Educating the Retarded Child

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For the social worker we have tried to delineate the contribution of education toward the life adjustment of these children. The vocational guidance expert may find help in interpreting and organizing the abilities and disabilities of these children in the direction of better training and better placement.

Acknowledgements are made to authors, publishers, and journals who have been very generous in granting permission to use quoted materials from books, pamphlets, and periodicals.

The authors wish to express their indebtedness to Robert L. Erdman for his help in revising and adding recent publications to the "Selected Annotated Bibliography"; to Ivan Garrison for many of the examples used in the "Secondary-School Program" in Chapter 10 and the "Sociodrama" in Chapter 15; and to Dr. Robert H. Haskell for his review and criticism of the "Wayne County Training School Experiment in Self-Determination" also used in Chapter 15.

Special appreciation is expressed to the authors' wives, Winifred Day Kirk and Margarete Gesch Johnson, for their critical evaluation and editorial assistance in the preparation of the manuscript.

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learned, it is used as a situation for a skit. Sometimes the situation grows out of what is read in a newspaper or out of a discussion on some controversial question. Many of the skits are concerned with boy-and-girl problems and the way these problems are dealt with at home. Some deal with how to apply for a job or what to do in certain social situations.

It would be impossible to determine how much these dramatizations have contributed to the total adjustment and improvement that some special class pupils have made. One teacher reports:

> There has been an improvement in the total personality picture of nearly every child. One boy had only one answer to give to every teacher request the first few months of school. He would say, "I ain't going to do it." By the end of the year this was changed. Another pupil, a girl, reported that some boys wanted to take her to a nightclub in a near-by city. She stated that she was going to go until all at once she remembered a skit we had about a girl going out with strange boys. I have just received a letter from a boy who has moved to a city in another state. The boy states that he had just been hired as a car washer in a filling station and reports that he knew how to apply for the job as a result of his experience in a sociodrama on applying for a job.

The Wayne County Training School Experiment in Self-Determination [9]

In the summer of 1935 the Wayne County Training School launched a new and radical program in cottage management for higher-grade mentally defective, socially maladjusted boys. This program, including a system of self-determination and democratiza-

[9] The material on the Wayne County Training School Experiment on self-determination has been derived from several sources. In 1935 Samuel A. Kirk, who was then mental hygienist at that institution, was charged by the medical superintendent, Dr. Robert H. Haskell, with the activation, organization, and management of an experimental cottage. Although he subsequently left the institution, he had the opportunity to revisit it in 1942, after the experiment had been under way for seven years. There he read all of the records, and conferred with the superintendent and others. Additional information has been obtained through correspondence with Dr. Haskell and from the published articles of Dr. Newell C. Kephart, who continued and extended the experiment for a number of years.

tion of cottage management, has now functioned successfully for a period of fifteen years.

It is very difficult to evaluate a program of social rehabilitation by objective means. A subjective evaluation of this program, however, indicated that it is a practical demonstration of the influence of democracy on character development. The following report will include a description of (1) the Wayne County Training School, (2) how the self-determining cottage started, (3) the rules of the cottage, (4) how morale was maintained, (5) incidents of misbehavior, (6) examples of adjustment under group autonomy, and (7) the influence of the experiment on institutional management.

THE WAYNE COUNTY TRAINING SCHOOL [10]

The Wayne County Training School, located at Northville, Michigan, has now become recognized as one of the outstanding institutions in the United States for the rehabilitation of higher-grade mentally defective problem children. It was established in 1926 for the purpose of caring for, educating, and rehabilitating children who show signs of social maladjustment and who are low in intelligence. It was believed that this group of children should not be admitted to a traditional institution for the mentally deficient but that they should be trained in an institution whose prime purpose is rehabilitation. Lower-grade mentally deficient children, usually falling in the uneducable or custodial group, are not knowingly admitted into this institution.

The institution consists of about 700 boys and girls who are housed in cottages, holding from thirty-five to fifty children each. In these cottages are found children of the same sex and of approximately the same age level.

The management of cottages of that size requires a certain degree of routinization of living. The administrators of the institution allow as much freedom as possible to the children, but this freedom, in a large group, does not resemble the freedom a child would have in his own home and in the determination of his own conduct. As

[10] Haskell, Robert H., "An Organization for the Training of Higher Grade Mental Defectives," *The American Association for the Study of the Feebleminded*, Proceedings, 37 (May, 1932), pp. 252–270.

part of the training program the children are required to do much of the work in the cottage, such as serving meals, making beds, and keeping the cottage clean. The cottage parent usually assigns some task to each child.

