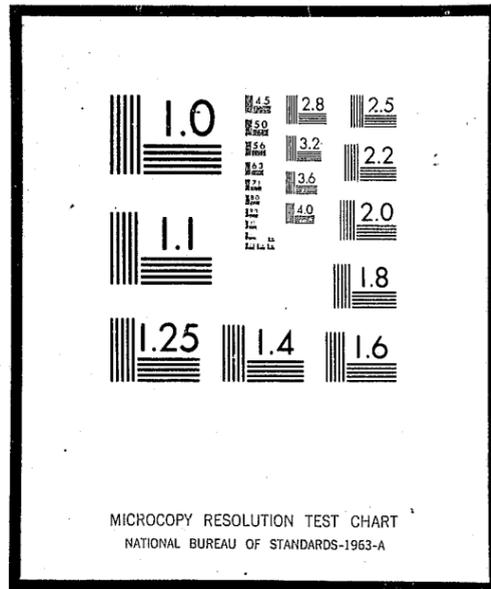


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THE DENBIGH GROUP FOSTER HOME

AN EVALUATION

JUNE, 1975

The following report was prepared through funding provided by Montgomery County and the Governor's Justice Commission under Sub-grant Contract SE-432-72A, "Denbigh Group Foster Home".

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SE-432-72A

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I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF EVALUATION REPORT

Denbigh Group Foster Home is a group foster home for four boys and 2 girls, aged 14-18. The major objective of the home is to provide an environment where the children can gain an increased sense of self-worth and confidence which will lead to constructive participation in society. The children live in the home with the houseparents and staff associates as a family and are provided with experiences and professional help designed to achieve the stated goals.

The evaluation has focused on the type of client served, the need for the service, and how well the client is being served.

The client served is a youth between the ages of 14 and 18 whose behavior and home environment have led to the decision to remove the child from the natural home. Objective criteria have been established to determine eligibility for admission to the home, but these criteria are only loosely applied. A greater reliance has been placed on the way the child seems to fit with the current composition in the home. This emphasis on selecting the child who fits in well may be one of the significant factors contributing to the success of the home.

Recently almost all of the referrals have come from Montgomery County Child Care Services. While this is a convenient source, the intake committee should be encouraged to notify all agencies in the county who might have potential clients, and then act on the cases returned without regard to source of referral.

The need for the services of the home was determined by taking a

sample of cases from the files of Juvenile Probation and looking for cases that remained eligible after rigorously applying the objective criteria. When the results of the sample were extrapolated to the entire population of cases during a single calendar year it was inferred there would be 80 eligible cases. This was considered as a conservative estimate since the criteria are not rigorously applied in the selection procedure and the records of Child Care Services were not included. Because of the number of eligible cases discovered, and the lack of competing services it is recommended that the establishment of additional group foster homes be encouraged.

How well the client is being served was determined by interviews with agencies that come in contact with the home, the houseparents, and the residents, by observation of the home operation and by testing the residents.

The buildings that are there provide shelter, but are not really adequate for the purpose they serve. Eventually these buildings should be extensively remodeled or replaced.

The full time houseparents are performing their roles effectively. The physical needs of the children are well met, and the houseparents demonstrate their concern for each child. Neither parent holds outside employment so both are available whenever circumstances dictate their presence. School officials particularly noted the rapid response and genuine concern that was present.

The other positions in the home have not been filled as well. Some alternative needs to be found which will give the houseparents much needed help and relief. Some suggested alternatives might be to use

newly retired individuals or couples, attempt to fill the positions with graduate students in counseling, social work, etc., or change the structure of the positions to create alternative houseparents. Whatever model is decided upon, the employment and effective use of staff associates is one of the most pressing problems to be resolved.

A structure of rewards for good behaviors and punishments for inappropriate acts has been instituted which seems to be rigorously and fairly administered. Each resident is aware of the penalty he must pay for misbehavior. This method of controlling behavior is consistent with most of the current thinking in the analysis of behavior. In the future it would be desirable if there were some way to expand the use of these principles to modify other behaviors such as the constructive use of free time, and the establishment of long-term goals.

Since it appears that a process has been established to effect change, the next logical question is, has the process been effective? Any answer to this question must be tempered with the knowledge that the tenure in the home is a relatively short one. None of the children now in the home have been there as long as a year.

Even with this limitation there are trends which indicate no worse than maintaining the status quo for some residents in some areas to significant growth for many in most areas studied. None are currently in a worse situation than when they were originally placed in the home. Two are no longer in the home. One is living as a foster child of a couple for whom she was previously employed. The second has returned to a vastly improved situation in the natural home.

Of the remaining four, one may soon be placed in the care of

relatives, and another is now talking frequently with a mother where communication has not been possible for years.

All six have remained in school which is very impressive to Upper Merion School officials. Attendance at school has been adequate, grades are passing for all by possibly one.

There have been no significant encounter with law enforcement agencies. While there was some experimenting with drugs for a short time this now seems to have ceased.

In only one area of the psychological testing was there any significant change. While the difference was statistically significant it was still small enough that results need to be interpreted cautiously. With the most cautious interpretation it can still be stated that the change was in the desired direction.

Based upon the evidence available it is concluded that the experience in Denbigh Group Foster Home has had the effect of halting a slide toward undesirable behavior and has begun to turn these individuals toward behaviors which eventually should lead toward an increased sense of self-worth, a greater freedom for constructive participation in society, and to a reintegration in the community.

## II PROJECT ACTIVITIES

In a project like that of the Denbigh Group Foster Home it is difficult to separate project activities from project results. For this reason in this section project activities will be described as they are presented in the Denbigh Group Foster Home Proposal deviations from the proposal are part of the results and findings and are presented in Section IV. The remainder of this section is composed of quotations from the Denbigh Group Foster Home Proposal.

### INTRODUCTION

Denbigh Group Foster Home is a group foster home for six boys and girls, 14 through 18 years of age. Sponsored by a group of interested citizens from Montgomery, Delaware and Philadelphia Counties in cooperation with the Denbigh Conference Center, a facility of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, this program intends to accept children on the basis of behavioral characteristics rather than labels, to provide high quality care in a supportive and caring community, and to nurture a healthy sense of independence and responsible decision-making in its young people.

The Group Foster Home Committee considers Denbigh a unique resource for young people whose behavior indicates they could benefit from this program. It possesses adequate existing facilities, the strong support of its Advisory Board, and access to a network of volunteers in the community and in local parishes. With the help of volunteer individuals and families, the Committee hopes these young people can rediscover

their ability to maintain normal healthy relationships more quickly than in other institutions.

As a part of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, the Committee has had the advice and consultation of Episcopal Community Services and will continue to draw upon their expertise. While it has access to professional resources, it is composed of amateurs. Some have had experiences with young people placed in their homes by the courts and others have struggled to find families willing to care for young people - but none are professionally trained. As amateurs, the Committee will be able to assist other community groups in developing similar projects and has made that a high priority. Many parishes own large rectories, some of which are no longer needed for their clergy. These parishes are now being encouraged to make these buildings available to meet pressing community needs. The Committee sees itself in a unique position to assist them in this process.

#### PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

Our interest is in boys and girls, aged 14-18, who have already come in contact with the law or whose activities could make them subject to arrest. In terms of present legal definitions, this category can include individuals classified as incorrigible/delinquent or dependent/neglected. We mean to narrow it to include only persons who have engaged in what are coming to be known as "victimless crimes" (i.e., truancy, runaway, drug use, sexual "promiscuity"). These types of negative behavior are damaging primarily to the young person who does them; they do not represent an immediate threat to the lives or property of others.

One kind of experience that such persons share is a lack of success in their immediate social relationships (family and school in most cases). Environmental inadequacies - low self esteem, lack of confidence in one's ability to "do for oneself." Some individuals set out to prove themselves at the same time. If they push their rejection far enough, society will reject them - "put them away".

It is generally recognized that such persons are almost always the products of environments that are in some way faulty - they deserve help rather than punishment, their problem is also society's problem. Help has been forthcoming by way of a myriad of agencies, public and private, foster placement agencies, reform schools, treatment facilities and the like. The cost of care outside the natural family is high; the amount of money spent on the effort is impressive. Unfortunately, the results are often less impressive.

This has to do, at least primarily, with the fact that treatment or care involve separation from the community, which reinforces negative feelings about the workaday world. It also has to do with the large size of institutions, which makes identification with their purpose or boundaries unlikely. The need is for a setting which can support young people in their transition from dependency to independent, yet responsible, behavior. Evidence from juvenile courts, welfare departments, runaway houses and private families in Philadelphia, Montgomery and Delaware Counties indicates the number of children who need such an environment is large.

#### METHOD

The emphasis in care for these persons will be laid upon the

relationships within the home - between the young persons themselves and between the young person and the adult staff. Since these adolescents have generally had difficulty relating to adults, the relationship to houseparents and assisting staff will be critical. The staff must accomplish what many have not, i.e., a relationship in which the child gains security in consistent loving concern, realistic and fair boundaries for behavior, and a willingness on the part of the adult to share his/her life in meaningful ways with the child. The emphasis then will be upon the quality of relationships within the home. All the children will be encouraged to test new behavior and to acquire new skills for living.

