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# A Study of Children Placed in Institutions by Children's Division, Chicago Welfare Department

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A STUDY OF CHILDREN PLACED IN INSTITUTIONS  
BY CHILDREN'S DIVISION, CHICAGO  
WELFARE DEPARTMENT

by

Bernice Anne McNeela

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Social  
Work of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment  
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## LIFE

Bernice Anne McNeela was born in Chicago, Illinois, October 15, 1923.

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From 1949 to 1951 the writer was a social case worker for the Chicago Chapter, American Red Cross.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

There has existed in the child placing field a controversy as to the relative benefits of foster home placement and institutional placement for the dependent child. The two types of care developed as almost two entirely different fields, with individuals in each field taking sides as to what kind of care is better. More recently there has been a trend toward considering the benefits of both types of care and using the one which seems most suitable for each individual child. Now, when a child is referred to an agency, it becomes a matter of deciding, first, whether he should be removed from his home, and second, if removal is indicated, whether a foster home or an institution should be used.<sup>1</sup>

### PURPOSE AND SETTING

The present study was undertaken to determine what reasons were considered before placing a child in an institution by

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<sup>1</sup> Frank M. Howard, "Institution or Foster Home?", Mental Hygiene, New York, XXX, January, 1946, 92-94.

an agency which had both facilities available, the Children's Division of the Chicago Welfare Department. The purpose of the study is to identify the factors which entered into the thinking and planning of the workers who had placed children in institutions rather than in foster homes. It was hoped that the study would be of assistance to workers who are considering placement of a child in an institution and that it would bring to light some information about the placement situation in Chicago.

The Children's Division of the Chicago Welfare Department is the largest child placing agency in Chicago. In order for a child to be eligible for the services of the agency, the parents must be in need to the extent that they cannot afford private care. If a child is over sixteen and not under the jurisdiction of his parents, he may establish eligibility in his own right. These children are unattached, emancipated minors whose parents are not available for contact by the agency and who have no relatives who are able or willing to support and supervise them.

In some cases, the agency directly supervises the child either in a foster home or an institution. This is called the direct case load of the agency. In other cases, the agency supports the child financially, but he is supervised by another agency or institution. This is known as the cooperative case load. The child must be eligible for the services of Children's Division before this arrangement is made.



Children's Division has been using institutions for the care of their children since 1943. Previous to that year, it had been placing children in foster homes by interpreting the old Pauper Law to include dependent children for whom no other resources were available, although there was no specific legal basis for this. In 1943, the Attorney General of Illinois made a decision which gave legal sanction to the interpretation. Thereafter, the agency began to expand its program to include institutional care.<sup>2</sup>

#### SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The study was limited to those children receiving direct supervision from the agency on July 1, 1950, and who were still under the care of the agency on December 31, 1951. This limitation was chosen because it was a recent period and yet would provide a sufficient time in which to determine some of the results of placements. Children's Division was directly supervising approximately two thousand children during this period, of whom only ninety-one were in institutions. Only one child in each family was chosen, because frequently children are placed in institutions in order to keep families together. Including all children of a family would distort the findings. The study,

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<sup>2</sup> Roman L. Haremski, "The Children's Division of the Chicago Department of Welfare," Public Aid in Illinois, Chicago, XVIII, March, 1951, 3-4.

moreover, was limited to active cases. With these limitations, the number of children studied was brought to forty-two, thirty boys and twelve girls.

Two schedules were used to collect the material. The first schedule contained questions regarding the children, their background, the reasons for placement, and the developments after placement. Since not all of the areas of development were covered in each dictation, the most recent information regarding each point was included on the schedule. The second schedule was used to collect information about the programs and staff of the institutions.

The information about the institutions will be given in Chapter II, which will include a description of each institution in which the children were placed. Chapter III will give a description of the background of the children, the conditions under which they were referred to the agency, and their experience with the agency before they were placed in institutions. The reasons which were considered by the worker in placing the children will be described in Chapter IV. Chapter V, on the results of placement, will include information about the children's stay in the institution, their adjustment to the institution, and recommendations regarding future care which have been made by the worker.

## CHAPTER II

### THE INSTITUTIONS

This chapter will present a description of the institutions in which the children were placed, the age group accepted, whether or not they accept both boys and girls, their staff, and religious affiliation.

During the time that the children were in the institutions, there was a total of twenty institutions which accepted children from Children's Division for direct placement. However, the children included in the study were placed in only fourteen of these institutions. It is these fourteen institutions with which the present chapter is concerned.

Three of the fourteen institutions accepted only boys, four accepted only girls, and seven accepted both boys and girls. An analysis of how many children were placed in each institution shows that the children were evenly distributed among the institutions if they are classified according to type. Fifteen boys were in boys' institutions, fifteen in mixed institutions; five girls were in girls' institutions, and seven in mixed institutions.

## TYPE OF CHILDREN ACCEPTED

The institutions studied had facilities for all children, excepting negroes, between the ages of three years and twenty-one years. All of the institutions which limited their intake to one sex served only adolescents. Of the four girls' institutions, three accepted girls to the age of eighteen and one to the age of twenty-one. None of the boys' institutions accepted boys older than sixteen, but once a boy was accepted he could remain until he completed high school. Of those institutions which served both boys and girls, one accepted only pre-school children, one accepted both pre-school and grammar school children, four accepted children of ages who would probably be in grammar school only, and one accepted both grammar school and high school children. The age groups did not correspond directly to possible grade placement, and it is therefore possible that many of the children would have to attend another grammar school upon leaving the institution, rather than transfer to a high school.

The type of children accepted by the institutions included dependent, pre-delinquent, and delinquent children.<sup>1</sup> With one exception, the institutions which served both boys and girls accepted only dependent children, whereas three of the four girls'

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1 It should be noted that Children's Division placed only dependent, neglected children.

institutions accepted pre-delinquent and delinquent girls and two of the three boys' institutions accepted delinquent boys. This indicates a tendency to keep the normal, well-behaved children together, but to segregate them when they show behavior problems. The fact that the segregated institutions served the older age group may also be a factor. This is in accordance with a recommendation made by the Child Welfare League of America:

The institution should accommodate both boys and girls, so that brother and sister groups may be kept together and so that all of the children may have the advantages of associations including both the sexes. The exceptions to this are, of course, those institutions organized to give special training to the adolescent, and others caring for children who particularly need to be segregated for the time being.<sup>2</sup>

#### SIZE OF THE INSTITUTIONS

The size of the institutions varied greatly from two small girls' institutions with a capacity of less than fifteen to a large boys' institution, which could accommodate two hundred and fifty boys. Of the seven mixed institutions, three had a capacity in the thirties. The following table gives the capacity for which the institutions were licensed.

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<sup>2</sup> Standards of Foster Care for Children in Institutions  
New York, 1937, 9.

TABLE I  
CAPACITY OF THE INSTITUTIONS

Capacity	Boys	Girls	Mixed	Total
Below 30	0	2	0	2
30 through 50	1	0	4	5
50 through 70	1	0	1	2
70 through 90	0	1	0	1
Over 90	1	1	2	4
Total	3	4	7	14

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

Ten of the institutions had no religious affiliation, but were governed by non-sectarian boards of directors. One institution was governed by a Bohemian Fraternal Organization. Of the remaining three, one was Catholic, one Baptist, and one Evangelical. The preponderance of non-sectarian institutions is to be expected, since Children's Division, working under the Illinois law which provides that children shall be supervised by an agency of their own religion, refers children whose parents have a religious affiliation to an agency of that religion for supervision.

## EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Seven of the institutions had their own schools, at least for some grades, the grades for the age group usually served by the institution. Three of the institutions used only their own schools, two of which provided education for grammar school children, and one for children of adolescent age. Of those using both public and private schools, three had their own elementary school, but used public high schools, and one provided its own school through the third year of high school. This indicates a definite tendency toward having the younger children remain on the grounds of the institution for their education, while allowing the older ones to attend a community school, thus providing for the stimulation of outside contacts.

## CASE WORK AND PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES

Ten of the institutions employed a case worker, two received case work services from a referring agency, and one received them from a local agency. One institution made no provision for case work services, although it did use the psychiatric services of the Institute for Juvenile Research. It has since changed its program and is no longer caring for children. This institution and one of the two institutions which had social services only from referring agencies accepted private placements. It is possible that children so placed would be without case work services.

However, case work services were available to all of the children included in the present study, since they were under the direct supervision of Children's Division.

All of the institutions made some provisions for psychiatric services. Six of them employed a psychiatrist on a consultative basis, four used mental hygiene clinics, two used the facilities of cooperating agencies, and one employed a private psychiatrist.

#### SUMMARY

The institutions in which the children were placed had facilities for all children except negroes above the age of three years who were not physically or mentally handicapped. The size of the institutions varied greatly from the small resident type to a large school with a capacity of two hundred and fifty children. The majority of the institutions were non-sectarian, private agencies. Seven of them used public schools for all of the children under their care, three used only their own schools, and four used both their own and public schools. With two exceptions, they provided case work services for the children, and all of them had psychiatric services available. It would seem that the institutions in which the children were placed represent a cross-section of the institutions of the Chicago area.



## CHAPTER III

### THE STUDY GROUP

This chapter will be devoted to a description of the children included in the study, their family background, and the conditions under which they were referred to the agency.

Of the forty-two children studied, there were thirty boys and twelve girls. On a percentage basis, this meant 71.4 per cent were boys and 28.6 per cent were girls. The reason for the much higher percentage of boys seems to be that foster homes are harder to find for boys than for girls, and because ten of the boys had already been placed in an institution by the Family Court<sup>1</sup> or by parents before they were accepted for the services of the agency, whereas only three girls were so placed.

The age distribution of the children at the time of referral is shown in the following table.

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1 Formerly known as the Juvenile Court.

TABLE II  
AGE AT TIME OF REFERRAL

Age	Boys	Girls	Total
0-3	0	0	0
3-6	5	1	6
6-9	6	3	9
9-12	10	5	15
12-15	9	3	12
Total	30	12	42

The largest single group of children, 35.7 per cent, were between nine and twelve, and 64.4 per cent were over nine at the time of referral. There were no children under three or over fifteen at the time of referral. The fact that there were no older children may be the result of limiting the study to active cases. Children who were older at the time of referral would probably have now been released from the care of the agency.

Thirty-nine of the children were white, one was part Chinese, one was part Japanese, and one child had an Indian mother and a father who was half-Indian. Although there were approximately two thousand children receiving direct supervision from Children's Division at the time of the study, of whom seventy per cent

were Negro, there were no Negro children in the study. This was due to the fact that there is still a gap for coverage for Negro children in need of institutional care. This lack of institutional facilities for Negro children reflects a great unmet need in this community.

Thirty-five of the children were legitimate, three were illegitimate, and four were the children of parents who were not legally married, although they were recognized in the community as being married.

Intelligence Quotients were obtainable on sixteen of the boys and eight of the girls. Six (37.5 per cent) of the boys had dull normal intelligence, eight (50 per cent) had normal intelligence, and two (12.5 per cent) had above average intelligence. Two of the girls (25 per cent) had dull normal intelligence, five (62.5 per cent) had average intelligence, and one (12.5 per cent) had above average intelligence. Because of the small number of children for whom an intelligence quotient was obtained, it is difficult to come to any conclusions regarding the intelligence of the children, except that it would seem to be a normal group.

Thirty-three of the children were born in Chicago, two elsewhere in Illinois, six in other states, and one was born in England. The girl who was foreign born was the child of an English war bride by a previous marriage. One boy, although he had been born in Chicago, was the child of German-born parents and had been

deported to Germany with them during the war. Difficulties in adjusting to this country were a factor in the referral of both of these children.

#### RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

The religious affiliations of most of the parents were vague. Many of them had changed their affiliation from one religious group to another, or were no longer practicing their religion. This indifference to religion resulted in some confusion in the religion of the children, so that they could be classified in only the most general denominations. In all instances where the parents were available their wishes regarding what religion they wished the child to be instructed in were consulted. In several instances where there was some doubt as to what religion the child should be reared in, the Family Court and the agency of the religion in question were consulted.

Of the forty-two children involved, forty were considered Protestant for placement purposes, and two were Roman Catholic. The parents of the two Catholics, however, requested that their children be placed in a non-Catholic institution.

#### BIRTHPLACE OF PARENTS

The following table gives the birthplace of the parents of the children included in the study.

TABLE III  
BIRTHPLACE OF PARENTS

Birthplace	Father	Mother
Chicago, Illinois	16	17
Elsewhere in Illinois	2	3
Outside of Illinois	13	16
Outside of United States	5	5
Unknown	6	1
Total	42	42

Although five fathers and five mothers were born out of the country, these were not in the same family. Two of the children had both parents born in Europe, and six children had one foreign born parent. In only one instance, where both parents had been born in Germany, did national origin seem to be an important factor in the child's adjustment. The father of one of the children was born in China, but this was a problem of interracial marriage rather than of nationality. This was also true in the case of two other children, one of whom was part-Japanese and the other part-Indian.

With the exception of one girl, all of the children included in the study came from broken homes. This child had run

away from home several times, and her parents complained that they could not control her. She was one of a family of ten children who lived in a very poor neighborhood. In another case, the parents were living together and maintaining a home in a foreign country, but had sent both of their children to America to live.

In ten cases, there were step-parents in the picture. In six of these cases, the child was living with the step-parent. In three cases there was a separation of the natural parent from the step-parent, making two upheavals in the child's life. In one case the child had been living with the mother and step-father until the mother died, at which time the mother's relatives took the child away from the step-father, mainly because of a difference in race.

Twenty-three of the mothers and six of the fathers were in the home at the time of referral. The remaining, nineteen mothers and thirty-six fathers, were out of the home. This included eight mothers and two fathers who were not living with the child because they could not provide adequate living quarters for the children.

This difference in the number of men and women who kept in touch with their children but could not provide a home for them seems significant, particularly in view of the fact that only two more fathers than mothers deserted the children. Although ten parents were divorced, this was given as a reason for the absence of

the mother in only one instance, because in nine cases the child lived with the mother. In twenty-one cases both parents were out of the home, in twenty cases only one parent was out of the home, and in one case both parents were in the home. In only two cases were both parents deceased.

TABLE IV  
REASON FOR ABSENCE OF PARENTS

Reason	Father	Mother	Total
Divorced	10	1	11
Deserted	8	6	14
Separated	3	0	3
Deceased	7	8	15
Illness	3	2	5
Parents not married	3	0	3
Parent refused to make a home for child	1	1	2
Parent living out of country	1	1	2
Total	36	19	55

Thirty-eight of the 42 children had siblings, ranging in number from one to ten. Siblings of 28 of the children were placed by Children's Division, either in foster homes or

institutions, and twelve of the children had siblings who were placed in the same institution. This does not mean, however, that all of the children in these families were placed by Children's Division. Although eleven of the children had more than four siblings, in only three cases were four or more children from one family placed by the agency, and in no case were more than four children from the same family placed in the same institution. In addition to this, twelve of the children also had step-siblings who were not placed by the agency.

