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**A STUDY OF SOME FOSTER CHILDREN
WHO BECAME DELINQUENT**

by
A. Elizabeth Ryan

**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
Master of Social Work**

June

1954

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study of the case records of the children who, while in the custody of the County and while being given services by the Division of Child Welfare of the Milwaukee County Department of Public Welfare, were committed as delinquent to correctional institutions was undertaken at the suggestion of the Division Supervisor and with the approval of the Director, Department of Public Welfare, County of Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The Division of Child Welfare has been providing services to children since October, 1947 when all county-sponsored welfare services were integrated into the Department of Public Welfare. Prior to that time, and since February, 1898, the sole public agency for the care of dependent and neglected children requiring care outside their own homes was the Milwaukee County Children's Home, which still exists and is used as part of the total public child welfare facilities in the County.

Milwaukee County covers an area of 238.5 square miles and had a population of 871,047 according to the U. S. Census Bureau report of 1950. The six cities and eight villages in the County had a population of 780,909 while the population of the seven townships, mainly rural and semirural, was 90,138. The Citizens' Governmental Research Bureau of Milwaukee has estimated that the County's total population as of January 1, 1954 is 906,824, an

estimated gain of 35,777 over the 1950 Census figures. The economy is mainly industrial, but the rural areas include small and large farms and truck farms.

This study was made because the Division of Child Welfare had concern, both in terms of agency program and in terms of the children themselves, about the reasons why some of them in the custody of the County failed to adjust, became delinquent and required commitment to correctional institutions. Statistics had not been kept so that the magnitude of the problem was not known.

The plan of the study was to determine the significance of particular social, economic and interpersonal factors of the children and of their families which existed at the assumption of custody and at commitment to correctional institutions; to compare similarities and differences; and to determine the significance of agency factors operating during custody. An attempt was made to determine the factors involved in the antisocial behavior of these specific children resulting in commitment to correctional institutions whereas the great majority of children cared for each year by the agency did not require such a plan.

To locate the children committed as delinquents while in the agency's custody, it was necessary to check the closed statistical files of all children and to consult the case records to verify delinquency commitments. Since the guardianship of some of the children had been made permanent at the time of custody and such status continues with the agency until the child reaches the age of twenty-one years, it was also necessary to consult the active case load books to identify the children committed to correctional institutions and whose cases remain open, although actual casework service and supervision

were assumed by other agencies. These open cases are known as "suspended cases". It was necessary to include all the commitments for five years prior to November 1, 1953 when the study started, in order to have an adequate number of cases, forty-three for the study. Although these commitments to correctional institutions took place during the study period, some of the children had been under County custody from as far back as 1932.

Sixteen general areas of consideration were used in constructing the schedule through which data on social, economic and interpersonal relationship factors of children and their families were compiled (See Appendix I).

Identifying information provided vital statistics such as sex, age, birthdate, birthplace, birth in or out of wedlock, religion, physical defects, the source and reason for the original referral to the Child Welfare Division, the acceptance date and the date of commitment to a correctional institution. The sections on application showed whether children were accepted for care through court commitment or by voluntary application of parents; whether they had previously been in agency care and, if so, for how long and for what reason. Another section of the schedule related to applications shows the stated and attendant reasons for the children's need for agency care.

Data on living arrangements, school grades and school problems of the children at application and at commitment to correctional institutions were included to complete as fully as possible the picture of these children whom the agency was asked to care for.

Social agency registrations; the age, occupation, education, marital status, race and nation of origin of the parents; and the number of siblings

of the study group also in agency care or with penal or correctional institutions records at acceptance and at commitment were included as probable significant family factors.

Parent-child relationships were explored through recorded evidence of parents' feelings toward their children and children's feelings toward parents. Parents' specific activities, showing positive and negative actions and attitudes, were included to assess what parents did, or failed to do, to ameliorate the family problems which had affected the children placed in the care of the agency.

The agency's activities with the children during custody included the use of psychiatric service, the number and types of placements, the number of workers each child had and the assessment of client-worker relationships of parents and children.

The factors of the delinquency of the children in the study group included data on living arrangements, school placements, stays in the Detention Home, the stated reasons for delinquency commitments and recorded evidences of influential factors of delinquent behavior of these children.

The areas of exploration included in this schedule were thought to represent those most amenable to objective measurement. It should be mentioned that the case records, from which the data in the schedules were obtained, were not written for the purpose of this study or to measure casework skills, but to record information helpful to the individual caseworker and to the agency in providing for the needs of the children. Consequently information which might have been useful for this study was sometimes incomplete or omitted.

The agency's case records are composed of: a) a family section with a face sheet, a social history and a chronological record of contacts with the parents; b) separate sections for each child with the child's face sheet, medical, dental and psychiatric findings, and a chronological or summarized record of contacts with the child; and c) the correspondence section which is self-explanatory. Legal records, consisting of the Children's Court orders of custody and of release, together with a copy of the court testimony when custody is awarded to the agency, are filed separately in a Legal File kept either at the County Court House (headquarters of the Division of Child Welfare) or at the Milwaukee County Children's Home, depending upon when and to which agency the custody order was made.

Data obtained from these case and legal records were entered on the schedules and were tabulated for use in the tables contained in this study. Factual information and names used in the text of this study have been disguised to protect the confidential record material and the identity of the children and parents with whom the case records deal.

Through comparison of social, economic and interpersonal relationship factors which existed at the assumption of custody and at commitment of the children as delinquents and through analysis of significant agency factors during custody, an effort was made to understand why these particular children required commitment to correctional institutions. Difficulties were encountered particularly in reducing to comparable terms the various workers' impressions of parents' relative adequacy; the psychiatric descriptions of the children; in assessing the attitudes of parents toward children, children

toward parents and the attitudes of both toward workers; and in assigning positive and negative values to the specific activities of parents to ameliorate the family problems which resulted in the children's need for care outside their own homes.

CHAPTER II

THE CHILDREN AT ACCEPTANCE

This chapter will include a statistical description of the children of the study: who they were, why they required agency care and how they became wards of the agency, with whom they lived and where they were placed in school when the agency knew them at acceptance.

Some indication of the Child Welfare Division's caseloads during the five year period clarify the scope of the problem with which this study is concerned. It was impossible to secure the total unduplicated case count for each of the five years because of the change in agency administration from the Milwaukee County Children's Home to the Division of Child Welfare which is one division of the integrated public welfare services in the County Department of Public Welfare. Another reason was due to increased functions of the Division of Child Welfare resulting from the inclusion of the Adoption Division of the County Court and from assumption of greater activity on behalf of unmarried mothers.

The figures given in Table I¹ were obtained from the annual reports of the Child Welfare Division for the years 1949, 1950, 1951 and 1952 and from the preliminary estimated statistical report for 1953.

1 Table I, see page 8.

TABLE I

NUMBER OF CHILDREN ACTIVE WITH MILWAUKEE COUNTY
DIVISION OF CHILD WELFARE ON THE LAST DAY
OF EACH STUDY YEAR

Year ending	1 a)	2 b)
12-31-49	584	1047
12-31-50	808	1144
12-31-51	807	1258
12-31-52	919	1263
12-31-53	1107	1553

a) Includes children in all types of foster care, in their own homes and in relatives' homes.

b) Includes unmarried mothers under twenty-one years of age and the County Court Adoption Division caseload.

It should be explained that these totals represent the active caseloads on December 31 of each year. The estimate of the total unduplicated cases given service by the Child Welfare Division during 1953 was 2289 children. Comparable figures were not available for the other four years. The forty-three children included in this study comprise approximately one percent of the total number of children in care during the five year period.

All of the study children were committed to the custody of the public agency by the Children's Court of Milwaukee County, although the agency may also receive dependent children by voluntary application of parents. The parents of all of these children had legal settlement in Milwaukee County, one of the eligibility requirements for service by the agency.

Because the reasons why the agency was asked to care for these

children might shed light on why they later became delinquents, both the immediate and the attendant reasons for the referrals were studied.

TABLE II
IMMEDIATE REASONS FOR REFERRAL OF STUDY GROUP
TO MECH OR DCW

Reason	Boys 23	Girls 20	Total 43
Child neglected	13	13	26
Behavior problem	4	5	9
Broken home	4	1	5
Housing or eviction	2		2
Request for foster care		1	1

Twenty-six children were considered neglected, nine were behavior problems, five came primarily because of broken homes, two had been evicted with their families and foster care was requested for one child. The reasons for referral of the children are not necessarily mutually exclusive but were rather the immediate or precipitating factors in the Court's decision to commit the youngsters to the agency's custody. For example eviction was the immediate reason for one boy's custody but he also came from a broken home. At least three of the children from broken homes might just as easily have been found neglected. Another boy from a broken home was actually so seriously rejected that the Court might have called him neglected. Thirteen of the thirty-five children included under the agency categories of "Neglected" and "Behavior Problem" had originally been charged in Children's Court with being

delinquents, but the Court changed the delinquency petitions to "Neglect by Parents" in five cases and to "Dependency" in three others. Four others of the thirteen were found by the Court to be "Dependent and Delinquent" and one to be "Neglected and Delinquent". These differences in the Court's findings can be explained partly by the fact that the Milwaukee County Children's Home was expressly prohibited by law from accepting delinquent children, whereas the Division of Child Welfare is bound by no such legal restriction.

The fact that the immediate reasons for referral do not show the total picture of these children's situations may be seen by the attendant reasons for the Court's decision that the agency assume custody of the children.²

These attendant reasons totaled 138, from two to five per case, an average of 3.2 per child. Most of the reasons, 109, were attributed to parents (Table III A) while only twenty-nine attendant reasons could be attributed to the children themselves (Table III B) and were in fact usually the specific behavior symptoms which resulted in Court action and agency custody. The attendant reasons attributed to parents indicated their instability, inadequacy and inability to rear children able to adjust to the requirements of society as shown by the attendant reasons attributed to the children.

Examples from case records to illustrate these immediate and attendant reasons are numerous. Fourteen year old Rosalie was considered by the Court as neglected when it was learned that she was living alone in a small

2 Table III A, see page 11; Table III B, see page 12.

apartment she had shared with her divorced mother who had been arrested a week earlier on a morals charge. During this and other extended absences of the mother from home, Rosalie had worked after school to buy food and when her money ran out depended upon the kindness of neighbors to feed her. Another example was four year old Harold who, with his eight brothers and sisters, was sent to the Children's Home because the family was evicted. However, the parents' care of them was so inadequate that the children might well have been considered neglected.

TABLE III A

ATTENDANT REASONS ATTRIBUTED TO PARENTS
FOR CUSTODY OF STUDY GROUP

	<u>Total 109</u>
Personality or character difficulties (alcoholism, promiscuity, (interference, abuse, (indifference.	27
Separation of parents due to (incarceration, death, (abandonment, divorce.	18
Inadequacy	16
Rejection	13
Inability to control	12
Inability to care for	7
Marital discord	7
Physical or mental incapacity	5
Inadequate or bad housing	4

TABLE III B

ATTENDANT REASONS ATTRIBUTED TO CHILDREN
FOR CUSTODY OF STUDY GROUP

	<u>Total 29</u>
Delinquent behavior	15
Personality disturbance	4
School problems	4
Runaway	3
Poor companions	2
Low mentality	1

Still another revealing factor of the disturbed living situations of these children will be seen in Table IV³ which records the number of times the children had been in agency custody, prior to and including the acceptance with which this study is concerned.

Twenty-seven of the children had been in agency care only once; eight children were in custody twice; and the remaining eight from three to seven times. Seventeen of the twenty-seven children in custody only once had been in agency care three years or less when committed to correctional institutions but ten children were in care from six to almost eighteen years. All but three of the sixteen children in care more than once remained from two to eleven years, the average being four and a half years.

³ Table IV, see page 13.

TABLE IV

NUMBER OF ACCEPTANCES PER CHILD
AND
TOTAL TIME IN AGENCY CUSTODY
OF STUDY GROUP

Total time in agency custody	Number of times accepted by agency for care					Total
	One	Two	Three	Four or more		
1 day to 2 years	14	3			17	
1 - 6 months	5	1			6	
7 - 12 months	5	1			6	
13 - 18 months	4				4	
19 - 24 months		1			1	
2 - 3 years	3	2	1	1	7	
4 - 5 years		1	1		2	
6 - 7 years	3	1	1	1	6	
8 - 9 years	3	1	1	1	6	
10 - 11 years	1		1		2	
12 - 13 years	1				1	
14 - 15 years	1				1	
over 16 years	1				1	
Totals	27	8	5	3	43	

Another factor studied was the ages of children at acceptance by the agency.