While the internal relationships within the home are intended to be the primary method of care and rehabilitation, professional resources, including psychiatrists, psychologists, and case workers, will be utilized to diagnose, treat and direct those areas of the children's lives which require special attention. To the extent possible, the home will draw upon the appropriate professional services available in the counties from which the children come. Where they are not available, these will be obtained through contract or contribution from qualified professionals in this area.

The program of the home will be structured to assist the young person in participating in as many meaningful activities as possible. Educational evaluations will be made to determine the most appropriate setting for the child to continue his/her own growth and development. Local high schools will be utilized in whole or in part, and home bound instruction will be utilized where necessary. In every case in which it

is judged helpful, adults and peers will be available to assist and encourage the young person in his/her education.

Beside getting the young person involved in an educational program, the staff will assist the young person in finding appropriate full or parttime jobs. It is through meaningful activity and a reasonable number of successes in them that young people gain confidence.

The normal care expected for any child in a home will be provided for these young people. Medical and dental examinations will be normal procedure for acceptance in the program. The children will be given adequate clothing, entertainment and personal allowances and support in the decisions for their expenditure.

Few group foster homes presently admit boys and girls. And there are understandable reasons for this. We feel that if the risks involved are well enough understood, however, they are worth taking for the sake of the possible benefits to be derived from a co-educational situation. One of the important relationships being tested in adolescent years is with persons of the opposite sex. If a healthy peer relationship can be established there, the child will have a much better basis for healthy sexual relationships in later years. If persons from the opposite sex are excluded from the primary healing environment in the child's life, adjustment becomes more difficult and the potential for exploitive relationships in later years is heightened.

We believe that integration into other communities and relationships is desirable as soon as possible. Through community and church contacts, we feel able to make these available to the young people and to assist them in the process of testing these contacts. Evaluation

of the program and the children's progress will be solicited from appropriate county agencies. Internal evaluation will be carried out regularly by the Board of Directors in cooperation with the directors and outside personnel.

### III EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

#### EVALUATION PLAN

In this section the activities and rationale proposed for the evaluation are described and have focused on achieving three separate purposes: To determine if there is a need for group foster homes, to determine the type of client served by the Denbigh Group Foster Home, and to determine how well the client is being served.

#### Type of Client Served

The type of client served by the Denbigh Group Foster Home is defined in the proposal as "boys and girls aged 15-17 who have already come in contact with the law or whose activities make them subject to arrest...who have engaged in...victimless crimes."

This evaluation has attempted to define:

- a. The nature of the misbehavior that led to placement in the home.
- b. The background of each individual including other agency placements.
- c. The means by which placement was arranged.

With only 6 subjects this has been done by taking case histories and then searching for common characteristics which will lead to a definition of the client actually served.

#### Need For Service

The need for the type of service offered by the Denbigh Group Foster Home Inc. was determined in the following manner:

1. A systematic random sample of 500 cases was drawn from the files of Juvenile Probation.
2. These cases were studied to determine the percentage who fit the profile of the client of the Denbigh Home.
3. A survey was made of other institutions to determine the number and type of places available for this type of individual.

It is assumed that these individuals need help and if no spaces are available elsewhere, it will be concluded that there is a need. If spaces are available elsewhere, a need for these services would need to be determined.

#### How Well The Client Is Being Served

The objective of the project is to produce "a child whose sense of self worth and confidence is significantly enhanced."

While this goal is rather global and difficult to objectify, the methods employed suggest more specific goals in achieving the desired objective. These goals are:

1. Provide a home atmosphere where rehabilitation can take place.
2. Provide necessary professional help.
3. Have child participate in "meaningful" activities.
4. Have child involved in an educational program.
5. Have child get and hold a job.
6. Have child spend money "wisely".
7. Have child develop healthy (non-exploitive) relationships with the opposite sex.

This is central to the success of this project and is also most difficult to evaluate. What constitutes a "good" home? A good home for this evaluation is defined as a home in which:

- a. Parents (responsible adults) are present and make "good" models for the young people.
- b. Physical needs are adequately provided.
- c. Each individual has specific responsibilities in the maintenance of the home.
- d. Limits are agreed on and sanctions are imposed when limits are over stepped.
- e. Each individual can have confidence that he is accepted and can look upon the home as a place where he can be himself.
- f. Each young person can rely upon the support of the parents at critical times. This does not imply approval of misbehavior but does indicate an active positive regard for each individual.

While this list is incomplete these have formed the basis of the evaluation of the home which has been accomplished through direct observation.

Goal number 2. Provide necessary professional help. The competency of the professional help was assumed. For purposes of this report their activities are described and their effectiveness determined by the remaining goals which focus on the product. In addition, the subjects completed an instrument from which self esteem could be inferred. This instrument was composed of the L, F, K and Pd scales of the MMPI. The instruments were administered at the commencement of the evaluation

and again at the end. To determine if any change had taken place.

Goal number 3. Have child participate in meaningful activities.

This goal was evaluated by determining the involvement of each individual in hobbies, extracurricular school activities, self improvement projects (such as reading, grooming or other maintenance activities) and church and service activities.

Goal number 4. Have child involved in an educational program.

Involvement means more than enrollment. Effectiveness of involvement shall be assessed by attendance, grades earned, disciplinary actions taken, and honors or awards given.

Goal number 5. Have child get and hold a job. Getting a job is self-defined. Holding a job was defined as continuing to be employed until:

- a. a better job is obtained
- b. the need for the position no longer exists
- c. other productive activities (school athletics, etc.) compete and house parents agree with decision to terminate employment
- d. the end of this project

An individual shall not be considered to have held a job if:

- a. he is terminated for unreliability, incompetence, dishonesty, poor judgement, etc.
- b. he quits because he doesn't want the job

Goal number 6. Have child spend money wisely. Every individual with money is able to spend it. Determining the wisdom of the expenditure, however, depends on many factors.

The presence of a savings account, the accumulation of personal

effects, the absence of a need for "advances" are all viewed as wise use of money.

Goal number 7. Have child develop healthy, non-exploitive relationships with the opposite sex. The nature of the relationship with the opposite sex can best be directly observed within the home and relied heavily on anecdotal reports and direct observation.

#### EVALUATION PROCEDURE

##### Collection of Background Information

The records of each of the individuals in the home have been studied, each individual has been interviewed and tested and requests have been made for school records.

The test administered was composed of items from the L, F, K, and Pd scales of the MMPI. All completed the examination in a standard fashion except one individual. This individual is reading at about a third grade level so the items were read to him in order to get his responses.

Letters were prepared requesting school records. The purpose of obtaining this information was explained to each resident and signatures were obtained.

Interviews were conducted privately with each individual. The purposes of these interviews was to obtain reactions of each resident to his current status, to the home, the houseparents, and the school.

##### Collection of Data to Determine a Need for the Services of Denbigh Group Home

Prior to the actual collection of data meetings were arranged with

a representative of Juvenile Probation and with William Schlacter. The purpose of these meetings was to inquire if there was a perceived need for group foster homes, and to determine the nature of records so that a data collection plan could be established.

The interview with William Schlacter, which is described in detail later in this report, established a perceived need for group foster homes. He was also most co-operative in agreeing to make information available, and in suggesting sources of information.

Paul Michner was the representative from Juvenile Probation who met with me. He was most helpful in explaining the inter-relationship between agencies and in making records available to the project.

Based on these interviews the following data collection plan was established:

1. Only the records of Juvenile Probation would be used. This decision was based on the apparent practice of attempting to avoid labeling a child delinquent. This practice seems to then often move the child from the jurisdiction of Juvenile Probation to Child Care Services. Investigation of the records of both agencies may artificially inflate the number of qualified individuals. Also if a need could be established from the records of a single agency, then qualified cases from the other agency would simply swell the need.
2. The sample would be drawn from a roster of initial contact. This roster is composed of a record of the initial contact with each individual referred to Juvenile Probation. It

contains name, date of initial contact, offense, and final disposition. A sample of two pages per month, for a total of 24 pages containing records of 530 individual cases was drawn.

3. The 530 cases would be screened on the basis of offense.
4. A 50% random sample of the remaining cases would be drawn and individual files perused for previous offenses, other disqualifications, and final disposition.

The plan was carried out. Three additional visits were necessary to Juvenile Probation to collect data. The staff was most helpful in the accomplishment of this task. However, because this is an active agency there was some problem finding all of the records. All those records not in files or found with a reasonable search were assumed to be with the individual assigned to the case. This assumption was born out by the fact that none of the cases that were still open were located. To have searched for these cases was judged to be counter productive since the cases with complete information provided enough data to make the necessary inferences.

#### Observation of Home Operation

The first two visits to the home were by appointment, subsequent visits have all been without prior appointment. This arrangement has been agreeable with the houseparents and has allowed the evaluator the opportunity to observe the home in a more natural state. The purposes of the visits have been varied. Some of the visits were to peruse the files of each client, at other times the clients were tested.

#### IV PROJECT RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

##### RESULTS ANTICIPATED (Denbigh Group Foster Home Proposal)

The primary result we anticipate is a child whose sense of self worth and confidence in developing healthy relationships with others is significantly enhanced. By providing maximum support and realistic boundaries at a time when the child is testing both himself and others, we feel the continuance of anti-social behavior can be prevented and the child freed for constructive participation in society.

