A Study of Guidance Center Adjustment Plans for Dull Normal Boys

James Joseph Flynn
Loyola University Chicago

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A STUDY OF GUIDANCE CENTER ADJUSTMENT
PLANS FOR DULL NORMAL BOYS

BY
JAMES J. FLYNN

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
of Master of Arts

February
1952
VITA

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He graduated from Gonzaga High School, Spokane, Washington, in June, 1941. He received the Bachelor of Arts degree (Honor Classical) in Philosophy from Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington, in June, 1948.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This study of the needs of dull normal boys is a companion to one along parallel lines in the case of the dull normal girl. The purpose of the present thesis is to discover what common remedial measures, if any, were used by different psychologists to foster the healthy adjustment of dull normal boys referred to the Loyola Center for Guidance and Psychological Service. There are many reasons for choosing to perform this type of study with the dull normal group. They constitute a fairly homogeneous group, along one dimension at least. Further, the difficulty which they have in common is such a basic one that it could be expected to manifest itself in almost any environment.

As a group they constitute a rather large part of our population. Estimates vary as to the actual percentages. Wechsler classes those individuals with IQ rating of between eighty and ninety on his intelligence scale as dull normal, and calculates that they will comprise 16.1 per cent of the general
population. Porteus cites four studies using the Stanford-Binet on large random populations where the group with IQ's between seventy and eighty-five ranged from ten to fifteen percent of the respective samples. In Terman's standardization data on the Stanford-Binet, approximately nine percent of his 2904 subjects received ratings between seventy-five and eighty-four.

In addition to the fact that their number is significant, their plight is demanding. The average child can be expected to adjust well in the normal school program since the curriculum is geared to his ability. The special schools instituted for the mentally deficient child provide adequate care for some of them and at least are positive signs that their difficulties are recognized within our educational structure. But the dull normal child must plod along, depending on the chance of falling heir to an understanding and sympathetic teacher each year and rarely, if ever, tasting success. For the school administrator, he presents a dilemma. If he is kept with his age group, he soon sinks to the bottom of the class. If he is kept back a

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year or two, he is compared with children younger, generally
smaller, and most frequently quicker at learning than he is.
When placed in a special class for mentally deficient children,
his near normal abilities are not developed, his morale is dam-
aged, and his initiative declines.

Few studies in the literature deal specifically with
the dull normal group. The majority of textbooks give at most a
cursory reference to their situation and mention that they need
special consideration.

Kanner devotes a few pages to problems arising from
intellectual inadequacy. In his consideration of the matter,
he lumps together all those "incapable of satisfactory perform-
ance commensurate with their ages." He then describes their
predicament and speaks of the beneficial effects of special
classes and special teaching. He remarks that the greatest
problem is presented by the difficulties which the parents have
in accepting their children's limited capacities.

With respect to children with dull normal abilities,
Louttit says, "The management of this problem, when it is uncom-
plicated with others, is primarily educational and therefore is

\[4\] Leo Kanner, M.D., Child Psychiatry, second edition,
most satisfactorily handled by the school."\(^5\) He then goes on to suggest special classes and individualized assignments.

Lester and Alice Crowe mention that secondary school is particularly difficult for dull normal children. The vocational schools, originally intended for the non-book-minded, are often well populated with boys of average mentality who are adverse to academic studies and desire vocational training. When the dull normal finds himself in such a group he is again subjected to frustrating competition and is likely to develop unhealty attitudes resulting in adult maladjustment and delinquency.\(^6\)

Shirley approaches the problem of slow-learning children with less emphasis on the academic aspects. He points out that they are likely to be misunderstood children whose self-confidence and family relationships are shaken because their elders forced them to compete with normal and superior children. He suggests vocational schools if secondary schooling is desired and maintains that their achievements should only be compared with their own potential as revealed by an individual intell-


Shirley emphasizes therapy in terms of emotional needs. He lists the following: affection, security, acceptance as an individual, self-respect, achievement, recognition, independence, and authority. In the case of the dull normal, he maintains that much attention should be devoted to finding the means to satisfy the child's need for achievement since the ordinary ways of fulfilling this need are denied him.

Griffin, Laycock, and Line also consider the personality development of children in terms of needs. They list various physiological, social, and self (ego) needs. Under social needs they include: need for status, approval; need for affection; and the sense of belonging or being like others. Among the self needs, they mention needs for self-respect, success, dominance, new experiences, harmony or integration, and spontaneity.

These authors devote a comparatively lengthy section to the problems of children with limited mental ability and present a sympathetic evaluation of their circumstances. In addi-

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8 Ibid., pp. 50-58.

tion they include some very practical suggestions for helping the child utilize his limited capacities to their fullest. They mention that any methods used in working with the child must increase his sense of self-worth. The section on dull normal children closes with suggested methods of interpreting them to their parents in a manner calculated to enlist parental cooperation.10

An independent study by Laycock attempted to compare the adjustment of fifty-one children of superior abilities with the adjustment of fifty-one children of inferior mental abilities in a normal school setting. He found that the inferior children were significantly more maladjusted in these areas: violations of general moral standards; transgressions against authority; violations of school standards; difficulties with other children; and undesirable personality traits. He concluded that the feeling of inferiority and the children's efforts to compensate for this feeling were the most important causes of the maladjustments.11

Among educational sources, Baker's article in the Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education was help[

10Ibid., pp. 113-134.

ful. His contributions will be discussed in the analysis of the recommendations.12

The above references reveal the recognition of the problems dull normal children encounter and they contain some useful suggestions for their welfare. The present study plans to go further in the examination of detailed plans of meeting their needs.

