RELEASE FROM CENTERS

DISPOSITION	NUMBER	PERCENT
Home	51	47
Foster Care	17	16
MacLaren and Hillcrest	14	13
Ran	7	6
Relative's Home	5	4
Emancipated	3	3
Group Home	3	3
Detention	2	2
Shelter Care	2	2
Cedar Hills	1	1
Fairview	1	1
Friend's Home	1	1
Oregon State Hospital	1	1
Youth Adventures	1	1
TOTAL	109	*

*Figures do not total 100 due to rounding.

home." Although the largest percentage of children (47%) do go home upon release, this is not to suggest that theirs is a success story. An example of this would be the child who is sent home because he is not benefiting from the program the center offers. It is doubtful that he would in fact benefit from any center that doesn't offer the security of a state institution, yet he has not exhibited behavior severe enough to warrant a referral to such an institution. So he remains at home until he incurs a law violation which will send him to MacLaren.

Many children go home on a trial basis. Some who cannot return home go to a friend or relative's home. Those who are living on their own were categorized as emancipated whether or not they were of age. Only a small percentage (3%) fell into this category.

Sixteen percent of the children went to a foster home. For many, this living situation offers much more freedom than the child care center, and may be a bridge between a child's returning home or living on his own.

Six percent of the children ran from the centers and were released while they were gone. During their stay at a center, many children run away, but usually they return or are brought back. Those who remain gone for a certain extended length of time are considered terminated from the center and are released in their absence.

In view of the number of children who leave centers after less than one month, it is surprising that only two youngsters were sent to shelter care upon release. This type of housing generally is utilized on a short term basis only, while more permanent housing is being sought. A child who could not adapt to a particular center could be sent to shelter care while his C.S.D. worker made other living arrangements for

him. Many caseworkers report that shelter care was utilized, however, by many of the children during the year following their release. Because the children were in shelter care during the year, rather than at the beginning or end of the year, their use of shelter care is not shown on either Table VI or VII, the latter table shown on page 30.

Three of the children went to group homes which are sometimes confused with child care centers. Group homes are defined as foster family care for four to fifteen youngsters at one time. The care received in a group home is generally more professional than that found in foster homes.

The third largest group (14 youngsters) was sent to MacLaren and Hillcrest but whether or not this is reflective of the other counties in Oregon is unknown. The numbers of youngsters sent to these two schools were combined in order to give a clearer view of the situation at the state institutions. While MacLaren is a school for boys and Hillcrest is for girls, boys from MacLaren may be chosen to go to Hillcrest if they are not violent, want to work outdoors, or are academically inclined.

6. Where are these children one year later?

7. How many children are residing at MacLaren and Hillcrest one year following their release from a center?

As with the previous section, both these questions deal with the same topic, and are separated only because of the interest in the centers' role in diversion from the state institutions.

The categories are much the same as those on Table VI, with the additions of Secret Harbor and Carroll House, both child care centers, Pitchford Boys' Ranch, the original Youth Care Center, and the category

"unknown." It seems that in one year's time, many cases were closed, and the children's whereabouts were unknown. This category is not to be confused with that of "ran," in which the child is known to be on the run, and usually his case is still open.

Once again, the largest group of children (34%) was at home, although this was a smaller number than had gone home upon release. Another group that lessened in size was those staying in foster homes. These decreases were accounted for by the increasing number of children on the run (15%) and those emancipated (16%).

The total number of youngsters at the state institutions remained constant, with the number at MacLaren decreasing somewhat, and the number at Hillcrest increasing. As with Table VI, the third largest group were found in MacLaren and Hillcrest.

There were few changes in the living situation of the group as a whole from the time of release from a center until a year later. Individual changes will be discussed in a later section.

8. Is there any relationship between the length of time a child spends in a center and his disposition upon release?

Table VIII on page 31 shows the dispositions of children according to the time period they spent at centers. Because a majority of the children spent under 18 months in a center, the months have been categorized in groups of three up to 18 months. This is followed by one six-month period (19-23) and two 12-month periods (24-35 and 36-48).

