a RESEARCH PROGRAM for the Children's Bureau

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By legislative act and by tradition the conducting of studies and investigation is a prime activity of the Children's Bureau. Nevertheless, for the past fifteen years or more, for one reason after another, the Bureau has devoted most of its time and funds to its other programs. Some of the reasons for this apparent shift in emphasis will be examined below. Here it is sufficient merely to note the change, for of more importance to the present argument is the fact that even under the pressure of new administrative duties and decreased funds for the carrying on of investigations, the Bureau has maintained its interest in research and its contacts with research workers and has continued to produce significant studies from time to time.

In recent years the Bureau has given considerable attention to the research aspect of its work with a view to determining upon a long-time research program. Several conferences of experts on various aspects of child development and child health and welfare have been held to this end, and there have been many discussions with such persons individually. From these conferences and from these talks with individuals many suggestions have been received regarding topics on which research is greatly needed and regarding ways in which the Bureau could be helpful in forwarding such research.

In addition, the fact-finding work of the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth has provided all concerned with the well-being of children with a summary review of present knowledge and expert opinion in regard to one important aspect of the matter, the development of personality in childhood and youth.
and the factors affecting it favorably or unfavorably. That review brought to
light many unanswered questions, and revealed many gaps in present knowledge,
and it also suggested some of the lines that future research might profitably
follow:

As a result the Bureau has at hand considerable information about lacks
in knowledge relative to children's development and well-being, and also many
suggestions from highly regarded professional workers about the part the Bureau
might play in improving the situation. Such material, however, has real sig-
nificance for research planning only when it is related to past and present
Bureau activities and when it is viewed in the light of the Bureau's responsi-
bilities under the law. The present memorandum, then, undertakes this
analysis and thus continues the Bureau's search for a sound basis for a pro-
gram of study and research.

THE PROBLEM AND THE PLAN OF STUDY

The Children's Bureau, says the Act of 1912 under which it was
created, "shall investigate and report...upon all matters pertaining to the
welfare of children and child life among all classes of our people". To
research workers of the present day that mandate opens up endless possi-
bilities, and the problem of constructing a plan for research under the Bureau's
auspices appears to revolve chiefly around the question of determining upon
priorities among the various aspects of child development and child life.

In elaboration of the law-makers' intent, however, the Act lists some
of the topics that should receive the Bureau's particular attention: "infant
mortality, the birth rate, orphanage, juvenile courts, desertion, dangerous
occupations, accidents and diseases of children, employment, legislation
affecting children in the several States and Territories." Taken literally,
that list sharply constricts the area and focus of study and, to the scientifi-
cally minded, may raise the question whether research in the sense of the
formulation and testing of hypotheses was intended or is possible under the
Act. The list does, however, appear to give a clear indication of the in-
tended nature and content of the Bureau's investigatory activities, and so
leaves the outsider wondering why there is much doubt about what the Bureau
should do.

The problem of determining upon a long-range program for the Bureau
is not so easily solved, however. The forty years that have passed since the
establishment of the Bureau have brought many changes in public interest and
attitude of mind, in the Bureau's responsibilities and activities, and in knowledge
of children's needs and the complexity of the factors involved in children's well-
being. Some of the questions originally posed for Bureau study have been
answered rather adequately, and new questions have become so numerous and so
complicated as to require reconsideration of how the Bureau might best function
in the research area. For these and other reasons, the Act of 1912 is no longer
a sufficient guide to the Bureau's research activities, necessary as it is in es-
ablishing the Bureau's duty to conduct investigations and in stating broadly the
subject matter with which the investigations shall deal.
If the basic Act is insufficient as a guide, what then can be looked to for providing a sense of direction among the endless possibilities that are opened up when child life and child welfare are taken as subjects of investigation? The alternatives appear to be three. The first is the one so far taken by the Bureau: the identification of pressing research needs through an examination of present knowledge and current research. It is to this end that the Bureau has solicited the statements of experts in the relevant sciences and professions regarding topics on which it is especially important that research be undertaken. To this end, too, the Midcentury White House Conference materials can be scrutinized for what they say and what they reveal about "gaps in knowledge."

The second alternative is to seek in present Bureau programs and activities, and in the problems they pose, the guide line to worth-while research. Those who direct the grant-in-aid programs and their numerous professional colleagues in and out of government must be well aware of the spots at which lack of scientific knowledge handicaps their efforts or renders them futile. Their observations could provide an empirically based research program that would serve the Bureau well, especially if research were to be regarded as an aid to the other Bureau undertakings rather than an enterprise coordinate with them.

The third alternative is to look to the Bureau's history in the research field and to attempt to derive from it a sense of direction for future work. As has been noted above, the original sole purpose of the Bureau was to conduct investigations and to report upon them. Such activities formed the basis of nearly all of the Bureau's work for over twenty years. Indeed, the fact that the Bureau now has a greatly enlarged area of responsibility can be largely attributed to the studies it then conducted and the activities associated with them. It may therefore be that the early work of the Bureau established a line of thought and action that points the way to future investigations.

Actually, these three alternative approaches supplement rather than supplant one another. Hence the question is not so much which one to take as which one to take first. To the writer it seems best to reverse the order stated above. Instead of first analysing the suggestions of the recent Research Conferences of the Children's Bureau and those implicit in the Midcentury White House Conference fact finding report, we shall start with the Bureau's past research work, move on to its present administrative programs, and hope to find in them the clues for determining how to use to best advantage the findings and suggestions of theorists and research workers in the planning of a future research program for the Bureau.
IMPLICATIONS OF PAST STUDIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The attempt to derive a line of direction for an enlarged research program from Children's Bureau history calls for a careful review of the investigations, especially those conducted prior to 1936, before so much of the Bureau's effort was necessarily devoted to the administration of the grants-in-aid programs. As will be shown below, these programs were to some extent an outgrowth of the Bureau's investigatory activities, a response to the disadvantageous conditions the studies revealed. The working out of the policies and procedures for their administration, however, made a claim on Bureau attention and funds that resulted in the gradual diminution of research activities and in some change in their character. For an understanding, then, of the Bureau's research tradition we must turn to the investigations conducted before the Bureau's tasks were so greatly enlarged.

What we want to discover from this review of the early studies is what criteria were used to determine the choice of topics, what relation the studies bore to one another (did they represent a logical sequence?), and how their findings were used by the Bureau to advance the well-being of children.

Focus and scope of early studies

The original conception of the function of research in the Children's Bureau was simple and clear. It was to secure, through original investigations or other means, the pertinent facts about the conditions surrounding child life and about other matters relevant to the welfare of children in the United States, to the end that, through communication to the public, improvement might be secured. This conception followed the clear intent of the law. Even a casual review of the activities leading up to the passage of the Act indicates that there was no doubt in anybody's mind concerning the scope of "all matters pertaining to the welfare of children and child life".

For ten or more years before the passage of the Act establishing the Bureau, the conviction had been growing that only through the work of a branch of the Federal government could needed information concerning, as Florence Kelley put it in 1905 (?), "The physical, mental, and moral condition and prospects of the children of the United States, native and immigrant" be obtained and disseminated. In the hearings and the Congressional debate preceding the passage of the bill this viewpoint was stressed, and special emphasis was put upon the value to the nation of accurate information about infant mortality, child labor, and delinquency. It was recognized that some such information was already being obtained by a number of
departments and bureaus of the Government. In order, however, that specialized studies and compilations of data should be correlated, that investigations in important but neglected areas should be undertaken, and that the combined information should be made readily available both to professional workers and to the general public, the creation of a bureau that considered all the problems of childhood was urged.

For instance, Senator Borah, reporting for the Senate Committee on Education & Labor said:

"The design & purpose [of the Bureau is] to furnish information . . . . from all parts of the country to the respective States to enable them to deal more intelligently and more systematically & uniformly with . . . . the betterment of the condition of children and the more careful guarding of their welfare."

The report from the Committee on Labor of the House of Representatives was even more explicit:

". . . . the dissemination of information concerning the unfortunate children of the various States . . . . will enable the States to do their duty by these children and will remove one source of agitation against the proper exercise of State functions. The various charitable and humane organizations interested in the welfare of children . . . . ask us . . . . to collect the facts and to standardize the information concerning these children in order that they may do their work more wisely and effectively."