The method adopted for this study is not unlike that employed by Tyson in a much larger field. He attempted to classify the suggestions published in mental hygiene books. Since the suggestions he abstracted from these books dealt with mental health in general, his classification scheme was necessarily different from the one used in the present study.13


CHAPTER II

METHOD OF SECURING DATA

The materials used in this thesis were drawn from case reports in the files of the Loyola Center for Guidance and Psychological Service. The intake and testing procedure at the Guidance Center is like that of similar agencies. In the case of a juvenile client, the parent generally initiates contact for the client. In the preliminary visit with the parent, the family background, and the physical, social, and educational history of the child is obtained. Following the case history, the psychologist meets the child and, after establishing rapport, begins the examination with an individual intelligence test. Later sessions are devoted to achievement and personality testing where indicated, and counseling sessions for the client and parents.

When the psychologist is confident that he has sufficient information to understand the child and his situation, he begins writing the comprehensive report. This report contains testing results, school history, developmental history and medical facts, and available data on the social background. After these more detailed and technical parts are set forth, the psy-
chologist recapitulates his findings in a non-technical summary. Finally, he draws up a list of specific recommendations calculated to aid the teacher or social worker in handling the child or in interpreting his needs to the parent.

Thus far, the procedure is that common to hundreds of guidance centers, with this exception, that while the whole report is intended for the school or other interested agency, the Loyola psychologist has the parent and home background particularly in mind when writing the summary and recommendations. In this point the Loyola Center deviates from the policy of many similar agencies, that a copy of the summary and appended recommendations are placed in the hands of the parent. These portions are carefully explained to them and are used as a basis for discussion in subsequent visits. Since they are usually given to the parents before therapy is terminated, indeed, often before therapy is begun, their intelligent cooperation may be expected.

It is with the summary and recommendations described above that the present study is directly concerned. What therapeutic measures did the psychologist consider necessary to further the healthy development of the dull normal child? The answer to this question lies in an analysis of the pertinent sections of the finished report.

One might assume that this question could be readily
answered by making a quantitative analysis of the recommendations since the positive measures could then be classified and counted. The impracticality of this type of approach is largely due to the nature of the report given to the parents. It is an attempt to describe complex and subtle growth processes in non-technical language. Consequently, in order to bring out some difficult idea in the summary, frequent examples must be given. Oftentimes detailed remedial measures are suggested. The child's particular need can be made more apparent by mentioning ways to fulfill the need. This occasionally results in the situation where the summary contains more numerous or more important recommendations than does the list of recommendations itself. Consequently, the summary must also be analyzed in the search for remedial measures suggested by the psychologist.

The inadvisability of a quantitative approach in such a study is due to the fact that few, if any, trustworthy conclusions could be drawn. Supposing that a quantitative approach had been utilized, and assuming that measure A and measure B yielded a difference with a coefficient of reliability that would be significant, of what would it be significant? May we say that measure A is more important than measure B? Or that it is less obvious to parents? Finally, a qualitative approach affords a better opportunity to go farther than the recommendations, to get beyond the remedial measures suggested and to approach that
which was to be remedied. By concentrating on the kind of recommenda-
tions employed and by examining their context, the re-
search worker could attain a clearer understanding of the needs
and frustrations of a dull normal child.

Therefore the writer decided to use a quantitative ap-
proach where quantity would have a contribution to make, but to
attempt to analyze the reports chiefly in terms of their quali-
tative content.

The foregoing describes the writer's viewpoint. His pro-
cedure in gathering the data was as follows.

The files of all clients entering the Center between
May, 1943, and November, 1948, were examined in a search for dull
normal boys of school age. Criteria were set up in terms of
sex, IQ, CA, and completeness of the report. Only boys were
selected since this was a companion study to another investiga-
tion dealing with dull normal girls. Those with Stanford-Binet
IQ's between seventy-five and eighty-five were singled out.
These limits were chosen to avoid encroaching on either the de-
fective or average mentality groups. The present limits are
sufficiently removed from either group to make possible a rela-
tively homogeneous population.

The CA range lies within the limits of the school
residency of the dull normal. Few, if any, have not been en-
rolled before they are seven years, six months of age nor are
many withdrawn before they are fourteen years old.

The cases of twenty-three different psychologists comprise the fifty-three boys chosen. One psychologist handled seven of the cases, two others each worked with five cases, and the remainder were distributed among the twenty other psychologists. This spread suggests that the recommendations will not be primarily the result of the psychologists' personalities or individual manner of approach. Most of the psychologists, twenty, were women. Two were priests and seven were nuns. Their clinical experience and background varied somewhat but most of them had experience as classroom teachers, some in high schools and some in the elementary grades.

After the cases had been selected, the examiner went through each file abstracting from the summary and list of recommendations all suggestions or measures advised. These were written in brief form on separate cards. The material was then ready for analysis and classification.

