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CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, D.S.W., 1979

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1979

STRATEGIES OF INTERVENTION WITH THE PARENTS OF "ACTING OUT" PRE-SCHOOL BLACK CHILDREN

by

WILLIAM NEAL BROWN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Social Work in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Social Welfare, The City University of New York.

1979

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11 May 1979
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Chairman of Examining Committee

21 May 1979
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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

The question toward which the project was directed is: How does one engage the parents of children who present problematic behavior. The project evolved from a problem faced by The Community Day Nursery of the Oranges and Maplewood, New Jersey with which the agency felt that social work expertise would be helpful. The problem was that of children's behavior which the agency described as "acting out". In the course of a discussion with the agency director a comment was made that the children in a group for abused children were problematic; but, they were not the agency's prime concern. There was more concern with the problem of disruptive, "acting out" children, some of whom were not, to the agency's knowledge, either abused or neurologically impaired. The director saw these children as simply reacting to how they were handled by the adults around them. A substantial proportion of the children who use the nursery are black, from families of varying economic circumstances. Repeated attempts by the agency to reach these parents had been unsuccessful. These attempts included informal overtures by the teachers, invitations by the two social workers, and a special series of meetings planned by a local minister.

The project proposal was conceptualized on the generally accepted assumption that the behavior of the children reflected their

interaction with the significant adults in their environment, the most important of these adults being the children's parents. While there are some mixed views about this assumption, the weight is by far on the side of the causal effect of parent-child relations.[1] Research data on the effects of parent behavior patterns have been accumulating since the early 1930's.[2] Two examples are the work of Levy on over-protection and the studies of Symonds on "acceptance-rejection".[3] Bandura studied the extent to which parents of aggressive boys permitted and encouraged their sons to display aggression and how they handled aggressive behavior when it occurred. He found that the mothers of the aggressive boys were considerably more punitive than the mothers of the control boys, who were likely to train their boys through reasoning.[4] Becker has studied and reported on the consequences to children of different forms of parental discipline.[5] Such studies have served to document the pervasiveness of the effects of parent behavior and to suggest a fundamental association between the way the parent behaves and the way the child responds.

It was hypothesized that if the parent-child transactions could be changed, there would be a resulting change in the children's behavior. The problem in this line of reasoning lay in the agency's steadfast perception that the parents of these children were inaccessible. One could provide no input to the quality of parent-child interaction if the parents could not be involved. The problem of engaging these parents was accepted as both a challenge and an area of research exploration. The problem of reaching the parents of children in temporary custodial care is seen as having considerable current relevance as a result of marked and rapid shifts in family roles and life

styles.

Statement of the Problem

The problem in this study is to engage the parents of forty seven pre-school black children, identified as having behavior problems, and to involve the parents in a parent education program.

This study assumes that the behavior of children is mainly a product of their interaction with significant adults. It would follow that changing the parent-child interaction should ameliorate the behavior problems of the children. However, the review of the literature reveals that most social institutions encounter difficulty in involving the parents of such children. Thus, the objective of this study is to engage the parents of the children in question and to analyze the success or failure of the strategies involved.

Significance of the Problem

Institutionalized plans for the temporary care of children is one of the major problems facing our society today.[6] Industrialization, movement away from rural areas to the cities, movement away from cities toward the suburbs, over-all increased individual mobility, expansion of leisure time and/or employment, shifting societal values including the growing economic independence of women, and the tremendous impact of the media have all had an effect on how children are socialized. One of the major problems facing our society today is "working mothers" and how to arrange care for children. As recently as 1940, only one mother in eight worked. In the decade from 1949 to 1958, the number of working mothers with children under twelve rose by

80%. Since World War II, most of the growth of the labor force has been accounted for by married women, most of them mothers. In 1970 women formed roughly 40% of the working population; approximately 60% of all adult women were employed.[7]

In the 1950's the number of married women at work exceeded for the first time the number of single women at work, a trend that seems to be continuing. In fact, as Wilensky and Lebeaux state:

> Women work to supplement family income (an aspect of rising levels of aspiration for self and children), to support their families (a necessity for an increasing number of heads of broken families), to achieve "self-fulfillment" (a reflection of the changing definition of woman's role), and because the opportunities have increased (an aspect of the shift toward work assignment on the basis of "what you can do" and the fact that women can do an increasing portion of the jobs available).[8]

With ever increasing numbers of women, including mothers of young children, entering the work force, one cannot ignore the question of child care.

The societal factors enumerated above obtain for all children, however they are compounded for the black child who has a history of matriarchal family structure and impoverished life circumstances which antedate the social changes described here.[9] In addition, poor people living in an urban setting share several universal characteristics. These include such factors as inadequate income, living on a level well below that which is average for the community; frequent unemployment or employment in unskilled seasonal jobs; minimal education, and living in slums in sub-standard housing with many persons to a room. Often, it means inadequate nutrition, with resulting health problems. It usually means inadequate services and resources to deal with physical and mental problems.[10]

Psychologically, poverty involves a state of mind. It usually carries with it apathy, inertia, indifference and loss of initiative. It may cause envy, bitterness and self-depreciation of the ego, resulting in hostility, anomie, and disturbed role identification.[11] The poor housing and over-crowding influence motivation and self-evaluation, and there is much stress from a constant need to get along with people in cramped quarters. Furthermore, the crowding causes a person to look to others for satisfaction in life, to be cynical about people, to be uninterested in solitary pursuits, and to have an early initiation into sexual behavior. The crowding leads to friction and confusion within the homes which causes family members to spend much of their time on the streets. Stability of family life is affected, since one notes that separation, desertion, divorce, and family size vary inversely with income.[12]

A number of attempts have been made to address social work intervention to the problems of the kind of families and children represented in this agency. These include: The Seattle Atlantic Street Center Project (1969-1972), The Rutgers Family Life Improvement Project (1966-1971), Preventing Chronic Dependency (1970-1972), The Baltimore AFDC Project (1968-1970), The New Haven Neighborhood Improvement Project (1959-1964), The Detroit Public Schools Project (1959), Mobilization for Youth (1961), and Project Enable (1965).[13] In the main, these were projects designed to reach multi-problem families or particular problematic groups through increased resource provision and the facilitation of connections between the families and resource providing institutions. They all focused on a degree of interdisciplinary and inter-agency cooperation. Because of their breadth and scope, their

activities and findings tend to be described in gross terms.

In the current instance, the focus of activity is on one small group of parents in a small agency. The intent here is to develop and evaluate one worker's intervention in an effort to explicate what goes into a successful (or unsuccessful) intervention. "Success" here is equated with parent involvement. Though the long range goals are important and are not to be dismissed, the effort is primarily to answer the question: "How does one engage the black parent?"

Review of the Literature

This section comprises a review of the pertinent research and literature related to efforts to engage the parents of problematic children. The review focused on the question: What types of programs have sought to work with similar target populations and what kinds of recruitment efforts have been employed in these programs? The search was divided into two categories: (1) reports of interventions with the type of parent involved in this project, and (2) theories related to black families and black parent-child interaction.

Parent Involvement

Content in the literature about how to involve parents in the interest of pre-school children is sparse in comparison to the number of pre-school programs in operation. Research in this area is particularly non-existent. Most of the content found consists of journal articles describing the experiences of a specific program in involving parents for that program. Systematic research has focused primarily on programs designed to improve the teaching skills of low-income parents.

Commenting on this fact in their final evaluation of Project Head Start, Midco Educational Associates state:

> Most of the research has been done by experts in the field of early childhood development, mainly it would seem, by psychologists. While there is nothing inherently wrong with this, it has nevertheless tended to skew the nature of the work. Although the particular problems the researchers have chosen to investigate are almost too various to enumerate or catalog, it is clear that their chief interest has been in the parent as learner or as teacher of his or her own children.[14]

Nationally known programs such as Head Start and Project Enable have utilized a variety of parent involvement and parent education strategies. These will be described in this section; but, due to the scarcity of data on the involvement of parents of problematic pre-school children, the review was broadened to include any efforts to engage parents regarding the problems of children, and this content is also included in the review.

The prototype of most current pre-school programs for the children of lower class families was Project Head Start, sponsored by The Office of Economic Opportunity in the War on Poverty. Prior to the beginning of Project Head Start in 1965, most pre-school programs, and the research related to them, were concerned mainly with middle-class, white children and their parents.[15] Kraft and Chilman[16] surveyed the research related to parent education projects with low income families. They concluded that recruitment and retention were the salient obstacles to be overcome in any such effort, that fathers are most difficult to reach or hold, and that poor attendance is a persistent problem. Their final report states that "published reports as well as frank statements by workers made it amply clear that one of the chief, if not the chief, difficulty in organizing a parent education project among low-income clients was simply to assemble a group and then maintain adequate atten-

dance at meetings over a number of weeks".[17] They support this allegation with examples and interview comments from a number of projects which they surveyed. They stress the observation that there is a tendency for parents from low income groups to respond to and concentrate heavily on social activity and recreational events rather than any formal, adult education type activity.[18]

A number of large programs have included parent education as a component of the total project. Project Enable was carried out under Office of Economic Opportunity funding in one hundred privately supported family service agencies during 1966-67. Jointly sponsored by The Family Service Association of America, The National Urban League, and The Child Study Association of America, the parent education component was staffed by social workers of the family agencies. The parents were recruited by Urban League staff in the various municipalities.[19] Altogether, one hundred Family Service Association member agencies and National Urban League Affiliates participated in the project. The target population included all families falling within the poverty guidelines set up by the Office of Economic Opportunity.[20] Recruitment of parents was a continuous part of the ENABLE program. Recruitment attempts included public forums, door to door canvassing, flyers and other forms of publicity. The evaluation of the program concludes that recruitment by any means but face-to-face contact was usually unsuccessful. Most ENABLE programs provided child care during meetings as well as transportation to and from the sessions. Providing these services was essential to establishing a group and involved considerable staff time in planning and implementation. A major investment of time was in the recruitment visits and the personal follow-ups

necessary to counteract the inhibiting effect of certain widespread attitudes encountered in the target population.[21]

Since the total program had a number of components, evaluations are mixed; and, it is difficult to know if the program was considered a success. With regard to the parent education meetings, attendance records showed that parent attendance averaged from fewer than four persons in 27% of the groups to twelve or more in one third of them. The median attendance for all groups in all cities was between six and seven parents. An average of 8.7 meetings were held for each group.[22]

In an article based on work with disadvantaged parents in the Bloomingdale area of Manhattan, New York, Stein comments: "Lending a sympathetic ear has apparently been the most important method of making any contact with families and convincing them that we are interested in them. Without this first step very little can be done to help them accept suggestions for modification of their own methods and to try out new ones."[23]

Glickman described a group program for parents of Head Start children held in New Haven, Connecticut. The program was sponsored by The Family Service Association and staffed by a professional social worker. Fifteen mothers were eligible for the program. All fifteen enrolled, but only three attended regularly, two fairly regularly, and five sporadically. "Many were absent because of illness in their children or in themselves. Some stayed away because chronic depression and current discouraging situations kept them from making the effort to attend. Others stayed away after highly charged subjects touching their own anxiety had come up for discussion."[24] No observable impact was noted.

