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## A Study of Twenty-Four New Foster Fathers and Their Relationships to Their Foster Children

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A STUDY OF TWENTY-FOUR NEW FOSTER FATHERS  
AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS TO  
THEIR FOSTER CHILDREN

by

Florence Mae Levin

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Social Work  
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Degree of  
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to analyze the inter-personal relationship of twenty-four foster fathers to their foster children. The meaning of "inter-personal relationship" will be explained below under the sub-head "method."

This study of the relationship of foster fathers was done because we have less information about foster fathers than about foster mothers. "The foster father is conspicuous by his absence in many of the records that were studied." "The home generally reflects the character of the man, whose temperament often affects the whole situation."<sup>1</sup> Thus, the writer is attempting to discover what affect the foster father has on the foster child.

The foster father usually has a more difficult job than the natural father. This is because of the child's earlier experiences, the greater and more intense needs and the limitations of the child's present circumstances.<sup>2</sup>

The sources of this study are the foster home case records of the Home Finding Department of the Children's Division of the Chicago Welfare Department.

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<sup>1</sup> William Healy, Reconstructing Behavior in Youth, New York, 1938, pp. 144-45.

<sup>2</sup> Sybil Foster, The Mental Hygiene Implications in Substitute Parental Care, Mental Hygiene, Vol. XX, #2, 1936, pp. 205-17.

The following criteria were established for the choosing of the case records for this study:

- 1.) The child must have been in the foster home for at least one calendar year. This criteria was established, because a year seemed to be the minimal time in which the relationship of the foster father with the child could become apparent.
- 2.) Only one foster child must have been present in the home. This would make the relationship of the foster father to the foster child uncomplicated with relationships to other foster children.
- 3.) The child must not have been known to the foster parents before placement.
- 4.) Prior to 1949, the foster parents had no foster children from this or any other agency.

These criteria were applied to the 109 foster homes which were licensed during 1949 and were still active during December, 1951. These 109 foster homes were chosen as a base because 1949 was the earliest year for which card files were available and complete.

Of these 109 homes, twenty-six met the criteria. Two of these, however, did not contain sufficient information about foster fathers for the purposes of this study.

Methods After the twenty-four cases were chosen, the attached schedule (see copy in the Appendix) was used as the tool for gathering the raw data.

The data thus gathered were organized to answer two questions:

- 1) How good was the relationship between the foster father and the foster child?
- 2) Is there a correlation between the quality of the father-child relationship and some of the face-sheet items?

The method of answering the first of these questions is as follows:

- 1) Seven qualities of a good relationship were postulated. They are:
  - a) Manifestation of affection
  - b) Understanding
  - c) Time with child
  - d) Fair discipline
  - e) No preference to own children
  - f) Outings with both foster parents
  - g) Child accepted as an own child
- 2) The records were searched for every indication of each of these qualities.
- 3) If there was evidence in the record that the relationship had this quality, a positive mark was given. If there was evidence that the relationship lacked this quality, a negative mark was given.
- 4) If three or more qualities of the relationship received positive marks, that case was placed in Group A. If two or one qualities received positive marks, that case was placed in Group B. Group C consisted of those cases which contained no positive marks and at least one negative mark.

It was necessary to learn about the quality of the relationship in order to differentiate into separate groups those foster fathers having

different kinds and different degrees of relationships with the children.

The method of answering the second of these questions is to correlate Groups A, B and C with

- 1) the education of the fathers
- 2) the races of the fathers
- 3) their ages at the time of application
- 4) the ages of the foster children at the time of placement
- 5) the age differences of father and child
- 6) the number of natural children in the foster home
- 7) the quality of the childhood of the foster father.

By correlating the quality of the relationship and some of the face-sheet items, the writer is attempting to find out if these face-sheet items explain, partially at least, the quality of the relationship in Groups A, B and C. If so, the face sheet items of future cases might indicate into which group a case would fall.



## CHAPTER II

### THE QUALITY OF THE RELATIONSHIP

The purpose of this chapter is to determine the kind of relationship that existed between the twenty-four new foster fathers and their foster children.

First, the findings are presented in Table I. For each of the twenty-four cases, positive or negative marks are given in the columns representing the seven manifestations of a good relationship. The cases are placed into three groups, as explained in the Introduction of this thesis.

Second, the evidence for this table is presented. Direct excerpts from the case record are given to substantiate the writer's decision to give the positive and negative marks. The excerpts follow the pattern of the table. That is, excerpts are given for the cases in Group A for the first quality of a good relationship, for the second up to the seventh inclusively. Then, the excerpts for Group B and C are given in the same manner.

Table I cannot be considered as absolutely accurate since many comments concerning the relationship may not have been mentioned to the worker or were omitted from the case recording.