The program of the group foster home is intended to provide:

- a. an opportunity for young people to live in an environment small enough that they can understand it and their impact on it.
- b. exposure to adult models in roles other than judge, doctor, parent - adults caring for themselves, learning and growing, as well as caring for "clients".
- c. an opportunity for young persons to be active on their own behalf in planning their lives and deciding what they need rather than being diagnosed and treated.
- d. opportunities for acquaintance and involvement with other caring communities, young people and families.

A secondary result we anticipate, more dependent on opportunities and circumstances than the first but of major importance, is the nurturing of other group foster homes or group homes in the metropolitan area. We are convinced that the need is great and that the cooperative

effort required to provide this service significantly enhances the health of any community. The Group Foster Home Committee is prepared to interest and assist others in helping meet this need.

##### RESULTS ACHIEVED

###### Type of Client Served

There are four boys and two girls who are residents in the home. The individual with the longest tenure in the home has been there since May of 1974. Three have entered since November 1974.

The specific behavior which led to the civil authorities being involved, and in eventual placement in the Denbigh Home range from a case where a child asked to be removed from the natural home during the visit of a case worker who was working on a problem with the subject's sibling, to a case of theft and of illegally discharging a firearm. All of the youngsters are from homes where there is conflict, usually between the child and one or both parents. In at least one case there seems to be a close relationship between the child and one parent, but extreme conflict exists between the child and the other parent.

All the children have had difficulty with school and have had a pattern of unexcused absences.

The presenting problems for each child are:

1. Child requested removal from natural home and conditions warranted it.
2. An injury to the child by a parent.
3. Resident is a runaway because of parental conflict.
4. Resident displayed unsocialized aggressive behavior.
5. Resident was arrested for auto theft.

6. The child illegally discharged a firearm in the home.

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The purpose for proposing that family background be collected was to determine which cases in the sample had family backgrounds similar to those in the group home. The need to do this lost its significance when it was determined that the nature of the disposition of the case in both Juvenile Probation and Child Care Services takes into account the family situation. Those cases which require removing the child from his natural home all have elements in common. The main element being that the family has lost its effectiveness in dealing with the situation.

This loss of effectiveness is usually a result of one or both parents being ineffective, absent, inconsistent, or abusive. While the child's misbehavior is a factor in the deterioration of the home environment it is rarely the underlying cause.

The children in Denbigh come from homes with relatively long histories of discord. The misbehavior of the child now in Denbigh (or in the case, the sibling of a child now in Denbigh) brought to a head long simmering problems. Representative of the home situation are:

1. A family in which the father's whereabouts are unknown. The children and mother live with the maternal grandmother.
2. A family where the father has remarried and the new stepmother has rejected and abused the child.
3. Two children living with the grandfather, status of the father unknown, the mother is dead, and the grandfather is alcoholic.

#### Means By Which Placement Is Arranged

The children now in Denbigh have come through essentially the same process. When a vacancy occurs, the appropriate child care agencies

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are contacted. These agencies then recommend children to be placed in the home. The files of the children thus nominated are reviewed by a committee of the houseparents, psychologist, and counselors. The criteria described in the section on a need for services are informally applied and some candidates eliminated from further consideration.

The psychologist reviews the record for any sort of psychological pathologies which may present difficulties in the home. Where records indicate any inconsistencies or possible pathologies further psychological evaluation may be required.

The available material is reviewed to find those children who most closely match the current composition of the home. Because the home presently has children of smaller stature there is a tendency to prefer children who have not been physically aggressive and are not large.

Once the records are reviewed, the remaining candidates are interviewed by the houseparents in the home. The purposes of this interview are:

1. To allow the houseparents to become acquainted with the candidate.
2. Review and clarify any potential problems in the child's record.
3. Explain the expectations and rules for the child.
4. Allow the child to explore the facility and form impressions that will help him decide if he wishes to remain a candidate.

After this interview the following dispositions may be made:

1. The candidate may not wish to be considered further.
2. The houseparents may not wish to consider the applicant

further.

3. Further evaluations may be requested.
4. The individual may remain an active candidate.

If the child remains an active candidate then a weekend visit to the home is arranged. After this visit if the child wishes to remain a candidate, all of those in the home, houseparents, counselors and children decide on the acceptability of the candidate. When consensus is reached then the candidate is accepted into the home.

#### Need for Service

In order to determine a need for the services of a group foster home, the houseparents were interviewed and a profile of admission standards was developed. While previously prepared information indicates a fairly rigid set of standards, the Gerbers indicated that these were guides which they employed to implement the overall principle of selecting children who were good risks and who would fit well within the present population of the home.

The specific criteria and rationale are discussed below:

Age Requirement Fourteen was selected as a minimum age because other placements seem to be available for candidates under this age. Up to age fourteen it is easier to find foster homes for these children. After age fourteen the foster home is less easily available. The maximum age probably needs no discussion, however, there is a requirement that the children must still be school attenders.

Sex Denbigh has facilities for both sexes. There are both advantages and disadvantages to having both sexes present. The present physical arrangement makes it relatively easy to have both sexes in

the home. There are now spaces for 4 boys and 2 girls.

Type of Offense The major categories of offenses - Status, Personal, Property - are not really considered as criteria for exclusion; however, it appears that there is a greater likelihood that the individual selected would have an offense that would fit in the Status category.

This concept will be discussed further below:

Status Offenses Both the severity and the nature of the offense are taken into account. For example:

- a. Drugs - experimentation with various forms of drugs would not be a reason for exclusion, however, if drugs are a major problem or if the individual had had more than a casual exposure to hard drugs, he will not be considered for admission.
- b. Runaway-Truancy - A child who is frequently absent without excuse or who has a pattern of running away would not be selected. A child who has fled a situation that is perceived as being intolerable might be selected if this action didn't appear to be a habitual or frequent means of coping with stress.
- c. Promiscuity - The promiscuous individual will not be selected.

#### Personal Offenses

- a. Assault - One case of assault with no weapon and no serious bodily damage inflicted would not be reason for non-selection. However, two or more offenses, or a weapon present or bodily damage inflicted are grounds for non-selection.

Property Offenses The nature, severity, and pattern of offenses

are all taken into account. The more frequent and severe the greater the probability of non-selection.

Previous Institutionalization While the usual decision is not to select individuals who have been institutionalized previously an individual with one previous experience in an institution of less than four months would still be considered.

Psychotic Symptoms If in the course of the evaluation, the psychologist notes psychotic symptoms, the child is disqualified.

Physical Handicaps Because of the physical arrangement of the home - many steps, narrow doors, etc. children with physical handicaps are excluded.

Intellectual Functioning An attempt is made to include in the home children who can compete in the Upper Merion Schools, as a result, attempts are made to select children who have an I.Q. of 80 or above who are close to their grade placement in reading and other learning skills.

Most of the above criteria are rather loosely applied. The major concern seems to be to get a child who will fit in the home, neighborhood, and school and who seems to have the greatest potential for change.

Since there appears to be a rather large pool of candidates for each vacancy, the criteria can be loosely and subjectively applied.

In order to determine the need for services like those of Denbigh, a set of objective criteria have been established using the more subjective criteria in such a way that when categorization errors are made they are more likely to reduce the number of potential candidates.

For example, the objective criteria that have been developed eliminate from inclusion any assault violation even though under some conditions a child charged with assault may be admitted to the home. The survey of the records at Juvenile Probation employed the criteria in Table I.

TABLE I

Criteria to Exclude From Further ConsiderationAs Candidate For Group Foster Home

Age - Under 14 and over 18

Drug Offenses

Runaway

Promiscuity

Assault

Hospitalization for Mental Illness

Physical Handicaps

I.Q. Under 80

Procedure Interviews were held with William Schlacter of the Montgomery County Child Care and Paul Michner of the Juvenile Probation. From these interviews it was observed that there was duplication in many of the cases in the two departments. In order to avoid duplication in samples and thereby artificially inflate the size of the available population of candidates for group foster home, the sample was taken only on the cases at Juvenile Probation. While this procedure may give a spuriously low estimate of the need for group foster homes, if a need is established by this procedure then it can be inferred that

the total potential clientele is as large or larger than that inferred from the sample.

The Juvenile Probation Office keeps a record of the initial contact with each individual during the year. This record is simply a roster in which each case is listed chronologically by date of offense, and includes name, date, offense, and disposition of the case. The roster is organized with approximately 23 entries per page.

A sample of two pages per month for a total of twenty-four pages was drawn from the 1974 roster. The total number of cases drawn was 530. By applying the criteria for type of offense and thereby eliminating any case where the offense included drugs, promiscuity, assault or other serious criminal offenses, the number of candidates was reduced to 131. It should be noted that during the survey of the roster an arbitrary decision was made to eliminate relatively trivial offenses such as "failure to pay traffic fine."

From the 131 cases still included, a 50% random sample was drawn, and the entire list of criteria was applied to the 66 cases remaining by examining the individual files.

The individual cases were perused for age, previous disqualifying offenses, hospitalization for mental illness, physical handicaps, I.Q., final disposition of case, etc.

Table 2 indicates the number disqualified by category. The categories in Table 2 are not unduplicated categories, for example one individual is included in three of the categories, previous drugs, promiscuity, and previous hospitalization for mental illness. Before considering the total number of individuals the final disposition of the

case must be considered.

TABIE 2

Individual Disqualification By Category

Age	
Too young	3
Too old	5
Previous Drug Offense	13
Promiscuity	3
Assault	2
Mental Illness	<u>2</u>
Total	28

When Table 3 is examined, it can be seen that by applying the previously defined criteria 40 individuals remain qualified on the basis of previous records. There are certain categories of disposition which should further reduce the pool of candidates.