Kraft, Fuschillo, and Herzog evaluated a 1968 Howard University project, supported by The Children's Bureau, which attempted to form parent education groups in association with the pre-school for disadvantaged children. Their main recruitment technique was a house-to-house canvass, staffed by Howard University students. They report that it was necessary to utilize a "practical and feasible" strategy of recruitment; and, that this strategy could not be unduly laborious, expensive, or time-consuming, since there were limitations of time, money, and staff. The authors report that attendance at planned meetings was sporadic and that parents would make contact with the school on an individual basis to discuss specific, crisis problems of their children.[25]

Edith Fein reported on a Hartford, Connecticut experiment where parents were paid for attendance at parent education meetings. The experiment was conducted in conjunction with The Family Life Program sponsored by The Child and Family Service of Hartford. Fein comments: "Since lack of money is the most persistent problem of low-income families, addressing this need might offer the strongest possible motivation."[26] Of one hundred and thirty seven parents interviewed, all but two indicated an interest in attending the meetings. Actually, only eighty five parents attended one meeting or more. From this number the average attendance was 69.5%. She notes that this is a higher rate than that achieved by most parent education programs and attributes the difference in rate to the cash incentive. She concluded that the five dollar payment for each meeting attended tended to induce parents to give the meetings priority over the many other demands on their time and to emphasize the importance of this kind of education.[27]

A 1976 report by William Ade and James Hoot attempted to account for the difficulty in securing parent participation. They suggested that the participation of parents with the activities of a day care center were limited by factors inherent in the structure of day care agencies. Three such factors were cited: (1) limited financial resources, (2) limited availability of staff, and (3) attitudinal limitations of the subject matter and the working parent. They stated: "Regardless of whether the staff at a day care center is parent and family oriented or not, the typical organizational design of most day care programs presents several obstacles that may intimidate the growth of parent motivation and involvement."[28]

The review of the literature regarding attempts to engage parents of children beyond the pre-school age group revealed reports of many of the same obstacles and strategies for intervention that obtained for the pre-school category. Levine, in discussing efforts to involve parents in the use of mental health services, commented that parents are often labelled "hard-to-reach" or "unmotivated", because they seemed hostile, defensive, and defiant of authority. She discussed three strategies for increasing parental involvement: (1) the discarding of traditional interventive approaches, (2) the involvement of parents in agency policy meetings, and (3) an invitation to families to attend regular staff conferences. This report contained no formal evaluation; but, the author contends that the report was not intended to demonstrate success or failure as much as to show the impact of parent involvement on use of service. Several case illustrations are used to achieve this objective.[29]

The public school system is a social institution which con-

stantly faces the problem of involving parents in the interest of children. A notable effort in this direction was The Great Cities Project of the Detroit Board of Education.[30] This program emerged as a result of the increased influx of minority group children into the school systems of the nation's largest cities. A key component of the program was the attempt to involve parents. Carl Marburger, superintendent of schools at the time of the project, notes that many of the children in central city schools come from homes where the parents have had little success with their own education, little success in their own lives, and see the school as an aspect of life in which they have no part. He commented that "the parents of these children are not against education. At worst they see no need for it, are indifferent."[31]

The Detroit project used a variety of strategies in the effort to involve these parents. The range of strategies included: (1) initial concentration on parents who were articulate and more solvent economically rather than on the hard-to-reach, (2) provision of free clubs and classes, with emphasis on classes focused on skill development, (3) development of informal clubs and groups, (4) differential time structure in school facilities, with schools made available to parents after regular school hours, (5) use of the initial group of parents to involve the hard-to-reach, and (6) the development and use of a new category of school personnel, the school-community agent, who served as liaison between the school and the community.

This was a mammoth, crash program with a built-in evaluation component. It was deemed a success, especially in the area of parent involvement and became a model for the program in a number of other

cities. The heart of the project and the basis for its success was best expressed by Marburger: "This [type of] project will not succeed if it does not develop an indigenous leadership, which assumes responsibility on its own for the problems of individuals and the local community."[32]

Bergen and Kris reported on attempts to engage the parents of adolescent mental patients. These parents were described as reluctant to become involved with the agency, because, in many instances, they felt responsible for the adolescent's problems. The staff at the hospital tried a number of strategies in an effort to engage these parents. The author describes four: (1) an open house and dinner to which parents and patients were invited, (2) formation of a corps of parents known as The Friends of the Adolescent Service, (3) provision of flexibility in the program to accomodate the time schedules of parents, and (4) active pursuit of parents through home visits, worker availability at night, and telephone calls. They reported success in the use of these strategies, with parents becoming involved who were previously disinterested.[33]

The literature review reveals a scarcity of information on how parents were involved. The information available indicates that parent participation is uniformly difficult to achieve. Regardless of the size of the project reported or the approaches described, the findings are sparse and inconclusive. All found it difficult to reach parents; and, when some were reached, parent attendance is reported as sporadic. A range of strategies were reported on a continuum from parent participation in the development of program to the payment of a stipend to parents as an inducement for attendance at meetings. The

payment for attendance resulted in a higher percentage of parents attending, but even this strategy was not notably successful.

Theory

Attempts to explain the behavior of blacks and black parent-child relationships are diverse; and, sometimes as diametrically opposed as Moynihan's "The Tangle of Pathology" and Hill's The Strengths of Black Families. Somewhere between these extremes lies Lewis' concept of "The Culture of Poverty". Then, there is Billingsley's systematic appraisal of Black Families in White America, and Ryan's concept of Blaming the Victim. Jenson advocates a view based on biological deficiency.[34] Moynihan portrays the black family as matriarchal. His central position is that three centuries of injustice have resulted in deep structural distortions in the lives of black Americans. These distortions he describes as a "tangle of pathology" which can only be unravelled if these distortions are made right. Though much of his statistical data is accurate, his conclusions are in the form of broad generalizations, the most controversial of which is that whatever stability a black family achieves depends on a powerful, controlling, domineering mother. Hill's study is an attempt to negate the negative perceptions of black families created by the widespread media coverage of The Moynihan Report. He presents and analyzes data on kinship bonds, work orientation, adaptability of family roles, achievement orientation, and religious orientation. His conclusions differ markedly from Moynihan's, and he states: "Contrary to the widespread belief in a 'matriarchy' among blacks, our findings reveal that most black families, whether low-income or not, are char-

acterized by an equalitarian pattern in which neither spouse dominates, but shares decision-making and the performance of expected tasks." Lewis advanced the concept of a "culture of poverty", which has become synonomous with his name. In his view, economic deprivation is accompanied by "structure, rationale, and defense mechanisms" necessary for survival. He states that "Once the culture of poverty has come into existence, it tends to perpetuate itself. By the time slum children are six or seven they have usually absorbed the basic attitudes and values of their subculture. Thereafter, they are psychologically unready to take full advantage of changing conditions or improving opportunities that may develop in their life time." Billingsley attempts to counter the views of both Moynihan and Lewis. He points out that authors generally concentrate on various forms of deviant behavior which they believe to be the result of breakdowns in family life. He maintains that these authors focus on the twenty five percent of the black population who demonstrate deviant behavior, while failing to look at the seventy five percent of the black population who meet the usual criteria of family stability. His central position is that racism is the most crucial factor in determining the viability of the black family. He states: "Racism, the oppression, exclusion, and discrimination of Negro people on the part of white people and white institutions, infests our whole society and operates as a barrier against the freedom, opportunity, and manhood of all the Negro people, whatever their level of achievement or socioeconomic status." Ryan's basic position is that the poor as a group are victimized by their social and economic circumstances and that within this total category blacks are more victimized than others. His stance with reference to

the black family is taken in opposition to the Moynihan study. He does not deny the accuracy of Moynihan's statistics but minimizes their relevance or usefulness. He comments: ". . . what these endless correlations mean (when translated from statistics to the lives of human beings) is that poor people tend to live in slums, to be oppressed and exploited and mistreated, and to experience enormous amounts of social, economic, mental and physical suffering as a result. And Negroes experience a vastly disproportionate share of this suffering."[35] Ironically, the contradictions in their positions notwithstanding, all of these points of view purport to be supported by research.

All of the perspectives can be categorized in two models, the deficit model and the social structural model. The deficit dategory would include Moynihan, Lewis and Jenson, while Hill, Billingsley, and Ryan would be placed in the social structural category. All of the theorists in the deficit category suggest, in varying degrees, that the behavior and life styles of blacks accrue from internal deficits in the make-up of the person. The structuralists, on the other hand, place more emphasis on external, contextual factors such as the role of social and economic constraints in the lives of poor people.[36] In sum: The first group holds that there is something about the people themselves that makes their life what it is. The second group holds that the people are the way they are because of the social situation in which they are placed.

These conflicting theories are relevant to the implementation of this project, because all of the prior interventions that have been attempted have been based on one of the two models. The deficit

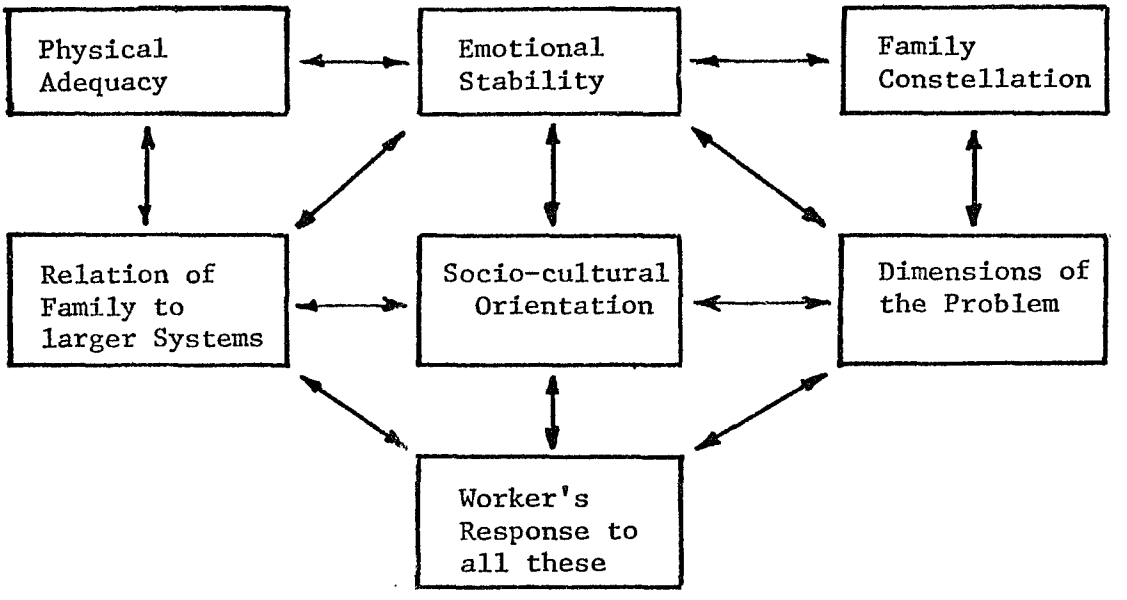
model has been, by far, the most influential. The theories of both Moynihan and Lewis received considerable publicity and widespread acceptance during the early 1960's. The term "culture of poverty" introduced by Lewis became a self-explanatory by-word. The notions implied by the term were "substantiated" in the work of Moynihan, and the "culture of poverty" concept became the base for determining national policies and strategies in programs for the poor.[37] Their view determines a perspective and dictates a deficit reduction approach that has thus far been unsuccessful in involving black parents. Given the range of possible perceptions of the black family and the conflicting positions in the theories presented, the writer concluded that any proposal for intervention with such families will be conditioned by the theoretical perspective of the planner.