Those going home upon release comprised the largest groups of those who stayed a year or less. After a year's stay, more seemed to go to foster care. This suggests that those who stay less than a year are more likely to go home while those who spend a year or more are

TABLE VII

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF CHILDREN RESIDING
IN EACH LIVING SITUATION ONE YEAR
FOLLOWING RELEASE

LIVING SITUATION	NUMBER	PERCENT
Home	37	34
Emancipated	18	16
MacLaren and Hillcrest	14	13
Ran	9	8
Foster Care	8	7
Unknown	8	7
Relative's Home	4	3
Detention	2	2
Group Home	2	2
Carroll House	1	1
Cedar Hills	1	1
Friend's Home	1	1
Pitchford Boys' Ranch	1	1
Secret Harbor	1	1
Shelter Care	1	1
Youth Adventures	1	1
TOTAL	109	*

*Figures do not total 100 due to rounding.

TABLE VIII

NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN EACH DISPOSITION AS
RELATED TO LENGTH OF TIME SPENT
IN CENTERS

DISPOSITION	NUMBER OF MONTHS									
	0-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	16-18	19-23	24-35	36-48	TOTAL
Home	17	8	8	12	3	2	0	0	1	51
Foster Care	3	0	3	2	5	2	1	1	0	17
MacLaren and Hillcrest	9	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
Ran	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Relative's Home	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	5
Emancipated	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3
Group Home	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Detention	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Shelter Care	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Cedar Hills	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fairview	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Friend's Home	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Oregon State Hospital	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Youth Adventures	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	43	14	15	17	12	4	1	1	2	109

more likely to enter a foster home upon release from a center.

Of those who were sent to MacLaren and Hillcrest, nine out of 14 spent three months or less in centers. Those who ran did so generally during the first three months of stay, and the two who were sent to detention spent three or less months in centers.

This table shows that a great deal of movement takes place during the first three months of stay at a center. The largest number of those who go home do so in the first three months, but those going to MacLaren detention, or running also do so in the first three months.

9. Is there any relationship between the length of time a child spends in a center and his living situation one year following his release?

Table IX on page 33 is identical in form to Table VIII except that the living situation one year following release is used instead of the immediate disposition. The time periods are the same as in Table VIII.

The largest number of youngsters who were home one year following release spent three months or less at a center. Those who were emancipated, on the run, or in foster care were spaced fairly evenly over the months. However, the largest groups who were at MacLaren and Hillcrest one year later spent three months or less in a center.

There appears to be little clear cut relationship between the length of time spent in a center and the living situation one year later. The length of stay seems to have more impact upon the immediate disposition than on the later living situation.

10. Is there any relationship between a child's disposition upon release and his living situation one year later?

TABLE IX

NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN EACH LIVING SITUATION ONE YEAR FOLLOWING RELEASE AS RELATED TO LENGTH OF TIME SPENT IN CENTERS

LIVING SITUATION	NUMBER OF MONTHS									
	0-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	16-18	19-23	24-35	36-48	TOTAL
Home	18	4	4	6	3	1	0	0	1	37
Emancipated	6	0	5	3	3	1	0	0	0	18
MacLaren and Hillcrest	8	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	14
Ran	3	0	1	3	1	0	1	0	0	9
Foster Care	1	0	1	1	3	1	0	1	0	8
Unknown	2	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	8
Relative's Home	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
Detention	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Group Home	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Carroll House	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cedar Hills	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Friend's Home	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Pitchford Boys' Ranch	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Secret Harbor	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Shelter Care	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Youth Adventures	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	43	14	15	17	12	4	1	1	2	109

The movement of individual youngsters is shown on Table X on page 35. The categories for disposition and living situation one year later are the same as used on Tables VI and VII, but are arranged in different order so as to coincide with each other. MacLaren and Hillcrest have been separated in order to present a more accurate representation of movement.

The majority of the youngsters who went home were home a year later, and all who went to foster care were still there a year later. This doesn't mean that these youngsters necessarily stayed in one place. Some went from their mother's home to their father's; some were in and out of detention; and others were moved from one foster home to another. This table shows only that these youngsters were in a similar living situation one year following release as immediately upon release.

