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Children bear the promise  
of a better world . . . . .

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Their defense is security  
they find at home.

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# Our Concern— Every Child

TIMES change but is it necessary to have any better definition of the obligation of our Nation to her children than that it shall be to secure to each of them the inalienable right set forth in the Declaration of Independence to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness? It is for us in our little day to do what we can toward translating that dictum. . . . One dares to hope that—not in our day but before the history of our country is all written—we shall add another clause and say that the rights of the child include not only the pursuit of happiness but its attainment.

—Julia C. Lathrop

# *The family is the true*

“In spite of the great changes which have occurred in family life, especially in cities, there is still no more far-reaching educational institution than the family. It can be a school for the democratic life, if we make it so.” In these words the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy in 1940 affirmed its belief in the fundamental importance of home life and reiterated the conviction expressed by the three preceding conferences that security of home life is the first essential of child welfare.

A home which protects the health and well-being of its children and which lays the foundation for a well-balanced emotional and intellectual life gives its children a heritage that equips them for meeting the stress of life. A child's development as a member of society is influenced by his experiences as a member of a family group. The social attitudes and the conduct of a child are determined largely by the standards that he has acquired in his home. The home meets the needs of a child if it provides him with physical and emotional security and affords him an opportunity for spiritual and intellectual growth.

In a democracy no family can live for itself alone. Churches, schools, libraries, industry and business, health and social-welfare agencies, recreational facilities, civic and social organizations, and all the activities that make up community life play a part in the life of each family. The strength of the community depends upon the integrity of each individual and family group,

# *It should be a school*

# *threshold of democracy*

and security of home life is achieved not only through family effort but also through those forces in the community which make for wholesome living.

Parents should make an effort to understand the world that surrounds their children. Those fathers and mothers who may lack the education to share fully in the interests of their growing boys and girls still can be informed on world events and know about enterprises in the community. In almost all communities there are opportunities for adult education, covering a wide range of elementary and advanced subjects, including child care and homemaking. Study clubs, discussion groups, college extension courses, libraries, and newspapers bring education to the doors of all.

Even the wisest and most gifted parents need to study the art of parenthood. Child training is not a static science. New discoveries are continually bringing new understanding of the problems of children and youth. Parents should keep informed in regard to constructive methods of child training and principles of child guidance.

Homes in which parents and children have interests in common and a mutual understanding of problems that affect the individual members of the family make a strong foundation for our democracy. Security of home life for children must be built upon such a foundation.

# *for successful living*

## *Family income a basis of security*

The security of the home and its adequacy for care and training of children are largely dependent upon the income of the family. Other values in the home may compensate in large measure for lack of some material comforts. A large income does not in itself insure a good standard of home life, but the income should afford the means for participation in the life of the community.

A study of the cost of living in 59 cities in 1935 resulted in an estimated "maintenance level" budget of \$1,261 a year for an unskilled manual worker's family comprising 2 adults and 2 children 13 and 8 years of age. In this budget \$448 was allowed for food—a little more than \$2 a week for each member of the family group; housing was estimated at \$222; clothing, clothing upkeep, and personal care, \$184; fuel, light, and other household operating expenses, medical care, and miscellaneous items comprised the rest of the budget. In 1935-36, according to the National Resources Committee, more than a quarter of the Nation's families

had yearly incomes of less than \$750; more than two-fifths had incomes of less than \$1,000; nearly two-thirds had incomes of less than \$1,500. It is obvious that a considerable part of the total families in the United States do not have the means which permit even this "maintenance level" budget.

The most important approach to the problem of insufficient incomes is through measures to raise the incomes of wage-earning and farm families, which constitute a large proportion of all families in the United States.

### *White House Conference*



A necessary condition of the family's capacity to serve the child is an income sufficient to provide the essentials of food, clothing, shelter, and health, as well as a home life that means for the child education, happiness, character building.



## Home life requires a home

Family life cannot be secure unless it has its setting in surroundings that constitute a real home, in a house in which it is possible to maintain the health and comfort of its members. Substandard housing is found not only in crowded sections of large cities but also in villages and farm areas. The relationship between housing and health has long been recognized, and many problems of delinquency and abnormal behavior are known to have their origin in crowded living conditions.

