

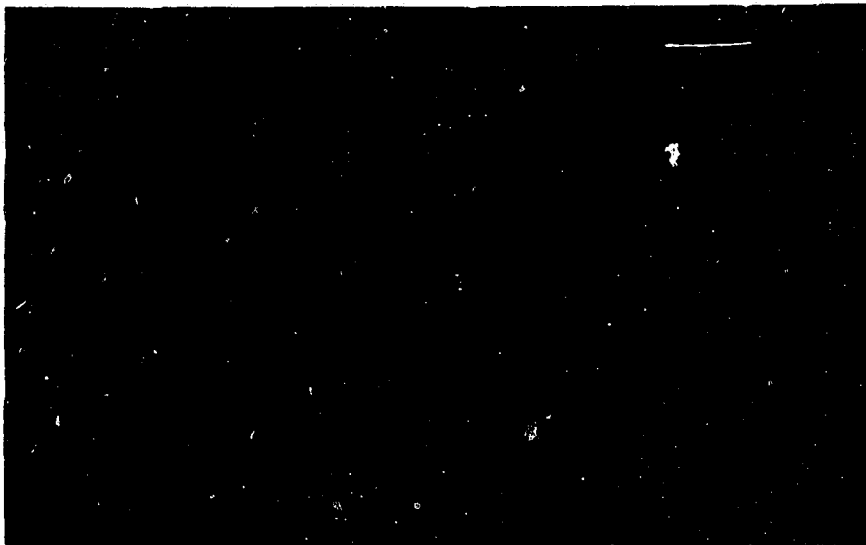
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**Center for Advanced Studies  
in Human Services**

Midwest Parent-Child Welfare  
Resource Center

School of Social Welfare  
The University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee



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ACQUISITIONS

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS  
IN THE CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT-JUVENILE DELINQUENCY  
CORRELATION

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## INTRODUCTION

Widespread evidence of family dysfunction in our society is apparent in many areas, particularly in child abuse/neglect and in juvenile delinquency. The correlation between child abuse/neglect and juvenile delinquency is documented in the literature by examples including the following:

The New York State Assembly Select Committee has found that the abuse of children, whether by parents or institutions, turns the abused child inward toward aggression, violence and criminalization. It views the mistreatment of children as a major contributing factor to increasing violence and rising crime rates. One study has shown that seven out of thirty-nine abused children were in court as juvenile delinquents after being reported abused. Although he may say it too often, Dr. Vincent Fontana is right when he points out that abuse is a dynamic phenomenon reflected in all our statistics on crime. (Chase, 1975, p. 117.)

Another study indicates an even higher correlation, namely, forty-two per cent of children reported to protective services were subsequently identified as delinquent or ungovernable. (Proceedings of the First National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, 1976, p. 118.)

Based on this correlation, the authors of this paper will focus on: first, analyzing current child abuse/neglect policies and programs which promote juvenile delinquency, and, secondly, changing current policies and program practices toward preventing both child abuse/neglect and juvenile delinquency. .

We undertake our discussion from the perspective that our nation's attitude toward children is ambivalent; indulgent and claiming to be child-centered but also hostile and expecting discipline and controlled child behavior. We therefore have policies and programs with ambivalent and contradictory goals. Historically, the nineteenth century house-of-refuge movement and the later crusades by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children evolved

"not to save children from cruel or abusive parents but to save society from future delinquents." (Pfohl, 1977, p. 311.) Society's concern for order, regularity and obedience in children's behavior persists, e.g. the recent Supreme Court ruling allowing corporal punishment in the schools, and we must be aware of these values as we examine child abuse/neglect policies and programs.

Even before the battered child syndrome was identified, professional journals were presenting articles on the etiology of delinquency in parent-child relationships. (Jenkins, 1943; Easson and Steinkilber, 1961; Curtis, 1963.) With the advent of child abuse/neglect reporting laws and more recently with the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, child abuse/neglect has been viewed as a discreet, unique problem rather than one of family dysfunction leading to a multiplicity of other problems, including juvenile delinquency. In our haste to enact legislation and provide programs to identify child abuse/neglect, we have provided a service delivery mechanism which is stigmatizing and therefore used largely for crisis intervention. At the same time, we have poured billions into equally discreet juvenile crime programs. We knew long ago that violence breeds violence, but we have built fragmented services for symptoms rather than treating the root of the problem in the home.

