A study of the development and function of the child welfare department in the Gary public school system from 1941 to 1949

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A STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND FUNCTION OF THE
CHILD WELFARE DEPARTMENT IN THE GARY PUBLIC
SCHOOL SYSTEM FROM 1941 TO 1949

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE ATLANTA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL
OF SOCIAL WORK IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

BY
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of Procedure</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Limitations</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD WELFARE DEPARTMENT</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempts to Individualize Children</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Individualized Services</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Recent Trends</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF THE CHILD WELFARE DEPARTMENT</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laws Affecting the Department</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provisions for Personnel</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS PRESENTED BY CHILDREN AND SOME THERAPEUTIC RESOURCES</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of Problems Handled</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services to Meet the Problem</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra-Therapeutic Means</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of the Problem

School social work, as sponsored by the Child Welfare Department of the Gary Public Schools, represents an outgrowth of the visiting teacher program which had its development in 1906-1907 in Boston, New York and Hartford. Agencies in these cities responded to the need for the school and community to cooperate for the benefit of the child both educationally and socially and financed the first visiting teacher program. ¹

In New York, immediate impetus for school social work came from two social settlements. By 1914, Rochester, New York had become the first city in which the Board of Education employed and financed a visiting teacher service. The initiating group in Boston had been the Woman's Education Association which established a home and school visitor in one of the city schools for the purpose of ensuring a closer relationship between the home and the school. In Hartford, Connecticut, the suggestion for a visiting teacher program came from the Director of a psychological clinic. The worker assigned to the program was at first known as a special teacher who assisted the psychologist in gathering case histories and later, by carrying out the recommendations. ²

Social case work developed in schools because of the recognition that


some difficulties in the child's school adjustment were due to his experience in the home and community as well as within the child. Fortunately, educators were aware that many children required considerable help in accepting authority and in becoming self-disciplined persons. Consequently, counselors, visiting teachers, and child guidance staff members were added to the school's program to assist in individualizing and in helping the maladjusted child bring about some compatibility of his social and personal needs as he comes in contact with others in his surroundings. Social case workers in the public schools are concerned with the forces blocking the adjustment of children. They work therapeutically with individuals and groups so that optimum development can be facilitated.

Twentieth century children face a world of new insecurities which necessitate forthright action on the part of the entire community. Provision must be made for more adequate measures of individual attention as well as a renewed vision and courage to find new ways of helping children make adjustments as old ones become meaningless to larger numbers of children. This situation can be achieved as social workers and teachers work cooperatively and harmoniously with parents and children to find new patterns.

It has been only in recent years that the public school system of Gary has served as an agency for social welfare services. Obviously, the

1 Mildred Sikkema, op. cit., p. 461.
emergence of this service in the Gary Public School System as well as in
the school system of other cities, indicates growth in a social work ap-
proach to a child's problems. The writer became interested in the program
of the Child Welfare Department of Gary, Indiana in connection with his
field work assignment under the auspices of the Atlanta University School
of Social Work. A study of the Child Welfare Department\(^1\) seemed signifi-
cant because of the kinds of service rendered to children. Moreover, the
function of this Department in the area of case work represented a most
progressive step in school work services in Gary.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to present a general description of the
Child Welfare Department with an account of its developmental history. It
further proposes to give the legal basis for the responsibilities of the
Department, to describe some of the major concepts which are used in its
program, to evaluate their effectiveness, and to consider various problem
situations handled by the child welfare worker.

Method of Procedure

The source of much of the material used in this study was personal in-
terviews with the Director of the Child Welfare Department and through read-
ing unpublished materials relative to the Department. Observations and re-
ports on the work of staff members, a review of official documents from the
State Department of Education and an exploration of published articles and
reference readings pertaining to the subject were used as supplementary

\(^{1}\) Hereafter referred to as the Department.
data. Cases used for illustrative purposes in this study were selected at random from agency files.

Scope and Limitations

This study is concerned with the development of the Child Welfare Department of the Board of Education of Gary, Indiana. The focus is upon the period from 1941 to 1949 during the administration of its present Director, Mr. Mark C. Roser. Because this type of program is in its most formative stage of development, the study will of necessity be limited due to the lack of information available for research purposes.
It has been questioned as to whether or not an individual approach can be used in an authoritative educational setting, implying that it is only in a voluntary situation that social work understanding can be applied. This question is raised because the relationship between the social case worker and the participating individual is the medium through which the individual is helped and in which the interplay is characterized by a degree of freedom for the individual. It suggests an emotional bridge which is formed when a person burdened with anxieties, uses another to release his feelings to gain further insight in his own problem which may or may not be consciously known to him. However, there are many persons in the school setting who render a service similar to case work by the very nature of their personality and training. Frequently, the school staff members can and do make a real contribution to a school environment which is conducive to learning and growth.