Another fact which must be considered is that Table I is based on twenty-four foster homes which were active from 1949 to 1951 and in which a

foster child remained for at least one year. Thus, it can be assumed that the caseworkers found these homes to contain more positive qualities than homes which became inactive before the two year period had elapsed and than homes in which a child had been removed before a year's period of time had elapsed.

These considerations definitely modify the validity of this study. However, since the only possible source of information was the caseworker's recording in the case history, the writer had to remain within this source and present what is found there.

Table I shows that ten cases in Group A gave from three to six positive qualities of a relationship. The ten cases in Group B gave one or two positive qualities and in Group C were found four cases giving one to four negative qualities.

The most frequently found positive qualities in all three groups were the quality of acceptance (g) found in fifteen cases, the quality of time spent with the child (c) found in twelve cases, the quality of having outings (f) found in eight cases, and understanding (b) found in seven cases.

The least frequently found positive qualities were fair discipline (d), no preference to own children (e), and affection (a).

TABLE I  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOSTER FATHERS  
AND THEIR FOSTER CHILDREN

GROUP A Case No.	Affectionate	Understanding	Time spent with child	Fair discipline	No preference to own children	Outings with foster parents	Child accepted as own child	Number of +s	Number of 0's
1	+		+				+	3	
2		+	+		+	+	+	5	
3		+	+			+	+	3	
4	+		+	0			+	3	1
5	+		+	0	0		+	3	2
6	+	+	+				+	3	
7	+	+	+	+	+		+	6	
8	+	+	+			+	+	4	
9	+		+			+	+	3	
10		+	+		0		+	3	1
GROUP B									
11							+	1	
12			+					1	
13							+	1	
14						+	+	2	
15						+	+	2	
16						+	+	2	
17						+	+	1	
18						+	+	2	
19		+				+	+	2	
20			+				+	2	
GROUP C									
21		0							1
22	0	0	0				0		4
23			0		0				2
24	0	0	0	0					4

+ indicates a positive relationship

0 indicates a negative relationship

In order to explain and substantiate the various positive and negative signs for each case, quotations will now be given from these case records which illustrate the various manifestations of the relationships with the foster children:

#### GROUP A

#### EXCERPTS FROM CASE RECORDS OF THE MOST-POSITIVE GROUP

##### Signs of Affection

Case 1: The foster parents have been giving [her] more material needs than she actually requires and they seem to be fulfilling her needs for love and affection. . . . [The foster child] is very fond of the foster father, and he pays much attention to her when he comes home from work.

Case 4: [The foster child] appears to be more fond of Mr. C. Mr. C. is a rather mature young man who enjoys giving [him] companionship. He definitely is the strong factor in the household. . . . Worker has the impression that possibly Mr. C. is closer to the foster child than is Mrs. C., as he seems to be a warmer individual and more relaxed. . . . The foster parents seem to be really quite attached to [the foster child], Mr. C. in particular.

Case 5: [The foster child] is an extremely affectionate little child, and Mr. Z. seems to need this response. . . . Mr. Z. impresses worker as a person who needs a tremendous amount of affection and approval. He loves to play with [the foster child] and she is very much attached to him. Mrs. Z. is also very fond of [her] but thinks that she would be far better able to give the child up if necessary than would her husband.

Case 6: Mr. R. especially seems to enjoy the child a great deal and since he begins work at 1:30 P.M., he spends a great deal of time with the child in the morning. He usually teaches the child different tricks such as whistling, throwing a kite, etc. The foster child seems very attached to him, and whenever Mr. R. went into the room, would always go to him and pick him up.

Case 7: Mr. P. has an easy, accepting manner with [the foster child]. . . . There is much affection shown for each other.

Case 9: The foster father shares in the responsibility of his care. . . . The foster parents continue to be affectionate and are becoming very attached to this child.

## GROUP A

Signs of Understanding

Case 2: When [the foster child] one day showed the worker how he could ride the horse back, Mr. M. turned to the worker and said that [the foster child] was just about the best rider he has seen.

Case 3: Mr. G. is definitely the dominant person in the household and he appears to have a great deal of understanding in his handling of the child and instructions which he gives to the foster mother.

Case 6: Mr. R. appeared more relaxed and secure in his attitude toward the child, and since he shares in caring for the child, he may counteract some of the anxiousness displayed by Mrs. R.

Case 7: In recent contacts with Mr. P., the foster father has displayed feeling and understanding toward [the foster child]. Mr. P. recalls incidents in his own boyhood which remind him of [the foster child's] activities. He recognized a child's need to daydream and have a carefree play. The attitude . . . is not unrealistic because Mr. P. expects [the foster child] to play with other children fairly and competitively.