Review of the substantive data presented in the first phase of the literature review and the range of theoretical positions described above revealed that no one author and no one of the theories advanced provided a sufficient base for the implementation of this project. Instead, what was suggested was a "repackaging" of available knowledge, much of which seems to be verified. This structure and the interplay of knowledge in it would seem to be the essential gestalt for approaching this type of project.

The essential gestalt seeks to portray needed areas of knowledge and their interplay in an approach to problem solution. It may be shown graphically as in the diagram on the following page.

Physical Adequacy denotes knowledge of physical well-being on the health-illness-disability continuum, including some notion of the impact of physical inadequacy on social functioning.

THE KNOWLEDGE GESTALT



Emotional Stability refers to the areas of knowledge related to emotional equilibrium, not in terms of "labels" or defined categories but in terms of capacity to assume expected social roles.

Family Constellation refers to an area of knowledge which includes the impact of "significant others", most often the family. This area also includes knowledge of family interaction and the impact of changing mores and life styles on family functioning.

Relation of Family to larger Systems denotes knowledge of community behavior, including the relation of a family to the larger society. It includes awareness of social systems and how they function, social stratification, and the impact of class on a target population.

Socio-cultural Orientation is a crucial dimension of the gestalt. It includes knowledge of life styles, educational and religious patterns, and significant cultural beliefs. It is in this area that the

impact of community compartmentalization becomes relevant. As a society we are beset by ethnic divisions and the "sets" that result from this pattern of life. Societal, educational, employment, and housing patterns effectively screen out opportunity for cross cultural familiarity. The most crucial of these restraints is the housing pattern of most communities.[38] In practically every community, there are distinct areas representing two things--ethnic and class affiliation. There is likely to be an area composed of middle Europeans; almost certainly there will be an Italian area; and, there is sure to be a black section of the town.

Communities are divided in these ways. People go from these separated sections of the community to their daily tasks and return to those sections without ever contacting difference except in the most superficial ways. They really never get a chance to know one another.

Communities are plagued by ethnic, religious, and intergenerational conflict. The religious tensions may be more subtle, more subdued, less vocal and violent, but they exist nonetheless. The racial tensions are likely to be more visible and more violent. In an era of increasing urbanization, there is an additional pressure of the class structure and the fears of lower class whites, the "caught" people--those who have achieved but not securely. They have moved up in the scale; but, not having solidified their positions, they feel real fear that the intruders, the invaders, those pushing from below will engulf them, take them over, and neutralize their gains. This is a real and understandable fear; to deal with it is not easy.

Depending on from which area of the community the worker has

come and how far he/she has been able to move vertically or horizontally in the stratification scale, one comes to the helping task with a certain kind of perception, a certain kind of "set", certain kinds of expectations of self and others. Stereotypic ideas and preconceived notions abound, and the nature of the cultural gap is one of very real difference in many areas.

Dimensions of the Problem refers to the components of the problem situation. In most instances, it will be found that this area is a combination of knowledge from several of the other areas. For example, the basic assumption on which this project is based--that the behavior of children is a result of the transactions between parents and children--was arrived at on the basis of knowledge from "Family Constellation" and "Socio-cultural Orientation". However, it could well be "Relation of Family to larger Systems" and "Socio-cultural Orientation". If this were conceived to be the case, this change in perception could change the whole focus of the project, including the targets for change.

Worker's Response refers to the worker's knowledge of how he/she reacts to the knowledge from each of the preceding squares.

The arrows represent the fluidity of the gestalt. The rectangles are seldom discrete. They interact, impinge on one another, creating a new situation which includes the target problem and the target population with which the worker set out to deal.

This discussion of knowledge, taken from social work and other areas, raises considerable question about the calibre of "worker" who has been involved in the projects with this kind of target population about which so much of the research has produced such negative impres-

sion of social work competence. In most of the research, the worker is presented as a "given". The consumer of the research has to assume that the worker or workers in the project evaluated possessed the requisite basic knowledge about black families, the reciprocal relations between those families and the larger community, and any value discrepancies between the target population and the population as a whole. As Wood has suggested, the tacit assumption has been that the MSW connotes knowledge in the needed areas and in needed amounts.[39] (The author can not make this assumption, especially with reference to "Relation of Family to larger Systems", "Socio-cultural Orientation", and "Worker's Response".) The review of the literature also suggests that this assumption may not be warranted.

This notion introduces a variable-the worker-which has not been tested. Such a test is beyond the interest, resources, and scope of the project. This project will be limited to an explication of that knowledge needed to engage the parents.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis for an exploratory project can be established in several ways--by hunch, on the basis of prior research in the area of concern, or from the theory regarding the area to be explored. The hypothesis for this project grows from the theories relative to black behavior as that theory is expressed in the literature, already reviewed. This review showed that the major theorists may be divided into two areas, the deficit model and the social structural model, which may be in conflict.

In the planning and implementation of this project, the deficit

model is rejected in favor of the social structural. In addition, the knowledge gestalt as described on pages 18-21, above, was taken into account. The hypothesis for the project grew from these two areas of theory.

Statement of the hypothesis:

Black parents of children who present problematic behavior are interested in their children and will involve themselves in activities which they perceive as beneficial to the children.

a. Parents will attend activities designed to improve their role as parents, if the timing of the activity is coordinated with their life schedules.

b. Parents will participate in activities designed to improve their role as parents, if they have a part in planning those activities.

The problem growing from this hypothesis was: How does one engage the parents of children who present problematic behavior?

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CHAPTER II

PROJECT DESIGN

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PROJECT DESIGN

Description of the Design

This project was conceptualized as an exploratory effort from which more definitive areas for investigation may evolve. It was recognized at the outset that a variety of strategies would be needed to involve parents in an agency based parent education program; therefore, the initial phase of the project was viewed as flexible or "rolling".[1] Once the parents were engaged, it would be necessary to work out a definite plan of activities with them. The plan was to engage the parents through the use of the proposed strategies and to develop the remainder of the joint work with them.

Because of the nature of both the problem and the target population, it was necessary to have what Suchman defines as levels of objectives. He observes:

> A distinction is often made between "objectives", "activities", and "steps" arranged in descending order, with each of the latter terms used to denote action taken to implement a former one. In this sense, the objectives make up an ordered series, each of which is dependent for its existence upon an objective at the next higher level, while each is, in turn, implemented by means of lower-level objectives. In this framework, there is a descending order of objectives, beginning with the idealized objectives and ending, at the lowest level, with a subdivision of administrative tasks.[2]

In this instance the idealized objective is to change the behavior of certain children who disrupt an agency program. Based on the

available social science data, it is hypothesized that a way to achieve this objective is to change the daily transactions between these children and the significant adults in their environment. There are two possible targets for such intervention: (1) the teachers in the agency program, or (2) the parents of the children. The teachers are more easily accessible; in fact, they are a "captive" target group. However, their contact with and impact on the children is more limited and restricted, so the decision was made to focus on the parents as the target group.

The decision to focus on the parents introduced a new level of objective. They were not a captive target group in the sense that the teachers were; and, if they were not involved, little movement could be made toward the overall objective. Thus, the highest priority objective became to engage the parent. The total effort was based on the assumption that a stimulus could be introduced that would change the view and behavior of the parents toward the children, resulting in changed responses from the children. None of this could be attempted if the parents would not participate. The engagement of the parents as participants in the project became the immediate objective of highest priority. This shift in objective caused a restructuring of the research question to be answered. While the problem and the "idealized goal" (that is, changing behavior of problematic children) remained the same, the immediate research question changed from-Can one introduce a stimulus that will be effective in changing the behavior of parents?-to: What goes into social work intervention aimed at securing the participation of non-voluntary parents?

The emphasis in the following summative exposition will be on

what went into the involement of these parents. Even while struggling with the basic objective of securing the participation of reluctant parents, subsidiary long range objectives had to be attended. The plan was that the worker would keep a log of activities occurring in the project and that when, and if, the program eventuated, the sessions with the parents would be taped. These were to be accountability measures. It was also determined at the outset that, although evaluations of one shot case studies are not of the highest validity, there should be some form of evaluation. This will be discussed in the section on evaluation.

Operational Definitions

The goal of this project was to engage the parents and involve them in activities designed to improve their roles as parents. Engagement was defined as the attendance of the parent in at least four of the parent education meetings. Involvement was defined as the presence of the parent in at least four of the parent education meetings and actual participation in at least three sessions. Strategy was defined as any act or technique, direct or indirect, used to engage the parent.

All of the strategies proposed and actually used were based on knowledge gained either from the review of the literature regarding prior attempts to engage similar target populations or from the writer's practice experience with such populations. An example of this was the use of a particular, initial film showing. All of the staff, some of whom were black, advised against the use of this particular strategy because of the sensitive nature of the film. The

author, however, knew both from the literature and from experiential observation that the content of the film actually replicated the life styles of some of the target families, or that some were not far removed from such a life style. The intent was to force engagement through provocation.

Discussion of Proposed Interventive Strategies

All of the strategies selected for use were based on what can be conceived as the three "I's" of engagement: (1) Impact, (2) Indirection, and (3) Inducement. Impact has to do with getting the target's attention, focusing that attention on an area of concern, and arriving at agreement that a condition exists about which something ought to be done. Indirection has to do with an approach that avoids pointing the finger of blame at a specific individual but allows him to share with others in the problem and in the search for solution. Inducement has to do with those activities designed to make the target want to become a part of the search for solution.

These strategies grow from what research has revealed about the target population. For example, several researchers conclude that the type of parent involved in this study is faced with such myriad survival problems that the parent defines "problem" differently or assigns a problem a different priority than does the larger society.[3] These parents are more attracted by activities with a social or entertainment focus than to activities of an educational or problem-solving nature. Kraft and Chilman state: "Two facts, however, have been well documented in previous studies of poor people in America: (1) They are less likely than most middle class Americans to join and maintain

membership in formal groups; (2) They are less likely to seek information on child-rearing from professional sources. Given these two facts, the logical expectation would be for meetings of parent education groups to be poorly attended by poor people."[4]

The repertoire of strategies selected included: the use of film; the use of individual contacts; the development of an indigenous cadre; formal and informal group discussions; and, the use of power. This section is devoted to a discussion of the rationale for selection of the proposed strategies.

The Use of Film.

The basic reason for the selection of a film to initiate the project was the author's agreement with the Chinese proverb: "One picture is worth more than ten thousand words."[5] In addition, a film stresses the experience itself and not merely the expression or understanding of the experience. Rather than just the intellect, film viewing is an experience which requires the involvement of the senses. The viewer is forced to compare, contrast, agree, disagree, and generally feel with, against, or in tune with the characters and situations he views.[6] It was anticipated that an initial film, properly selected, would make the point of concern about parent-child relations without that point having to be spelled out in accusatory terms; and, at the same time, the material viewed would serve as a provocation leading to involvement, as discussed on page 31, above.

The Use of Individual Contacts.