The most clear-cut of these are individuals in the category "Transferred to agencies outside of Montgomery County". These individuals are no longer in the vicinity now under the jurisdiction of the county. Individuals in four other categories of final disposition, Reprimand and Release, Probation, Consent Decree, and Dismissed were also eliminated as candidates for a group foster home. It was assumed that those responsible for the disposition of the case had determined that there was an adequate home environment in these cases or the final disposition of the case would have been some other category

which would have removed the individual from his home environment.

TABLE 3

Final Disposition of the Case

	Total Sample	Sample Not Disqualified By Previous Offense	Final Qualified Sample
Reprimand & Release	14	7	
Deprived	7	4	4
Other Agencies	8	5	5
Probation	9	4	
Institutions	7	3	3
Consent Decree	5	3	
Transferred to Agencies Outside Montgomery County	4	3	
Dismissed	1		
Open	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>2 (est.)</u>
Totals	66	40	14

Not enough information was available for the cases still open to make a judgement for inclusion or exclusion. Since there was no evidence to indicate that these cases were different from other cases, it was assumed that the same percentage of the open cases would remain qualified as were qualified from those cases which had reached a final disposition.

From Table 3 it can be seen that 14 individuals qualify for inclusion in the candidate pool for the group foster homes. If this number were generalized from the sample to the total number of unduplicated

cases handled by Juvenile Probation (1505) during 1974 the total number who would qualify as candidates would be approximately 80.

This figure may be spuriously high or spuriously low. Among the factors which may make this an overestimate of the number of available candidates are the following:

1. Residents currently in the home may not like the candidate.
2. The candidate might not want to come.
3. Other agencies may be better able to handle the specific concern.
4. Disqualification as a result of psychiatric evaluation.

Among the factors which may make this estimate of 80 spuriously low are:

1. The criteria are subjectively applied, for example, at the time of the evaluator's first few visits to the home at least 50% of the residents were exceptions to the criteria for admission. One had a habit of running away, another was handicapped with a broken leg and a third had severe learning difficulties.
2. Some candidates come from Child Care Services with no previous contact with Juvenile Probation.

Available Agencies From the reports of the State Welfare Department the typical disposition of cases was determined for the State of Pennsylvania for the years 1954 and 1971 and for Montgomery County for 1971. The most recent report available was dated July 1972 and included data through 1971.

An inspection of Table 4 indicated that the pattern of services

TABLE 4  
Unduplicated Number of Children Receiving Child Welfare Services

Year	by Type of Agency						Total				
	Public Child Caring Agencies		Voluntary Child Caring Agencies		Institutions for Dependent						
	N	%	N	%	N	%					
State 1954	11852	31	11052	28	10248	26	2719	7	2603	7	38683
State 1971	35445	47	11573	15	5306	7	2800	4	20166	27	75460
County 1971	1141	41	603	22	229	8	73	3	706	26	2754

Source: State Welfare Department Annual Report 1972

has changed significantly since, 1954, and it should be kept in mind that three years have elapsed since figures were prepared. The use of institutions has declined both in percentage and actual numbers. This decline is particularly marked, for children judged to be dependent (deprived).

In the 18 years covered the number of dependent children institutionalized has been cut almost in half. For delinquent children the number has remained nearly constant, but the percentage of the total is approximately half what it was in 1954. This decline in the use of institutions is probably indicative of the relative lack of effectiveness or high cost of this kind of service.

The use of voluntary child caring agencies has remained almost constant in terms of actual number. In 1971 only 15 % of the cases received care through this media compared to 28% in 1954. It is difficult to draw any inference from these data.

The number of children cared for by both the public child caring agencies and day care centers have increased significantly. The growth of day care centers is not of concern to this report since the clientele served does not overlap the clientele of the group foster home. However, the rapid growth in the number of children served by public child caring agencies coupled with the reduction in number of children institutionalized is of significance.

What agencies are caring for the child who would have been institutionalized previously? Are there foster homes and other facilities in sufficient numbers to handle the increased load? These are among the questions raised by the above data that are relevant to the present study.

The data indicate the pattern of child care services for Montgomery County are very similar to the state wide pattern. In an interview with William Schlacter of the Montgomery County Child Care Services the following was established:

Institutionalization is usually not the preferred means of caring for children.

When institutionalization is suggested, there are no institutions within the county, so children must be sent some distance away.

Institutions are sometimes used because other facilities are not available.

Usually foster homes are available for children under 14. It is very infrequent that a child between 14 and 18 is able to be placed in a foster home.

Child care services in Montgomery County could use the services of 6 or 8 more group foster homes.

At the time the Gerbers first took over as houseparents of Denbigh only one of the children was referred from Child Care Services. In January all but one of the children in the home were from Child Care Services.

The greatest need for services is institutional care for children with psychiatric problems.

From these points made by Dr. Schlacter it was concluded that while the most pressing need for services in the county is for psychiatric care there is also a need for additional services similar to those of the Denbigh Group Home.

This need is further born out by the number of candidates for each vacancy. By notifying only child Care Services when a vacancy exists. There are several candidates to choose from who meet the criteria.

The need for services is underscored by a concern that was expressed when Denbigh applied for additional funds. While Child Care Services was pleased with their interaction with Denbigh, Juvenile Probation expressed displeasure because the home had terminated some of the children referred by it and had not replaced them with other children referred by Juvenile Probation.

It is not the purpose of this evaluation to take sides in this controversy. However, the fact that agencies are competing for placements is an indication of the need for the services.

#### How Well The Client Is Being Served

The evaluation of a project like the Denbigh Foster Home can easily focus on process or product. Ideally, both need to be considered, but most weight should probably be placed on the product, the change in behavior produced during the individual's tenure in the home. The objective of the project is to produce a child whose sense of self-worth and confidence is significantly enhanced.

While these terms are rather global and difficult to objectify the methods employed suggest more specific goals in achieving the desired objective. These goals are:

1. Provide a home atmosphere where rehabilitation can take place.
2. Provide necessary professional help.
3. Have child participate in "meaningful" activities.
4. Have child involved in an educational program.

5. Have child get and hold a job.
6. Have child spend money "wisely".
7. Have child develop healthy (non-exploitive) relationships with the opposite sex.

Goals number 1 and 2 focus on process. Goal number 1 is to provide a good home atmosphere. This is central to the success of this project and is also most difficult to evaluate. What constitutes a "good" home?

A good home for this evaluation shall be defined as a home in which:

1. Parents (responsible adults) are present and make "good" models for the young people.
2. Physical needs are adequately provided.
3. Each individual has specific responsibilities in the maintenance of the home.
4. Limits are agreed on and sanctions are imposed when limits are over stepped.
5. Each individual can have confidence that he is accepted and can look upon the home as a place where he can be himself.
6. Each young person can rely upon the support of the parents at critical times. This does not imply approval of misbehavior but does indicate an active positive regard for each individual.

While this list is incomplete these will form the basis of the evaluation of the home which will be accomplished through direct observation.

The first visit to the home was on January 13 and its main purpose

was to view the physical environment and meet the houseparents. The second visit was made on January 16 to observe an interview to fill a vacancy in the home. Subsequent visits have been made to observe the home operation and to interview and test residents.

House Parents and Home Administration The administration of the home is handled by the houseparents, Dave and Sue Gerber. They have been in the home since June 1974. They have had previous experience working with this type of child in and out of an institutional setting. They have assistance from a male counselor who lives in the home occupied by the boys and a female counselor who lives in with the girls on the Gerbers day off.

The Gerbers seem to be happily married and are old enough to be the natural parents of the children in the home. They have one son who is attending college. Neither of the Gerbers hold employment outside of the home so they spend most of their time with the home and its administration. They seem to be genuinely concerned with the welfare of each of the children in the home. They are aware of the progress of each of them in school, and seem to be prepared to go to the school or help with tutorial services whenever necessary. While they seem quite flexible and willing to make concessions to meet the needs of the individual child there are certain non-negotiables. Some of these involve the boy-girl relationship in the home. The residents are to consider each other as brothers and sisters, as such they may not date one of the other residents. Curfews may not be violated. Each individual is responsible for his own debts and fines. For example, if a child makes a long distance telephone call then the amount of the call is taken from his

allowance.

When a new child is being considered for inclusion in the home, the parents are very specific in their expectations of him. It is made clear that he must attend school, he will be responsible for certain duties in the home, he will be given privileges commensurate with his ability to accept responsibility.

On the second visit to the home the Gerbers were interviewing a new candidate for the home. Prior to the interview the file of the candidate had been carefully perused, both by the Gerbers and their psychologist. It appeared that the psychologist had suggested certain problems that should be explored more fully. There seemed to be a greater reliance on psychometric data than is probably warranted by the tests that were reported.

The test results indicated a possible psycho-motor problem. As a result it was difficult for the houseparents to accept the reported mechanical skills of the candidate even when he described a difficult car repair in detail. The individual only became a serious candidate after he was retested and "passed".

While the concern based on psychometric data was present, it was good to note that the houseparents and the psychologist were willing to have a reassessment take place. During the course of the interview questions were raised concerning the candidate's attitude toward school. Since his previous achievement and attendance record had both been poor.