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14 Non-specific or general statements of basic needs were not considered since we were concerned with specific measures. Likewise, twenty-six recommendations relative to follow-up and long-term counseling were not abstracted.
CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

It is to be remembered that these recommendations were written by many different psychologists. Thus the same idea would be expressed in diverse ways. Wide variations in style were noted since some psychologists had written rather directly while others had chosen a more circuitous path. This is not meant to imply that the direct recommendations were better because of their clarity, nor that the subtlety of the indirect approach was the more efficacious since it might avoid stirring feelings of guilt or blame on the part of the parents. It is a question of the personal style of the writer adjusted to the individual reader.

Both the emotional and the intellectual resources of the parents had to be considered by individual psychologists in writing the recommendations. Painful facts had to be wrapped in soft words frequently so as to facilitate their acceptance. It was necessary to present technical concepts in such a way that the uninitiated could grasp them. At times a grammar school vocabulary was employed so that parents with little education could understand the intentions of the psychologist. These fac-
tors all contributed to variations in the wording of the recommendations and made the process of analysis a difficult one.

In exposing the results of the analysis and classification sample recommendations will often be given. These are described as samples and not selections because there will be no definite effort to select items with the most precise wording. Rather, representative suggestions in the various categories will be presented.

The recommendations to be classified were intended to better the child's adjustment by furthering his development. The construction of the classification scheme, therefore, is based on the various areas in which a person may be developed, that is his physical or intellectual resources, his moral, social and emotional capabilities. Human beings, of course, are not constructed in minute segments so that a psychologist could concentrate on developing a client socially and then proceed to his emotional adjustment. On the contrary, progress in one phase of his adjustment is naturally followed by a change in another aspect of that person's life. However, emphasis can be placed on one area, at the same time recognizing the fact that widespread effects may occur. For example, it is apparent that special help in reading contributes primarily to the intellectual development of the child. However, it is just as obvious that, following successful tutoring, a better emotional adjust-
ment may be attained. Likewise, the child may be more inclined to participate in social activities once the stigma of academic failure is removed. Placement of an item in a particular category should not be regarded as rigid and inflexible. Where doubt arose as to the classification of a particular recommendation which might be related to more than one category, the decision was made on the basis of the psychologist's intention as revealed in the context of the report.

The distribution of the 510 recommendations among the five general groupings is shown in Table I. It can be seen that the heaviest loadings are in the emotional, social, and intellectual spheres while measures dealing directly with physical and moral development receive less attention. This is to be expected since the last two areas are administered by other well-trained specialists, whereas psychology is chiefly concerned with the former domains. However, it is gratifying to observe that these psychologists recognized the full development of their clients and did not hesitate to refer them to physicians or religious authorities when the need was evident.

Most attention was devoted to the general category of emotional development, an area which is apt to be neglected in the ordinary school routine because of the urgency of the aca-

\[15\] See Table I, p. 16
demic needs of the dull normal. This is understandable in view of the fact that the school must emphasize intellectual progress.

TABLE I

DISTRIBUTION OF 510 RECOMMENDATIONS ACCORDING TO GENERAL AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Development</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional development</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social development</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical development</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral development</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>510</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The recommendations in the emotional development grouping were classified in terms of basic or general needs, a much disputed topic. The purpose of this study is not to establish or define any basic needs. The particular needs chosen were selected because they could conveniently serve as the framework for meaningful content. Moreover, the basic needs utilized as subheads under emotional development were those most frequently mentioned by writers on the problem. The four groupings chosen were security (chiefly in the family group), recognition, affection, and achievement. The distribution of the recommendations
concerned with emotional development can be found in Table II.  

The child's need for security was stressed most frequently in the suggestions analyzed. Security can be described as freedom from anxious fear. This reveals its relation to the other needs since anxious fear can be caused by a lack of affection or an unfulfilled desire for recognition or achievement. Security bespeaks a certain permanence and a confidence bordering on optimism. A secure person is able to appraise his circumstances and feel assured as to the stability of the satisfaction of his wants. Shirley recognizes the fact that, for a child, security rests largely upon parental affection. It is not surprising then, that the recommendations classified in this study were chiefly concerned with security within the family group.

The most frequently appearing measure calculated to increase the dull normal boy's security accented the fact that by performing chores and duties, he received assurance that he rightfully belonged. Although this recommendation also satisfied his desire for recognition, its apparent purpose was to convince him that he was accepted by the group. "He should be made to feel that he has something to contribute and that the

16 See Table II, p. 26.
17 Shirley, op. cit., p. 52.
work he does for others is necessary." "Give him a schedule of tasks and other opportunities to be helpful at home. He will feel closer to the family group if he shares in responsibilities and receives praise and recognition." In this regard, parents were advised to select tasks which the boy could do better than others in the family. This type of suggestion, of course, would also gratify the boy's sense of achievement as well as his desire for belonging. It possesses additional merit in that it suggests a task in which he is sure to succeed, thus avoiding insecurity aroused by inadequacy feelings or failure.