Attempts to Individualize Children

By 1920, a department of attendance had been established in the Gary Public Schools. The motivation for this program came from many sources. The State of Indiana, as other states, had in existence a compulsory school law and, as a corollary to this law, required school cities\(^1\) to make an annual census of all school age children. For this purpose, a certain amount of money was made available to employ attendance officers; but the

\(^1\)Cities which have school districts.
funds available were granted only on the basis of one such officer per 5,000 school age children.

Apart from the impetus of the legal requirements, the school system of Gary was making an expansive program for the children and community. Dr. William A. Wirt stimulated a program for the school system which presented a different educational approach. The concept of a community school was evolved early, and the so-called work-play system embraced the promise of adequately meeting the needs of children and of adults.

These developments paved the way toward pointing out the necessity of close home and school relationships for the total welfare of children and of employing personnel which would have time to visit homes and keep informed about children's social relationships in the particular neighborhood of each school. Contacting each home at least once a year and taking the school census was viewed as an activity which not only resulted in the collection of necessary census information, but also, an opportunity to discuss children and the school with family members, to learn attitudes, and to interpret the school to the home. This was a service to supplement other community activities expressed through such organizations as the regular Parent-Teacher Associations.

A director was appointed to the department of attendance with seven attendance clerks to handle this phase of the work. Census taking, collecting book rental, and checking on truants were among the early clear-cut responsibilities. According to Mr. Mark C. Roser, in the background

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1 William A. Wirt, From the History of the Lake and Calumet Region of Indiana (Gary, Indiana, 1963), p. 569.
was the notion that better adjustment of children who resisted school and who violated the state law, could be affected in one way or the other.\(^1\)

An attempt to individualize and help meet children’s needs was made when bedside teaching services for children confined to their homes was developed. As a result, many children handicapped by illness were enabled to complete their education, or the temporary ill child was assisted in meeting academic requirements during his absence from school, in order that he would not be faced with the obstacle of having to catch up with his class at school. It was a means also of changing the attitudes of discouraged children and their parents during periods of illness.

Undoubtedly, much value in terms of mental hygiene resulted from this service to children which was a direct charge on local tax funds. Licensed teachers were provided in all grades above the third. Grade school children received two hours instruction per week and high school students, three. Past experience has shown that this time was sufficient to help children with their academic improvement, not only at their grade level, but in many instances helped them to progress in their school work.\(^2\) The department of attendance continued in its growth and service to children, and gradually this department became known as the Child Welfare Service Department.

Special Individualized Services

The development of special services to individualize children

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\(^1\)Statement by Mark C. Roser, Director, Child Welfare Department, Board of Education, Gary, Indiana, personal interview, October, 1950.

\(^2\)Ibid.
came with the recognition of the value of psychological examinations. A psychologist was appointed to the Child Welfare Department in 1927, whose responsibility at that time was to administer educational and intelligence tests to children who were screened through referrals from the principals of the schools and the director of the Department. This was an important step in an individual approach to the school child because individual psychological service was not common among Gary schools at that time. It was an expression of the need for more study of the child, and the need to relate psychological findings to the classroom performance in order to assist teachers in helping a child gain from the learning experiences in the school.

As a result, a desire to create new methods of serving children and to build a program geared to their needs was stimulated. But there were no state funds for psychological services provided up to 1949. The cost was defrayed solely from resources of the community. The individual services at this time were also supplemented by assistance from the Educational Research Division which had as its purpose the evaluating of the mental level and educational achievement of all the children enrolled in the schools.

Despite the depression, Gary made progress in the interests of its school children. By the early 1930's a medical department under the direction of a physician was established, and nursing service provided in each school. Routine physical examinations of referred children were instigated as well as public health service, such as vaccinations, dental services, and other health measures. According to the previously mentioned Mr. Roser:

All of these services related themselves in helping meet the needs of children, outside of the regular school's functions. In other words, the concept of educating the whole child was not an idle one. In many areas of the child's life it became a reality,
and remained as a dominating slogan to guide the energies of the entire school system.\(^1\)

A psychiatrist was employed in the schools on a part-time basis to assist in the understanding of the emotional maladjustments of the individual child by 1935. This was the beginning of a clinical team work approach to the school child. There was some attempt at collaborative understanding of the child which included the classroom teacher, psychologist, psychiatrist and social worker.

