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CHILDREN'S BUREAU
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CHILDREN'S YEAR

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CHILDREN'S YEAR WORKING PROGRAM



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CHILDREN'S YEAR WORKING PROGRAM.

War work on behalf of children has been inaugurated by the Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor and the Child-Welfare Department of the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense.

The President has approved the plans for Children's Year. He says:

Next to the duty of doing everything possible for the soldiers at the front, there could be, it seems to me, no more patriotic duty than that of protecting the children, who constitute one-third of our population.

The success of the efforts made in England in behalf of the children is evidenced by the fact that the infant death rate in England for the second year of the war was the lowest in her history. Attention is now being given to education and labor conditions for children by the legislatures of both France and England, showing that the conviction among the allies is that the protection of childhood is essential to winning the war.

I am very glad that the same processes are being set afoot in this country, and I heartily approve the plan of the Children's Bureau and the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense for making the second year of the war one of united activity on behalf of children, and in that sense a children's year.

The Children's Year campaign "To save 100,000 babies and get a square deal for children" opened on April 6 with the beginning of a Nation-wide Weighing and Measuring Test of young children. This Test, the first step in the larger war-time program, will be carried out in each State by individuals and organizations cooperating with the State and local child-welfare committees of the council of defense. The Children's Bureau and the Child-Welfare Department of the Woman's Committee expect that each community will follow the Test by some permanent work for the protection of mothers, babies, and young children, and will undertake some definite activities in relation to the three other main items in the war-time program, namely: Home care and income, child labor and education, and recreation. The President has expressed the hope that Children's Year "will not only see the goal reached of saving 100,000 lives of infants and young children, but that the work may so successfully develop as to set up certain irreducible minimum standards for the health, education, and work of the American child."

The working program which follows (1) defines the aims of Children's Year; (2) enumerates "community questions" in order to

indicate the kind of exact information which a committee should secure as a basis for constructive work; (3) suggests as "work to be done" certain practical measures that may be undertaken during Children's Year. Few committees will wish to attempt to accomplish within 12 months all of the work outlined in the program, but the program will serve its purpose if it leads to a careful review of the situation and a deliberate plan for meeting the most pressing needs of the community in each field of work.

On the other hand, the working program is in no sense a complete statement of child-welfare work. It is merely an attempt to review the first essentials for the saving of infant lives and those standards of protection of older children which are most seriously threatened in war time.

Many committees will undoubtedly wish to develop in greater detail than this program calls for some piece of work which applies especially to their own community. The bureau will be glad to discuss methods of work and details not covered in the following outline. A special leaflet on follow-up work after the Weighing and Measuring Test has been prepared.

The first four sections of the program consider the child community as a unit made up of normal children in normal homes. In most communities there are special problems relating to children who can not be given proper care in their own homes without special assistance or who have been deprived of their natural guardians. The fifth section, on Children in Need of Special Care, is offered as a possible basis for discussion and action in relation to these special problems.

In making and carrying out plans for Children's Year, it is especially important that the child-welfare committees secure the cooperation of existing agencies, both public and private, which are already engaged in similar work.

I. PUBLIC PROTECTION OF MOTHERS, INFANTS, AND YOUNG CHILDREN.

A. INFANT-WELFARE WORK.

AIM.—To make available to all mothers (a) advice about recognized methods of caring for their babies and themselves, and (b) the necessary facilities for promoting the health of children.

Community questions.

How many public-health nurses are there who give demonstrations to mothers in their own homes about their own care during pregnancy and about the care, feeding, and clothing of babies?

How many births are there each year in the community? How does the number of public-health nurses doing infant-welfare work compare with the annual number of births?

What facilities, such as infant-welfare and prenatal centers, are accessible to mothers for medical advice and supervision in the care of themselves during pregnancy and the care of healthy babies? Are these adequate in the opinion of those who are doing the work? In a city, what districts are not provided for? For a rural community in which no center has been opened what centers in near-by towns are available?

What infant-welfare work, such as is suggested above, is carried on by the city health department or the county authorities?

Is there a division of child hygiene in the city health department? In the State health department?

How many hospital beds are available for confinement cases?

What possibilities are there for medical and nursing care at confinement for mothers who can not afford to pay much?

What proportion of births are attended by midwives?

What provision is there for the licensing and supervision of midwives? What standards of training are required?

Has the completeness of birth registration been tested recently?

Work to be done.

Support and increase the work of public-health nurses. Enroll Home Health Volunteers to assist them. Start public-health nursing and volunteer work in any community, whether a city or a rural community, where it has not been attempted.

Carry out as a community activity the Weighing and Measuring Test.

Support existing infant-welfare and prenatal centers and increase their number as they may be needed to reach all neighborhoods in a city and the most remote mothers in rural communities. Start such work in communities where it has not been attempted.

Make available for all mothers good nursing and medical care at time of confinement.

Give publicity to the importance of fresh milk in the diet of nursing mothers and artificially fed babies. (See also I-B.)