#### REFERRAL INFORMATION

Thirty-one of the children came to the attention of the Children's Division from the Family Court. An additional four were referred by both a public assistance agency and the court, and two by the public assistance agency alone. Two were referred for financial supplementation by an institution in which they were already living and two parents made personal application. In one case Children's Division asked the court for permission to take action. The situation had come to their attention because they were supervising older half-siblings in foster homes. The two parents who made personal applications retained guardianship. The other children were put under the guardianship of the Family Court, Children's Division, or the institution in which they were staying or a joint guardianship including both the agency and the



institution was established. It should be noted that Children's Division no longer accepts joint guardianship with another agency or institution.

The reasons for referral seem to divide themselves into those relating to the parents, or the family situation; and those which related to the child. There were a total of eighty-one reasons pertaining to the parents which led to the child being referred to Children's Division. In every case except one, there was some inadequacy on the part of the parent or some inability to give the child what he should have, such as inability to support him or insufficient housing. Table V shows the distribution of the reasons for referral which pertain to the parent.

TABLE V  
REASONS FOR REFERRAL  
PERTAINING TO PARENT

<u>Reason</u>	<u>Number</u>
Broken homes . . . . .	34
Parental inadequacy . . . . .	30
Inadequate housing . . . . .	12
Financial need . . . . .	5
Total . . . . .	81

Parental inadequacy included inability or unwillingness to give proper care to the child, neglect, abuse, and lack of interest. Although only five of the parents were listed as unable to support the children, all of the parents had to be in financial

need to be eligible for the services of the agency. In these five cases a plan had already been made for the child, either by the Family Court or the parent and the agency was being requested to give financial assistance in order to carry out the plan. It was not the only reason for referral, however, since all of the children either came from broken homes or had inadequate parents.

Only nineteen of the children showed behavior problems serious enough to be mentioned in the referral letter or the intake study. A total of thirty-eight behavior problems were mentioned, as follows:

TABLE VI

## BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS AT REFERRAL

<u>Behavior Problem</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Poor school adjustment . . . . .	6
Sex delinquency . . . . .	5
Stealing . . . . .	4
Uncontrollable by parent . . . . .	4
Lying . . . . .	3
Ran away . . . . .	3
Insolent and stubborn toward parents . . . . .	3
Wandered from home . . . . .	2
Refused to live with relatives . . . . .	2
Other . . . . .	6
Total . . . . .	38

The information gathered about the child's behavior was obtained from the records of other social agencies, from the parents and other relatives, and from the child himself. Since the intake study is done in a relatively short period of time, and

since the main reason for referral was usually the parent's inability or unwillingness to care for the child, it is possible that some behavior problems would not be noticed until they had been under the care of the agency for some time. The behavior difficulties noted were almost all aggressive behavior or that which would cause trouble or irritation to the parents, such as truancy, stealing, and running away.

### LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Table VII compares the living arrangements of the children at the time of referral with their living arrangements immediately prior to being placed in the institution.

TABLE VII  
LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF CHILD

Living Arrangements	At Referral	At Placement in Institution
Institution	12	12
Temporary institution	6	3
Temporary foster home	7	3
With parents	6	1
Other relatives or friends	6	4
Arthur J. Audy Home for Children <sup>2</sup>	4	5
Sanitarium	1	1
Foster Homes	0	13
Total	42	42

<sup>2</sup> Formerly called the Juvenile Detention Home

Twelve children were already placed by the Family Court or their parents in an institution, and remained there. One child was placed in an institution by the court during referral, making a total of thirteen children who were in institutions at the time they were accepted for the services of the agency. The table shows a movement away from temporary foster homes and living with parents to permanent foster homes. This is due to the fact that the agency attempted placement of most of the children in foster homes before placement in the institution. They placed only one child directly from his own home to an institution.

With the exception of twelve children already in institutions at the time of referral, the next largest group of children, seventeen, were placed temporarily in foster homes or institutions by the Family Court pending a decision as to their eligibility for care from the agency. Twelve remained with relatives or friends and one child who had a heart condition was placed in a sanitarium. Of the thirty children not already in institutions, fifteen were listed as having behavior problems and fifteen had no behavior problems. Six of each group were allowed to remain with relatives pending permanent placement, and nine were removed by the court. It would seem that the child's behavior was not a factor in deciding whether he should be removed from his home. Even in the cases of the four children who were placed in the Arthur J. Audy Home for Children, two of them were staying there because they refused to return home.

Since a child's attachment to his parents is frequently given as a reason for placing him in an institution rather than in a foster home, it was felt important to know how long the child had been away from his parents prior to placement in the institution.

TABLE VIII

LENGTH OF TIME SPENT AWAY FROM PARENT IMMEDIATELY  
PRIOR TO PLACEMENT IN INSTITUTION

<u>Length of time</u>	<u>Children</u>
None . . . . .	6
Less than 6 months . . . . .	9
6 months to 1 year . . . . .	6
1 to 2 years . . . . .	5
2 to 3 years . . . . .	5
3 to 4 years . . . . .	2
4 to 5 years . . . . .	3
Over 5 years . . . . .	6
Total . . . . .	42

Half of the children had been out of their homes less than one year, 23.8 per cent had been living away from parents between one and three years, and 26.2 per cent had been living away from home between three and eight years. No child had been away from his home for more than eight years. It is interesting to note that five of the twelve children who were already in institutions at the time of referral were sent directly from their homes to the institutions, whereas only one out of the twenty-nine children placed in institutions by Children's Division was placed directly from his home to an institution. This was an Indian boy

who had been allowed to remain home during the intake study and for whom no suitable foster home could be found.

#### FOSTER HOME EXPERIENCE

Sixteen of the forty-two children had been placed in foster homes by Children's Division before placement in the institutions. Twelve of these were boys and four were girls. In addition to these, three children had been placed in foster homes by other agencies, five were placed in temporary foster homes by the Family Court, and two had been in both temporary foster homes and homes provided by other agencies.

The boys were in a total of forty-five foster homes, an average of 3.8 homes; the girls were in nineteen different foster homes, an average of 4.75 homes. Since one of the girls had been in twelve different foster homes, this raised the average disproportionately. The other girls were in only two or three homes. The children therefore had a series of unsatisfactory foster home placements prior to placement in the institution. The length of stay varied from three days to five and one-half years, the average length of stay for the boys being ten and one-third months, and for the girls, sixteen months.

#### INSTITUTIONAL EXPERIENCE

Twenty of the children had been in institutions before

entering the institution in which they were living at the time of study. Only three, however, had been supervised by Children's Division in institutions and later transferred to other institutions. Of the seventeen who had been in institutions while not under the supervision of Children's Division, seven were placed only temporarily while awaiting a decision regarding plans for them. Of the remaining ten instances, information regarding their adjustment was not available in three cases, two children made a very good adjustment, and four made what the institution called only a fair adjustment.

#### SUMMARY

The study group of forty-two children was composed of thirty boys and twelve girls. With three exceptions, they were all white children. On the basis of the limited number of children for whom intelligence quotients were obtained, it seemed that the children represented an average group of children. With one exception, they had all been born in the United States.

The children were brought to the attention of the agency mainly because of parental inadequacies or because their families had been broken due to a death, divorce, desertion, or separation. In only nineteen instances were any problems relating directly to the children mentioned at the time of referral. Five of the children had been in foster homes before coming to the attention of

Children's Division, and sixteen were placed in foster homes by the agency before being placed in the institution. Thirteen of the children also had experiences in other institutions before the present setting was chosen. This points up the fact that many of the children had had a series of unfortunate placements which made succeeding placements all the more difficult to make.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE REASONS FOR PLACEMENT IN INSTITUTIONS

Before discussing the reasons why this group of children were placed in institutions, it would seem advisable to mention some of the criteria which are generally used in deciding between foster home and institutional care.