There seems to be a genuine concern for the individual child but this concern is tempered by the realities of the individual situation such as the financial, physical, or attitudinal variables present. The

Gerbers make it very clear that if the child comes to the home he will be treated with love and respect but that any misbehavior will be dealt with in a manner that should reduce the misbehavior. If the behavior persists then other action may need to be taken.

In short, it does appear that responsible adults are present and that they do provide good models for the children in the home.

Other Adults There has been a turnover in the other employee positions in the home. It would be desirable to see greater continuity in these positions or a redefinition of the administrative structure so that the functions might be adequately performed. As long as the current physical environment exists it appears important to have at least one responsible adult in each building at night.

The functions of the staff associates as defined in the Denbigh Group Foster Home Proposal include two specific responsibilities along with general responsibilities to assist in the overall operation of the home and to provide a healthy model for the residents. The specific duties are for one of the staff associates to live in the building with the boys and for the other staff associate to live in as a substitute for the other staff members on days off.

There has been a staff member in both buildings each night, but the other responsibilities have not been performed well. The houseparents have not had the days off that they are entitled to. This is partially because they felt a need to be in the home during a period of particular stress, but more importantly because personnel was not available who could adequately cope with the situation in their absence.

The young people who have filled these positions have other interests and needs which take them away from the home leaving them unavailable to serve as models. It also seems apparent that these positions are viewed as temporary by those who have filled them, and as a result little real commitment develops.

The residents have recognized little contribution of the part of the staff associates. The only contributions mentioned were occasional help with school work and that one staff associate helped teach the residents table-tennis skills.

It appears that the positive effect of the staff associate is of such a limited value that the effort expended in having an additional member of the household may not be warranted.

The lack of positive effect on the part of the staff associates may be due in part to poor selection procedures, but may also be a result of the role definition as it has evolved. To have a young adult who can be a good model for these teenagers may be a conflict in terms. Young adults should be making preparation for and commitment to careers and usually are in the process of courting and marrying. Neither of these functions are consonant with the position as outlined. The staff position is not a career and the way the job description is written it precludes preparing for one and still being employed at the home. While it might be very useful for the residents to be able to observe the developmental process of a young adult, alternative models of administration in the home may be worthy of consideration.

In an informal way other models are being tried, and with continued experimenting a better use of fiscal and personnel resources may be

effected.

A possible model is outlined below:

Eliminate the position of a full time staff associate. In place of this position provide room and board for one or two young men (possibly college students) who in exchange for room and board would agree to be in the home at least during nighttime (possibly 10 p.m. - 6 a.m.) five or six nights a week. This would meet the need to have the other building covered at the most important time. This arrangement might also provide a better model of a mature young adult. The residents would be able to observe a young adult either preparing for a career or engaging in an occupation rather than just "being there".

Broaden the concept of the parttime staff associate to include newly retired couples. If the right couple could be found they might provide the needed maturity, stability and continuity to allow the houseparents to more consistently get time off. They might also give the home a dimension not now present. An older couple periodically in the home may give the feeling of an extended family with grandparents visiting periodically.

Encourage the board of directors to become more involved in the home, so that they become well acquainted with the residents. This will allow the residents to interact with a variety of adults in a non-threatening, non-authoritarian relationship.

Another possible model might be to fill the full time staff associate position, use board of directors or other volunteers to fill the responsibilities of the part time staff associates, and engage some young adults to serve as friends and models.

If the current model is retained it may be profitable to broaden the search for staff associates to include students in programs in psychology, social work, education, etc. at local universities.

Whatever model is finally used, something should be done to alter the current situation. The houseparents are filling too many roles. They need some relief and the current structure is not providing it. While different people in the positions could help, the turnover that is inherent in the current structure leaves the major burden constantly on the houseparents.

Physical Environment The home is located in an area of relatively low population density. The setting is close to ideal for this type of enterprise. There are several acres of open ground and a swimming pool that is available in the summer when a qualified life-guard is present. The exterior of the home is not as pleasant as the setting they are in. The homes look dark and austere, they don't present a very inviting appearance. The windows in the storm doors have been replaced with plywood. The interior of the two homes are quite similar. Both have need of some maintenance and repair. They both need painting and would be less costly to operate if they were better insulated. The house in which the houseparents reside is kept neat and appears clean. The house in which the boys sleep was neither as clean nor neat. It wasn't dirty in the sense that there was accumulation of grime, but there was a certain amount of clutter and unmade beds that seems to be associated with teenaged boys.

The houseparents recognized the state of repair of the two homes, but indicated that they were not willing or able to perform the

necessary maintenance until a decision is made on the tenure of the home in this location. The Archdiocese had indicated a desire to divest itself of the property and the developer was not interested in having the group home remain. Now a decision has been made the necessary maintenance will be performed as funds become available or a new home will be sought. The likelihood of the major maintenance being performed if they stay in the present location appears high.

While the home is generally clean there is an air of casualness that seems to make the home a place where kids can feel comfortable to relax and enjoy themselves. The furnishings appear durable and able to bear the traffic. The parents indicated that while they intend to keep the home neat and comfortable they do not want to make it a place where the children can't feel at ease. All of the furnishings are there to be used by all the residents. The residents each have personal property but the furnishings, TV, dishes, etc. are available with little or no restriction.

The house in which the boys sleep has been modified so that it is mainly a sleeping and recreation area. The top floor contains bedrooms for the four boys and the resident counselor. The main floor has been converted into a game area. The living room is now used for table tennis. The kitchen is used for a study area and not for food preparation since all of the residents eat together in the other house. The basement contains several tools and pieces of machinery such as wood lathes. While it is incomplete, the potential is there for a good shop and hobby center. One of the problems is the expense of materials. The boys are using any scraps of wood that they can find.

The other house contains bedrooms for the houseparents and the girls, an office, living room, dining area and kitchen.

Both homes are adequately furnished.

Individual Responsibilities Each individual in the home has certain specific responsibilities. Each is responsible for his own possessions and for the maintenance of his clothing and bedroom. Each is responsible for his own breakfast and lunch and each has specific responsibilities with the evening meal. The evening meal is the only regularly scheduled time that all sit down together for a meal. In rotation each has the responsibility for doing the dishes and cleaning the kitchen and dining area. As a special incentive, if the child moves directly to the task Sue Gerber will help until the job is finished. If the child is slow or reluctant, then he is left with the entire responsibility.

Each child is given an allowance of five dollars per week. It is his responsibility to manage the money to take care of any extras he may wish or any activities he may wish to participate in. To help the individual learn how to handle his own affairs, each is given the responsibility for the selection of his own clothes. If he wishes the houseparents will assist him but the basic responsibility rests with the individual. Each child has thirty dollars a month that can be spent only on clothing. He may spend as little or as much of it as he wishes. If he wants to make a large purchase he may save the money for it. This opportunity to make their own clothing purchases is viewed as an experience that is essential in the development of the child. Many of them have no idea of sizes or need until they have had these experiences.

Limits and Sanctions There appears to be a philosophy in the home to require that each individual take the responsibilities for his own behavior and that whenever possible his decisions be internally motivated. Such a goal must be tempered with the realities of individuals who have tested limits previously and do not have a history of being internally motivated.

As a result of this philosophy behaviors that do not endanger physical well being or increase the probability of misbehavior are treated quite differently from behaviors that do. Limits seem to be individually prescribed. The individual who cannot handle his freedom has greater restraints applied. Some of the requirements that all residents have in common are:

1. The houseparents must be advised of activities, times, places, and friends involved prior to the individual leaving the home.
2. The agenda thus agreed upon must be followed, deviations will result in a restriction of activities, this may involve times, places, or people.
3. Any financial obligations incurred by the individual remain the responsibility of that individual and must be met by him.  
If the individual has no other source of money available to him these obligations are met through an allowance reduction.
4. Each individual is responsible for the care of his own area in his own room. There is a once a week inspection where things must be clean and in order, but the rest of the time the individual's self-pride determine the state of his area.

While it may be possible to devise a better scheme, the program

at Denbigh seems to work. Its success is probably dependent upon the prompt and consistent application of constraints or assessment of penalties. The kids know if they misbehave then the penalty will be assessed or the privilege removed.

The Home As a Haven The general tone of the home seems to be surprisingly relaxed and free from tension. Any environment with six teenagers is certain to have a stress level that is going to be high at times, and Denbigh is no exception. There is, however, a fairly good spirit among the residents, they seem to like and be concerned with each other.

For example, one of the residents has difficulty reading and several of the others are willing to spend time helping him.

During my presence in the home the kids have seemed to feel as though they belonged. If in conversations I asked questions which they were uncomfortable with they looked to Dave and Sue for support. When the purpose of my visit was made known to them (to evaluate the effectiveness of the home) several of them expressed chagrin over their behaviors which might reflect negatively on the project. All came to the support of the Gerbers and expressed their positive regard for the home.

The Parents as Support The young people in the home are from environments where one or both parents are absent, or worse, abusive. The behavior of the parents is often one of the most significant factors in the child being placed in a foster home. As a result of the parental behavior these children may view adults with a great deal of suspicion and distrust. This distrust makes the role of the parents in the foster home even more difficult. The extent to which the Gerbers succeed is

difficult to measure, but there have been some critical incidents which may help to evaluate their success.

One of the residents has run away from previous placements and has not voluntarily returned. In December this resident along with another resident ran away for five days. During their absence, the resident without the runaway history called in everyday to report on their condition and activities. At the end of five days, they both returned voluntarily.