As a result of the rapid growth of defense industries a serious situation has arisen in many communities. Populations have increased overnight from a few thousand to many times that number. Families must live in rapidly constructed houses or in trailer camps and other temporary makeshifts which are most inadequate for the health of the family and for the bringing up of children. In large cities the result of this influx of new population is overcrowding and rental charges that are far out of proportion to the value of the

accommodation. These conditions demand drastic action by the State and local authorities responsible for the maintenance of sanitary conditions. Control of rentals, and housing projects in "defense areas," are immediate needs.

The housing of migrant families has been a problem in some parts of the country for a long time. In some communities camps are built for migratory workers, but they take care of only a very small part of the total number. It is estimated that there are about one-third of a million such families.

### *Children in a Democracy*



Since an enlightened public opinion is essential in housing, citizen committees should be organized in communities to promote public interest, understanding, and support. Housing facts and problems should be made widely known to the public.



## *Defense of children means safeguarding family life*

The family has the first responsibility for the care of children. But society also has an obligation to give whatever financial aid or social services may be needed to help keep the home together and make it mean all it should mean to children.

Whenever a major disaster or widespread unemployment deprives large numbers of families of their livelihood, extensive measures for their relief must be undertaken. The stability of the home is threatened in all emergencies of this kind. During the period of depression which began over 10 years ago the fate of many thousands of families depended on whether relief was wisely enough and effectively enough administered to save their homes. Had it not been for the action of the Federal Government in making available large sums for unemployment relief, and the efforts of States and local units to meet the urgent needs, the past 10 years would have been a period of untold suffering by millions of children. It has been estimated that from 6 to 8 million children in 1939 were in families receiving unemployment relief.

Through the provisions of the Social Security Act great progress has been made since 1935 in assistance to families and individuals in need. Federal funds administered by the Social Security Board are available to States for special types of public aid—old-age assistance, aid to dependent children, and aid to the blind. But many families and individuals who need help do not qualify under the provisions of the Social Security Act and must depend entirely upon measures for “general relief” in their State or local community. Even in prosperous times there are families in every community who for one reason or another are dependent upon aid from public or private agencies.

General relief is often inadequate and very poorly administered. It is very important for every community to determine whether children are suffering because the help given is insufficient, or because they belong to families which need assistance but are not receiving it.

### *The Social Security Act reinforces the economic foundations of family life through—*

**Aid to dependent children**

**Aid to the blind**

**Old-age assistance**

**Old-age and survivors insurance benefits**

**FINANCIAL SECURITY for the family is essential to the  
welfare of the child.**

## *Aid to dependent children must be expanded*

Thirty years ago the "mothers' pension" or "mothers' aid" movement first turned the limelight on the need for public aid to children whose mothers were widows or without support. The first White House conference in 1909 declared that no child should be deprived of his own home because of poverty. As this form of aid developed it became apparent that it was needed not merely to keep children in their own homes but to save them from neglect and suffering caused by poverty in the home. Many thousands of children have received food and clothing and educational opportunities and have had the care of their own mothers who would have been deprived of these important things unless this type of aid had been granted them. With Federal funds supplementing State and local grants almost a million children in approximately 390,000 families are now receiving aid to dependent children, broader in scope than the original "mothers' aid" program. Distribution throughout the country, however, is very uneven. In many States and communities children are not receiving aid at all in keeping with their needs.