More Recent Trends

At the beginning of the forties, a change occurred in the administration of the Gary Public School System which had definite effects on the Child Welfare Department in the schools. The founder and superintendent of the Gary Public Schools died in 1940, and continuity in the school program was difficulty to achieve. His successor held a temporary appointment for three years. Widespread publicity by local newspaper, and unfavorable community feeling due to the misuse of funds caused the Board of Education to request an independent educational agency to survey the entire school system and submit recommendations for changes.\(^2\) As a result, a report called the Purdue Report was presented to the Board of Education, which paved the way for the further development of the Child Welfare Department.

In a critical description of the Department, the report brought out that the ages of the members of its staff ranged from thirty-two to sixty-three years and that several of the attendance officials were past fifty

\(^1\)Ibid.

\(^2\)Ibid.
years of age. It pointed out that the training of the Director of the Child Welfare Department was less than two years of college preparation, with no special training in the field and that the visiting teachers had meagre training for the type of work which was required. Although some of the staff members had taught in schools, none of them had had more than two years of college training. Most of the workers were too old to visit the homes of the children and were performing clerical duties.

According to this report, it seemed that activities of the workers as a whole were more of a clerical nature than professional services. The Purdue Report further indicated that the psychiatrist's visits to Gary were infrequent and that he lacked adequate school and social history data relative to the home conditions of the children and the parents of the children. This information would have facilitated a better understanding of the children's needs and maladjustments.

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2Ibid.
CHAPTER III

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF THE CHILD WELFARE DEPARTMENT

Modern state compulsory educational systems had been initiated by Massachusetts as early as 1852, but not until 1897 in Indiana. Although there had been a strong conviction that democracy could not exist without an educated electorate, there was also the belief by some people that the compulsory attendance law violated an individual's initial sense of freedom and that this law would "create more crimes." The answer to the problem created by the compulsory attendance law indicated a dual approach: first, a more realistic study of the child; and secondly, a more real understanding of pupil's needs in order that individual adjustments could be made.1 The function of the Gary Child Welfare Department, although limited in its case work services by law, based its program upon the concept of treating children differently according to their individual needs and as human beings with social and personal needs.

Laws Affecting the Department

The Indiana Law concerning compulsory attendance was passed in 1921.

The essential provision read as follows:

Unless otherwise provided herein every child between the ages of seven and sixteen shall attend public school, or other school taught in the English language which is open to inspection of local and state attendance and school officers.2

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1 Statement by Mark G. Roser, Director, Child Welfare Department, Board of Education, Gary, Indiana, personal interview, October, 1950.

2 Indiana Laws (1946), Chapter 24, Section 5.
For the administration of the Compulsory School Attendance Act of 1921, a State Board of Attendance was set up which consisted of the members of a State Board of Attendance composed of members of the State Board of Education. The members of the State Board of Attendance were authorized to elect a president and secretary from its membership and to hold monthly meetings. The act provided for the appointment of a state attendance director by the governor, and gave the State Board of Attendance power to set up rules and regulations which were mandatory.\(^1\)

In regard to the number of Child Welfare Workers, an amendment to the law in 1945 provided that each school corporation having 1,500 students in average daily attendance, appoint an attendance teacher; an additional worker was to be appointed for every 7,500 such students. There was a further provision that the government bodies of each school corporation shall present each year a budget for such workers to the County Commissioners who were mandated to grant the necessary funds out of the county appropriations.\(^2\)

The law concerning school boundaries had a direct bearing on the work of the Department in the discharge of responsibility to authorize individual school transfers.\(^3\) The courts held that each School Board had the authority to fix school boundaries as it deemed necessary, providing that equal\(^4\)

\(^1\) *Ibid.*, Chapter 24, Section 3.

\(^2\) *Indiana Laws* (1945), Chapter 171, Section 1.

\(^3\) Transferring a child from one school to another

\(^4\) *Indiana Laws* (1946), Chapter 7, Section 3.
provisions were made for Negro and white children. This law was framed to
effect the decisions pertaining to the segregation of Negroes from the
schools. As a result, it was only in scattered school communities in In-
diana where segregation was not practiced.¹

The anti-hate law was an important factor which aided the school board
in dealing with opposition to its inter-cultural policy. In the main, this
policy stipulated that, as of 1945, every child should attend the school in
his own district. The result of this law increased the number of Negro and
white schools in Gary. The anti-hate law, passed by the legislature in
1945, however, provided penalties for any one spreading race or religious
hatred.²

As a result of conflict, tension, and experience, the Indiana Assembly
in 1949 passed the Hunter Bill which abolished segregation and provided
for a gradual system for providing school attendance facilities in one
school for all the children residing in a neighborhood.³ There was a time
limit placed on the bill, so that the full implementation of this law
through all of the grades would become effective gradually.