The individual contact was envisioned as the basic strategy in the repertoire of techniques toward engagement. The review of the

projects that had reported some success in parent education revealed that the face-to-face contact was repeatedly cited as the most effective recruitment activity. The plan was to use individual contacts, both direct and indirect, in person and by telephone to talk with parents when they came to leave or pick up their children or in prearranged home visits. The purpose of these contacts was to stress attendance at the parent meetings rather than to focus on the specific problems of the parent or the child.

Development of an Indigenous Cadre.

Based on the concept of community compartmentalization referred to in the section on theory, it was assumed that a gap existed between the perceptions of the agency representatives and the members of the target population. The most important effect of this gap was that it constituted both a communication and credibility block between the two groups. The indigenous cadre was envisioned as a vehicle to bridge this gap and open up channels of communication. In addition, Reissman and others have suggested that when people set out to help other people, quite often an equal amount or more help accrues to the helper.[7] Thus, it was felt that if parents could be involved in the recruitment of parents, they would get a sense of meaningful participation in the project, and their own interest would be increased.

The Use of Group Discussions.

Group discussions as a strategy were seen as both process and goal. The intent was to use formal and informal discussion groups as a medium for recruitment, retention, and education. The plan was to socialize the project in the agency by formal meetings with the board

of directors and the parent-teacher association and informal group meetings with parents in any way they could be assembled. Once this process recruited a nucleus of parents, then a series of group discussion meetings would be planned. This series would be the body of the parent education program.

The Use of Power.

The role of power in intra-organizational activities has been well documented in the literature.[8] Much less has been written about the use of power as a facet of interventive technique. Katz and Kahn have defined power as "the capacity to exert influence". French and Raven suggest five categories of power: (1) legitimate power, (2) reward power, (3) punishment power, (4) referent power, and (5) expert power.[9] In this situation the author had no legally sanctioned or legitimate power, had no ability to reward or punish the participants. So, the bases for any use of power had to fall within the categories of referent or expert power. Katz and Kahn observe further that "the essence of leadership has to do with that influential increment which goes beyond routine and taps bases of power beyond those which are organizationally decreed. These include referent power, which depends upon personal liking between leader and follower, and expert power, which depends upon the knowledge and ability of the leader".[10]

In a similar vein, Schermerhorn suggests that there are two major types of relationships, symmetrical and asymmetrical.[11] In symmetrical relationships the parties involved share equal influence, at least initially; and, in some cases the concept of power is not even present.

For the most part, symmetrical relationships pose little problem, therefore, we will focus here on asymmetrical relations, since it is in this area that problem might arise in the course of implementing a program for the target group.

Two classes of asymmetrical relationships have been identified: (1) asymmetrical relationships based on attraction of one party to the other, and (2) asymmetrical relationships based on one party exercising pressure over the other.[12] When the relationship is based on attraction, even if there is an uneven influence by one party over the other, the likelihood of conflict is minimized because the feelings between the involved parties are positive, and the association is a freer one. In this situation, conflict is not likely to occur.

The second class of asymmetrical relationship is most relevant to the implementation of the project. This class is based on urgency and pressure. In the current instance the urgency is predicated on the behavior of the children, and the pressure to do something about this is coming from the agency. According to Schermerhorn, there are five categories in this class. They are: (1) relationship to a figure who is dominant because he embodies informal group norms; (2) relationship to an expert who has specific and rational credentials for his position; (3) relationship to a person simply on the basis of his position; (4) relationship to a person because of his strength or his threat of violence; and (5) relationship to a person in authority because of established social precedence.[13] The relationship between the author and members of the target population fell within categories one and two of Schermerhorn's second class. The plan was to use this source of power as a lever toward implementation of the proposed program.

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CHAPTER III

THE SETTING

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THE SETTING

Description of the Agency

The setting for the program described here was The Community Day Nursery of the Oranges and Maplewood, New Jersey. This agency is a pre-school child care facility with a mental health orientation. In a pamphlet prepared for public relations purposes, the administration describes its program as follows:

> Community Day Nursery provides a meaningful, well-organized day care center in a modern building designed explicitly for this purpose. It is a non-profit organization, licensed by the New Jersey Department of Education. A professionally trained director and staff administer a program which accommodates all social, economic and racial groups of our community.
>
> Founded in 1894 (incorporated in 1897), Community Day Nursery primarily served underprivileged children and concerned itself with the child's physical well-being only. As times changed and new concepts developed, the program was extended to include the total child; his relationship to his family and other members of the child's society, his intellectual potential and his emotional well-being.[1]

The agency is supported by the local United Fund and by state and federal contributions through Title XX. Parents also pay a fee for service which is determined by the agency social worker, on a sliding scale according to parents' ability to pay.

It should be noted that this was the first, and perhaps still the only child care facility in New Jersey planned, designed, and

built for the purpose it serves.[2] It should also be clarified that, while they state that the program accommodates all social, economic, and racial groups of the community, in actuality, except for the children in the group for abused children, the one hundred and fourty four children served by the center are practically all black.

The agency employs teachers, assistant teachers, a full time social worker, a social work aide, and a part time consulting psychiatrist. There are nine teachers (four white, five black), thirteen assistant teachers (six white, seven black), and nine black CETA workers (of whom three are males). The agency has a long history of involvement in both education and social work. It has served as a field placement center for social work students from two schools of social work and many educational interns from local colleges. Two students from the school of social work in the state university are surrently doing their field work there.

History

As with most social agencies of any appreciable age, the day nursery has had several shifts of both physical location and clientele, these shifts being dictated by changing socio-economic conditions, man made disasters (wars), and population transitions. In the beginning, the client population consisted mainly of white families (mostly Italian); now, with the changed character of inner city populations, the families served are mostly black.

Inspired by the philosophy and the work of Charles Loring Brace, a group of "Friendly Visitors" from the local charity organization society were instrumental in the founding of the day nursery. A

shocking incident involving three young children, locked in an unheated apartment while their mother worked, was the immediate precipitating factor. In 1894, The Bureau of Associated Charities, convinced of a community need for a place where babies and young children might be cared for while their mothers worked, aided in drawing up plans for the nursery. A Board of Managers was formed, consisting of seven women. This board employed a "matron" and opened the nursery in a one-room house that had been used as a Homeopathic Dispensary. (This building had been offered rent-free to the group.) The agency was originally called The North Side Day Nursery.

Applicants were limited to the children of widowed mothers who had no choice but to work. In keeping with the climate of the times, the concern and care for the children was primarily physical. They were cared for from six in the morning until six-thirty at night, washed, and fed two or three meals daily which the members of the board took turns in making. (6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. were the stated hours; but, in actuality the nursery provided a twenty four hour service since the staff lived on the premises, and the agency was also used for any lost or homeless youngsters who had no other place to go. The twenty four hour availability was terminated in 1930.) For those able to pay, the fee was five cents daily for one child, eight cents for two (in the same family) and ten cents for three. In addition to parent fees, donations and subscriptions made up the balance of the agency budget.

Incorporated in 1897, by 1900 the daily attendance had grown to fourteen children, necessitating a change of location to larger quarters. An interested and anonymous friend purchased a renovated farm

building at 60 South Center Street in Orange and donated it to the agency. This building housed the agency until 1961 when in moved into a new building that had been planned and built from the ground up for the specific purpose that the agency serves. (It should be noted that, even though there was a large capital fund raising campaign mounted for the new building, it was the equity in the building at 60 South Center Street, considerably appreciated over the years, which made the plans for the new structure a possible consideration.)

Born out of the ferment of the broad industrial changes of the nineteenth century, the agency has had its course and its character shaped by all the significant events of the twentieth century---World War I, The Great Depression, World War II. During World War I enrollments rose, and by 1917, with the calls upon women from war industry, the average daily attendance at the nursery was forty-seven children, including twenty-two infants and pre-school children, fourteen kindergarten and eleven after-school children. (While the agency was at 60 South Center Street, parents could enroll children who were old enough to go to school by themselves but who had no after school supervision.) These arrangements greatly taxed both facilities and personnel---by now consisting of the matron, the head of the infants ward, and trained nurses as assistants. The fact that there were nurses instead of teachers gives an interesting insight into the thinking of the time concerning young children. Physical (custodial) care was uppermost in importance.

After World War I, the most noteworthy twentieth century event in the evolving history of the agency was the great depression. The depression struck a heavy blow at many families in the area. The

nursery softened the blow, where possible, by carrying approximately fifty percent of its children without charge. It did request of its parents that they give service instead of money payment. These services consisted of cleaning and repairing nursery equipment and clothing and partial maintenance of the building. Parents who could afford it were paying fees ranging from five to twenty-five cents daily, although there was no real examination of ability to pay. Like every other agency in the community, the nursery had to scale down its costs in every way short of eliminating service. Enrollments during this period were rather spotty and irregular; but, interestingly enough, did not drop off too greatly. The reason for this was the greater amount of work for women than for men, as domestics and in factories. Women could often do a "man's work", and yet not have to be paid a man's wage. It was in keeping with this development that the nursery policy on admissions was modified to admit any child of working mothers. (Prior to this, admission had been restricted--first to the children of widows and later extended to include deserted mothers.) By 1935 the nursery was accepting children when there was a serious or incapacitating illness in the home, as well as the children of working mothers.

In the 30's the care continued to be mainly custodial, frequently involving overnight services for sick and homeless children, although this had tapered off from the earlier years when, in connection with The Children's Aid and Adoption Society of Orange, homeless children were housed at the nursery night and day until other suitable arrangements could be made. However, by 1935 the nursery had discontinued its twenty four hour schedule, since this had become too

demanding on limited staff.

In the late 30's the nursery became a member of the Child Welfare League of America and the newly organized National Association of Day Nurseries. There appeared a gradual change in philosophy and increased concern about more than the child's physical needs.[4] Social work services began to be used, as a social caseworker was loaned to the agency by the Children's Aid and Adoption Society. When the "matron" (who served for over forty years) retired, the board sought and found a director trained in child development.

Great impetus was given to the nursery school movement by World War II. In New Jersey sixty-two child care centers subsidized by federal funds provided by the Lanham Act were opened to care for children of mothers in war work. This led to the organization of a state child care unit under the direction of the Departments of Education and Institutions and Agencies. As nurseries increased, concern for the care of young children was felt by the state Departments of Education, Health and Welfare, because there was no state agency legally responsible for private philanthropic nurseries. Out of this concern, The New Jersey Association for Nursery Education was organized in 1945. (The Commissioner of Education was granted the legal responsibility for licensing all day care centers for children from two to five years of age.) Standards for such centers were developed in 1946 and revised in 1953. The Community Day Nursery was licensed in 1947.

In 1950 the nursery added a full time caseworker to its regular staff and committed itself to a program designed to improve family life. The caseworker was used to try to determine which applicants were most in need of the nursery facilities and to carry on casework

in regard to family problems while the children were being aided by the nursery program of activities, to further their social, psychological, and physical growth and development.

The expansion of program and population during World War II and in the years immediately following the war began to tax the limits of the structure at 60 South Center Street. The Board of Directors began to consider the notion of selling this building and using the capital accruing from it as the beginning of a fund for a new building, designed specifically for a day nursery. A site was located on Freeman Avenue in East Orange. (By now the population of the nursery was largely black, and this location was right in the heart of a changing neighborhood, with a heavy influx of blacks.)