TABLE V
AGES OF CHILDREN AT ACCEPTANCE

Age in Years	Boys 23	Girls 20	Total 43
1-2	2	1	3
3-4	2		2
5-6	2	1	3
7-8	1	1	2
9-10	5	2	7
11-12	1	2	3
13-14	6	10	16
15-16	4	3	7

The age range was from one to sixteen years, with seventeen children being under eleven while twenty-six of them were between eleven and sixteen years of age. It is particularly revealing that sixteen of the children were thirteen or fourteen and seven of them fifteen or sixteen years of age when the agency was asked to care for them. The latter group were preadolescent and adolescent, periods when children normally begin to strive for independence and maturity. These are admittedly difficult years of adjustment for children and parents as Leon J. Saul, M.D. writes in his book, Emotional Maturity:⁴

⁴ Leon J. Saul, M.D., Emotional Maturity, Philadelphia, 1947, 126.

From this angle (the striving for maturity). . . much of the emotional problem of adolescence consists of the struggle to win independence from the parent. Much of the paradoxical behavior of the adolescent becomes intelligible on this basis. The adolescent is part adult, and all eagerness to prove his or her adulthood, strength, sophistication, independence. On the other hand the ties and attitudes of childhood are not yet resolved.

Race of the children was tabulated and showed thirty-one to be White; nine, Negro; two, Indian; and one, Mexican.

TABLE VI
RELIGION OF CHILDREN IN STUDY GROUP

Denomination	Boys 23	Girls 20	Total 43
Catholic	10	7	17
Lutheran	7	7	14
Baptist	2	4	6
Presbyterian		2	2
Unspecified Protestant	3		3
None	1		1

The children's religious affiliations were Catholic or Protestant, although one boy had never attended any church. The distribution according to denomination is shown in Table VI.

All but seven of the children were born and had lived all their lives in Milwaukee. Two girls had been born elsewhere in Wisconsin and two other girls in Missouri and Oklahoma, respectively. The three boys born outside of Milwaukee came from Alabama, Michigan and New York. Thirty-five of the children had been born to married parents and eight had been born out of wedlock.

The six boys born out of wedlock were evenly divided between the White and Negro races, while one Indian and one Negro girl were born to unmarried parents. There had been a legal determination of paternity for only one boy, so far as the records indicated, but one natural father had cared for his son for all but the first year of the child's life.

Physical examinations of the children in the study group revealed they were all in good health with no disabling defects. Such defects as the examining physician noted were two children with impaired eyesight requiring glasses; one girl with deformed teeth which somewhat disfigured her mouth; one boy had a stiff elbow from an old injury; another boy had a repaired hare-lip which did not involve his palate or speech. A fourth boy, age nine, with explosive, aggressive behavior symptoms was suspected to have residuals of encephalitis, sleeping sickness. A fifth boy was thought to have epileptic equivalents but this tentative diagnosis was not confirmed by an electroencephalogram.

School placements⁵ of the children at acceptance ranged from kindergarten to eleventh grade for thirty-seven children. Five of the remaining six in the study group were preschool children and the school placement was not recorded for one girl who ran away a month after being accepted by the agency. Sixteen children were placed in kindergarten to sixth grade, while twenty children were in grades seven to eleven. One boy was in a Special C Class for the seriously mentally retarded. Eighteen of the children, approximately three-

⁵ Table VII, see page 17.

TABLE VII
SCHOOL PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN AT ACCEPTANCE

School grade	Boys 23	Girls 20	Total 43
Preschool	4	1	5
Kindergarten	1		1
First	3	2	5
Second	1		1
Third	1	1	2
Fourth	2	1	3
Fifth	1	1	2
Sixth		2	2
Seventh	2	3	5
Eighth	5	3	8
Ninth	1	3	4
Tenth	1	1	2
Eleventh		1	1
Special C class	1		1
Not stated		1	1

sevenths, were retarded in school at acceptance by the agency. Twelve of these eighteen were retarded one year; four were retarded two years; one child, three years; and one child was in a Special C Class. Seven of the children were low average or better according to psychological examinations; an equal number were dull or borderline; one child was a mental defective (IQ under seventy) and three had had no psychological testing to show what their intellectual ability actually was.

TABLE VIII

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF CHILDREN AT ACCEPTANCE

Living arrangements	Boys 23	Girls 20	Total 43
A. Own home			
1. Both parents	7	1	8
2. Mother only	5	9	14
3. Father only	2	2	4
4. Mother and stepfather	2	3	5
5. Father and stepmother	3		3
B. Relatives' home	1	3	4
C. Foster home	1		1
D. Institution			
1. MOCH	1		1
2. Other institution	1	2	3

Living arrangements of the study group at acceptance showed only eight of the forty-three children living with both parents; eight more living

with one natural and one stepparent; and eighteen living with one parent only, that parent being the mother in all except four cases. Four children were living with relatives and five children, away from any member of their families. Although this indicates some degree of family instability, the full significance of the children's living situations will become clearer when the marital status of parents is described in Chapter III.

In considering the overall picture of the study group at acceptance, it was seen that these forty-three children comprise a very small group, less than one per cent, of the children cared for by the agency during the five year period studied. All of the study group had been committed to the agency by the Children's Court for immediate reasons of neglect, behavior problems, broken homes, eviction or need of a foster home. However, the immediate reason was by no means the only one as the 138 attendant reasons, an average of 3.2 reasons per case, demonstrated.

More than half the children were in the preadolescent and adolescent age group and approximately three-fourths were white. All but one child had some religious affiliation. Only seven children were not native-born Milwaukeeans and all but eight had been born in wedlock. At acceptance, only eight children were living with both parents; eight more lived with an own and a stepparent; and eighteen lived in one-parent homes. Nine children lived with relatives, with foster parents or in an institution when the agency assumed custody.

The children were generally in good health and free from seriously disabling handicaps. Their school placements showed approximately three-

sevenths of them to be somewhat below grade expectancy for their ages.

CHAPTER III

FAMILIES OF THE CHILDREN

In order to learn the kinds of families from which the children came, Social Agency Registrations, parents' ages, education, occupation, marital status and race were tabulated. To complete the family picture the number of siblings each child had was studied, together with the number of them also in agency care or with correctional institution records at acceptance of the study child.

Since the number of social agencies which knew each family might clarify the sort of parents the child had, the total unduplicated registrations prior to acceptance of the study child were tabulated. The inability of these forty-two families of the forty-three children, of whom two were sisters, to manage their own affairs independently of agencies' help is noteworthy. Only one family was unknown to any agency prior to assumption of custody of the girl involved. A factor in this may be that Jane had not lived with her mother and stepfather, both of whom were employed, until about six months before she was placed in agency custody because of delinquency which had been brought to the attention of the Court.

These multiproblem families¹ as shown in Table IX² were known to

1 Term used by Bradley Buell to describe families in which problems

2 Table IX, see page 22.

social agencies from one to twenty-one years prior to the child's acceptance. It will be noted that thirty of the forty-two families had been known to agencies from eleven to twenty-one years before the particular placement in care of their children with which this study is concerned. As was mentioned in Chapter I, sixteen children had required from one to six earlier placements in the public agency's custody.

TABLE IX

SPAN OF YEARS FOR SSE REGISTRATIONS
ON FAMILIES OF THE STUDY GROUP

<u>Years</u>	<u>Families</u>
None	1
1 - 5	5
6 - 10	6
11 - 15	15
16 - 20	14
21 - 25	1

It appeared important to learn to how many and to what kinds of agencies these families had appealed for help with their problems. For this purpose the numbers of agencies registered were tabulated in Table X³ and their types separated into seven major categories according to the primary

of dependency, serious maladjustment and ill health caused their need for services of many social agencies. This was a community survey conducted in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1948 and reported in Community Planning for Human Services.

3 Table X, see page 23.

function of each agency. This distribution is shown in Table XI.⁴

TABLE X

NUMBER OF UNDUPLICATED AGENCIES REGISTERED
ON FAMILIES OF THE STUDY GROUP

<u>Agencies</u>	<u>Families</u>
None	1
1 - 5	7
6 - 10	10
11 - 15	13
16 - 20	9
21 - 25	2

These families were known to from one to twenty-four separate social agencies. No attempt was made to determine how many applications had been made to each agency by each family since this information was included in very few case records. As will be seen in Table X seventeen families were known to from one to ten agencies while twenty-four families had applied to and received some type of service from eleven to twenty-four agencies.

The types of agencies knowing these families fell into seven categories: Health, Assistance, Service, Child Placing, Psychiatric, Authoritative and Institutional. The Institutional category was subdivided into three: 1, Penal or Correctional; 2, Mental Hospital; and 3, Colony and Training School for the Feeble-minded and Epileptic.

There were a total of 477 agency registrations on these forty-two

⁴ Table XI, see page 24.

families, an average of 11.35 agencies per family. This is an unduplicated total since ordinarily the Social Service Exchange reports each agency registered only once to an inquiring agency. This average agrees closely with the mean number of agencies (11.66 per family) reported in the Glueck study of 500 delinquent boys.⁵

TABLE XI

NUMBER AND TYPES OF UNDUPLICATED AGENCIES
REGISTERED ON FAMILIES OF STUDY GROUP

Type of agency	Number of agencies registered							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Health	2	9	7	9	4	3		3
Assistance	19	14	2		1			
Service	2	12	8	5	4		1	2
Child placing	23	5	8	1				
Psychiatric	25	1						
Authoritative	17	11	7	1				
Institutional								
a. Penal or correctional	12							
b. Mental hospital	2							
c. Colonies for feeble-minded	1							

In all, twenty-seven families had sought help from one to eight

⁵ Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck, Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency, New York, 1950, 103.

health agencies for a total of 139 registrations. (Included in the health category were agencies which provided in-patient or out-patient medical care or advice or supervision of ill persons in their own homes.) Thirty-four families were known to from one to eight service agencies, a total of 113 registrations. (A Service Agency was one whose primary function was provision of casework service.) From one to four authoritative agencies (Courts, Probation and Parole) had registered on thirty-six families, a total of sixty-four registrations. The next most numerous category, child placing agencies, showed one to four agencies knew thirty-seven families, a total of sixty-one registrations. The current Division of Child Welfare registrations are not included in this count as registration occurs after the child is accepted. It would be included, however, for the sixteen cases of children who had previously been in agency care.

One to five assistance agencies, whose primary function is financial support, had helped thirty-six families, a total of fifty-eight registrations. There were twenty-seven psychiatric agency registrations on twenty-six families, one family having consulted two agencies. It is important in understanding this figure to know that there are only two public psychiatric clinics, one for adults and one for children, in the community. Another, private psychiatric clinic, part of a medical clinic, does not differentiate its psychiatric patients from those using general medical services. Since public agency clients are also accepted by this clinic such registrations may be included under the Health Agency category. In the institutional category twelve families were known to penal or correctional institutions; two families had patients in one

of the two County Mental Hospitals and one family was known to one of the State Colonies and Training Schools for the Feeble-minded and Epileptic.

The impact of the 477 agency registrations on these forty-two families is truly significant when considered in terms of money expenditures, time of personnel involved and years of services required. The study of agency services in St. Paul, Minnesota, mentioned earlier showed that slightly less than six per cent of the families in the community absorbed from 46 to 55 per cent of agency time, service and money.⁶

Marital status,⁷ another of the factors studied for these forty-two families, adds weight to an understanding of the reasons for subsequent delinquent behavior of their children.

The term "families" should be qualified as only eight of the study group had parents who were living together when the agency assumed custody of the children. This group includes one set of foster parents of Betsey who had not known her natural parents. Single parents included in this study were six unmarried mothers who had borne children out of wedlock and one unmarried father, he being the only one for whom there had been a legal establishment of paternity. The marital status of one father and one mother showed no marriage to the child's other natural parent but the father was currently, and the mother had been, married to another person. The father in this instance had cared for his son from infancy when the natural mother abandoned him. The

⁶ Bradley Buell and Associates, Community Planning for Human Services, New York, 1952, 86, 412, 413.

⁷ Table XII, see page 27.

mother in this category, twice married and not divorced from her second husband, had been living for several years without benefit of clergy or court, with the man who was the father of Nancy and two older siblings.