Age is one of the most important factors to be considered. All authorities agree that most young children, especially those under three years of age, should not be placed in an institution, even for a comparatively short period of time, because the young child needs a strong, close identification with parent figures in order to mature into adulthood.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, adolescents who are striving for independence do not need as close a relationship with parent figures.

A child who shows such difficult behavior that foster parents cannot handle or accept it, or the child who is a menace to society and himself needs the closer supervision which an institution can provide. In an institution there are a larger

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1 Florence Clothier, "The Problem of Frequent Replacement of the Young Dependent Child," Mental Hygiene, XXI, October, 1937, 550.

number of persons to bear the brunt of the child's behavior and trained personnel who are better able to understand and cope with acting-out behavior.<sup>2</sup>

Frequently a child's relationship with his parents will make a foster home placement inadvisable or unnecessary. If a child is confused about his own parents or has a very close relationship with them, he may not be able to relate to foster parents. If he has at least one good parent on whom he can rely, he does not need foster parents. A child whose parents have just recently died or been divorced may be temporarily unable to accept foster parents, and will need the more neutral setting of an institution.<sup>3</sup> Since the space provided by a foster home is definitely limited, an institution may be used to keep the children of the same family together.

McGovern mentions another group of children for whom an institution is frequently used: dull, unattractive youngsters whose low mentality, physical deformity, or general social and physical unattractiveness make them difficult to place in foster homes. These children can often measure up to the institutional

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<sup>2</sup> Julia Deming, "Group Placements for Adolescents," Mental Hygiene, XXVI, October, 1942, 638.

<sup>3</sup> Eva Burmeister, "Institutions and Foster Homes as Used by an Agency Offering Both Services," Child Welfare League of America Bulletin, April, 1942, 18-21.

routine under careful supervision and training geared to their own level.<sup>4</sup>

There are also the more positive advantages of the institution: the group living, the neutral setting, and the controlled environment which it provides, the greater availability of psychiatric services, and the opportunity for closer observation and supervision of the child.

The needs of the parents of the children can frequently be met by an institution rather than by foster homes. Parents are often threatened by the possibility that their child will become attached to foster parents and will lose their affection for the parent. They prefer the impersonal atmosphere of the institution. Moreover, they may feel that having their child living in another home puts them in a bad position, because it implies that there is something wrong with their own home, but they are willing to accept help from the trained personnel of the institution, and can tell their neighbors that the child is in "boarding school."<sup>5</sup>

Thirteen of the children included in the study were already in institutions at the time they were accepted for the

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<sup>4</sup> Cecelia McGovern, Services to Children in Institutions, Washington, 1948, 33.

<sup>5</sup> Howard, "Institution or Foster Home?", Mental Hygiene, XXX, 103.

service of Children's Division, and twenty-nine were placed in the institutions after they were being supervised by the agency. One of the most striking things to note about the reasons given for placement are the differences between the reasons given by the worker in allowing the child to remain in the institution and those considered before placing a child in an institution. The reasons for allowing the child to remain were fewer and less varied than those given for placing the child in the institution. This is illustrated by Tables IX and X, which give the reasons for placement and a comparison of the total number of reasons for both types of children. The reasons were taken from the case histories and the letters of referral to the institutions. The classifications were formulated by the writer.

TABLE IX  
REASONS FOR PLACEMENT IN INSTITUTION

Reasons	Number of reasons for children		Total
	Already placed	Placed by C.D.	
Reasons relating to child			
Child's behavior problems	4	21	25
Child's wishes	3	9	12
Attitude of school authorities	0	2	2
Failure to adjust in foster home	3	10	13
Inability to relate to foster parents	0	10	10
Should remain in institution	1	0	1
To be with siblings	5	1	6
Attachment to siblings	0	6	6
Group setting	0	6	6
Neutral setting	0	5	5
Controlled environment	0	6	6
Reasons relating to parent			
Parent's desire	8	5	13
Attachment to parent	2	5	7
Bad experience with parent	0	2	2
Possibility of rehabilitation with parent	0	2	2
Recency of parent's death	0	1	1
Reasons relating to community			
Lack of foster home	0	8	8
Attitude of community	0	3	3
Other	0	12	12
Total	26	114	140

TABLE X  
COMPARISON OF REASONS FOR PLACEMENT

	For Children		Total
	Already Placed	Placed by C.D.	
Number of children	13	29	42
Reasons for placement	26	114	140
Reasons per child	2	3.86	-
Number of categories	7	17	-

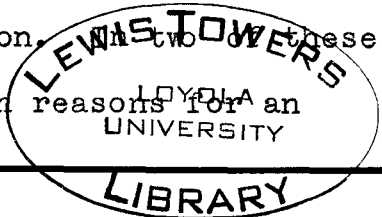
The above tables present all of the reasons mentioned by the worker. However, in all of the cases, there was one main reason which was the deciding factor in the placement. These reasons are presented in Table XI.

TABLE XI  
MAIN REASONS FOR PLACEMENT

Reasons	Children Already Placed	Children Placed by C.D.	Total
Behavior problems	4	21	25
Parent's desire	6	4	10
Failure to adjust in foster home	1	0	1
To be with siblings	1	0	1
Should remain in institution	1	0	1
Attachment to foster parent	0	1	1
Lack of foster homes	0	1	1
Child's desire	0	2	2
Total	13	29	42

CHILDREN ALREADY IN INSTITUTIONS

Since there was such a wide variation in the reasons for placement, we should like to discuss first the reasons for allowing the children who were already in institutions to remain. Four of the children had behavior problems which were contributing factors to their being placed in an institution. In two of these instances, the behavior problems were the main reasons for an



institutional placement. The children had previously been in foster homes while being supervised by other agencies, and had made very poor adjustments. One of these children was a six year old girl who had been in an institution since she was four years old. She had been in several foster homes, and attempts had been made to rehabilitate her with her family, without success. At the time of referral she was receiving case work treatment from an agency close to the institution, and it was thought advisable to continue this treatment for at least a year. The other child, a boy, was unmanageable at home, and rejected by his step-mother. His previous experience in foster homes and other institutions had been unsuccessful. Because he was making a good adjustment in the present setting, it was recommended that he remain. The third child had been placed in an institution at the request of his mother, so that he could be with his sisters. The fourth boy had been placed by the Family Court, with the consent of his mother, who wished him to remain. He was allowed to remain, despite the fact that the worker thought a more personal atmosphere would be beneficial.

Of the remaining nine children who were already in institutions at the time they were accepted for service, the desires of the parent were the deciding factor in six cases. In three of the cases, the children also expressed a desire to remain in the institution, rather than live in a foster home. Two of them had such a good relationship with the parent that it was thought best to foster this relationship. Three of the children made no explicit



expression of their desires. They had been placed in the institution by their parents, together with one or more siblings.

The recommendation was made that three of the children be allowed to remain because they were making a good adjustment. One of them had previously made poor adjustments in both foster homes and institutions, but was making a good adjustment in the present setting. One boy was placed in an institution by the Family Court during the intake study and was allowed to remain solely because of his good adjustment there. His mother was dead; his father had deserted. The other child was placed with three siblings, and the agency thought this arrangement should be continued, since all of the children were making a good adjustment.

Although six of the children were placed with their siblings, in only three instances, where there were three or more siblings placed together, was the explicit recommendation made that the institution should be used in order to keep the children together. In the other three cases, there were only two children placed together. It is possible that they could have been placed together in foster homes.

