A STUDY OF INTAKE POLICY AND PROCEDURE OF THE MENNONITE
ORPHAN'S HOME OF WEST LIBERTY, OHIO, FOR THE YEAR 1949

A Thesis
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for the Degree Master of Arts

By

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to express appreciation to Mr. Paul Sieber, Superintendent of the Mennonite Orphan's Home, West Liberty, Ohio, for supplying necessary information for this project; to Mr. J. D. Graber, Executive Secretary of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, for his permission to make this study; and to Mr. Wesley Thorpe, faculty advisor, for his interest and guidance in its development.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Study

Within the Mennonite church there has been a renewed interest in children's work. This area of church work has taken on a new significance for a small group of church leaders who are anxious to see developed a more adequate child welfare program within the church. These leaders are engaged in various avenues of church work and are keenly aware that there is a need to assimilate present-day techniques into their existing children's institutions.

The prime mover in the resurgence of child care interest is the newly formed Child Welfare Committee of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities. This committee is composed of two ministers, one medical doctor, two college instructors, one businessman and an editor of a church periodical. These individuals have been commissioned by the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities to carry out the following four points in the child welfare area of the church program:

1. Seek to give to each child in our institutions loving concern and care, in addition to employing those methods and practices of child welfare recommended and found useful by standard welfare agencies.

2. Employ such methods as a summer camp for underprivileged children, cottage and village plan of serving children from broken homes and adopting any other means for doing effective work in the child welfare area that recommend themselves as practical and sound.

3. Seek to operate a program of child placement in Mennonite homes on a church wide basis, using qualified case worker or workers.
4. Appoint qualified persons with social service training as heads of our child welfare institutions.1

One of the first tasks that the committee undertook was the reorganization of the Mennonite Orphan's Home (hereafter referred to as the West Liberty Home or Home) in West Liberty, Ohio. The reason for starting with this Home was to alleviate some conditions that have not been conducive to good child care. On the strength of some recommendations passed on to the local board of the West Liberty Home by the Mennonite Child Welfare Committee, the physical plant is to be remodeled so that it will meet state requirements. This will be an arduous task, but definite steps have already been made to go ahead to meliorate the existing conditions.

If the Mission Board is to go ahead with a superior child care program the use of a trained staff and an adequate program will have to be taken into consideration along with improvements of existing facilities. Of these facts the Welfare Committee is well aware, and they are attempting to face the situation realistically. The matter of a trained staff is of great importance at this point and the committee can now count on the services of four of its young men who are in graduate schools of social work. However, with the need of more trained people in this area and related areas of child care, the Welfare Committee is looking for young people who will be willing to prepare for service among children.

This then brings us to the next point in promoting a progressive child care program, and that is the actual policies and program that will

describe agency function. The policies that govern agency functions should meet standards of both state and church authorities. Such a set of policies is not fashioned without a critical examination of all that goes into a program of child care under church sponsorship.

A basic starting point would be to re-evaluate the purpose of the Home in light of acceptable practices in the area of child care without losing sight of the spiritual concepts that the Mennonite church adheres to. Since the Mennonite church places emphasis on the individual's need for spiritual security through a faith in Jesus Christ, then this concept has to be incorporated in a statement of purpose in formulating a well balanced set of standards to be used as a working basis for child care.

In a book written by L. L. Swartzendruber, former superintendent of the West Liberty Home, there is a statement of purpose that could be considered indicative of the church's attitude today toward institutional care. L. L. Swartzendruber says:

> The primary object of the existence of this institution is to reach the unfortunate and dependent boys and girls and to give them such physical care and moral training as will enable us to reach the soul of the child, and bring it to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.

It is not the writer's aim to formulate a new statement of purpose, but to examine certain practices at the West Liberty Home in light of recommendations by authorities in this field and discover just what might go into the formulation of agency policies. A study of this phase

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of institutional care is deemed necessary because the West Liberty Home has not been functioning within the framework of standardized practices.

There are three different aspects of institutional care and procedure that can be examined as to the adequacy of institutional policy. The first of these is intake, which consists of a study of the child's needs and the process of admitting a child to the institution. The second aspect would be to study the custodial care or institutional treatment that the child has been placed in. The third area would center about the discharge or after care, when the child leaves the institution. Each one of these three elements presents a valid area for study, but in the writer's opinion the study of intake practices is of extreme importance because it has a direct bearing upon the custodial care of a child and also the implications involved in discharge. Therefore, the writer has chosen to make a study in this area to discover whether intake practices can be altered at the West Liberty Home to determine the needs of children for whom admission at the Home is sought.

Since the writer has spent six months at the West Liberty Home he has had an opportunity to observe the program of the Home in the light of present-day social work practices. This study is being made as a result of these observations and it is the writer's aim to evaluate the present intake practices so that basic policies might be created if and when a change is deemed necessary.
Method of Study

In order to facilitate an objective study of the West Liberty Home it was felt that the study should be based upon a comparison of the intake practices used at the Home during 1949, with a set of intake criteria that has been promulgated by child care authorities. There have been several sets of criteria that have been published within the last ten years by recognized children's agencies. The set that has been used in this study was prepared for the Child Welfare League of America\(^1\) by a committee composed of outstanding workers in the field of child welfare. Since the set of criteria as outlined by this committee is more complete than the one produced by the Children's Bureau,\(^2\) the writer saw fit to use the former set primarily because of its detailed content. However, the criteria as proposed by the Child Welfare League was not deemed complete enough for the study, so several other elements were incorporated to expand the list.

The writer was not able to procure a complete set of intake practices that was used at the West Liberty Home, because such a set has never been produced. Therefore, the writer has had to try to determine just what the practices have been at the Home and use them in the comparison for this study.

In recording information gathered from the West Liberty Home, a schedule was used for each child admitted during the year. A copy of this schedule will be found in the Appendix.

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1 Standards for Children's Organizations Providing Foster Family Care, Child Welfare League of America, 1941

2 Recording Child Welfare Services 269, United States Department of Labor, Children's Bureau, 1941.
Historical Sketch

As the Mennonite church began to recapture the Anabaptist vision by becoming a more aggressive Christian church, there were many areas of church work that were developed during the latter part of the 19th century. The Mennonite people began to realize their need to be more world-wide in their approach to social needs as they attempted to put into practice the Biblical command to, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." Thus we discover the leaders in the Mennonite church organizing schools for the education of Mennonite youth, publishing houses for the printing of Christian literature and a Mission Board to implement the spread of the Christian message to other lands.

During the upsurge in these fields of Christian endeavor there were two men in Orrville, Ohio, who felt that they should establish an orphan's home. These men, Solomon Plank and David Garber, presented their plans at the Annual Ohio Conference of the Mennonite Church in 1895. The Conference acted upon their request and passed a resolution which stated, "That this conference encourage the brethren in their proposed work by their prayer, means, etc."