HOW THE SELF-DETERMINING COTTAGE STARTED

In the spring of 1935 a new cottage was completed. This cottage was approximately one-half mile from the main group of buildings on an institutional farm. It was an ideal place to start a new project in cottage management and in rehabilitation of mentally handicapped adolescents. This program was activated during the summer of 1935.

The philosophy and points of view which determined the organization of the self-determining cottage were as follows:

(1) Most self-governing organizations are adult-controlled and usually too complicated for mentally handicapped children. It was decided that no self-governing organization would be outlined by the administration, but that the method of self-government would be allowed to evolve as the boys themselves met their problems. It was felt that by allowing the boys to evolve their own method of organization and government, the rules and regulations would be kept within the mentality and needs of the boys themselves.

(2) It was anticipated that starting a self-governing cottage with a large heterogeneous group would very likely be slow and cumbersome. Consequently, it was decided that a group of only twelve boys would be admitted initially to the cottage and that sufficient time would be given them to organize the cottage on a self-government basis. It was felt that gradually new boys would be admitted, one or two at a time, and that those boys already established would indoctrinate the new ones in the customs and mores of the cottage. Social conformity and responsibility would then be produced through the influence exerted by the larger group on the smaller group, instead of by the house parent in charge. Group autonomy would be developed gradually as the boys learned socially approved forms of conduct.

(3) A cottage father and mother would be appointed to the cottage, not to manage the cottage but to cook for the boys, to fur-

nish guidance and suggestions, and to keep records of the progress of the cottage.

(4) The boys would be informed that they were then responsible for their own conduct and for that of the cottage and that it was up to them to establish their own rules of conduct and cottage management. It was decided that they would be allowed to make mistakes if those mistakes did not conflict with the management of the rest of the institution or would not be detrimental to the outside community. A part of their education was to learn by being allowed to make mistakes.

(5) The supervision of the cottage was not assigned to the general supervisor of all cottages but to the mental hygienist of the institution. This mental hygienist was given complete responsibility for the cottage organization, for the determination of policy, and for the selection of the original boys. The cottage father and mother were responsible directly to the mental hygienist of the institution.

(6) The general rules of the institution for cottage organization did not apply to this experimental cottage.

Before any boys were admitted to the cottage, a number of them who had made a fair adjustment to the institution were interviewed by the mental hygienist. They were informed that they were being considered for admission to the cottage and that the boys selected would be those who did not require supervision by an adult, but who could manage their own affairs. All of the boys appeared to be eager for this opportunity. After interviewing a number of boys, the mental hygienist selected twelve of them for transferral to the cottage.

On the first day the boys were quite confused. They had been in attendance at other cottages and had learned the rules of those cottages. They were now placed in a situation in which those rules did not apply. For example, smoking was not allowed in the institution. They asked if they could smoke in their new home. They wondered what time they should go to bed. They wanted to know if they could go to town to a show without an attendant. They wondered who should sweep the floor and who should wash the dishes. To all of these questions the cottage father was instructed

to say "I don't know; I don't make the rules." After several days of such confusion with conflicting opinion among the boys, they insisted on being told what they could do and what they could not do. The cottage father suggested to them, after some frustration on their part, that they send a few boys to the office of the mental hygienist and inquire about the rules and regulations. When they came to the mental hygienist with these questions he also informed them that he did not know what they could or could not do. He reminded them that they had previously informed him that they knew enough to run the cottage. The boys explained that they did know how to run the cottage but that some of the other boys thought differently. It was then suggested to them that they hold a meeting that evening and decide on what they could or could not do.

The meeting that evening was very serious. They elected a chairman and a secretary and decided on some of the issues. First they assigned a cottage task to everyone. Next they decided that since many of them were over sixteen years of age they should be allowed to smoke. They also decided to go to the show in town without supervision.