There are several factors which are of significance in this incident:

1. The fact that the children ran away may indicate that some problems exist in the home which need attention. Especially is this a possibility since one of them had not run away previously.
2. One of them reported in each day. The fact that there was a need felt to report in may indicate loyalty to the houseparents, a discomfort for what had been done, fear of the consequences, or a testing of reactions to determine if it were safe to return.
3. They returned voluntarily. Both felt sufficiently secure in their relationship with the houseparents at the end of five days to return voluntarily. They both knew they faced certain restrictions, but both were willing to return and face whatever penalty awaited them.

One of the other residents had an encounter with the law. He was immediately restricted to the home because he had violated his

previously agreed upon agenda. The houseparents worked closely with the police to determine the extent of the individual's involvement. In the process they expressed confidence in the child. This child expressed his appreciation for the confidence the houseparents had in him.

Goal number 2 - Provide Necessary Professional Help There seems to be ample evidence that adequate professional help is available. During the course of this evaluation the services of dentists, physicians, psychiatrists, and psychologists have been used both at a time of crisis and on a regular preventive-maintenance basis. Many of the residents have regularly scheduled appointments with a psychiatrist and there are visits to the home by a psychologist weekly.

Each resident has a caseworker who is in contact with the home and the individual.

During March one of the individuals took a drug overdose. This led to several days in the hospital. During the time the individual was in the hospital, the houseparents had all of the others in the home visit the hospital. This visit had a sobering effect and seemed to help quell an experimentation with drugs that had begun among several of the residents. The overdose experience also brought to the attention of the home an inadequacy in drug crisis assistance. This lack became a topic for the monthly board of directors meeting.

In short, when there is a need for professional services, they are found and provided. Are the professionals competent? The children seem physically well and none of them mentioned any unattended physical problems.

Many of the children in the home have entered with psychological problems. These are not easily resolved nor is it often easy to assess progress toward the resolution of these problems. Objective assessment can only tap those aspects of personality they are designed to measure. A comprehensive assessment of the personality is theoretically improbable and would not be a desirable imposition on the residents. As a result whatever dimensions are assessed it should be remembered that these do not represent the total personality.

It was decided to determine if there had been a change in self concept by using selected scales from the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI).

The scales and the rationale for inclusion are presented below:

**L Scale:** This scale uses the rationale that certain responses are nearly universally true (e.g. "I do not always tell the truth" is true for almost everyone) so if the individual answers false to several of the items he is either an extremely unusual individual or the responses on the questionnaire are suspect.

**F Scale:** This scale is made up of extremely unusual items (e.g. "I see things or people around me that others do not see."). The individual who answers a large number of these items in the scored direction is likely to be either psychotic or answering the questions in a fashion to give a negative impression of himself. Since each of the residents was screened for psychotic symptoms prior to being admitted to Denbigh, high scores on this scale will be

interpreted as a desire to look bad. If the experience in Denbigh and with the therapeutic helpers had had the desired effect scores should go down on this scale.

**K Scale:** This scale is composed of items which are designed to determine if an individual is attempting to make a good impression by overstating his own virtues. In most instances high scores on this scale are considered to indicate dishonest desire to make oneself look good. Because the children in this study have not been given the chance to develop positive self-esteem and since this is one of the goals of Denbigh, scores should go up on this scale.

**Pd Scale:** This scale is composed of items that imperially differentiated a group of diagnosed psychopaths from a group of normal individuals. The residents of Denbigh are a group of individuals who have learned to cope with their environment by manipulating it and as a result it is anticipated that their scores on the Pd scale would high. If the experience with therapy and in Denbigh has the desired effect scores should go down.

Results of the testing are shown on Table 5 and in Figure 1. The means on the pre and post tests for the F, K, and Pd are close to identical. On the L scale the difference between the pre and post tests was large enough to be statistically significant. An inspection of the individual profiles indicates very similar patterns both across individuals and time. Generally the kids are more honest in their responses

now but other wise the average response remains unchanged.

TABLE 5

Means and Standard Deviations Pre and Post  
on the  
L, F, K and Pd Scales (raw scores)

		Pre	Post	t
L Scale	Mean	4.00	2.67	2.66*
	S.D.	1.86	2.50	
F Scale	Mean	12.17	12.67	-.04
	S.D.	6.40	7.00	
K Scale	Mean	10.33	9.87	.33
	S.D.	2.06	3.92	
Pd Scale	Mean	23.00	23.83	-.32
	S. D.	7.20	9.01	

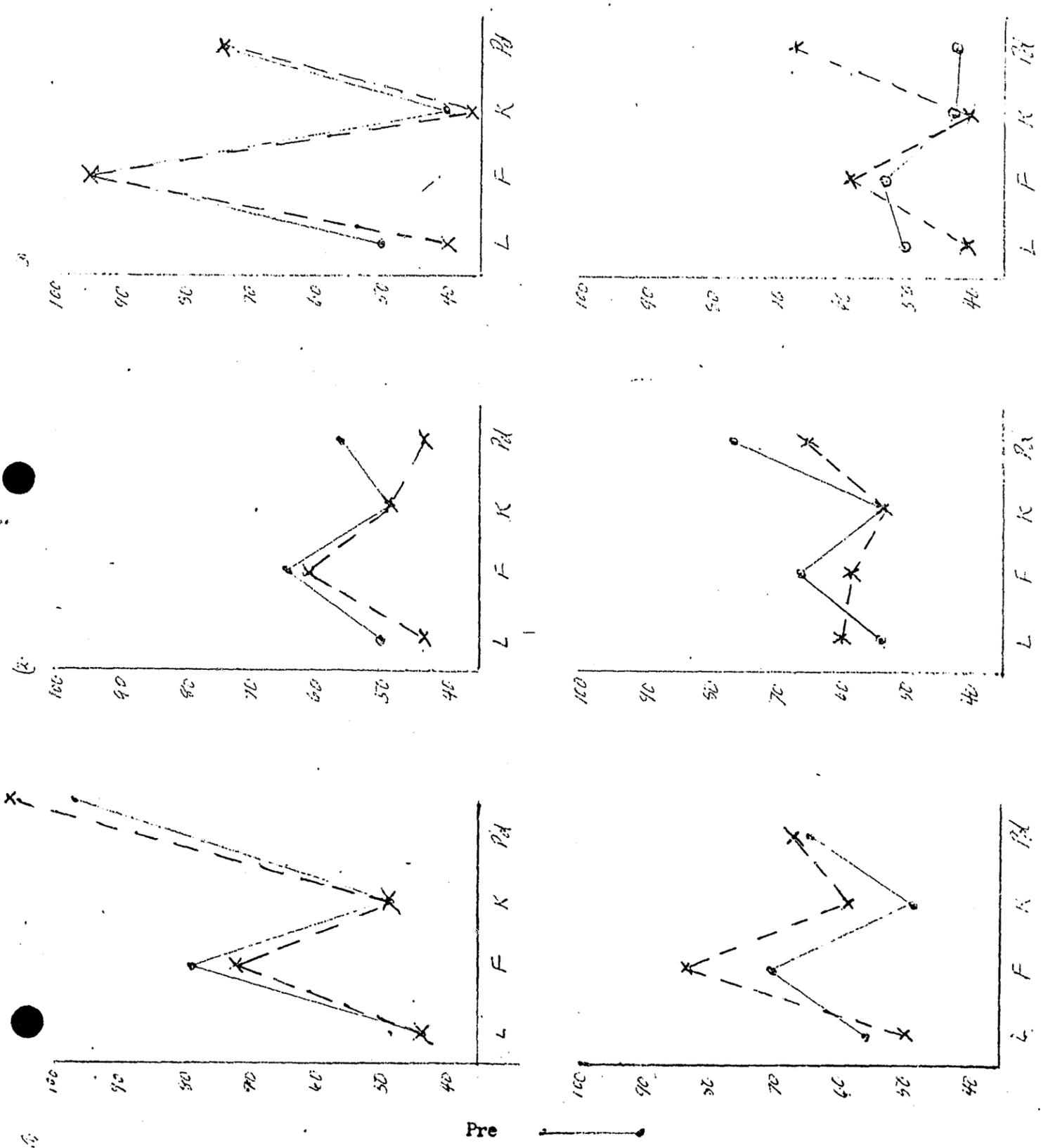
\* significant beyond .05 level

On the individual profiles the F and Pd scales are the high points for every individual but one on the pre test and two on the post test. Young subjects going through a period of rebellion against the family tend to get elevated scores on the F-scale. So it is not surprising that the F scale is elevated in this population. The fact that the scores remain elevated may indicate that family interactions remain unresolved; In the general population high F scores are characterized as being rebellious and non-conforming. This also seems descriptive of the sample in this study and is also related to the high scores on the Pd scale where high scorers are characterized by lack of social conformity and self-control. Other descriptors of high scorers on the Pd scale are adventurous, verbal, aggressive.

The K scores fell approximately on the mean for the general

FIGURE 1

Pre and Post Individual Profiles on the L, F, K, and Pd Scales



population.

Low L scores tend to describe someone who is perceptive, socially responsive, and self-reliant. The significant drop in L scores may indicate a movement in the desired direction.