Many of the recommendations attempted to maintain or develop the child's security by preventing insecurity which might arise from ill-advised comments or attitudes on the part of adults. The most common measure of this type reminded the parent not to compare the dull normal in any respect with other children, siblings, classmates, or acquaintances. One suggestion allowed exception to that rule where the comparison was favorable to the dull normal himself. Other recommendations forbade discussion of his difficulties in his presence or in the presence of other persons. Likewise it was advised that no mention be made of his past failures. "Past failures should be forgotten. No mention should be made of them in his presence since he already feels deeply about them." The discouraging effect of certain parental attitudes was adverted to. "At no time should his behavior be-
come the occasion for display of concern, disappointment, or discussion." "It is very important that the anxieties of his parents be hidden from him." Teachers were also urged to shield the boy from certain defeat, for example, by omitting oral reading assignments if he had a reading disability.

Some emphasis was placed on the attainment of a spirit of family unity through family activities and recreation. "Every means should be used to foster family unity, especially by providing for good times together and occasional chats where a free exchange of ideas is permitted." "Strive to foster a spirit of unity in the family, with everyone having a share in the chores, with time for a family chat or recreation together occasionally."

In addition to the above practical suggestions, some of the recommendations consisted of more or less general statements. "His parents can help him by providing an atmosphere of security in the home and by letting him know and feel that they have confidence in him." "The parents should make every effort to provide a harmonious, happy home for this sensitive boy." "He should receive love, affection, recognition and praise for success and respect for his ability, sufficient to assure him of security in the family group."

Next to security, most recommendations in the emotional development grouping were concerned with recognition. The recognition category was taken to include two needs mentioned by
Shirley, acceptance as an individual and the need to have one's achievements recognized. Recognition flows from achievement and, to a lesser degree from affection. In turn, it partially satisfies the child's desire for security.

The greater part of the suggestions aimed to fulfill this want by urging parents and teachers to be watchful so they could praise the boy's successes. "Give him recognition for the least success and praise him for honest effort." It should be noted that other recommendations in the report from which this is quoted had advised the parents and teachers that progress for dull normal children should be considered from the child's own level of achievement and should not be compared with the attainments of children with average abilities. Further, "success" was not construed to apply only to academic success but referred to any satisfactory actions. "Praise his good behavior, giving him more attention when he is good. This will satisfy his need for attention, thus eliminating the cause for his misbehavior."

"Comment favorably on every praiseworthy act."

Frequently the child himself was unable to be motivated by the actual progress he had made since he was painfully aware that he was still doing work inferior to that of his classmates. In such cases, the psychologists tried to help him see his prog-

18 Ibid., pp. 53-57.
ress by encouraging him to use his own past achievements as his norm of comparison. "Motivate him in wholesome self-competition rather than competition with others."

The relation between recognition and the child's other needs was sometimes pointed out. "Give him some feeling of responsibility and success at school and home in order to build up his self-confidence and a sense of security and belonging."

At times the psychologists found the child's need for recognition so demanding and the probability of his achieving success so unpromising that they prescribed praise for good effort alone and suggested that special opportunities be provided so that success and merited praise could follow. "Arrange for opportunities for success and praise at home and in the school."

"He should be praised for the care and effort he puts into a job."

A further indication of how severe a child's need for recognition can become is revealed by the following recommendation. "Emphasis should be placed on success and he should be given tangible evidence of progress, such as a progress chart or an occasional reward." There were many instances in the writer's own experience where the child, by habitually ignoring the reactions of his elders, had attempted to render himself impervious to the discouraging results of his efforts. This type of adjustment likewise prevents the ordinary therapeutic measures from penetrating his defenses.
The above recommendation possesses additional merit in that it utilizes tangible signs of progress. Children with limited mental ability customarily find it easier to learn from the concrete than the abstract.

Parents were advised to analyze their ways of working with the child in terms of positive and negative means. Positive means included the measures previously listed and negative means referred to actions or comments that would tend to devaluate his appraisal of his own achievements.

Writers stressed the boy's need to be considered an individual by recommendations that he be treated as an older boy, that he be allowed to go to bed later than his younger siblings, and that he be permitted within limits to choose his own clothes.

Many of the measures referred to the fact that parents should manifest interest in the child's activities. Practical ways of doing this were: encouraging him to talk of the day's events, refraining from criticizing him when he is confiding in his parents, giving him full attention when he is speaking, joining him in his hobbies, and discussing his vocational plans with him.

The teacher was reminded that she could help satisfy his need for recognition by having him perform occasional duties and services in the classroom.
The third category pertaining to emotional development was the need for affection. This includes not only a natural desire to receive affection but also the opportunity to bestow warmth and devotion on others. One might expect that more attention would have been given to anything so necessary for emotional security. There are a number of possible reasons why such was not the case. There is a strong possibility that the need for affection is so basic that the parents themselves easily recognized it and responded to it. This is given more credence when we recall the forlorn and hapless appearance that dull normals often present. However there is an equal likelihood that, in many cases, a rather selfish love on the part of the parents had turned to rejection when the child failed to bring laurels to the family. If this were true, the psychologist might have considered it premature to direct the parents to display more affection towards the child. Speculations could be multiplied ad infinitum, revealing no certainties. However, a final possibility may be mentioned, one that is suggested by the recommendations themselves. In analyzing the recommendations belonging primarily to other categories it was observed that an atmosphere of affection was implied throughout. This would suggest, and the recommendations themselves lend strength to the impression, that it is difficult to be articulate about the precise manifestation of affection. Instead, one must be content to direct attention primarily to
other needs. Then the methods suggested to meet those needs will at the same time serve to satisfy the child's need for affection. For example, compliance with the recommendation that the parents show a real interest in the child's daily activities would be difficult without, at the same time, bestowing affection on him. There were two types of recommendations serving affection. Many of them said in substance, "Give the child affection and love in the external signs he understands, such as a hug, kiss, or gentle pat on the head." The other kind of recommendation was non-specific and urged, "sympathetic understanding, gentle firmness, kindness, and response to his needs for recognition, affection, etc."