A year later 1896 an orphan's home was opened on the Solomon Plank farm in Orrville, Ohio, when a widower of the Mennonite Church had to find a place for his motherless children. Soon other people heard of it

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2 Matthew 28:19.

and began to send their motherless and fatherless children to this Home. However, several years later this farm had to be sold and a new site had to be obtained to continue care for these children. It so happened that a well constructed private residence was available in West Liberty, Ohio. Negotiations were made for the procurement of this building in West Liberty and in 1900 it was secured. Shortly thereafter the staff and children moved from Orrville, Ohio, to their new setting in West Liberty.

The West Liberty Home is situated in a prosperous farming community in Western Ohio. This Home sits upon a hill that overlooks this quiet town in the Mad River valley. The residents of this community are primarily of German ancestry and approximately one-fourth are members of one of the three Mennonite churches in this locality.

Since the establishment of the Home in West Liberty many improvements and several additions were made to care for the increase of children who needed a home. Along with the expansion of the Home itself, land adjacent to the Home was either donated or bought until the overall land, including the Home and farm, totals seventy-three acres.

In the course of time the Home has cared for about 1200 children, which means an average of 24 new children were admitted each year. At one time prior to World War I there were a total of 91 children cared for in the Home. Today, because of state regulations, the Home is not licensed to care for more than 40 children at a time. This regulation came about as a general change in the philosophy of institutional care developed. Now we see children's institutions interested not in the
quantity of children cared for, but in the quality of care and treatment given to the children as individuals.

In the development of the Home there appears to have been a time when some radical changes were inaugurated and other changes were contemplated. The Home was at a stage of development, when the objectives of child care were to be enlarged upon. These objectives, if carried out, would have provided permanent care for the children until they were ready to seek employment and to be on their own. Some of the leaders contemplated vocational training at the Home. However, this never came to pass, but the Home did have its own school at the institution for about five years after World War I. This educational program was to expand into the field of vocational and agricultural training for the children, but in 1925 the educational program was discontinued and the children once again went to the local public schools.

It appears that the leaders of the Home did have a vision as to the potentials of an institutional setting, but did not carry out its objectives. Instead they continued to render custodial care and placement services for those needing it. Children continued to come to the West Liberty Home from states throughout the Mid-West. If one looks through the files he can discover that children came to West Liberty from as far as Oklahoma, Tennessee, North Carolina and Michigan. With these out-of-state placements, home contacts with families were made difficult. On the other hand the continued placement of children from the institution and into foster homes also presented problems because children went into as many as twelve states beside Ohio for foster homes. This type of placement was not conducive to follow-up work and the
follow-up contacts that were made were usually through correspondence.

Shortly after the Home first started to work with needy children a statement of purpose and character of work was recorded in the minutes of the Second Mennonite General Conference in 1900. The statement reads as follows:

"(The purpose of the Home is) to take care of poor children (giving Mennonite children the preference) teaching them lessons of industry and Christianity and finding Christian homes for them. There are no children received over twelve years of age. Homes are found for children as rapidly as possible. Children are placed in Christian homes only. Children having attained the required age attend public school. Boys are taught to work about the Home under the care of the matron. Regular devotional exercises are conducted with the children both morning and evening. Children attended Sunday School and church service at the Mennonite church."

This early statement of purpose and character of work has changed somewhat during the past 50 years, but basically it is the same today. Even though the purpose and nature of the Home has been rather consistent, the type of child the Home has received has changed. Today one will find at the Home more children from non-Mennonite backgrounds and more children with emotional problems, presumably caused by their home environment prior to institutional placement.

As we look back into the development of the Home during the last 54 years we discover that the purpose and function has not kept pace with the changing concepts of present-day child care. While many leading institutions of child care have been flexible to these changing concepts, the West Liberty Home has been inelastic and now has to make

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up for lost time by accepting standardized child care practices as performed by many of our nation's outstanding institutions.
Functions of Staff

Since its inception, the West Liberty Home has retained the function and duties of staff without any noticeable change. The superintendent and his wife still carry out the administrative functions. The employment of a full time farmer is still practiced and his duties are fundamentally the same. Then there are the matrons and cook who continue to serve in their original capacities. However, the Home at one time employed qualified school teachers while school was held on the Home grounds, and the Home has also employed a registered nurse from time to time when one was available.

The superintendent has a job that not many individuals desire, because his work covers such a wide area and as a result his effectiveness is spread thin. Besides being responsible for the intake and discharge of each child the superintendent often does his own bookkeeping and correspondence as part of his office work. He usually manages the farm in its entirety while the farmer does most of the manual labor. When maintenance work has to be done he often does it, but if it involves too much time and effort he will employ a mechanic to do the job. Since the state Division of Social Administration requires that children be visited who have been placed into foster homes from the Home, the superintendent travels hundreds of miles each year to visit children who have been placed as far as two hundred miles away. As purchasing agent, the superintendent does most of the buying of food and clothing. When materials have to be purchased for maintenance of the Home or farm, the superintendent is usually designated to do it.
These basic jobs that the superintendent performs have to be taken care of by him because there is no one to whom he can delegate the jobs. Since this condition exists it seems only logical to have an adequate staff who can relieve the superintendent of some of these responsibilities so he can spend more time in the capacity as an administrator.

Most of the domestic work in the Home is supervised by the head matron who is the wife of the superintendent. She is the one who helps the other matrons plan their household duties of cleaning, laundering, sewing, ironing and other details that pertain to housekeeping.

Taking care of the farm and its livestock is a job that the farmer does. He does most of the actual farming, but at harvest time neighbors offer their time and equipment because the Home does not have all the equipment that most modern farms have. It has always been the practice at the Home to train the older boys in some of the fundamentals of farming and tending livestock. This task has been carried on by the farmer who supervises older boys as they perform specific jobs.

The Home has tried to maintain a staff that would include approximately four matrons of which one was either a registered nurse or a practical nurse. Two matrons are assigned to care for the boys and two to care for the girls. The duties of these matrons consists of helping the children get ready for school, for meals, and bed. This means having clothing ready for them and supervising their toilet and dressing. These matrons also have to clean the rooms and make the beds or else supervise the older children in these tasks. They also assist with the weekly washing, ironing and mending of all the children's clothing. In church on Sunday and in daily chapel services at the Home, they are
responsible for the children under their care. They also try to spend some time with the children in special study in school material and in recreation.

When it comes to feeding the children and staff, the cook usually has the unenviable task, because she has little or no help to perform her duties of preparing three meals a day for a hungry group of children and adults. It is not infrequent to see the cook in the kitchen ten hours a day preparing meals and often she works either six or six and a half days a week.

