

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
CHILDREN'S BUREAU
JULIA C. LATHROP, Chief

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Suggestions to Local Committees
FOR THE
Back-to-School Drive

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PREPARED IN COLLABORATION WITH THE
CHILD CONSERVATION SECTION OF THE FIELD DIVISION
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Suggestions to Local Committees

FOR THE

Back-to-School Drive

In the Back-to-School Drive the Child Welfare Committees are asked first of all to make an effort to return to school those girls and boys who left school in June and who failed to return after vacation. Many of these children took out employment certificates or vacation permits intending to work only through the summer and to return to school in the fall, but the high wages have been an inducement for them to remain at work. These children with a little encouragement might be persuaded to continue their education. This leaflet gives concrete suggestions concerning the work to be done in the Back-to-School Drive. Other leaflets will describe constructive measures that may be developed to safeguard children.

PLAN OF ORGANIZATION

A. Each State Chairman should appoint a sub-chairman on School Welfare who will appoint her county chairmen at once.

Chairmen should be careful, in inviting persons to join the School Welfare Committees, that all the members are:

1. Acquainted with school problems;
2. Sufficiently tactful to make themselves welcome in the homes where they introduce themselves, and sufficiently persevering to get the information which is certain to be of valuable assistance to local school authorities and labor authorities.

B. Each County Chairman on School Welfare should proceed as promptly as possible to see the County School Superintendent and ask him:

1. To furnish her a list of the schools in her county;
2. To ask each principal in the county to request the teachers of his school to prepare lists of the names of the children who have failed to return to school after the vacation.

C. The County Chairman should notify the chairman in each of her units of organization to form as many local committees as will be required to provide a committee of five for each school in the community.

D. When the committees are formed, each School Welfare Committee should proceed to get from the principal of the school to which it has been assigned, the names of the children who did not return after the vacation.

E. The members of each committee should then visit every absentee child.

RECORD CARDS

Each visitor should take with her a card on which to record the facts that will explain the reason why the child is not at school. Cards similar to that reproduced below will be furnished by the Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor. The details of distribution will vary somewhat according to the State organization. Each local School Welfare Chairman should secure information as to the method used in her State from her State Chairman.

SPECIMEN CARD

School	Grade	Date
Name of child	Date of birth	
Address	Name of parent	
Reason for not returning to school:	Earnings needed	Dissatisfaction with school
Is child at home or at work?	High wages offered	Indifference of parents
If employed	Other reason	
What kind of work is child doing?	Name of firm	Address
Has child an employment certificate?	State specifically	
Ages of other children under 16 employed:	State if he is working on vacation permit	
Result of visit:	Will child return to school?	Under what conditions?
Follow-up work done, with dates:		

(Further space for remarks on reverse side of card.)

When the card is filled out the information on it should show where there is laxity in the enforcement of child labor and school attendance laws. Most of all, it should enable each community to see to it that every child gets the schooling necessary to his success in life.

CHILD LABOR AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE LAWS

It is quite necessary that the local committees should be familiar with the requirements of the child labor and school attendance laws of their State if they are to do effective work and assist in the enforcement of these laws. Copies of the laws may be secured from the State labor department or the factory inspection office.

These laws are the first essentials in the protection of children and every effort should be made to enforce them.

COOPERATION

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the Back-to-School Drive is a co-operative effort and does not depend upon authority. The cooperation is between the Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor and the Child Conservation Section of the Council of National Defense and all the State and local committees on the one hand, and the parents and children on the other. The interest and the duty of all are alike. With tact and perseverance on the part of the local committees, there is no limit to the help that can be given in aiding the usefulness of schools and in making clear to parents and children the practical value of schooling. Any information which members of the local committee may get concerning the children should be turned over to the school authorities to aid them in taking the proper action in cases of violation of the school attendance laws.