Space will not permit a description of the evolution of all of these rules, but an example should be mentioned. The rule on smoking, for instance, violated the institution rule, and the boys decided to send a letter to the superintendent asking him for permission to smoke. They received permission from the superintendent, provided they also obtained permission from their parents. When this issue was settled, the boys smoked in the cottage, on the playground, and took cigarettes with them to their occupational assignments. They gave themselves complete freedom in smoking at any time and at any place. This practice, however, did not last long. First, all the boys who were assigned to occupational classes in the institution found other boys asking them for cigarettes. Second, a written complaint came in from an attendant at another cottage saying that these boys had given other boys cigarettes. At the next meeting of the Council, as they now called it, this complaint was read and discussed. The boys then voted that they could smoke but that no boy was allowed to take cigarettes with

him to the institution proper. All cigarettes were then turned in to the cottage parents for safekeeping while the boys were in school.

Restricting smoking to the cottage or cottage grounds was not the end of smoking difficulties. Some boys who had assigned themselves the tasks of keeping the cottage clean, complained that "butts" were thrown on the floor by other boys immediately after cleaning. One morning the chairman of the group came to breakfast after the boys had finished. Oatmeal was the main dish. The chairman had added his sugar and cream and was ready to start eating when the boy waiting on the table reached over his shoulder to put some toast on his plate. The waiter had a cigarette in his mouth. This cigarette with abundant ashes slipped out of the smoker's mouth and landed in the cream and the oatmeal. A new serving of oatmeal came forward quickly. But there was no more cream. The chairman had to eat his breakfast with plain Holstein milk. He did not like it a bit, and the more he talked about it the more determined he was that this sort of carelessness had gone too far. A special meeting was called for that noon, various complaints about carelessness in smoking aired, and further restrictions on time and place of smoking in the cottage imposed. Hence, the rules for smoking were finally evolved: (1) requiring permission to smoke from the parents, and (2) limiting smoking to the playground and the recreation room of the cottage.

The same pattern was noted with many other activities which were discovered in their newly found freedom. Initially, complete freedom of action was taken. As the boys discovered that this freedom caused complaints and difficulties, they imposed limitations on their own activities.

The method of admitting new boys was determined at a council meeting with the mental hygienist. A list of three to five eligible boys was sent to the cottage periodically by the mental hygienist. From this list the boys elected one or two every time they wished to admit other boys. Their selection was based on various factors; namely, their knowledge of the boy, whether or not they liked him, what they needed him for, and how they thought he would fit into the cottage group. At one time, for example, they admitted a boy

because they wished to strengthen their baseball team; they selected the boy because he was a good baseball player.

After the cottage was organized and was functioning, it was found that some of the boys violated some of the rules. Their names were brought before the Council meeting. At the outset the boys were quite severe in the punishment that was meted out. For smoking on the institution grounds they took all the privileges away from one boy for three weeks. He was not allowed to leave the cottage even to go to the playground for that length of time. After good behavior for two weeks, however, he asked that his privileges be reinstated and was granted the request.

THE RULES OF THE COTTAGE

The rules and regulations of the "Homestead Cottage" (as it was named by its charter members) were posted on the bulletin board. Most of these rules were established by the boys during the first six months of the cottage organization. Each of these regulations evolved, like the smoking regulation, after the boys had felt a need for it, and usually after problems had arisen or mistakes been made. After a number of years of operation, the following regulations were found posted on the bulletin board:

(1) Any boy who wishes to smoke must receive permission from home.
(2) Smoking must be confined to the Club Room and the grounds near the cottage.
(3) No boy is to carry cigarettes to the institution grounds.
(4) No boy is to smoke until his work is done.
(5) Boys going to and from work are not to go by way of the teachers' residence, unless with an attendant. Boys going to and from church on Sunday may use the walk alongside the teachers' residence.
(6) No one should use the sewing machine except the clothes room boy.
(7) Every boy should see that the bowls in the lavatory are clean after using them.
(8) Any boy wanting to go to bed before the usual time may do so.
(9) No boy should smoke going to and from work nor on the way to and from shows.
(10) One boy at each table serves and clears away the dishes.
(11) All money should be handed to the advisor and not carried or kept in lockers or chests.

(12) Boys should not wear each other's clothes unless permission is received from the owner.
(13) Hard shoes are not to be worn in the cottage unless on special occasions or with orders from the clinic.
(14) When a boy loses his privileges, he gives up the right to leave the immediate vicinity of the cottage.
(15) Boys may go to a show in Plymouth or Northville twice a month.
(16) No more than five or less than three boys may go to the show at one time.
(17) A list of those going to a show should be handed to the advisor so that he will know where the boys are in case they receive a visitor or are needed for some purpose.