This in brief is the way in which each staff member serves Christ and the church. However, the writer feels that this service can be rendered more effectively if there were a few more tangible goals in sight for the workers. If the work program could be altered to provide better working conditions, it would be possible to eliminate to a certain degree the rapid turnover of staff.
CHAPTER II

FINDINGS

Intake Criteria in Child Placement

It is difficult to list in chronological order a set of intake criteria for child placement because it has always been the practice of the workers in this field to work with clients on an individual basis. This approach does not leave much room for the enumeration of factors involved in the intake process. Yet a beginning has to be made in order to ascertain the need of placement for the child as each parent requests placement. In this study the writer will try to keep in mind that children cannot be placed categorically solely on the basis of their needs. We will attempt to be flexible in our approach and try to see each child as an individual.

Concerning the word 'intake' the reader should understand that the word signifies the process of study used to decide a course of action to be taken in dealing with the problem that has been brought to the worker. In some instances there might be only one intake interview before a decision is reached. Generally, intake will involve a series of interviews used to gather all pertinent material that will then be used to decide what type of placement the child needs.

Placement, in this study, consists of removing the child from his own home and placing him in either an institution or in a foster family home. Such placement might be of a temporary or indefinite nature until the child's family situation is resolved; or it might be a permanent
placement, which may mean legal separation of the child from his parents. In either case the element of placement is a serious step and much thought must go into it before a decision is reached.

In reaching a decision the case worker usually presents the findings of the intake study to his supervisor or others designated to aid in reaching a solution. Then the knowledge of the situation is discussed thoroughly and a course of action is taken that is aimed to render the best available service to the child and his parents.

Before a decision is reached the following elements of intake should be examined by the agency handling the case.

1. The referral request should be carefully considered in terms of source of request, the picture of the immediate situation and the kind of help which the applicant believes at the time to be necessary or desirable. Other social agencies which may be acquainted with the situation should be consulted through the use of the Social Service Exchange.

2. The applicant, whether the parent, relative, another social agency, the court, or a hospital, should be informed of the resources of the agency and its method of giving service. As early as possible, the child’s own parents should be seen to help them better understand and decide if foster family care is what they want for their child, and to recognize the need for such care where referral has been made in the interests of the child against their wishes, as in cases of neglect and abuse.

3. All possibilities of service to the child and family in their own home should be reviewed, and also whether some other type of care, such as placement in an institution, may be better suited to their needs.

4. During the intake study a relationship should be established between the family, the child, and the agency that will enable the parents and child to consider their problem freely. The way in which the parents are helped to understand what is involved in placing the child, so that they may decide if placement

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is what they want, will serve to prepare them and the child for their future relationship with the agency; and will also bring out such information as is necessary for the agency to understand the problem. The purpose of the intake study is therefore not only to obtain information about the child and parents, but to build up a meaningful relationship that will permit them to use the agency as they need it. It should be recognized that case work with the parents and child has begun as soon as they are able to tell of their need for help. It is desirable to request of them only such information as is necessary at the time for an understanding of the problem. The manner in which the parent talks about and explains his situation, and his general response to necessary procedures, such as interviews and medical examinations, will reveal in itself significant material, such as attitudes and feelings between parents, between child and parent, and toward placement.

5. It is important that wherever possible both parents and the child should participate in the intake study. Interviews in the office should be arranged for the purpose of their taking the initiative in coming to get help and of becoming familiar with the concrete reality of the agency. Visits to the home should be made in order to become acquainted with all members of the family in relation to one another, and with parents who are unable or unwilling to come to the office. Relatives, physicians, teachers, and clergymen should be seen with the consent of the family where it is felt that they may contribute to an understanding of the situation.

6. Medical examinations should be routine procedure of the agency. Psychological testing should be done whenever there is question about the child's mental development. For children with severe behavior and emotional disturbances, or other problems that cannot be understood, psychiatric examination should be arranged. The resistance of the child or family to special examinations should be taken into consideration. If necessary for better understanding of the child, temporary placements for a period of observation, in study homes or temporary boarding homes subsidized by the agency for this purpose, should be used.

7. The intake service should be carried and supervised by experienced case workers with particular sensitivity, understanding and awareness of how the parent and child may feel about coming to an agency, and how confused and guilty the parents may be in considering whether they should give up the responsibility for their child. The worker should be clear about the resources and services of the agency, its purposes and procedures, in order to interpret them to the parents and child; and familiar with other resources in the community. Skills in short-contact
intererviewing, in evaluation of material obtained by the agency or from other sources, and in diagnosis are especially important.

8. The intake service should be the responsibility of the placement agency even when allocation or referral is made by another agency. The agency should in all cases interview the parents and child, and should obtain sufficient understanding of the situation through reports and conferences with other agency when it has not itself made the complete intake study.

Even though this foregoing list of intake criteria, as emphasized by the Child Welfare League, is concise, the writer feels there are several related areas that should be added to those already enumerated. One area concerns the financial responsibility the parent has in placing his child and the other is a frank discussion of visitation and discharge plans responsibility the parent should take upon himself.

In reference to the financial responsibility of the parent in payment toward services rendered to their children in foster home care, it is felt that parents should realize their obligation toward the care of their children. Not only will the parent see that he has a responsibility in continuing to care for his children though they are separated, but the child will continue to feel that his parent has not rejected him. Placement is a form of rejection as far as the child is concerned, but this can be lessened when the child understands that his parents still provide for his care.

The second area that should be amplified is that of a discussion


between worker and parents concerning the discharge of the child and a program of visitation while the child is in the institution. Both of these are related, because there is involved the parental interest in the child while the child is away from his own home. Just because the child is in foster care, there is no sound reason for severing the relationship between the parents and child. Such a severance often has deleterious effects upon the child. These effects can be partially avoided if the parents had made discharge plans with the agency prior to admission of the child. When such plans have been established then further plans of parental visitation should be made to help the child realize that foster placement is a temporary expediency, and that a happy reunion of parent and child is the goal of the agency.

The above factors involved in the intake study were written primarily for foster family placement, but they are steps that should also be used in considering placement in an institution, because in either case the child has to be removed from his family. If such a study were made of a child, using as a basis for the study the above ten elements, there are three possible decisions that can be made; each one is valid and helpful if it is used properly. They are:

1. Keep the child in his own home.
2. Place the child in a foster home.
3. Place the child in a children's institution.

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1 Standards for Children's Organizations Providing Foster Family Care, Child Welfare League of America, 1941. Page 38.

