

JAC. LIS8d

Children bear the promise
of a better world

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no. 11

Protect them from harmful
community influences.

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PERIODICALS

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—Sir George N
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ROUTINE SLIP

EITHER we must give up the ideal of anything approximating equal opportunity for the child in the rural district and the small industrial and mining community and the child in the richer community or we must accept the principle of a wider taxing area and of central responsibility for the encouragement and development of a State-wide program. The necessity for rapid extension of education, health, and social service through State cooperation in county-wide programs is clearly indicated.

—*Grace Abbott.*

WHAT a strange thing is a city! It is both a dream and a reality, a past and a present, the houses, workshops, and shrines of a commonwealth. It is the hearthstone of the people from which they measure the world . . . for men make cities and cities make men; "the walls of our cities are men."

—*Sir George Newman, Ministry of Health, England.*

EITHER we must give up the ideal of anything approximating equal opportunity for the child in the rural district and the small industrial and mining community and the child in the richer community or we must accept the principle of a wider taxing area and of central responsibility for the encouragement and development of a State-wide program. The necessity for rapid extension of education, health, and social service through State cooperation in county-wide programs is clearly indicated.

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Good neighborhoods help

ALTHOUGH community conditions are always important in the lives of growing boys and girls they are especially deserving of attention at present. If we may judge from the experience of the United States during the last World War, the days ahead of us are likely to prove unsettling to some of our boys and girls. The behavior of some will reflect their disturbance. The quickened tempo of life and new stresses and strains may well add to what we may think of as problems more or less normal to childhood development and adolescence. We must meet to the fullest extent possible the needs of individual children in the home and at school, and must see to it that conditions in the community are those which offer opportunity for continuing wholesome development, that its influences are those which build up rather than tear down character.

Because of industrial migrations whole families will be uprooted and transplanted into new communities where often they will be homesick and friendless. Many homes will in a sense be "broken homes." Frequently the father will be absent because he is in service or because he is employed in defense work. In an increasing number of homes, the mother will be away during the day because she is working or is participating in volunteer defense activities. Thus for many children parental discipline will be relaxed and guidance lessened.

City and country children alike will feel the urge to action that comes with the emotional stress and strain of war and danger. Unless they have understanding and wise guidance from adults some youths will try to express their patriotism in unwise or unacceptable ways, as for example the young boy who runs away from home to join the Army or the young girl who misrepresents her age in order to be able to participate in projects for entertainment of service men.

to build good citizens

Because of the increased opportunities for employment, many of those in the teen-age group will find themselves in possession of a new social and economic independence for which they are not prepared. Especially serious is this for the youth who goes from the farm or small town to the city and for the youth in the rural area that has experienced a sudden mushroom growth and the introduction of "boom" activities. For such a boy or girl new social and economic independence is coupled with a new and more complex way of life.

In addition to feeling the impact of changing family and individual situations the youth is particularly vulnerable to the influence of certain harmful community conditions and situations. He may suffer from these in either of two ways. First, because of isolation or because of lack of facilities the community may afford him little opportunity for wholesome friendships and group activities, little opportunity to use leisure time constructively and to develop satisfying interests. Many of our social ills and much of delinquent conduct comes out of the inability of individuals to find satisfaction and fulfillment in leisure time. Second, the youth may be exposed to definitely demoralizing influences such as widespread and open prostitution, drinking, gambling, and the like, extensive distribution of indecent literature, exhibition of undesirable shows and motion pictures, and poorly supervised places of commercial amusement.

All these problems of undesirable community influences appear in an intensified form in the new and overcrowded communities that have sprung up in rural areas as a result of the Nation's war effort. In these areas unsatisfactory housing, lack of school and recreational facilities, and other factors in community life tend to throw young people into situations that may prove harmful.

Democracy must be rooted in the soil of every comm

Probably never before has youth had so challenging an adult world. Barriers are apt to be broken down, standards cast aside, and standards disturbed—all with resulting bewilderment to the individual. Youth must be prepared to have rich, purposeful, and creative lives. They must be helped to achieve a perspective upon life that makes them able to distinguish between fundamental values in behavior and transient ideas about acceptable and unacceptable conduct.

Is your community failing to protect children?

Has it neighborhoods where crime rather than law observance is the accepted way of life?

Has it neighborhoods that offer adolescent boys and girls little opportunity for wholesome activities?

Has it areas where children's only playgrounds are the street, railroad yard, or city dump?

Has it roadhouses, beer parlors, and amusement places in which young boys and girls are exposed to demoralizing influences?

Has it newsstands at which indecent and obscene magazines are sold to young people?

Are children and youth under the age of 18 years held in jail or police stations?