#### CHILD REARING PRACTICES BREEDING VIOLENCE

Although the main topic of this paper focuses on policy and needed policy changes, it is within the family that the effects of policy or lack of policy exert the most direct impact. Experiences within the family, such as child rearing practices, are linked to the norms and values outside the family system. Lystad writes:

...it is within the family that societal stress affects each individual most immediately. It is here that the child's capacity to grow and develop is nurtured. And it is here that the child learns future adult roles of a violent or non-violent character. (Lystad, 1975, p. 340.)

Thus, in establishing a knowledge base for policy, a brief overview of the research on child rearing practices, particularly discipline, should be informative.

As noted previously in this paper, society expects parents and other caretakers to keep children under control. Physical punishment, most universally known as "spanking," is often used to obtain this control. While the effects of physical punishment are complex, being dependent on both the intensity of the punishment and the manner in which it is administered, spanking provides an aggressive behavior model.

If the goal of discipline is to bring about self-control rather than control by others, attention must be given to the research that reports a correlation between parent responses that are warm, accepting and affectionate, and socialization of the child. Sears, Maccaby and Levin found that the withholding of parental affection until compliance occurred was especially effective in developing self-control in children. (Bandura and Walters, 1963.) Wesley C. Becker concurs in a summary statement in "Consequences of Different Kinds of Parental Discipline":

The importance of warmth and permissiveness in facilitating the growth of sociable, independent children has found repeated support. The debilitating effects of parental hostility in its many forms is certainly apparent. (Becker, 1964, p. 203.)

Rutter found that both "family discord and lack of affection were associated with the development of antisocial disorder but the combination of the two was particularly harmful...." (Rutter, 1972, p. 109.) Lystad found parents of delinquents to be more punitive, more sanctioning of antisocial behavior



and of aggression than parents of non-delinquents. (Lystad, 1975.)

Clearly, research indicates that family discord and punitiveness are associated with antisocial behavior of children. We also know that environmental or psychological stress affects a family's ability to provide nurturance and supervision. Thus, it would seem that policies must recognize that stress on families can lead to aggressive behavior by parents wherein violence breeds violence.

#### THE INVIOABLE BOUNDARY BETWEEN FAMILY AND GOVERNMENT

Parents and individual caretakers can abuse and neglect children because in this country there has been an inviolable boundary between the family and the forces of government. Nowhere except with respect to the church is the barrier between public and private more rigid. Interestingly, at least one social and cultural historian points out that such was not always the case:

The boundaries between private and public sectors of American life were defined far differently during pre-Revolutionary days when the community's power of intervention (often expressed through both family and church) was, at least in theory, virtually limitless.

Families in the 17th century, for example, were taken as models of the large society, little commonwealths in which the vital lessons of obedience, deference, and mutual respect would be absorbed by children along with their food, shelter, and daily care. Parents shouldered burdens that in later years would be borne by schoolmasters and politicians; stringent laws protected their authority and held them responsible for juvenile misdeeds.

Those who lived outside of normal family relations were suspect. Dependent and orphaned children were placed not in public institutions but in other families. Young bachelors were often required to receive public permission to live separately. Widows and widowers swiftly remarried after bereavement, and divorce was practically unknown. (Harris, April 4, 1976, p. 9.)

Curiously, in the period between Revolutionary days and the present, the power of intervention diminished at the same time that the family as a value

worthy of intervention diminished. Values shifted to the individual: to Horatio Alger, not his family; to self-actualization; to tax laws which penalize the married. Even the linchpin of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics states, "I regard as my primary obligation the welfare of the individual or group served." (National Association of Social Workers, 1960, 1967.) It will be interesting to see whether the currently proposed revisions of the Code specify the welfare of the family as a primary obligation.

Our value of the individual rather than the family and our concern for family privacy has had devastating effects on our nation's children. We have enacted legislation which focuses on identifying and "catching" abusive parents rather than mandating treatment for family dysfunction. Further, our laws don't prohibit using physical force on children in the interest of positive nurturing and deterring later violence; they just say don't use too much and don't get caught. Because the poor are more visible, they are more likely to be reported and the service system is oriented to a social class whom we identify as dependent and unable to provide for themselves. Thus, we have structured an elaborate system of child welfare services to serve as parent substitutes for the poor in the naive belief that the state makes a good parent. Having structured these programs, it has been our inclination to overuse and protect them. In short, the authors believe that much of the "solution" to child abuse and neglect is part of the juvenile delinquency problem.

#### CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT LEGISLATION

As a result of the congressional Subcommittee on Children and Youth hearings during 1973, the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (PL 93-247) was passed into law in January, 1974. Subsequently, through the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, created by the Act, grants have

been awarded for demonstration and research; information gathering and dissemination, training and technical assistance, and assistance to states.

Among the major objectives of PL 93-247 is the improvement of state child abuse and neglect reporting laws. Since its inception, thirty-three states have revised their laws to meet federal regulations established under this Act and are thereby receiving grants to implement new legislative provisions.

In actuality, however, while newly-revised state reporting laws mandate improved identification and reporting procedures, implementation of effective community based treatment and prevention programs is still severely lacking. The continuing widespread use of foster care and institutionalization of children, as well as the policies and practices within many of these programs, provides strong evidence of the ineffectiveness of these laws in resolving the problem of family dysfunction.

In view of staff shortages and lack of training, child protective service workers understandably recommend placement when in doubt. It has been estimated that eighty-nine per cent of all child welfare expenditures is for foster care. (Comptroller General Report to the Congress, April 9, 1976, p. 35.) The community team approach to child abuse and neglect with shared decision-making and accountability probably reduces the use of placement, but it has yet to be implemented on any significant scale. Furthermore, we must remember that child protective service units have been mandated only to investigate, and treatment, when it occurs for the parent, the child, or the family, remains a privilege, not a right. When state laws are rewritten, the revisions inevitably relate to reporting rather than treatment. This emphasis on reporting distracts from treatment, as the following two-minute response to a TV editorial suggests:

The recent Channel 6 editorial, "Toughen Child Abuse Laws," may mislead the public into thinking that reporting

child abuse - or child neglect - is all that is necessary to solve the problem.

Certainly, as Channel 6 suggested, it is imperative to strengthen the law to require reporting by more professionals. However, identifying abusive or neglectful parents is no guarantee that they or their children will be helped. Furthermore, by emphasizing reporting, we tend to focus on "catching and punishing the parent" rather than helping the parent and preventing further abuse.

Most abusive parents were themselves abused as children, and they are in fact victims, not criminals. Ninety per cent of them can be helped so the children do not have to be removed from the home.

Children belong in families, not in the care of the government, so let's demand long-term treatment and follow-up as well as the reporting of child abuse. Reporting is not enough. (Haeuser, May 13 and 16, 1977.)

#### OVERUSE OF PLACEMENT

We turn now to what happens when parental abuse or neglect results in placement. Unfortunately, placement in itself is too often misconstrued as treatment. Yet we know that extricating children from the child welfare system is much more difficult than the initial placement. Specifically, New York City's Child Welfare Information Service reported for 1975 that "discharge plans provided for only one child in five to be returned to his home" and "no discharge plan at all had been drawn up for 30% of the children." (Child Protection Report, December 4, 1975, p. 3.) The pattern is all too familiar. A child, shifted from one foster home to another, exacerbated by the shrinking number of foster homes in the age of the Women's Movement, becomes emotionally distressed by this instability over and above the trauma of separation from his or her own family. Residential treatment is recommended, often far from the child's home community, and ultimately the child, perhaps now a youth, turns on others as a delinquent or on self as a mental patient and high risk for the staggering adolescent suicide rate. Consider the lack of placement resources and, more importantly, the total disregard for a child's

natural family and community in the following case:

The F case - This case involved a 16-year-old girl who was picked up by police for shoplifting and placed in a detention home in one State (State A) after having run away from a foster home in another State (State B). The State B welfare agency had legal custody of the girl and was notified of the situation by the State A welfare agency. The letter to the State B welfare agency indicated that suitable placement of the girl within its jurisdiction was unlikely.

The State B welfare agency replied that it believed the girl should not be returned because the place from which she ran away represented all the bad experiences she had undergone throughout her life and that a fresh start would probably help her. It offered to pay for all placement costs incurred in behalf of the girl.

The State A welfare agency could not find a foster home for her so she was placed in a receiving home. The girl ran away and was again picked up by the police in State A and placed in a detention home. The girl was subsequently returned to the county in State B from which she had run away initially. The caseworker involved in State A told us that a lack of resources for adolescent girls was the major problem in this case. (Comptroller General Report to the Congress, April 9, 1976, p. 35.)