2 Ibid., page 36.
The first decision, that of keeping the child in his own home, has gained in favor in recent years among child welfare workers. As a result of the 1909 White House Conference on the Care of Dependent Children, 1 a set of statements was produced that has been a guiding factor in child care. One basic statement revealed that all children, if possible, should remain in their own home. Children should not be removed from their own home because of poverty alone. This concept was not made a reality until the passage of the Social Security Act in 1935. 2 In this Social Security Act there is a provision that grants financial assistance to all mothers and children who meet certain eligibility requirements as specified by the various states. This piece of social legislation caused the total population in children's institutions to drop. 3 Yet it did not eliminate the role that the children's institutions can and should play in our modern society.

There are some children with emotional problems that can best be treated in their own home setting. It is not imperative that all children with problems be placed in an institution for treatment, since many communities have a child guidance clinic and/or other social agencies 4 that have facilities available to aid parents with problem children.


If the presence of the child in the family unit is determined to be harmful or impractical, then foster care should be considered. It is at this point that the caseworker has to use all available resources to determine whether or not the child should be placed in an institution or in a foster family home. Often the worker will come to the conclusion that a foster home will best meet the needs of the child. However, not all parents will sanction the use of a foster family home and will insist upon an institutional setting for their child, because an institutional placement is easier for a parent to accept. This presents a serious problem for the case worker because the worker must take into consideration that the placement should ultimately meet the needs of the child and not just the needs of the parent. Therefore, the worker has the task of presenting these concepts to the parent so that the placement will eventually benefit all concerned.

During the last two decades the role of the children's institution has changed to a great extent. These changes have come about through much research in this area of child care and many institutions, because of these changes, have developed a new philosophy. Some institutions have changed the name of "Orphan's Home"\textsuperscript{1} to either "Children's Home", or to "Children's Center". This change puts less stigma upon the child and institution because it gives the connotation that institutional life is of a temporary nature and serves other purposes than just custodial care.

Many progressive institutions have adopted the cottage plan\textsuperscript{2} of

\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., page 18.
\end{enumerate}
institutional life which breaks the total institutional population into smaller units. Along with this change some institutions have added trained workers to their staff to help the needy child adjust to himself and society. Among these professional workers one will find the case worker, group worker, psychologist, and consultant psychiatrist; all working as a co-ordinating unit to help the child.

The present use of a children's institution is to help children in certain areas in their social relationships where there has been a breakdown or else prevent a breakdown that might occur if the child remained in his own home or was placed in a foster family home. Some types of children in need of institutional care will be enumerated to reveal the specific areas in which children's institutions can make a definite contribution to the field of child welfare.

1. Those children who because of an emotional disturbance cannot accept a foster family situation, 1 B. foster family cannot accept them, or C. who cannot remain at their own home, should be placed in a children's home providing there are facilities available to aid the child. These children are in need of a neutral setting such as an institution can offer in order to prepare them for foster placement or else to discharge them back to their family situation. These special services that an institution can render for these disturbed children are case work service, planned group activities, psychiatric consultation, and a psychological testing program.

2. Those children who need routine living to train them so they can eventually fit into a foster family home, should be placed in an institution. These children might have some undesirable deep-seated habits that will be eliminated or tempered in a group setting as they learn to become part of a group by doing things the way others do them. This is a form of group pressure to have children conform to acceptable patterns as they strive to "belong" to the group.

3. Adolescents who are seeking parental freedom and who are in the process of losing the gang spirit can also benefit through an institutional setting. These youngsters can happily attain their independence in an institution providing the institution has a program and atmosphere that is conducive to guidance for boys and girls of the same age level.

4. Children who have been strongly attached to their parents and are compelled by death, illness, or family separation to leave the family scene can often benefit more from an institutional setting than in a foster family home. Here the institution acts as a neutral area in which the child can adjust easier to an institutional worker as a parental substitute rather than to a foster mother. Such a child with strong parental ties might react more negatively to a foster mother than to an institutional mother figure.

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2 Ibid., page 24.

These four groups cover the main types of children who can benefit from institutional care. However, we should also present the types of children who should not be institutionalized. The foremost among this group are the infants and pre-school children. Some institutions set the minimum age level at four while others set it as high as six or eight. This age level concept has to be somewhat flexible so that the urgency of the placement situation might be taken into consideration. Also because it might be expedient to place a pre-school child for a few days.

It is not advisable to place feebleminded children in a children's home unless the Home is equipped with staff and a program that can help these children. Most state health or welfare departments provide public institutions for the feebleminded, while some institutions are controlled by private organizations that are licensed by the state.

Another important group of children who should not be placed in an institution is the less disturbed child who can use foster family care better than anything else. In a foster family they can continue to receive the needed security and necessities of life that an institution might deprive them of.

In summary we can say that a children's institution which does an adequate job with each admission, must make the intake process a vital part of institutional procedure. We have seen the implications of the various ingredients that go into intake for child placement as formulated by the Child Welfare League of America, and therefore we must recognize the responsibility that rests upon a children's institution in view of this knowledge.

Intake Cases of 1949*

In this chapter there is recorded eight cases involving seventeen children who were taken into the West Liberty Children's Home during 1949. All cases referred to the Home during the past year were dealt with by the superintendent. He has been given authority by the local board to decide whether or not these children were to be accepted. This procedure of admission is the general pattern that has been followed by the Home since its inception.

It has been the practice of the Home to have the superintendent make all arrangements pertaining to the admission of the child. It is he who arranges with the parents or custodians of the child concerning transportation to the Home. He also makes financial arrangements with the parents or custodians. In preparing the staff for the admission of this child he is responsible for interpreting the situation and circumstances. Sleeping accommodations are also arranged by the superintendent with the aid of the matron involved in the care of the child. Work on the farm or around the Home is also a matter that is discussed between the superintendent and matron and/or farmer.

If preliminary correspondence and contact work is necessary prior to the admission of the child, the superintendent is usually the one who does it all. Some of these preliminary steps might include the gathering of educational records from the schools attended by the children, correspondence with county welfare agencies and contact with the parents either by correspondence or in personal interviews.

* All names and residences of individuals in this section have been disguised.
Since the superintendent has been intimately connected with each case presented in this chapter, he is the one who has given the author most of the material. However, some material has been culled from the files that contain limited information.

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<th>Case #1</th>
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<tr>
<td>Walter G.</td>
<td>Born 5/22/38</td>
<td>Admitted 1/20/49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stanley G.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nancy G.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Florence G.</td>
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Mrs. G. called long distance to West Liberty to ask whether her four children could be placed at the Home. No definite answer was given her at that time and during the Christmas vacation in 1948 Mrs. G. visited the West Liberty Home with a woman who had previously placed two children there. Mrs. G., who came from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, told the superintendent that she had four children she wanted placed in the Home because she found it difficult to keep them with relatives and friends in Pittsburgh. These children had been shuffled from one family to another and she did not want this condition to continue. She explained that her husband had been in the armed forces and when he came back they had domestic difficulties that culminated in separation. Since he had been home he had not been able to hold down a job. Mrs. G. believes her husband is in need of psychiatric care because of his erratic behavior. The family situation was also in a confused state because both Mr. and Mrs. G. could not get along with their in-laws. If the children could be taken from such a situation for a while the home difficulties might clear up and they could once again take back their children.
The superintendent asked Mrs. G. to have a medical report on each child. This examination was to be made by their family physician. Mrs. G. complied with this request and on January 20, 1949 the four children came by bus from Pittsburgh with their father. Temporary surrender papers were signed by both father and mother. Mr. G. agreed to send money for the support of the children.