Case 8: Mr. and Mrs. M. are interested foster parents and are helping him accept his new home as a permanent foster home at this time. These people are firm in their manner yet are sympathetic with [him].

Case 10: Mr. T. also spends time with the child and will take him for a short ride, and also has been attempting to teach him to stand up for his own rights. He has been holding short boxing sessions with him in the evening.

## GROUP A

Foster Father Giving Time to the Foster Child

Case 1: [The foster child] is very fond of the foster father, and he pays much attention to her when he comes home from work.

Case 2: Mr. M. has been very friendly with the boys. During the winter he took them sledding, skating, etc.

Case 3: The foster father takes a very active interest in [the foster child] and takes him out on a number of occasions in the evening when he returns from work.

Case 4: [The foster child] appears to be more fond of Mr. C. Mr. C. is a rather mature young man who enjoys giving [him] companionship.

Case 5: Mr. Z. impresses worker as a person who needs a tremendous amount of affection and approval. He loves to play with [the foster child] and she is very much attached to him.

Case 6: Mr. R., especially, seems to enjoy the child a great deal and since he begins work at 1:30 P.M., he spends a great deal of time with the child in the morning.

Case 7: Mr. P. is away at night which does not give him much time with the children during school days. He is at home on week-ends and during school vacation which gives him plenty of time with the children.

Case 8: Mr. M. is a very jovial person and has really been a father to [the foster child]. Mr. M. takes time out to play games with [him] and to teach him how to climb, pick berries, judge which snakes are harmful and which are harmless and explains the various insects to [him] who is interested.

Case 9: The foster father shares in the responsibility of his care, as he [is] home during the day and does not leave for work until late afternoon.

Case 10: Mr. T. also spends time with the child and will take him for a short ride, and also has been attempting to teach him to stand up for his own rights. He has been holding short boxing sessions with him in the evening.

#### GROUP A

#### Negative and Positive Signs of Discipline

Case 4: (negative) [Mrs. C.] does most of the disciplining by deprivation and complains because Mr. C. will sometimes give in to [him]. She tells him they must work together, but he finds it hard to resist the child.

Case 5: (negative) . . . Mr. Z. is completely unable to discipline the children and cannot bear to spank them. This is very likely because he cannot take any hostility from them.

Case 7: (positive) Both parents discipline in a rather abrupt impartial manner. They do not think spankings are effective but would spank a child if it was necessary. Mr. and Mrs. P. show understanding of [the foster child's] needs.

#### GROUP A

#### Foster Fathers Who Show no Preference to Own Children

Case 2: Mr. M. is exceptionally fond of [the foster child] and feels

that he has been more like his own son than [one of his sons].

Case 5: (negative) [The foster child] is accepted in this family as if she had been born into it, and in fact, Mr. Z. seems almost more attached to her than to his own natural daughters . . . he is unable to share the child with anyone outside his family.

Case 7: Mr. P. has related with pride the attitude of admiration displayed by the natural children toward [the foster child]. Family relatives are quite fond of [the foster child] and the foster father has made an effort to see that [he] is accepted as any other child and not over-indulged.

Case 10: (negative) [The foster mother] is extremely attached to [the foster child] as is her husband and in fact they have shown the child favoritism over their own child . . . whose nature is not as sweet and appealing as [the foster child's] .

#### GROUP A

#### Outings with Foster Parents

Case 2: [The foster child] is included in all social events of the family and since they are farm people they enjoy a lot of outdoor life.

Case 3: The foster father takes a very active interest in [the foster child] and takes him out on a number of occasions in the evening when he returns from work.

Case 8: The foster family always include [him] when they go on family outings and picnics.

Case 9: [The foster child] is included in family plans . . .

#### GROUP A

#### Signs of Child Being Accepted as an Own Child

Case 1: They do so want to adopt her but they understand that at the present time it is an impossibility . . .

Case 2: Mr. M. is exceptionally fond of [the foster child] and feels that he has been more like his own son than [one of his sons] .

Case 4: [The foster child] has certainly adopted this home as his own and the C's are still eager to adopt him.

Case 5: [The foster child] is accepted in this family as if she had been

born into it, and in fact, Mr. Z. seems almost more attached to her than to his own natural daughters. . . . Mrs. Z. is also very fond of [her] but thinks that she would be far better able to give up the child if necessary than would her husband.

Case 7: The P's are uncertain in their feeling toward [the foster child's mother]. They would like for [the foster child] to remain in their home and speak in terms of him graduating from high school. [The child] and Mr. P. have been planning to build a garage which would be large enough for [the foster child's] car when he gets older.

Case 8: All of the members in the M. household are happy to have [the foster child] with them . . .

Case 10: [The foster child] is completely accepted as part of the foster family and worker has felt that he may even be shown some preference. Both foster parents have been very understanding and sympathetic in working with him and they do not press him or set standards for him to meet.