Goal number 3 - Have Child Participate in Meaningful Activities

There are many opportunities for involvement in projects. One individual has been involved in building models of cars, motorcycles, etc., another has a pet rabbit and a third has built a stereo. There is a relatively well equipped shop in the basement of one of the homes, a number of games are available and recently a variety of sports equipment was purchased.

Even with these things available there is a significant lack of constructive activity. On any of the visits made to the home when school was not in session several of the residents seemed to be casting about with little if anything constructive to do. Television is a favorite pastime even when there is little of interest in the program. Many of the activities are such that they involve little long-term commitment, preparation or skill.

Religious and service activities are non-existent. None of the children have participated in extra curricular activities at school.

There seems to be an effort on the part of the residents to improve certain maintenance and grooming functions. They are usually clean and dressed appropriately. The appearance of most of them is erratic and seems tied to a variety of influences, but generally most of the residents seem more concerned about grooming and personal care now than at the beginning of the evaluation.

Most individuals do spend time with homework.

The environment of the home has been set up to encourage activities of a meaningful nature, and when an interest is shown by one of the residents the houseparents have attempted to encourage it. Some of the boys have helped build picnic tables and do minor repairs.

The problem is that these youngsters came into the home with an extremely limited scope of interests and great quantities of time. It is difficult for them to think beyond their present situation and as a result there is little interest in long range planning.

Because of backgrounds that were often unstable and unpredictable, these kids have learned to deal almost exclusively in the here and now. They have also been so concerned with the maintenance of self that they have not learned to reach outside themselves to help others, they also have had little if any opportunity to develop skills that could be used in most extra-curricular activities at school.

Increased attempts need to be made to introduce these kids to activities and programs where interests and skills may be developed. The houseparents recently discovered that the residents didn't know the rules to some of the more common sports-softball, soccer, etc. and as a result they were embarrassed to participate at school where their lack of knowledge, as well as skill, would be readily apparent.

Most of the activities, equipment, and materials come as a result of expressed interest on the part of the resident, and whenever a wholesome interest is expressed it is encouraged. It may be useful to try to initiate some service activities or work exploration experiences. These kids need the experience of becoming involved and learning to care. They need some activities where they can experience the thrill of

accomplishment. They need to know the exhilaration that comes from working and planning to reach a desired goal.

Kids like those in Denbigh are resistant to these experiences, but with some effort a creative program may be possible. To watch one of these kids shower a small animal with love leads one to believe there is tenderness and caring in the child. These kids have experienced loneliness and fear, is it possible that they may be able to help younger kids who are now experiencing the same kinds of problems? I was particularly inclined to think they could show the necessary empathy when one of the girls turned to me and said, "Don't ever let your kids get involved with these." She was looking over a book on drugs at the time and seemed to indicate a genuine concern for the welfare of my children.

The residents seem to have little awareness of the fact that they will eventually be adults and will need to assume adult responsibilities. The girls in the home have learned some cooking and other homemaking skills, some of the boys have learned some carpentry skills but none of the residents seem to have the vision of adult responsibility which involves career planning and preparation.

Goal number 4 Have Child Involved in Educational Program Each of the residents of Denbigh is involved in an educational program. Four have attended Upper Merion Senior High School, one is at Upper Merion Junior High School and one is at the Middle Earth School.

The resident who is attending Middle Earth has a reading problem that has restricted greatly his ability to achieve in an academic setting. He was enrolled in Vo-tech but was withdrawn from there when it became obvious that he would not be successful. He will probably be enrolled

next year if his reading ability continues to improve.

During the time he has been at Denbigh his reading ability has changed from that of essentially a non-reader to the point that he is attempting to read several things. His reading level is approximately 4th grade and continues to improve.

The student at the junior high school has not done well academically. His grades are mainly D's and F's and there is some question about his passing the eighth grade. At last report he will probably pass but even if he does it will be marginally.

The grades of the students at the high school can best be described as erratic. A and B grades during one marking period melt into D's and F's on the next report card. For others D grades have changed to A's during the same marking period. The mean grade point average during this year for three of the students at Upper Merion High School are reported below in Table 6. The fourth student at the Upper Merion High School has been there for only one grading term and received a gpa of 2.20.

TABLE 6

Grade Point Averages of Residents in High School

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Individual 1	2.00	3.75*	**
Individual 2	2.20	1.00	1.80
Individual 3	3.25	.25	**
Total	2.48	1.67	2.20

\* Honor Roll

\*\* Transferred out of Denbigh Home

While grades generally have not been meritorious there are some bright spots. One individual did make the honor roll and none of the high school students have been warned they might not pass this year.

Attendance is not as good as it could be. The kids have missed days of school and periods during the day because they decided to cut class. Most of the residents have been suspended for one or more days on more than a single occasion for some form of misbehavior. Based on grades, attendance and disciplinary action it appears that most of the individuals are functioning poorly in the school setting.

However, in interviews with the counselors at the senior high school the following information and observations were obtained:

1. The residents of Denbigh are indistinguishable from many others in dress, behavior, attendance and grades.
2. The behavior of the one individual who was in the high school prior to being placed in Denbigh has improved significantly. One of the counselors observed that the opportunity for this individual to leave his natural home and live at Denbigh was probably his "salvation".
3. Comparison of records for the one resident with a sibling at the high school indicated that the Denbigh resident had better grades and a better attendance record. The attendance record showed fewer total days missed, fewer unexcused absences and fewer suspensions.
4. All of the students remain enrolled. To quote one of the counselors "The fact that all of these students are still enrolled is a remarkable accomplishment when one considers the

the type of student involved."

In summary, while the objective record shows little evidence of improvement in school, all those involved with the kids in school tend to agree that there have been significant improvements in attitude. For the most part the students attend school without any question as to where they belong, and while they would deny it vigorously, there is some indication that they might, at times, actually enjoy the experience. Recently they have been observed doing homework without arguing and have occasionally asked questions or talked about their school experience.

Goal number 5 Have Child Get and Hold a Job Jobs for teenagers in these times of economic difficulty are nearly impossible to find. One of the residents was forced to give up his job when he entered Denbigh because of logistical problems (distances were too great).

Three of the residents have obtained employment during their tenure at Denbigh. One remains employed and although business has decreased, his employer has retained him on a reduced schedule. Another quit her job because the schedule was too demanding. She began babysitting for a couple and made a good enough impression that they have now taken her into their home as a foster child. A third worked for a short time, but is presently unemployed, she seemed to have a difficult time keeping the posted schedule until she was no longer on it. The other three residents have not been employed.

This record indicates that the residents have been able to secure and retain employment when one considers the age and background of the residents, and the current economic conditions.

Goal number 6 Have Child Spend Money Wisely The accumulation of

personal effects (with the possible exception of clothing) is probably more contingent on previous home environment than on wise expenditure at the home. The \$30. a month clothing allowance mandates some accumulation of clothing, and while the individual has a choice of the kind of clothing this money is not available for other purposes.

Savings accounts are present for all those who have earned outside income. Advances are almost impossible to get. The home is structured so that only a relatively small amount of money is available for unrestricted use. Having the residents purchase their own clothing insures some responsible accounting as well as teaching them skills in clothing selection.

The only money which the individual completely controls is the \$5.00 per week allowance. This money is usually spent early in the week and seldom do the residents have any reserve at the end of the week. Since advances are not easily acquired, many of the residents will perform extra tasks to earn extra money or cigarettes.

In summary, money in the home is handled so that the resident should learn to use it wisely.

Goal number 7 Have Child Develop Healthy Non-exploitive Relationships with the Opposite Sex The boys and girls in the home date occasionally but there is no steady or frequent dating. There is no dating within the home since this is forbidden, and there also appeared to be little if any sexual interest among the residents in the home. The residents acted more like brothers and sisters than they did like friends.

Summary

The home is structured to achieve the goals as they have been outlined in previous sections. Experiences are planned and a system of rewards and punishments implemented to attempt to bring about the desired changes. With the exception of the problems with the staff associates, the structure appears to be well conceived and well implemented.

The nature of the individuals in the home at any given time would make the results vary. For the residents in the home at the time of this evaluation the goals have been generally met. There is some need to be concerned about the lack of purposeful long-range goals, low grades and general disinterest in school and school related activities, but it also must be recognized that these attitudes have been developed through years of conditioning. There are signs of trends in a positive direction, but the time in the home is less than a year for the longest term resident, and this is a relatively short time to change deep seated habits and attitudes.

IMPACT OF THE RESULTS

Teenagers who have problems have been dealt with in a variety of ways almost all of which are very expensive and almost universally with disappointing results. While it is too early to make generalizations there are some facts to be considered.

The cost is approximately the same or less than for other similar child care services.

The residents all expressed a positive reaction to their experience at Denbigh.

During the course of this evaluation two of the residents ran away

and returned voluntarily, one resident took an overdose of drugs, and one resident was questioned because he was seen in an area at approximately the time a robbery took place. Other than these three incidents, all of which seem to have been satisfactorily resolved, there has been no contact with the legal authorities.

All of the residents have remained in school and have improved their attendance.

Two of the residents are no longer at Denbigh. One has become a foster child of a couple for whom she was tending children, the other has returned home.