The final need contributing to the emotional development of an individual is achievement. This refers to the strong desire to be able to accomplish something commensurate with our own norm of attainment. This need derives its strength partially from its relationship to reality-testing, as understood by Coleman.\(^{19}\) In the process of developing, the normal infant must continually explore the possibilities and limitations of his environment. This enables him to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to manipulate and use the resources surrounding him. This phenomenon, on the developmental level, is represented, in terms of emotional

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needs by the desire for mastery.

Again it would be cause for mild wonder that this need received no more attention than it did were it not for the mutual relationships between the various classifications. The most realistic way to satisfy the need for achievement is to prepare the child for actual success. The measures included under intellectual development were largely devoted to this end.

In addition to those recommendations primarily intended to promote academic progress, the following suggestions attempted to afford him the emotional satisfaction of achievement. Most of the advice urged that he be aided in developing special abilities or aptitudes. "Encourage him to use his skill in mechanical tasks." "Encourage his interest in farm work and allow him to assist with as many farm chores as possible." "He should be given an opportunity to develop his skill in handwork, in the classroom and outside." Since in these types of activities competition is less keenly observed, one suggestion advised that he be allowed to follow his interests even though he manifested no exceptional talent. "Since he is interested in drawing, he should be allowed to develop himself along that line though he may not have special ability." In a few instances it was suggested that the boy continue or secure employment so as to experience a sense of accomplishment.
### TABLE II

**DISTRIBUTION OF 163 MEASURES PERTAINING TO EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Security</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Let him contribute his services</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Avoid comparing him with others</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) General admonitions</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Do not discuss him or show emotional concern</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Include him in family activities</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Avoid humiliation in school</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) Refrain from references to past failures</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recognition</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Show interest in his activities</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Praise success, build confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Assign prestige tasks in school</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Treat as an individual</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affection</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Give him external signs of love</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Show tact, sympathy, and understanding</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Achievement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Develop special abilities</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Permit employment for sense of satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Next to the emotional development of the child, the category receiving the most attention was social development. Shirley has described the period of school age as the period of communal socialization. He says, "It is a period of increasing independence and the time when he (the child) should be learning to make friends, to stand up for himself, and to respect the rights of others." A glance at Table III reveals that many of the recommendations were devoted to these ends. The discipline aids guide the child in respecting the rights of others while the remaining suggestions were intended to equip him for making friends and increasing his independence.

With respect to discipline we may again draw from Shirley's common sense approach. He stresses the following conditions which must be fulfilled to make discipline efficient. It must be based upon love, understanding, and respect for the individuality of the child. It must be reasonable and consistent. Emphasis should be placed upon fostering and encouraging desirable impulses and acts through example, direction, and normal incentives. Punishment should be recognized as effective although its chief function is to inhibit or thwart misbehavior rather

20 Shirley, op. cit., p. 77.
21 See Table III, p. 33.
22 Shirley, op. cit., pp. 331-335.
than to stimulate good behavior. Finally, punishments and rewards are more efficacious if they are similar to the natural consequences of the act with which they are concerned.

Most of the suggestions concerned with discipline stressed consistency, and understanding of the child. Some of these were more or less general statements mentioning the importance of consistency, calmness, patience, firmness and kindness. Many of the recommendations referred to some Notes on Discipline assembled by the staff of the Loyola Guidance Center. This list appears in the Appendix. In addition to these statements of principles there were many practical means suggested to aid in carrying out the general statements. To insure consistency, parents were cautioned that adults other than the parents generally should not share in the duty of correcting the child. An understanding of the child's emotional needs was evident in the advice to correct or criticize the child in private, to keep criticisms infrequent, and to avoid references to past misdeeds. In a few instances with older boys, reasoning was suggested rather than dictation and frequent corrections.

Since obedience is a learned reaction, emphasis was placed on the positive aspect of discipline. The influence of example was mentioned and some suggestions concerned ways of preventing specific types of misbehavior. "He should be given as little opportunity as possible to lie. Instead of being
asked whether he did something he should be made aware of the fact that he was known to have done it. He should be helped to tell the truth rather than be blamed for lying. "Property rights should be explained to him simply. He should have his own things separate from his brother's and should be taught to care for them; at the same time he should be made to see that the rights of others must also be respected."

The place of punishments and rewards was recognized. The point was stressed that the punishment should be linked to the misbehavior, in time and in nature. Punishment should follow quickly and should be related to the transgression. "Punishment should follow the misdeed promptly. Explain the reason for the punishment." "When a child is disciplined for misbehavior, the form of punishment should be as mild or as severe as the misbehavior is serious." "When he doesn't come home at the regular time, let him suffer the natural consequences, such as missing his meal or giving up play time for the time lost." The use of corporal punishment was not approved in a few instances. Deprivations and forfeitures of privileges were favored instead. It was suggested that enjoyable rewards be given for notable improvement.