In 1955 the agency embarked on a capital fund drive for the new building. The drive was quite successful; and, in 1958 ground was broken for the new nursery at 18 Freeman Avenue. The building was completed in late 1960. In 1961 the agency moved from South Center Street to Freeman Avenue. However, it required less than a decade for the nursery to outgrow these carefully planned facilities. Fortunately the site on which the nursery had been built extended from Freeman Avenue to South Munn Avenue, and a large vacant piece of land had been left behind the newly constructed building. In 1971 another building fund drive was initiated, plus the fact that by now the agency was eligible for state-federal assistance for capital improvement. A new building was built, fronting on South Munn Avenue; and, in 1976 the agency moved from Freeman Avenue to its present location at 115 South Munn Avenue, East Orange.

Current Organization

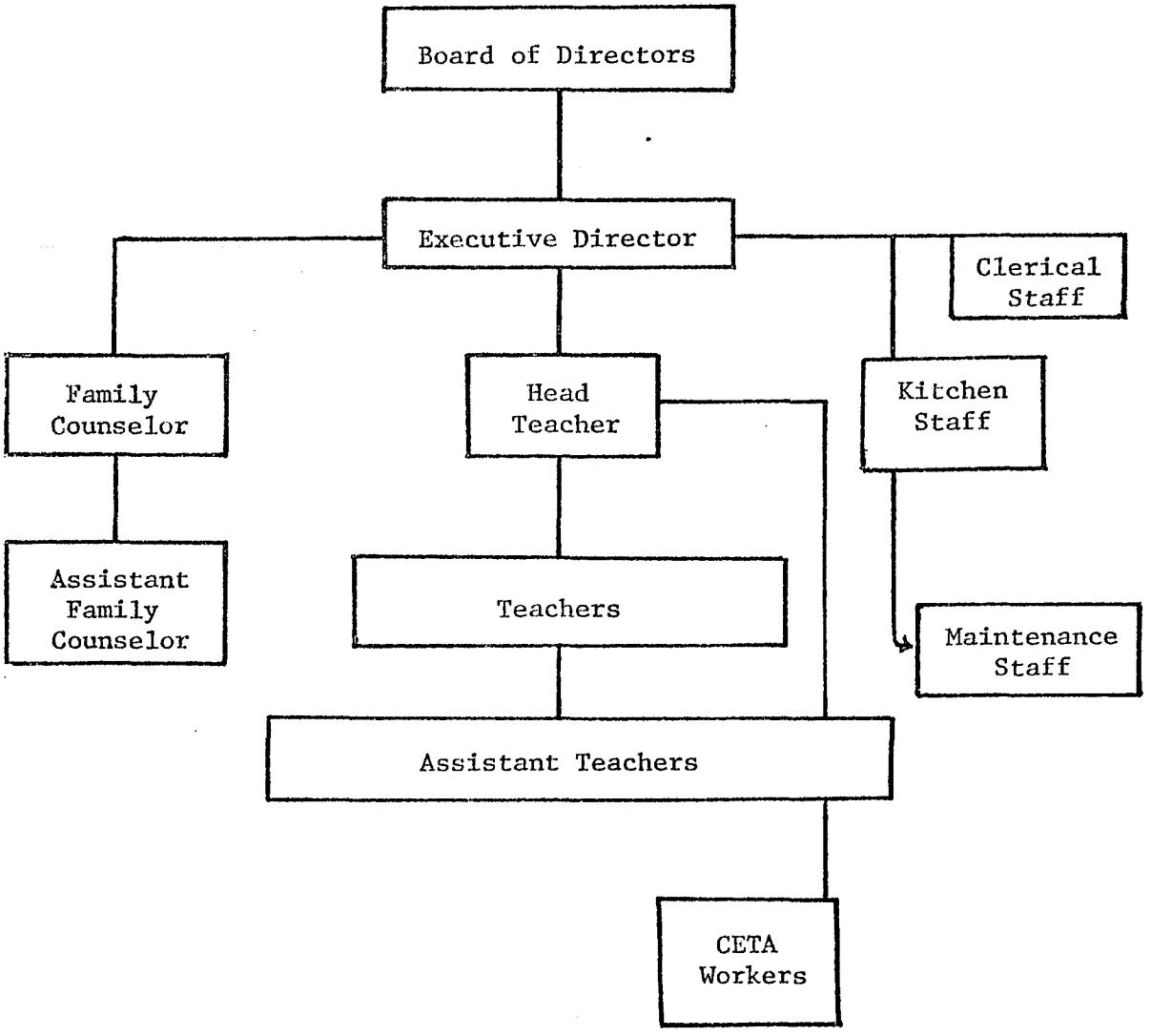
In its current organization and philosophy the center serves as a combination pre-school educational enterprise and a social agency. The agency is actively involved in the activities of the professional social work community of the Oranges and Maplewood. The agency director serves as president of the county organization of Day Nurseries and also as a citizen member of the Board of Directors of the State Board of Public Welfare.

Internally the agency is set up as in the diagram on page 47. The center is open five days a week, Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 5:15 p.m., 12 months a year. The agency observes the same holidays as the East Orange Public Schools; and, in case of bad weather, they are closed whenever the public schools are closed.

The Head Teacher and the teachers are selected on the basis of qualification as teachers, with emphasis on early childhood education. The regular daily program is divided into segments for classes, free play, and nap times. The children are given a morning "snack" and a full lunch.

Monthly parent-teacher meetings are scheduled; and, in addition, parents have access to agency staff through their child's teacher or through individual contacts with the social work staff. Fees continue to be established in accordance to a sliding scale based on parents' ability to pay, with many of the children being subsidized or fully paid for from Title XX funds. The agency is currently licensed by the Division of Youth and Family Service of New Jersey. (The officially designated child care agency, once known as The State Board of Child Welfare.)

TABLE OF ORGANIZATION - COMMUNITY DAY NURSERY



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[1]Community Day Nursery: "What Do You Know about Day Care?" (East Orange, N.J.: Community Day Nursery, 1972), p. 1.

[2]This information obtained in an interview with Ms. Susan Zimmer, agency director, November 11, 1978.

[3]Rhoda M. Berg, "History of the Day Nursery of the Oranges" (Orange, New Jersey, 1953). Most of the early history of the agency is abstracted from this paper. Data since 1953 has been accumulated through interviews and review of agency files.

[4]While this was a significant change in the philosophy of the center, it was, in fact, a gradual change brought to fruition by the converging of a number of factors: (1) changed social attitudes and awareness of the community as a result of the large number of women, some of whom had not worked before, who had to work during the depression; (2) the aging of the agency director who had been oriented as a nurse, and the consequent need to seek new leadership; and, (3) the emergence of a national standard setting agency for day care. See, for example, Helen Hart, "Day Nurseries in a Changing World", A Report of the Research Program of the National Federation of Day Nurseries (New York: National Federation of Day Nurseries, 1931), p. 5.

CHAPTER IV

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

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The implementation of the project occurred in three distinct phases: (1) the ground work phase, (2) the recruitment and program planning phase, and (3) the execution of the program. While there may be some overlap in the activities of the worker from one phase to another, the total project will be more clear to the reader if each phase is discussed separately.

The Ground Work Phase

The ground work phase included all the activities necessary to socialize the project within the agency and to achieve beginning contact with parents. Simultaneously, it was necessary to develop a parent education program designed to deal with the problem presented by the agency. This was a necessary task, even though adjustments would have to be made in the planned program as the group formed and the interests and needs of the parents became more apparent. (A copy of the planned program is Appendix C.)

The project was based on a number of propositions which grew out of the literature review. They are:

1. Lower class, urban black parents tend to be oriented toward the present.[1]

2. Lower class, urban black parents tend to have constricted experiences and an alienated, distrustful approach to society, outside of family.[2]

3. Lower class, urban black parents tend to engage in limited verbal communication with relative absence of subtlety and abstract concepts.[3]

4. Lower class, urban black parents are mainly from families in which there were low levels of educational-occupational achievement by parents.[4]

5. The behavior of lower class, urban black parents is conditioned by feelings of powerlessness.[5]

6. Lower class, urban black parents experience a poverty of resources (social and economic) relative to felt needs and levels of aspiration.[6]

7. Lower class, urban black parents are often unable to move, or for cultural reasons avoid moving to their advantage through impersonal and bureaucratic channels.[7]

8. Lower class, urban black parents often present a facade to the external world and behave differently in their own communities.[8]

Based on these propositions, the logical connection between the objective of the project--the engagement of parents--and worker activities in program development and implementation can be expressed in propositional statements of the "if . . . then" variety. The following examples are illustrative:

> If black parents tend to be oriented toward the present, then intervention with them should be present oriented. Any considerable lapse of time between a planned event and its execution would be discouraged. Such factors as appointment letters for contacts at some worker determined future time would be minimized. Availability, on the part of the worker, becomes a key factor in working with parents whose life schedules are packed and pressured.
>
> If black parents tend to engage in limited verbal communication with relative absence of subtlety and abstract concepts, then the worker should take steps to open channels of communication. "Messages are made up of signs, and a sign is a signal that stands for something in experience."[9] When the target population comes from the black, lower classes, the worker has to assure that he/she understands the linguistic shorthand of the ghetto, the abbreviated style, and the

> lack of qualifying embellishment to speech patterns. In addition, care has to be taken not to mistake taciturnity for intellectual inadequacy.
>
> If black parents present a facade to the external world and behave differently in their own communities, then the worker should move to penetrate the facade and deal with what the parents perceive as the reality.

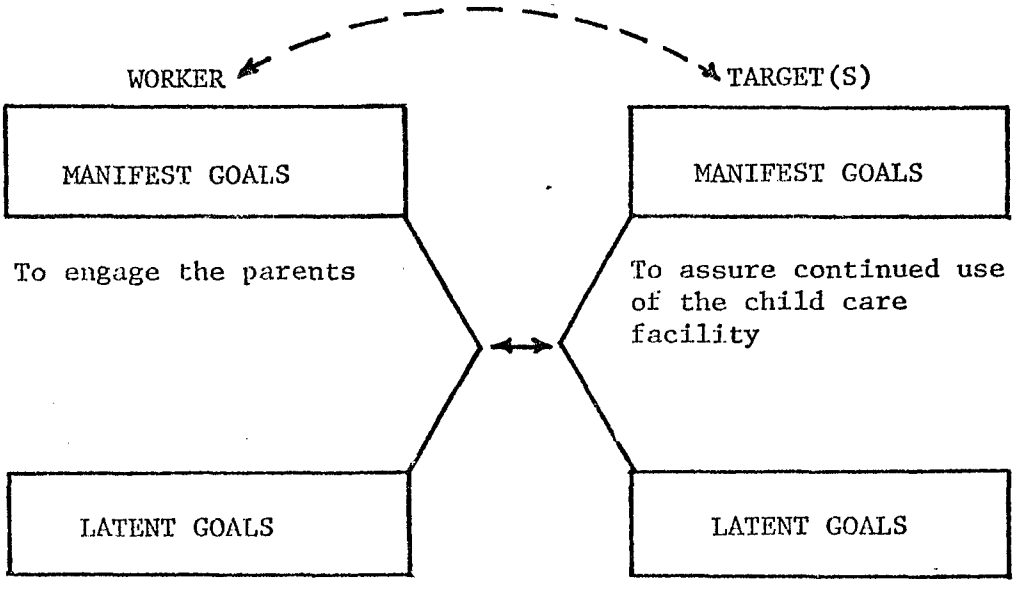
The last propositional statement is crucial both to the engagement process and the program as a whole. It expresses acknowledgement that both the worker and the target group have manifest and latent goals. The diagram on page 53 attempts to show the complexity of this interplay and the need to resolve the combined communication and evasion problems, if engagement is to be achieved.