Make a test of birth registration, if no such test has been made recently. In any case, try to emphasize the importance of birth registration; if necessary, secure improved legislation and better enforcement.

Where practicable, encourage establishment of a municipal or State division of child hygiene.

B. HEALTH MEASURES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN.

AIM.—To point the special needs of the child of preschool age.

Community questions.

What provision is made for health supervision of children between infancy and school age by public-health nurses? By infant-welfare centers?

What special measures have been taken during the war to insure an abundant supply of pure milk?

Work to be done.

Carry out as a community activity the Weighing and Measuring Test.

Extend work of infant-welfare centers and public-health nurses and their volunteer assistants to include all children between infancy and school age.

Hold children's health conferences during Children's Year.

Make provision for permanent children's health conferences at regular intervals.

Give publicity to the importance of milk in the diet of children.

C. EDUCATION OF MOTHERS.

AIM.—To make available to every mother information about the best methods of child care.

Community questions.

How much educational publicity on the care of children is being carried on, especially through pamphlets, exhibits, and newspaper articles?

What public courses for mothers are offered in any local educational institutions?

What local clubs, classes, lectures, etc., help in the education of mothers with special reference to children under 6 or 7 years of age?

What types of mothers are not reached by existing facilities?

What provision is made by the schools, health authorities, or private agencies for the instruction of girls in infant hygiene, as, for example, through Little Mothers' Leagues?

Work to be done.

Distribute free educational material.

Develop public opinion so that mothers will demand instruction and that special courses will be provided to meet and stimulate that demand.

Promote school, college, and university extension courses in child care, home cooking, and household organization.

Promote permanent demonstration centers.

Provide especially, during Children's Year, short practical courses for mothers in maternal, infant, and child hygiene.

II. HOME CARE AND INCOME.

A. HOUSING AND SANITATION.

AIM.—To insure to each child the home surroundings necessary for health.

Community questions.¹

What sort of houses are available for people of low incomes? How generally are they equipped with the necessary conveniences to make easier the work of the housewife?

What are the rentals?

What choice of dwellings do people in the lower income groups actually have? Is there a house famine? If so, is it due to lack of houses or to the bad condition of empty houses?

What points are covered by the State housing law? By a local housing ordinance? Do these include separate dwellings as well as tenements? What provision is made for enforcement of housing laws and ordinances?

What is the annual appropriation for health work by the board or department of health? How much is this per capita of population? Is a full-time trained executive employed?

Work to be done.

Back the State and local health authorities in their efforts to raise the standards of sanitation and hygiene.

¹In addition to the topics suggested by the questions enumerated, attention might well be given to the abundance and purity of the milk supply, to the supervision of markets and food, and to water, sewerage, garbage disposal, communicable disease, and special educational work in house hygiene.

Stimulate interest in adequate public appropriations for health work and for raising the standards of training required of the staff.

Promote popular courses in house hygiene, expenditure of income, and similar courses in home economics.

If there is a lack of houses in proper condition, cooperate with other organizations in the community to meet the situation.

Other activities will be suggested by the information secured by the committee about its own community.

B. SPECIAL NEEDS OF OLDER CHILDREN.

AIM.—To provide the special home comforts and protection needed to safeguard older children.

Community questions.

What are the schools, clubs, or settlements doing to connect the performance of household duties by children with school or club work?

What is the community doing to help parents in their efforts to provide for the home discipline and home recreation of children?

What opportunity is offered by schools and colleges for study of the special problems of the growing child?

In considering wage standards and family budgets, how much attention is given to the cost of the home comforts that are necessary for the best protection of the child?

Work to be done.

Carry on an educational campaign on the importance and cost of a fair living standard that includes more than the bare essentials of subsistence.

Urge starting and extending courses, clubs, or other activities adapted to local needs by which serious discussion of questions affecting home discipline and home recreation may be encouraged.

C. FAMILY INCOME.

AIM.—To enable mothers to care for their own children at home, with an income sufficient for family needs.

Community questions.¹

How do the lowest wages paid to men in the community compare with the cost of the things necessary to maintain a fair standard of living, such as clothing, food, housing, furniture, fuel, light, health, recreation, car fare, sundries?

¹ In addition to the topics suggested by the questions, attention might well be given to the effect upon child life of such industrial problems as the prevention of accidents, the promotion of industrial hygiene, workmen's compensation laws, public employment agencies, unemployment insurance, standards of hours, and the enforcement of labor laws.

In what occupations and industries are men earning wages insufficient to enable them to support their families according to a fair standard?

How are widowed mothers and their children provided for?

How are separation allowances to soldiers' families being supplemented where insufficient?

Why are mothers engaged in gainful work, and what are they doing? How many are working? How are their children cared for?

What standards are required of day nurseries? Are they licensed and supervised? If so, by what authorities?

Are employers encouraging or discouraging the employment of mothers? What is the attitude of social workers?

What is the community doing to make information about family expenditure available?

Work to be done.