Case #2

George B. Born 2/19/45

Admitted 4/24/45
Discharged 11/15/48
Readmitted 2/3/49
Discharged 5/15/49

Upon the first admission of George to the West Liberty Home, he was placed along with two older brothers. They were placed in the Home because their parents killed their new born baby and as a result the father was in prison and the mother was sent to an institution for the feebleminded. With the loss of both parents these children had to be taken care of by the Strong County Welfare Department. Strong County does not have a county children's home and consequently they try to place all neglected and dependent children in foster homes or in children's institutions in nearby counties. This was the reason the Strong County Welfare Department sought out the superintendent of the West Liberty Home to discover whether these three brothers could be placed there. Arrangements were made to accept these children and they were admitted on 4/24/46.

Two and a half years later the Strong County Welfare Department took George and his brothers out of the West Liberty Home and placed them with private families in another county. This arrangement did not work out
satisfactorily and other plans had to be made. Therefore the Strong welfare officer called the West Liberty Home superintendent to ask if they could once again accept George.

George was accepted for the second time on 2/4/49 and was brought to the Home by a Strong County social worker. The worker explained that George is feebleminded, but he cannot be committed to an institution for the feebleminded until he has passed his sixth birthday. The County of Strong agreed to pay for George's support while he remained at the West Liberty Home.

Case #3

Betty F.          Born 1/10/36          Admitted 9/14/49
Phillip F.        " 6/3/40            "
Sylvia F.         " 4/16/42            "

In May of 1949 the superintendent received a letter from the minister of the Mennonite Mexican Mission in Detroit asking if it would be possible to place a half dozen Mexican children in the West Liberty Home for an indefinite period of time. The letter gave the names and ages of each child. A reply was sent stating that only four children could be received because the Home did not accept children under four years of age nor over fifteen years of age. The reply letter also inquired about the educational status of each child, because if they were to remain in West Liberty they would in all likelihood go to school in the fall. The superintendent also requested that the children have medical examinations by their family physician.
While the superintendent was on vacation in June he visited the minister of the Mission to get further information about the children. A home visit was made in which the aunt of the children was present, but not the children. It was disclosed that the parents of the children were not in a position to support them. The mother was in jail and no one knew the whereabouts of the father. At this time the children were living with the grandmother and aunt who were members of the Mexican Mission.

On the 11th of July the minister from the Mission drove the three children to the West Liberty Home accompanied by their aunt and older brother. Since the aunt and grandparents were not in a position to contribute toward the support of the children, the superintendent decided to waive payment for their support.

Case #4

Irene D. Born 8/22/38
Admitted 3/25/48
Discharged
Readmitted 8/23/49
Discharged 1/25/50

When Irene was accepted the first time she came to the Home with four brothers and sisters. The Welfare Department of Morrow County, Ohio asked placement for these children who were then the charges of the county after the parents were determined unfit to care for them. Morrow County authorities had to make arrangements outside the county because they do not have a county children's home.

The following statement is a quotation from a letter that was sent to the West Liberty Home by the Judge of the county.
"Irene will not cause you any trouble whatever, she is of the motherly type and really has a lot of good sense and I for one cannot understand where she has acquired the ability that she has shown up to the present time through and by virtue of the poor training and environment available to her in her home. Irene is not overly bright in her school work, she requires a great deal of time to concentrate and to come to a solution; however, I am sure that Irene can, through good wholesome environment and proper home conditions and a good Christian training, learn to take care of average household duties to a considerable degree of satisfaction. Although our physician has rated Irene as a borderline case, I am sure she will snap out of any difficulty that may arise for her."

Irene was in the Home only a short time when she was placed in a foster home in Morrow County, by the Morrow County Welfare Department. Then in August of 1949 the foster parents did not care to have her any longer, so the superintendent was called again by Morrow County authorities to ascertain whether or not the West Liberty Home would again accept Irene. This request was granted and once again Irene became a resident of the West Liberty Home. Her support was taken care of by the Morrow County Welfare Department.

Case #5

Norma T. Born 5/7/40 Admitted 5/28/49
Kenneth T. " 5/27/41 "  "

The superintendent received a phone call from Mr. T. asking if it would be possible to place his children in the Home for a short time. Mr. T. called from Youngstown, Ohio, and he was asked to come to the Home to talk the matter over. Both Mr. and Mrs. T. came to the Home and explained that they had to place their children temporarily because they did not have a place to live. They had been recommended to the West Liberty Home by the superintendent of the Champaign County Home in
Urbana. Mr. and Mrs. T. lived at Glendale, a summer resort, in Urbana and wanted to move back to their home in Youngstown, Ohio, but were unable to find a place to live. They now wanted to place the children until they found housing in Youngstown. Two medical forms were given them to be filled out by a physician and as they left the Home they were told to bring the children down the following day.

After the couple left, the superintendent talked with the superintendent of the Champaign County Home to get further information. He was informed that Mr. and Mrs. T. left Kenny and Norma with a woman at Glendale and promised to be back for them within a week. When they failed to return at the end of the week, the woman called the police authorities and the children were then taken to the County Children's Home. Mr. and Mrs. T. were immediately informed of this move and were told that they would be taken to court if they did not come for their children. They hurried down from Youngstown and sought arrangements that would be satisfactory to all concerned. They inquired of the County Home superintendent and he referred them to the West Liberty Home.

These children were accepted after they had their medical examination and the parents agreed to pay the support of Kenny and Norma.

Case #6

Larry S. Born 2/9/43 Admitted 7/1/49
Karen S. " 11/29/41 " "

Domestic difficulties had slowly been bringing the S. family to a complete breakdown when the probation officer of Urbana told Mr. S. to place the children or else the county authorities would take custody
of them. Mr. S. told the officers he would try to place them at the West Liberty Home after the probation officer recommended this. Mr. S. had heard of the Home, so he telephoned the superintendent to see if his children could be placed there until the family situation could be straightened out. Family matters were discussed by Mr. S. and it was decided to send the children to the West Liberty Home after both children had physical examinations. After temporary custody papers were signed, Mr. S. agreed to pay for the support of his two children.