Thus the desire of the parents was the reason mentioned most frequently in placing these children. It would seem that the fact that they were already placed made the worker hesitant to suggest another change, in view of the resistance of the parents, and, in some cases, the resistance of the child. Since some of

the children had made a precarious adjustment before placement, either in their own home or while placed by another agency, the success of any change would be uncertain. In none of these cases were the advantages of an institution--the group living, the neutral setting, or the controlled environment--mentioned as a factor in making the decision as to whether the child should be allowed to remain, nor was the availability of foster homes mentioned.

#### CHILDREN PLACED BY CHILDREN'S DIVISION

Twenty-one of the 29 children placed in institutions by Children's Division had behavior problems which prompted the worker to consider an institutional setting. Table XII shows the frequency of the various types of behavior problems exhibited by the children. In general they correspond to those mentioned at the time of intake. It is notable, however, that in eleven of the cases poor social relationships with other children were mentioned, since the group living with the opportunity to improve in social relationships is frequently mentioned as a positive advantage in an institution.

Foster home placement had been attempted with thirteen of these children, without success. It is interesting to note what the worker expected the institution to accomplish for these children who had previously made such poor adjustments. In three instances, the training and socializing experience of living with

a group of children were mentioned. A neutral, controlled setting was recommended in two situations as shown in the following excerpts from case records: "She needs an impersonal, but controlled environment in an institution to help her accept placement away from her mother"; and, where a group setting was also recommended,

He needs a group living experience and could add much to a group, as his interests and knowledge are wide and varied. He would do better in a more neutral setting, since he was so tied up with the A's (previous foster parents). A more controlled setting would give him the security he needs and a more strict discipline.

TABLE XII

## BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS BEFORE ENTERING INSTITUTION

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Poor relationships with other children . . . . .	11
Stealing . . . . .	8
Sex delinquency . . . . .	8
Runaway . . . . .	6
Aggressive behavior . . . . .	5
Lying . . . . .	5
Poor school adjustment . . . . .	4
Temper tantrums . . . . .	3
Enuresis . . . . .	3
Other . . . . .	4
Total . . . . .	57

In one case, a more consistent and stable environment, with group living, was recommended. In another instance the worker thought that, "An institutional environment would give her an opportunity to regain her confidence, and relieve the anguish she

has suffered through parental rejection." One boy had spent most of his life in Germany, and was living away from his parents at the time of referral. The worker felt that association with other children who were separated from their parents would be helpful to him, and that he needed contact with sympathetic adults. Community and school pressures for his removal from the foster home were also a factor. One boy who had previously been in an institution, and had a deep attachment to the director, expressed a strong desire to return. He had made such a poor adjustment in six foster homes over a period of two and one-half years that the worker thought he had not been properly prepared for his removal from the institution.

Four children who had behavior problems had made poor foster home adjustments, but other factors were also involved in deciding upon an institutional placement. One was a six year old boy who had been placed in seven different foster homes in a period of one year. At the time of placement in the institution, he was exhibiting night terrors, using bad language, and was not sufficiently aggressive with other children. The worker thought he needed the socializing experience of living with children his own age. Since this boy had hay fever and poor eyesight, the fact that the institution had a good medical program was also considered. In the second case, the socializing experience of the institution was also the main consideration. The boy was showing

only minor behavior problems, but appeared to be unable to play with children of his own age. The third child was an adolescent boy who "had become wild because of lax discipline." He was in need of close attention because of his rapid growth, low intelligence quotient, and lack of emotional maturity. There was no suitable foster home available which could provide this for him. The fourth boy had been in seven foster homes in less than four years. His behavior was described as being "over-active, aggressive, hostile, and anti-social." The consultant psychiatrist advised that he was in need of a stable foster home with a relationship with a foster mother, but because a suitable foster home was not available, an institutional placement was necessary.

Eight of the children who had behavior problems had never been in foster homes while under the supervision of Children's Division. Five of these children, four girls and one boy, had such serious behavior problems that an institutional setting was decided upon almost solely on this basis, although other factors were involved. One girl was closely attached to her own mother, and had been rejected by her step-father. It was thought that she was not ready for a relationship with a foster father, and that she needed the close supervision and consistent handling which an institution could provide. The fact that she had adjusted well while she was temporarily placed in an institution during the intake study also led the worker to choose an institution. In another case the recreational facilities which would

be available and the fact that she would be treated in the same manner as the other children was the treatment plan. The third girl had very serious behavior problems and had come from a family which seemed to derive neurotic satisfactions from exceedingly strict religious observances. The desires of the parent and the recommendation of the Family Court psychiatrist were the deciding factors in the case of the fourth girl. The psychiatrist recommended a boarding school placement with psychotherapy, in the hope that her attitude toward her parents and her behavior would be improved sufficiently so that she could be returned home. The boy, who had refused to live with his mother or other relatives, was placed in an institution after psychiatric consultation, which elicited the following recommendation:

It will be difficult to find a satisfactory community placement for him since his emotional ties are quite intense. . . . He is in need of careful, friendly supervision, considerable emotional maturing, further training, and sound family support.

In the remaining three cases of children who had behavior problems, the behavior was not the primary reason for placement in the institution. In two cases the lack of foster homes necessitated an institutional placement. A psychiatrist of the Family Court definitely recommended a foster home for one of the boys because "of his need for warm and stimulating ties to interested, objective and receptive adults." The worker thought that he "needed association with a family who could give him

stimulation and help in finding constructive outlets for his tendency toward adventure," but believed that an institutional placement was preferable to remaining at the Arthur J. Audy Home for Children, the temporary detention home of the Family Court. The other was an Indian boy who was experiencing neglect by his parents and rejection by the community and school. Because of his race, no foster home could be found. An institutional setting was thought to be an acceptable plan, because he would find "acceptance, understanding, and consistent, firm handling." The third case was that of a girl who while staying in a temporary foster home was reported by the foster mother to be disobedient, fresh, and insolent. The worker felt that she was not able to relate to foster parents, and was in need of a neutral setting. She had been devoted to her mother, who had just recently died.

Only eight of the 29 children placed directly by Children's Division had no behavior problems. Three of these children had been in foster homes. One, a girl, had been in the same foster home for five and one-half years. She was removed because the worker felt that the foster mother was obtaining neurotic satisfactions from her relationship with the girl, and was making her much too dependent. A psychiatric consultation was held before removing the girl, at which time a year or more in an institution was recommended in order to help her to readjust and accept another family. One boy was replaced from a foster home into an institution because the foster home in which he had been living

with his brothers was thought to be inadequate. Since his brothers had not made a good adjustment there, it was decided to remove the entire family. There was no suitable foster home available. The third child was placed in an institution because he insisted upon being with his brother, who was already in the institution.

Five of the children had no behavior problems and had never been in a foster home. Four of this group had siblings who were to be placed in the same institution. In three of these cases, the children had parents or relatives who wished them to be placed together in the institution. In the fourth case, the children wished to remain together and there was no foster home where both of them could be placed together. The fifth case was that of a Nisei boy for whom no foster home was available. His mother wished him to be placed in an institution, because she feared she would lose his affection to foster parents if he were placed in a foster home.

We shall now discuss in more detail the more significant reasons other than behavior problems which entered into the placement plans. The discussion includes all of the children: those already in institutions at the time they were accepted for service by the agency, and those placed by Children's Division.

#### THE NEEDS OF THE CHILDREN

As indicated in Table IX the needs of the children for



the positive things which an institution has to offer were mentioned seventeen times: group living six times; neutral setting five times; and a controlled environment six times. However, only eleven children were involved. None of the children who were already placed in institutions at the time they were accepted for service were included in this group, and all of them had exhibited behavior problems. The number and type of children for whom these services were recommended was therefore rather limited.