The character of the concern that led to the establishment of the Bureau is also indicated by the names of prominent individuals and organizations that urged the passage of the bill: such as, Jane Addams, Lillian Wald, Florence Kelley, John Glenn, Prentice Murphy, Owen Lovejoy, Homer Folks, Ben Lindsay; the American Federation of Labor, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, The National Child Labor Committee, the Russell Sage Foundation, The American Association for the Prevention & Relief of Tuberculosis, the White House Conference on Dependent Children.

As the House Committee report, citing expert testimony, put it, the problems that aroused particular concern were four - those of the afflicted children, the dependent, the delinquent, and the children at work.

Regarding the first group, it was said that 300,000 children under one year of age were dying each year and that half of these deaths could be prevented if "those in charge of the children were made acquainted with proper preventive measures." As to dependent children, it was pointed out that about 200,000 children were cared for in institutions and by other means annually and that "the information concerning the best methods for their care & training is very meager." Children coming before the courts constituted another serious problem
about which not enough was known in spite of much study, and there were many questions concerning the child-labor problem that needed authoritative answers.

Many of the specific topics proposed for study by backers of the bill are still pertinent and many of the questions are still unanswered. For instance, Homer Folks said:

"There is no authoritative statement of the total amount of the work [with dependent children] and far less in authoritative inter-relation of the nature of the work, of the results of the experience, of what becomes of these children or what kind of citizens they are making. ...We would like to know how the scheme is really working."

Owen Lovejoy pointed out:

"Juvenile courts and systems of probation have been established in a number of leading cities; but at present no agency is charged with collecting for convenient use the latest and most valuable information gleaned from the experience of these local agencies. In default of this, obsolete methods are continually being introduced in certain localities, although in other localities their disuse has followed their proven ineffectiveness."

The National Consumers' League listed numerous points "on which it is hoped that the Bureau may furnish enlightenment", among which were the following:

"1. How many blind children are there in the United States? Where are they? What provision for their education is made? How many of them are receiving training for self-support? What are the causes of their blindness? What steps are taken to prevent blindness?

"2. How many mentally subnormal children are there in the United States, including idiots, imbeciles, and children sufficiently self-directing to profit by special classes in school? Where are these children? What provision is made for their education? What does it cost? How many of them are there receiving training for self-support? ..."

Hon. Julian Mack, Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois called for "collection of the facts of child life, of the results of various kinds of child treatment indulged in by the many States in order that when in any State new projects are brought forward they may be able to come to some headquarters and find what has been the experience throughout the United States by information gathered under the authority of the United States Government".
It was against the background of such discussion and such suggestions that the Children's Bureau started its work. It had that first year a budget of $25,640.

The chief criterion for choice of subject matter in the early days was so implicit in the Act and in the arguments on which it was based that it was probably not a matter of deliberate consideration. That criterion was that the studies should deal with clearly apparent social ills, with conditions whose disastrous consequences for children were already fairly apparent. The studies were undertaken not in order to test hypotheses, in the manner of science, but rather to establish bases for action, through providing accurate information about the extent of the recognized problems and their associated conditions and the measures and facilities available for dealing with them.

Some of the topics to be studied were named in the Act: infant mortality, the birth rate, orphanage, juvenile courts, desertion, dangerous occupations, accidents and diseases of children, employment, legislation affecting children. Even if the topics had not been so specified, it would have been clear to all that the Bureau's studies should deal with matters that were arousing public concern, matters that either involved large numbers of children or concerned smaller numbers spectacularly.

The Bureau's reason for existence set other criteria, too, for the choice of subjects for investigation. Since the findings were to be communicated to the public, it was important not only that the studies deal with matters of great interest and concern to many people but also that the relevance of each particular investigation to the general problem be clear and easily understood. It was important, too, that the research be of such a nature that the findings could be easily described and that they would provide a basis for action, if necessary. Accordingly, in spite of the broad wording of the Act ("all matters pertaining to the welfare of children and child life among all classes of our people"), there was little disposition on the part of the Bureau to engage in basic research, and the Bureau experienced little difficulty in distinguishing its areas of investigations from those of other agencies of the government and other research organizations.

With such a conception of its investigatory task, what lines did the studies take in the early years, what was the logic of their development, and what was their relation to the other activities of the Bureau? These questions will be answered by a categorization and summary review of the early studies, the objective being to see what implications this historical development has for the formulation of a long-range research program for the Bureau.

Studies of infant and maternal mortality

Infant mortality was the first topic chosen for study, this subject being selected, says Grace Abbott, because of its fundamental social importance and
its popular interest and because it offered the possibility of quickly establishing the scientific character of the Bureau's work and its usefulness to the public. The investigations dealing with infant and maternal mortality provide a prime example of the way the Bureau worked: 'with a clear conception of the questions to be answered, the order in which they should be tackled, and their interrelationship. Once the answers to the first questions that were posed began coming in, the Bureau was quick to see their implications and to engage in activities aimed at remedying the bad situation.

The steps in the infant and maternal mortality investigations were as follows:

1. The relation of infant deaths to economic, social, and civil conditions.

In 1912, when the studies started, birth registration was limited to eight states and two other cities. It was estimated, however, that about 2.5 million children were born each year and that about 300,000 of them died before they were a year old, the rate being 124 per 1000 live births. The Bureau immediately began to push for complete birth registration, and at the same time it started a series of investigations in birth registration areas to discover why so many babies died.

To determine the reasons for the high death rate, investigations were conducted by staff members of the Bureau in nine representative cities: the plan of the inquiry was to visit within a year's time the homes of all children born within a given year in order to secure certain social data that were thought to have a bearing on survival. The schedule was prepared by Ethelbert Stewart, statistician of the Children's Bureau. It covered such topics as physical condition of the mother, frequency of previous births, type of feeding, color and nationality, housing and neighborhood conditions, employment of the mother, prenatal and postnatal care, earnings of the father. In addition to securing such information about each family, descriptive accounts of over-all sanitary conditions in the various sections of the community were written, and note was made of each family's place of residence.

The findings for each study were analyzed and published separately. In a final report, based on 23,000 records, Robert Woodbury, by a kind of partial correlation method, drew conclusions as to the relative influence of the various factors. He concluded that the primary cause of high infant mortality was low earnings on the part of the father. For instance, in one of the cities the infant death rate in the most prosperous segment of the population was 1 in 27 and in the poorest it was 1 in 7. With low earnings were closely associated poor housing and poor sanitary conditions, employment of the mother, inadequate care of the mother during pregnancy and confinement and of the child during the first year of life.
2. Report on preventive measures already in use.

The report of the first of the infant mortality studies made it clear that an attack on the problem would require work on many fronts. Accordingly, between 1914 and 1922, a series of reports was published describing the kinds of preventive measures already in use in American cities, by public and private agencies in the United States, by various organizations in New Zealand, and by several countries in Europe.

3. Conditions in rural areas.

In view of the kinds of measures being undertaken in the most advanced areas, a series of surveys in rural districts was initiated in 1917. These carried forward the work of finding out just where the country stood with regard to need and provisions for safeguarding the health of mothers and infants. Studies were made in typical rural communities in twelve states in the South, Middle-west, and far West. Among the topics covered were the general living conditions of the families studied, mothers' employment, their prenatal and postnatal care, feeding and care of the infants, as well as various data on community conditions and community provisions for maternal and infant care. Gross ignorance of the needs of mothers and infants and gross lack of facilities for promoting their welfare were revealed.

As rapidly as the various studies were completed, they were published and distributed widely. Their findings provided the basis for a vigorous attack on the social problems revealed, both by the Children's Bureau and its public and by other governmental and voluntary organizations, local, state and national. The studies, for instance, gave great impetus to the drive for improvement of sanitary conditions in towns and cities and for the pasteurizing of milk. They were used as an argument for minimum wage legislation and for "pensions" that would enable mothers to remain at home. They resulted in improvement of measures for safeguarding infant and maternal health. They underlay the agitation for improvement in facilities for the care of mothers and infants and for instruction of mothers in the principles of child care.

In many of the activities looking to these ends the Children's Bureau participated; in some it took the initiative. Specifically, the Bureau worked in cooperation with the Federation of Women's Clubs to press for uniform birth registration throughout the United States, this information being the sine qua non for judging the effectiveness of preventive measures. The Bureau also initiated in 1914 its series of bulletins for parents, Prenatal Care and Infant Care, which have ever since played so large a role in parent education. In these, the dangers of unhealthful living conditions were stressed, and the need of pregnant women and infants for sunshine, pure water, and uncontaminated milk. In the light of current emphases in bulletins of this kind, it is of interest to note that the bulletins also pointed out that "all babies need mothering and should have plenty of it."
4. Studies of maternal mortality.