TABLE XII

MARITAL STATUS OF PARENTS
AT ACCEPTANCE OF CHILDREN

Marital status	Father = ^{a)} 36	Mother = ^{b)} 42
Single	1 ^{c)}	6
Never married to other parent but married to another person	1	1
Parent deceased	5	5
Remarried to other person than parent	7	9
Divorced or separated	7	9
Deserted or abandoned	2	
In mental hospital		2
Not living with other parent for other reason	5	2
Married to, and living with, other parent	8 ^{d)}	8 ^{d)}

a) Father not included for 6 children born out of wedlock because of no legal establishment of paternity

b) Only 42 mothers as 2 girls were members of the same family

c) Paternity legally established

d) Contains 1 set of foster parents

Seven fathers and ten mothers of the study group were remarried to other than the natural parent, while six fathers and eight mothers were sepa-

rated or divorced; five fathers and five mothers were dead; two fathers had deserted; and two mothers were in mental hospitals. Five fathers and two mothers were not living together for miscellaneous reasons (for example, one father was in the Army in Alaska and two fathers were the husbands of the two mentally ill mothers). The marital status and whereabouts of two fathers (included in miscellaneous reasons) were not known at acceptance of their children although it was learned later that one father was in a mental hospital for the criminal insane and the other was in a Veterans' Hospital in another state. The disturbed marital status of these parents is indicative of their lack of stability.

All of the children in this study came from families with defects in parental relationships since even the eight children whose parents were still living together had been subjected to marital discord more, rather than less, serious in degree. These eight families were characterized by the agency workers who knew them as immature, inadequate, inconsistent, rejecting and alcoholic and were unable to provide the stable, warm emotional climate most favorable to the children's growth into mature, emotionally stable, secure men and women.

Modern psychiatry teaches us that many of our human problems grow out of faulty family soil. Moreover, professional workers of all kinds know that family strengths and weaknesses constitute powerful assets and liabilities in the treatment and cure of many different kinds of problems.⁸

As noted previously, the one set of foster parents included because Betsy could remember no other parents were no more mature and stable than the

8 Ibid., 9.

natural parents of the other children as this foster mother had been married twice so that Betsy had had two foster fathers.

John Bowlby, M. D.,⁹ an English psychoanalyst, reported the results of studies made by a number of investigators in several European countries and in the United States. The studies concerned variously, maladjusted children and adults, and showed percentages of from 36 to 66 having come from homes disrupted before the study subjects were sixteen years of age. Dr. Bowlby pointed out that lack of control groups in some of the studies and the possibility of poor heredity might tend to distort these findings. Nevertheless he believed the consistency of the findings of the studies tended to show there is a relationship between broken homes and childhood maladjustment.

The place of birth and race of parents were explored to learn if cultural conflict, sometimes arising between foreign born parents and native born children, played a part in the children's later delinquency. This factor is of negligible significance for the total group since only six fathers and one mother were foreign born. The foreign born Greek father and Greek mother were married to one another. The race of the parents was not statistically significant since it did not differ from that of the children save in one instance, that of the Mexican boy whose mother was white.

The ages of fathers and mothers at acceptance of their children were tabulated to learn what effect this may have had on their children's maladjustments leading to care outside the parental homes.

⁹ John Bowlby, M. D., Maternal Care and Mental Health, Geneva, Switzerland, 1952, 164.

TABLE XIII
AGES OF PARENTS AT CHILDREN'S ACCEPTANCE

Age	Father 37 a)	Mother 42	Total 79
15 - 20		3	3
21 - 25		1	1
26 - 30	2 a)	3	5
31 - 35	5	13	18
36 - 40	9	12	21 c)
41 - 45	8	5	13
46 - 50	3	1	4
51 - 55	3 b)	1	4
56 - 60	3		3
Not known	4	3	7

a) Includes one natural father for whom there had been legal establishment of paternity

b) Includes the natural father with whom one boy had lived most of his life

c) Includes one foster father and one foster mother

The largest number of parents, fifty-two, were between thirty-one and fifty years of age when the children were placed in agency custody. Seven parents were fifty-one to sixty years of age and only nine, two fathers and seven mothers, were under thirty. As shown in Chapter II the children ranged from one through sixteen years of age at acceptance, thirty-one of them being nine years or older when the agency was asked to care for them. Because the

significance of the relationship of parents' to children's ages was not apparent from Table XIII, the ages of parents at the birth of the study children were computed. This information, available for only thirty-four fathers, showed sixteen of them to have been between twenty and twenty-nine years of age; thirteen to have been thirty to thirty-nine; and five of them, forty to forty-nine years of age at the child's birth. The mothers were somewhat younger at the study child's birth, since six were fifteen to nineteen; twenty-eight were in the twenty to twenty-nine year age group; and another six were between thirty and thirty-nine years old. It would therefore appear that parents' youth and inexperience were not significant causative factors of the children's maladjustment.

Although the education of parents might have contributed to further understanding of family factors affecting the study group, this information was lacking for twenty-five fathers and for an equal number of mothers. Eight of the twelve fathers whose education was given had completed seventh to ninth grades; three, eleventh and twelfth grades and one had attended school only to fourth grade. Ten of the seventeen mothers whose education was recorded had finished seventh to ninth grades; five had two to four years of high school; and the remaining two had completed fourth and sixth grades only. This information is too meager to arrive at any significant conclusion about the educational achievement of these people affecting their adequacy as parents.

To understand the economic and social situations of the families from which the children in this study came, the occupations of fathers and mothers were explored. However, information about the usual work engaged in

was not given for fifteen fathers and twelve mothers.

TABLE XIV
OCCUPATIONS OF PARENTS
AT ACCEPTANCE

Type of occupation	Fathers 37 a)b)	Mothers 42 b)
Skilled	10	6
Semi-skilled	4	2
Unskilled	2	2
Factory - unspecified	6	7
Housewife		13
No occupation given	15	12

a) 2 girls are sisters

b) (Father was undetermined for 5 children born out of wedlock
(Includes natural father with whom one boy had lived most of
his life

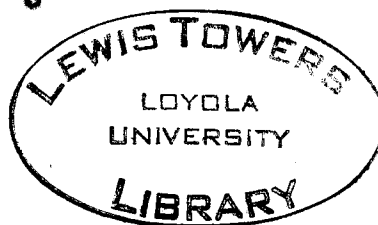
Thirteen mothers were listed as housewives, presumably not employed outside their homes. Ten fathers and six mothers were engaged in skilled work, while ten fathers and nine mothers worked at semi-skilled or an unspecified type of factory job. The jobs of two fathers and two mothers were a menial type of unskilled work.

Because the family make-up of these children is incomplete without some knowledge of their siblings, the total number of siblings each child had, the number of siblings also in the care of the agency and of those with correctional institution records at acceptance were charted.

ADVERT

[illegible]

- a) 4 study children had no siblings
- b) 30 study children had no siblings in agency care
- c) 39 study children had no siblings with correctional institution records



These forty-three children had a total of 166 siblings (including half and step siblings), an average of 3.86 per child but 4.976 children per family, well above the national average. Only five of the children had no siblings or no living siblings. At the time thirteen of the children of the study group came into custody it was found that fifty of their siblings were already in the care of the agency or were accepted at the same time. However thirty of the children were the only child of their families requiring care outside the parental homes. Only four of the study children had siblings with correctional institution records at acceptance: three children with one sibling each and one child with two siblings who had already had difficulties serious enough to necessitate commitments as delinquents.

Some analysis of the parents and siblings of the children included in this study reveals striking and significant factors which provide clues to early social and possible emotional deprivation.

The significant family factors having a bearing on the difficulties of the children in the study group were first of all indicated by the number of social agencies and the length of time they had served these families. The average number of agencies which had given service to each of these families was 11.35 agencies. From eleven to twenty-four agencies had assisted four-sevenths of the families, and five-sevenths had been known to agencies over a period of eleven to twenty-one years.

Thirty-five, about five-sevenths, of the children came from broken homes and the other eight children whose parents were still living together had been subjected to serious defects in the quality of the emotional climate

of the home.

The parents fell into a somewhat older age classification than might have been expected since fifty-seven of the seventy-nine parents whose ages were recorded were between thirty and sixty years of age and only nine were under thirty when their children one to sixteen years old were accepted into agency care. Over half the fathers were thirty to fifty years old and two-thirds of the mothers were twenty to thirty years of age at the birth of the study children.

The families averaged nearly five children per family (4.976), the total being 209 children, ranging from one to thirteen per case in the forty-two families. Almost one-third of the siblings were also in the care of the agency when the children of the study group were accepted. Only four children had no brothers or sisters, and a fifth child's two siblings had died before her birth.

The large number and the length of time social agencies had known these families and the disturbed marital situations of all of them, justify their designation as multiproblem families and provide illuminating reasons to understand why the study group and nearly one-third of their brothers and sisters required care outside their parental homes.

CHAPTER IV

PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

To attempt to ascertain the quality of parent-child relationships of the children in the study group, evidences of parents' feelings toward their children and children's feelings toward parents were tabulated from recorded statements in the case records for the three periods: (1) when the children were accepted for care; (2) during agency custody; and (3) at the commitment of the child to a correctional institution. Also studied were parents' specific activities, positive and negative, toward interest in solving the problems which had necessitated placement of their children. Under specific activities parents might have engaged in were included statements of how parents complied with court orders of support if such had been made; whether they visited their children regularly, rarely, or not at all after placement; whether they sought more adequate living quarters, if indicated; or became engaged with case workers to improve home and family conditions in other ways: financially, emotionally and physically.

The evidences of parental feelings toward the child include the feelings of foster and stepparents in cases where the child had lived most of his life in such a home. The totals of these expressions of feeling do not coincide exactly with the numbers of own, foster and stepparents for a number of reasons. Obviously parents and children may feel different ways at the same or different

times about one another. Also twenty fathers were permanently out of their children's lives because of death, divorce, desertion or not having been married to the mother; and five fathers were practically so due to Army service out of the country, and to prolonged hospitalization or incarceration. Eight mothers had been permanently removed from the child's life due to death, desertion or termination of parental rights at acceptance and four more mothers became so during custody.

The most striking features of parental feelings for these three periods are the rejection expressed by mothers and mother substitutes: twenty-one at acceptance; nineteen during custody and fifteen at commitment of the children to correctional institutions; and the small number of mothers who gave any indication of affection for their children. The preponderance of more or less destructive attitudes of these mothers, ranging from ambivalence and indifference to hostility and punitiveness, indicates how devastating must have been their effect on these youngsters. One mother at acceptance and two during custody expressed or indicated guilt about their feelings toward their child, which may not necessarily be proof of the absence of guilt feelings.

Fathers' attitudes and feelings were generally somewhat less harsh since ten of them expressed or showed affection for their child during some or all of the three periods. Almost the same number of fathers as mothers were indifferent to their children; many fewer fathers than mothers were rejecting; while half, or fewer, fathers than mothers were ambivalent toward their youngsters. Only one father gave evidence of having hostile feelings toward his child during custody and one father showed guilt at having his child placed

away from home. No father was punitive toward the child so far as recorded evidence in the records indicated. There was no evidence of the feelings of three mothers and four fathers in all three periods; for two mothers and four fathers during two of the three periods; and for two mothers and four fathers once in the three periods. This does not include twenty-six parents with whom contact was impossible for many reasons. It is possible this lack of evidence may be explained partly by the relatively short time, less than three months, four of the children remained in agency care and perhaps partly by the inability to locate some parents to discuss their children's welfare. These last were supposedly available, but worked or ignored requests of workers for appointments.¹

It becomes increasingly easier to understand why these particular children's behavior became such as to necessitate commitment to correctional institutions when one recalls the importance of the family unit as "the primary constellation in American culture. . . , the interaction of whose members affects negatively or positively the life of each individual, particularly in the formative years."² "It (the family) is still the best place to learn to love, to be loved, to accept oneself and others, and to work out problems of aggression, rivalry, dependency and submission."²

The children's reactions to the destructive, harsh, rejecting atti-

1 Table XVI, see page 39.

2 Gordon Hamilton, Theory and Practice of Social Case Work, 2nd ed. revised, New York, 1951, 95, 96.

TABLE XVI

INDICATIONS OF PARENTS' FEELINGS TOWARD CHILDREN OF STUDY GROUP

Feelings	A. At acceptance		B. During custody		C. At commitment	
	Mother a)	Father b)	Mother a)	Father b)	Mother a)	Father b)
1. Affection	3	10	4	10	5	9
2. Ambivalence	6	3	11	3	5	3
3. Indifference	6	6	7	6	4	2
4. Rejection	21	3	19	3	15	3
5. Guilt	1	1	2			
6. Hostility	1		2	1	3	
7. Punitiveness	1		1		1	
8. Other					3	
9. None indicated	5	7	4	7	6	10

a) b) Includes Mother or Father Figure in 3 cases where child had no contact with own parent but lived for years in same home

tudes of parents reflect their basic desires for affection, acceptance and the total emotional security they need to grow into mature, happy adults.