Case #7

William D. Born 10/27/43 Admitted 8/17/49
Ruth D. " 7/16/46 "

The local funeral director got in touch with the superintendent and told him a young widower would like to place his children for adoption. Arrangements were made for the father to speak with the superintendent, and a few days later Mr. D. came to the Home with the funeral director. During the interview Mr. D. informed the superintendent that his wife died of tuberculosis only a few months previous to this meeting and now he was trying to find a place where he could place his children because he was unable to care for them and neither could his married sister. Now he was ready to place them for adoption, but he said that he promised his wife that he would see to it that they would be placed together if they were placed. He informed the superintendent that he was employed for a railroad company but the work was of a temporary nature, and because of this he would not be in a position to pay for the support. A few evenings later he came to the Home with x-ray reports on the children
that revealed a negative report. Mr. D. said that the physician had recommended periodic x-rays taken of the children after they were placed.

After several other visits to the Home with his children Mr. D. signed temporary custody papers for his children and the children were admitted.

**Case #8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Admitted</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mary M.</td>
<td>9/15/41</td>
<td>11/19/49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Betty Ann M.</td>
<td>8/27/43</td>
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Shortly after the death of Mr. M., Mrs. M. placed her two children at the West Liberty Home. They were there a short time until Mrs. M. had them placed with her sister. This did not work out well because Mrs. M's sister did not have too much room in her small house and she neglected the two girls. Mrs. M. decided to place the girls again at the West Liberty Home. She called by phone and it was agreed to place her children there after they had physical examinations. After the examinations Mrs. M. brought her two girls from Lima, Ohio for placement on the 19th of November. Mrs. M. agreed to pay full support for her children while they remained at the Home.
Comparison of Intake with Criteria

In making a comparison between the criteria set up in the previous section and the cases that were accepted at the West Liberty Children's Home in 1949, the writer became aware of the problems that might arise because of the paucity of recorded material that is available at the West Liberty Home. While many progressive institutions keep extensive records on each child, the West Liberty Home has not come to the place where recorded material is a source of information to help the child. Since extensive written material is not available on these cases accepted at the West Liberty Home it is necessary to depend primarily upon memory to discover just what went into the decision of accepting these children for institutional care.

This section will be devoted to a comparison of each point of the established criteria with the intake policies as practiced at the West Liberty Home.

Step number one in intake, as presented by the Child Welfare League, was partially fulfilled by the administration at the West Liberty Home. This criterion stated that:

The referral request should be carefully considered in terms of source of request, the picture of the immediate situation, and the kind of help which the applicant believes at the time to be necessary or desirable.

The first part of this criterion was adhered to because in all cases the picture of the immediate situation was covered by the superintendent with the parents as was the kind of help desired by the parents, (but to

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what extent it was discussed is questionable. However, the second portion of this initial step seems to have been totally eliminated. This portion refers to the use of the Social Service Exchange.¹ The Exchange is composed of a central office where social agencies register the names of their clients, family composition and residence, so new agencies calling will know what agencies have given service. In the State of Ohio the state legislature has made provision for each county to have a Social Service Exchange to facilitate the spread of pertinent information among social agencies to better help their clients. The Social Service Exchange is not limited only to Ohio, but they are found in many of our leading communities where there are two or more agencies who desire to discover to what extent other social agencies were used by their clients.

The second point of comparison reveals that the West Liberty Home was only partially functioning according to accepted standards because while the Home usually informed the applicant of the facilities that were available to children, it did not question the need for placement. This criterion stated that:

The applicant, whether the parent, relative, another social agency, the court, or a hospital, should be informed of the resources of the agency and its methods of giving service. As early as possible, the child's own parents should be seen to help them better understand and decide if foster family care is what they want for their child.

Because of the many nearby county welfare departments who periodically used the Home, the resources of the Home had been made known to some social agencies before the children were placed. However, the resources that

were made known to some social agencies were not comprehensive because it seemed that the Home provided inexpensive care for the children and that was what the county welfare departments were primarily interested in. When the weekly rate of payment at the West Liberty Home is compared with other institutions, it will be revealed that the cost of care at the West Liberty Home usually is from $3 to $10 a week cheaper than many institutions. In one respect it is commendable for the Home to have such inexpensive rates, but when the Home appears to be exploited by other agencies, then is the time to become concerned.

In some of the more progressive institutions like the Lakeside Children's Center in Milwaukee, the institution publishes a small booklet¹ that presents pictorially and verbally the facilities available at the institution. This attractive little pamphlet is given to children who are to be placed in the institution, so they can get a better picture as to what to look forward to in the Center setting. With the use of this simple tool the parents and children now have a better understanding of the resources that the Home has to offer.

The second portion of this criterion did not enter into the discussion to any great extent because the Home has seldom been filled to capacity in recent years and a request is seldom refused. If a frank discussion was made between the administration and the parents, concerning the meaning and significance of placement, then the parents might have considered an alternative to placement in solving their problems. Such

alternatives will be discussed and elaborated upon more thoroughly in the next criterion. Often after a discussion of placement and its meaning, parents will withdraw their request for placement and use other services. One agency reports that only 20% of all applications resulted in actual placement.¹

Point three appears to have been absent in the intake procedure at the Home because the administration did not understand the available social services that could be had in the child's own home. This criterion stated that:

All possibilities of service to the child and family in their own home should be reviewed, and also whether some other type of care, such as placement in an institution, may be better suited to their needs.

Under the Social Security Act of 1935 the Federal government made provision for individual states to create an organization called Aid to Dependent Children, to help mothers and children who receive no support from the father. This governmental agency will provide financial support to take care of the family needs such as food, clothing, shelter, and utilities. Even though this cash allotment is not a large amount it does supply the basic needs of living to keep the family together.

Some community agencies also render a Homemaking Service² to provide a homemaker for a period of time in an endeavor to keep the family intact. This type of service provides a qualified staff member to keep house


while the mother of the family is incapacitated because of hospitalization or other temporary family disruptions.

These two avenues of service are not the only social agencies equipped to meet family needs, but we see other agencies that can help under certain circumstances. Some of these are: Family Service Association, Child Guidance Clinic, Housing Authority, Bureau of Juvenile Research and other agencies that have facilities to aid parents as they attempt to cope with their problems.

In discussing the fourth point, which revolves around the area of relationships between people, we feel that the West Liberty Home did not completely reach the stage of adequate relationships between the family, the child and the agency. This criterion states that:

During the intake study a relationship should be established between the family, the child and the agency that will enable the parents and child to consider their problem freely.

