

EDMONTON WELFARE COUNCIL  
YOUTH SERVICES DIVISION  
JUVENILE CORRECTIONS COMMITTEE

SUB-COMMITTEE ON PREVENTION

Former Recommendations from Earlier Reports

- a) early detection of delinquency traits through co-operation of home, school, community agencies and the police
- b) improved counselling in schools
- c) more effective casework in probation
- d) facilities within the community for referral, such as:
  - psychiatric services on an out-patient basis
  - more specialized institutions for emotionally disturbed children.

For the purposes of this committee "prevention" included dealing with those who might become delinquent and the broader areas of concern, namely, conditions giving rise to delinquency and the reduction and/or prevention of delinquency. In essence, prevention was held to mean any effort which would enhance individual, family or community functioning. Prevention then can be as specific as provision of day care facilities for working mothers and as broad and collective as urban renewal or "war on poverty" but must relate in some way to prevention of family breakdown.

The growth of social-psychological disorganization has far exceeded the availability of preventive or treatment services. It would seem then that while we must expand proven programs and find new techniques and organize more resources to cope with problems, attention must also be given to the manpower shortage and the development of preventive programming that will assure the greatest good for the largest number.

Most social agencies have been concerned with secondary prevention but the need for primary prevention (parent education, family life education) is now apparent. The child must be reached at the earliest possible level when disfunctioning is detected and at the same time preventive efforts of a secondary nature must be expanded. Community development, Urban Renewal and the War on Poverty directed at the culturally deprived child and family are more inclusive attempts to reduce and prevent social-psychological-cultural disorganization. Delinquency is one expression of conditions that produce the culturally deprived child.

As indicated by current legislation, government at all levels is moving toward basic responsibility in the development and provision of preventive services. This would suggest that a primary responsibility for coordination of efforts will be assumed by government. At the same time, other social agencies, the school and the church will continue the trend toward provision of more preventive services and the obvious pitfall becomes that of duplication of services, non-productive use of resource personnel, etc. The Welfare Council through its role as a community planning body can play a basic role in the coordination of service programs.

### THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

The traditional function of the school has been that of educating the child. Current developments suggest a beginning recognition of the need to educate the "whole child", giving attention to the emotional as well as the intellectual child. In view of the time span during which the school is a basic force in the child's life, education must begin to incorporate some sense of wholeness.

#### Recommendations

1. A program of sex education and/or family life education should be incorporated into the curricula.
  - Appropriately trained personnel should be instrumental in providing this kind of content and in training other teachers to present it.
2. The current stipulation that school counsellors must be teachers first (hold a certificate) exerts severe limits on obtaining skilled personnel and should be removed.
3. The proposed Bureau of Child Study should be implemented for the purpose of providing an intensive assessment of a child's needs with referral to the appropriate resource.
4. Expanded facilities for research.
5. Expanded provisions for counselling, particularly in Junior High and elementary schools.

### THE ROLE OF THE POLICE

Historically, the role and function of the police has been that of enforcing the law and maintaining order. This remains the core function, and the very presence of law enforcement and order presents a deterrent of varying degrees of effectiveness. Negative

attitudes toward authority and ignorance of the law have been established as contributing factors to delinquency through research.

### Recommendations

1. It is suggested that the police force and the school explore possible ways and means of relating their functions.
  - A pilot project could be set in motion whereby the police would interpret the law and the nature of enforcement to dispel negative attitudes toward authority and foster awareness of law and order.
2. That members of the police be involved where possible in recreational programming for youth.
3. That the police force consider its public relations program critically to develop and expand use of interpretive media to enhance public awareness.

### THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

The committee felt it could not claim sufficient representation of all denominations and religious faiths to elicit specific recommendations. However, the church presents a collective representation of values spiritual and moral, and a core sense of value orientation to the community. Development of specific programming for youth, pastoral counselling and expansions into the area of Family Life Education in liaison with other services have preventive implications for juvenile delinquency.