It should be noted that the above are written rules. There are many unwritten rules that have become customs of the cottage. For example, every boy takes care of his own bed. This was done in other cottages and was carried over as a matter of fact. The rules listed above are rules that usually did not apply to the other cottages and were, therefore, deviations from their previous training. Most of the rules, habits of cleanliness, and so forth that were taken for granted were not listed as rules of the cottage.

HOW MORALE WAS MAINTAINED

During the first three months of the existence of the cottage the morale was high. The boys were very proud of their achievements and of their newly found freedom and responsibility. They carried out many projects, such as making a baseball diamond, clearing out the yard, and organizing the cottage for comfortable living. They had many visitors during these earlier months and were always proud to explain the functioning of their cottage.

Soon, however, the novelty of the cottage began to wear off, and some of the boys needed new techniques to keep up the morale of the cottage. Consequently, new ideas had to be suggested to keep morale at a high pitch. Some of these are:

(1) During the fall it was suggested to them that the teachers and others in the institution wanted to know what the boys were doing in the new cottage. To meet this demand the boys held an open house during a council meeting and invited the teachers, attendants,

social workers, and others in the institution. For two weeks they wrote up the minutes of their council meetings, what they did and how they did it. That evening they conducted a council meeting, then reported on their various activities. The open house technique in which the boys reported their activities to the institution personnel proved to be a morale builder.

(2) Most of the boys did not attend the academic school but were assigned to vocational jobs. They wanted some instruction at the cottage in the evening. To achieve this, they asked for one teacher to help them do handwork, one for academic work, and one to teach them how to play cards and other games. Here we find the interesting phenomenon of the boys selecting their own teachers for specific reasons.

(3) Activities and projects tended to produce group unity. Many of these were carried out throughout the years. For example, during the summer of 1942 each boy had a victory garden.

(4) Incidents of misbehavior and incidents which brought dishonor to the group aided group morale. In all societies a decrease of morale and group unity occurs until a crisis again brings about unity; note the reactions of the American people before and after Pearl Harbor. The same happened at the Homestead Cottage. Group unity and morale fluctuated. At times when morale decreased and some boys did something which brought dishonor upon the cottage, unity was again re-established.

(5) Competitive games with the neighboring public schools and with the other cottages were also means of unifying the group.

(6) In 1942 the organization of the cottage was changed by establishing guides, leaders, and probation periods for newcomers. In addition certain rituals, such as those practiced in fraternities, were introduced. It was believed that these rituals, carried out when boys were promoted from one bracket to another, would focus the attention on character development. In addition to these rituals, various robes for the different groups were worn at the council meeting. This seemed to keep the meeting at a more serious level. The practice of formalizing the meetings, which was a reversal of the original philosophy of the cottage, did not last long. It was found to be an adult-imposed formality and was soon abolished.

INCIDENTS OF MISBEHAVIOR

It would not be truthful to state that by giving the boys responsibility for their own conduct the whole problem of misbehavior was solved. Many incidents of misbehavior occurred at this cottage, but these incidents were minor and not as frequent as incidents in cottages that were under strict adult supervision.

When reading of all the incidents of misbehavior that happened in this cottage during the first seven years of operation, one is impressed by the lack of serious offenses. This emphasizes that adolescent boys could be given much responsibility for their own conduct. Typical examples of these incidents are:

Three boys picked strawberries from a neighboring farm.
One boy gave cigarettes to a boy in another cottage.
Several boys were found walking on the girls' side of the institution.
Money was stolen from one boy's chest.
Two boys were reported as being late for work.
Boys continued to leave the cottage and go to the girls' side.
Three boys were voted out of the cottage during the year for violating rules.
One boy read in the morning instead of doing his work.
Boys were fighting.
Several boys wore other boys' clothes without permission.
One boy's bicycle broken. No one admitted using it.

It will be seen from these incidents that they are very minor and are of the type which occur even in college dormitories. The punishment given was a reprimand at the council meeting or the restriction of privileges.

The experiment has functioned for fifteen years without the occurrence of any major incident which would warrant closing the cottage. It should be remembered that during all this time many boys left the cottage without supervision and went to the neighboring town to attend a show. Only once during this period did a group of boys become boisterous in the town or at the show to an extent which would warrant withdrawal of their privileges by the other boys.