It was one of the functions of the Department to determine school
transfers as well as to arrange for the payment of tuition of children who
had no legal settlement in the city. The restriction, however, presented
many difficult problems. Under the law, tuition had to be paid for each

²Ibid.
³Indiana Laws (1949), Chapter 186, Sections 1-11.
child who did not have settlement in Gary unless he was a ward of the court. As a result, the schools refused to enroll children who resided in the city but were not living with their parents unless proof was received from the Juvenile Court that these children were legal wards of those with whom they lived.

Because crippled children have special educational needs as well as unique social and personal problems, the Department assumed chief responsibility for their care. Therefore, the Child Welfare Department stimulated thinking about the care of those children and endeavored to spearhead an organization of special classes whenever possible. With physically handicapped children, the need to understand and view them as a total whole person was considered important. The Department workers were able by nature of their training to be of real service to this group of children.

There was a new impetus given to the Gary schools' attempt to meet needs of especially handicapped children by the passage of the House Bill number 163. This bill provided for a reimbursement of 100 per cent of the funds spent by the school cities over and above the average per capita cost of educating the normal child. This law also stimulated efforts to care for the educational needs of children.

Another law affecting the services of the Department related to the employment of minors and is significant in connection with the function of school social work. This law related to the decisions made concerning the release of a child from school in order to work and reflected the trend

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1 *Indiana Laws* (1903), Chapter 186, Section 1.

2 *Indiana Laws* (1947), Chapter 276, Sections 1-14.
of the State's interest in children who discontinued their school work.

By a ruling of the State Board of Attendance Teachers, the responsibility for verifying employment conditions of any minor was placed upon the attendance teachers or the social workers in the Child Welfare Department. They were requested to report violations of child labor laws to the State Division of Labor, the Bureau of Women and Children.¹

Because of the nature of the work of the Child Welfare Department, of necessity it must maintain a close relationship with the juvenile court. Not only its legal structure should be known, but the school should have more knowledge of the court's philosophy, facilities for treatment, the staff, and other methods or organization. These factors played a major part in determining the school's decision to refer or not to refer a child to the court.

The Indiana Juvenile Court Act of 1945 defined its basic principle and purpose as follows:

... to secure for each child within its provisions such care, guidance, and control, preferably in his own home, as will serve the child's welfare and the best interest of the state; and when each child is removed from his own family, to secure for him custody, care and discipline as nearly as possible equivalent to that which should have been given by his parents.²

Social workers in schools are consistently faced with the advisability of making legal exceptions. In this connection, there have been cases which suggest strict adherence to the purpose and aim of the law. For


²Indiana Laws (1945), Chapter 356, Section 1.
example, the court held that compulsory education statutes did not "invade the right of parents to govern a child," and that they were to be given a "reasonable interpretation" so that the best interest of the child and the State were served. Although this has been the aim and philosophy underlying the services of the court, the recommendations and activities of the Department of Child Welfare have been upheld and have never been changed at any court presentation.\(^1\)

According to Mr. Mark Roser, experience has shown that in actual operation it is possible to provide service necessary for individualization of children's problems. This was sometimes done routinely through a letter outlining the reasons for the request. In other instances, an informal hearing with the chief Probation Officer, the parent, the child, and the school representative was arranged, and this conference method was sometimes used to help parents change their attitudes about the employment of the child. In other situations, it was used as a device to reassure school people, or the employer or parent, that decisions of the Child Welfare Department had legal sanction.\(^2\)

Another law which had much to do with the present school practices and with teacher-pupil relationships related to discipline. Under this law, the courts have generally held that a teacher may use the proper means to enforce discipline.\(^3\) Measures which are sane and humane are used and

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\(^1\)Op. cit.

\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Indiana Laws (1946), Chapter 10, Section 10-38.
Provisions for Personnel

The compulsory attendance law of 1946 provided for licensed state attendance officers who have completed at least elementary schools and were qualified "in accordance with the standards and regulations determined by the state board of attendance." Since this law has been passed, there have been many shifts in the directors of the program of the Department. These directors had no formal training in social work, psychology or sociology. Although the Indiana Attendance Officers' License required at least a high school education, the Gary Board of Education has required that its Child Welfare Workers have at least one year of training in social work. But by 1949, however, only Gary and Indianapolis employed people who met the requirements of the National Visiting Teachers Association, which were based upon social work education.

During the year 1948, there were twelve Child Welfare Workers assigned to school centers where they worked as an integral part of the school system. This meant a ratio of one worker to every 1,800 students, a ratio which imposed a heavy burden upon them in attempting to provide case work services to a child and his family, in addition to keeping up to date the census in their districts and giving some direction as to meeting the needs of children with personality problems.