Between 1915 and 1921 there was a substantial reduction in infant mortality. Nevertheless there was little change in deaths in early infancy attributable to premature birth, congenital debility, and birth injuries. Since all of these conditions have maternal causes, the Bureau initiated a series of studies in regard to care of mothers and the causes of maternal deaths. The extent of maternal mortality had been early inquired into. In 1927 and 1928 a large field investigation of the causes of maternal death and of the conditions associated with it was undertaken.


The high incidence of maternal deaths led naturally into inquiries into how it might be lessened. The studies dealt with such subjects as the kind of measures used by certain foreign countries, the legislation dealing with control of midwives here, the extent and cost of care under public funds.

6. Inquiries into particular causes of infant death: especially prematurity.

Parallel with these investigations the Bureau undertook to study particular causes of infant deaths, especially those following premature birth — extent, causes, and the effectiveness of counteractive measures. Plans for much more detailed studies along this line are currently being made.

7. Analyses of statistical reports on incidence and trends.

With the social and economic causes of infant and maternal mortality fairly well established and some ways of dealing with the problem being indicated, the Bureau has continued to keep before the public the facts about the incidence and trends in these deaths in various sections of the country and in various population groups, as indicated by Census Bureau studies. In thus pointing out the black spots, a basis is provided for state and local action.

The infant and maternal mortality studies have been described in considerable detail because they represent the Bureau's most long-continued, logical and consistent effort to investigate and report upon a particular matter affecting the welfare of children. The series is important also in indicating that, in spite of the numerous studies, only a beginning has been made in understanding the problem and dealing with it.
The Bureau is well aware of the need for much more knowledge about the physiological and perhaps emotional factors affecting the survival of individual mothers and infants. It also recognizes that there are cultural as well as social and economic factors to be dealt with in reducing the high incidence of mortality in certain groups and in certain sections of the country. Involved here are such questions as how to influence attitudes and behavior, especially among people whose values and customs are different from the usual American; these call for inquiries of an anthropological as well as psychological nature. Such considerations make it clear that the line of inquiry about cause of infant mortality must not stop with common-sense, fact-finding investigations but, on the contrary, must push forward into theoretical areas in which much joint work on the part of various disciplines and professions is called for.

Similarly, the effectiveness of various measures currently being used in the effort to reduce infant and maternal mortality should be examined. To this end pre-natal and post-natal medical care, obstetrical practices, devices for caring for infants prematurely born, parent education, both pre-natal and post-natal, the training of professional and semi-professional staff, and so on should be studied. Since the Children's Bureau is the administrator of the Federal funds that aid in the support of maternal and child health programs, it would appear to be in a particularly advantageous position to promote and, to some extent, to undertake such studies. Moreover, as the expender of such funds, it would seem to be its duty to make such inquiries.

Such considerations also highlight the fact that there is not as great a distinction between the Bureau's research activities and those required for the administration of the grants-in-aid programs as might be thought. These programs were a natural outgrowth of the Bureau's early studies, and their present inclusion in the work of the Bureau - along with other consultation services - do not so much change the Bureau's work as widen its possibilities for significant inquiries and for influencing the character of the work that is done toward overcoming or mitigating social ills.

Other studies

Investigations conducted under the authorization of the Act of 1911 were, of course, not confined to infant and maternal mortality and welfare. Almost at the outset the Bureau marked out several other lines of investigation: economic handicaps to children's well-being, child labor, and children in need of special attention. For a time studies in these areas were largely confined to securing background data - such as legal provisions and other measures for counteracting the difficulties - though a few field studies in Washington, D. C. and nearby areas were undertaken.
The findings of the infant mortality studies, however, soon demonstrated the need for more detailed investigations of other matters, for the same conditions that produce high infant death rates are also likely to result in poor health, little education, mothers and children engaged in paid employment, family disorganization and break-up. Accordingly, the Bureau soon increased its staff and branched out into detailed consideration of the other topics listed in the Act of 1911. The areas and the topics considered under them were the following:

Child health:

1. Physical status
2. Nutritional deficiencies
3. Prematurity
4. Heart diseases and accidents
5. Child health and child health services
6. Other studies

Economic handicaps to children’s well-being:

1. Nature of the situation
2. Measures for mitigating the handicaps

Child labor:

1. Child labor conditions
2. Regulative legislation and its administration
3. Accidents and occupational hazards
4. Vocational guidance and placement

Children lacking adequate care and protection:

1. Laws and their revision
2. Programs and administrations of child care and protective measures
3. Mental defectives
4. Illegitimate children
5. Dependent children

Juvenile delinquency:

1. Causes of delinquency
2. Extent
3. Juvenile courts
4. Institutional treatment

Recreation. (a few miscellaneous studies)
The list of topics so far dealt with by the Bureau indicates that far from being concerned with "all matters" affecting the welfare of children, the Bureau has concentrated chiefly on certain very specific matters - those that have received the chief attention of health and welfare workers and humanitarians generally for at least a hundred years. With few exceptions, economically disadvantaged sections of the population have been the subjects of study and the remedies proposed, including the grants programs, have been largely directed to them. What the Children's Bureau has done in its investigations is to apply the scientific viewpoint to manifest social ills as they affect children. Primarily it has asked: do these ills really exist and in what proportions; what are their concomitants and what their apparent effects?

A good case can be made for this concentration of interest. It is likely, indeed, that this is what the term "welfare" meant to those who backed the passage of the 1912 Act. Currently, however, to many people "welfare" has a wider meaning, being equivalent to "well-being" and to "health" broadly conceived. In this connection it is significant that some of the current studies of the Bureau (such as, the vision studies and those concerned with dental caries) do not have an economic limitation and that there is much interest in broadening the base of the Bureau's work to include wider areas of child research.

The question before the Bureau, then, is whether to stick to its original area of investigation or to attempt to play a part in the study of "all matters" as presently conceived, excluding only those already within the province of other government agencies.

It would seem that the former is the wiser course to take -- and that little of the advantage of the latter course would be lost in taking it. The Children's Bureau is the one agency of the Federal government with a clear mandate to inquire into and keep the country informed about what is happening to the children whose welfare is in jeopardy and to consider what can be done about it. In this field there is no question of overlapping with other Federal agencies or of taking on a job that voluntary agencies and organizations are equally well equipped to handle. By this interpretation of the mandate, educational, physiological, psychiatric, and strictly medical studies of children in general are not within the Bureau's province. It was the recognition of this, no doubt, that prompted the Office of Education and the Public Health Service to support the passage of the 1912 bill in the first place.

If the Bureau, in its investigations, held tight to this conception of its mandate and yet followed the questions thus raised to their logical conclusions, it would soon find that to fulfill its function it would have to have knowledge from fields as wide as any it might otherwise choose to sponsor research in.
For example, in its quest to discover how best to aid children who have suffered from gross neglect on the part of their parents, it would be concerned with research on such questions as the following. In what ways and to what extent and at what ages is mishandling of certain specified types harmful to children? If harmful, are its effects reversible? At what ages and by what means? What is the possibility of favorably influencing parents whose attitudes and methods are harmful? Which parent, what attitudes, and by what methods? How do adults learn, especially regarding matters of an emotional import? In what ways do cultural differences affect all these questions? What are the child-rearing customs of sub-cultural groups in this country? And so on.

In short, any practical question having to do with disadvantaged children quickly leads into areas of knowledge pertinent to all children. In limiting its function to the narrow interpretation of the Act of 1912, the Bureau's research, accordingly, would lose nothing in breadth of interest but would gain in focus and defendable raison d'être.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE GRANT-IN-AID PROGRAMS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The Children's Bureau's traditional line of investigation thus suggests one form that future research might take. We must ask, however, whether this form is in keeping with the Bureau's present work and interests, especially with respect to the grant-in-aid programs, and what additional clues to the Bureau's role in research these current activities suggest.