Three of the children needed a special type of care. Two of these had health problems. One girl had a heart condition which prevented her from exerting herself strenuously. One boy had minor health problems which required relatively consistent attention. One boy was recommended for a boarding school placement because his high intelligence quotient indicated superior educational potentialities.

Ten of the children were considered unable to relate to foster parents. In seven of these cases, the reason for the inability to relate to foster parents was because of the child's relationship with his own parents or with previous foster parents. There were instances of both an attachment of the child to the parent, and confused or rejected feelings because of experiences they had been through. One child was unable to relate to foster parents because he compared foster homes unfavorably with an institution in which he had previously lived. Another boy was

thought to be too emotionally disturbed for a relationship with foster parents. One boy who had been neglected by his own mother became emotionally involved with an older woman. Because of this attitude, the psychiatrist who was consulted recommended an institutional setting.

#### AGE AND SEX OF THE CHILD

If one considers only the actual material which was recorded in the case records, it would seem that age was not considered in very many of the situations. Two of the foster homes in which the children were living were considered not to be adequate for children of that particular age, adolescence, but their age was not the reason for the institutional placement. One ten year old boy was thought to be too young for an institution, but other contingencies forced his placement in the institution.

An analysis of the age of the children at the time of placement in the institution, however, shows that the greater majority of the children were in the pre-adolescent or adolescent stage. Twenty-five of the 30 boys and ten of the twelve girls were over nine years of age. Only one of the children was under six years of age at the time of placement.

In general, the same may be said about the sex of the child. Thirty of the forty-two children were boys, yet in no case did the record contain any statement to the effect that the institution would be more beneficial for a boy than it would

be for a girl." Perhaps institutional placements are more readily available for boys, because of the availability of a large school for boys which was used for a number of the placements. Also, foster homes are apparently more difficult to find for boys, especially adolescent boys. This point will be discussed in greater detail later.

TABLE XIII

## AGE AT INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Age	Boys	Girls
0 - 3 years	0	0
3 - 6 years	0	1
6 - 9 years	5	1
9 -12 years	13	6
12- 15 years	12	4

## FAMILY SITUATION

Parental desire was not nearly so important a factor in deciding the type of placement for those children placed by Children's Division as it was for those who were already in institutions at the time they were accepted for the service of the agency. In only five out of twenty-nine cases was it noted that the parent wished an institutional placement, whereas eight out of

thirteen parents whose children were already placed expressed such a desire. In two cases the parents desired the institutional placement so that the children could be kept together and in two other cases the parents expressed concern over losing the affection of the children if they were placed in a foster home. In the fifth case, the mother believed that an institutional placement would be more beneficial to the child than a foster home placement. In no case where the child had previously been placed in a foster home by the agency was there a comment to the effect that the parents desired an institutional placement. This was not necessarily because the agency failed to attempt to contact them, but because they were not available for consultation.

The child's affection for his parents was mentioned in only seven of the cases, and only four of these were cases where the parent had shown an interest in keeping the attention of the child. The remaining three were situations in which the child had confused feelings about his parents rather than a healthy attachment which was being fostered. The possibility of rehabilitation of the family with the resultant short contact and preservation of family ties was a factor in only two of the cases. One of these did not involve the parent, but an aunt with whom the child had been living.

Nine of the children expressed a positive desire to be in the institution. Two boys wished to be in an institution in order to be with their brothers, two children expressed a dislike

for foster homes, and two said that they preferred an institution. One wished to have the company of the other boys in the institution, one wanted to be on a farm (he was placed in an institution which had a farm), and one wanted to live in an institution because this was his mother's wish.

#### COMMUNITY FACTORS

In eight of the cases, the lack of foster homes made the institutional placement necessary. All of these cases involved boys, six of whom were over the age of ten. In two cases there were no foster homes available despite the fact that the boys were presenting no serious behavior problems. One boy wished to remain with his sister, and this could not be done in a foster home. Homes were not available for three of the boys because of their serious behavior problems. Foster home placement had been recommended by a psychiatrist for two of these boys because of their need for a secure, warm, stable relationship with foster parents. The race of the child prevented a foster home placement in the other two cases, an Indian boy and a Nisei.

The lack of foster homes for eight out of forty-two cases, or 19 per cent, does not appear to be an extremely high percentage, especially since some of the children presented a difficult placement problem. However, there were thirteen children already resident in institutions at the time they were accepted

for service, for whom no attempt was made to find foster homes. Since most of these children were adolescent boys, or children with behavior problems, it is probable that there would have been a great deal of difficulty in locating foster homes for them. Actually, then, there was a lack of foster homes in eight out of twenty-nine cases, or in 30.7 per cent.

Three of the children were in difficulty with the members of the community because of their behavior. Removal from their present environment was necessary, and an institution was selected because of the probability that the child would not adjust in any similar community. The authorities of the school where two of these children were attending also requested the child's removal.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE WORKER

Psychiatric evaluation of the child was obtained for nine of the children before placement. With the exception of one girl for whom psychiatric consultation was obtained because of her attachment to the foster mother, all of these children had behavior problems. Institutional placement was recommended for seven of the children. Foster home placement was recommended for two of the children, but because of the lack of foster homes this type of placement could not be carried out.

In an additional two cases, placement in a foster home had been recommended by the worker, but placement in an institution

was made against her recommendation. One placement was made because the boy wished to be with his brother in an institution. Four children, or 9.5 per cent, were therefore placed without a recommendation for an institutional placement.

#### SUMMARY

In summarizing the findings of this chapter, it can be said that the majority of the children were placed in the institutions because of behavior problems, this being one of the major considerations in twenty-five of the cases. The behavior problems were frequently connected with other problems: the fact that the child did not adjust in foster homes, or that he seemed unable to relate to foster parents. Because of their particular needs, eleven of the children were thought to need the group living, controlled environment, or neutral setting which the institution could provide.

The wish of parents to have their children placed in institutions was the next most important reason for the placements, the main reason in ten of the cases. This reason was tied up with the child's own desire to be in an institution, either because he did not want a relationship with a foster parent which would compete with his relationship with his parents, or because he wished to be with his siblings. The worker was inclined to encourage the children's desires to maintain contacts with both parents and

siblings, frequently mentioning that the children of the same family should be placed together in an institution rather than separately in foster homes.

The lack of foster homes was mentioned specifically in the placement of only eight of the children, most of whom presented difficult placement problems. In only three cases was an institutional placement made against the recommendation of the worker because of the lack of a foster home.



## CHAPTER V

### THE RESULTS OF PLACEMENT

As stated in the introduction, all of the children were in the institutions on July 1, 1950. The present chapter will give information regarding the results of the placements made as of December 31, 1951. This date will be referred to as the date of the study. As the time of the study, twenty-nine of the children were still in institutions and thirteen had been removed. One of the girls who had been placed in a foster home was later returned to another institution. For the purposes of the follow-up study, we shall consider this girl as being removed from the institution. The length of stay and the reasons for removal will be discussed in more detail later.

### CHILDREN'S ATTITUDE

Table XIV gives a comparison of the children's attitudes regarding the institutions at the time of entrance into the institution and the attitudes at the time of the study. The child was considered to be satisfied with the institution if he made no

major complaints against the institution and was satisfied with being placed in an institution rather than in a foster home.