The worker dealt with the problem of availability by spending informal, unscheduled time at the agency. There were numerous individual contacts with parents, both direct and indirect, in person and by telephone. Parents were seen either when they came to leave or pick up their children, usually the latter. The stress in these contacts was on developing trust and urging attendance at the planned meetings.

Every opportunity was taken to meet with and use both formal and informal groups within the agency to publicize the project. These meetings included several planning meetings with the agency director, two meetings with the agency social workers to discuss their experiences with the target population, and several meetings with informal groups of parents, which might appear to have occurred by chance but which actually occurred, because the worker knew from agency staff the best times to encounter such groupings, and arranged to be available at those times.

In addition, the worker arranged to be invited to a board meet-

The Communication Problem in Engagement
Related to Worker-Target Behaviors



[10]

From this diagram, one can see that both the worker and the target(s) have hidden agendas.[11] These have to be reconciled before open communication can occur. The broken line suggests usual communication channels. The solid line shows the level of communication needed for engagement.[12]

ing where the essential elements of the project were described. The board seemed interested, and the members were enthusiastic in their expressions of support. There were some questions, the most important being whether the project would entail any changes in agency structure or organization. They were informed of the possible need to stagger staff hours to provide a child care function during the weekly meetings. There were no expressed objections to this possibility.[13] The worker also arranged to be invited to a meeting of the parent-teacher group where the project was one of the items discussed.

Some mention needs be made of the crude mechanics of getting a project such as this initiated. The worker should check and recheck the apparently routine, simple aspects of the activity, such things as the availability of custodians, locked doors, accessories, availability of telephone, and rest rooms for men and women. An example of this need occurred on the night of the first planned meeting. Ordinarily the agency is closed at night. In order for the group to meet, the director had said that she would arrange for the custodian to be available to admit the group to the building. The custodian had been instructed to meet the worker at the door at 7:15 to prepare for a meeting scheduled at 7:30. He misunderstood the directions; and, at 7:15 he was busily working on another floor while the worker and several parents stood out in the bitter cold.[14] Fortunately he happened to pass through the lobby, and the group was able to attract his attention. Then, the tape recorder was not available--this, despite the fact that the worker had come in the afternoon to bring some tapes and to be sure that the equipment would be available. However, the equipment was locked in the receptionist's office, and the custodian

was under standing orders "not to unlock any office doors". He had not understood any instructions to the contrary on this. He was right in doing what he had been told to do, the group did not press him.

The principle to be explicated for this and any similar project: The basic mechanics are important and can obstruct the technical (professional) components of implementation. The worker should anticipate and prepare contingency plans to avoid mechanical disruption.

The Recruitment and Program Planning Phase

In conjunction with the agency social workers, it was planned that the first project contact with the parents would be a film presentation at which the worker would be the discussion leader. The worker was to select the film and selected "This is the Home of Mrs. LeVant Graham".[15]

On the afternoon of the meeting day, the worker met at the agency with the director, the two social workers, the supervising teacher, and two male members of the teaching staff. The meeting was convened for two reasons: (1) the worker wanted to preview the film and make some notes in preparation for the meeting with the parents, and (2) the worker wanted the key members of the staff to see and react to the film prior to its being shown to the parents. Having chosen the film, the worker knew its content. "This is the Home of Mrs. LeVant Graham" is an earthy, hard hitting chronicle of a black life style that has both class and ethnic overtones. While the Grahams are not on public welfare, they are quite poor. This is reflected in the kind of house they live in, and the overcrowded conditions in which they live. Moreover, in terms of behavior, the film includes a number of dominant

society stereotypic portrayals of black behavior. In the main, however, it has a basic realism; it does contain parents and children living under difficult conditions and shows clearly the nature of parent-child interaction.

Staff reaction to the film was predictable. From the black social worker: "You can't show that to our parents, because it doesn't represent 'our families'. Ten people that I can think of now will get up and walk out!" It was obvious that she felt personally affronted. From the white social worker who is Jewish: reticence, a reluctance to comment at all, and then finally an analogy with how she feels when something "negative about Jews" is shown on television. Overall, the consensus of staff was that the film was a poor choice and that to show it would jeopardize the success of the meeting.

Even though the worker had anticipated some reaction of this sort, their strong protestations engendered misgivings with which he tried to deal. Their reservations were acknowledged; but, the worker pointed out that the major focus, the prime concern is really what is best for the children. The project had to take the risk, that simply showing the parents a nice, cozy palliative document would not move us in the direction we wanted to go. Finally, the worker promised them that he would assume full responsibility for the selection of the film and expressed the view that, if the group were properly prepared before seeing the film, it could be useful and something quite positive could come out of it.

When the worker left this preliminary meeting, he was challenged but also aware that he was at a critical point in the development of the project. The initial meeting with the parents seemed much more

crucial. If, in their expressions the staff had correctly assessed the nature of the parents rather than personal defensiveness and the meeting did fail, what would happen to the excellent cooperation given by the staff up to this point? How would a poor meeting affect any chance of enlisting parents to help in recruiting the resistant parents? There was an urgency to do a good job of presenting and dealing with the film.

Using the notes made in previewing the film, the worker prepared the following points for an introductory statement:

"This is the Home of Mrs. LeVant Graham"

1. The worker assumes responsiblity for the choice of film

2. Rationale: Here, state in a general way the rationale for the meeting and for the film, emphasizing the focus on and concern for children

3. Suggest some areas for which viewers should be alert, emphasizing focus on everyday problems with which all families have to deal, such as:

    a. The number of people that have to live in a given space

    b. The quality of the atmosphere in the home

    c. Family roles--and, how they are carried out Who does what? and, when?

    d. Basic problems of how to pay the rent, buy the food, and the like

    e. Some common parent-child problems:

        The kind of toys
        The kind of discipline
        How much television

    f. Drugs and alcohol

Forty one parents came to the meeting. Counting members of the staff present, there were fifty two people in the showing. The worker

made the introductory remarks and then showed the film. The worker stationed himself near the front along a side wall where he could see the audience while the film was being run. The impact of the film was marked and quite visible. One man sitting on the front row, bent over, placed his elbows on his knees, and covered his face with his hands momentarily. Later, a staff person who sat near him said that he murmurred, "I don't want to see that". The film lasted only fifteen minutes; the meeting lasted one hour and forty five minutes. No one left; and, the group seemed reluctant to disperse when the meeting was terminated.

The preliminary meeting with the staff proved to be most helpful. They had correctly predicted the audience response. In fact, practically the first question was, "Why did you pick that film to show us?"; and, the inflection on Us said much, in terms of their class and status self perceptions. Once we got over this hurdle, it was necessary to deal with some other questions that were essentially superficial and dealing mainly with class and status concerns. However, we were able to get some substantial questions, to look at what the grating atmosphere in the Graham home did to the Graham children, to talk about some transactions between parents and children, and how hard it is to make these come out right, regardless of ethnic or class. For example: how does a child know that a parent's apparent disinterest or lack of time, which may be the same thing to the child, accrues from apathy or over-ambition? Is it possible to become so involved with getting ahead that one loses sight of what is best for the child?

The group became quite involved, at one point quite animated; they seemed to forget about the Grahams, and the discussion focused

generally on parents and children. This was used as a springboard to talk about what we might build from this discussion, including the possibility of a series of parent discussions. The worker invited any parents who were interested in pursuing this to remain after the meeting. Seven stayed, and these seven became the nucleus of the indigenous cadre.

The worker met briefly with these seven parents, and a follow-up meeting was planned for the next week. The next morning he called the social worker to ask if she would formally invite the seven parents to the planned meeting. She agreed to do this and also to provide the worker with the names of other parents who should be asked to come. In the course of the conversation, the social worker commented that she thought the previous night's meeting had gone well and that she was pleased. The worker considered this comment significant, because she was the worker who was most strenuously opposed to the film.

One of the parents who stayed for the discussion following the film was the president of the parent-teacher group. She held a unique position in the total agency operation. She was on cordial and close relations with both administration and staff and at the same time had a viable relationship with most of the parents. Using her as a focal point, a cadre of eight was developed to serve as a steering committee for the project. Several of the members of this basic eight worked in firms where they could and did use the resources of time, material and creativity in the interest of the project. For example, while we were still discussing the best ways of reaching the parents, the group came up with the idea of a flyer which they would prepare and which would go to all the parents who had children enrolled. One

mother commented that her fourteen year old son liked to draw and that she could get him to make a picture for the flyer. She did. This flyer entitled "Let's Get Together" is Appendix A.

Another of the mothers worked as a secretary in a local university. She agreed to prepare the copy. Another volunteered the resources of her company to "reduce" the large picture to a size suitable for the flyer. After these plans and resources were pooled and the flyer completed, the cadre met at the agency one evening to address and stuff the envelopes and put the notices in the mail. In addition, the cadre developed a "telephone chain" which they set in motion on each week-end prior to a scheduled meeting. They became the core of the ongoing group.[16]

While the cadre was very helpful in the recruitment effort, most of the parents who finally joined the group and stayed with it were secured in the daily individual contacts by the worker. During the month of January, he arranged to spend time at the agency between 3:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. at least three days a week. In this time he was able to contact a number of the parents who had attended the film showing and those who were identified by the agency social workers.

Throughout the worker's contacts with these parents, he detected a sometimes veiled, sometimes more open, "we--they" dichotomy in their thinking and expression in referring to the agency or its activities. It was almost as though they perceived their life situations as one of "we" against "they". The "they" referred most often to agency administration or staff; but, at times and in more subtle ways, the expressions seemed to take on an ethnic coloration. That is, that "whites" were always in a superior position: "blacks" were always in a sub-

servient position.

On whatever count, the worker came to sense that he was perceived as a "we" rather than a "they". He was clearly "outside" the agency organizational system; yet, from their perspective, he had influence with and within that system. It needs be noted that this view and the referent power which accrued from it was buttressed by the excellent cooperation which agency administration gave to the project. The securing of access to the building at odd times, securing the opening of a usually locked parking area, the acquisition of the open room with toys for children who had to accompany their parents were activities that seemed to impress the parents. Combined, these activities presented the view of the worker's having "the capacity to influence". This may be viewed as "only" sound efficient administration; but, given the attitudinal schism described above, it is seen as a factor of considerable import in the implementation of the project.

This phase of the project included the first meeting scheduled after the showing of the film. Because the tape recorder was not available and also because this meeting is representative, a summary taken from notes in the log is given below:

> This meeting lasted for two hours during which time the women talked freely. A number of things emerged, most significant of them being that, even in this group, no one knew anyone else. They made occasional comments of how this one had seen or passed that one either in bringing or picking up their children from the school; but, no names were known, and when given these had to be repeated several times. This seems to be a pattern in parent-to-parent relationships in the organization, even among those who regularly attend PTA . . . One commented: "I know faces, but I don't know names."
>
> The substance of the meeting could be divided into

three categories: (1) their complaints, (2) their informal discussion, and (3) their plan. The essence of these categories is summarized:

1. Their Complaints

   a. Difficulties related to leaving and picking up their child, especially related to picking up

   b. The organizational structure which prohibits direct discussion of the child with the child's teacher. (Teachers refer children's problems to one of the two social workers, and parents are urged to talk with the social worker rather than the teacher.)

   c. What they described as the "authoritarian" administrative structure, e.g. the selection of officers for the PTA, and the like

   d. Complaints with implicit "racist" undertones--e.g. one mother commented: "No matter how nice white people are, they're still white."