We are concerned when we see a tremendous waste of youth reflected in draft deferment statistics, and in industrial accidents and unemployment. We do not come fully aware of the magnitude of the loss in those values which our civilization cherishes when we are prepared for satisfying living conditions in the home, the church, the club, or the field of pursuit or entertainment by the arts and by many other amusements. Yet, it is in the quiet hours outside the hours of school or work that most of our youth become delinquent or criminal.

At all times, and especially in these conditions, our Nation demands responsible adult leadership. We are eager to meet that demand. The pressures of war conditions have called for a response to these pressures that has precipitated many young peo-

Is your community protecting children?

Are children and youth needing special care and supervision provided with service by qualified workers and given treatment adapted to their special needs?

Do all young people have access to wholesome recreational and leisure-time opportunities?

Is there effective supervision, by qualified workers, of rooming houses, places providing public refreshment or entertainment, streets, parks, and playgrounds?

Are there good laws, well enforced, protecting young persons employed in public places and in street trades?

Are the police and courts vigilant in law enforcement?

maturity. Some will experience no particular difficulty in this speeding up of the growth process. Others will develop unevenly and at times seem more like children than like adults. The latter group especially will need help in growing up wisely. All should have the safeguard of wholesome community conditions.

Community

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A good home is the start

IN a broad sense protection from harmful community influences begins with the safeguarding of the stability of the home, the strengthening of the economic and emotional security of the family and its members. Such protection includes financial assistance and social service to meet economic and social problems of families arising out of illness, dislocations of employment, absence of the breadwinner, and the like; community facilities to supplement home care and supervision when mothers are employed, which take into account the needs of school children for guidance in hours not devoted to regular school programs as well as the needs of preschool children for care; effective health service and medical care, which includes measures for safeguarding physical and mental health; opportunities for education that not only serves immediate needs but is attuned to the whole growth cycle and is directed toward the objectives of a free society; safeguards with respect to child labor and youth employment; opportunities for play, for wholesome companionship and leisure-time influences; and the resources of religion which is not afraid of life but gives life ultimate meaning, confidence, and hope.

Direct protection from harmful community influences is achieved through what may be regarded as the housekeeping practices of the community. These have to do specifically with the conditions on the streets and in public places, in centers for commercial recreation, and in service industries—especially those providing shelter, food, drink, and entertainment. Good community housekeeping requires that there be carefully drawn laws and ordinances for the inspection and control of health and social conditions in public places, places of commercial amusement, and service industries; legal measures for the protection of youth and for the prevention of their exploitation for commercial gain; enforcement of these regulatory and protective measures by competent and socially minded officials who understand the needs of young people and are alert in their recognition of destructive influences.

in protection of youth

Regulation by laws or ordinances properly drawn and consistently enforced is essential. But this alone constitutes a negative approach to harmful community influences. Protective and preventive services for young people must be developed as part of or in cooperation with local law enforcement agencies. Persons who understand young people and are skilled in social work should be available to participate in inspection of commercialized recreation, enforcement of laws for the protection of youth, and observation of conditions resulting in the exploitation of young people. Such participation by social workers will reveal that many children and young people found in situations of social danger are in need of assistance and guidance. The community must therefore make available adequate facilities for social service and vocational and educational guidance through which they and their families may be helped to meet their individual problems. Better still, such assistance should be available to families and children long before the danger point is reached and through natural and readily accessible channels.

In the community, constructive influences that build up must be substituted for destructive influences. In the words of the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy, "Adequate play facilities for children, constructive companionships and associations in neighborhoods where they reside, and carefully supervised group activities all contribute to the upbuilding of character."

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*As a citizen interested
in improving community
conditions, you can—*

1. Inform yourself about community conditions that affect the lives of children.
2. Participate in movements to eliminate harmful conditions and promote those favorable to the welfare of children.
3. Insist that your police and courts enforce laws for the protection of children and young people.
4. Support educational, recreational, and social-service programs designed to meet the needs of children as a group and as individuals.
5. Set a good example as a citizen by voting for upright and competent public officials and by supporting them as they discharge the responsibilities of their offices.

**Other Bureau publications
that may interest you are—**

- Pub. 143. Child Management.
- Pub. 215. Facts About Juvenile Delinquency.
- Pub. 225. Guiding the Adolescent.
- Pub. 241. Development of a Leisure-Time Program
in Small Cities and Towns.

*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,
James M. Landis, 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.



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.
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“CHILDREN IN WARTIME,” a radio program on defense of children, prepared by the Children's Bureau, is presented every Tuesday at 12 m. Eastern War Time over the Blue Network.

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

Defense of Children Series No. 11