Following will be excerpts from the case records of Group B which is comprised of those cases which are semi-positive, or have less positive manifestations as a group than Group A.

#### GROUP B

##### Signs of Understanding

Case 19: Also [the foster child] appears very proud of Mr. A., wanting to imitate the things that he does. Mr. A. laid his belt on the table and [the foster child] took his belt off too. [He] watches Mr. A. particularly at the table, imitating many things that he does. . . . [He] calls Mr. and Mrs. A. mother and father, and also has had no difficulty with eating or sleeping, although he had previously refused to eat while in another foster home.

#### GROUP B

##### EXCERPTS FROM THE CASE RECORDS OF THE SOME-POSITIVE GROUP

##### Foster Fathers Giving Time to the Foster Child

Case 12: [The foster child] especially looks forward to the time when the foster father comes home from work or the time that he spends with [him] on Sunday.



Case 20: Mr. L. gets a great deal of enjoyment in playing with [him] in the evening before the child is put to bed.

#### GROUP B

#### Outings with Foster Parents

Case 14: The foster parents include [him] in all their plans and the foster father is continuously bringing him new toys.

Case 15: She is included in all of the plans of the family's and the C's own children accept [her] as their own sister.

Case 17: They have brought [the foster child] numerous toys of an expensive nature, a suit of clothes and have taken him on a vacation--his first train trip . . .

Case 18: [The foster child] is included in all of the plans made by the family . . .

#### GROUP B

#### Signs of Child Being Accepted as an Own Child

Case 11: [The foster child is] receiving complete acceptance in the foster home as an own child. It has been indicated on several occasions that [she] is quite well integrated, and is accepted by not only the foster parents, but the other children, as well.

Case 13: The worker feels that [the foster child] is a well accepted part of this foster family. The foster parents themselves, particularly the foster father, is a warm outgoing person.

Case 14: [The foster child] is considered part of the foster family. Both foster parents give him abundant love . . .

Case 15: Mr. and Mrs. C. have certainly acted as they have accepted [the foster child] as their own child.

Case 16: [The foster child] happens to be just the type of child that the L's wanted so far as physical appearance is concerned and also so far as availability for adoption is concerned. [She] resembles the foster father closely in physical appearance and her parents are interested in having her adopted.

Case 17: . . . he is given the love and affection of an own child.

Case 18: [The foster child] seems to be an accepted member of the family

and is getting along quite well.

Case 19: The A's state that they would be very much interested in adopting [the foster child] should it become possible for them to do so.

The following excerpts are from the case records of Group C, or the negative group. In this group, there are only negative manifestations shown, while in the other two groups there were either only positive manifestations shown or mostly positive manifestations.

#### GROUP C

##### EXCERPTS FROM CASE RECORDS OF THE NEGATIVE GROUP

##### Lack of Signs of Affection

Case 22: . . . [the foster child] pays little attention to the other members of the family, even refusing to go near them and receive any attention from them. They also in return seem to ignore her.

Case 24: Mr. O. does not seem to have much to do with [the foster child] as he believes that bringing up children is entirely a woman's job. Mr. O's only contact seems to be in the role of disciplinarian, and worker has heard him speak very crossly to the children playing in front of his home. He has impressed worker as being a rather surly disposition and not a comfortable person to be with. Just what his effect on [the foster child] is the worker does not know.

#### GROUP C

##### Lack of Signs of Understanding

Case 21: Mr. J. is a very self-sufficient, capable, successful business man, and worker recognizes that he expects not only the foster child, but the foster mother, to conform to his whims, wishes and desires . . . [the foster child] is in need of a father person but is unable to feel secure with this foster father; worker has recognized that [he] shows a great deal of respect toward this foster father, yet is very fearful of him, and is somewhat tense in his presence.

Case 22: Mrs. A. seems to understand very little in regard to training this child and worker questions the adequacy of this foster home, as [the foster child] pays little attention to the other members of the family, even refusing to go near them . . . they also in return seem to

ignore her.

Case 24: Worker wondered seriously about Mr. O's affection for [the foster child] . . . He acted extremely irritated and made remarks about the burden of foster children in general. . .

#### GROUP C

#### Foster Fathers not Giving Time to the Foster Child

Case 22: . . . [the foster child] pays little attention to the other members of the family . . . they also in return seem to ignore her.

Case 23: Mr. G. has very little to do with the family since he is away nights and sleeps most of the day. He leaves much of the care of the children to his wife and simply has become a money provider for the material needs of the family.

Case 24: Mr. O. does not seem to have much to do with [the foster child] as he believes that bringing up children is entirely a woman's job.