A study of six months duration dealing with six carefully selected kids cannot be used to infer to the population of delinquent and/or deprived juveniles in Montgomery County; however, the results of this study certainly indicate encouraging trends. The kids at Denbigh have had a good experience and have responded reasonably well to it. Since the cost to the state is the same for Denbigh as it is for other similar programs, these results certainly suggest the continuation of the Denbigh Group Foster Home and the establishment of other similar programs on at least a trial basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The Gerbers have established a viable and effective program. From interviews with school officials and others it appears that the parents that are in the home make a significant difference in the interaction between the home and outside agencies. They also set the tone in the home.

There are several elements that make a difference between success

and failure, but not all of these are well articulated.

A possible research question is what elements are essential to be successful houseparents.

The residents of Denbigh are carefully screened to get a group of kids who have not been involved in serious offenses. Another possible research question involves the nature of kids who can benefit from the experience.

There are several questions which may be asked, but before any of them can be seriously asked, a substantial commitment would need to be made to the concept of group foster homes.

The group foster home while it receives much financial support from the per diem supplied by governmental agencies, is usually conceived and brought into fruition by some charitable organization. There is a certain commitment and possible strength in the autonomy that private sponsorship affords, however, if it is determined that the concept of group homes has enough validity to be expounded, and particularly if some experimental manipulation is determined to be desirable, then public sponsorship of some homes may be necessary and worthwhile.

Appendix A  
Questions From the L, F, K, and Pd Scales  
of the  
MMPI

- T F 1. I do not always tell the truth.
- T F 2. I do not read every editorial in the newspaper every day.
- T F 3. Once in a while I put off until tomorrow what I ought to do today.
- T F 4. If I could get into a movie without paying and be sure I was not seen I would probably do it.
- T F 5. I would rather win than lose a game.
- T F 6. I like to know some important people because it makes me feel important.
- T F 7. I do not like everyone I know.
- T F 8. I gossip a little at times.
- T F 9. Sometimes at elections I vote for men about whom I know very little.
- T F 10. I get angry sometimes.
- T F 11. Once in a while I laugh at a dirty joke.
- T F 12. At times I feel like swearing.
- T F 13. My table manners are not quite as good at home as when I am out in company.
- T F 14. Once in a while I think of things too bad to talk about.
- T F 15. Sometimes when I am not feeling well I am cross.
- T F 16. I have diarrhea once a month or more.
- T F 17. I have nightmares every few nights.
- T F 18. I have a cough most of the time.
- T F 19. When I am with people I am bothered by hearing very queer things.
- T F 20. It would be better if almost all laws were thrown away.
- T F 21. My soul sometimes leaves my body.
- T F 22. A minister can cure disease by praying and putting his hand on your head.
- T F 23. As a youngster I was suspended from school one or more times for cutting up.

- T F 24. I see things or animals or people around me that others do not see.
- T F 25. Sometimes I am strongly attracted by the personal articles of others such as shoes, gloves, etc., so that I want to handle or steal them though I have no use for them.
- T F 26. Sometimes I feel as if I must injure either myself or someone else.
- T F 27. I have the wanderlust and am never happy unless I am roaming or traveling about.
- T F 28. I commonly hear voices without knowing where they come from.
- T F 29. Someone has been trying to rob me.
- T F 30. There are persons who are trying to steal my thoughts and ideas.
- T F 31. At times it has been impossible for me to keep from stealing or shoplifting something.
- T F 32. I am very religious (more than most people).
- T F 33. I believe my sins are unpardonable.
- T F 34. I can sleep during the day but not at night.
- T F 35. It does not bother me particularly to see animals suffer.
- T F 36. I have been told that I walk during my sleep.
- T F 37. My neck spots with red often.
- T F 38. I have reason for feeling jealous of one or more members of my family.
- T F 39. No one cares much what happens to you.
- T F 40. The only interesting part of the newspaper is the "funnies."
- T F 41. I can easily make other people afraid of me, and sometimes do for the fun of it.
- T F 42. I am never happier than when alone.
- T F 43. I am liked by most people who know me.
- T F 44. Any man who is able and willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding.
- T F 45. I believe in law enforcement.
- T F 46. I am not afraid to handle money.
- T F 47. My hearing is apparently good as that of most people.

- T F 48. Children should be taught all the main facts of sex.
- T F 49. I usually expect to succeed in things I do.
- T F 50. I believe there is a God.
- T F 51. At times I am all full of energy.
- T F 52. I am troubled by attacks of nausea and vomiting.
- T F 53. My family does not like the work I have chosen (or the work I intend to choose for my life work).
- T F 54. I have used alcohol excessively.
- T F 55. My parents and family find more fault with me than they should.
- T F 56. If people had not had it in for me I would have been much more successful.
- T F 57. I frequently find it necessary to stand up for what I think is right.
- T F 58. I believe in a life hereafter.
- T F 59. Evil spirits possess me at times.
- T F 60. I believe I am being followed.
- T F 61. Someone has been trying to poison me.
- T F 62. Someone has control over my mind.
- T F 63. Someone has been trying to influence my mind.
- T F 64. I like to study and read about things that I am working at.
- T F 65. I believe I am being plotted against.
- T F 66. I believe I am a condemned person.
- T F 67. At one or more times in my life I felt that someone was making me do things by hypnotizing me.
- T F 68. Most of the time I would rather sit and daydream than to do anything else.
- T F 69. There is something wrong with my mind.
- T F 70. Everything tastes the same.
- T F 71. My father was a good man.
- T F 72. I loved my father.

- T F 73. My mother was a good woman.
- T F 74. I like to visit places where I have never been before.
- T F 75. I loved my mother.
- T F 76. I enjoy children.
- T F 77. I have had periods in which I carried on activities without knowing later what I had been doing.
- T F 78. At periods my mind seems to work more slowly than usual.
- T F 79. I have sometimes felt that difficulties were piling up so high that I could not overcome them.
- T F 80. I have often met people who were supposed to be experts who were no better than I.
- T F 81. I find it hard to set aside a task that I have undertaken, even for a short time.
- T F 82. I like to let people know where I stand on things.
- T F 83. At times I feel like smashing things.
- T F 84. I have never felt better in my life than I do now.
- T F 85. It takes a lot of argument to convince most people of the truth.
- T F 86. I have periods in which I feel unusually cheerful without any special reason.
- T F 87. I certainly feel useless at times.
- T F 88. Criticism or scolding hurts me terribly.
- T F 89. I think a great many people exaggerate their misfortunes in order to gain the sympathy and help of others.
- T F 90. Often I can't understand why I have been so cross and grouchy.
- T F 91. I get mad easily and then get over it soon.
- T F 92. What others think of me does not bother me.
- T F 93. I have very few quarrels with members of my family.
- T F 94. I am against giving money to beggars.
- T F 95. At times my thoughts have raced ahead faster than I could speak them.
- T F 96. I frequently find myself worrying about something.

- T F 97. I worry about money and business.
- T F 98. It makes me impatient to have people ask my advice or otherwise interrupt me when I am working on something important.
- T F 99. People often disappoint me.
- T F 100. I often think, "I wish I were a child again."
- T F 101. I find it hard to make talk when I meet new people.
- T F 102. When in a group of people I have trouble thinking of the right things to talk about.
- T F 103. Most people will use somewhat unfair means to gain profit or an advantage rather than lose it.
- T F 104. It makes me uncomfortable to put on a stunt at a party even when others are doing the same sort of things.
- T F 105. I think nearly anyone would tell a lie to keep out of trouble.
- T F 106. I have not lived the right kind of life.
- T F 107. These days I find it hard not to give up hope of amounting to something.
- T F 108. In school I was sometimes sent to the principal for cutting up.
- T F 109. There is very little love and companionship in my family as compared to other homes.
- T F 110. My parents have often objected to the kind of people I went around with.
- T F 111. My way of doing things is apt to be misunderstood by others.
- T F 112. I liked school.
- T F 113. I have been quite independent and free from family rule.
- T F 114. My relatives are nearly all in sympathy with me.
- T F 115. I have very few fears compared to my friends.
- T F 116. I am neither gaining nor losing weight.
- T F 117. I am happy most of the time.
- T F 118. My daily life is full of things that keep me interested.
- T F 119. I find it hard to keep my mind on a task or job.
- T F 120. Sometimes without any reason or even when things are going wrong I feel excitedly happy, "on top of the world".

- T F 121. I wish I could be as happy as others seem to be.
- T F 122. I believe that my home life is as pleasant as that of most people I know.
- T F 123. My conduct is largely controlled by the customs of those around me.
- T F 124. I am always disgusted with the law when a criminal is freed through the arguments of a smart lawyer.
- T F 125. I have been disappointed in love.
- T F 126. Someone has it in for me.
- T F 127. I am sure I am being talked about.
- T F 128. I have never been in trouble with the law.
- T F 129. I am sure I get a raw deal from life.
- T F 130. No one seems to understand me.
- T F 131. I know who is responsible for most of my trouble.
- T F 132. I do many things which I regret afterwards (I regret things more or more often than others seem to do).
- T F 133. My hardest battles are with myself.
- T F 134. Much of the time I feel as if I have done something wrong or evil.
- T F 135. During one period when I was a youngster I engaged in petty thievery.
- T F 136. I have had very peculiar and strange experiences.
- T F 137. I have never been in trouble because of my sex behavior.
- T F 138. At times I have very much wanted to leave home.
- T F 139. I do not mind being made fun of.
- T F 140. I like to talk about sex.
- T F 141. I wish I were not so shy.
- T F 142. I am easily downed in an argument.

**END**