At present, the state is the parent for 350,000 foster care children displaced from their homes. (Child Protection Report, September 9, 1976, p. 1.) We must ask ourselves how many got more consideration or skilled assistance than F and how many, for whom initial removal was to be only temporary, will end up in the foster care/institutional cycle.

Robert Mnookin, an expert in foster care, reported recently to the Family Impact Seminar that although foster care is primarily a state and local concern, federal financial incentives are all weighted toward institutional care, and "current practices, regulations, and policies of welfare agencies and institutions (e.g. with respect to the rights of parents, visiting privileges, and services) add up to a decidedly anti-family bias."

(Summary Report: Second Meeting of the Family Impact Seminar, January 25-26, 1977, p. 2.) The authors of this paper submit that the state makes a notoriously poor parent and that the rising juvenile crime rate and failure of

state training schools clearly demonstrates that governmental policy and programs providing substitutes for dysfunctional families are not very effective. The stigma of protective services and our "hands off" policy with respect to the family means intervention is crisis oriented and not amenable to supportive services. If parental abuse begets placement and placement begets institutional abuse, is not our very own "helping" system contributing to the problem of juvenile delinquency? Dr. Alan A. Stone, Professor of Law and Psychiatry at Harvard, makes the following observation:

The use of courts to deal with noncriminal social problems (the abused, the abandoned, and the PINS), is part of America's monomania for legalistic solutions. The juvenile courts demonstrate the total inadequacy of that legal approach. The court's only function in many instances is to funnel children from unsuitable homes to unsuitable placements. (Stone, 1975, pp. 156-157.)

It is quite clear that both in terms of the scale of social welfare expenditures and the type of services developed, social services which support the family have received lower priority than those intended to replace the family. (Moroney, 1976, p. 118.)

#### INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE

While child abuse/neglect laws are primarily intended to protect children from maltreatment and to preserve family life whenever possible, we have seen that these laws have had, more often than not, counter-effects on both individual children and their families. First, child abuse/neglect registry data indicates that these laws have been applied almost exclusively to the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect by parents and caretakers in the home. Whereas outside of the home, that is, in schools, in "child-saving" institutions, and in foster homes, abuse and neglect of children is socially and legally condoned by our society in the name of discipline. As a result,

although "there are far more American children mistreated in institutions than suffer injury or neglect at home...our value system, as well as our politics, makes it easier to finger the parents than to blame society."

(Chase, 1976, p. 151.) This is well exemplified on the federal level. In contradiction to the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act aimed at protecting children from parental as well as institutional abuse, federal level policymakers are in practice allowing institutional abuse to flourish. Recent congressional hearings on extension of this federal Act:

...avoided any mention of the even more sensitive matter of institutional child abuse - the maltreatment of youngsters in institutions supported directly or indirectly by HEW funds. Despite many exposes of flagrant abuse in foster homes, reform schools, and hospitals, NCCAN has declined to take any initiatives - and Congress, in effect, is saying it is okay to ignore these out-of-sight unfortunates. (Child Protection Report, May 12, 1977, p. 3.)

Secondly, our ineffectiveness in preserving family life is demonstrated when we consider the numbers of children separated from and abandoned by their communities. In addition to the 350,000 children in foster care, the National Research Council cites over 450,000 children currently placed in public and private institutions, including 95,000 in residential hospitals and schools for mentally-retarded persons; 78,000 in residential treatment centers for emotionally disturbed; 150,000 in detention and training schools for delinquents; 37,000 in institutional programs for the physically and sensorially handicapped; and 98,000 in residential programs for dependent and neglected children. It should be noted that this data represents only "estimates" for the number of children in institutional care. "No agency has a complete picture of institutions and institutionalized children in the U.S. Responsibility is scattered in Washington and fragmented and idiosyncratic in the states." (National Research Council, 1976, pp. 85-89.)

Consequently, we do not even know where our children are.

Moreover, since availability of space is often the determining factor in deciding where to place a child, the child's individual problems and needs are not necessarily matched with the type of placement utilized. In terms of problems, these children are referred by agencies, courts, schools and parents as being emotionally disturbed, truant, school dropouts, retarded, runaways, delinquent, "dangerous" to self and others, dependent, abused, neglected, uncontrollable, ungovernable, and persons in need of supervision (PINS).