The shortcoming in this area was due to the fact that the length of time involved in establishing a relationship was lacking. It is difficult to establish personal relationships when the parent is seen only once or twice or when the children are never seen, as was often the case, until they came to the Home for placement. It is also difficult to understand and appreciate the family situation unless a home visit was made to see the conditions and circumstances under which the problems developed. Therefore, we must admit that the time element in building

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up a working relationship was lacking because of the seventeen children admitted to the Home only four had been seen at the Home prior to actual placement and only three had been visited in their own home.

Casework as practiced today in an institution is based upon personal relationships. It is the caseworker who studies the home situation and meets several times with each person involved in placement. This is done to provide a continuity of relationships that will cover the length of time in study, in actual placement and finally in discharge. With such a continuing relationship the child has found a friend in the caseworker who knows the past experiences as related to the present and is planning for future welfare of the child.¹

An analysis of point five reveals that the West Liberty Home did not make as thorough an intake study as should have been made. This one criterion states that:

It is important that wherever possible both parents and the child should participate in the intake study.

In this area of participation we see that the child had little or no part in planning for his future welfare. This also relates back to the previous point of the building up of a relationship between the agency and child prior to placement. In the majority of cases accepted in 1949 at the Home, the child did not become acquainted with the Home and its activities until the day he was placed. This kind of an experience can be difficult for a child and in some instances it was. However, the experience the child has of separation can be mitigated if the child had

taken an active part in placement with his parents and the agency.

The sixth element that is discussed, involves the physical and mental development of the children as it relates to placement. This aspect is stated as follows:

Medical examinations should be a routine procedure of the agency. Psychological testing should be done whenever there is question about the child's mental development.

Even though the West Liberty Home does make it a practice to have each child examined by his family physician prior to placement, it does not make full use of the medical records. In two instances in 1949 children were admitted to the Home who had physical disorders that were not cared for properly. In both instances the medical examinations revealed these physical disorders, but no follow-up work was done immediately to help the children. One girl with an infected, running ear did not receive treatment until several months after she was admitted. The other girl had a systolic heart murmur which the administration didn't know about until four months after admission. In both instances these girls might have enjoyed better health if their condition was reckoned with when they came to the Home and if their physical condition was discussed during the intake study.

The only knowledge of the mental development of the child who is admitted to the Home is discovered in the child's progress in school. This is usually a fair indication of the child's mental capacity and his emotional well being. It was discovered that of the seventeen children accepted at the Home in 1949 fourteen of them were at least one year

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behind in school when compared with others their own age. There might be several reasons for this unfortunate situation, but it is a reality and must be reckoned with.

One reasonable way of ascertaining the child's mental development is to give a psychological test by a competent psychologist. This is the general practice in many children's institutions because it has been discovered that it is a valid tool in giving help to children. Some of the larger institutions like Bellefaire in Cleveland which employs two psychologists, develop a program for their children to determine their progress in an institutional setting. In such an institution a psychological testing program is not only a part of the intake study, but it becomes part of the treatment process.

Point number seven brings into focus another weakness in the realm of intake, namely, that of a lack of an experienced case worker on the staff who has the time and ability to make an adequate study. This criterion states that:

The intake service should be carried and supervised by experienced case workers with particular sensitivity, understanding, and awareness of how confused and guilty the parents may be in considering whether they should give up the responsibility for their child.

As we look into the ability of the case worker we must recognize that the personal characteristics that one should have often cannot be obtained solely from a formal education. Basically the characteristics of a social worker are acquired through experience and personal growth of which a formal education is a part. One of the many things that a formal education does for a social worker is to point up other resources
that might be used to help the child under consideration. With a wider knowledge of community resources the worker is better able to meet the needs of the child. Besides acquainting the case worker with community resources, a formal education also prepares the worker to perform other duties that will facilitate aid to the client. Two of these major duties are interviewing\(^1\) and recording,\(^2\) both of which play a large part in the life and work of a case worker. The art of interviewing relates back to point four which refers to human relationships, while recording relates to the whole process of making and keeping adequate records on each child and his family, because the service can be geared to the child's needs.

Relative to the duties of the case worker is the time element that is involved in making an adequate intake study. This element is a real factor at the West Liberty Home because the children come from out of state as well as from in the state. If the case worker is to make an appropriate study he will have to spend much time traveling in order to visit the individual homes. If such time cannot be expended in home visitation, then the intake study will suffer.

In the final point as proposed by the Child Welfare League we can say that the Home, as a social agency, has taken responsibilities that are questionable when the welfare of the child is considered. This criterion states that:

The intake service should be the responsibility of the placement agency even when allocation or referral is made by another agency.

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When other agencies used the Home for placement of their children, the Home seldom received the report of an intake study from the agency, and the Home never made an intake study when a child was referred from other agencies. Since the other social agencies desired placement of their children, the administration of the Home took for granted that institutional placement was the proper course of action. Whether the Home accepts a child from a social agency or directly from the parent, an intake study must be made to discover whether the child needs placement and whether the agency has the facilities for meeting his needs. This has direct bearing upon this criterion and it should be incorporated in the intake procedure.

One of the questionable responsibilities revolves around the fact that the Home has accepted parental responsibility for the child for an indefinite period of time without ascertaining whether another agency could do a more adequate job. There are other agencies in the state of Ohio that can do a more adequate job in the giving of custodial care and treatment. Yet this was seldom discussed between the administration and the parents.

This then leads us to the additional points that we felt should also be considered in an intake study. The first addition is stated as follows:

In reference to the financial responsibilities of the parents in payment toward services rendered to their children in foster home care, it is felt that parents should realize their obligation toward the care of their children.

The Home in twelve instances out of seventeen has asked the parents or guardians to contribute toward the support of the child. Of the five
not required to pay, two were to be placed in a free foster home as soon as one was available and three were to receive free care because of the financial burden already placed upon the relatives of these children. In no instance was there an indication that parents pay on the sliding scale as based on their income and family obligation. This plan has been fostered by several agencies. ¹ When parents fall in arrears in their payments, there is little pressure put to bear on them in order to get them up to date on payments. Court action has never been taken to collect payments nor was the child discharged because of his parent's inability to pay.

In respect to payment for support by the parents for the child, the basic understanding should not be that of being mercenary and forcing the parents to pay, but to help the relationship between the parents and child. This factor acts as a tangible tie between parent and child and it should be kept alive as long as possible without doing damage to either the parents or child.

The second point that was added to the list of criteria as presented by the Child Welfare League, pertained to discussion of discharge and visitation during the intake study. This was stated as follows:

The second area that should be amplified is that of a discussion between worker and parents concerning the discharge of the child and visitation while the child is in the institution.

From what is known of the intake study used by the Home one would discover that the area of discharge was not discussed thoroughly. It was not infrequent to have children in previous years come to the Home

for an indefinite period of time and then stay on for several years without specific action taken as to discharge. However, in 1949 most children were admitted without previous discussion about discharge plans and as a result some children appeared to be disturbed because they knew of no definite arrangements concerning their discharge.