### THE COMMUNITY

The community retains some collective responsibility for those of its members who must look to community resources when in need. In essence, all community resources that operate on a premise that is in any way preventive have a common concern for the mental health of the community. New ways must be found for the community to gain the participation of its members in community activities and to provide services to those whose needs are greatest.

- A. Parent Education - engaging parents in some program of emotional learning geared to their needs as parents and the related needs of their children. Within this frame of reference, parent education covers a broad scope, from practical advice related to problems of living, to more structured Family Life Education programs where parents deal with common concerns at more depth. Areas of primary concern are sex education, parent-child problems,

A. Parent Education (cont'd.)

the nature of parental responsibility, the nature of marriage, etc.

Recommendations

1. That Parent Education and/or Family Life Education be geared to existing knowledge of the most productive techniques and the known qualifications for staffing.
2. That social agencies in particular look to interpretation of service programs to the community through whatever media or technique required (e.g. radio, television, etc.)
3. That the interests of the community would be best served if efforts at Parent Education were coordinated to the extent that content was reasonably consistent rather than confusing and duplicative.
4. Exploration of a possible "Plays for Living" program using local theatrical and drama personnel.

- B. Volunteers - Social agencies must realize the inevitable manpower shortage and instrument proven and devise new ways of enlisting volunteer citizen participation in service as well as policy making and administrative capacities.

Recommendations

1. Implementation of Family Life Education programming using volunteer help in leadership and direct service roles. Education for Marriage series directed at engaged couples contemplating marriage are conducive to this kind of format.
2. Further consideration of a Big-Brother, Big-Sister Service for children of fatherless homes.

- C. Existing Service Programs - Must be expanded where value has been established in action if even a minimal attempt is made at coping with the existing demands of social-cultural-psychological disorganization, at the same time that more attention is given to primary prevention.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. More stringent child welfare legislation to deal with educational, moral and emotional as well as physical neglect.
2. Expansion of services with qualified staff is important.
3. The need for an operating school of social work is now emergent.
4. That the Ministry of Youth be organized in such a way as to face the basic problems facing youth in the Province of Alberta.
  - a) The ministry could be directed at the development of youth through programming;
  - b) Should give attention to existing centralized Youth Authorities (e.g. California and New York) that have tested out various approaches at coordination and provision of youth services;
  - c) Could become a legitimate social planning and research instrument;
  - d) Could possibly look to a commission structure over the course of the next year for guidelines and direction;
  - e) Should have the broadest forces possible in examining youth programming.
5. That the School Readiness Program now underway on a pilot basis at Norwood United Church be examined with the purpose of developing some guidelines for the more general use of this kind of program in the community.
6. There is an acute need for more foster homes for adolescent youngsters who for reasons of health and well-being should be placed outside their own home. If environmental help of this kind is not available, the value of more sophisticated kinds of help is greatly depreciated.
7. Community development must be seen as an interrelated attempt to deal with family-community concerns, not as a conclusive answer to same.
  - Rural and urban community development are not synonymous and the method of community development must therefore be directed to the particular needs of any given community.
8. Recreational programs must be developed wherein recreation is seen as a part of the whole person. Recreation in itself does not necessarily mean that any given child will not become delinquent.
9. Residential facilities of a subsidized nature are needed for the marginal youngster where school failure, delinquency, etc. are underpinned by a lack of socialization through cultural-economic-emotional deprivation.

10. Legislation must be revised and updated in the manner required to enhance rather than retard family functioning and emotional growth and development.

It was felt that research should be given further attention by the larger committee.

11. As preventive programming begins to move towards mass programs for large segments of the population, it must be recognized that the focus is on people, not on a program as such; and further, that the helping professions and related disciplines must provide guidelines so that focus on the individual and the family are retained. Preventive programs are of little value if method is not based on proven and effective techniques for working with people.

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