#### GROUP C

#### Negative Signs of Discipline

Case 24: Mr. O's only contact seems to be in the role of disciplinarian, and worker has heard him speak very crossly to the children playing in front of his home. He has impressed worker as being of rather surly disposition and not a comfortable person to be with.

#### GROUP C

#### Signs of Preference to Own Children

Case 23: Since [the foster child's] placement it is felt that the G's have differentiated between [her] as a foster child and their own children, in the area of treatment . . . she is not allowed the freedom that Mrs. G's oldest daughter . . . is allowed regarding the neighborhood children . . . Mrs. G. rationalizes this on the basis that the neighborhood is prejudiced against foster children . . .

#### GROUP C

#### Signs of Foster Child not Being Accepted as Own Child

Case 22: . . . [the foster child] pays little attention to the other members of the family, even refusing to go near them and receive any attention from them. They also in return seem to ignore her.

## SUMMARY

As can be seen from the previous excerpts from all three groups, there have been many repetitions. This was done when one excerpt seemed to be indicative of more than one manifestation of a relationship.

From twenty-four case records quotations were obtained concerning the quality of the relationship between the new foster fathers and the foster children.

These twenty-four cases were divided into three groups which contained most-positive, some-positive, and negative qualities of a relationship is listed on Table I.

According to Table I and the evidence given, the positive qualities found most often in all three groups were those of acceptance, time spent, having outings, and understanding. The positive qualities which were found least often were those of fair discipline, no preference to own children and affection.

The first question of this study was: How good was the relationship between the foster father and the foster child? This question was answered in Chapter II.

In Chapter III the second question is to be answered. Is there a correlation between the quality of the father-child relationship and some of the face-sheet items?

## CHAPTER III

### CORRELATION BETWEEN RELATIONSHIP

#### AND SOME FACE-SHEET ITEMS

From the schedule, a sample of which is in the Appendix, certain factual information was obtained about these twenty-four new foster fathers.

The purpose of this chapter is to choose a number of items which appear to be significant to explain why a father had a good relationship or not with his foster child.

The content of Table I is to be correlated with certain face sheet items. This is done in order to determine if the cases which have already been separated into Groups A, B and C have face-sheet items which are similar, or which also show a differentiation between the groups.

The items for correlation were chosen because they were easily obtainable from the case records and because they appeared to have some significant bearing upon the father-child relationship.

The following items for correlation were selected:

Table II: Education of the Foster Father

Table III: Races of the Foster Fathers

Table IV: Ages of the Fathers at Application

Table V: Ages of Foster Children at Placement

Table VI: Age Difference

Table VII: Number of Natural Children in the Home

Table VIII: Quality of the Childhood of the Foster Father

Following is Table II which gives the number of years of education had by the twenty-four foster fathers. There was no information obtained about three of the foster fathers.

According to Table II, seven foster fathers had not completed their grammar school educations. Ava F. Collingwood wrote that Connecticut is the only state in which graduation from grammar school is required of foster parents. "Where children of all ages, conditions, nationalities must be cared for the educational level goes down to the seventh or eighth grade."<sup>1</sup> Collingwood also stated that "Some of the smaller agencies with a more selective intake estimate the average educational level to be first or second year high school."<sup>2</sup>

In Group A, the most-positive group, there is information available about eight of ten foster fathers. Of these eight, two had less than a grammar school education, one had more than grammar school, but less than a high-school education, and five had a completed high school education. Thus, we find that more than half about whom information was available had completed twelve or more years of schooling.

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1 Ava F. Collingwood, A Study of Group Education for Foster Parents. New York, 1939, Bulletin of Child Welfare League of America, pp. 6-7.

2 Ibid., p. 7.

TABLE II

## YEARS OF EDUCATION OF TWENTY-FOUR FOSTER FATHERS

GROUP A Case No.	Less than 8 yrs.	8 yrs.	More than 8 and less than 12 yrs.	12 yrs.	More than 12 and less than 16 yrs.	16 yrs.	No Information
1					x		
2							x
3			x				
4					x		
5					x		
6	x						
7							x
8					x		
9	x						
10				x			
GROUP B							
11	x						
12	x						
13					x		
14					x		
15	x						
16		x					
17			x				
18	x						
19							x
20			x				
GROUP C							
21						x	
22	x						
23			x				
24		x					
TOTAL	7	2	4	1	6	1	3

In Group B, there was information about nine of ten fathers. Of these nine men, four had not completed grammar schooling, one had a grammar school education, two had not completed high school, and two had some years of college training. Thus, from these nine fathers, only two had completed twelve or more years of schooling.

In Group C, or the negative group, information was available about all four men. Here was found a wide range. One had less than a grammar school education, one had eight years, one less than 12 years, and one had completed a college education.