Next to the discipline factor in social development, the psychologists writing the recommendations concentrated on means of affording recreation and social contacts for the child.
Within this category much emphasis was placed on the beneficial effects of group activities. "Encourage him to join the Cub Scouts or a boys' club where he will meet playmates and learn the give and take of association with children his own age."

"Encourage joining in group cooperative play which will not require definite skills or complicated rules." The above recommendation takes into account one of the factors which interferes with the social adjustment of dull normal boys, the fact that their lack of muscular coordination and their deficient mental skills often operate to reduce their aptitude for sports and games. Occasionally the following suggestion was made in an effort to help overcome this liability. "He should be encouraged to participate in the regular sports. His older brother should be encouraged to help him improve in sports." The importance of group play in fostering desirable social attitudes was sometimes mentioned. "Encourage him to take part in group play so he won't be a lonely child and an unhappy adult. Such play also leads to attitudes of cooperation, fair play, and respect for the rights of others."

It was recognized that social relations are all-encompassing in that contacts cannot be limited to the play fields. Consequently many recommendations advised that the boy should be allowed to entertain his friends at home frequently and that he likewise should be permitted to visit them. Of all the recommendations concerned with recreation and social contacts, only one
measure contained the suggestion that the boy's activities be curtailed. "Limit movie attendance to one picture a week. Be sure that it is known which theater he is going to and with whom."

Most of the above recommendations attempting to provide social contacts were secondarily concerned with the formation of desirable social attitudes. The development of reliability and regularity was the primary purpose of the suggestions advising chores and home duties. The assignment of tasks to increase his security by allowing him to share in family responsibilities has already been considered in the section on emotional development. The emphasis in the following suggestions was on regularity of performance. "He should be required to perform a few reasonable chores each day, not for punishment, but to develop wholesome attitudes of cooperation, sharing of responsibilities, and mutual loyalties in the family group." "To help develop traits of reliability, responsibility, cooperation and wholesome attitudes he should be given a few simple chores to perform each day." Many measures referred to the fact that the child should be helped in arranging a workable schedule since he might encounter difficulty with an array of regular duties." Arrange scheduled household tasks and adhere to them, dusting, cleaning, washing dishes, setting the table, etc. Assign a few tasks at first and then increase them gradually." "He should be helped in planning a schedule for daily study, school work, chores, rest, recreation, etc."
"Aid him in making a schedule to budget his time and work alongside him for a few days to prove the advantages of such organization."

To aid the child's social adjustment, school changes were sometimes advocated. The majority of these involved children from broken families and advised placement in boarding schools. In a few instances, it was considered desirable to promote the child to a higher grade so he could associate with children his own age. Instructions for remedial work in his academic deficiencies accompanied these latter recommendations.

In addition to the above positive measures calculated to aid in the social development of these dull normal children, the psychologists found it necessary to caution the parents against inhibiting the child's growth by over-protection.

To further equip the child for social intercourse, a few recommendations suggested that he be given a regular allowance. It was also seen that this would aid in the formation of beneficial attitudes. "Give him an allowance and permit him to earn a small sum to develop habits of self-reliance and personal responsibility." "Provide him with a small regular allowance and with a minimum of supervision."
### TABLE III

**DISTRIBUTION OF 152 MEASURES PERTAINING TO SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>55</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Emphasis on consistency and understanding</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. general</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. specific</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Emphasize positive aspect of discipline</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Concerning punishment and rewards</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contacts and Recreation</th>
<th>46</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Encourage group activities</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Allow him to entertain and visit friends</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Encourage outdoor activities</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Limit movie attendance</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chores to Develop Regularity and Reliability</th>
<th>27</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Placement</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Boarding school</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Promotion</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avoid Sheltering</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Give Regular Allowance | 5 |
The general heading of intellectual development has for its primary purpose progress in academic skills. It was further subdivided into categories including school placement, special instruction, home aids and readiness activities, individualized attention, and general learning principles. Table IV shows the distribution of recommendations according to these groupings.23

The majority of the recommendations dealt with special instructions and individualized attention for the child, two topics which are pre-eminently psychological in nature since emotional circumstances play such a prominent part in them. The majority of the special instruction measures specifically mentioned expert aid in reading. Arithmetic and spelling help was also considered necessary in many cases, and penmanship instruction only rarely. That there were comparatively few measures concerned with motivating the child for his special instruction program is probably due to the fact that in many cases this remedial academic work is instituted at Loyola Center and, when this is not practicable, there is close cooperation between the tutor and the psychologist at the Center. The problem of motivation in tutoring thus receives much attention in technical conferences with the tutor. The recommendations which did concern motivation urged

23See Table IV, p. 39.
that the child be told that he had the ability to do better work and tutoring would enable him to use that ability.

In 1936, Baker said, "If teachers would learn to avoid comparing them (dull normal children) with average children and take them at their own level of development and their own rate of mental growth, the solution of their problems would not be so difficult." The category concerned with individual methods of attending to the dull normals echoes this thought. It echoes it many times. "He will progress most satisfactorily if permitted to work at his own rate with material at his own level of ability. His progress in school has been and will be slower than normal. This is to be expected because of his slow rate of mental growth and he should not be scolded or held responsible for his slow progress."