A report of the Social Security Board giving figures for the month of July 1941 showed that out of 44 States including the District of Columbia and Hawaii which were receiving Federal funds for aid to dependent children—

*Only 4 States reported an average monthly payment per family of \$45 or more;*

*In 11 States the monthly grant per family ranged from \$35 to \$44;*

*In 17 States monthly grants ranged from \$25 to \$34;*

*In 10 States monthly payments were from \$15 to \$24;*

*In 2 States average aid per family was less than \$14.*

Reports from 43 States on the number of children under 16 receiving Federal funds for aid to dependent children show similar inequalities—

*In 5 States more than 50 out of every 1,000 children were being aided;*

*In 3 States 40 to 49 out of every 1,000 children were being aided;*

*In 12 States 30 to 39 out of every 1,000 children were receiving help;*

*In 11 States 20 to 29 out of every 1,000 children were receiving help;*

*In 12 States the number of children receiving aid was less than 20 out of every 1,000.*

Undoubtedly there is the same kind of variation among localities within the States. It points to the fact that while there has been encouraging growth of aid to dependent children in their own homes a great deal more must be done in most States and communities if the purpose of this assistance is to be fulfilled.

Security of home life cannot be assured unless families are enabled to provide for their children the necessities of a decent standard of American living. *Every State and every community should make sure that it is not depriving its children of the things that are essential to the development of sound bodies and mental health.*

*Members of your community who have the welfare of children at heart should—*

Study means of increasing the security of home life for families with insufficient incomes by—

**Aid under the Social Security Act:** The welfare of children is part of the welfare of the total family group, and all forms of public assistance should be considered. Assistance through "Aid to Dependent Children" is particularly important.

**General public relief:** The needs of families not eligible for aid through the Social Security categories should be provided for.

**Family service and relief by private agencies:** Organizations of good standing supported by private funds should be enabled to fulfill their function in helping families.

*"Over 900,000 children are already receiving aid to dependent children under Title IV of the Social Security Act. However, an additional million and one-half children are in need of such aid and would be eligible for such assistance under existing legislation if the funds were available. The average amount now being paid per child is only about \$10 per month when allowance is made for the mother or other caretaker of the child. If the dependent child were to receive as much as the aged person at the present time the average payment would be doubled to about \$20. In other words, aid to dependent children could be more than doubled in terms of the number to be aided and then doubled again if adequate assistance were to be given to the needy children."*

—Statement of the Chairman of the Social Security Board before a Senate Committee, July 21, 1941.

*Our Nation is mobilizing its resources  
for the welfare of children  
as an important part of national defense:*

To coordinate health, welfare, medical, nutrition, recreation, and related services bearing on the defense emergency, the President of the United States has established by executive order the

*Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services,*  
Paul V. McNutt, Director.

To assure effective coordination of Federal relations with State and local governments engaged in defense activities, to facilitate constructive civilian participation in the defense program, and for other purposes, the President has established the

*Office of Civilian Defense,*  
Fiorello H. LaGuardia, Director.

The *Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor* is responsible for promoting the welfare of children at all times through—

Studies and advisory services	Child-labor administration
Cooperation with State agencies	Bulletins, leaflets, and radio talks

The Chief of the Children's Bureau, Katharine F. Lenroot, has been designated child-welfare consultant to the Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services, and the Assistant to the Chief, Charles I. Schottland, has been made liaison officer with that office. The Associate Chief of the Children's Bureau, Dr. Martha M. Eliot, has been designated liaison officer with the Office of Civilian Defense. Other Federal, State, and local agencies are working for the promotion of child welfare, in cooperation with many privately supported organizations.




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*The Defense of Children Series:*

**“CHILDREN BEAR THE PROMISE OF  
A BETTER WORLD” includes:**

1. What Are We Doing To Defend Them?
  2. Are We Safeguarding Those Whose Mothers Work?
  3. Are They Getting the Right Start in Life?
  4. Have They the Protection of Proper Food?
  5. Are We Defending Their Right to Health?
  6. Their Defense Is the Security They Find at Home.
  7. Their Education Is Democracy's Strength.
  8. Through Play They Learn What Freedom Means.
  9. Our Nation Does Not Need Their Toil.
  10. Are We Helping Those With Special Needs?
  11. Protect Them From Harmful Community Influences.
  12. Is Their Safety in Wartime Assured?
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*“CHILDREN IN WARTIME” a radio program on defense of children, prepared by the Children's Bureau, is presented by NBC every Monday at 11 a. m. E. S. T. (Blue Network)*

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR ● CHILDREN'S BUREAU

*Defense of Children Series No. 6*

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