Dr. Bowlby³ referred to a study, made by D. H. Stott, of 102 persistent juvenile offenders, fifteen to eighteen years of age, in an English Approved School, in which Stott "demonstrated clearly how anxieties arising from unsatisfactory (parental) relationships in early childhood predispose the children to respond in an antisocial way to later stresses. Most of the early anxiety situations noted by Stott are particular aspects of maternal deprivation." Dr. Bowlby pointed out however that fathers also have an influence on children even in infancy.

Although five of the children were too young at acceptance to verbalize their feelings toward parents,⁴ sixteen at acceptance and twenty-one during custody showed affectionate attitudes towards mothers and fathers. That this expression of affection was reduced to eleven instances at commitment is not surprising when parents showed so little evidence of affection for the children. The relatively large numbers of children who expressed or indicated hostility, ambivalence, indifference and rejection toward parents may indicate their attempts to defend themselves against the absence of the love and affection children need for healthy emotional growth. There are several probable explanations for the lack of evidence of how children felt about their parents. One may have been due to their having no person to whom they felt sufficiently

3 Bowlby, Maternal Care and Mental Health, 13.

4 See Table XVII, page 41.

TABLE XVII

INDICATIONS OF CHILD'S FEELINGS TOWARD PARENTS OF STUDY GROUP

Feelings	A. At acceptance		B. During custody		C. At commitment	
	Mother a)	Father b)	Mother a)	Father b)	Mother a)	Father b)
1. Affection	9	7	13	8	7	4
2. Ambivalence	9	5	16	8	8	4
3. Indifference		1	2	2	1	2
4. Rejection	4	3	7	5	5	6
5. Guilt	1		2	1	1	
6. Hostility	13	6	12	7	11	3
7. Other	1		1		2	
8. None stated	6	11	4	10	11	15

a) b) Includes Mother or Father Figure in 2 cases where children had lived for years in a foster or relative's home and stepfathers and stepmothers

close to confide their feelings, since so many of them had experienced lack of understanding and trustworthiness by their parents. Another factor, especially pertinent at commitment, was perhaps due to the discontinuance of contact with the worker when the child was transferred to a correctional institution outside of Milwaukee County. The total number of expressions of children's feelings toward parents do not coincide with the total numbers of parents involved for several reasons. Twelve mothers and twenty-five fathers were more or less permanently out of the picture, but the child's attitudes toward seven long-time foster or stepmothers and eight foster or stepfathers were recorded, thus increasing the total number of expressions of feelings included in the Table. It should also be noted that there may be several attitudes expressed at the same or different times by a child toward his parents.

A further clue to how basic were natural parents' attitudes toward their children is provided by the recorded evidences of parents' specific activities surrounding family and child problems. Table XVIII⁵ shows the total positive (81) and negative (118) activities of the parents. Positive activities were recorded twenty-five times for fathers and forty times for mothers and in sixteen instances for both parents. Activities of a negative nature were attributed in thirty-four instances to fathers, in sixty-one to mothers and in twenty-three to both parents.

In each case the negatives outweighed the positives numerically and the records indicated more activity of mothers than fathers. This difference

⁵ Table XVIII, see page 43.

TABLE XVIII

PARENTS' SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES REGARDING PROBLEMS

Positive activities	Total 81	Negative activities	Total 118
Showed positive interest	13	Showed little or no interest	16
Visiting, intermittent or regular	8	Little or no visiting	11
Cooperated with agency	17	Failed to follow agency suggestions	21
Improved home standards	5	Interference in foster home	8
Accepted child back in home	5	Destructive interest	8
Payments -- regular	5	Payment order not met	13
Unable to pay	10	Abandoned child	7
Miscellaneous (gifts, letters, etc.)	18	Mother rigid, rejecting or punitive	11
None mentioned	8	Parents, inadequate, alcoholic, etc.	9
		Miscellaneous (no gifts, letters, etc.)	14
		None mentioned	5

appears to be influenced only slightly by there being fewer fathers (thirty-seven) than mothers (forty-two) in the cases of these children. A partial explanation of the eight cases in which no positive activities and the five in which no negatives were mentioned may lie in the relatively short period these children were actually in agency care.

The list of positive and negative activities of parents contains only specific notations the caseworkers recorded from time to time. The positive actions vary in constructive value since some were token gestures of interest while others showed a genuine wish to help the child or at least to carry out some of the duties of parents. However, not all of the positive actions were really beneficial, as for example, one mother who took her daughter home for a couple of months demanded her removal summarily because the girl was impudent and came home later than she had been told to do. Another family worked diligently to improve their home physically but could not change their rigid, rather punitive attitude toward their son and his stealing. Generally these efforts with a few exceptions, such as the five fathers who paid regularly for the support of their children and the eight parents who visited their children fairly regularly, were not consistently carried out.

Likewise the negative activities were uneven in value but were somewhat more consistently engaged in by parents. For example, interference in foster care of the child might be so serious as to result in verbal battles with foster parents or might be less overt hostility such as criticizing foster parents to a child, which was perhaps more subtle but no less harmful to the child. Destructive interest might range from encouraging a child to visit

parents more frequently than the agency permitted or without the knowledge of foster parents, to coaxing a fourteen year old girl to accompany her mother to taverns or to criticising the agency's plan to place the child in a foster home.

Parents who showed positive interest in their children (thirteen) might be counted on to help prepare a child for placement, to explain in a constructive way why the child could not return home or to support agency or foster parent authority in matters of discipline. Those parents who showed little or no interest failed to visit when they promised, made unrealistic statements about when the children would return home, never showed approval of children's school achievements, rarely remembered birthdays or gave Christmas presents.

The most striking fact in the exploration of how parents felt toward their children was how many of the mothers of the study group were rejecting, ambivalent or indifferent and how few of them showed positive affection for the youngsters. Likewise significant was the fact that fewer fathers rejected and more expressed affection for their children.

It was important to note that mothers' negative or destructive activities exceeded fathers' and were about one-third more numerous than positive activities. While the positive activities of parents averaged 2.3 per case toward the thirty-five children in whose records such activity was mentioned, the negative actions averaged three per case toward the thirty-eight children for whom this information was recorded.

Noteworthy also was the number of children who expressed affection

for parents, especially for mothers who had apparently failed them. Very few of the children seemed indifferent to their parents, and from one-third to nearly half expressed hostility to or rejection of their mothers. While such attitudes are fairly normal in adolescents generally, the degree of hostility and rejection of parents by these study group children indicated the pathological emotional climate of many of their parental homes.

CHAPTER V

AGENCY ACTIVITIES WITH THE CHILDREN

Some understanding of agency and community factors which formerly prevailed is necessary, especially since these may affect those children who had spent several years in the Children's Home prior to placement in foster care. The lack of boarding funds until 1938 and the shortage of workers until after the end of World War II meant that many children had lived for long years in the institution before placement in foster homes. Therefore when boarding funds and staff permitted, it was decided administratively, in 1939, that the high school age children living in the institution and attending school outside the grounds, should be placed first. For a number of years children were placed in foster care as they completed eighth grade in the institution school. This caused many younger children to remain in the institution before placement in family homes was possible.

The shortage of staff in the first years of the boarding program prevented each child from having an individual social worker to whom he could go with problems in his family or within himself. While it was true that matrons and house fathers tried to help each child, staff shortages occurred among cottage personnel also due to the war. Because the Children's Home, built to accommodate 500 children, sheltered between 700 and 800 children there was little time or privacy for an emotionally needful child to receive much indi-

vidual attention or to discuss his problems. Consequently no continuing relationship was formed by a child with an individual social worker until a few months before foster home placement was contemplated. The children's need to relate to a worker of their own often was expressed when a child would approach one of the workers to ask "Who is my social worker, Miss?" or "Will you be my social worker?" as happened many times to the writer during this period in this agency. It was not until 1950 that the staff was large enough to permit each child accepted for care to be assigned to a specific caseworker.

In addition to the handicap of too few workers with heavy case loads, there was no central homefinding unit until October, 1949. There was no pool of available homes to tap when the foster family of a disturbed adolescent decided, sometimes with little or no warning to the worker, that they could take no more of his behavior. This meant that often the many moves from home to home were made out of sheer necessity rather than as part of a considered long range plan for the child. Because of an administrative decision that children, once placed in foster care, could usually not return to the Children's Home between placements, the Detention Home was used to house children in an emergency until another foster home could be found for them.

Not only was it difficult to find foster homes for adolescents, but also for Negro children, handicapped children and others with special problems. There were few facilities for group care of adolescents or seriously disturbed younger children and most often these were filled to capacity.

During the first ten years (1938 to 1948) of the boarding program the intake function of the agency was performed by the Children's Court rather

than the agency. This meant in effect that the agency had no choice but to accept such children as the Court wished to commit to agency custody. During much of this time the agency had no court liaison worker. Of necessity the exploration of the child's and his family's problems had to be made while the child was in agency custody rather than before he came.

In December, 1948 the agency's Intake Unit was established to consider applications of parents for the care of dependent children. The Children's Court continued to hear the cases of children thought to be neglected, an obvious protection both for children and the agency. During the last four years the agency has had a court liaison worker which has prevented some of the former precipitate removals of a child from his own home with little or no preparation for the separation. Formerly such separations, of which often the child had not been told until the Judge did so, were accompanied with more severe emotional problems than separation would normally entail and the child arrived full of confusion, anger, sorrow and hostility which staff members and institution personnel tried to help the child handle.

While the above conditions did not affect those children committed since 1950, they must have had some influence on the sixteen children in agency care more than once and the ten children in care from six to eighteen years. Precise information is lacking to measure this factor because of the fact that children did not have social workers to record how they felt about separation at the time it occurred.

In an attempt to understand those factors least difficult to measure objectively and those which might contribute most to a comprehension of the

children's behavior and to a knowledge of what the agency tried to do to remedy the problems, the following areas were studied: the use made of psychiatric resources; the number of workers and the length of time each was assigned to work with the child; client-worker relationships in terms of how it was recorded that parents and child felt toward the worker; the number, type and length of agency placements of the children; and the reasons given for removals from placements and replacements of the child. It was recognized that many other factors exerted an influence on these children but there seemed no way to surmount the difficulties of measuring the differences in workers' skills, effectiveness of particular foster homes for specific children, etc., to obtain reasonably objective answers.

The first phase of the study of the agency's work with these children relates to the use of psychological and psychiatric resources in the community as an aid in diagnosis and treatment. Because of staff shortages in the child guidance clinic it was not possible to refer children for psychiatric evaluation early in the agency's custody of the child. This was done most often when the children's problems became acute and in a number of instances at the point of commitment to a correctional institution, as indicated by referral dates given in the records.¹

One boy and four girls had no psychiatric service and one boy and two girls only psychological tests at the Milwaukee County Guidance Clinic, the main resource for psychiatric service to children in the public agency's care.

1 Table XIX, see page 51.

The Jewish Vocational Service provides vocational counselling following a series of intelligence, projective and aptitude tests. The Public School Psychological Service gives intelligence, achievement, aptitude and projective type tests to children with educational and emotional difficulties coming to the attention of the schools.

TABLE XIX

USE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PSYCHIATRIC
AGENCIES WITH THE STUDY GROUP

Agency	Sex and number		Total 46 a)
	Boys 23	Girls 20	
Milwaukee County Guidance Clinic			
psychological only	1	2	3
once - complete study	7	7	14
twice	6	3	9
three	5	3	8
four			
five and/or continuing psychotherapy	1	1	2
Dispensary-Adult Clinic		1	1
Jewish Vocational Service	1	1	2
School Psychological Service	1	1	2
None	1	4	5

a) 3 girls had service by 2 agencies

It should be noted that the total of forty-six referrals exceeds by three the number of children in the study group as three girls had service from two different agencies.