The Social Security Act of 1935 gave to the Children's Bureau the administration of the child welfare, maternal and child health, and crippled children programs, and from 1938 to 1947 the Bureau administered the child labor provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. These programs have not been the Bureau's only ventures into the administrative field. In 1916, the Bureau administered the first Federal Child Labor Act for the nine months of its existence; between 1921 and 1929, under the Shepherd-Towner Act, it was in charge of the granting of funds to improve maternity and infancy health; and between 1943 and 1945 it carried out an emergency program of maternal and infant care. The present programs, however, are so much larger than the others the Bureau administered and have stimulated the Bureau to develop so many associated consultation services that they may appear to have fundamentally altered the character of the Bureau's work.

Closer examination of the situation indicates, however, that the connection between the administration of grant-in-aid programs, the provision of consultation services, and the research activities could be very close. The new activities of the Bureau are clearly in line with the Act of 1912 so far as subject matter is concerned, for the law they are based on was in considerable part a
response to the needs the Bureau's studies revealed. Rather than deflecting
the Bureau's traditional interests, these new activities give the Bureau a more
favorable opportunity than formerly to discover what conditions and circum-
stances adversely affect children and by what means the conditions can be im-
proved and the children aided. The program activities thus enlarge upon the
Bureau's work rather than radically change its character.

Nevertheless, it is true that the output of studies by the Bureau has de-
clined. This may be attributable in part to the demands of the new activities
on the interest and energy of the staff by reason of their very size; in part to
the war and the post-war situation, which heavily involved the Bureau in numer-
ows and pressing duties. More important than these reasons has been perhaps
a feeling that in the grants programs and in the consultation services the Bureau
is achieving what it had long sought - an improvement in the health and welfare
of children - and that its chief responsibility lay in improving its functioning
along these lines and in developing "standards" for child care that will be general-
ly useful.

The very nature and purpose of the studies earlier conducted may have re-
inforced this attitude. As has been shown above, these studies were largely what
might be called crusading studies - studies aimed at showing the character and
extent of adverse conditions and situations affecting specified groups of children
and the kinds of measures currently in use by which they might be lessened or
overcome. Very few inquired into the effectiveness of these measures or sought
to determine the concatenation of circumstances that produced the ill that was to
be remedied. In short, in the manner of the decades in which the studies were
produced, it was rather taken for granted that causes either were known or were
rather irrelevant to the present purpose and that knowledge of effective means of
dealing with the difficulties was at hand. Accordingly, with a child labor law
enacted and with Federal funds made available for helping states increase their
health and welfare services, it would be logical to conclude that investigations
should take second place and the Bureau should give chief attention to seeing
that the law was enforced and the services promoted.

Present-day thinking on welfare matters, however, is much more skeptical
than that of twenty, twenty-five years ago. There is growing concern that a
closer connection between causes and remedies be established in the social welfare
field and that more attention be paid to the social and emotional aspects of physical
health matters. The intricate inter-relatedness of numerous factors in the creation
of any situation or condition unfavorable (or favorable) to a child's development -
from the hazards of birth to delinquency - is increasingly recognized, and the
difficulty of drawing the implications and applying the findings of science to prac-
tical situations is increasingly appreciated.
This change in viewpoint brings with it a change in conception of the Bureau's investigatory activities. Though there is still place for the kinds of inquiries previously conducted, still need to study carefully what happens to children when, for example, their mothers go to work, their parents are migrant laborers, their health needs are unattended to, nevertheless evaluate investigations of active programs and studies of a theoretical character must also be undertaken or promoted if the Bureau is to do its full duty in investigating and reporting upon all matters pertaining to the welfare of children -- even if "welfare" is defined in 1912 terms.

Many of the questions to be studied would arise out of the day-to-day experience of administering Bureau programs. Others would come from the doubts of scientists and professional workers about the correctness of the assumptions on which programs and working methods are based. Others would revolve around the effectiveness of current measures and the effects of these measures on child and family life. There would probably be a demand for studies that would contribute to the professions' understanding of the people they deal with - their learning processes, their motivations, their values, goals, and ways of life. And so on. The Children's Bureau's responsibilities under the Act of 1912 and under the Social Security Act are all of a piece; and enlargement of its research budget is sorely needed in order that all of its responsibilities can be effectively carried out.

SUGGESTIONS FROM THE CONFERENCES ON SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

Against this background of the Bureau's past history and present activities and the line for future research they suggest, the advice and proposals of the experts the Bureau has called together in conferences in recent years take on added meaning. These conferences were called because the Bureau was considering adding "basic research" to its usual activities. The purpose of the conferences was "to examine the need for research in child welfare and child life, to explore its directions, and to reappraise the role of the Children's Bureau in Research".

The topics suggested by the conference members - at the conferences or in subsequent correspondence - were put forth as examples of unanswered questions with which Children's Bureau research might deal.Crudely classified, the topics suggested were as follows:
1. Cultural patterns and social organization

   a. What are the major social classes and ethnic groups in the United States?

   b. Variations among cultural groups in child-rearing customs

   c. Cultural basis for parental attitudes toward children

   d. Basic social structure and psychological relations of child life (family, play-group, gang, school, clubs, etc.)

   e. How these basic social groups seek to train children at each age level; what is the character of intensive inter-personal reactions in each; what kinds of behavior are learned in each type of environment and each type of relationship?

   f. Changing patterns of American family life

2. Child development

   a. Personality development of slum children; of children in various cultural contexts

   b. Personality characteristics resulting from variation in social experiences

   c. Control and socialization of the individual: sleeping, toilet, fatigue

   d. Standards of "normal" behavior

   e. Development of sex behavior

   f. Follow-up of children of types predicted to turn out poorly

   g. Influence of size and composition of the group on child development

   h. How various "behavior outcomes" are arrived at

   i. Influence of relationships within family and of family with outsiders on child-development personality maturation
3. Behavior dynamics
   a. Psychodynamics of feeding
   b. Motivational factors: dependency, aggression, effects of affection or dislike
   c. Validation of psychoanalytic concepts

4. Medical
   a. Life history of chronic diseases
   b. Causes of cerebral palsy; of congenital malformations
   c. Infant and child mortality - prematurity, epidemic diarrhea of newborn, accidents
   d. Management of diabetes, kidney disease, cerebral palsy, erythroblastosis fetalis, congenital & rheumatic heart disease, Mediterranean anemia
   e. Causes of breast and nipple pathology; insufficient lactation (etc.)

5. Social welfare (general)
   a. Effectiveness of community organization activities in community improvement
   b. Extent of success in social rehabilitation of assistance clients under best social work efforts
   c. Effects of assurance of economic security on personal enterprise and family solidarity
   d. Need for casework services: number of children in problem situations; proportion of children of various population groups served

6. Foster care of children
   a. Is care out of own home harmful? In what cases?
   b. Effects of group care (including nursery school) on children of pre-school age
   c. Relative value of different group-care methods
d. Process of group life in "cottages" of institutions

e. Are rules of foster-home placement in keeping with psychology? Consistent with practice?

f. Adoption: results with couples of varying ages

g. Tests for readiness for group living

7. Delinquency

   a. How to re-orient and re-socialize delinquents and pre-delinquents

   b. Types of treatment; their effectiveness

   c. A "Kinsey" on delinquent behavior

   d. Effectiveness of juvenile courts

8. Parent education

   a. Control and follow-up of education of young parents re child-rearing

   b. Mass methods of influencing attitudes

   c. Effectiveness of various educational methods in improving parents' attitudes

9. Methodological studies

   a. How to assess needs and indicate priorities in social field and child development - comparable to use of morbidity and mortality statistics in health work

   b. Obstacles to integration of knowledge about child development; methods of overcoming them

   c. How to answer small questions about parent-child relations and personality development on an experimental basis

   d. Method in social-work research
To the writer it seems that these suggestions, even as examples, do not add up to a research program. This perhaps is attributable to the fact, among other reasons, that the area of desired research - child welfare and child life - was too broad. In such an unlimited, non-specific field the range of possibilities exceeds the intelligent comprehension of any specialist (as all good research workers must be), and the sum total of various specialists' suggestions does not define an area or result in a program.

It may even be, as many maintain, that the drawing up of lists of subjects for research is futile; that research workers disregard such lists and that a literal following of them would be destructive of enterprise and imagination. However that may be, the discussions and suggestions of the conferences suggest that if the Children's Bureau is to undertake or sponsor "basic" research it must either do so within some framework of Bureau purpose and activities or be content to work without a specific program.