Examples of the most blatant placement policies which promote institutional abuse and neglect and, therefore, also juvenile delinquency, have been cited by Wooden (1976) and others:

- Forty-six states approve of placing children in county jails; thirty-four of these states do not require even a court order to do so. Consequently, 8,000 children are in jails on any given day, and over a one-year period, 100,000 children have spent one or more days in jails. (Wooden, 1976, p. 27.)

- Seventy-five per cent of the children in jails are locked up with adults. (Wooden, 1976, p. 28.)

- In all but three states, it is "common" practice to place neglected children in facilities for juvenile offenders. (Wooden, 1976, p. 24.)

- Thirty to fifty per cent of the population of detention centers, jails and training schools are status offenders, i.e., truants, runaways, and PINS. (Wooden, 1976, p. 37.)

When children from economically, socially and educationally advantaged families are neglected by their parents and communities, they may be sent off to "first-class" boarding schools and military academies. Poor and minority children are the ones most often relegated to institutions in which the



practices and care are worse than the homes from which these children are removed. Yet, in our world of double standards:

...the preoccupation with personal hygiene and individual morality rather than institutional values and standards allows us to remove a child from parents whose living quarters are dirty and roach-infested, but to fund with public monies a school for retarded children where toilets are overflowing, garbage is uncollected, and children are permitted to lie in their own soiled clothes. (Chase, 1975, p. 152.)

These children are not only misplaced from their homes and communities but they are also "sentenced" and "warehoused" for indeterminate periods to inappropriate institutional settings in which the physical and emotional conditions are often severely abusive and neglectful. Abhorrent conditions and practices have been cited as "common," particularly in juvenile detention centers, training schools and "for profit" foster homes by Chase (1975), Wooden (1976), Stone (1976) and the National Research Council (1976), and include: overcrowding; lack of sufficient numbers and types of staff; little or no provision for education; inadequate facilities; brutal and sadistic corporal punishment; lack of medical care; sexual abuse by staff and children; overuse of solitary confinement and drug abuse in place of treatment; lack of recreational facilities; and regulations serving the institution rather than the child and his family.

While "we know that most correctional institutions reinforce delinquency in children, that most institutions for the mentally retarded require low levels of intellectual functioning, and that most hospitals for mental illness perpetuate sickness" (National Research Council, 1976, p. 85), we continue to let the availability of these institutions influence decisions which are not in the best interests of children and their families or society.

With the emphasis on identification and increased reporting, communities and professionals continue to believe that the problem of child abuse and

neglect is being taken care of. However, without community commitment to preserving family life and to implementing a comprehensive community-based system for the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect, separation and abandonment of children and families will prevail. The frequency of court referrals and subsequent court-ordered placements of children in institutions reflect parental as well as community sanctioned abandonment of children in a misguided search for legal solutions. As Milton Luger, former president of the New York State Juvenile Delinquency Programs stated:

With the exception of relatively few youths, it would be better for all concerned if young delinquents were not detected, apprehended, and institutionalized. Too many of them get worse in our care. The public is terribly shortsighted. They just want them out of the way. (Chase, 1975, p. 154.)

Our shortsightedness is indeed costly in terms of human lives and tax dollars. Charles Manson is only one example. "(He) and countless thousands of children locked away from society during the late '40's and '50's became part of the bitter harvest of crime this country reaped in the late '60's and early '70's." (Wooden, 1976, p. 56.)

#### CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN THE SCHOOLS

One of the most flagrant examples of legally-sanctioned child abuse is the recent Supreme Court decision on Ingraham et al vs. Wright et al, decided on April 9, 1977. For the second time in less than two years, the Supreme Court upheld corporal punishment in the schools. More specifically, the Court ruled that:

...the cruel and unusual punishment clause of the Eighth Amendment did not apply to disciplinary corporal punishment in public schools and the due process clause did not require notice and hearing prior to the imposition of corporal punishment in the public schools, as that practice was authorized

and limited by...common law. (97 Supreme Court Reporter 1401.)