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1Ibid., Chapter 24, Section 2.
2The Child Welfare Department of the Gary School System is under the Board of Education.
By 1949 there were nineteen workers on the staff of the Gary Child Welfare Department. Three of these workers' salaries were paid from county funds; the balance was a direct charge against the Gary School City's budget with no reimbursement from other sources. This was approximately one worker for every 1,000 children enrolled.

Up to 1949, efforts by the State Attendance Officers Association to reformulate the qualifications of Child Welfare Workers had been without success. There was always the fear present that the experienced workers already employed would not meet changes in the regulations as to education and training. Second, there was lack of agreement in the organizations as to what such qualifications should be.

Compensation for the services of the psychologist and social worker had not been recognized by the State Legislature in Indiana by 1949, and there were no provisions for licensing either one of these two groups. In Indiana, professional recognition for a psychologist could be obtained only through meeting the requirements of the Indiana Association for Clinical Psychologists. A Junior member is required to hold a Master's Degree from a recognized college; a Senior member must have a Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Recognition for social work training in Indiana can come from two sources, namely: membership in the American Association of Social Workers and affiliation with the National Association of School Social Workers.

The services of a psychiatrist were available to the Child Welfare Department from the Mental Hygiene Clinic on a close working relationship between the two. The facilities of the clinic were available to the child and his parents; and in so far as possible, the services of the clinic were not made compulsory. The aim of the school social workers was to secure
the cooperation of all parties in order to reduce resistance to psychiatric services.
CHAPTER IV

BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS PRESENTED BY CHILDREN
AND SOME THERAPEUTIC RESOURCES

The program of the Department depends not only upon what it has to offer but also upon the flexibility of the community and school structure with regard to their ability to make changes which would meet the needs of the child. Moreover, the degree of success of the social case workers in handling problems is dependent upon what they bring to the situation and their knowledge and use of themselves in terms of the various problems which they encounter.

Generally, behavior problems of all types and degrees occur in some children regardless of their physical condition; and they occur at any intellectual and economic level and among all racial and religious groups. With regard to the cultural and social factors, there are wide divergencies in standards by which behavior is judged. In a specific family, the criteria for objectionable conduct vary from time to time and from child to child.¹ The child with a primary behavior disorder is most likely to be regarded by parents and society as a "bad" rather than "sick" child; but the case worker sees him as a child who, like other children, needs to be understood to be helped effectively.²

Types of Problems Handled

The symptoms of behavior disorders presented by children referred to the social case workers of the Child Welfare Department centered around aggression, hostility, negativism, shyness, timidity, enuresis, speech defect, jealousy, abnormal sexuality, stealing, lying, and truancy. Some of the psycho-social factors which served as predisposing, precipitating and perpetuating causes for the child's emotionalism included parental neglect, school maladjustment, parental and employer violations of the child labor law, various assaults on children, accidents and inter-cultural aspects. The following case illustrated the type of problems handled by the social case workers which indicated aggressive reaction.

Case 1

Robert, a six-year-old boy, was referred to the social case worker because of his aggressive behavior. According to his mother, he was very active, stubborn, disobedient, and wilful, yet at times an affectionate child. Social history revealed that Robert was not a wanted child and was bottle fed from birth. In school, he had fights with boys his own age and older, and disfigured their papers. He seemed nervous, talked in an undertone, bit his nails and accepted authority only temporarily. At home he was spanked, deprived of privileges, and whipped with a switch. He was frequently punished for going off without permission and for telling falsehoods. Robert had temper tantrums when he could not have his way. Frequently, he failed to obey his father and was punished severely. For the most part, discipline for Robert was inconsistent so that he did not know what to anticipate.

Robert seemed to be uncomfortable in his relationship with both parent persons. His mother had ambivalent feelings toward him; and Robert presented evidences of being narcissistic, with too little capacity to form social relationships. Because of his feelings toward both parents, he attempted to find a measure of satisfaction by being aggressive in school with children.
According to Gordon Hamilton, the extremely aggressive child who acts out his impulses is referred to as presenting a primary behavior disorder. He acted out the way he felt and was showing difficulty in accepting the demands made upon him. He had experienced a great deal of pain in his contacts with parents. Therefore, his adaptions are unhappy ones for him. The aggression may always be interpreted as reaction to the restrictions and frustrations of early handling, which is the reason why he is sometimes referred to as having a "reactive behavior disorder." It is also primary, because it starts in the formative period of life. Frequently, children, similar to Robert, are rejected and have had inadequate love and affection from parents. Sometimes, however, many maladjusted children who have well-meaning affectionate but unwise parents, behave in a socially unacceptable way.1

Sometimes, aggression in the form of subtle hostility is conveyed by a child in an oral fashion which indicates some difficulty in his relationship to a maternal person. Mary, a six-year-old girl, was referred to the social case worker because she had a defect in speaking which the speech therapist thought might be symptomatic of some difficulty in her adjustment to a conflicting situation.