In the previous sections of this paper it has been suggested that the Bureau's studies and its administrative activities mark out an area within which research might well be carried on, and that the practical questions the activities raise often require an appeal to theory for their satisfactory answering. Appeal to theory and even to factual studies of the various disciplines, however, would still leave many questions unanswered. For instance, as Sibylle Escalona pointed out at one of the conferences, basic theory in child development is largely lacking, as is the methodology of studying it. This being so, there is still much basic research the Children's Bureau would find itself wanting to do or sponsor, even if it took as its primary research objective the discovery of facts and principles bearing upon the physical, social, and emotional well-being of children who are disadvantaged.

If the suggestions of the conference members are viewed from the angle of an already determined upon objective rather than as marking out a research program for the Bureau, they come into better focus. Viewed from that angle they appear as questions on which the Bureau could not expect to find scientific answers already at hand if its search for knowledge led in that direction. They indicate, moreover, some of the areas into which these experts would expect the Bureau's studies to lead. We may well ask, therefore, to what extent the experts' suggestions and the line of research already proposed dovetail.
First, it will be noted that certain of the categories of problems listed above - social welfare measures, foster care of children, delinquency, parent education - do not refer to basic research, however that term may be defined. Moreover, they are topics directly in line with the research objective we have described.

Second, several other categories - culture and social organization, child development, behavior dynamics - represent areas of study to which a search for an understanding of the behavior and environmental situation of disadvantaged children would almost certainly lead. The medical studies would also be pertinent, especially if emphasis were put on their social and psychological causes and concomitants.

Finally, the methodological studies are surely pertinent, since the possibility of answering many of the questions about causes and methods of treatment depend upon developments along this line.

It would seem, therefore, that most of the suggestions of the research workers whose advice has been sought are in line with the research objectives that developed out of consideration of the Bureau's past studies and present administrative activities. In short, to specify a focus for research by the Children's Bureau is not to limit its scope unduly.

THE PROPOSED SCOPE OF CHILDREN'S BUREAU RESEARCH

If we conclude, tentatively at least, that the Bureau's program of research and investigation, like its other programs, should derive from its central responsibility as stated in the Act of 1912, what specifically does this imply for the scope of the studies the Bureau would conduct or sponsor? The word "scope" is used deliberately, for it is apparently the experience of research organizations and foundations that advance planning in regard to specific studies to be conducted or supported is futile. It would seem possible and desirable, however, to designate broadly the areas within which the Children's Bureau would work.

In conducting investigations the Children's Bureau has two main objectives. First, it aims to assemble the facts needed to fulfill its obligation to keep the country informed about matters that adversely affect the welfare of children. Second, it aims to determine what kind of health and welfare measures and methods are most effective in aiding children and their parents. The first aim derives from the basic Act establishing the Children's Bureau; the second is a necessary concomitant of the Bureau's responsibilities under
Title V of the Social Security Act. The two aims, obviously, are closely related. The carrying on of programs requires information about needs. Vice versa, having secured the facts about the handicaps under which numerous children live, we naturally want to know by what means they can be diminished. Together these aims provide the basis for an integrated research program.

These being the objectives, it follows that the Children's Bureau research plan is chiefly concerned with answering practical questions about the well-being of children rather than with carrying on basic research, and that any theoretical investigations that are conducted will be undertaken with a practical end in view. Accordingly, the plan starts with common-sense surveys of conditions affecting children adversely, goes on to questions that grow out of the every-day practice of health and welfare agencies, includes applied research in the usual sense of the word, and contemplates theoretical investigations being undertaken when lack of scientific knowledge clearly handicaps understanding and practice.

It is, of course, not contemplated that studies will be undertaken in this order. Depending on the particular subject under study and the present state of knowledge about it - delinquency, foster care of children, premature birth, for example - investigations would start at one or another point and move backward or forward or deal with one particular aspect as the situation required. The statement below, then, is to be regarded as a description of the scope of the Bureau's contemplated studies rather than a description of particular projects. As such, it is necessarily somewhat abstract, especially as it is designed to be equally applicable to both health and welfare fields.

I. Handicapping Situations and Conditions

A. Surveys of situations adversely affecting significant groups of children.

This is the kind of investigation frequently carried on by the Children's Bureau during its early years. It represents the literal carrying out of the Bureau's mandate to investigate and inform the public about matters bearing on the welfare of children.

The situations to be studied would be, for the most part, those that had already aroused public concern. The questions to be answered are whether the situation is disadvantageous to children and what it consists of, how widespread it is, under what conditions it arises, what it entails for children, and what is being or might be done about it.
Current examples of situations of this kind are: "black markets" in babies, employment of mothers of young children, migrant labor and other situations of very low income, etc.

1. Nature of the situation: its locale, persons involved, reasons for existence, associated conditions, etc. as pertinent to the particular subject under investigation.

2. Number of children affected; their physical, social, and emotional condition.

3. Nature, extent and availability of facilities and measures for dealing with the situation or mitigating its ill effects.

4. Laws pertaining to the situation; revisions required.

B. Identification of children individually handicapped

In addition to easily identifiable groups of children whose welfare is threatened by grossly unfavorable situations that probably require broad social and economic action, there are many children whose disabilities are of a more individual character, many of whom must be brought to the attention of service agencies if they are to function adequately. Among these are the physically or intellectually handicapped children, juvenile delinquents, and those likely to become delinquent, children who are homeless or "neglected" or whose parents are otherwise in need of assistance in regard to family matters, and so on.
In the health field there is, for example, much interest in mass screening methods. In some areas valid devices are available for detecting early signs of disease and malfunctioning; in others, the methods currently available are too crude to be very useful.

In the social field also there is interest in early identification of disorders, especially with respect to children "in danger of becoming delinquent" or of developing other personality and behavior disorders. Various theoretical questions are involved here, including that of the validity of the analogy with physical disorders. Much knowledge about the causation of the difficulties would have to be drawn upon in devising predictive instruments. This is an area in which a considerable number of fact-finding studies have already been conducted and in which some methods of prediction have been suggested.

In both fields it is not only a matter of prediction of future disorders. Also involved is the identification of children already handicapped physically, intellectually, or socially. Such information is needed not only as a basis for determining the size and character of the service programs required and for judging the extent to which present programs are meeting the need but also as a source of control data for determining both the efficacy of programs and the conditions under which outside aid is not required.

1. How are the children having the disability or living under the disadvantageous conditions to be identified, especially if the condition is one that develops slowly or that may require aid even if not severe?

2. What is the relative efficacy of various methods of identification?

3. What is the incidence of the disability? Its variation with age, sex, economic and social status, racial or ethnic group, etc.?

4. How many and which of these children are being reached by present service programs?

5. Of the children not reached, how many and which need aid from sources outside the family?
C. Nature and causes of the disability or disadvantage (group or individual).

If the children and their parents are to be aided - or the condition prevented - they and the factors leading to the condition must be understood.

D. Personality and behavior concomitants of disadvantageous conditions or situations.

What does it "do" to children - physically, psychologically, development-wise - to live under specified adverse situations or to have certain personal handicaps? How do they feel about their situation or condition? What does this imply for work with them?

II. PROGRAMS AND METHODS OF SERVICE

A. Determination of kinds of help required.

Having identified particular categories of children in need of individual assistance, the next question is what is the nature of their needs. This question will, of course, have to be explored for each group separately. The point at issue here is not the exact methods to be used by the various professional and non-professional persons concerned but the aspects of the children's lives to which attention will have to be paid if the children are to be adequately served.

1. What services do the children and their parents need? (This might be determined by an analysis of the positive and negative elements in the situations under which they live and/or by the improvement in their functioning that is secured when certain services are supplied.)

2. What problems are encountered in supplying such services?
3. To what extent do need for, desire for, and ability to use service coincide?

4. What are the distinguishing characteristics of the kinds of cases in which offered services are rejected?

5. What happens to the children who do not receive aid thought to be needed?

6. What are the distinguishing characteristics of the children and their circumstances in cases of this kind that work out reasonably well? (Discovery of such cases might provide criteria for determining upon priorities both among services and among children who should receive services if the supply is limited.)

B. Analysis of present service programs

The analysis might be made either of individual programs or agencies or of all programs in a certain field in, say, a city, county, or state. It refers to these programs' objectives, clientele, extent and coverage, administrative problems, and effectiveness.

Among the programs to be studied are those which serve children who are homeless, temporarily or permanently, or "neglected" or whose parents want help with problems of child-rearing; those for unmarried mothers and illegitimate children; those for delinquents and children "in danger of becoming delinquent"; those that serve children who are "crippled" and those devoted to advancing maternal and child health, and so on.