2. Informal Discussion

   In the informal discussions, they compared notes on daily schedules, the demands of their children who were not in the nursery program, and the possiblity or degree of involvement of their men. As indicated earlier, they did not know each other, and the informal discussions (which were also digressions) were being used to get acquainted. A common thread running through these discussions was one of pressure and harrassment.

3. Their Plan

   Despite all the digressions and the constant need to try to keep them "focused", they were enthusiastic and seemed taken with the idea of parent-to-parent discussions. They responded positively to the idea of a series of such meetings. They centered their discussion around the mechanics of getting a larger group of parents together. They decided to prepare a flyer to go to all parents--from "A Group of Concerned Parents"-- and spent considerable time working on the format and wording of such an instrument. They set March 1st as the date for a "mass meeting", with the formal discussion series to begin on March 8th.

The central purpose of this section has been to delineate what were the strategies that recruited these parents. The strategy used most often was the person to person contact by the worker. The assistance of an indigenous cadre and group meetings with various components of the agency were included. In these contacts, the worker used both referent power and expert power. Chilman comments: "A group approach to working with very poor parents may be highly effective--at least it has been judged to be with some parents. This approach seems promising, partly because cultural change appears to be brought about, to some extent, through acceptance and identification with an individual who serves as an 'ego ideal'. This is particularly true if this person is the leader of a group, and more particularly if he or she is liked and admired by group members."[17] This is the basis of referent power; the worker was aware of this, and used this power whenever possible.

Probably the most important thing that the worker did was to indicate understanding of their situation by responding to both their manifest and latent concerns. The existence of a "we-they" dichotomy in their thinking and expression in relation to the agency has been referred to earlier. This also meant that in their behavioral repertoire they had "packaged" role behaviors for the "we" and other behaviors for the "they". This poses a potential trap for the worker, for to bridge the gap between the "we" and the "they" constantly poses the possibility of disloyalty to one or the other. For example, when one mother advanced the idea that her son hit other children without provocation or sprinkled his language liberally with profanity, because "he learned it in the nursery", the worker had to turn the discussion

to the use of language in the home and the impact of this on a child's manner of speech. In this instance, the worker knew from the staff that much of the child's disruptive behavior was brought with him into the school. Without appearing to "take the side" of the agency, the worker had to help the group to look at their role and their use of sanctions with children. Some authors call this "doing what works". The writer would call it rather the "differential use of self", within the context of the knowledge gestalt described earlier.[18]

It should be noted that this is not "rule-governed behavior" on the part of the worker.[19] It is open to question whether rule-governed behavior would have allowed for the amount of time and energy invested in the project or whether a rule-governed worker would have made such an investment. Zimmerman also raises the question of whether relating primarily to the needs and interests of the target population would not ultimately pose difficulty for the worker, since the "rules" are directed at the goals of the agency rather than the needs of individual clients.[20] Vinter also raises this as an organizational dilemna.[21] In terms of the "we-they" dichotomy, the worker within the system is caught in the middle. As a person outside the agency hierarchy, the worker in the current situation was able to handle this, mainly by relying on expert power, in ways not available to a person within the structure.

This description of intervention raises anew the question of what it means to be professional. What is professional behavior? Here, the writer would like to differentiate his concern about "professionalism" from that expressed by Whittaker and others which, in essence, is a concern about the split between the so-called tradition-

alists and those who opt for more systems intervention or social action. This is a realistic dilemna and a cause for concern by the profession. However, the writer's concern has to do with the aura, the more basic role behavior of the social worker in whatever arena is chosen for the focus of professional activity. This concern has to do with how to achieve sophistication without "preciousness". Though it may seem to be a contradiction in terms, it is as if one could become more professional, at least with this target population, by appearing less "professional". It has to do with what the persons in this target population would call "vibes", feelings and reactions of both the worker and those for whom help is intended. If a worker has expertise--knows how to cut through the organizational and individual facades to the "hidden agendas" and the individual latent fears, concerns and inhibitions, can be objectively empathic, and knows how to use questions both to obtain and to convey information--this ability is in no way reduced by being relaxed and unpretentious about it. It is in this area that the worker was most able to reach these parents, to appear identified with their "we" without alienating the "they". Probably the best example of this is in the choice and use of the film. The worker took a calculated risk in doing this; but, it was a risk that, on the basis of professional knowledge, he felt he had to take. As a black, the film created a "cognitive dissonance" even in him, but as a professional, he knew that there were some blacks who, however much their protestations, were not too far removed from the message of the film. This had to be handled in such a way as not to aggravate the "hurt" of the reality and yet move to try to come to terms with it.

The recruitment and program planning phase culminated in the

development of a project flow chart, shown on page 67, which provides an overview of the total effort.

The parents in this group were about as diverse as one can assemble a group of individuals. Their only common grounds for this activity were (1) that they used this agency, and (2) their interest in their children. This analysis attempts to look at the composition of the group in terms of age, sex, marital status, number of children, education, occupation, housing and geographic point of origin. The review of the literature, especially the evaluations of those programs based on the "deficit" model, gave the impression that one could expect a monolithic set of characteristics in the target population. The characteristics selected for examination were intended to provide a profile which would support or reject the deficit assumption.[22]

Although the fathers were invited and encouraged to come, the group consisted overwhelmingly of mothers. This is not surprising when one looks at the data on marital status--of the eighteen women who had been married, seven were separated from their husbands. There were four mothers who had not been married. (See Table No. 1)

Table No. 1

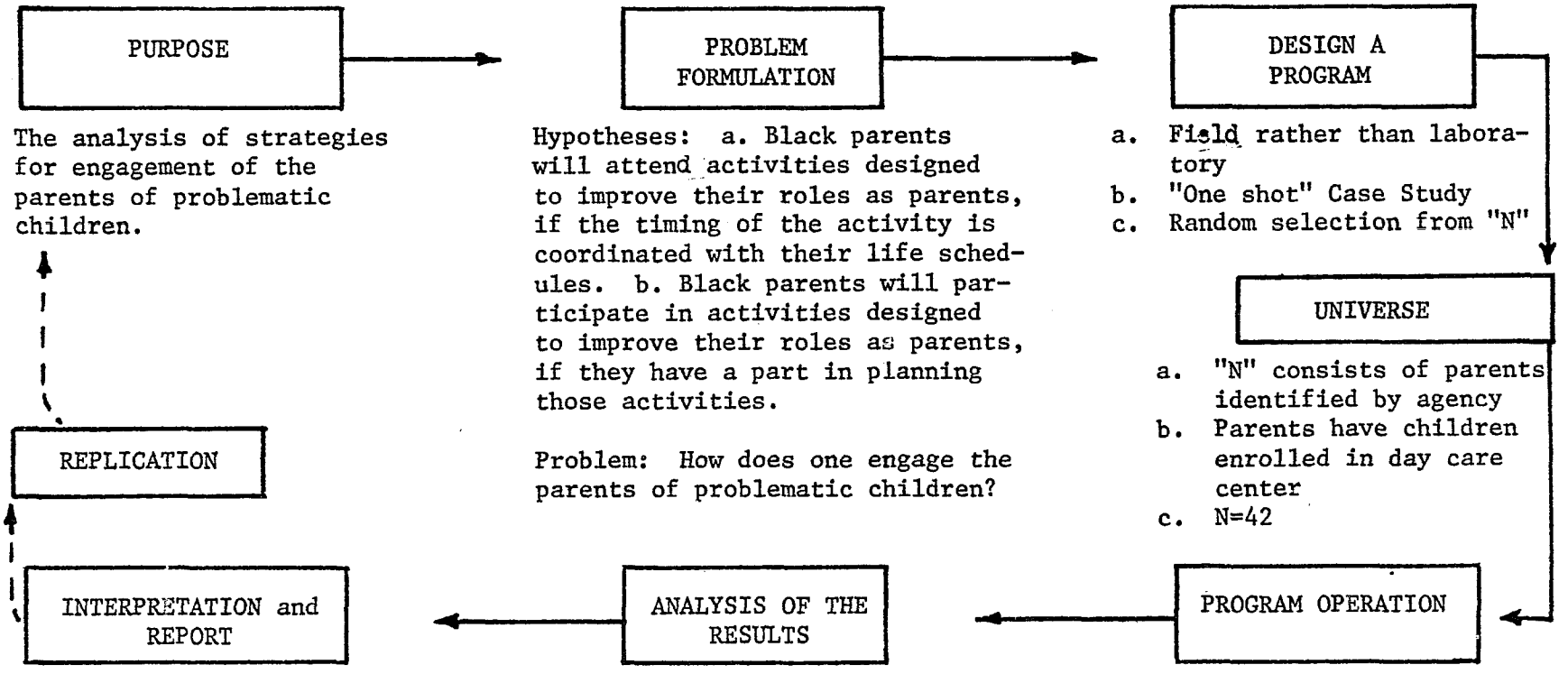
Participants' Marital Status

Marital Status	Percent	Number
Single	18.2	4
Married	45.5	10
Married but Separated	31.8	7
Widowed	4.5	1
Total	100.0	22

A large number of the participants are married (45.5%), but this

CHART #1

PROJECT FLOW CHART



tells nothing about the availability or role of the spouse. The significant figure is the 31.8% who are married but separated. This figure combined with the percentages for single and widowed show that 44.5% of the families represented were one parent families.

The ages of the participants ranged from twenty four to forty six, with the median age being in the 26 to 30 category. (See Table No. 2)

Table No. 2

Age Range of Participants

Age Range	Percent	Number
20 - 25	13.6	3
26 - 30	50.	11
31 - 35	22.5	5
36 - 40	9.4	2
41 - 45	.0	0
46 - 50	4.5	1
Total	100.0	22

The number of children per "family" ranged from one to four, with only four families having four; one family had three, and the remainder had one or two children.

The diversity is best illustrated by the data on educational background which shows a spread from one mother with an eighth grade education to four who were college graduates. (See Table No. 3)

Table No. 3

Educational Attainment of Participants

Level of Education	Percent	Number
Below High School	4.5	1
Some High School	31.8	7
High School Complete	27.3	6
Beyond High School	18.2	4
College Complete	18.2	4
Total	100.0	22

The tremendous range in educational attainment probably accounts for the lack of social contacts and familiarity of the parents. (It also affected the level of group discussions.) This table, as well as the others emphasizes the lack of "common denominator" among the agency's clientele.