With the exception of a few minor incidents, such as stealing

strawberries from a neighboring farmer, there have been no major incidents leading to community disapproval of these boys. Ample opportunity to create damage was offered since there were many hours in which no adult was at the cottage to watch the boys.

On one occasion a number of the boys went with boys from another cottage to the Scout Cabin of the Institution, where they broke the windows. For this incident, and because a large proportion of the boys were involved, the Superintendent took away the privileges of the cottage. During this period the boys were supervised by an attendant, could not smoke, and could not go to shows unsupervised. They were allowed to hold meetings and discuss their plight. After several weeks the Superintendent granted their request that privileges be restored.

EXAMPLES OF ADJUSTMENT UNDER GROUP AUTONOMY

The effect of self-determination within a group must be measured mainly by its effect on the adjustment of the individual. The boys in this cottage had had varying adjustment records in the other cottages. Some were obedient and conforming under adult supervision. Others were not so conforming. A few incidents involving different boys will give some indication of the differences among the boys and their modes of adjustment to a peer group instead of to adult authority.

Joe was voted upon by the original twelve boys as a suitable member of the group. At the Council meeting following his admission to the cottage, he was given the responsibility of cleaning the main room of the cottage. Since this room was used by visitors, the boys desired that it be clean at all times. Joe had the reputation of being an expert housekeeper in his former cottage.

After a week the "inspector" reported that the main room was not kept in good condition. Joe was surprised at this accusation. He insisted that the room was kept clean and asked the boys not to withdraw his assignment, since in the past he had obtained recognition for his work in sweeping and mopping floors. The following week the inspector again reported that the room was not kept clean and recommended that Joe be dismissed from this responsibility. Again Joe pleaded to keep his assignment. He did not agree that

the room was unkempt. At this meeting the chairman asked the cottage parent to assist in the inspection of the room. The house parent confirmed the inspector's report that Joe seemed unable to keep the room clean. At this point Joe came to the mental hygienist with tears in his eyes. He was fearful that he would lose his responsibility and could not understand why his work was always praised in other cottages and unsatisfactory in this one.

An analysis of the situation showed that Joe was able to clean a room as long as an attendant was present to direct his movements. When he was left alone without supervision, he was unable to carry out the assignment, even though he wished to do so. An arrangement was made whereby the cottage parent would inspect the room and point out to Joe where he forgot to clean. Joe accepted the responsibility of asking the cottage parent to assist him by inspecting his work daily. After three weeks of this routine Joe was able to clean and inspect his own room to the satisfaction of the boys.

The case of Joe exemplifies the difficulties involved in learning a simple task. Although Joe had cleaned floors under supervision for two years previous to his admission to the Homestead Cottage, he was unable to carry out the task without supervision. He actually failed in his task until he learned, through partial supervision and then no supervision, to clean floors. The social approval of the group was the motivating factor in driving him to learn to do a task independently of adult suggestions and supervision.

Kephart states:

> By far the most potent disciplinary force with these boys is group disapproval. The selection of new members by the group itself results in strong ties between the boys which make social approval an unusually strong motive with them. Group disapproval is expressed formally when an offender stands before the group and is publicly accused; but it is often expressed also in an informal way when, without suggestion or definite planning, the group merely withdraws from an individual and leaves him socially isolated.
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> Illustrative of this type of discipline is the incident of John, who worked in the cottage kitchen and who went for a walk one morning and did not return in time to prepare the noon meal. The boys came in at noon and found that there was no food. There was, of course, a great deal of con-

cern and much condemnation of John. When the food finally came, the boys were thoroughly angry. The result was that without any discussion or planning, for the rest of the day no one spoke to John; he was not invited to participate in any activity, and when he came up to a group who were engaged in something, it melted away and left him alone. Since this incident, John has never taken an unauthorized vacation from the kitchen.[11]

Kephart describes the adjustment of Alfred:

Alfred was committed to the Wayne County Training School in 1933 at the age of twelve, because of behavior difficulties in school and because he was unable to adjust in boarding homes. His initial adjustment at the training school was not good. He was described as argumentative, quarrelsome, mischievous, bullying, overactive, and sullen. He resented authority and correction. His difficulties included fighting, picking on smaller and duller children, refusal to do cottage work, defiance of attendants when disciplined, truancy from the institution, and extreme profanity. He was unable to adjust to the routine of the institution or to any cottage in which he was placed. A rather extended program of psychotherapy proved unsuccessful, and attempts to interest the child or to capture his imagination failed. All attempts to adjust this child to the training school were unsuccessful.