In terms of constitutional rights, the Supreme Court more explicitly stated that "school children have no need for the Eighth Amendment" because "schools are open institutions subject to constant public scrutiny" and that these children have "adequate remedies under state law." (97 Supreme Court Reporter 1421-1422.) However, currently there are only four states - Maine, New Jersey, Maryland and Massachusetts - which outlaw corporal punishment in schools, and one state - Hawaii - has temporarily suspended permission for its use. The majority, thirty-three states, permit corporal punishment, and the remaining twelve remain "silent" in their statutes, i.e., allow local school districts to decide.

From an international perspective, the United States is one of the few countries of the world which still allows corporal punishment of children. Most other countries prohibit it, including the Scandinavian countries, Russia and France, since 1887. (National Education Association, 1972, p. 26.)

Moreover, "there is a present lack of a specific statute authorizing the United States, through the Attorney General, to bring suits to remedy severe and widespread deprivations of the federal constitutional rights of handicapped persons and children." (Office of Special Litigation, 1977, p. 1.) Our society's contradiction in values and attitudes about disciplining children is apparent by our federal and state child protection legislation, on the one hand, and at the same time, the Supreme Court's approval of corporal punishment in the schools. While most of us would agree that consistency is an essential ingredient in disciplining children, it seems ridiculous that our social policies forbid parents to abuse their children and yet allow teachers the option of doing so. A recent letter from a county welfare department supervisor illustrates the confusion about this issue. Namely, foster parents have been

questioning, "Since the schools are allowed to paddle...children, why aren't we?" (Letter to Midwest Parent-Child Welfare Resource Center, May 3, 1977.)

With the responsibility of educating children, schools are in a position of modeling behavior for children. If schools use corporal punishment with children, indeed, violent behavior becomes the model for children. Moreover, as the aforementioned letter illustrates, parents, too, view the schools as a model for disciplining children.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT, NOT SUBSTITUTION, NEEDED

Even if we exclude the foster care-institutionalization-delinquency syndrome and institutional abuse, we are confronted with Gelles' research indicating that basic training for violence and the teaching of violent behavior and pro-violent norms occurs primarily through parent-child interaction and day-to-day family life. (Gelles, 1972, p. 172.) If our policies are targeted to substitutes for the family, how can we expect to change the violent ways of the large majority of families who are not seen by protective or other social services?

Clearly, it appears that governmental policy and program priorities with respect to families should be reversed, with priority given to support for families and less emphasis on substitution for families. As far back as 1909, the White House Conference on Dependent Children pointed out that parents care for children better and cheaper than anyone else. (Schorr, 1974, p. xiii.) Moreover, support for families is not synonymous with invasion of families, so family privacy is not an issue. While some authors conceive of family support policies and programs as a partnership between parents and the state wherein responsibility is shared, the authors prefer a conceptualization wherein the state provides resources - and outreach for their utilization -

which facilitates parenting and family life. In short, parents are given resources to do their job. In totalitarian countries such as Russia and China, the child belongs to the state and intrusions into family life for the sake of the state are the norm. In socialist countries such as Sweden, the child belongs to the parent but the state recognizes that it is in its best interest to help the parent through a variety of social benefits and programs. Some authors, such as David Gil, believe that capitalism is incompatible with a nonviolent society and that the USA cannot adopt a family support posture without a significant movement toward socialism. (Gil, 1977, pp. 5-6.) The authors agree with Dr. Gil that total nonviolence is impossible in a capitalistic, economically violent society. However, we also believe that capitalism will stay for the foreseeable future and that by reversing our priorities and focusing universally on families rather than on deviant individuals, much can be done to reduce family and societal violence within our present system.

We see the emergence of family policy discussions in many areas as a hopeful sign. President Carter's focus on the family is, of course, invaluable, but there is also the Family Impact Seminar, the forthcoming National Conference on Social Welfare Commission on the Family, and the recent American Orthopsychiatric Association resolution proposing national policy aimed at strengthening the family, and the National Academy of Sciences 1976 report identifying the primary problem facing America's children as poverty.

At the same time, we are pessimistic because child welfare, with foster care and institutionalization as primary functions, is a very entrenched establishment, and entrenched establishments tend to perpetuate themselves. What Titmuss observed with respect to hospitals can probably be applied to child welfare programs:

Boards of Governors and Management Committees devote more of their time to conditions of work, questions of rewards, difficulties of status and dissatisfaction among the staff than they do to meet the needs of the patients. Of course, all of these questions are vital to the efficient and harmonious running of a hospital; there must be a system of settling these often difficult issues.... One of the new problems is the danger that the hospital may tend increasingly to be run in the interests of those working in and for the hospital rather than in the interests of the patients. The fundamental purpose of the hospital must not be dimmed by excessive preoccupation with the means. (Schorr, 1974, pp. 122-123.)