According to this very limited sample, and considering only the factor of formal education it would seem that if a prospective foster father had completed twelve or more years of schooling he would have a better chance of being included in Group A than if he had less years of schooling.

Table III indicates the races of the foster fathers. Information was available about all of them.

According to Table III, eight of ten men in Group A were white. In Group B, three of ten men were white, and in Group C, one of four men were white. Group A also had the highest percentage of men who had completed twelve or more years of schooling. In Group B also the white foster fathers had more schooling than did the Negro foster fathers.

Consequently, the racial factor alone cannot be considered significant if separated from the educational factor.



TABLE III  
RACES OF TWENTY-FOUR FOSTER FATHERS

GROUP A	WHITE	NEGRO
Case No.		
1		x
2	x	
3	x	
4	x	
5	x	
6	x	
7	x	
8	x	
9		x
10	x	
GROUP B		
11		x
12		x
13	x	
14	x	
15		x
16		x
17		x
18		x
19	x	
20		x
Y		
GROUP C		
21	x	
22		x
23		x
24		x

Following is Table IV, which lists the ages of the foster fathers when their applications were accepted in 1949. This table was constructed to determine if the age of the father has significant bearing upon his relationship with the foster child.

TABLE IV  
AGES OF TWENTY-FOUR FOSTER FATHERS WHEN THEIR  
APPLICATIONS WERE ACCEPTED IN 1949

GROUP A	Case No.	21 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	50 - 60	61 - 70
	1		x			
	2		x			
	3		x			
	4		x			
	5		x			
	6			x		
	7		x			
	8			x		
	9					x
	10	x				
GROUP B	11			x		
	12			x		
	13		x			
	14		x			
	15				x	
	16				x	
	17				x	
	18			x		
	19			x		
	20		x			
GROUP C	21			x		
	22		x			
	23			x		
	24				x	

In Group A of Table IV is found one father thirty years or less in age, six who were between thirty-one and forty years, two who were between forty-one and fifty years, and one foster father who was between sixty-one and seventy years of age.

In Group B were found three men who were forty years or less, four

men who were between forty-one and fifty years and three men between fifty-one and sixty years.

In Group C, there was one man less than forty years, two men between forty-one and fifty years and one man between fifty-one and sixty years of age.

In Group A, therefore, seventy per cent of the foster fathers were forty years or less in age. In Group B, thirty per cent of the foster fathers were forty years or less in age. In Group C, which consists of only four men, twenty-five per cent or only one man, was forty years or less in age.

Consequently, the fathers in Group A had a greater percentage of men less than forty years of age than any other group.

Table V gives the ages of the foster children at the time of placement. This table was devised to see if the age of the child had significant bearing upon the quality of the relationship with the father.

According to Table V, sixteen of the twenty-four children who were placed were less than six years of age. Also, six children were between six and ten years and two children were between the ages of eleven and fifteen years.

From Group A, seven of ten children were less than six years of age. In Group B, eight of ten children were less than six years of age. In Group C, one of four children was less than six years of age. There does not seem to be a very significant difference in the age distribution of the children in Groups A and B.

TABLE V

## AGES OF THE FOSTER CHILDREN AT PLACEMENT

GROUP A	Case No.	Less than 1 year	1 - 5 yrs.	6 - 10 yrs	11 - 15 yrs.
	1	x			
	2				x
	3		x		
	4		x		
	5		x		
	6		x		
	7			x	
	8			x	
	9		x		
	10		x		
GROUP B	11			x	
	12		x		
	13		x		
	14		x		
	15	x			
	16	x			
	17			x	
	18		x		
	19		x		
	20		x		
GROUP C	21			x	
	22	x			
	23				x
	24			x	
TOTAL	24	4	12	6	2

Table VI, which follows, is really a resultant table from Tables IV and V. Table VI shows the age difference between each foster father and his foster child.

TABLE VI

AGE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWENTY-FOUR  
FOSTER FATHERS AND FOSTER CHILDREN

GROUP A	Case No.	Years	
	1	35	
	2	26	
	3	29	
	4	30	
	5	35	
	6	34	Age span: 24-60
	7	28	
	8	42	Average age: 34.3
	9	60	
	10	24	Median: 32
GROUP B	11	40	
	12	47	
	13	32	
	14	38	
	15	51	
	16	51	Age span: 32-51
	17	52	
	18	43	Average age: 43.4
	19	45	
	20	35	Median: 44
GROUP C	21	41	
	22	36	Age span: 32-47
	23	32	Average age: 39.0
	24	47	Median: 38.5

According to Table VI, the age span in Group A is greater than that in Group B or C. However, one father of sixty years in Group A accounts for this. The average age difference in Group A is 34.3 years which is considerably younger than the average age difference of 43.4 years found in Group B. The average age difference in Group C is 39.0 years.