1. For what conditions and situations are services being provided?

2. Through what facilities? By what staff?

3. Who is being reached?

   a. age, economic status, race and ethnic group, place of residence, etc.
b. situations occasioning request for or offer of service

c. source of referral

4. What proportion do they constitute of the total similarly handicapped? (Break down by significant sub-groups.)

5. What services are provided for specified categories of cases?
   a. amount of service per case and per worker
   b. quality of service: how nearly up to standard?
      1) difficulties encountered in meeting standards?
   c. how many and which children (by significant characteristics) receive the kind and amount of service deemed desirable?
      1) while under the care of the organization
      2) subsequently
   d. What variation is there in the kind of service similar cases receive?

6. How acceptable are the services to the recipients?
   a. what proportion accept the offer of aid? Their differential characteristics.
   b. what proportion complete treatment? Differential characteristics.

7. What is the over-all effectiveness of the program with specified kinds of cases?
   a. how is this best judged? (e.g., by proportion reached, proportion completing, gains made re the primary problem, comparison with children not served, etc.)
b. who is effectively served as judged by the determined-upon standards? How are those aided to varying degrees distinguished from those not aided, with respect to--

1) nature of the difficulty; other traits of the individual

2) nature and extent of service

3) qualifications and skill of the worker

c. In what kinds of cases is there recidivism?

8. Problems of administration: for instance -

a. Case loads

1) how many cases can be handled effectively by workers of given training and experience, with given territory to cover, and specified service to render?

2) what variation in quantity and quality of service occurs as case loads rise?

b. Costs of providing services of particular kinds

1) how is cost to be determined? What items are to be included?

2) what are the effects of charging for service?

c. Etc.

9. What lacks exist within present programs?

a. in regard to situations and conditions for which aid is provided.

C. Character and effectiveness of particular methods and measures.

Within present programs there is much variation in measures and methods used and much debate about which are preferable
and for what reasons. Much of the argument, in the social welfare field particularly, centers around application of theory, and there has been little appeal to facts for confirmation. In some areas even the exact nature of the treatment method is unclear, and it is not even certain that terms are being used consistently or with the same meaning to all concerned. This being the case, it is not surprising that differentials have not been determined at all adequately and that there is little knowledge about what methods and measures are most effective in specified types of cases.

1. What is the exact nature of particular methods and measures?

2. Do different methods produce different results, type of case and other significant conditions being held constant?

3. What kind and quality of work is required for success with particular types of cases? With what kinds of cases are particular methods effective?

4. What types are not aided by any of the present methods?

5. How valid are currently recommended measures, methods, and policies as judged by results secured?

6. What are the present contributions of the various professions to "joint team-work"?

7. What are the needed contributions as judged by the requirements of the cases? Do these vary with the nature of the child's problem, the locale of the service, etc.?

D. Effects of particular measures upon children and their families.

Although measures are designed to help children who are in one or another kind of difficulty, it often happens that the measure is concerned with the particular difficulty under consideration and may have unpremeditated effects on the child as a whole and on his family life. For example, under certain conditions hospital care may be thought necessary for pre-school children, severely handicapped children may be thought to require the
kind of training only an institution usually affords. Do these supposedly needed measures have detrimental side effects? What can be done to reduce or overcome them?

1. What are the effects of particular measures on children, in contrast to their effect on the difficulties the measures were devised to deal with?
   a. On their emotional well-being and personality development
   b. On parent-child relations
   c. On educational and vocational progress, etc.

2. What children are especially likely to be adversely affected?
   Criteria for judging this in individual cases.

3. What devices for offsetting the adverse effects are used?
   How effective are they?

4. How do various measures for dealing with the same difficulty compare in their adverse side effects?

E. Basis and effectiveness of preventive measures

The Children's Bureau concern with the welfare of children is not limited to the discovery of disadvantageous situations and of the means by which handicapped children may be aided. The Bureau also seeks to learn the causes of these situations and how the development of difficulties in children may be prevented.

The assumption back of most preventive measures is that the condition will develop in a significant proportion of cases under certain specified circumstances. Preventive measures are aimed at removing or modifying these adverse circumstances, at instituting correctives, or at supplying compensations. This requires a prior identification of the associated factors. There is needed, too, a progressive
pushing back along the line of inquiry to discover the conditions under which these associated factors develop or emerge. In such a search, projects aimed at prevention - if carefully designed and carried out, can serve as experimental situations in which to test the validity of the hypotheses regarding causation.

1. What is the influence of specific social, economic, emotional and organic factors, separately and combined, on--
   a. the development of the conditions under consideration (e.g., delinquency, premature birth)
   b. the situation likely to lead to the condition or to be associated with it (e.g., marital conflict, adverse parental attitudes, etc.)

2. What is the effectiveness of the preventive measures currently in use.
   a. those clearly based on theory of causes
   b. those that operate without direct reference to causes

3. What are the distinguishable characteristics of the cases -
   a. reached by particular preventive measures
   b. not reached by any of the currently employed preventive measures

4. What preventive measures not yet employed are suggested by the findings regarding causation?

F. Application of unutilized theories and findings of the behavioral disciplines

In addition to studying what is now going on in the field of services for children, the Bureau would perform a very useful service in bringing to the attention of professional workers theories and facts from the behavioral disciplines that have not yet been taken account of in their practice.
Studies of this sort would range from those that reviewed and analyzed findings in a particular area and raised questions for the profession (Bowlby's WHO report is an example) to those that attempted to work out the logical implications of a body of theory for certain aspects of the practice of a particular profession. In connection with these studies, pilot projects might be set up to test the value of the findings for work with children.

Reviews of this sort should also cut across disciplines in order to indicate what various disciplines have to say on specific topics. Out of such reviews, even more than out of those based on single disciplines, questions for further research would arise, many of which would be of a practical nature.

III BASIC FACTS AND THEORIES

Many of the subject proposed for study above lead directly or indirectly into unresolved theoretical issues, as well as into questions on which factual knowledge is lacking. Some of these are included in Sections I-C and I-D above; others are implied in other sections. Many more will be revealed as the practical studies and the surveys included in Section I are carried out.

A sharp line cannot be drawn between studies of a theoretical nature and the practical investigations suggested above. A distinction can be made, however, between research that starts from a theoretical question and that which arises out of the problems of practice. It is the latter, according to this plan, that the Children's Bureau would be chiefly concerned with.

Just what the range of theoretical investigations would be cannot be stated in advance, since the investigations would not be the outcome of systematic explorations of fields of science but would rather develop as lack of knowledge was disclosed in the course of practical studies. The following, however, are examples of such investigations in areas in which lack of knowledge handicaps practice.
1. Values and customs of sub-cultures in the United States, with special reference to their bearing on health and welfare matters.

2. Essential elements in constructive behavior and attitude change; how such change can be effected: in adults, in children, in people of divergent culture, in groups, in communities -
   a) in regard to human relations
   b) in regard to child rearing
   c) in regard to physical health, etc.

3. Individual differences among children, especially those of a congenital character; their influence on personality development and on behavior.

4. Importance for children of parental affection and continuity of care by own parents. If both cannot be assured, which is the more important?

5. Effects of economic privation on children's physical and emotional health, on the emergence of latent capacities, on the ability to function in American society.


**HOW THE RESEARCH MIGHT BE CARRIED ON**

If this is to be the scope of Children's Bureau research interest, how can the Bureau operate so as to further the increase in knowledge in these areas? Before that question can be adequately considered, certain peculiarities of the situation with respect to these areas must be described.

For the most part, these are areas in which very little research is currently being carried on or ever has been carried on under any auspices. Even fact-finding investigations have been scarce, the early Children's Bureau investigations notwithstanding. This is particularly true of the welfare field, but in the health field, too, few of the questions proposed
above have been adequately answered, especially those that relate to the social and emotional aspects of children's difficulties and the measures used to deal with them. In both health and welfare fields, little attention has been paid to the explicit application of the concepts and viewpoints of the behavioral sciences and to testing their usefulness for practice.

This being so, it follows that methods appropriate to the answering of the kinds of questions proposed for investigation have not yet been adequately developed. In addition, the number of research workers competent to deal with these questions is small, for what is required for the best work is both knowledge of scientific theory and technique and clinical experience in the field under consideration or at least clear understanding of the field's problems. Accordingly, in undertaking to carry on or to promote research along the lines proposed above, the Children's Bureau, for the most part, would be breaking new ground with respect to subject matter and to some extent, with respect to method. It would not be duplicating the work of other governmental agencies or private organizations, though, of course, in many particular investigations their cooperation would be needed.