The reasons why psychological and psychiatric service was not used for the five children who had none were sought. Although these were not recorded they can be inferred in two cases, but not in the other three. One boy was in the care of another agency (to whom psychiatric consultation was available but may or may not have been used) for almost three years prior to his placement in a correctional institution.² One girl was in the care of the agency only a little over two months when she was sent to a correctional institution.

All but three of the psychological ratings³ contained in Table XX⁴ were made by the Milwaukee County Guidance Clinic. Two boys and one girl received such service from the Public School Psychological Service or from the Jewish Vocational Service. (The other girl seen by the last named agency also

2 This purchase of care and service is used in some cases by the agency which retains custody of the child.

3 Exact numerical IQ's are not reported by the Clinic except for defective children for whom commitment to a training school is contemplated. The numerical range for the descriptive terms of the Table is as follows:

Very superior	130 and up
Superior	120 to 130
High average	110 to 120
Average	90 to 110
Dull normal	80 to 90
Borderline	70 to 80
Defective (retarded)	below 70

4 Table XX, see page 53.

had service from the Guidance Clinic.)

TABLE XX
INTELLIGENCE RATINGS OF STUDY GROUP CHILDREN
DURING CUSTODY

Rating	Boys 23	Girls 20	Total 43
Defective	1		1
Borderline	1	1	2
Dull	5	2	7
Low average	4	3	7
Average	8	8	16
High average	2	2	4
Superior	1		1
No rating	1	4	5

In studying the results of the psychological tests it was found that twenty-three of the thirty-eight children tested were in the average range of intelligence. Five were high average or superior and twice as many, ten, were dull, borderline or defective. If more than one rating was available on a child the latest one was used as probably most representative of his functioning prior to commitment. On the whole the study group could be considered intellectually to be fairly representative of the total population.

Psychiatric studies were made of twenty boys and thirteen girls, a total of thirty-three of the forty-three children in the study group. The

results of these studies are contained in Table XXI.⁵ It is noteworthy that there was no child considered psychotic and only one boy was diagnosed as a neurotic.⁶ Nine children exhibited personality patterns of mild or severe schizoid type and twenty-three children had personality trait disturbances. It will be seen that the psychiatric classifications used in Table XXI are generally descriptive of the emotional problems or symptoms rather than diagnostic, since children's personality patterns are usually not considered crystallized or fixed until after adolescence.⁷

The effects of emotional deprivations, disturbed home conditions and for some of these children, the extensive periods of institutional living they had experienced, are evidenced in the emotional problems classified in Table XXI. Maternal rejection and lack of emotional warmth and continuous maternal care have long been recognized as detrimental to children's emotional health and to the development of feelings of security and stability needed for healthy personality.⁸ The fact that such a large proportion of the study group were found to have marked disorders is of significance in understanding these children.

The number of workers each child had seemed to offer another means of describing the agency's attempt to help these children to use beneficially

5 Table XXI, see page 55.

6 See footnote to Table XXI, page 55, for source of psychiatric classification.

7 Dr. John A. Johnson, Milwaukee County Guidance Clinic

8 Maternal Care, 11, 12.

TABLE XXI

PSYCHIATRIC CLASSIFICATION OF CHILDREN
IN THE STUDY GROUP ⁹

Classification a)	Boys 20	Girls 13	Total 33
1. Psychotic	0	0	0
2. Neurotic	1		1
3. Personality Pattern			
a) Schizoid-severe	4	2	6
b) Schizoid-mild	1	2	3
4. Personality Trait Disturbance			
a) Passive-dependent	5	2	7
b) Passive-aggressive		1	1
c) Aggressive	3	2	5
d) Emotionally unstable b)	4	3	7
e) Other (sex symptoms)	2	1	3

a) This classification is taken from the Diagnostic Manual of the American Psychiatric Association, 1952 edition

b) This classification was formerly designated as Psychopath

⁹ The writer is indebted to Dr. John A. Johnson, psychiatrist at Milwaukee County Guidance Clinic for help with this Table.

placement away from their parental homes. The number of workers ranged from one to five per child. Well over half (twenty-five children) had only one worker; eight children had two and eight more, three workers; while only two had five workers. Changes were largely explained by staff turnover or the workers' transfers to other duties. Only one child was noted as having complained to her fifth worker of having "so many workers" but one might wonder if other children had, but did not express, such feelings.

It seemed logical that the length of time each worker was assigned to work with the child might have significance, especially since children from such disturbed family situations might be expected to have difficulty in establishing good relationships with other adults. This study showed that the length of time individual workers were assigned to work with children varied from five weeks to almost eighteen years, which was the length of time the children remained in agency custody. This information can be seen in detail in Table XXII.¹⁰

The information concerning the length of time workers were assigned to specific children does not necessarily correlate with the length of time children remained in custody, since eleven children had no worker assigned to them for the first one to seven years they were in agency care. This occurred in the first years of the expansion program due to staff shortages. Only two of the children had more than three workers. It should be noted that one child had the same worker for almost eighteen years, all the time he had been in

¹⁰ Table XXII, see page 57.

agency care up to commitment to a Federal Reformatory.

TABLE XXII

LENGTH OF WORKERS' ASSIGNMENT
TO EACH CHILD

Time assigned to child	Worker									
	#1	#3	#2	18	#3	10	#4	2	#5	2
1 year or less		24		12		4		2		2
1 to 6 months	15		6		2				2	
7 to 12 months	9		6		2		2			
2 years		8		2		6				
3 years		2		2						
4 years		2		2						
5 years										
6 years		3								
7 years		1								
8 years		1								
9 years		1								
10 or more	a) 1									

a) One worker had this child for 17 years, 11 months

Client-worker relationships, another phase of the agency's work with the study group, are indicated in Table XXIII. While this shows some interesting information about both parents' and children's attitudes to their workers, these data were not recorded for every parent and every child by

each worker who had had contact with them.

TABLE XXIII

CLIENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD WORKERS

Attitudes	A. Parent to worker		B. Child to worker
	Mother	Father	
1. Accepting, friendly	10	8	25
2. Ambivalent	8	3	6
3. Indifferent	4	4	1
4. Hostile	4	2	5
5. Suspicious, distrustful	6	3	13
6. Other	1		6
7. None indicated	15	10	7

It should be explained that there were fifty-six attitude notations in the records of thirty-six children and seven records contained no indications as to how the children regarded the worker. These latter can be explained by the very short contacts with five children and in one case by the fact that the direct work with the child was done by another agency.

The attitudes of fifteen mothers and ten fathers to workers were not recorded for a number of reasons such as inability to locate parents, desertion, mental illness, death, prolonged hospitalization or incarceration, army service or because parental rights had been terminated. It should be noted, as mentioned in Chapter IV, that twenty-five fathers and twelve mothers were

more or less permanently removed from their children's lives.¹¹

It would appear that parents generally were less friendly and accepting than their children of the caseworkers since only eighteen parents showed this attitude. Nineteen parents were ambivalent or indifferent to workers and fifteen were suspicious, distrustful or openly hostile. Only one mother was reported to have concealed her child's poor behavior from the worker. While the reasons given for particular attitudes of parents and children toward workers were sought, too few were recorded to be statistically significant. Among those given are revealing reasons such as: mothers who showed hostility to workers as a projection of guilt over their maternal failures; mothers who were overprotective, evasive, outwardly cooperative, inadequate, or alcoholic and irresponsible. Fathers were resistive to placement; resented their financial obligation to support the child; were "too busy to see the worker"; or were emotionally disturbed by the child's problems.

Some of the stated reasons for children's negative attitudes toward workers were attributed to early trauma, longstanding personality disturbance, the reflection of parents' or relatives' attitudes, dislike of white people, by one Negro girl, and "so many workers", expressed by one of the girls who had had five workers.

Working with severely disturbed children in such an emotional atmosphere created placement problems, as revealed by a study of the number and types of placements made during custody.

11 For reasons, see page 37.

It should be noted that the agency had been awarded permanent guardianship, to age twenty-one, with termination of parental rights by the Court in the cases of four of the boys born out of wedlock. Some of the reasons why adoption placements were not made, or were not successful, will be shown in the following case situations:

One boy, John, had been taken for adoption in infancy by a great aunt and her husband but the adoption was never completed because the family was receiving relief in the early years of the depression and because the great uncle deserted when the child was three years old. This was the child, mentioned earlier, who remained in agency custody for almost eighteen years.

A nine year old boy, Ronald, was so seriously traumatized by his rejecting, unwed mother by the time the agency was asked to accept permanent guardianship that an adoption placement was out of the question due to his behavior.

Joan, born to married parents, was permanently committed without termination of parental rights at the age of five. However she could not be placed for adoption because her father's mental illness made termination of his parental rights impossible under the law. Joan's mother's one gesture of responsibility was an inquiry at the agency office five years after the child had been committed to agency custody because of gross neglect.

The numbers and types of placements the agency made of the study group children are summarized in Table XXIV¹² which shows the one to nine

12 Table XXIV, see page 61.

TABLE XXIV

NUMBER AND TYPES OF PLACEMENTS OF CHILDREN
OF STUDY GROUP DURING CUSTODY

Number of times placements were made	Types of placements used						
	Own 12	Rel 12	BH 29	FH 6	AH 1	Inst 32	Det H 35
1	12	9	8	3	1	16	8
2		3	8	2		14	12
3			7			2	11
4			3				3
5			2	1			1
6							
7							
8							
9			1 a)				

a) Nine placements in six homes

Key: Own - own home
 Rel - relative home
 BH - boarding home
 FH - free or wage home
 AH - adoptive home
 Inst - institution not including Det. Home
 Det.H - Detention Home
 Other - Chicago Det. Home (1) whereabouts unknown (2)

placements per child for the various types of plans in own or relatives' homes; boarding, free or adoptive homes; and institutional, Detention Home, or "Other" placements. ("Other" placements consisted of the Chicago Detention Home for one child and "whereabouts unknown" for two others.) Separate tables showing the breakdown for each type of placement will follow later in this chapter.

The forty-three children in the study group had a total of 252 different placements, an average of 5.88 per child. Twenty-one of the children had one to five plans made for them and twenty-two children, from six to thirteen plans during custody before commitment to a correctional institution. This would indicate the degree of the child's maladjustment which Bowlby describes as resulting in "the tragic procession from one foster home where he fails to settle to another . . . , Foster mothers cannot give loving care to a child who fails utterly to respond."¹³

There were twelve children who were placed, or who remained, in their own homes for some period during agency custody, protective supervision being a rather recent development in the agency program. Table XIV¹⁴ shows the distribution in months of the time spent by these children in their own homes.

In two instances it was the plan of the Court that the agency provide supervision in the child's own home. In two other cases the plan was made because the agency could not locate a foster home willing to accept the child with his serious problems. In the three cases in which the child remained less

¹³ Maternal Care, 128.

¹⁴ Table XIV, see page 63.

than thirty days, two were to prevent the child from spending the Christmas holidays in the Detention Home and one was on an emergency basis between foster home placements. The two children who remained in their own homes a year and the child who spent twenty-five months in his own home, had been placed by the agency after other types of care in the hope that it would become a permanent plan for the child. Failure was due less to the child's inability to adjust than to continuance of the basic attitudes of rejection, particularly of mothers, which had made removal originally necessary.

TABLE XIV

LENGTH OF TIME IN OWN HOME
DURING CUSTODY
12 CHILDREN

<u>Length of time</u>	<u>Total cases 12</u>
Three months	6 a)
Six months	2
Nine months	1
Twelve months	2
Over twelve months	1 b)

a) 3 children spent less than 30 days in own home

b) 1 child spent 25½ months in own home

Because of the agency's belief that relatives' homes offer the next best resource to own homes for children, plans with relatives were made for twelve children, three of whom lived with two different relatives. That relatives were not used more often was due to lack of interest, of suitability or

of availability.

TABLE XXVI

LENGTH OF TIME IN RELATIVES' HOMES
DURING CUSTODY
12 CHILDREN

Length of time	Relative home as first placement = 12	Relative home as second placement = 3
1 year	10	2
1 - 3 months	4	1
4 - 6 months	4	
7 - 9 months	1	1
10 - 12 months	1	
2 years		1
3 years		
4 years	1	
Over 4 years	1 a)	

a) 1 boy spent 18 years in home of same relative

Boarding homes were used one to nine times for twenty-nine children for periods varying from one month or less to four years. It is noteworthy that only ten of the seventy-six boarding home placements, averaging 2.62 per case, lasted for more than one year. Still more tragic for the child is the fact that forty-one of the sixty-six placements enduring less than one year ended between one and three months after placement. The children lived in an additional fourteen boarding homes for four to six months and in eleven other

homes for seven to twelve months. One child who had nine boarding home placements actually lived in six different homes as she spent three separate periods in the same home.