Case 2

Mary stuttered most when talking to her mother and when she was excited. Her stuttering was at a minimum when talking with her father and her three-year-old brother. She also stuttered in class when reciting. Although Mary had an I.Q. of 130, she was only an average student in class but made efforts for perfection. At home, her mother was exact about Mary's performance of household duties,  

1Ibid., pp. 45-46.
especially those pertaining to her room. Evidently, a great deal was expected of Mary, and at times, she was disobedient and considered more stubborn than her brother. Mary also wet the bed occasionally and received little attention from parent-persons in that her mother had no time to listen to Mary's activities; and the father spent little time generally with the children. Mary's relationship with her parents seemed to cause her concern; and she reacted by crying when her parents quarreled. Generally, both parents used methods of discipline which seemed frightening to her. There were times when her father shouted at her and she trembled. The mother, however, had slapped and whipped Mary with a strap causing physical abuse.

Mary was confused and frustrated by the inconsistent treatment given her by both parents which suggested some rejection of her by them. It seemed that she has been unable to establish an acceptable relationship with them and yet, she desired this. Mary was torn between two loyalties during quarrels between her parents; and it appeared that the pressures in the home and her reaction to the treatment accorded her have been manifested in her symptom of stuttering and in enuresis.

Although stuttering is not hereditary, a child may inherit a sensitive nervous system; and stuttering is likely to develop because of rigid fixed discipline, severe training and over-protective love by means of unwise parental pressure. The personality of the stuttering child has been interpreted by Dr. Glauber as resembling, on the one hand, the makeup of the behavior disorder with narcissistic oral traits, and on the other, the compulsive neurotic. The struggle between domination and passive resistance acted out through a partial blocking of the speech function is in essence a struggle in parent-child relationship with a rejecting but controlling mother. Hostility is always embedded in this symptom. Although for the

stutterer, the conflict has already been "internalized, parental urging a reproof, frustrations and over-attention to the symptom in school by a parent surrogate continues pressure on the acute irritant." In the stutterer, one usually finds "the rejection over-protection syndrome," with over-anxiety and pressure from both parents, aggravated by hostility. In the case of Paul, a severely disturbed child, much hostility was expressed by his sadistic need to retaliate which resulted in his attempted arson.

Case 3

Paul was a six-year-old boy who was referred to the social case worker because of his inability to adjust to the school situation, both academically and socially. According to his mother, she did not permit him to play with children in his neighborhood because of his aggressive behavior. She had very little control over him. Frequently, he did the opposite to what she requested; and no method of discipline had proved to be very effective. However, occasionally Paul obeyed his father; but for the most part, he was resistant and negativistic, having temper tantrums when he could not have his way. In school, he was hyperactive and did not apply himself to the academic program. He presented a hostile attitude toward classroom authority. Paul kept sharp instruments in his pockets and pierced other pupils with them. He took things which did not belong to him and made several attempts to set fire to one of the school buildings. When asked questions which seemed threatening, he blocked and stuttered extensively when attempting to answer.

Apparently, Paul rejected maternal authority. At school, he seemed to transfer feelings toward the teacher because she symbolized a maternal figure. His symptomatic behavior seemed to be precipitated by difficulty in his learning experiences and inconsistent parental handling which were forced upon him. The academic situation and the school in general seemed painful, representing a form of control and therefore was a threat which evoked his destructive behavior.

Many times, social workers receive cases in which aggressive behavior is a result of cultural conditioning. The following case is an example of psychosocial implications.

Case 4

Frank, aged six, was referred to the case worker by the school principal. In class, he would bite, expectorate, kick, make faces, strike anyone near him and pinch severely the faces of children whom he disliked. He gave polite verbal acceptance to classroom authority but soon resumed aggressive and negativistic behavior. Frank was nervous; and when his teacher approached him to execute disciplinary measures, he would jump. He was not accepted by other children; and his mother did not permit him to play with children in his neighborhood because of his roughness in play. In the home, his aggressive behavior was accepted for the most part because the parents did not consider his behavior severe enough to require their attention. Only occasionally was he disciplined for it. Both parents had told him to fight if anyone struck him.

According to parental cultural patterns, Frank's aggressive behavior was accepted, but at school it was forbidden. To the parents, fighting in the form of physical attack was an acceptable way of self-assertion. It seemed that Frank's behavior problem was precipitated by conflicting cultural patterns, the dominant culture being represented by the school as against the lower class social strata. The learning situation appeared to have contributed to Frank's difficulty because it seemed to challenge his adequacy in adjusting to a new social situation and threatened his ability to adjust. Apparently, he reacted to this situation by striking against his environment. According to Karen Horney, "the person who moves against you is the aggressive type whose basic feelings are those of hostility." 