While the above suggestions to permit him to work with materials at his own level of ability are necessary, teachers often report that he shows no interest in tasks at this level since he is too mature. To help meet this difficulty, the advice was frequently given to provide him with easy reading on a more mature level.

So as to maintain the boy's interest in class discussion.

\[24\] Baker, op. cit., p. 145.
some recommendations urged the teacher to give him an opportunity for advance preparation of material he would be asked to discuss in class.

The next category of recommendations is devoted to home aids and readiness activities. This emphasizes the fact that not only does the dull normal learn more slowly than children with average capabilities, but he also brings less of his past experience when he enters a new grade. These suggestions were concerned with younger children and many of them prescribed simple exercises to develop muscular coordination. "Encourage him to participate in many action games, to draw and trace and cut out and color, etc. These will develop better motor abilities." "To develop proper articulation: (a) repeat rhymes and jingles; (b) play games requiring different types of voices; (c) imitate sounds, an airplane, dog, etc."

Some practical measures to develop the child's experiential background were included. "Widen his experiential background by allowing him to do more things in common with other children; radio and theater; taking responsibilities at home, going to the store, looking at children's books, cutting, coloring, pasting, and drawing." "Allow him to visit places of interest to build up a background of experiences. Encourage him to talk about what he sees and to draw pictures of them." Playing store was suggested to give him the foundation for number concepts.
An attempt was made to reinforce and to continue the learning begun in school by encouraging extracurricular reading. "Give him every opportunity to read; when riding he may try to read road signs, e.g., exit, danger, etc." "Since he is interested in cars, encourage him to keep a scrapbook of automobile pictures. Pasting the name under the pictures will interest him in reading and give him practice in associating the word with the picture. Having him compare and discuss the various makes may stimulate his powers of observation."

The next large grouping related to the intellectual development of the child was concerned with school placement. While most boys were kept in the regular school, an individualized program was suggested. Ungraded divisions were recommended for a few children while vocational schools were advised for some of the older boys. Only very few advised the parents to place the child in a special school for slow learning boys.

The final class of measures intended to further intellectual development was made up of statements of general learning principles to aid the teachers of dull normals. Notice was taken of his short attention span and the teacher was advised to help him learn but a few things at a time. It was suggested that instructions be presented as concretely as possible and that an effort be made to show the practical purposes of class activities. The pupil was to be encouraged to explain things as he
learned them and the teacher was urged to ask simple questions so as to teach him to understand the context of the material. Motivation in drill was also recommended.

The above recommendations are in essential agreement with Baker's observation relative to the qualitative learning factors of dull normal children. In addition to the foregoing, he mentions that, while an effort should be made to relate the processes being learned to everyday situations, it should be remembered that more than a few applications will confuse the slow learning children. Finally he points out that, because these children have limited powers of self-criticism, they should be helped to develop in this area by giving them much time to discover and correct their own errors.

The majority of the measures related to physical development advised general physical or dental examinations as may be seen in Table V. Admission to a state school for epileptics was suggested for one child. There was moderate consideration given to means of reducing physical tension, such as limiting the amount of strenuous exciting play, resting before

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26 See Table V, p. 41.
| **TABLE IV** |
| **DISTRIBUTION OF 144 MEASURES PERTAINING TO INTELLIGENCE DEVELOPMENT** |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Instruction in One or More Areas</th>
<th>63</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Reading</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Arithmetic</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Spelling</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Penmanship</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Motivation concerning tutoring</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individualized Handling</th>
<th>32</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Permit him to progress at his own rate</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Supply easy reading with mature interest</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Give previous preparation for class discussions</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Aids and Readiness Activities</th>
<th>24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Readiness activities</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Develop experience background</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Encourage extra-curricular reading</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Placement</th>
<th>18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Continue in regular school</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. repeat present grade</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. unspecified grade status</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Ungraded division</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Vocational school</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Special School</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| General Learning Principles | 7  |
meals, and recommending that the teacher assign tasks in school that would require muscular activity. A training program for enuresis was planned for one child. This consisted of an early evening meal with no liquids after it, progress chart for successful nights, and regular wakenings during the night. The psychologist mentioned that the efficacy of the plan could be enhanced if both the boy and his mother had faith in it. The ramifications that one recommendation may have, as well as the necessary overlapping of the classification system, is aptly demonstrated by one of the suggestions which advised the mother to explain to her son why it was necessary for him to wear glasses. While pertaining to the physical development of the child, it is apparent that emotional and social considerations cannot be neglected.

Table VI shows the classification of measures related to moral development. Of the few recommendations concerned with moral development, the majority were rather general counsels stressing the importance of self-control. "Encourage him to grow in self-control by learning the value of thinking of others, showing his liking for others, doing things for them,

27 See Table VI, p. 42.
### TABLE V

**DISTRIBUTION OF 38 MEASURES PERTAINING TO PHYSICAL NEEDS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examinations</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Complete physical</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Vision</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Dental</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Hearing</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce Physical Tension</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Limit strenuous exciting play</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Rest before meals</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Permit muscular activity in the classroom</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Program for Enuresis</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain Necessity of Wearing Glasses</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State School for Epileptics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and thus winning their affection." "He should be helped to acquire self-control by friendly, loving, patient and wise guidance and encouragement from his elders."