Governmental agencies characteristically operate in the research field in one or more of three ways. They may carry on research on their own, in laboratories or field stations under their own management or in cooperation with others. They may contract with universities and research organizations to do the work, the subjects for research being proposed either by themselves or by the contracting agency. They may provide grants to individuals or organizations to pursue studies of their own planning.

Because of the nature of the subject matter to be dealt with, the first of these means is open to the Children's Bureau in only a limited kind of way. Most of the questions on which answers are sought are those that concern children and their families in particular social, economic, and cultural circumstances. They are not questions that can be studies in a laboratory or institute set up at headquarters. To answer them one must go to the field, seek out the subjects of study, and work with those who provide services.

For many of its studies, therefore, the Bureau would need itinerant research teams or would have to station research workers in appropriate places or otherwise carry on research where the opportunities were presented. In such carrying on of studies away from home base the Bureau has had much experience. The advantages and the difficulties thus revealed should be carefully examined for their implications for future studies.
The other two devices commonly used by governmental agencies for furthering research—contracting for research to be done by others and subsidizing research proposed by others—are also of limited feasibility for the Children's Bureau. The reason for this lies in the small number of research workers who are equipped by training and experience to work on these problems. The knowledge and skills required cut across university departments and professional schools, and there are few research organizations working in the areas of the proposed research.

The most likely source of interest in undertaking this kind of research are welfare agencies, public health programs, hospitals, and the like, though the various professional schools are also possibilities. In most of these organizations research personnel of the needed kind are scarce. Social agency research workers are likely to be narrowly statistical in their training and interests and are unlikely to have the broad theoretical viewpoint that is desired. Those in the health field are for the most part laboratory scientists or specialists in vital statistics. The individuals who are most likely to be interested in the analysis of qualitative data are largely lacking in research know-how.

If, then, none of the usual devices for further research through governmental agencies seem adequate to the task at hand, what other means are to be considered? Some possibilities are suggested by the very nature of the difficulties that have been described. It has been implied that one of the chief problems in carrying on research of the desired kind is to effect a union between the ideas, observations, and questions of those who are close to actual practice and the viewpoints and technical know-how of those who are expert in research on theoretical issues. Both individuals and research organizations that have this special competence are few. If the Children’s Bureau, in carrying on its research activities, could operate in such a way as to promote this mutual understanding and also increase the supply of research workers, it would be achieving a double purpose. The following proposals are made with this objective, as well as that of promoting research, in mind.

1. The Bureau might take as one of its chief research functions serving as a liaison between theorists, research workers in the health and welfare fields, and practitioners at various administrative levels. This could be done by -

   a. holding conferences on research and methods

   b. compiling and critically reviewing research on various topics and developing the implications for additional research
c. developing ideas for application and testing from the unutilized viewpoints and findings of the behavioral sciences

d. promoting contacts between service organizations and universities, aimed at exchange of ideas and staff

e. maintaining a roster of research personnel in various fields

2. The Bureau might provide consultation service to agencies and organizations wanting assistance in planning and carrying on practical studies within the scope of the Bureau's interests. In the course of doing this, the Bureau might -

a. enlist the cooperation of universities and professional schools for advice and for provision of graduate students as research personnel

b. work with agency personnel in planning studies and analyzing findings

c. provide research staff, part-time or full-time

3. The Bureau might aid states in undertaking studies financed by grant-in-aid funds by -

a. encouraging the evaluation of programs and methods and providing consultation service in this regard.

b. assisting States in setting up record-keeping devices in all demonstration programs financed by Bureau funds, so that data for continuous evaluation would be at hand

c. promoting cooperative arrangements between state departments, professional schools, and academic departments of universities for research purposes

4. The Bureau might carry on certain projects on its own or in cooperation with other federal agencies, such as

a. analyses of statistical reports

b. field studies of social and economic conditions adversely affecting children
c. local pilot studies for developing methodology applicable in larger investigation

For these studies, particularly the latter, the Bureau could -

a. utilize the advice of its own multi-discipline staff, (research and service) for planning

b. enlist the help of universities for advice and provision of research assistants

c. discuss methods and findings with advisory committees drawn from various professions and disciplines

For any of this work considerable expansion of staff and funds would be necessary. In this connection the Bureau might consider providing research internships for graduate students and recent graduates in the behavioral disciplines and professions. By this means the supply of competent research workers would be directly increased, and the Bureau would benefit immediately and in the long run.

SPECIFIC AREAS FOR STUDY IN THE NEAR FUTURE

So far we have been talking about what might be. Our assignment requires also that we make suggestions about areas in which the Children's Bureau should immediately or in the near future undertake to carry on studies. Some possible topics have already been mentioned. For instance, under Section I of the scope statement certain subjects for field investigation were pointed out (black markets in babies, employment of mothers of young children, children of migrant laborers and others of very low income), and in Section III certain lacks in theoretical knowledge were listed. In addition, much emphasis has been put on evaluative studies in the fields of child health and welfare. More than this is needed, however, if the Bureau is to undertake program planning for research to be carried on in the near future. Accordingly, the following list of subject areas is presented, with brief comments on reasons for undertaking studies along these lines.

It will be noted that these areas of study cut across the sections and questions listed in the scope statement above. This, it seems to us, is as it should be. While the Bureau could perform a useful service by proceeding step by step along the fact-finding lines laid out in the scope statement, more will be accomplished by another kind of planning. The proposed approach is to choose subjects for study that give promise of increasing theoretical knowledge or advancing scientific method of a kind that is widely applicable in health and welfare work.
1. Evaluation of current child health and welfare programs and measures: methods of determining their effectiveness.

As is well known, one of the most difficult scientific tasks is that of determining cause and effect relations in human behavior. Nevertheless, it is highly important that methods be devised by which we can ascertain whether health and welfare measures are achieving their objectives. While it is obviously impossible to develop scientific method apart from specific studies, it would seem that the Bureau would perform a useful function in health and welfare research if it would review critically the methods now used in evaluative studies and would bring to the attention of research workers fruitful methods developed in analogous fields.

With methodological possibilities well explored, the Bureau's research staff could provide assistance to state and other agencies interested in determining the effectiveness of present programs, measures, and methods. From such studies detailed information about what the Children's Bureau grant-in-aid funds are used for, what they accomplish, and what they leave undone would emerge. In addition, through such studies proposed scientific methods would be put to test and knowledge about how to evaluate would be advanced.

2. Effects on children of separation from their parents.

This is a topic of considerable theoretical importance and one that also has practical implications for numerous aspects of health and welfare work. Currently, interest in the subject has been stimulated by Dr. Bowlby's report published by the World Health Organization, some of whose conclusions appear to run counter to certain social work practices. The subject, however, is broader than that which Bowlby discusses.

The study should cover a wide variety of separation situations (foster care, hospitalization, institutionalization of the handicapped, to mention only a few) and should inquire into the circumstances under which separation is prejudicial to a child's development. In the course of the study it would be of interest to compare the effects of the separation situations health and welfare workers are concerned about with those that are frequent outside of the usual range of their work; for example, those occasioned by attendance of children at summer-long camps and boarding schools, care by "nurses" during long absence of parents, evacuation from areas of danger, and the like. Included, too, should be observations in families and communities of divergent culture. For instance, what are the effects of the seemingly rather common practice in certain Negro groups of sending little children to relatives in the South to be reared? How do children in Israel respond to communal arrangements for their care? The subject, obviously, is a very complicated one, in which many social, psychological and cultural factors are involved. The main questions to be answered are the following!
a. Does separation from parents have as ill effects as some theoretical formulations and some empirical studies would suggest?

b. What are the significant variables?

c. Are there situations in which separation is desirable? Criteria?

d. What are the benefits of separation in such cases?

e. Can the ill effects of separation, if any, be lessened, offset, or overcome?

f. All in all, is it loving care or continuity in relationship that is the more important for a child's well-being and healthy development?

g. In the light of the above, what are the current practices in health and welfare agencies in situations involving separation of children from their parents? To what extent are these practices in accord with present standards and with the above findings about what is best for children?

If questions of this sort could be answered in a reasonably satisfactory manner, we would have information of great importance for child-rearing generally, for public policy in regard to the employment of mothers and the insurance and assistance programs, and for many aspects of health and welfare work.