TABLE XIV  
ATTITUDE TOWARD INSTITUTION

Attitude	At entrance	At study
Indicates satisfaction	26	15
Indicates dissatisfaction	5	7
Not given	10	20
Could not be determined	1	0
Total	42	42

The attitude of the children was not given in twenty cases at the time of the study, but was given in all except ten cases at the time the child was placed. This may be due to the method of recording: it is possible that if the child did not indicate a change in attitude, no mention was made of his attitude in succeeding dictation. However, eleven fewer children were satisfied at the time of the study than were satisfied at placement, which would seem to indicate a decreasing interest in the institution after some time had been spent there. It is also interesting to note that the differences in attitude occurred only among the boys--the attitudes of the girls remained almost constant.

## BEHAVIOR

Although behavior problems were noted in twenty-five of the children before placement, only sixteen of these children exhibited problems upon entering the institution. Table XV lists the behavior problems.

TABLE XV  
BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS AT ENTRANCE

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Not cooperative . . . . .	7
Enuretic . . . . .	3
Temper tantrums . . . . .	3
Stealing . . . . .	3
Aggressive behavior . . . . .	2
Ran away . . . . .	2
Did not get along with other children . . . . .	2
Other . . . . .	8
Total . . . . .	30

A comparison of this table with Table XII, which gives the behavior problems before entering the institution, shows very little similarity in the problems. Apparently the great change in the child's environment brought about a corresponding change in his behavior. The differences were also due to the fact that the child's behavior in relation to the institution, its regulations, and the group living were noted.

The problems of six of these children cleared up almost completely at the time the study was made. All of these children were still in the institutions, although foster home placement

had been recommended for two of them. Eight of the children had improved somewhat, and two children varied greatly in their behavior.

Nine of the children, although they did not exhibit behavior problems upon entering the institution, did have behavior problems at the time of the study. Four of these children were those who had behavior problems before entering the institution. This may be due to the fact that a child frequently passes through a period immediately after entering an institution when he will conform to routine, and does not rebel until after he becomes accustomed to the new situation. However, no previous behavior problems had been noted in five of the children. Three of these children had been placed in the institution because of their parent's desires and one because of the child's desire to be with his brother, while one was placed by the Family Court.

Seventeen of the children presented no behavior problems, either upon entering the institution or at the time of the study. Five of this group, three girls and two boys, had behavior problems before entering the institution.

The child's behavior improved at least to some extent in fourteen of the twenty-five children who had behavior problems before entrance, and five of the children showed no behavior problems during any part of their stay. Therefore in 56 per cent of the cases there was some improvement. This seems significant for two reasons. Although the children had been placed in

institutions because of their behavior, this did not mean that the worker expected an improvement. Nor is it true that because a child does not adjust in a foster home he will adjust in an institution. Some of these children had been so damaged by unfortunate experiences that they could not be expected to improve in the brief span of residence in the institution.

#### LACK OF FOSTER HOMES

As indicated in Chapter IV, the lack of foster homes was a factor in eight of the cases. Seven of these children were still in the institutions at the time of study. A foster home placement had been recommended for the eighth boy before he entered the institution, but because of his behavior there was none available at the time. After almost three and one-half years in the institution, the authorities of the institution recommended that he leave. The record does not indicate the reason for his removal, but his behavior had improved somewhat during his stay.

Of the three boys for whom a foster home was not available because of their behavior, two improved somewhat during their stay and the progress of the third was sporadic. The remaining five children all made excellent adjustments while in the institution. They were all noted to be cooperative and responsive to the routine of the institution. Thus, despite the fact that their placement was made for a negative reason, the majority of them

made what was considered a good adjustment.

#### FAMILY SITUATION

Seven of the children had been placed in the institution primarily because of their parents' desire, three to be with their siblings, and seven because the parents wished them to be with their siblings. With one exception, those parents who expressed a desire for the children to be in the institution visited the children and continued their interest in them. In the other case it was not actually a parent, but a grandmother who was standing in loco parentis and who could not visit the boy because of the distance involved. However, only one child was returned to a parent. This was occasioned by a change in the program of the institution, which is no longer caring for children. Since the child's entrance to the institution, the mother had obtained an apartment and employment. Two brothers who had previously been in the same institution had been removed and were working part time. When the institution could no longer care for her or the other members of the family who were still in the institution, the matter was referred to the Family Court, which decided to return the children to their mother.

In three of the ten cases where the agency attempted to keep the children of the same family together by institutional care, the family was later broken up by one of the siblings

leaving the institution. Two of these removals were caused by the fact that the siblings passed the age at which they could be cared for by the agency. The other sibling was released from the institution because of misbehavior and was returned to his parents. Thus, in no case were the children separated by the planning of the agency once they had been placed together in an institution.

It would appear from these figures that institutions were freely used by the agency to serve the purposes of keeping children of the same family together, and of maintaining parental contacts, when the parents indicated their desires to keep in touch with the children.

This brings us to the matter of parental visits in general. Only twenty-two of the forty-two children, or 51.2 per cent, were visited by their parents while they were in the institution. Table XVI gives the frequency of the visits of the parents. The terminology classifying the frequency of the visits was taken directly from the records. The meaning of the worker in using such words as occasionally or frequently could not be determined.

TABLE XVI

## FREQUENCY OF VISITS BY PARENTS

<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Children Visited</u>
Never . . . . .	20
Occasionally . . . . .	4
Infrequently . . . . .	4
Frequently . . . . .	5
Weekly . . . . .	2
Semi-monthly . . . . .	4
Monthly . . . . .	3
Total . . . . .	42

## LENGTH OF STAY

As indicated above, twenty-nine of the children, twenty-three boys and six girls, were still in the institution at the time of the study. One of the many considerations which a worker has to face in institutional placements is deciding the length of time which the child should be allowed to remain so that he will obtain the maximum benefit from this type of care. Most authorities agree that even the best institution is an abnormal setting, and, if the child is allowed to remain for too long a period of time, he may be damaged by the experience rather than helped. Howard warns of the effects of regimentation if the child is allowed to remain too long.<sup>1</sup> Burmeister states that no child should be allowed to remain in an institution longer than three years,

<sup>1</sup> Howard, "Institution or Foster Home?", Mental Hygiene, XXX, 103.



because children are much more responsive during the first years, and frequently suffer fatigue from continual group care.<sup>2</sup> In the group studied, only 33 1/3 per cent of the boys and 41 2/3 per cent of the girls were in the institutions less than three years. Since twenty-nine of the children were still in institutions at the time of the study the length of their stay will be even longer. Only two of the thirteen children removed from the institution were there less than three years, although an additional four were in less than four years. By far the greater number of the children (twenty-five) had been in the institutions between two and four years, and only eight were in more than five years.

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2 Burmeister, "Institutions and Foster Homes as Used by an Agency Offering Both Services," Child Welfare League of America Bulletin, April, 1942, 21.

TABLE XVII  
LENGTH OF STAY IN INSTITUTIONS

Time	Children still in institution	Children who were removed	Total
Less than 1 year	0	0	0
1 to 2 years	2	2	4
2 to 3 years	11	0	11
3 to 4 years	10	4	14
4 to 5 years	2	3	5
5 to 6 years	2	3	5
6 to 7 years	1	1	2
7 to 8 years	1	0	1
Total	29	13	42

#### REASONS FOR REMOVAL

Of the thirteen children who were removed from the institutions, eleven were sent to foster homes, one was returned to the mother, and one was sent to the home of a relative.

Six of the replacements were made because of a change in the program of the institution: either they were no longer caring for children, or had changed the age requirements regarding the age of the children accepted. There was very little

information in the record as to why another institutional placement was not sought for these children, since it is assumed they would have remained in the institution if the program had not been changed. However, the four boys and one of the girls thus affected had all been in institutions more than four years and perhaps it was felt that they had had enough institutional life. The other girl was allowed to return to her mother.