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1 Allison Davis, "Ability and Survival," The Survey, LXXXVII (February, 1951), 63.

Services to Meet the Problem

The Child Welfare Department is designed to meet the special needs of children, and is responsible for dealing with special problems concerning attendance, retardation, truancy, delinquency, and emotional maladjustment. In meeting these needs, the Department acts as the liaison agent between the child's home, his school and the community agencies dealing with his problems. Such agencies include the juvenile court, the prosecutor's office, the Department of Public Welfare, and the Mental Hygiene Clinic. The Child Welfare Department also shares with the health and medical branch of the school system in the administration of special education as provided for handicapped children, such as the home-bound, the crippled and the mentally handicapped.  

Although the Department discharges the school's legal responsibilities concerning school attendance, and its actions are based on the Indiana Statutes concerning these matters, the laws are interpreted to mean that the needs of each child can be served best by understanding and treatment. Non-attendance at school is viewed as a symptom of maladjustment. In each instance, a cooperative action was secured from parents, teachers, and school administrators in order that the source of the difficulty can be determined and proper treatment applied.  

Extra-Therapeutic Means

The social worker has the responsibility of understanding the problems
of children such as Robert, Mary, Frank and Paul, and to schedule case studies for presentation at case conferences. These conferences evaluate the cumulative data presented for the most part by the social case worker and psychologist, and upon the basis of these data, recommendations are made. Case discussions which were participated in by teachers, principals and the Child Welfare staff members, facilitated knowledge and recommendations affecting the children. This cooperative conference group, which operates in close harmony, contributed to the morale of the schools and provided an effective way of helping individual children. This collaborative service has been used in the schools of Gary since 1948.¹

All of the plans for referring cases for services to other agencies were arrived at in the schools and were made with the approval of the central office of the Child Welfare Department. Because of the serious personal problems which were frequently involved in cases referred for court action or psychiatric services, cooperative case work with the juvenile court and the mental hygiene clinic, formed an important part of the activity of the Child Welfare Department.²

In more acute behavior problems, the Child Welfare staff members have felt it essential to use the resources of the mental hygiene clinic. This clinic has proven to be helpful particularly in those instances in which children have attempted suicide. These children obviously needed prompt medical and psychiatric treatment.

Generally, there has been resistance to referrals for psychiatric

²Ibid.
service, and it has posed some difficulty in making use of this service. Parents have been threatened by the need for help with emotional problems and were unable to accept the use of the psychiatric consultation. A better interpretation to parents and use of referrals has been made possible through the active cooperation of the County Medical Society and by interpretations through seminars led by the Clinic Staff and sponsored by the schools.¹

Referrals to the court are made upon the recommendation of school conferences. However, every effort is made to screen a case; consequently, many of them have been enabled to find other resources than the court to meet the needs of the child violating school laws. However, case work service is given by court authorities to families and children who require it. The main groupings of cases referred to the court include; first, parents, who because of their own experience and limited understanding, deprive their children of an education; second, those children committing offenses which if they were adults, would be considered crimes; and, third, children whose emotional conflicts were so deepseated that they have been unable to make a positive response to treatment.²

¹Ibid., p. 9.
²Material obtained from agency files.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Social work was developed in Boston, New York, and Hartford during 1906-1907. The development of this program in these three cities indicated that certain changes were taking place which precipitated a need for this service. Agencies responded to this need for the school and the community to cooperate for the benefit of the child both educationally and socially, hence, school social work was begun.

The emergence of social work in schools was very definitely an indication of growth in an individual approach to a child's problems. Although the Child Welfare Department of Cary has been in the process of expanding, it has completely embraced the significant concept of child adjustment and parental understanding of his adjustment. At the onset, the Child Welfare Department was known as the Department of Attendance, and its personnel performed duties which, for the most part, were clerical. As the Department grew with the addition of special services, such as the psychological, medical and psychiatric services, its name was changed to that of the Child Welfare Department. These services were geared toward helping the child as an individual.

The Department was aware that due to an increased population and because of the compulsory attendance law, classes had become larger and there had been a tendency toward regimentation of children on a mass basis. The child as an individual with individual problems was in danger of being overlooked in a group situation. Mr. Mark Roser, Director of the Child Welfare Department, recognized that it was the task of social case workers to bring to the school setting an individual approach.
Social work in the school setting can make a contribution of immeasurable value. The case worker's effectiveness depends upon how well he works with teachers. He should be aware that teachers also have feelings about the problems which they refer to him. In view of this, he should help them with their classroom problems more adequately and at the same time render a service to the children.