3. Cultural norms and values as factors influencing parents' and Children's response to health and welfare measures.

It has long been recognized that certain ethnic groups are unusually difficult for health and welfare workers to serve and that they apparently stubbornly resist the best efforts to help them. More recently, anthropologists have been discovering that the whole orientation of these people is so different from that of the usual American that it is not to be expected that they would be motivated by the same incentives or objectives. What is not known with any preciseness, however, is how these differences in basic orientation affect these people's attitudes about health and welfare matters, what obstacles to health and welfare work are thereby set up, and what can be done about it. Questions to be answered under this topic are the following:
a. What are the relevant norms and values of specified groups of people whose orientation differs from the usual American?

b. How do they affect the response to specified health and welfare measures?

c. In what ways must practices be altered to take these norms and values into account?

d. What improvement - and with whom - is achieved when this is done?


This is recognized in many circles as a crucial question and is not one that is unique to the Children's Bureau's area of interest. Nevertheless, there are specifics to be considered; the possibility of effecting change in attitude and behavior probably varies with the nature of the change desired and with the individuals who are to be influenced. The Children's Bureau's interest in this topic covers such matters as how to effect change in parents in regard to child-rearing attitudes and methods, in parents who are neglecting or abusing their children, in parents who do not feed their children properly, in children who commit delinquent acts, in members of a community who injure children by their prejudicial attitudes, and so on. In research on these matters the Children's Bureau would doubtless seek the cooperation of other Federal agencies, as well as universities and research centers. Programs under grant-in-aid funds would, however, provide opportunities for testing out hypotheses in this area.

5. Types of delinquents; effective methods of preventing delinquency and treating delinquents.

There have been many studies of causes of delinquency but most of them are concerned with traits that characterize delinquents or distinguish them from non-delinquents (or those who have not been caught). At best these show which youngsters are likely to be delinquent; they give little indication of why or what to do with or about them.

Delinquency is an aspect of certain children's behavior - not something they "get" but something they "are". To deal with children displaying this behavior we must understand the children and what the behavior signifies. The behavior may be normal in the group they belong to; it may be an expression of a refusal to accept imputed inferiority; it may indicate lack of normal ability to control one's impulses, etc. Much more understanding of the psychology and the sociology of the delinquent is needed. Observational
studies of individual children rather than - or in addition to - statistical analysis of traits of large groups are called for.

Analysis of the effectiveness of current treatment measures and methods is also greatly needed, especially, which methods or measures “work” with which children. From such analyses and from the observational studies proposed above we would hope to derive categories of delinquents or delinquent behavior that would be useful in diagnosis and treatment planning. This information should also be valuable for child welfare work generally.

6. Effects of economic privation on the health and development of children, on the emergence of their latent capacities, on their ability to function in American society.

Included in this topic is the question whether extreme poverty is a cause or an effect of physical and psychological incapacity. It is said by some psychologists and sociologists that the children of the very poor (the dwellers in urban and rural slums and those whose parents are migrant workers) have much latent ability and that they represent an undeveloped national resource of human ability and power. Is this so? What is being done and what more might be done by health and welfare programs to improve the situation of these children? How could such work be carried on? By what devices can services be brought to them and made useful?

It seems unlikely that any other than a Federal agency can undertake studies of this question on the scale that is required, although, of course, in making such studies the Federal agency would have to rely upon research centers for the development of concepts and tools for testing.

7. Infant mortality and morbidity.

Ever since its inception, the Children's Bureau research program has included studies in this area; it is likely that its chief contributions to knowledge have been made there. The present research staff, partly in cooperation with other organizations, has done some work that would facilitate research on the following topics. It seems important that studies of this sort continue.

a. causes of infant mortality in counties having highest death rates, with particular reference to cultural factors.

b. relative effectiveness of various methods of handling premature infants.

c. follow-up studies of premature infants to determine outlook
for normal development under varying conditions and circumstances.

d. causes of "pregnancy wastage." Is it related to social and economic conditions?

SUMMARY

In summary, this analysis of the Children's Bureau's past research activities and their relation to the laws under which the Bureau operates and the Bureau's present activities in other fields has led to proposals in regard to a future research program for the Bureau - its focus, scope, and topics for study in the near future.

It is proposed that the Bureau take as the prime focus of its investigations children whose health and welfare are in jeopardy. Among these children are those who are handicapped, socially or physically - those who are homeless, temporarily or permanently, or are neglected or mis­treated or unwisely handled by their parents, the children of unmarried mothers, delinquents and those in danger of becoming delinquent, those who suffer from crippling diseases or conditions and those whose intelligence is below par, and so on. Also included are children who live under social or economic conditions thought to handicap their development - the children of migrant laborers and others whose income is very low (and perhaps those whose parents have too much money), children who are the objects of prejudice and discrimination, young children whose mothers are employed outside the home, youths who are employed at too young an age or under conditions endangering their health and welfare, and the like. Such a focus for investigations would also embrace the children whose sound development would be endangered if prenatal and postnatal services were not available to their mothers or if they themselves did not receive requisite health supervision and care. The aim of the research would be to add to the store of knowledge needed for sound formulation of social policy and for the effective carrying out of services in children's behalf.

The possible scope of studies that have such a focus is broad. The following questions are indicative of its nature:

1. What harmful effects, if any, do particular social or economic situations and conditions and particular child-rearing practices have on children? How many and which children are adversely affected?
For example, extreme poverty, employment of the parents in migratory work, employment of the mother outside the home, adoption through “black market” sources, separation of the young child from his mother for medical care or because the home is judged unfit or for other reasons, extreme “permissiveness” as a child-rearing technique, and so on.

2. What does it “do” to children to be handicapped physically, socially, or intellectually?

For example, to be deaf or blind, to have a serious heart disorder or defect, to be illegitimate, to have borderline intelligence, and so on.

3. How are the handicapped children to be found; particularly, how can they be located before the handicapping condition has developed to a marked degree?

4. What are the causes of the handicapping conditions and what is needed to prevent, offset, mitigate, or overcome them?

5. What is presently being done in this regard through public and voluntary organizations and agencies? What difficulties are encountered, and how may they be overcome?

6. What success is attained by present service programs, and with what children? How effective are the particular measures and methods employed?

7. What scientific knowledge is not yet adequately utilized in this work? At what points is the work handicapped by lack of scientific knowledge?

Questions such as these can be answered only through numerous detailed studies and investigations, conducted by research workers in many different settings. They are put forth here as indicating the scope of the Bureau’s research work, the broad area in which the investigations it would conduct or sponsor in the coming years would fall.

As to the proposals in regard to investigations to be entered upon in the near future, the guiding consideration has been to suggest topics that cut across many programs and activities in the fields of child health and welfare and that have both theoretical and practical implications. Successful studies in most of the areas listed above should result in new knowledge that would be widely applicable, as well as contribute to the solution of problems of immediate concern to health and welfare workers.
This proposed program for research by the Children's Bureau is one that, it seems to us, is not only in line with the Bureau's tradition but also much needed today. The area indicated by those questions is largely an untitled field so far as scientific research is concerned. Relatively speaking, little money and little research talent is being employed or ever has been employed by the Federal or State governments or by private research organizations in undertaking to discover the answers to the kinds of questions posed above.

There has been little scientific research in regard to either social services or the social aspects of public health. In both the social service and the public health fields, however, there is growing interest in applying scientific method to the collection and analysis of social data for the purpose of determining the effectiveness of programs and of testing the hypotheses on which programs for children are or might be based. So far, however, little of scientific worth has been accomplished, and even the methodology of investigations is poorly developed.

As to the analysis of social and economic conditions inimical to children's well-being, the present research situations is even less encouraging. No research organization of any magnitude has taken this as its field of interest. The few studies that have been carried on - aside from those of the Children's Bureau in its early days - have been sporadic investigations, such as the occasional ones dealing with the plight of migrant children; and there is no concerted effort on the part of any research group to get the facts and to develop or synthesize the theory relevant to such matters. In view of our present knowledge of how important the environment and experiences of childhood are for the full development of human beings' potentialities and in view of the country's need for healthy, creative, loyal citizens, it is surprising that this is so. The Children's Bureau, of course, cannot take on this whole job. Given funds and a creative staff, it can, however, provide leadership in this area and can play an important part in mobilizing scientific effort in this regard.

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