Many children's institutions have been used by parents and county welfare agencies as a "dumping ground" for undesirable children. This is true of the West Liberty Home and it is known to be so by the state visitor from the Division of Social Administration and also by businessmen in the town of West Liberty. This "dumping ground" concept usually develops when the institution exists to meet only the needs of parents or guardians and not the needs of the child. When such children are placed, they remain in an institution because their parents or guardians are satisfied with the arrangements and have found a solution for their problems. This sordid business of using the children's institution as a "dumping ground" can be partially eliminated if concrete discharge plans were made during the intake study. If discharge plans were formulated between the Home and parents during the intake process, then there would cease to exist the institutionalized child who has spent 8 or 10 years in an institution suffering irreparable personality damage.

Related to this area of discharge is the whole field of visitation which is far from being a systematic procedure. In one respect the sporadic visitation of parents cannot be avoided because in eleven out of seventeen cases the parents live anywhere from 50 to 300 miles from the Home. This is a reality factor that parents can hide behind and often do. Yet the institution keeps alive the temptation of parents
not visiting their children, because children continue to come to the Home from several hundred miles away. The Home either has to make definite visitation plans with the parents or relatives during the intake study or else they should refuse to accept children who have to come too great a distance. Again we must recognize that the Home should exist to help the child and not aggravate his condition by helping him sever his connections with his family which time and distance tend to do.

Not only do parents find it difficult to visit the Home, but children are denied the privilege of visiting their own home because their home is so far away. Some children's institutions permit children to visit their parents regularly\(^1\) and because of these visits the family tie is kept firm. As it now stands at the West Liberty Home, most children do not make home visits until vacation (if they make visits at all) and the children make the staff aware of the fact that they want to visit their parents.

Now that ten major features of an intake study have been considered, the writer would like to present certain aspects of responsibility that the Home takes upon itself each time a child is admitted.

One of the more serious questions of responsibility and one that is difficult to answer is, what happens to the development of a normal child when thrust into a situation in which at least 20% of the children are mentally deficient\(^2\) and 15% are physically handicapped?\(^3\) To take a normal

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3 Medical reports at the Home.
child and place him in this type of environment is a responsibility that cannot be taken lightly. Two other questions that could be asked concerning the relative responsibility of the Home are: does the Home have facilities to help all children coming to the Home, develop as normal children, and does the Home have a staff and child care program for this development? If these questions are to be answered in light of the responsibility the agency has, then one might question the advisability of accepting all the children the Home did during 1949.

Since most of the material on the seventeen children came directly from the superintendent and not from recorded material, this comparison that was attempted in this section was not placed on a statistical basis. This is regrettable because the comparison cannot be considered exact. However, an honest attempt has been made by the writer to present the facts as he has seen them.
CHAPTER III

CONCLUSIONS

This concluding chapter will contain recommendations directed toward alleviating some of the existing conditions in the Home that have been caused to a large extent by both an inadequate intake study program and an inadequate program of child care. As the writer looks at the situation he feels that an intake study program can only be based upon a clearcut statement of purpose of the Home, and its aims and objectives. This, however, can be accomplished providing the need for the existence of the Home has been established. When the need and purpose have been established, then an intake study program can be carried out effectively providing the Home has a treatment program capable of using the intake study material as a starting point to help the child.

In the opinion of the writer the first recommendation is to establish the need for a children's institution in Logan County, Ohio. If a survey can be made of the Mennonite Church and Logan County and counties adjacent to it, to determine just what the needs are, then the Mennonite Child Welfare Committee can plan a program of child care that will meet the needs of children who can benefit from institutional care. It hardly seems reasonable to continue the operation of a children's home when the Home no longer can meet specific community needs. If it is decided that there exists no valid reason for a children's home, then it might be conceivable to focus attention in the area of foster family care or care for the child in his own home.
After the need for the existence of the Home has been established, then the writer feels that a re-statement of agency purpose has to be made to meet those needs, because without a definite and explicit purpose no program can function properly to meet specific needs. The purpose of the Home at present is, as stated by L. L. Swartzendruber:

...to reach the unfortunate and dependent boys and girls and to give them such physical care and moral training as will enable us to reach the soul of the child...

This statement is good as far as it goes, but there is a vagueness about the words "unfortunate" and "dependent" that should be made clear. It should be recognized at this point that not all unfortunate and dependent children need institutional care. Therefore, the statement of purpose should contain a more specific description of the type or types of unfortunate and dependent children the Home feels it can help. Included in the statement of purpose should be: geographical limitations from which the child should come, age of the child, physical and mental development of the child and other elements that are of importance when basic concepts of child care are considered.

Once the Home has a more comprehensive statement of purpose, then an intake policy program can be developed in light of the aims and objectives as stated in the purpose. This intake program should meet with the approval of both the national child caring agencies such as: the Child Welfare League of America or the Children's Bureau, and of the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities. The formulation of a set of

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intake policies should follow point by point the criteria set up in a previous chapter unless a better set is found.

When these three steps have been taken, then the task will be to develop facilities that will use the intake study as a means to help each child who enters the Home. At this point the writer recommends that a staff be employed that is capable of carrying out this program, and that they receive specific enjoinders as to policy regarding the care or treatment of each child. This can be carried out satisfactorily providing there are: explicit descriptions of executive and personnel requirement, statements of function for the staff, statements on remun-eration, leaves, vacation, pensions, medical care for the staff and other areas that are relevant in personnel practices.

The reason for the inclusion of these personnel practices is to provide the staff with a sense of security so that the staff can work with greater confidence and assurance that will eventually be transmitted to the child. In every respect the needs of the children are of primary importance and if a more secure staff can be procured, then the children will receive better treatment.

If these four recommendations can be activated, then the writer feels that the West Liberty Home will do a more effective task in meeting the needs of the children and the community it serves. When this comes to pass then the status of the Home will be raised to a place where it will be recognized as a child treatment center. However, it will not be made into a utopian situation overnight, but will grow through the years to its rightful place in the field of child care.
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APPENDIX

INTAKE STUDY OF CHILDREN ADMITTED TO
THE WEST LIBERTY HOME DURING 1949

1. Name                      2. Address                      3. Age upon Admission
4. Number of siblings       5. Number of siblings at Institution
6. Admission date           7. Reason for placement
8. Source of referral       9. Initial contact with Guardian: Correspondence__, Personal Interview__, Other__.
10. Other agency contacts
11. Financial arrangements
12. Discharge arrangements
13. Physical condition
14. Physical defects
15. Mental status (I.Q.)
16. Educational status: average__, above average__, below average__.
17. Distance from own home
18. Frequency of parental visits