The value of religious training and moral values as character-building aids was mentioned and there was but one instance wherein sex instruction was considered necessary. Considering the fact that there were only few older boys in the group selected, it may be presumed that sex had not yet become a prominent problem for them.

**TABLE VI**

**DISTRIBUTION OF 13 MEASURES PERTAINING TO MORAL DEVELOPMENT**

- Develop Worthwhile Attitudes ................. 6
- Religious Training .......................... 5
- Confession and First Holy Communion ............ 1
- Sex Instruction ........................... 1
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the present study was to determine the common remedial measures recommended for dull normal boys in psychological reports to their parents. Although sources discuss the adjustment difficulties of dull normal children, there have been few detailed studies of their needs. Admittedly, these children do not belong in institutions for mental defectives. On the other hand they are unable to achieve satisfactorily when compared with children of average mentality. The frustrations they often encounter may lead to personality difficulties and social maladjustment.

The present investigation consisted of an analysis and classification of the recommendations included in psychological reports given to the parents of fifty-three dull normal boys. These suggestions were classified according to the general area of development with which the measures were primarily concerned. These areas were: emotional, social, intellectual, physical, and moral. It was found that most consideration was given to emotional development while social and intellectual followed closely.
Each general grouping was then broken down into sub-headings and specific measures. These are given in tabular form and are discussed qualitatively in the text.

The classification concerned with emotional development was analyzed in terms of general desires or basic needs, namely recognition, security, affection, and achievement. Most frequent attention was given to the need for security and recognition. Affection and achievement received less representation for two different reasons. The need for affection was emphasized throughout the reports given to the parents. As a result, it had a general prominence rather than specific mention. To help in satisfying the emotional need for achievement, the psychologists attempted to prepare the dull normal child for actual achievement by suggesting measures calculated to develop to their optimum the intellectual resources such a child possesses.

The recommendations concerned with the social welfare of the child emphasized the importance of discipline. This is understandable both from the standpoint of its relation to the demands of society and also from the fact that obedience and self-control are things to be learned. Since dull normal children learn more slowly, greater emphasis would naturally have to be placed on learning these traits. Increased social contacts and recreation were frequently suggested and household chores were recommended to aid in the development of responsible social
attitudes.

With respect to intellectual development, emphasis was placed on special help in the basic school subjects. Individualized methods of working with the child were suggested so as to diminish emotional interference with his learning ability. The importance of home aid was recognized and supplementary activities were suggested to help compensate for the child's inferior mentality. The majority of the recommendations concerning school placement advised continuance in regular classes.

The measures directed toward physical development were relatively few. Most of them recommended examination by a specialist and some listed methods of reducing physical tension.

Since most of the clients at the Loyola Center were from parish schools there was an insignificant number of measures related to moral development. Some mention was made of the development of worthy moral attitudes and religious ideals. Training of this kind was more often brought out in the case of children not in parish schools.
GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

1. In all, 510 suggestions recommended by twenty-three psychologists and related to the needs of dull normal boys were collected and classified.

2. It was found that there were common remedial measures suggested by various psychologists in an effort to promote the healthy adjustment of dull normal boys. While these recommendations were not stereotypes, their similarity of content was apparent.

3. In terms of frequency, greatest stress was placed on the measures aimed at the emotional, social, and intellectual development of the dull normal boy.

4. Within each category considerable agreement was found as to specific means of furthering development.
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B. ARTICLES


Many children have difficulty with home discipline because they have not thoroughly learned habits of obedience. As they advance in years, they come to learn these habits largely by developing right attitudes towards authority. The following points ordinarily prove helpful in developing these attitudes:

1. Commands should issue only from legitimate authority. Older sons or daughters and other adult relatives do not share a parent’s rights or responsibilities.

2. Authority, to be accepted and respected, must be exercised consistently: a) from one occasion to another; b) by agreement in policy and practice between parents.

3. Commands should be as few as can be compatible with good order.

4. Their number can usually be reduced by making use of suggestions, requests, hint, established habit, praise for good behavior, etc. Planning and foresight can eliminate many needless orders.

5. Children have to learn that obedience to authority is reasonable, and most of them will also profit much by being given a simple, sincere reason, suited to their years and mentality, for particular orders.

6. Commands should be preceded by an effort to secure full inner and outer attention. They should then be given in a calm, business-like way, implying that they will be accepted and carried out as a matter of course. Allow a reasonable time for compliance.

7. Compliance should be recognized as praiseworthy.

8. Failure to comply should be followed by a calm, business-like penalty without nagging or show of emotion.

9. Minor slips may often be overlooked or handled with lightness of touch.

10. Unfulfilled threats, severe penalties, and repeated references to past failures will generally do more harm than good.

11. The threats and denunciations of the gentle Saviour were reserved for the stiff-necked, hypocritical Pharisees, who were blocking His work maliciously. With children He was unfailingly gentle.

These suggestions have been contributed and formulated by staff members of the Loyola Center. Hundreds of parents have found them helpful.

Charles I. Doyle, S.J.
Director