When considering foster home placement, it is difficult to know how important the age differences are between foster parents and their foster children because we rarely know if the placement will be a temporary or a permanent one.

If it is a temporary placement, the foster parent's age at placement time is of the utmost importance. When considering adoption, or a long-time placement, their age twenty years in the future is also very important.<sup>3</sup>

Consequently, we might wonder about the fact that four foster fathers, one in Group A and three in Group B, are fifty-one to sixty years older than their foster children. Also, in Group A, one foster father is in the range of forty-one to fifty years older than the foster child, while in Group B there are three foster fathers in this latter age range.

Often we do not know how temporary a placement will be. It is possible that other positive factors in the foster parents will diminish the importance of such an age difference.

During the foster home studies of these twenty-four foster fathers there were questions asked of them by the workers concerning their own childhoods and parental relationships. What did the foster fathers, themselves, think about their backgrounds? Is it possible that some of these men might have felt hesitant or defensive about giving such information to a case worker they had just met? However, in Table VII, is listed information regarding their childhoods. The question asked was: did they consider their childhoods

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<sup>3</sup> The Placing of Children in Families, League of Nations, Advisory Committee on Social Questions, Volume I, Geneva, Oct. 21, 1938, p. 23.

to have been unhappy, happy, or mixed.

This information may lead to an understanding of the ability of the foster father to form a positive relationship to a foster child.

TABLE VII

CHILDHOODS OF TWENTY-FOUR FOSTER FATHERS AS PERCEIVED BY THEM

GROUP A	Case No.	Childhood
	1	/
	2	/
	3	/
	4	/
	5	No info
	6	0
	7	0
	8	No info
	9	0
	10	/
GROUP B	11	/
	12	/
	13	/0
	14	0
	15	/
	16	/
	17	No info
	18	/
	19	/
	20	/
GROUP C	21	/
	22	/
	23	/
	24	/

/--indicates a happy childhood

0--indicates an unhappy childhood

Interestingly enough, all four of the foster fathers in the negative group considered themselves to have had happy childhoods. In Group A, information was given about eight of the ten men. Of these eight men, five had happy childhoods and three had unhappy childhoods. In Group B, information was given about nine of ten men. Of these nine fathers, seven said they had happy childhoods, one said he had an unhappy childhood and one considered his childhood to have been both happy and unhappy.

It is possible that those men who had unhappy childhoods were motivated to become foster fathers because of their previous experience which they did not want the foster children to have. On the other hand, many people believe that people who have had happy childhoods know how to give happiness to their children, although all four of the foster fathers in the negative group had happy childhoods.

Another possible motivation for becoming foster parents may have been a lack of natural, or own, children still living in the home. There may have been a wish for companionship because of a feeling of loneliness for children in the home. Table VIII gives information about the number of natural children living in the foster home when the foster child was placed.

According to Table VIII, thirteen of twenty-four families had no children of their own living in the home at the time of placement of a foster child. This study, of course, excluded the homes where other foster children were placed at the time when the one foster child was placed. The writer uses the words "own children" to include natural, adopted, and step-children.



TABLE VIII

## NUMBER OF OWN CHILDREN IN HOME WHEN FOSTER CHILD WAS PLACED

GROUP A	Case No.	No. of Children
	1	0
	2	5
	3	0
	4	0
	5	2
	6	0
	7	2
	8	2
	9	0
	10	2
GROUP B	11	3
	12	0
	13	1
	14	0
	15	2
	16	0
	17	0
	18	0
	19	0
	20	0
GROUP C	21	0
	22	2
	23	3
	24	1

In Group A, five of ten families had no children of their own living with them at time of placement. In Group B, seven of ten families were without their own children in the home at the time of placement. In Group C, one of four families had no children of their own living with them at time of placement.

Of those families with own children, eight of eleven families had

one or two children of their own in the home. . The remaining families had three or five children of their own in the home at placement.

There does not seem to be any group significance between the quality of a father-child relationship and the number of natural children living in the home.

#### SUMMARY

To summarize Chapter III, the most significant items which seem to correlate with a good relationship of a foster father with a foster child are those items of education and age difference. Foster fathers with twelve or more years of schooling and who are around thirty-two years older than the foster children seem to be more likely to have, according to this study of twenty-four cases, a highly positive relationship with the foster child although there were many exceptions to this generalization.

The other items presented in the chapter offered no significant bearing on why some fathers were in Group A, B or C.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to analyze the relationship between twenty-four new foster fathers and their foster children.

To facilitate this study, two principal questions were asked: 1) How good was the relationship between the foster father and the foster child? and 2) Is there a correlation between the quality of the father-child relationship and some of the face-sheet items?