In November of 1936, as a last resort, this boy was transferred to the Homestead Cottage, as an experiment. The experimental nature of the project was presented to the boys of the cottage and they were asked if they would not accept him provisionally in order that we might see whether he could become adjusted in such a situation. This they agreed to do, and Alfred was accordingly sent to the cottage.

His initial reaction was similar to his reaction in previous cottage placements. He was given punishment by the boys for failure to do his cottage work, for smoking unlawfully, and for refusing to get up in the morning. His reaction to this was that the boys were "picking on him." He became sullen and defied the boys to make him serve his punishment. He soon saw, however, that such behavior did not cause any excitement in this cottage, but that he was only brought up again in meeting for these actions and given further punishment. No one was interested in forcing him; the group was content merely to express their disapproval and to take the outcome for granted. Thus his defiance did not gain for him any marked attention. In several long talks with him the supervisor adopted the same

[11] Kephart, Newell C., "Group Autonomy in a Children's Institution," *Mental Hygiene*, 22 (October, 1938), p. 587.

attitude; the desirability of conformity was pointed out to him without any attempt at forcing him to conform. Group ostracism was slow in producing its usual effect. The boys were puzzled by his solitary failure to respond, but their morale was sufficiently well grounded not to be affected by it.

Early in April Alfred began to strike up a closer individual acquaintanceship with another boy in the cottage, Mike. This acquaintanceship was originally colored by a fiction of belligerency. Mike's daily chore was the cleaning of a certain room, and when his job was done, he would make a great show of keeping everyone out of the cleaned room. Alfred began coming into this room as soon as Mike had finished, and inevitably a "rough-house" would result, although each boy was very careful not to hurt the other. This gave Alfred a chance to try out social contacts, and at the same time permitted him ostensibly to preserve his old pose of nonconformity, since on the surface he appeared to be disturbing Mike, whereas actually for both boys the fighting was nothing but a game. This activity, because it was noisy and showy, always drew a crowd, and gradually other boys were enlisted on one side or the other of the jangle. Thus Alfred was drawn into acceptable prominence in a group situation that brought with it the satisfaction of group acceptance and the realization of the fun that may be had only when one is co-operating with a group.

From this Alfred progressed to an interest in the activities undertaken by the cottage as a group. At first he was interested only in the rougher games, in which he could still, in his own mind, keep up a pretense of nonconformity. Gradually, however, he became interested in all the activities of the group.

Alfred now began to bid for popularity with the group. He became one of the most co-operative boys in the cottage and was willing to help any one at any time. The boys responded to this by accepting him. He became one of the most popular boys in the cottage and finally was elected chairman of the group. In this office he has handled the affairs of the cottage very well and has been an enthusiastic leader in all cottage activities. Our last report from Alfred was the remark, "Now I see how much trouble I caused when I was bad because, as chairman, I see how much trouble the other boys cause me when they are bad."

It is our opinion that such a result could not have been achieved in this case in a cottage operated in the usual way. We feel that it was achieved through showing the boy that nonconformity does not bring extra attention, but merely isolation from the group. In the usual cottage situation something must be done specifically about each misbehavior of which the

cottage administration chooses to make an issue, and the punishment must be carried out; otherwise the attendant cannot "save his face." This sets the boy off as opposing the attendant and thus the institution in general, and too often the boy carries the group with him. In the Homestead, the problem is the group's problem, not the supervisor's; thus the boy opposes the group, not the supervisor. This can result only in group disapproval of misbehavior. Furthermore, the boy is allowed to bridge the gap between nonconformity and conformity in his own way, and thus can do so in such a manner that he does not have to admit his defeat in the process, but can maintain his self-respect in his own eyes throughout.[12]

THE INFLUENCE OF THE EXPERIMENT ON INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT

After one year of successful operation of the Homestead Cottage, another cottage in the institution was converted into a self-determining cottage. This cottage, named the "Elks," was to be identical in operation to the Homestead Cottage with the exception of the privileges of attending movies in a neighboring town without an attendant.