Endeavor by every possible means to secure the payment of wages which meet the cost of a healthy, well-cared-for childhood.

For families from which the father is absent for military service, see that the separation allowance is secured and that supplementary funds are provided locally where needed.

For widows with children, secure public pensions sufficient for a fair standard of living and efficiently administered.

Take whatever steps seem advisable to reduce the number of working mothers to a minimum.

Secure means for training women in budget-making and expenditure.

III. CHILD LABOR AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

AIM.—To maintain standards of child-labor and school-attendance laws under war-time pressure until every other possible labor resource shall have been exhausted.

Community questions.

In what respects are the State child-labor and school-attendance laws below the highest standards in this country?

What exemptions are permitted by State law?

What efforts have been made to secure exemptions because of war conditions?

How great is the need for special assistance to enable children to stay in school?

How many attendance officers are employed? Is there a school census? How is it used to assist in preventing children from going to work illegally?

What efforts are made by the officials who issue employment certificates under the State law to prevent unnecessary employment of children?

How many factory inspectors are there in the State?

How often are places where children are employed in the community visited by an inspector?

How many prosecutions for violations of child-labor laws were made in the community during the last year? How many convictions were secured?

Work to be done.

Develop public opinion against the employment of young children to meet family needs.

See that adequate appropriations are made for the enforcement of child-labor and school-attendance laws, and that high standards of training and efficiency are required of school-attendance officers and factory inspectors.

Prevent the shortening of the school term, and require in all districts, urban and rural, a minimum term of nine months.

Try to prevent employment of children under 16 away from home town, or in dangerous or harmful occupations.

Cooperate with other organizations to develop labor resources other than children (and mothers; compare with II-C).

Work for some advance in State legislation and the administration of State laws. (The standards of protection afforded for certain occupations by the Federal Child-Labor Law should be regarded as a minimum standard for all occupations under the State law.)

IV. RECREATION.

AIM.—To provide playgrounds and clubs and other recreational activities under leaders possessing spontaneity and training.

Community questions.

(a) *In a city.*

What neighborhoods are there having no play spaces within easy reach?

What organized recreation is provided for outdoor activities in summer, and for indoor recreational activities?

Do existing plans include opportunity for development of recreation to meet the needs of the growing community?

What efforts are made to raise the standard of commercial recreation?

What provision is there for protecting young people from corrupting influences?

Is all public and private work for standardizing recreation carried on in such a way as to make a coherent program for the community?

(b) In a rural community.

What efforts have been made to develop group activities for children and young people?

What kinds of organized athletics are there for boys and for girls?

Are there suitable meeting places and what leadership is available for indoor (noncommercial) recreation?

Work to be done.

Emphasize the special importance in war time of sufficient diversity in recreation for young people and of active rather than passive forms of play.

Make some definite advance during the year in provision for community play.

Develop trained leadership and supplement with volunteer assistants.

V. CHILDREN IN NEED OF SPECIAL CARE.

A. DEPENDENT AND NEGLECTED CHILDREN.

AIM.—To secure in so far as possible good home care for each individual child.

Community questions.

What agencies, public or private, are there in the community to which may be reported cases of dependent or neglected children?

What efforts are made to keep children in their own homes instead of sending them to institutions?

What efforts are made to provide home care for homeless children and for those who must be removed from their own homes?

What standards are required of homes in which children are placed? Are these enforced by licensing and supervision?

How is the community meeting the problem of the unmarried mother and her child?

Work to be done.

Maintain the support and personnel of public and private agencies.

Assist local agencies by supplying volunteer workers and other practical help.

Develop public opinion to understand the need for family care of dependent children.

Strengthen and promote work for keeping children in their own homes and providing home care for dependent children.

B. PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN.

AIM.—*To provide care and treatment adapted to individual needs.*

Community questions.

What provision is there for a physically handicapped child: (a) For the correction of his defect? (b) For special school facilities or special training?

What provision is there for a mentally defective or subnormal child: (a) For expert examination of mentality? (b) For special training? (c) For institutional care if his condition is such that he can not receive necessary care in the community?

Work to be done.

Guard against cutting down of appropriations for special care and training.

Promote constructive work at points where the local situation is especially weak.

C. DELINQUENT CHILDREN.

AIM.—*To provide preventive treatment of juvenile delinquency.*

Community questions.

What organizations (public or private) or individuals are there in the community whose business it is to receive reports about children who are delinquent or in danger of becoming delinquent?

Is there a probation officer (or other social worker) responsible for the children's cases that come into court?

Are children's cases heard privately and are children kept entirely apart from adult prisoners both in court and during detention?

What provision is there for studying the history and needs of each individual child that comes before the court?

What trained supervision is provided so that delinquent children need not be sent to institutions?

Work to be done.

Maintain adequate support and sufficient staff to carry on existing work, public or private, without lowering standards of work.

Promote constructive work at points where local situation is especially weak.

Remedy and prevent conditions in the community that foster juvenile delinquency.