Sixty-seven percent of the youngsters who were sent to MacLaren were there one year later. This was not the case at Hillcrest, where only one out of five was still there. However, 33% of those at MacLaren one year after release and 40% of those at Hillcrest one year after release were sent home upon release from a center. This may be an example of those youngsters described earlier whom no center could benefit nor would accept, yet who are not considered candidates for the state institutions until they commit a law violation serious enough to warrant their referral to MacLaren or Hillcrest.

Because of the large number of categories, it is difficult to see possible relationships and patterns on Table X. For this reason, certain categories were combined to form Table XI, which appears on page 36. Most of the combined categories are self-explanatory except for "other agencies," which encompasses the child care centers, group homes,

TABLE X

NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN EACH DISPOSITION AS RELATED TO
LIVING SITUATION ONE YEAR FOLLOWING RELEASE

DISPOSITION / LIVING SITUATION	Home	Foster Care	Friend's Home	Relative's Home	Group Home	MacLaren	Hillcrest	Ran	Emancipated	Youth Adventures	Cedar Hills	Detention	Shelter Care	Unknown	Pitchford Boys' Ranch	Secret Harbor	Carroll House	TOTAL
Home	26	0	1	2	0	3	2	1	8	0	0	2	0	3	1	1	1	51
Foster Care	2	8	0	0	1	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	17
Friend's Home	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Relative's Home	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
Group Home	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
MacLaren	2	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	11
Hillcrest	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Ran	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	7
Emancipated	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Youth Adventures	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cedar Hills	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Detention	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Shelter Care	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Fairview	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Oregon State Hospital	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	37	8	1	4	2	9	5	9	18	1	1	2	1	8	1	1	1	109

TABLE XI

NUMBER AND PROBABILITY OF CHILDREN IN EACH DISPOSITION AS RELATED TO LIVING SITUATION ONE YEAR FOLLOWING RELEASE

DISPOSITION / LIVING SITUATION	Home	Foster Care	MacLaren or Hillcrest	Friend or Relative's Home	Other Agencies	Ran or Unknown	Emancipated	Total
Home	26 .51	0 .00	5 .09	3 .06	5 .09	4 .08	8 .16	51
Foster Care	2 .12	8 .47	1 .06	0 .00	1 .06	3 .08	2 .12	17
MacLaren or Hillcrest	3 .21	0 .00	7 .50	0 .00	0 .00	2 .14	2 .14	14
Friend or Relative's Home	1 .17	0 .00	1 .17	1 .17	0 .00	2 .33	1 .17	6
Other Agencies	3 .27	0 .00	0 .00	1 .09	3 .27	4 .36	0 .00	11
Ran or Unknown	2 .28	0 .00	0 .00	0 .00	1 .14	2 .28	2 .28	7
Emancipated	0 .00	0 .00	0 .00	0 .00	0 .00	0 .00	3 1.00	3
TOTAL	37	8	14	5	10	17	18	109

detention, and shelter care. Probability has been included in this table, and is listed directly below the frequency. This table shows that if a child goes home, to foster care, or to a state institution, there is a probability of approximately .5 that he will be in the same sort of living situation one year later. If he is emancipated upon release, it is most likely, according to this table (1.0 probability), that he will be emancipated one year later. Although some who are emancipated have simply come of age, others become emancipated because they have demonstrated their ability to live on their own. Whatever the circumstances of their emancipation, none of the youngsters were under C.S.D. supervision a year later. Since this includes only three youngsters, however, no firm conclusions can be drawn.

It appears that a relationship may exist between the disposition and living situation one year later in the categories of home, foster care, state institutions, or emancipated. Other relationships may exist, but are not clearly evident.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

This chapter will deal in more depth with some of the issues raised by the findings.

Despite the fact that only 24% of the children in this study were placed within the tri-county area, the question of county preference has caused some consternation among C.S.D. workers. Ideally, all centers would be equally accessible to children from all over the state. However, it seems that many centers are obligated to give preference to youngsters in their own counties before considering placing an out-of-county child. This suggests that workers and children do not have access to all centers in the state, and creates a problem because some centers have specialized programs to meet certain types of needs. A child should be placed in a center which matches his needs, but he may be denied placement in such a center because it is full due to placements of youngsters from that particular county. Some C.S.D. workers feel that a more effective system would include specialized centers with equal access to workers from all over the state.