After the Elks cottage had been in operation for one year there appeared to be marked differences between the Homestead and the Elks Cottages. Kephart states:

> The Homestead was a going concern whereas the Elks group was rather markedly a failure; the Homestead ran their affairs with virtually no interference from adults, whereas the Elks group frequently needed the intervention of the staff in an autocratic way to prevent complete disorganization; the Homestead group was acknowledged to be the best group in the institution, whereas the Elks group was among the most troublesome.[13]

To discover the basic differences in these cottages, Kephart [14] studied the composition of the groups and found, through sociometric techniques, that the factor of "homogeneity" was greater in the Homestead Cottage than in the Elks Cottage. The Homestead

[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 588–590.

[13] Kephart, Newell C., "A Method of Heightening Social Adjustment in an Institutional Group," *The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 8, No. 4 (October, 1938), p. 711.

[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 710–716.

Cottage group was more closely knit, whereas the Elks Cottage did not consist of a socially integrated or unified group.

To remedy this situation, Kephart selected a subgroup from the Elks Cottage and formed them, through activities, into a unit. Gradually other members entered into the activities. Five months later, a repetition of the sociometric technique showed progress toward greater homogeneity in the Elks Cottage.

Kephart's findings of lack of homogeneity in the Elks Cottage are not surprising. The Homestead Cottage was organized with a small group, the primary purpose of which was to form a homogeneous group that would gradually absorb new members as they were admitted. The Elks Cottage was begun as a complete unit with a relatively large number of boys. The heterogeneity of the group and its size were not conducive to forming a self-determining and unified group.

Kephart's study has demonstrated that homogeneity in a large group can be established by organizing a small unified subgroup as a nucleus which could, through its activities, draw in the other members of the total group. Teachers may find this method of inestimable value when faced with the problem of unifying a large group.

From these initial experiences the philosophy of the Homestead Cottage spread to one after another of the cottages in the institution. In 1950 the superintendent wrote:

It is my feeling, after years of observation of this project, that it has gradually become less and less conspicuous as the basic philosophy of its operation has spread throughout all of the various groups within the institution — both boys and girls.

I think you might be interested in part of a report made by Mr. Rossettie concerning our children's activities this past Hallowe'en.

"I am calling special attention to our Hallowe'en celebrations this year because I feel that they were particularly outstanding, not only according to standards which might be peculiar to children's institutions, but because they would compare very favorably to the standards we might find in the average community. Actually, our children had a variety of parties, particularly tailored to best meet the needs of each individual group.

"Our older children, with the exception of Cottages D, 2, and 8, partici-

pated in parties in which both boys and girls took part. At these mixed parties, which were held at the Children's Community Center, the Elks Lodge, and the Homestead, the main attraction probably was the square dancing.

"One of the things that impressed me most was the freedom with which our children were able to mix while at the same time maintaining a constraint and control which only a short time ago we would have considered beyond their ability to demonstrate.

"The one factor, which is borne most strongly upon my consciousness, is the realization that the accomplishments demonstrated can be attributed only to the excellent quality of leadership which is being furnished to our children by the cottage workers. I would say that this high quality leadership is far from anything new, but can be traced back to its real beginning when self-determination was first successfully introduced on June 17, 1935[15] (the date of the activation of the Homestead Cottage).

Summary

Throughout the book the social adjustment of mentally handicapped children has been repeatedly cited as a major aim in the education of children with mental handicaps.

The personality characteristics of mentally handicapped children do not differ basically from the personality characteristics of normal children. The differences found are invariably the result of frustrations resulting from failure to meet the requirements of school and society. Feelings of security, belongingness, and accomplishment have been thwarted as a result of the child's inability to cope with the standard requirements of his environment.

The classroom teacher is faced with the problem of organizing an educational environment which will harmonize with the child's abilities and disabilities and which will develop security through belongingness and adequacy through success and achievement.

Some of the methods that have been successful in the management of these children are:

(1) Organizing teaching procedures in harmony with good mental-hygiene principles.

[15] Quoted from letter of Robert H. Haskell, M.D., Medical Superintendent, Wayne County Training School, Northville, Michigan, to Samuel A. Kirk, December 11, 1950.

(2) Focusing the child's attention through positive suggestions and a positive classroom atmosphere on acceptable social behavior.

(3) Allowing children to plan activities within their range of interests and abilities.

(4) Using such techniques as sociodrama for the purpose of developing insights in practical life situations.

(5) Organizing self-determining activities to give children practice in the independent management of their affairs.

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