To answer these questions, the writer set forth seven qualities of a good relationship and the records were searched for these qualities. The records searched were new foster homes, whose applications were submitted in 1949, still active in 1951, where only one foster child was in the home during one calendar year, and where the child had not been known to the foster parents before placement.

From the excerpts taken from the case records, Table I was formulated which placed the fathers in three groups, depending upon the number of positive qualities found in the relationships.

Consequently, it was discovered that ten fathers in Group A had three or more positive qualities in a relationship, ten fathers in Group B had one or two positive qualities and four fathers in Group C had only negative qualities of a relationship.

Then a list of face sheet items was selected for correlation.

As far as education is concerned, it was found that from the information available more than half of the men in Group A had completed twelve or more years of schooling while two of nine men in Group B had completed this amount of schooling, and in Group C one of four men had this schooling. It seemed, therefore, although there were exceptions and information was not given about all of the men, that the highest percentage of high school graduates was found in Group A. High school education seems to be associated with good father-child relationship.

Although the highest percentage of white men were in Group A, this fact might be caused by the educational factor mentioned previously. That is, the significance between Group A and B would not be racial but educational and we cannot forget that Negro people have not had the educational or economic opportunities that white people have had.

As far as the ages of the foster fathers is concerned, there was a wide deviation. According to their ages when their applications were accepted in 1949, seventy per cent of the men in Group A were forty years or less in age. In Group B, thirty per cent were forty years or less in age and in Group C one of four men was in this age group.

The ages of the foster children at times of placement ranged from infancy to fifteen years. From Group A, seven of ten children were less than six years of age. In Group B, eight of ten children were less than six years and in Group C, one of four children was of this age. The age distribution of the children in Groups A and B seemed to be quite similar.

The age difference between the foster fathers and their foster children was also considered. The age span in Group A was greater than in the other two groups because one man in Group A was sixty years of age. However, the average age difference was 34.3 years in Group A, 43.4 years in Group B, and 39.0 years in Group C. It seems significant that the foster fathers in Group A who had been able to establish such positive relationships with their foster children were, as a whole, younger than those in Group B. Again, we must pause to remember that there were many exceptions. For instance, in Group A was found a foster father forty-two years older than the child and another who was sixty years older than his foster child.

In regard to the childhood of the foster fathers, it is doubtful that the records were adequate for evaluating the fact of a happy childhood.

The most significant factors which would explain why a father would be in the most-positive group, or Group A, are the factors of education and age difference, although exceptions were found.



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Schedule

I. Identifying Information

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Race \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Religion \_\_\_\_\_  
4. Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

6. Marital and family status:

- a. When married: \_\_\_\_\_  
b. Children from this marriage:

<u>Date of birth</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Living in home</u>	<u>Others in home Relationship</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

- c. Years of previous marriage \_\_\_\_\_ d. How separated \_\_\_\_\_  
e. Children from previous marriages:

<u>Date of birth</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Living in home</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

7. Foster father's education:

- a. Years of grammar school \_\_\_\_\_  
b. Years of high school \_\_\_\_\_  
c. Years of college \_\_\_\_\_ d. Subject \_\_\_\_\_  
e. Other \_\_\_\_\_ f. Subject \_\_\_\_\_

8. Employment:

- a. Present occupation \_\_\_\_\_ b. Salary \_\_\_\_\_  
c. Years at present occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
d. Previous occupations \_\_\_\_\_

9. Avocational Interests:

- a. Church groups \_\_\_\_\_  
b. Other groups \_\_\_\_\_  
c. Hobbies \_\_\_\_\_  
d. Recreational \_\_\_\_\_

10. The foster father's family history:

- a. Siblings:

Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Ordinal Rank \_\_\_\_\_

Identifying Information: (continued)

b. His interpretation of his familial relationships:

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c. His previous and present physical health:

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II. Application Information:

1. Date of application \_\_\_\_\_
2. Application accepted \_\_\_\_\_
3. Date of previous applications \_\_\_\_\_
4. Known to other agencies \_\_\_\_\_
5. Dates licensed \_\_\_\_\_
6. Source of referral \_\_\_\_\_
7. Children applied for: \_\_\_\_\_

- |        |        |                         |
|--------|--------|-------------------------|
| a. Age | b. Sex | c. Other specifications |
| _____  | _____  | _____                   |
| _____  | _____  | _____                   |
| _____  | _____  | _____                   |
| _____  | _____  | _____                   |

8. Children placed:

- | a. Date of birth | b. Sex | c. When placed | d. Removed - why | e. Latest there |
|------------------|--------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| _____            | _____  | _____          | _____            | _____           |
| _____            | _____  | _____          | _____            | _____           |
| _____            | _____  | _____          | _____            | _____           |
| _____            | _____  | _____          | _____            | _____           |

9. Reason given on application for requesting children \_\_\_\_\_

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