Gary, Indiana lagged somewhat in initiating a compulsory education system when compared with other states. During the forties, the Gary Public Schools received unfavorable publicity concerning the misuse of funds and an investigation was made of the entire school program. The Purdue Report resulted in a further improvement of the Child Welfare Department and was largely responsible for its present development. However, some of the criticisms of the Department which were made in the report were to be taken with reservations.

The Child Welfare Department shares in the responsibility of administering certain laws which affect its program for children. As a result of unfavorable attitudes in the communities, the Indiana Assembly passed the Hunter Bill which aimed at abolishing segregation in the schools. The courts had previously upheld segregation which obviously infringed upon the rights of Negroes to an equal education.

Child Welfare workers have aided in seeing that children do not become overworked or encounter abuses by employers. They have been requested to report violations of child labor laws to the State Division of Labor, Bureau of Women and Children. In doing this, the worker becomes an authoritative person.

It was one of the functions of the Child Welfare Department to arrange
for the payment of tuition of children who had no legal settlement in the city. The problem presented by this situation was similar to the problem created by the non-settled relief client. In attempting to meet the needs of handicapped children, the Child Welfare Department has stimulated thinking about care of these children and has helped in the organization of special classes whenever possible. In doing this the Department used the concept of individualizing the child.

The Child Welfare Department leans heavily upon the juvenile court in meeting the needs of the school child. The juvenile court judge may use the services of psychiatrists and psychologists if the child is severely disturbed. Before staff members are appointed to the juvenile court, they must have the approval of their local county chairmen. This does not mean that they have been without some qualifications for their duties.

Corporal punishment has been used in the schools. The Department has felt that this kind of punishment facilitated a relationship in which the attitude of the child toward school would be profoundly affected. Corporal punishment is not considered as wise handling of the child.

Events which violated democratic principles relating to race and infringed upon the rights of a racial group to enjoy certain educational experiences stimulated the passage of an Anti-Hate Law. The Child Welfare Department had been active in helping to prevent the spread of race or religious prejudice.

The personnel of the Department, in the past, has lacked suitable training. However, the Gary Board of Education has required that the Child Welfare Workers should have at least one year of training in social work. At the outset, the progress of the Department was impeded because of the
shifts and changes in Directors.

Further development of the Department seemed somewhat limited because there have been little efforts by the State Attendance Officers Association to rewrite the qualifications and training of workers because of the possible effects upon older workers. Moreover, the State of Indiana has been slow to recognize the profession of social work. This situation posed a real problem and challenge to social workers in Gary as well as to those in the State of Indiana at large.

There seems to be a need for more highly trained social workers in the Gary school system as the present number is inadequate when compared with the number of children whom they must serve. It is needless to say that maximum results cannot be obtained when workers are burdened with heavy caseloads.

The Child Welfare Department made use of extra-therapeutic aids such as the community resources and made referrals to other social agencies. The problems which its workers handled may be classified, generally, as primary or reactive behavior disorders of children. The cases of Robert, Paul and Frank were illustrative of aggression and hostility expressed overtly. In the case of Mary, aggression and hostility were manifested internally, for the most part, in the form of symptoms of stuttering and enuresis. In the cases of Robert, Paul and Mary, parental rejection was expressed through inconsistent and severe discipline. Another form of rejection was evidenced by Mary's mother, who unconsciously, was not able to accept her as she was, and therefore constantly demanded perfection of the child. Paul was a severely disturbed child whose attempted arson showed his emotional conflict. The social worker viewed all of these cases as
symptomatic behavior disorders. Of particular significance was the psycho-cultural factor in the case of Frank. Many children who were referred to the case workers come from homes in which the cultural pattern was an important factor which influenced the behavior of the child. Social workers in the school setting can use their sensitivity in recognizing all of the components which affect the child. Upon the basis of their training and understanding of human behavior the case worker makes use of himself and the necessary resources at the disposal of the school setting to alleviate the particular presenting maladjustment.

The case conference method which was used in the Gary Public School System can prove to be beneficial as an approach to problems of children. Its recommendations represented the common thinking of school people and staff members of the Child Welfare Department. The membership composition and joint participation in the case conference represented a progressive achievement in school social work. Although much effort was made to replace the legalistic and authoritative approach to problems in the school setting of Gary with case work techniques and understanding, referrals to authoritative sources such as the juvenile court are resorted to when considered in the best interest of the child. The Gary Public School System has considered the social worker as an important link between the home, the school and the child. This has become a reality through the services of the Child Welfare Department administered by social workers.
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