The question may arise whether it is not the place of the school attendance officers to visit the homes and get the children back to school. In many communities the number of school attendance officers is inadequate to do this work and any assistance which the local committees may give will supplement and not duplicate the work of the attendance department. The attendance officer, moreover, is usually concerned with returning to school only those children of school age who are not employed. The majority of the children who will be visited by members of the committees are those who are not ordinarily followed up by the attendance officer. A friendly caller may often be more successful in winning the confidence of these children and persuading them to return to school than the school attendance officer who enforces the law.

In order to assist in the enforcement of the child labor laws of the States, the local committees should also cooperate with the State factory inspection office and refer to that department any violations of the child labor law that may come to their attention.

HOME VISITING

When the visitor goes to the home she will in all probability have some information from the school concerning the child. The visitor should introduce herself as coming not only from the State Council of Defense but also as coming from the school. The success of the visitor depends upon her tact and the friendly relation she is able to establish with the parents. In talking to the parents about the importance of keeping the children in school at this time and the advantages of an education the following points may well be brought out:

1. The burdens and responsibilities of the next generation fall upon the boys and girls of today. Consequently, the nation is interested in seeing to it that all boys and girls remain in school and get the best possible training in order to prepare for the work they will later be called upon to do. President Wilson, in a letter to Secretary of the Interior Lane, assures the young people that "by pursuing their courses (in school) with earnestness and diligence they also are preparing themselves for valuable service to the nation," and that "after the war there will be urgent need for a high average of intelligence and preparation on the part of all the people."

Perhaps nothing has been brought to our attention which shows as clearly the necessity for keeping our boys and girls in school at any cost as the facts brought out by the war regarding illiteracy among our drafted men. There are 700,000 men registered for army service who can not read or write. In the second registration it is estimated that the number will be increased to 2,000,000.

"They can not sign their names.

"They can not read their manuals of arms.

"They can not read their orders posted on bulletin boards.

"They can not understand the signals or follow the signal corps in time of battle."

An uneducated man does not make a good soldier; he does not make a good citizen.

2. The present high wages are temporary and should not be used as an excuse for allowing any boy or girl to leave school for work. In most cases the work the child is doing requires no preparation and little skill; it is not educative and the boy or girl is not learning anything that will be of use to him in later life. A steady job with prospects of advancement and increased wages requires school training.

The following table has been prepared by the United States Bureau of Education. It compares the wages of children who left New York City schools at 14 years of age with those who left at 18 years of age.

Earnings per week of children who left school at 14, the end of grammar school	Age	Earnings per week of children who left school at 18, the end of high school
\$4.00	14
4.50	15
5.00	16
6.00	17
7.00	18	\$10.00
8.50	19	10.75
9.50	20	15.00
9.50	21	16.00
11.75	22	20.00
11.75	23	21.00
12.00	24	23.00
12.75	25	31.00
Total salary till 25 years of age, \$5,112.50		Total salary till 25 years of age, \$7,337.50

At 25 years of age the boy who had remained in school until 18 had received over \$2,000 more salary than the boy who left at 14, and was then receiving over \$900 a year more.

This is equivalent to an investment of \$18,000 at 5 per cent. Can a boy increase his capital as fast any other way?

From this time on the salary of the better educated boy will rise still more rapidly, while the earnings of the boy who left school at 14 will increase but little.

Although the wages paid now are much higher than when this study was made, the comparison remains the same.

3. Premature employment often cripples health and decreases the efficiency of the worker or makes him entirely unfitted for work in later life. An increasing number of employers throughout the country are requiring every applicant for a job to undergo a thorough medical examination in order that the employer may hire none but those who measure up to a high physical standard.

As a result many adults are rejected on the labor market because of physical unfitness. The physical examination given throughout the country to two and one-half million men to determine their fitness for service in the army resulted in the rejection of one-third. Many of these men were rejected on account of physical deficiencies that had their origin in childhood. Children must be protected from the strain of overwork if they are going to be an asset to the nation, in peace or in war.

4. The patriotic duty of all parents is to keep their children in school that they may build up strong, healthy bodies and prepare themselves for the useful and happy lives to which they have a right.

THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF SPECIAL TRAINING

Local School Welfare Committees should at once acquaint themselves with the opportunities for special training open to children in the schools. Often parents take their children out of school because the work the child is doing in school seems to have little relation to the work he will do in later life. In many communities there are vocational, technical, industrial, and trade schools which offer courses in printing, machine and electrical work, carpentry, mechanical drawing, dressmaking, millinery, design, home economics, and the like, but parents often have little information about such schools and the courses they offer. If they knew about them they might be willing to send their children to school for special training. There is great need of spreading abroad full knowledge of the opportunities for training in our public schools and for increasing those opportunities.

If there are no vocational schools in the community the local committees, as part of the Back-to-School Drive, may be able to interest the school authorities in starting such schools. That the Federal Government sees the need for more vocational education is shown by the establishment of the Federal Board for Vocational Education under the Smith-Hughes Act. The Government will give financial assistance, dollar for dollar, to any State that will provide approved instruction in subjects related to agriculture, trade, industry, and home economics.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The visitors may come across children who can not return to school because their earnings are needed at home.

Scholarship funds to keep needy children in school after the legal age for working is reached have been established in an increasing number of cities and should be encouraged in every community. The purpose of the scholarship is to keep children out of industry and give them at least two years of additional training beyond the compulsory school age in order that they may become more useful citizens. We have long favored the giving of scholarships in our colleges and universities to young men and women who could not continue their education without such assistance. Scholarships in elementary and high schools will lay the foundation for perhaps a greater addition to national power.

A special leaflet on "Scholarships for Children" suggesting how such work may be conducted is being prepared for the use of those committees who are interested in starting this work in their communities.

HOW THE RED CROSS WILL HELP KEEP CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

Many children have left school for work and more will be leaving because their older brothers have enlisted in the service or have been drafted. As a war emergency the Home Service Sections of the American Red Cross are keeping such children in school by giving adequate financial assistance to the families.

In the American Red Cross Manual of Home Service the importance of keeping children in school is emphasized. It further states: "Children who have been removed from school and put to work to meet a shrinkage in the family income are being returned to school promptly as soon as Home Service is called in. There is danger that other children may be kept out of school even after the Government's family allowance makes their return easy, unless attention is given to insuring this return. The right adjustment might be made in every case by seeking information from those schools in which instances of withdrawal are known. One Home Service Section is making special provision to keep children between 14 and 16 in classes where they will receive a good preparation for earning their living later. Another is taking children out of 'blind alley' occupations and providing special aid to give them training for better work."

7

The Children's Bureau has been authorized to state that the Home Service Sections will consider it a favor if the local School Welfare Committees refer to them children who should be in school but who are working because some member of the family has gone to war.

CHECKING UP WITH THE SCHOOL CENSUS

It may be possible for the local committees to check the school census with the school enrollment to find out whether all children of school age are in school. Those children who are not attending school should be followed up and returned to school.

Another method of checking with the school census is that used in one city last year. A list was made of all children who had been reported in the school census as being employed, and the names of the employers for whom they were working were also recorded. This list was checked up in the office that issues employment certificates to see whether all the children were legally employed. It was found that over 500 children were not in school and had no employment certificates. This list was given to the Child Welfare Committee of the Consumers' League for further investigation. Out of 395 children followed up in the places of their employment, 343 were working in violation of the child labor law. This was a far-reaching educational campaign and has resulted in the better enforcement of the child labor laws during the past year. In this same city a scholarship fund was established last year to aid in keeping children in school.

DIRECTIONS FOR FILLING OUT RECORD CARDS*

Care should be taken to fill out every space on the card which requires an answer. The name of the school, the grade, the name and address of the child may be filled out at the school. Before calling on the parent the visitor should have clearly in mind the additional information she wishes to get in the child's home. If possible, she should wait to fill out the card until after she has left the home.

Reason for not returning to school.

In recording the reason for the child's not returning to school one of the reasons indicated on the card should be checked; or, if he left for some reason not specified, name it in the space above the words "Other reason."

If employed, name and address of firm.