Furthermore, we social workers and social scientists seem to be enchanted with needs assessments relating supply and demand. This, of course, has the serious limitation of promulgating programs as ends rather than means to achieve an objective. "They generate their own dynamism and can reduce efforts to initiate change through more flexible experimentation in as much as the emphasis tends to shift to organizational survival." (Moroney, 1976, p. 104.)

With reluctance and concern for many dedicated child welfare workers, the authors have concluded that only a platform which obliterates child welfare will curb the violence in families and institutions which breeds juvenile delinquency and other problems. Parents, not children, are this country's greatest resource. Let's help them do their job by providing services to families and children in their own homes and benefits which will enable every family to enjoy a decent standard of living.

#### INCOME BEFORE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

The importance of income as a deterrent to child abuse and juvenile delinquency as well as other problems cannot be overemphasized. HEW Secretary Califano underscored this by reporting last fall to President-Elect Carter

that "the most severe threat to family life stems from unemployment and lack of adequate income.... Give American parents the job opportunities they seek so that they can provide for their families." (Califano, September 17, 1976, p. 1.) Mary Keyserling, a member of the National Academy of Sciences research committee, also recently noted that "serious economic difficulties have impact on other things. Child abuse comes out of this, poor academic performance, juvenile crime - they're all income related." (Merry, December 25, 1976, p. 1.) While our American society may not welcome socialistic policies and programs to combat family dysfunction, we must accept the fact that some form of guaranteed employment or income redistribution is essential to alleviate both child abuse and neglect and juvenile delinquency.

To support our conclusion that child welfare which substitutes for the family must be obliterated and replaced with policies and programs which support the family, we cite a recent Milwaukee Journal newspaper article which appeared under the heading, "End of Line Arrives at Age 16." After describing a typical juvenile criminal's foster home/institution experience, the article continues:

The boy first came to the court's attention in 1963, when he was just 3 years old. The Sheriff's Department had filed a complaint at Children's Court that the boy and his siblings were neglected children. The complaint apparently stemmed from an action of their parents, who took the toddlers to the Children's Home and said they were uncontrollable. (Milwaukee Journal, January 9, 1977.)

Parents who describe their children as uncontrollable are probably parents for whom life is uncontrollable; families without adequate income, housing, etc., or knowledge of child care, and few links to resources such as family or social services. It is clear that we must provide both resources and links to assist families in controlling their own destinies.

## SUMMARY

While the causes of child abuse/neglect and juvenile delinquency are rooted in family dysfunction, we have elaborated separate service systems which blind us to their common origin and deter us from focusing on programs which support families and children in their own homes. We have done this in the misguided belief that we must respect family privacy until private family problems become public.

In evolving child abuse/neglect reporting legislation, we have focused on identification rather than treatment, and too often we have misconstrued placement as treatment. By not providing treatment and by permitting the foster care-institutionalization-delinquency cycle to flourish, we must admit that child abuse/neglect policies and programs are indeed promoting juvenile delinquency.

More directly, abused and neglected children who are placed in institutions often fare worse than if left in the most inadequate home. Yet we sanction institutional placements just as the Supreme Court sanctions corporal punishment in the schools. In effect we are saying we sanction abuse.

The authors believe these policies and programs for child abuse/neglect contribute to the juvenile delinquency problem. Only as we reverse our priorities and provide universal programming and benefits, particularly income, for families and children will we intervene in family dysfunction without making the solution to the child abuse/neglect problem a part of the cause of juvenile delinquency.

When society seeks to redress deprivation, programs are designed to meet the needs of the deprived. In most instances "deprived" is synonymous with "poor." Services tend to be designed for special groups, rather than for all children. Thus the field of child welfare is oriented toward pathology and deprivation, an orientation that in overt and subtle ways affects program development and planning. There is substantial evidence that programs for the



poor are often poor programs. So a system such as child welfare, designed as part of the solution, can instead become part of the problem. (Schorr, 1974, p. 4.)

And, as long as we have child welfare placement services available, they will be used and reversing priorities will be difficult. It may be necessary to adopt an anti-child welfare posture.

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**END**