One replacement was made because the institution thought the child had benefited as much as she could by the placement. Three had improved sufficiently for foster home placement. One child was removed at his own request. He had already been in three institutions over a period of four years and ten months. The last institutional placement was made on an emergency basis because of the lack of a foster home. When he first entered the institution, he seemed to like it and continued placement had been planned, but when he requested a foster home placement, his request was granted. One boy had accepted summer employment without the permission of the institution, at which time he lived with his mother. The institution refused to accept him back. He was allowed to live with an aunt under the supervision of the agency.

TABLE XVIII  
REASONS FOR REMOVAL

Reason	Boys	Girls	Total
Change in institution program	4	2	6
Had received maximum benefit	0	1	1
Improved sufficiently for foster home	0	3	3
Child requested replacement	1	0	1
Institution refused to give continued care	1	0	1
Not given	1	0	1
Total	7	6	13

Thus, six of the replacements, or 46.1 per cent, were not according to plan, but because of technicalities involving the institution. Only 30.8 per cent of the removals were because the children had improved by the institutional placement. If expressed in terms of the total number in the study group, only 9.5 per cent of the children have been replaced from the institutions because they have benefited from the placement. It is interesting to note that all of these were girls. These figures do not seem to agree with those regarding the children's behavior, which indicate that the behavior of fourteen of the children had improved

during their stay and behavior problems had disappeared almost entirely in at least six of the children.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY WORKER

Continued placement was recommended for twenty-four of the twenty-nine children who were still in institutions. In ten of these cases there were limitations on the recommendation: in three of the cases it was suggested that vocational counseling be given, six were to remain until their graduation, and one until contact could be made with relatives to attempt to interest them in caring for the child. Foster home placement as soon as it could be arranged was recommended for four of the children. In one case it was felt that the child should be prepared for a foster home.

For the thirteen children who had been removed from the institution, continued placement in the present foster home was recommended in ten of the cases. All of these children were making at least an adequate adjustment. The boy who had been returned to his aunt was making a good adjustment. One girl who had been removed from the institution because it was felt she had obtained enough from institutional life had to be returned to an institution because she was not happy in the foster home, would not cooperate with the foster parents, and refused to talk over her problems with them. The case of the child who was returned to

her mother was closed by the agency and there has been no further contact with the family.

#### SUMMARY

At the time of the study twenty-nine of the children were still in the institutions and thirteen had been removed, one of whom was later returned to an institution. Only four of the removals were according to plan, because the children had improved sufficiently to warrant foster home placements. Six of the removals were caused by a change in the program of the institution. One child requested removal, and one institution refused to accept a boy back after he had left the institution without permission. The reason for one removal was not given.

According to the maximums accepted by most authorities, many of the children were allowed to remain in the institutions for too long a period of time, twenty-seven having been in the institutions for more than three years.

Despite the prolonged stays in the institutions, many of the children benefited from the placements. Eight of the twenty-five children who had behavior problems prior to placement had improved somewhat, the problems of six of the children cleared up almost entirely during their stay, and five of the children exhibited no problems during their stay. However, five of the children who were not problems before their entrance had begun to present behavior problems at the time of the study. It would be

difficult to determine the reason for this, since they were placed in the institutions for different reasons and had remained there for varying periods of time.

The parents who had expressed an interest in this type of placement for their children continued their interest in the child and kept in touch with him. However, approximately one-half of the total number of parents made no visits to the children, and only one child was returned to the parent.

Continued placement in the institution, at least temporarily, has been recommended for twenty-four of the twenty-nine children still resident in institutions, with eventual foster home placements recommended for five of the children. Eleven of the children had been removed to foster homes. Continued stay in the foster homes was recommended for ten of these children, and one had already been returned to an institution. Two children were returned to relatives, one to an aunt, and one to the mother.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This thesis was presented to determine the thinking and planning which went into the placement of children in an institution by an agency which had both foster home and institutional placements available. There has been much written about the type of children who should be considered for institutional care, but there seems to be little information about what the actual statistics are regarding the percentage of each type of children placed.

The study group represented a normal group of children insofar as health and intelligence was concerned. The children were all dependent children, the majority of whom came from broken homes. There was a preponderance of boys in the study, which seemed to be due to the fact that foster homes are more difficult to obtain for boys, and because the Family Court and the parents tended to place more boys than girls in institutions. The children were placed in institutions of varying sizes and facilities, which represented a cross section of the institutional facilities available in Chicago for dependent children. It should be noted



that the study did not include any Negro children. This was not because Negro children were excluded from the study group, but because of the lack of institutional facilities for Negro children in Chicago.

Since only ninety-one of approximately two thousand children being cared for by the agency were in institutions, it seems apparent that foster home placement is definitely preferred by this agency. This is also brought out by the fact that of twenty-nine children placed directly by the agency, sixteen were placed in foster homes before an institutional setting was chosen. The reasons why these particular children were placed in institutions include all of the classic reasons for choosing an institution in preference to a foster home, but the lack of statistics prevents a conclusion as to whether this agency agrees with similar agencies in the percentage of the various reasons.

The most important single factor which had to be considered by the worker in planning for the child was the child's behavior. Twenty-five of the children exhibited behavior problems before entrance, and in twenty cases it was the main reason for the placement. Many of the children had been in foster homes and had failed to adjust. This raises the question of whether the institutions were being used to care for difficult children whom no one else would accept, or whether there was a more positive side to these placements. It is possible that due to

omissions in recording, not all of the reasons for placement were mentioned. Also, since case workers are concerned with assisting people with their problems, the recording may dwell on the problems rather than on the strengths in each situation. This may account for some of the emphasis on the behavior problems of the children. Many of these children had such serious behavior problems that an average foster home could not be expected to handle them. Some of the children may have needed a more restrictive environment to protect themselves from their own impulses. Such children may, after a period of time in an institution, improve to such an extent that the worker will think that the child will be able to adjust in a foster home. This is not always true. With one exception, the children in the study who were placed in foster homes have been able to adjust, but since the length of time after their placement has been so short it is difficult to make any definite conclusions as to whether their adjustment is permanent.

The desires of the parents and the children were the next most important consideration. It was a much more important factor for those children who were already in the institution at the time of referral than for those who were placed by the agency. Since, in some of the cases where the child was already resident in the institution, the parents had actually initiated the placement and continued contact with the child, this acted toward the

promotion of family unity and the stimulation of the interest of the parents. In no case where the child had previously been placed in a foster home by the agency were the desires of the parent mentioned as a reason for an institutional placement. In many cases this was not because the agency failed to attempt a contact with them but because they were not available for consultation. However, this does seem to indicate a decreasing interest on the part of the parents when their children have been placed in foster homes for any length of time.

It is frequently said that children are often placed in institutions because of the lack of foster homes. It is therefore interesting to note how important this factor was in the placement of these children. It was mentioned specifically in only eight of the cases, but since no attempt was made to find foster homes for thirteen of the children, this could have been a much more important factor. Foster homes were much more difficult to find for boys than for girls, and were extremely scarce for children of mixed races.

A number of the children were allowed to remain in the institutions for prolonged periods of time. The effects of this could not be determined by the study. The workers were not unaware of the problem, and frequently mentioned that a particular child seemed to be dependent upon the institution. One is led to the conclusion that in these cases, at least, the child would

have difficulty in adjusting without the protection of the agency.

From the results of the study, one may say that if a child does not exhibit acting out behavior, and if his parents do not object to foster home placement, an institutional placement will not ordinarily be used by this agency.

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