It will not always be possible to get from the parent the address of the employer, and sometimes not even his name can be learned. In reporting cases of violation of the child labor law it is, however, necessary to have this information, and consequently every effort should be made to get it.

What kind of work is child doing?

This should be stated specifically, such as "Errand work," "Packing," "Riveting," "Running a punch press," etc.

Has child an employment certificate?

In some States vacation permits are issued for summer work. In other States, before a child is allowed to work even during vacation, he must have the same sort of employment certificate as is issued to children who intend to work permanently. Indicate on which form of certificate the child is working. If he is employed on a vacation permit while the schools are in session he is working in violation of the law, as this permit is good only for vacation time.

Ages of other children under 16 employed.

If there are other children in the family employed who are under 16 years, state their ages. A separate card should be made out for each of these children. Pin all of the cards together for the children in the same family.

Result of visit.

1. *Will child return to school?*

Answer "Yes" or "No."

2. *Under what conditions will he return?*

Indicate what adjustment was made in order to return the child to school. Some children may not be able to return to school unless a scholarship is provided. In the case of the child who has a brother or father in the military forces, it may be necessary for the Red Cross to give assistance in order that the child may continue his schooling. Sometimes better employment with higher wages may be found for an older member of the family, or the child who

*See form given on page 4.

is dissatisfied with school may consider going to one where he can get more special training.

Follow-up work done, with dates.

The results of further work for the child and of subsequent interviews with parents may be written on the reverse side of the card.

The record card should be retained in the community and the information made available to the school authorities.

PUBLICITY

It is important to enlist the sympathy and interest of large numbers of people if the Back-to-School Drive is to be successful. It is especially necessary to reach the parents of school children. The following methods of publicity are suggested:

1. Meetings held in the schools for the parents and teachers at which the importance of school attendance is discussed.
2. Talks given to the children in the schools impressing upon them that it is their patriotic duty to remain in school and train for the army of workers which the country will soon need.
3. Essays written by the children on "Why boys and girls should stay in school during war time," "Training for the future," and similar topics.
4. Talks given in moving picture shows by the Four-Minute Men.
5. Child labor and school attendance laws discussed at club meetings.
6. Articles in local papers. (These will be furnished from time to time by the Children's Bureau.)
7. Use of posters and slogans.
8. Distribution of information regarding State child labor law.

Wide publicity should be given to the child labor and school attendance laws. A large percentage of violations of our child labor laws is due to ignorance of their provisions. This is true in city and rural districts.

A campaign to inform the public, particularly employers of children, regarding the main features of these laws would be productive of great good. A leaflet giving an abstract of the State child labor law in simple form can be printed locally. This should be submitted to the authorities enforcing the law for correction. The leaflets may then be distributed in factories and stores. A supply should also be sent to the schools and each child leaving school should be given a copy.

9. An exhibit with the use of statistical material and photographs representing conditions in the vicinity under which children work. In such an exhibit the needs of the children should be emphasized showing that better laws are necessary for their protection, and that more adequate training is necessary for labor efficiency.

FURTHER WORK FOR THE SCHOOL WELFARE COMMITTEES

The Children's Bureau will furnish suggestions on constructive work that may be developed by the committees in cooperation with existing civic and social organizations. Such work includes:

1. Scholarships to keep children in school.
2. The visiting teacher as a remedy for truancy and non-attendance.
3. The employment certificate system and the safeguarding of the compulsory attendance period.
4. Safeguarding the health of children in industry.
5. Advising children leaving school for employment in their choice of occupation, and supervising the working child.

While it will be impossible for every State to follow the entire program almost any State will be able to carry out at least one of these suggestions for follow-up work.

In one State the Committee on Women and Children in Industry this year employed an experienced person to travel through the State and assist the local committees in working for a more uniform system of issuing employment certificates, better enforcement of the school attendance law and in carrying out some of the suggestions mentioned above.

It is suggested that all State committees look toward Child Labor Day, January 26, as the climax in the Back-to-School Drive when reports will be made on what each State has done for the better protection of its school children and working children.