TABLE XXVII

LENGTH OF TIME IN BOARDING HOMES
DURING CUSTODY
29 CHILDREN

Total time in each home	Boarding home								
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9
1 year	24	18	12	6	3	1	1		1
1 - 3 months	17	8	9	4		1	1		1
4 - 6 months	3	4	2	2	3				
7 - 9 months	1	3							
10 - 12 months	3	3	1						
2 years	2	2	1					1	
3 years	2	1							
4 years	1								

Free homes, used for six children were of two types: school homes in which they earned room, board and allowance while attending high school full time; or wage homes where children no longer in school earned room, board and a salary. The six children were placed in from one to five free homes, for periods ranging from one to sixteen months.

Four of the eight free home placements of less than four months'

duration, lasted less than thirty days; three lasted less than two months; and one, three months. The remaining four such placements were one each of nine and sixteen months and two of eleven months. Three children were boys and three, girls.

TABLE XVIII

LENGTH OF TIME IN FREE HOMES
DURING CUSTODY
6 CHILDREN

Total time in months	Free home				
	#1 6	#2 3	#3 1	#4 1	#5 1
1 - 4 months	4	2		1	1
5 - 8 months					
9 - 12 months	2		1		
13 - 16 months		1			

As institutions, both private and public, exclusive of the Detention Home which is treated separately, were also used for the care of some children, the length of time spent and the number of such placements were tabulated. The agency's own Children's Home accounted for most of these placements, although services and care in four small private institutions were purchased for five of the thirty-two children in this category of the study.

Twenty-eight of the thirty-two children with one or more periods of institutional living were placed immediately on acceptance at the Children's Home. Two had another type of placement prior to admission to the Children's Home and the remaining two were placed in an institution other than the Chil-

dren's Home during custody. Half of the thirty-two children placed at least once in an institution, remained less than one year and the other sixteen stayed more than one and up to seven years. This latter group is comprised mainly of the children committed to custody when they were under nine years of age and for whom the agency did not have sufficient staff to plan for their care outside the institution until several years after they were accepted into custody.

Only eleven of the study children had no institutional living experience during custody. As mentioned earlier, this excludes the Detention Home.¹⁵

Detention Home placements before the children were accepted for agency care and during agency custody were tabulated since this had an effect, not always constructive, on the children who spent time there, sometimes while plans were being made for them, and sometimes because of delinquent behavior which had been brought to the attention of the court.¹⁶

The children's records showed that ten children had not been detained in the Detention Home prior to agency custody; seventeen had been in detention one to three times; and in sixteen cases this information was unknown or not recorded. It was not possible to determine from recorded information whether detentions prior to agency custody were due to delinquent behavior because until December, 1948 dependent children also spent short periods in the Detention Home before Court hearings concerning custody.

¹⁵ Table XXIX, see page 68.

¹⁶ Table XXX, see page 69.

TABLE XXIX

LENGTH OF TIME IN AN INSTITUTION DURING CUSTODY

Time spent in institutions	Number of placement					Total	49
	First	a) 32	Second	15	Third	2	
Less than 1 year		16		10		1	27
Less than 30 days	7		6		1		
31 days to 3 months	3		2				
4 to 6 months	3						
7 - 9 months	1		2				
10 - 12 months	2						
2 years		4		2		1	7
3 years		1		1			2
4 years		4					4
5 years		4					4
6 years		1		1			2
7 years		2		1			3

a) 32 of the 43 children had 1 to 3 placements in an institution, exclusive of the Detention Home, during custody. 11 children had no institutional living.

TABLE XXX

THE CHILDREN'S STAYS AT THE DETENTION HOME

Number of stays	Prior to custody ⁴³	During custody ⁴³
None	10	6
1	11	9
2	2	12
3	4	11
4		3
5		1
Not known or not given	16	1

Only six children had no period in the Detention Home during agency custody but information of this nature was lacking on one child. Thirty-six children spent one to five periods in detention, the time varying from one to ninety-seven days, for a total of eighty-six such placements, averaging 2.32 per child. Because of an administrative decision that children once removed from the Children's Home into foster care could usually not be returned to the Home if the placement failed, the Detention Home was used for shelter in emergencies until a new foster home could be found for the child. Needless to say, the workers recognized this as poor planning for children generally, from a casework viewpoint, but had no alternate resource to use all too frequently. The Detention Home was also used for some of the persistent runaways and the overly-aggressive children whom the Children's Home personnel believed to have

a negative effect on other youngsters living there.

The duration of stays in the Detention Home is shown in Table XXXI.¹⁷ Fifty-three detentions, well over half, were for less than thirty days, while thirty-three, about two-fifths, lasted from thirty-one to ninety-seven days. The four longest detentions, ranging from sixty-eight to ninety-seven days, were the result of the inability of the agency and the Court to decide what the next plan should be for the child. The sixty-eight day detention involved a girl who refused to accept any plan the agency had to offer. The two boys detained for seventy-five days each presented such serious aggressive or withdrawn behavior that further psychiatric study was requested and the boys were kept under close supervision, not possible elsewhere, to prevent the one from harming others and the second from harming himself. The boy who remained ninety-seven days had such a persistent pattern of running away that the Detention Home was the only resource to insure his being available for psychiatric study.

The reasons for detentions prior to and during custody were explored. Although twenty-three reasons were listed for the detentions of eight children previous to agency custody, these involved too few children to be more than indicative of emotional disturbances. The reasons were: intoxication, refusal to go home, mother in jail, and truancy, one each; sexual irregularities, three; stealing and parental inability to control the child, five each; and runaway, six.

¹⁷ Table XXXI, see page 71.

TABLE XXXI

DURATION OF STAYS AT THE DETENTION HOME
DURING CUSTODY

Length in days	Number of detentions					Grand total 86
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	
1 - 10	8	4	4			16
11 - 20	9	7	2			18
21 - 30	5	8	3	2	1	19
31 - 40	6	3	4	1		14
41 - 50	2	3	1	1		7
51 - 60	2		1			3
61 - 70		1				1
Over 70	1 a)	1 b)	1 a)			3
Not known	4	1				5

a) 75 days for study and plan

b) 97 days because of persistent runaway

Eighty-three reasons were tabulated for the eighty-six detentions during custody,¹⁸ no reason being given for each of three children's stays at the Detention Home. One of these children was later committed for sexual irregularities and it could be inferred from the records that the other two were detained more because of serious personality disturbance than for overt misbehavior. In those instances in which more than one reason was given, only

¹⁸ Table XXXII, see page 72.

TABLE XXXII

RECORDED REASONS FOR DETENTION HOME
PLACEMENTS DURING CUSTODY

Recorded reasons for detention	Occurrence of detentions a)					Total reasons 86
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	
None given (3 cases)	3					3
Foster parents' inability to accept behavior		3				3
Child's inability to adjust to foster home	1					1
Child's aggressive behavior	1					1
Mother of child in jail	1					1
Temporary placement	14	6	1			21
Parents' inability to control child	2	1				3
Child awaiting commitment			5	1		6
Runaway	14	12	8	2	1	37
Treasury	1					1
Stealing	1	4	1			6
Sex irregularities	2		1			3

a) 6 children were never in the Detention Home

the most serious was used in the Table.

In order to understand why so many of the children were placed and replaced a total of 252 times in various types of homes or institutions, including the Detention Home, the reasons were tabulated and are listed in Table XXXIII¹⁹ in the order of frequency. Miscellaneous reasons, totaling twenty-one, included fourteen having to do with the Court, such as release of a child to his parents under agency supervision, holding of a child in the Detention Home for security reasons, for study, for discipline, etc. The other seven miscellaneous reasons consisted of such things as return to boarding school from summer placement, inability to adjust to relatives' homes, and return by police after being missing. Community disapproval of child's behavior included such reasons for removal as the school's refusal to accept a placed child, or community resentment of petty stealing, minor acts of destruction or aggression, which foster parents would have overlooked, had the community reaction not made removal of the child necessary.

The largest category, temporary placement, referred to children in the Children's Home, the Detention Home or in their own homes awaiting placement or replacement in a foster home. This reflects the difficulty of finding suitable homes for adolescents and seriously maladjusted children. Another reason, foster parents' inability to accept the child's behavior, is at least partially due to the use of foster homes which the agency workers had doubt would succeed because of the degree of disturbance of the child needing placement, but whose use was a matter of expediency since no more suitable home was

¹⁹ Table XXXIII, see page 74.

available. The category, child committed to correctional institution, referred to the reason for the last plan, often the Detention Home, before the Court determination of delinquency which led to commitment to a correctional institution.

TABLE XXXIII

RECORDED REASONS FOR REMOVAL OF CHILDREN FROM ALL PLACEMENTS
AND REPLACEMENTS

<u>Reasons</u>	<u>Total</u> 253
Temporary placement	66
Runaway	57
Foster parents' inability to accept behavior	43
Child committed to correctional institution	43
Miscellaneous reasons	21
Community disapproval of child's behavior	7
Child's inability to relate to foster parents	4
No reason recorded	4
Illness or death of foster parent	3
Child's physical condition	2
Child's too strong attachment to own parents	2
Sibling rivalry with adoptive parents' own child	1

As can be seen runaways accounted for the second most frequent reason for replacement. These related to the child's basic emotional disturbance and not primarily to the type of placement from which the child removed himself.

In summary, the outstanding factor of the agency's work with these

children was the multiplicity of placements in various types of foster homes and institutions. Sixty-six placements were of a temporary nature, made until more permanent plans could be worked out. These supposedly more permanent placements failed repeatedly since approximately half of the children had one to five placements and a little over half, had six to thirteen plans made for them. Only fifteen of a total of 111 placements made in own, relative, foster and free homes lasted more than one year, while sixty of the remaining ninety-six such placements ended in three months or less.

The length of time which thirty-two of the children spent in an institution (exclusive of the Detention Home) during custody, half of them under one year and half from two to seven years, apparently did little to help them develop patterns of security and stability to aid in their later community and family adjustments. Evidence of this was persistent running away, and inability to adjust and to relate to others, given as reasons for replacements and for the children's being detained in the Detention Home.

Twenty-eight of the thirty-eight children of whom psychological evaluations were made, were average or better in intelligence and only ten were below average, indicating that the problems they presented were not in most instances due primarily to serious intellectual defects. All thirty-three of the study group who had psychiatric evaluations prior to or during custody showed them to have serious emotional problems; the behavior of the ten children without psychiatric evaluations indicated emotional disorders perhaps only a little less severe.

While the attitudes of parents and children toward workers were not

always recorded it appeared that parents were less friendly and accepting of the worker than their children. Negative or destructive attitudes, such as ambivalence, indifference, suspicion, distrust and hostility, of parents and children toward workers seemed to be related to personality disturbances of the clients.

The number of workers and the relatively short periods some of them were assigned to work with the children, had a probable detrimental influence on the study group.

CHAPTER VI

FACTORS RELATING TO DELINQUENCY COMMITMENTS

This chapter, dealing with the various factors existing at the time delinquency commitments were made, will include the ages, school placements and living arrangements of the children immediately prior to their commitment as delinquents. Those with siblings in agency care or with correctional institution records will be reported. Delinquency findings made by the Court at acceptance of some of the children, the immediate reasons for the commitments to correctional institutions, influential factors of delinquent behavior attributed to parents and those attributed to the children themselves will be included. Finally, the years in which the commitments were made and the correctional institutions to which the children were sent will be recorded.

These factors were chosen because it was thought they would add to, and clarify, the situations which led to delinquency determination and commitment to correctional institutions of the children in the study group.

The youngsters ranged in age from eleven to eighteen at commitment as delinquents; almost half were fifteen or sixteen years old and over four-fifths were thirteen to sixteen. The distribution is presented in Table XXXIV.¹

Living arrangements of the children immediately prior to commitment

1 Table XXXIV, see page 78.

are presented in Table XXXV,² which shows twelve children in their own or relatives' homes, seventeen children in foster homes and fourteen in institutions. At acceptance, thirty-eight of the study group had been living in their own or relatives' homes and only five had been placed away from any member of their own families.

