

File 44A

COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

OF

EDMONTON AND DISTRICT

YOUTH SERVICES DIVISION

REPORT OF THE DELINQUENCY PREVENTION AND CONTROL STUDY COMMITTEE

PRESENTED TO THE YOUTH SERVICES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MAY 1962

COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
OF
EDMONTON AND DISTRICT
YOUTH SERVICES DIVISION

REPORT OF THE DELINQUENCY PREVENTION AND CONTROL STUDY COMMITTEE

INTRODUCTION

The Delinquency Prevention and Control Study Group was formed in 1958 as a committee of the Youth Services Division of the Council of Community Services of Edmonton and District. Its purpose is to study the causes of, the prevention of, and the successful treatment of juvenile delinquency.

Membership in the committee includes representation from the Boys' Club of Edmonton, the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Child Welfare Division of the Department of Public Welfare for the Province of Alberta, the Edmonton City Welfare Department, the Edmonton Juvenile and Family Court, the Edmonton Public School Board, the Edmonton Separate School Board, the Faculty of Education of the University of Alberta, the Family Service Bureau, the Guidance Branch of the Department of Education, the John Howard Society, the Juvenile Investigation Branch of the Edmonton City Police, the Juvenile Offenders Branch of the Attorney Generals Department, the National Parole Service, the Young Mens Christian Association and the Young Womens Christian Association.

During the first two years of its operation (1958 - 1960,) the committee focused its study in the area of delinquency control. In the fall of 1960 the committee developed a study which focused on delinquency prevention as well as delinquency control. This study was developed with the co-operation of the Juvenile Offenders Branch of the Attorney Generals Department.

METHOD OF STUDY

The Committee developed a study method by which case records were examined of (1) children who were exhibiting predelinquent behaviour but who had not come into contact with the law, (2) children who had become delinquent. Records and information from agencies and institution with which the child had contact were examined. These records were examined with a view to making recommendations for the improvement of existing services or the development of new services. The Committee was particularly concerned with what happened to the child before he came into contact with the law.

Following the presentation of each of the cases, an examination of the case took place. Where there was evidence that there was a need for the improvement of services or the development of new services, this was recorded.

The Committee took care in guarding the confidentiality of the records which were examined. Within the study group itself no names were used. No information about the cases which were reviewed is given in this report.

Five cases were presented and examined. The recommendations which are included in this report were developed as a result of careful examination of these cases.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Committee was concerned that in most of the cases presented to the group there appeared an absence of any long-term planning for the children. In most cases it appeared an emergency was met, dealt with, and then there was a minimal contact until the next emergency arose. We were particularly concerned when this happens in the cases of very young children who are suitable subjects for either long-term foster home placement or adoptive home placement.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT social agencies be encouraged in their attempts to make long range plans for their clients. If (a) the size of case-loads needs to be reduced, and/or (b) the degree of case supervision increased, or (c) some other measure need be taken to accomplish this, then the agencies concerned should be encouraged to maintain their efforts in this regard.

2. In come of the cases presented there appeared to be several social, recreational, and educational agencies involved, and yet at the same time the co-ordination of the work of these various groups seemed limited.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT the agencies concerned with the welfare of children be commended for the present endeavors towards the holding of case conferences when one or more agencies are involved, but at the same time we recommend that they be strongly encouraged to increase the use of such conferences, so that the respective roles of the agencies can be agreed upon, and the confusion to the client will be minimized.

3. We became concerned on reviewing the cases before us that a conflict of cultural expectations is often a significant factor in family disorganization and the subsequent production of emotional problems within the children of the marriage.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT (a) Agencies and Ethnic Groups already contributing in the area of preparing the new Canadians for their adjustment to our Society be commended for the efforts and achievements so far made in this area and that they be encouraged to continue to interpret as fully as possible the respective roles of family members as viewed in Canadian culture.

(b) Social Agencies coming into contact with newly arrived Canadians better equip their staff to become more knowledgeable about the cultural back-

grounds of their various clients and that interpretation in this area be included in social agency orientation services.

4. While the Committee was encouraged by the frequent use made of the services of the Provincial Guidance Clinic, they were at the same time concerned by the absence of sufficient long term, outpatient, psychiatric treatment services for adults in the low income bracket. The limited amount of such treatment services available for parents often meant that the attempts to successfully treat a child on a casework basis were frustrated by a problem existing in the parents, a problem so severe that it was not amenable to the casework method.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT there be greater provision of psychiatric services, on an out-patient basis, for those adults needing the service.

5. It has been established that emotional neglect has serious consequences for children. There is no doubt that such neglect does occur. However, the Child Welfare Act does not state explicitly that emotional neglect is cause for wardship action.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT formal recognition in law of the existence of emotional neglect be expressed in a suitable worded clause defining such neglect, and that it be included in Section 9 s.s. (i) of the Child Welfare Act of Alberta.

6. We were encouraged to note that some of the youth recreational services in Edmonton are experimenting with the establishment of special groups which are small in number and permit children with adjustment problems to benefit from a group experience that is geared to their level of social and emotional development.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT recreational services be commended for their

endeavors in this area, and that they be encouraged to expand such services.

7. The Committee is convinced of the importance of the school in the early identification of the child with delinquent tendencies.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT:

1. the school boards be encouraged to continue in the development and expansion of special counselling services.

2. the school boards be encouraged in their efforts to provide facilities for some children with social problems. Encouragement also should be provided where special efforts are made to integrate other children with social or emotional problems into regular classes.

3. agency workers be made aware of the counselling services available through the schools and that co-operative efforts be continued in defining at what point students be referred to appropriate community services.

4. fuller utilization be made of the channels available within the school systems for social agency workers to interpret problems which may be expected with a particular student.

8. We became quite concerned that there appears a tendency for social agencies to close their file on a boy upon his commitment to the Bowden Institute and have it remain closed until his release or shortly before his release. It was felt that the travelling distance from Edmonton to Bowden was a major factor producing the withdrawal of agency services when a boy is committed.

Inasmuch as as continuous casework services are as essential to the treatment of the problems of juvenile offenders after they are committed to Bowden, as they are prior to that time, WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT continuous casework services be available to juvenile residents in the Bowden Institute and following release.

9. It appears in many cases that the aid offered children of Indian or Metis origin, is seriously hampered because of a lack of accepting foster and adoptive homes.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT the appropriate social agencies co-ordinate their efforts in this area with a view to obtaining additional homes.

10. It appeared to the Committee that social agencies generally are conscious of the services offered by other agencies in the community but perhaps do not fully utilize the recreational resources available in the community.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT social agencies offering services in the City of Edmonton be encouraged to review their treatment services with a view to utilizing to a greater extent the recreation resources available.

11. Our Committee was encouraged by the establishment of Pre-Employment programs offered by the school systems of Edmonton.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT such programs be encouraged and that expansion be considered due to their effectiveness in helping the student better prepare for the responsibilities he is about to face in the labour market.

12. Your Committee became aware that the treatment services tendered by social agencies may be less effective in dealing with family problems than they might otherwise be, because the father of the family is unavailable for interviews due to his employment during the daytime.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT official consideration be given to the need for public and private agencies and, particularly those sections who provide services to children and families, to remain open the required number of evenings per week that will make possible the optimum casework service available in that agency.

13. The Committee is of the opinion that legal action in cases involving sexual immorality is not always the most appropriate and effective procedure.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT closer co-operation between the Police and Social Agencies be encouraged in deciding on the action to be taken.