An argument for local rather than specialized placement is that youngsters in centers close to home are more able to have contact with their families during their placement. This gives the child's C.S.D. worker an opportunity to counsel both the youngster and his family, thus increasing the youngster's possibility of reintegration into his home.

An interesting area for further research would be investigation of the effects of the level of family participation upon the success of the youngster once he is released from the center.

The emphasis on family relationships may be one reason most of the youngsters were placed in centers close to their homes. Funding also plays a large role in local placement. C.S.D. might have difficulty justifying the sending of a worker from Marion County to Umatilla Boys' Ranch, for example, unless this particular child care center was specialized to meet the needs of certain types of youngsters. It is important to keep in mind the fact that a large number of the child care centers in Oregon are in the more populus areas such as Portland and Salem where there are more resources as well as demand, thus contributing to the apparent local placement of tri-county youngsters. However, it seems to be a generally accepted policy of C.S.D. workers to place children close to their home communities. If this is not possible, workers often try to place a child in a center which is located in a community similar to the one in which he lives.

Apparently Table III shows fairly typical patterns of child placement and release. It seems that a large number of youngsters are generally placed during October and November, possibly when it becomes clear that their adjustment to school is unsatisfactory. Also the large number of youngsters placed in February can be accounted for by the fact that this month is generally the beginning of a new semester. If a youngster had adjusted poorly or had acted out during the first semester of school, a worker may feel that this would be a beneficial time to move the child, rather than subjecting him to another unhappy semester.

School is sometimes considered the biggest disruption for children.

This is why workers, trying to smooth a youngster's transition from home to a center or vice versa, will consider the influence of the school calendar when deciding when to place or release a child. This accounts for the higher number of releases during the summer months. Any move is traumatic to a degree, and most workers are careful to make this move as smooth as possible.

Some workers see advantages in moving youngsters when they are ready, rather than with accepted school vacations. A child who has gone through a center's program and has, in effect, "graduated," may backslide in his behavior if requested to stay another month or two until school lets out. Alternative school systems, which are smaller and more personal than public schools, may provide a solution to this dilemma as they offer individualized programs which are not bound by the school calendar. An alternative school system is flexible enough to adjust to the needs of the child rather than forcing the child to fit into the rigid system of public education. It seems that delinquent youngsters are often lacking in pleasurable, life-enriching experiences and have come to view themselves as failures. Sometimes public schools, with their emphasis on standardized performance, reinforce this poor self concept. Were alternative schools more available to children in centers, they would learn at their own level and their moves to and from centers might be more governed by their own behavior and attitude rather than by the school calendar.

Although vocational schools are much less flexible than alternative schools, they might provide another alternative to public education as they teach the youngster specific skills. It is possible that as a youngster learns a trade he will see himself as more successful and

worthy than previously, and will consequently function more effectively. It is this raise in self-esteem that is seen as crucial to the programs of child care centers, for a youngster needs to learn that there are stronger alternatives than delinquent behavior if he is to sustain socially acceptable behavior once released from the center.

Table IV, which shows almost half of the youngsters spending six months or less, may support the concern that many children are not staying in centers long enough. Although there seems to be some agreement among C.S.D. workers that a placement of less than six months is too short to be therapeutic, more research is needed to establish an acceptable optimum length of stay.

Apparently the methods of treatment for children in centers have changed since this research was conducted, and children are tending to stay for longer periods of time. Some workers feel that a five to six months stay is optimum; that a child who stays much longer than a school year will have greater difficulty readjusting to his home, and that a stay of less than two months generally indicates that the child was not suitable for placement in a center.

As much of the emphasis in child care centers is placed on reuniting families, it is not surpirsing that almost half of the youngsters went home upon release. It would be interesting to know for how many children, going straight home from a center was a drastic reduction in care and security. Some workers prefer to make the transition smoother for certain children by sending them first to a group home or to foster care until the child is more ready for the higher level of freedom he may experience at home. Especially for those children who had been living in the tighter security of a private institution, this step-by-step

transition to home may be very beneficial. Many youngsters, however, are stable enough to bypass this transition period, and are directly reunited with their families.