TABLE XXXIV

AGES OF CHILDREN IN STUDY GROUP AT COMMITMENT
TO CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Age in years	Boys 23	Girls 20	Total 43
11-12	3		3
13-14	7	7	14
15-16	10	11	21
17-18	3	2	5

Whereas eight children lived with both parents at acceptance, only two in their own homes at commitment were living with both parents. Six of the eight in parental homes at commitment lived with only the mother or with one own and one stepparent. This is indicative of the parents' disturbed marital situations and lack of stability. Only two children were noted as living at the Detention Home at commitment since they had been placed there more than two months for study and security reasons. Actually thirty others of the study group were housed in the Detention Home to await the court hearing which result-

² Table XXXV, see page 79.

ed in their commitment to a correctional institution. However, the last placement prior to the detention period was chosen as more significant for purposes of this study since placement in the Detention Home indicated that the agency had exhausted all other resources for the care of these children for whom commitment to correctional institutions seemed inevitable.

TABLE XXV

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF CHILDREN AT COMMITMENT

Living arrangements	Boys 23	Girls 20	Total 43
A. Own home			
1. Both parents	2		2
2. Mother only		3	3
3. Father only			
4. Mother and stepfather	1	1	2
5. Father and stepmother		1	1
B. Relatives' home	3	1	4
C. Foster home	9	8	17
D. Institution			
1. MCCH	5	5	10
2. Other institution	2		2
3. Detention Home	1	1	2

The school placements of the study group at commitment indicate to some degree how emotional maladjustment impaired their functioning ability.

TABLE XXXVI

SCHOOL PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN AT COMMITMENT

School grade	Boys 23	Girls 20	Total 43
Fourth	1		1
Fifth			
Sixth	1		1
Seventh	2	3	5
Eighth	6	5	11
Ninth	5	6	11
Tenth	1	3	4
Vocational	3	2	5
Special C class	3		3
Not stated	1	1	2

Of twenty children retarded in school at commitment, eight were one year; seven, two years; and three, three years below grade expectancy for their ages. The remaining two were placed in "Special C" classes for seriously retarded children. Eight of these children were low average or better in intelligence; seven were dull or borderline; and two had IQ's below seventy. Three of the children retarded one and two years in school had had no psychological examinations. A total of twenty-two children were retarded in school either at acceptance or at commitment. Two children, one and two years below grade expectancy at acceptance, were no longer retarded at commitment, while three

children up to grade at acceptance, were one grade below the average for their ages at commitment. It was noted that four children of the twenty-two retarded in school at some period during custody, had gained one-half to two grades in school achievement between acceptance and commitment; nine children lost one to one and a half grades; and eight neither gained nor lost during agency custody. One boy who was below school age at acceptance was three years retarded in school by the time he reached the Vocational School minimum age of sixteen.

Study of the records of the children retarded in school indicated rather directly the detrimental influence of the emotional problems they experienced. The fourth grade boy, eleven years of age, had average intelligence but functioned below his ability because of his severe emotional disturbance. Psychotherapy at the Guidance Clinic accomplished little in the way of change because his mother could not, or did not work to correct her basically destructive attitudes toward the child. Two of the children in the Special C classes were very dull but the third child, whose intellectual capacity was rated at least low average, was so aggressive toward other children that he could be managed only in a small class for exceptional children. The school placement of one eleven year old boy was not recorded. The only other child, a girl, whose school grade was not mentioned ran away a month after the agency accepted her, during the summer, and was missing for the next five months.

Exploration of the situations of siblings of the study group at commitment of the latter, showed that somewhat over one-fourth of the siblings were also in agency care.

TABLE XXXVII
SIBLINGS OF THE STUDY GROUP
AT COMMITMENT

Number of siblings	Number of study children with siblings:	
	Also in agency care	With correctional institution records
None	24	36
1	11	4
2	3	3
3		
4	5	

Nineteen of the study group at commitment had thirty-seven siblings still in agency custody. It should be recalled that at acceptance thirteen of the study group had fifty siblings also in agency care.

At commitment ten siblings, related to seven of the study group, were currently or had been in correctional institutions. This showed a considerable increase over the four study children at acceptance who had five siblings with correctional institution records. The reason that the number of siblings with delinquency commitments is not greater may lie in the fact that not all children are equally affected by adverse home conditions. The case records did not give reasons for the siblings' commitments so that it was not possible to compare the two groups in this respect.

The nature of the delinquent acts which resulted in the children's commitments to correctional institutions and the number of such acts are

recorded in Table XXXVIII.

TABLE XXXVIII
NATURE OF DELINQUENT ACTS OF CHILDREN
IN STUDY GROUP

<u>Nature of delinquent acts</u>	<u>Totals 86</u>
Runaway	24
Stealing	19
Sex irregularities	15
Aggressive acts	9
Truancy	8
Destructive acts	2
Other	9

Twenty-one of the delinquencies were against property (stealing and destruction); twenty-six were directed against people (sex irregularities, aggression, and resentment of foster parents); and thirty-nine were directed primarily against the child himself (runaway, truancy, drinking, use of dope and late hours). It should be noted that there had been no overt delinquency at commitment in two cases. One, the boy whose serious emotional disturbance prevented him from doing an acceptable job in several work homes, had however been engaged in persistent stealing and truancy prior to acceptance. The other, a boy whose extreme resentment of parental rejection caused his inability to relate to foster parents, was thought to need a more structured and controlled environment to prevent more overt acting out. In each case commitment was advised by the psychiatrist since the agency's program did not meet the

child's needs and there was no available institution other than a correctional institution to meet his emotional needs, as well as to prevent further, more serious behavior.

Twenty-eight of the children had companions in their delinquency while fifteen children had none.

Although the number of delinquent acts is exactly twice the number of children involved, one to five acts were attributed to the individual children. This distribution is shown in Table XXXIX.

TABLE XXXIX

GIVEN REASONS FOR COMMITMENT PER CHILD

Number of reasons	Cases 43	Totals 86
One	15	15
Two	17	34
Three	8	24
Four	2	8
Five	1	5

Influential factors of delinquent behavior attributed to parents and to children were taken from statements recorded by workers. It should be noted that in twelve cases of parents and six of children no such factors were recorded. The total of sixty-three factors relating to parents' contributions to their children's delinquency are tabulated in Table XL.

TABLE XL
INFLUENTIAL FACTORS OF DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR
RELATED TO PARENTS

<u>Type of problem</u>	<u>Total</u>
Personal problems	18
Interpersonal relationships	8
Parent-child relationships	37
Cases with none stated	12

Included under parents' personal problems (18) were such things as immaturity, inadequacy, ambivalence, alcoholism, low intelligence, religious fanaticism, neglect, poor personal standards, mother's diagnosed psychopathic personality, parents' institutional background (with resulting inadequacy as a parent person).

Interpersonal relationship problems (8) were sexual promiscuity, desertion, marital discord, mutual criticism by parents to the child and a mother's hostility to male figures, resulting in rejection of her only son.

Problems of parent-child relationships (37) consisted of rejection, lack of parental feelings, punitive attitudes and actions, stepparents' lack of acceptance, parents' encouragement of child's rebellion, poor supervision or handling, overprotection, lack of a father figure and parents' identifying the child with an undesirable or hated parent.

More personal problems of parents and of disturbances of interpersonal relationships can be inferred than were recorded as influential factors of the child's delinquent behavior. This is particularly true of disturbances

in parents' relationships to one another since, as was pointed out in Chapter III, thirty-five of the children were the products of broken homes and the other eight children whose parents were still living together had been subjected to serious marital discord.

In considering factors that seemed to influence the delinquent behavior of the children studied, the negative influences of parents were mentioned as often as five times in thirty-one instances, with an average of 1.6 per case. The factors of delinquency relating to the child also ranged from one to five in the thirty-seven cases containing this recorded information, with an average of 1.36 per case.

The various categories and the numbers of influential factors affecting the children are shown in Table XLI.

TABLE XLI

INFLUENTIAL FACTORS OF DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR
RELATED TO THE CHILDREN

<u>Type of problem</u>	<u>Total</u> 95
Personal problems	
1. Relationships	58
2. Physical	2
3. Mental	5
Child-parent relationships	18
Environmental	12
Cases with none stated	6

Personal problems were divided into physical, mental and relationship aspects. Epileptic equivalents and encephalitis sequelae were the two physical

problems recorded, while low intelligence and poor judgment were included in the mental problem category. Relationship problems included feelings of being unloved, unwanted, rejected or depressed; hostility; sibling rivalry; "laxness"; sexual irregularities; stealing; patterns of escape or aggression; being easily led; inability to endure frustration or to form relationships; egocentric or psychopathic personality; serious emotional disturbance; and no acceptance of agency plans.

Child-parent relationship problems were guilt (over hostility); fear of parents; rejection of parents; early emotional deprivation; lack of proper guidance; and poor relationships to parents or relatives.

Environmental problems included insecurity in school or foster home; repeated moves from home to home; and bad company.

Since the years during which children were committed to correctional institutions showed some lack of consistency these data were recorded in Table XLII.³

It should be noted that only one boy was committed as a delinquent during the first year included in this study; while ten, eight, nine and fifteen children were committed in the four subsequent years. The numbers of children committed to correctional institutions during the last four years of the study period were increased because the Court had found thirteen children delinquent before placing them in agency custody. This plan of having the agency try to help these delinquent children represented the Court's final

³ Table XLII, see page 88.

attempt to exhaust all possible resources for community casework service. The agency was asked to care for one boy, adjudged delinquent because he had robbed a drug store of one hundred dollars, and although legally committed to a correctional institution, it did not have a bed for him for six weeks after the Court hearing occurred. The child was included in the study group because he went directly from agency care to a correctional institution.

TABLE III

YEARS DURING WHICH COMMITMENTS
OF STUDY GROUP OCCURRED

Period when committed	Boys 23	Girls 20	Total 43
11-1-48 to 10-31-49 a)	1		1
11-1-49 to 10-31-50	6	4	10
11-1-50 to 10-31-51	2	6	8
11-1-51 to 10-31-52	5	4	9
11-1-52 to 10-31-53	9	6	15

a) These periods rather than calendar years were chosen as a matter of expediency by the writer because of the delay which would have been occasioned by using the cases of all children committed during 1953. It was believed that use of data as nearly current as possible would make the study more meaningful to the agency.

Seven of these delinquent and dependent or neglected children had to be committed to correctional institutions within a few weeks to a few months of acceptance; the agency continued from one to two and a half years to try to help adjust six others of the thirteen delinquents. Two initially adjudged delinquents each year were included in the commitment figures for the three

years ending in October of 1950, 1951 and 1952, while seven of the fifteen commitments to correctional institutions made during the year ending in October, 1953 were of children adjudged delinquent before acceptance by the agency.

As can be observed from Table XLIII most of the boys were committed to the Wisconsin School for Boys and most of the girls to the Wisconsin School for Girls.

TABLE XLIII

CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO WHICH CHILDREN
IN STUDY GROUP WERE COMMITTED

Institution	Boys 23	Girls 20	Total 43
Federal Reformatory	1		1
Norris Foundation	5		5
St. Charles Boys' Home	5		5
Wisconsin School for Boys	12		12
House of Good Shepherd		6	6
Wisconsin School for Girls		14	14

After considering the individual factors studied in this chapter it is found that the children of the study group ranged in age from eleven to eighteen, with slightly over four-fifths being thirteen to sixteen, at commitment to a correctional institution. Living arrangements showed only twelve children living with their own parents or with relatives, and only two children in homes with both own parents. Thirty-one of the study group had been in foster homes or in institutions just prior to commitment to correctional insti-

tutions.

Twenty of the forty-three children were retarded a year or more in school at commitment. Nine of the twenty children were below average in intelligence but three retarded youngsters had not had psychological tests to determine their intellectual capacity.

Runaways, stealing and sexual irregularities were the most frequent precipitating factors of commitment to correctional institutions. Two children had committed no delinquent acts during custody, although one had stolen persistently and truanted prior to agency custody; the commitment of the other seriously disturbed boy had been advised by a psychiatrist to prevent more serious overt misbehavior. The range of delinquent acts was one to five per child but the average was two.

