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Children bear the promise
of a better world

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no. 8

Through play they learn
what freedom means.

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PERIODICALS

PLAY

for Joy

for Health

for Growth

The America we defend

WE DEFEND the right of our children to play—unhampered by political, sectarian, or racial theories. We defend the right of our boys and girls to grow and develop through sports, clubs, hobbies, camping, drama, music, and creative arts and crafts into strong citizens of a living democracy. We defend the right of our young men and women to do together those things which mean comradeship, respect, and understanding. We defend the right of all people—freed from the economic stress of daily work—to continue to find opportunities for life in recreation.

We defend ideas, yes—but not these alone.

All over America leaders in small towns, large cities, and the open country know in their hearts that one important aspect of "Our Way of Life" means recreation. They and the American people who have created and made possible this movement will defend it.

—*National Recreation Association.*

Through play they learn

WE ARE CONCERNED here primarily with the leisure-time activities of children and with the services provided for them. The immediate activities are those in which spontaneous interest exists or may be aroused—activities inherent in child life, the nature of which we learn from the child himself. In the biological sense these are, for the child, the most highly educational. Their content is determined by the instinctive and unfalsifiable response of the child to his environment. Space, the simplest materials, the child's observation of life, the sense of well-being, exuberant vitality, and experimental adventurings are the equipment for these recreational activities. But the child is preparing for adult life as well as satisfying his immediate needs. On the face of it, the early play activities of the child may seem to have little bearing on his capacity for recreation in later life or on its socializing and health-promoting functions. There is, however, a deep and enduring quality to the established habit of spontaneous recreation, unconfined and pleasurable, that prepares and trains future capacity for play, regardless of how little visible similarity there may be between the doings in the play pen and the programs of the club, municipal park, or State camp. The ultimate educational objectives are served by enabling and encouraging the spontaneous play of the child as much as by providing playgrounds and organizing athletic contests or community pageants. And this is true no less of commercially supplied recreational facilities than of public or community provisions.

Play, to the child, is hardly distinguishable from the rest of life; it is the center of all interests and activities to which other interests, even eating and sleeping, are often subordinate. To speak of play as a need of the child is, therefore, to speak about that which to him is the greater part of and the most important thing in life. Unfortunately it is true that under unfavorable conditions the impulse to play may be, and often is, stifled or

what freedom means...

lost. To avoid the development of passive attitudes to life, spontaneity must therefore be protected and encouraged in the whole setting of the child.

As the child grows older, play gradually comes to be distinguished from other types of activity; it becomes "recreation." Play and recreation have incomparable values for the individual, in and of themselves. To emphasize recreation as a means of reducing or of preventing juvenile delinquency, of developing character and citizenship, or of some other worthy end is to slur over its essential character, its creative role as fun, relaxation, release, joy. Play and recreation are a part of the soil in which personality grows. It is during leisure that one is most free to be himself. In play one explores a whole range of roles and relations, one achieves social adjustment and group effectiveness, or, under unfavorable conditions, one experiences defeat, rejection, and disorganization.

All persons require types of experience through which the elemental desires for friendship, recognition, adventure, creative expression, and group acceptance may be realized. Normal family life and favorable conditions of play and recreation contribute much toward meeting these basic emotional needs. They help to supply, also, certain needs that arise in the process of growth and development of the child—the need for congenial companionship of both sexes, for emotional development, for a healthy independence—as well as other needs that arise at different stages in the individual's passage toward maturity. Play is an important means, also, for the development of motor, manual, and artistic skills, for contact with nature, for creative contemplation, for nonvocational learning, for the socializing experiences of group life, and for responsible participation in community life.

—*White House Conference on Children in a Democracy: Final Report (In press).*

Play is the child's best

All children should have —

1. Time to play.
2. Space to play where they can move freely.
3. Play areas and play materials that they can use by themselves.
4. Opportunity for spontaneous play and self-expression.
5. Trained leadership for organized recreation.
6. Special recreational guidance with its emphasis on group life for personality development.

est way
to health and growth

*Recreation aids
national defense by —*

1. Providing opportunity for the wise use of leisure time.
2. Giving healthful emotional release and needed relaxation for mind and body.
3. Developing leadership and initiative.
4. Making youthful bodies strong.
5. Helping children through play to learn to give and share.

*Has your community
these facilities ?*

Playgrounds and community centers.

Leisure-time agencies and youth organizations.

Libraries and museums.

Park areas for family picnics, hiking, and camping.

Does your community —

Think recreation is important for all its people?

Have adequate play and leisure-time resources for all its children and youth?

Use schools for community recreation outside school hours and during vacation periods?

Have a recreation commission or department, parents' groups, and youth councils interested in leisure-time activities?

Provide competent and trained leadership to supervise a board program of play and recreation?

*Some sources
of advice and material
on recreation*

Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor,
Washington, D. C.

Extension Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture,
Washington, D. C.

Recreation Division, Work Projects Administration, Federal Works
Agency,
Washington, D. C.

Recreation Section, Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services,
Federal Security Agency,
Washington, D. C.

Boy Scouts of America,
2 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Camp Fire Girls,
88 Lexington Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Girl Scouts of America,
14 West Forty-ninth Street, New York, N. Y.

Jewish Welfare Board,
220 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

National Catholic Youth Council,
1312 Massachusetts Avenue NW., Washington, D. C.

National Federation of Settlements,
147 Avenue B, New York, N. Y.

National Recreation Association,
315 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Young Men's Christian Association,
347 Madison Avenue., New York, N. Y.

Young Women's Christian Association,
600 Lexington Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Local public libraries.

Local offices of public and private recreational agencies.

Public schools.

Colleges and universities.

Recreation needs volunteer and professional leaders

Community recreation needs professional leaders but it offers many opportunities for volunteers, who should have the following qualifications:

1. Integrity and a high standard of personal conduct.
2. Dependability.
3. Ability to work with others.
4. Readiness to accept training and supervision.
5. Skill in certain avocations or hobbies.

A volunteer interested in children may —

1. Be a member of a defense recreation committee or a parents' council of a playground.
2. Coach baseball, basketball, softball, and other athletics.
3. Teach art, painting, and crafts.
4. Lead choral and instrumental music.
5. Teach dramatics, radio, and puppetry.
6. Lead social games and parties.
7. Plan and arrange for group discussions and forums for parents.

*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—

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|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 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.



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 every Monday at 11:00 a. m. Eastern War Time over the Blue Network.

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

Defense of Children Series No. 8

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. . . . Price \$3.00 per 100