It must be remembered that not all of those who go home are emotionally ready to return to their families. For some youngsters who do not adjust adequately to various forms of substitute care, going home may be their only alternative under present standards. It is these youngsters whom workers may be tempted to give up on since they respond so poorly to any attempts to reach them, and they tend to act out in an antisocial manner. Some workers report that children such as these seem to be likely candidates for the state institutions, but cannot be sent there until they are found to be "sufficiently delinquent." This may be a protective measure for the child, insuring that he won't be sent to the state institutions without just cause. It is unfortunate that there isn't some form of alternative care designed to meet the needs of this type of child, possible to prevent him from reaching the point where he does become a referral to MacLaren or Hillcrest.

Part of this problem may be an indirect result of the law which went into effect a year ago limiting restrictions placed on status offenders. In effect, this law limits the time status offenders can be held in detention to 72 hours, and states that status offenders cannot be sent to the state institutions. Many workers feel that this law, although basically protecting the rights of status offenders, is more restrictive than helpful and doesn't propose alternatives for former methods of treatment. Some C.S.D. workers report waiting until a status offender commits a law violation, then sending him directly to a state school, rather than to a child care center, if he has been an

especially difficult youngster. A reason behind this is that status offenders may often be in need of therapy and/or substitute care with a high level of security, but are difficult under the new law to reach. Until this law is revised or amended, many workers feel that they are working with their hands tied behind their backs.

As stated earlier, the living situation one year following release was used as one measure of a child's adjustment. Whether or not this adjustment is successful or not is difficult to determine as one particular living situation may be beneficial for one child, although harmful for another. For example, going to MacLaren or Hillcrest might mean for one child that he was finally able to receive the intensive therapy he needed in a maximum security situation. For another child, being in an institution might confirm his own belief that he was a "bad kid" and the associations with other such youngsters could increase his expertise in crime.

It becomes apparent that no one living situation can be labeled either good or bad, nor can a youngster's situation be arbitrarily deemed a success or failure. Many other variables must be considered in order to fully evaluate a child's total adjustment. The figures here present only one factor; the living situation one year later. It is important that their value not be misconstrued.

A fairly typical pattern was found in the dispositions of children who spent more than a year in centers. It seems that the longer a child spends in a center, the less likely his chances are for being reunited with his family. When a child leaves home to enter a child care center, the family has one less mouth to feed, less expenses, and often less emotional problems, as the "problem child" is no longer home. It is

possible for a family's standard of living to rise because of the child's absence, and the longer the child is gone the more accustomed to this level the family becomes. Some families feel they cannot adjust to the child returning home as it would mean a return to their previous life style. Another factor involved is the possibility that the child who spends a longer time in a center has more complex needs which may have arisen from a dysfunctional family into which reintegration could be impossible or harmful. For these reasons, some children who spend longer periods of time in a center may enter foster care upon release from the center rather than going home. Another reason that the children who go into foster care stay longer in centers may be that planning for foster care takes much time. A substitute family is being sought, and as such, is not taken lightly.

Emancipation is another disposition which takes time to prepare for and plan. Generally, if a child is emancipated after less than three months in a center, it is seen as a "bail out," an opportunity for the child who isn't adjusting to the center simply to get out. This is often considered an unwise move, as it usually means the child's return to the situation which caused his difficulties in the first place. Those youngsters who do take the time to be in an emancipation program have usually demonstrated that they are able to live on their own.

Table VII shows that a youngster's chances of going to a state institution are highest if he spends three months or less in a center. This may be due to the fact that child care centers are supposedly the last resource considered before sending a youngster to Hillcrest or MacLaren. If a child is not going to adjust to a child care center,

this is generally apparent within the first three months of stay. In fact, 64% of those who were sent to MacLaren and Hillcrest upon release stayed only three months or less in a center. Sometimes these are the youngsters who probably should have been sent originally to MacLaren or Hillcrest instead of to a child care center. However, it is difficult to predict how a child will react to a particular child care center. Perhaps more research could be done in this area in order to establish more effective screening methods for placement.