Influential factors of delinquency relating to parents were sixty-three recorded, with none for parents in twelve cases, while a total of ninety-five such factors was attributed to the children themselves. The range was one to five recorded factors for both children and parents. No mention of influential factors was found in the records of six children.

The five years included in the study showed one commitment to a correctional institution the first year and eight to fifteen commitments during the four subsequent years. The figures for the last four years included thirteen children adjudged delinquents previous to acceptance and who had ultimately to be committed to correctional institutions. This action by the Court was perhaps in recognition of the fact that these thirteen children had had little opportunity, because of their home environment and the inadequate

parents they had, to develop normal patterns of behavior.

Thirteen of the boys were committed to two governmental and ten to two private correctional institutions, while six girls went to a private and fourteen girls to the state institutions for delinquents.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

The forty-three children of the study group who required commitment to correctional institutions while in the custody of the Milwaukee County public children's agency, comprised less than one percent of the total of at least 4225 children cared for by the agency during the five year period with which this study is concerned. All of the study group had been committed by the Children's Court to agency custody because of serious parental lacks or because of behavior problems, including overt delinquency, of the children themselves. While the stated reasons why these children required care away from their parental homes were serious enough, they were most often the precipitating causes. Other multiple attendant reasons indicated that the homes and family interrelationships of these children offered little resource for enduring emotional satisfactions and constructive help in the process of growth to stable maturity.

The ages of parents at the birth of the children in this study showed that over half the fathers for whom the information was available were thirty to fifty years old and that two-thirds of the mothers were between twenty and thirty years of age. It would therefore appear that extreme youth and consequent inexperience were not primary causative factors of their failures as parents.

The families were larger than many since they averaged 4.976 children, with a range of one to thirteen per family. Almost one-third of the siblings of the study group, members of thirteen families, were in agency care at acceptance of the children of the study group and over one-fourth were in agency care when the study child was committed to a correctional institution. Five siblings of the study group at acceptance and ten at commitment of the study children had correctional institution records. While the numbers of brothers and sisters with correctional institution records is small it emphasizes the fact that not all children are equally affected by adverse home conditions and family relationships.

The degree of parental immaturity, irresponsibility and instability to which the study group children had been subjected is pointed up by the disturbed marital status of their parents. Both parents were living together in only eight instances when the children were accepted by the agency, but this includes the foster parents with whom one girl had lived since infancy. Seven parents of six children were unmarried and ten parents were deceased. The marriages of the forty-five remaining parents had foundered and in fact sixteen parents had contracted new marriages prior to the acceptance of their children into care. All of the children had been subjected to defects in parental relationships, since even the eight fathers and mothers still living together had serious marital discord. These latter parents too were characterized by caseworkers as immature, inadequate, inconsistent, emotionally unstable and irresponsible.

Designation of this group as multiproblem families, Bradley Buell's

descriptive phrase, seems justified by a study of the number of social agencies registered on them in the Social Service Exchange. Further evidence of their instability and inadequacy is shown by the multiplicity of social agencies, one to twenty-four, an average of 11.35 per family, which had given service to them for varying periods ranging from one to twenty-one years. Four-sevenths of the families had been known to from eleven to twenty-four agencies and five-sevenths had had service sometime during eleven to twenty-one years prior to their child's being placed in agency custody.

Three-fourths of the immediate and four-fifths of the attendant reasons for the children's need of care outside their own homes were attributed to parents. This reinforces the impression of parental inadequacy and instability which emerges from the study of significant family factors relating to the behavior difficulties of the study children.

The qualities of the feelings of parents, and especially of mothers, showed destructive rather than constructive influences upon their children. This is demonstrated by the large proportion of mothers who were ambivalent, indifferent, rejecting or hostile to their children and the few who showed signs of real affection for their youngsters. While fathers showed relatively more positive feelings for their children, this factor seemed insufficient to counteract the destructive effect of the mothers' negative feelings. The same also seemed to be true with respect to activities, since mothers, more often than fathers, engaged in more negative than positive activities on behalf of their children, thereby reinforcing the felt rejection of the youngsters. Even the positive activities had uneven value since parents were often inconsistent

in their attitudes and actions.

More than half the parents whose attitudes were recorded had negative feelings toward agency workers, which is perhaps not too surprising as this mirrors their reactions to their marriage partners and to their children.

In summarizing the findings of the study concerning the children themselves, many significant factors in addition to those relating to parents become evident to aid in understanding the reasons for the children's delinquent behavior and the need for their commitments to correctional institutions.

The children of the study group had had one to seven placements in agency custody for periods ranging from five weeks to eighteen years prior to commitment to a correctional institution. Over one-third of the children spent from six to eighteen years continuously in agency custody, which is significant not only in terms of the length of the separations but also of the implications of emotional trauma caused by the separation and of the hindrance to long range development of emotional security and stability in children lacking meaningful parental figures. As was implied earlier in this chapter, many fewer immediate and attendant reasons for their need for agency care could be attributed to the children than to their parents.

Most of the study group were White but Negroes, Indians and one Mexican were among the twelve non-White children. All but one of the children had religious affiliations. The majority were born and had always lived in Milwaukee County. Thirty-five of the forty-three children were born in wedlock although the father of one girl was other than the mother's husband. The remaining eight children had been born to unmarried mothers. None of the chil-

dren had seriously disabling physical defects, although two of them were suspected to have epileptic equivalents or sequelae of encephalitis.

A survey of living arrangements showed that only five children at acceptance but thirty-one at commitment were living away from any member of their families. However, only eight children at acceptance and two at commitment lived with both parents while twenty-six and six youngsters at the respective periods studied, lived with one parent and in some cases with a stepparent.

School placements studied indicated that eighteen children at acceptance and twenty at commitment were one to three years below the usual grade expectancy for their ages. Since only ten children of the thirty-eight for whom psychological test results were available were below average in intelligence, it would seem that factors other than intelligence played a part in school retardation.

Also of significance was the fact that over half of the children were preadolescent and adolescent at acceptance. Puberty is normally a period of stress for most children and of intensified strain for children who had already found their lives complicated by problems they were not equipped to meet by reason of immaturity and lack of early security. Equally noteworthy was the fact that some of the children were quite young, one to six years of age, at separation from their parents, which meant, since many of this group remained several years at the Children's Home, that they had been deprived of maternal care and affection at an age when they most needed the individual attention of one meaningful adult to develop the ability to relate to others.

Agency activities studied showed a very large number of placements, an average of 5.88 per child, but ranging from one to thirteen per child. Half the study group had had one to five and the other half, six to thirteen different plans made for them. The impact of repeated failures to adjust must have been devastating to the children's feelings, already severely threatened because of parents' rejection, indifference and hostility. More than half the children had only one worker, but eighteen children had two to five different workers during custody. Over half of the children had friendly feelings for their workers but the others showed them to be suspicious, distrustful, ambivalent, indifferent, hostile or defensive, not surprising when viewed in the light of the destructive nature of their relationships with their parents.

From the preceding findings it may be concluded that all of the study children were physically healthy. It appears that most of the children had been reared in social environments not conducive to healthy personality growth prior to acceptance. While poor social environments may also have been a detrimental factor for the eight children under six years of age when accepted, the resources of the institutionally geared agency program and the lack of staff prior to 1946, prevented differentiation in the care of these younger children, and undoubtedly contributed to their unhealthy personality development. Agency limitations, especially during the ten years prior to 1948, influenced negatively the development of those children in agency care the longest, from six to eighteen years. This can be seen particularly in the difficulties of adjustment experienced by the majority of the children whose first foster home placements occurred during adolescence. Such placements required

these children to form ties to new parents, which is difficult enough for normal children, but especially so for children whose own parents had failed them, as authorities, among them Bowlby, Hamilton, Josselyn, and Saul, previously quoted, have stressed.

In the light of more precise present day knowledge of the effects on children of separation from parents and of emotional deprivation, it is doubtless true that earlier diagnostic evaluations of the pathological influences to which these children had been subjected, might have prevented some of the cumulation of failure upon failure resulting from the average of 5.88 placements per child. The understandable reluctance of the Court to use correctional institutions, except as a very last resort, caused the agency to continue to replace children even after there appeared to be little hope that further placements could succeed.

While sixteen children were committed to correctional institutions within five weeks to eighteen months of acceptance, this group includes eleven children legally adjudged delinquents before the agency was asked to care for them.

These findings suggest that further study of the advisability of using foster homes for children with the degree of disturbance these manifested and the need for continual refining of casework skills for work with pathological parents and their seriously damaged children may be beneficial for the future total agency program.

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APPENDIX I

SCHEDULE

I Identifying Information

Sex _____ Birthdate _____ Age _____ Birthplace _____
 Address _____ Case # _____ Acceptance Date _____
 Race W N Ind Mex; Religion _____ ; Physical Defects _____
 Born in Wedlock Yes No; Referral: Source _____ Reason _____ (code) _____
 Del. Commitment Date _____

II Application

A Court Commitment TC _____ PC _____ PC-TPR _____

B Voluntary By Par _____ By Rel _____ By Other _____

C Prior Commitment or Acceptance

1 Date Accepted
 2 Date Discharged
 3 Length
 4 Reason (code)
 5 To DPW
 6 To MCHH
 7 To Other
 8 To Whom Released

1	2	3	4	5	6

III Reason for Application or Court Commitment

A Stated Reason _____

B Other Attendant Reasons _____

IV SSE Registrations

A Number of _____ B Span of Years _____

C Types of Agencies

1 Health 6 Authoritative
 2 Assistance 7 Institutional

3 Service	a Penal or correctional
4 Child Placing	b Mental Hospital
5 Psychiatric	c Colonies (defectives)

V Family Factors

	Fa	Mo	SPa	SMo	Rel or Foster	
					Fa Fig	Mo Fig
A Parents						
1 Age						
2 Race						
3 Nationality						
4 Marital Status (code)						
5 Educational						
6 Occupation						
7 TPR						

B Siblings: 1 Number _____

2 Number in Care: At Acceptance _____ At Commitment _____

3 Number with penal or correctional institution records:
At Acceptance _____ At Commitment _____

VI Living Arrangements

	At Application	At Commitment
A Own Home		
B Relative Home		
C Foster Home		
D Institution		
E Other (specify)		

VII School

	At Application	At Commitment
A Grade		
B Significant Factors		
C Problems		
1 Failures		
2 Behavior		
3 Adjustment		
4 Truancy		

VIII Number of Placements While in Agency Custody

A Type	B Number	C Length	D Reasons for Removal
1 Own			
2 Rel			
3 BH			
4 FH			
5 AH			
6 Inst.			
7 Det H			
8 Other (specify)			

IX Number of Workers While in Agency Custody

A Number

B Length of Time for Each Worker

Worker #	Months	Worker #	Months
1	5
2	6
3	7
4	8

X Psychiatric Service: A Yes No

B Intelligence

C Diagnosis

D Prognosis

E Recommendations

1 Followed Yes No

2 If not, why?

Before Acceptance	During Custody	At Commitment

XI Stays at Detention Home

A Number

B Length

C Reasons

Prior to Agency Custody	During Custody

XII Reasons for Commitment

A Nature of Delinquent Acts

1 Aggressive

2 Stealing

3 Destructive

4 Sex

5 Truancy

6 Runaway

7 Other (specify)

B Companions 1 None 2 With Others (specify)

C Stated Influential Factors of Delinquent Behavior

1	6
2	7
3	8
4	9
5	10

XIII Evidence of Parents' Feelings toward Child

	A At Acceptance		B During Custody		C At Commitment	
	Mo	Fa	Mo	Fa	Mo	Fa
1 Affection						
2 Ambivalence						
3 Indifference						
4 Rejection						
5 Guilt						
6 Hostility						
7 Punitiveness						
8 Other (specify)						
9 None Stated						

XIV Evidence of Child's Feelings toward Parents

	A At Acceptance		B During Custody		C At Commitment	
	Mo	Fa	Mo	Fa	Mo	Fa
1 Affection						
2 Ambivalence						
3 Indifference						
4 Rejection						
5 Guilt						
6 Hostility						
7 Other (specify)						
8 None Stated						

XV Client-Worker Relationships

- 1 Accepting, Friendly
- 2 Ambivalent
- 3 Indifferent
- 4 Hostile
- 5 Suspicious, Distrustful
- 6 Other (specify)

C Reasons Given

A Parent to Worker		B Child to Worker
Mo	Fa	

XVI Parents' Specific Activities Regarding Problems

A Positive

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

B Negative

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10