It is equally difficult to predict where a child will be a year after his release, especially since there seems to be no clear-cut relationship between the length of stay and the living situation one year later. Some C.S.D. workers have recommended expanding the purchase of care so that child care centers can work with the youngster after their release. As much of the gains experienced by youngsters in centers are in relationships with others, it appears reasonable to make possible the continuance of these relationships, particularly those with staff, so that the youngster can experience some continuity in his transition to another living situation. This could also give the child the opportunity for counseling and support, something which is sometimes lacking if the child returns to a home in which he finds himself a stranger. Once again, this would be one of the advantages of a placement which is close to a youngster's home. Perhaps this would lessen the number of children who are sent home or to the home of a friend or relative, only to be referred to a state school.

At present, the average daily population at the two state schools is still rising. In September 1976, C.S.D. requested and received $620,000 at an Emergency Board hearing, with $500,000 needed for three

new cottages and 38 staff members at MacLaren and $120,000 needed for seven staffers at Hillcrest. C.S.D. is predicting 60 to 70 more youngsters than present capacity allows. (10)

As the original intent of the child care center program was to divert children from these state schools, the effectiveness of the centers could be questioned. Especially since last year saw an under-utilization of substitute care, the speculation has arisen that the centers are either overly selective or their programs do not deal with the complex problems of many youngsters. Efforts are now being made through C.S.D. to evaluate individual child care centers, to increase the efficiency of their utilization.

There are many speculations as to the rising populations of the state schools, which may or may not be related to the effectiveness of the child care centers. When alternatives to the state schools (child care centers and private institutions) were developed, Hillcrest and MacLaren experienced an immediate drop in population. It seems that a point has been reached where these alternatives are filled, thus shifting the burden back to the state schools. The increase may be due in part to the push to release youngsters from the state schools. It is possible that those who were released before they were ready are now returning to these institutions.

Socio-economic factors may have played a large part in adding to the populations at the state schools. It seems that when money is scarce, alternative programs tend to be cut from funding. The centers have not always been allowed an increase to account for the cost of living. For this reason, some centers have had to cut back in staff and programs. Some workers believe that these cutbacks have damaged

the programs offered and may have contributed indirectly to the increased populations at the state schools.

In times of economic stress, relationships in families are often strained because of limited funds, thus increasing a child's chances of acting out. The breakdown in the family constellation, particularly in the case of divorce or separation, has also been blamed for the increase in the undirected, sometimes criminal behavior of youngsters.

These factors by themselves probably have not added to the rising populations at the state schools. There seems to be added pressure from the community to "get tough" with criminals, to "hang 'em high," and to keep the streets safe. Tolerance for the youngster who acts out in one form or another seems to have diminished, replaced with demands for punishment and retribution. Child care centers may seem "soft" on youngsters, leaving the state schools as the only acceptable alternative. For these reasons it is extremely important that the effectiveness of child care centers be researched and publicized. Uniform standards for operation of child care centers must be established and those centers who do not meet the qualifications should be asked to upgrade their programs.

From an economic standpoint, the centers are more efficient than the state schools as they range in cost from $750 to $900 per child per month, whereas the cost at Hillcrest is about $1,500 per child per month. (10) The transition back to the home is much less abrupt for those in centers than for those at the state schools. The youngsters in centers have had more opportunity for contact with their families, and many have been living in a community residence, attending public schools. In contrast, those at the state schools have been much more

isolated from society. For some youngsters, this may be valuable. However, these severe restrictions do not seem necessary for the majority of children now in substitute care.

Although the populations at the state schools are rising, it does not necessarily follow that the child care centers are ineffective in diverting youngsters, for the total number of youngsters who come under the jurisdiction of C.S.D. and/or the Juvenile Court has increased.

This writer is recommending that Children's Services Division examine its screening methods for assigning children to various forms of substitute care, particularly child care centers, private institutions and the state schools. More effective guidelines, based on research, should be formulated so that workers are better able to predict in what type of setting a child will receive the most benefit. Concurrently, child care centers need to be evaluated and upgraded if necessary, and their specializations noted so that screening techniques can be more explicit.

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