The ranges in occupations reflect these differences in education. (See Table No. 4)

Table No. 4

Occupational Distribution of Participants

Occupation	Percent	Number
Secretaries	18.4	4
Housewives	13.7	3
Clerks (No Typing)	13.7	3
Teachers	13.7	3
Maintenance Personnel	9.	2
Students	9.	2
Unemployed (Welfare)	9.	2
Occupational Therapist	4.5	1
Factory Worker	4.5	1
Unemployed (Rehab.)	4.5	1
Total	100.0	22

The occupational distribution reflects the wide diversity in the group and the differences in interest, capacity, and time allocation. It is significant to note that only three participants (13.7%) were "unemployed", one of these was on rehabilitation allowance as a result of injury in line of duty as a policeman, and two were recipients of public welfare assistance. However, there is a positive correlation between the distribution for level of educational attainment and the occupational distribution. Four of the participants or 18.2% completed college, and three of them, 13.7%, are teachers. On the other hand,

fourteen or 63.6% had attained less than complete high school education. Excluding the housewives (13.7%), those with less than high school completed represent 72.6% of the occupational distribution, and this in the least stable employment or the unemployed category.

Point of geographic origin (birth place) can give clues to cultural background.[23] Twelve of the participants were from the North (New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania); five were from the South (Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia), and four came from points outside the United States.

Only one couple owned their own home, two lived in the homes of their parents, and the remainder lived in rented apartments. Two participants were recipients of public welfare assistance.

In sum, this is a young group of energetic blacks who are trying to "make it".[24] They were a widely divergent group of twenty two people who had little in common in terms of cultural background, level of education, and occupational capacity and involvement.

Execution of the Program

The plan for the parent discussion series was developed by the worker and the steering committee. The committee decided that the series should be called simply a "Parent Discussion Session". The worker provided leadership for their deliberations. This leadership was based on propositions and principles related to practice, such as:

Propositions:

a. Group conditions are established to provide constructive experience which will assist the individual to feel differently about himself and others.

b. Group conditions are established to give support or to add pressure to the individual's attempt to behave differently.

c. Group conditions are established to provide opportunities for the individual to discuss and examine problems which he/she experiences in problematic areas of life.

d. Group conditions are established to make it possible for the individual to examine and analyze his impact on others as it is expressed in the group interaction.[25]

Applicable Practice Principles:

a. The worker should provide sufficient support that in time the major support to its members will come from the group itself.

b. Support may be given through verbalization or through nonverbal demonstration of the worker's interest.

c. The worker should direct effort toward helping the members communicate more effectively with each other and with other people.

d. Distorted perceptions of reality should be corrected, and members should be helped to develop effective coping mechanisms to deal with the actual situation.

Northen suggests: "A major task of the social worker is to contribute ideas, facts, and value concepts which are not available to the members and which may prove useful to them as they attempt to become oriented to and cope with their situations."[26]

There were seven parent meetings on consecutive weeks. Each week, reminder notices were sent to all the identified parents. On this notice, the worker posed a question for the parents to consider prior to the meeting. The discussion topics and the questions posed for each topic are shown in the chart that follows.

The Parent Discussion Series

Meeting #	Topic for Discussion	Question Posed to Parents
I	Parents set the pattern: But, who has the model?	Does your child want to be like you?
II	The Importance of Love	How does your child know you love him/her?
III	Dealing with the "parent child"	Do you have a "parent child" in your family?
IV	The One Parent Family	How do you fill the gap caused by the absence of the other parent?
V	Discipline and/or Punishment	Do you take out your frustrations on your child?
VI	Sexual Curiosity and Education	Does your child learn from the "birds and bees" or will he/she be taught in the streets?
VII	Ethnic Identification	Is being black enough?

The format for each meeting was essentially the same. The worker opened the discussion with comments, usually on the question that had been posed. After this introduction, the discussion was opened to the parents who could address questions to the leader or to other members of the group. Parents were encouraged to answer; and, wherever possible, to give specific examples out of their experience. In these discussions, parents were able to get the feeling that the daily problems they faced were not peculiar to or limited to their families. When this happened, the group was able to discuss alternate ways of handling a given problem.

There were some parents, two in particular, who did not want to discuss problems, even though it was clear that they had a number of them. One man tried constantly to divert the group to a discussion of

a trip to the circus. He obtained permission from agency administration and placed a poster on the bulletin board where parents could sign to indicate their interest. He received little response; and, eventually, the circus idea was dropped.

As the sessions progressed, there was considerable sharing of experiences both at home and with their children in the nursery. Two problems engrossed them; they repeatedly came back to the problem of discipline and parental sexual behavior in the home or sex education. When specific problems were cited, an attempt was made to have the group arrive at several alternative solutions, so that a particular parent could choose that solution which best fit his or her situation.

Toward the end the group developed cohesiveness and camaraderie to the extent that when the last several meetings were terminated, it was difficult to break up the small clusters on the parking lot so that the lot could be locked. At the conclusion of the seven sessions, there was an additional informal summary and evaluation meeting during which the participants completed the evaluation questionnaires.

LIST OF REFERENCES

[1]Catherine S. Chilman, "Social Work Practice with Very Poor Families", p. 14.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Sumati N. Dubey and Morris L. Grant, "Powerlessness Among Disadvantaged Blacks", Social Casework 51 (May 1970).

[6]Melvin L. Kohn, "Social Class and Parent-Child Relationships", in Frank Riessman, Jerome Cohen, and Arthur Pearl, eds., Mental Health of the Poor (New York: The Free Press, 1964), pp. 164-165.

[7]Ibid., pp. 166-168.

[8]William F. Whyte, Street Corner Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); also "Social Organization in the Slums", American Sociological Review 8 (February 1943): 34-39.

[9]Wilbur Schramm, ed., Process and Effects of Mass Communication (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1954), p. 3.

[10]It is interesting to note that with one exception, all of the parents who were seen as involved had rather clear family or parent-child problems. They included a divorced mother living with her parents, a working mother whose husband would not work, a widowed mother of four, a separated mother of two, a divorced father with custody of a young child, and a working mother, supporting a husband who was still in school.

[11]Leland P. Bradford, "The Case of the Hidden Agenda", Adult Leadership 2 (December 1953); William C. Schutz, "Interpersonal Underworld", in Warren G. Bennis, Kenneth D. Benne, and Robert Chin, eds., The Planning of Change (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961), p. 293.

[12]For elaboration of this idea, see: Ward Hunt Goodenough, Cooperation in Change (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1963), Part 2, pp. 377-428. He comments: "When people communicate, they do more than exchange mutually intelligible words. An important purpose of communication is to share experience, or to enlarge the area of mutual understanding between persons whose experiences differ." p. 387.

[13]The staggering of staff hours never eventuated, but arrangements were made to have one classroom left open with toys available to accommodate those parents who found it necessary to bring small children with them. For elaboration on the importance of this, see: Ade and

Hoot, "Motivation vs. Alienation", Day Care and Early Education 4, p. 19.

[14]Throughout the project, activity with the parents was greatly hampered by the bitter cold in the most severe winter in years. (Some say one hundred years.) The program was to begin on February 8, 1978; but, because of the severe cold and heavy snow, meetings had to be cancelled on February 8th and 15th. There is no way of adequately assessing the impact of this factor on the total project.

[15]See discussion on use of film as a strategy, p. 32, above.

[16]See: p. 32, supra.

[17]Catherine S. Chilman, "Social Work Practice with Very Poor Families", p. 16.

[18]See: pp. 18-22, supra.

[19]Don H. Zimmerman, "Tasks and Troubles: The Practical Bases of Work Activities in a Public Assistance Organization", in Donald A. Hanson, ed., Explorations in Sociology and Counseling (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1969).

[20]Ibid.

[21]Robert Vinter, "Analysis of Treatment Organizations", Social Work 8 (July 1963): 10-11.

[22]See discussion of theory, pp. 15-18, supra.

[23]This is true of all migrants; but, it is particularly true of blacks. There have been varying conditions of acceptance or rejection of blacks in different countries and in different sections of the United States. The nature of these conditions has impact on how the person is socialized and is relevant to assessment of later behavior. Differences may include dietary patterns, religious orientation, and family structure. See: Edwin Harwood, "Urbanism as a Way of Negro Life", in William McCord, John Howard, and Bernard Friedberg, eds., Life Styles in the Black Ghetto (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1969), pp. 20-23.

[24]Trying to "make it" is a common colloquial expression in the black community. The "it" refers to those values and achievements which the dominant society considers important. In this sense, "trying to make it" describes people who are upwardly mobile in search of social acceptance and economic security.

[25]Max Sugar, The Adolescent in Group and Family Therapy (New York: Brunner-Mazel, 1975).

[26]Helen Northen, Social Work with Groups (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), pp. 63-69.

[27]See: pp. 64-65, supra.

CHAPTER V

EVALUATION

CHAPTER V

EVALUATION

Evaluation is a judgement of whether goals were achieved to a desirable or intended degree. Ordinarily, research is used as the mechanism to make that determination; however, research for evaluation purpose has to make certain adaptations in relation to the activity being measured. For example, instead of the hypothesis as presented in classical research designs, one might begin with a statement of program purpose or goals.[1] Goals can be formulated by need, by the client or target group, by a worker group, or by a funding source. In this instance, the goals was set by need--on the basis of a specific request from a specific agency. The original goal of the project was to try to reduce the "acting out" behavior of children who were creating problems in the agency. Based on the assumption that children's behavior is most affected by the responses of significant adults in their environment,[2] a proposal was advanced to use parent-education as a means of changing the transactions of the parents with their children. It immediately became apparent, from the literature and from sources within the agency, that it would be difficult just to engage these parents. The immediate goal was then reduced to an effort to involve the parents and to analyze the strategies used to do this.

Two questions were posed for the project: (1) How can one

involve parents who are apparently pressured and occupied with survival concerns? and (2) Is it possible to move parents to a different level of concern for and involvement with their children? The first question seems to have been positively answered and forms the substance of Chapter IV, above. The second question remains to be answered, but some indications will be given here in the excerpts from parents' comments in their evaluations of the program.

Objective evaluation of this kind of effort is exceedingly difficult. In an attempt to objectify, two sources have been used. First is the verbal response of staff who, in comparing this attempt with their own experiences and other attempts to involve the parents, have indicated a positive view of the effort. The second source is the parents themselves. A questionnaire (Shown in Appendix B) was given to the participants in the final session. The questionnaire was designed to measure reaction to each meeting that the parent attended, six components of each meeting, and to elicit evaluative responses about the program as a whole. The questions about the meetings and the components provided the participants an opportunity to express the degree to which they responded to the program. Their choices to a question ranged from "not at all" to "very much", with a rating scale of one to five to indicate degrees of preference within these two choices. For example:

Question:	To what extent did you enjoy the program as a whole?	Not at all 1 2 3 4 5	Very much

The extreme negative responses would be "1"; the extreme positive response would be "5", while "3" would indicate a middle range response of indifference or neutrality.

Fourteen of the participants who attended the ongoing sessions had not attended the film showing and so were not affected by it. Of the twelve who did see the film, only one expressed outright disapproval. Six others were indifferent or neutral about it, giving the film a rating of "3", and five indicated that they liked it "very much" and gave it a "5".

The appraisals of the sequential meetings were highly positive, with only one participant scoring an indifferent "3", three rated it "4", and sixteen indicated "5". Reaction to the program as a whole received a similar response.

Sixteen participants indicated that as the program progressed, their reaction to it "became more positive", while five indicated that their feelings "did not change". However, this data has limited value, because no effort had been made to ascertain their view prior to the beginning of the program.

Asked whether they understood the goals of the program, seventeen responded that they did, while three indicated "not sure". The same responses were given to the question of how the discussions were related to the aims of the program.

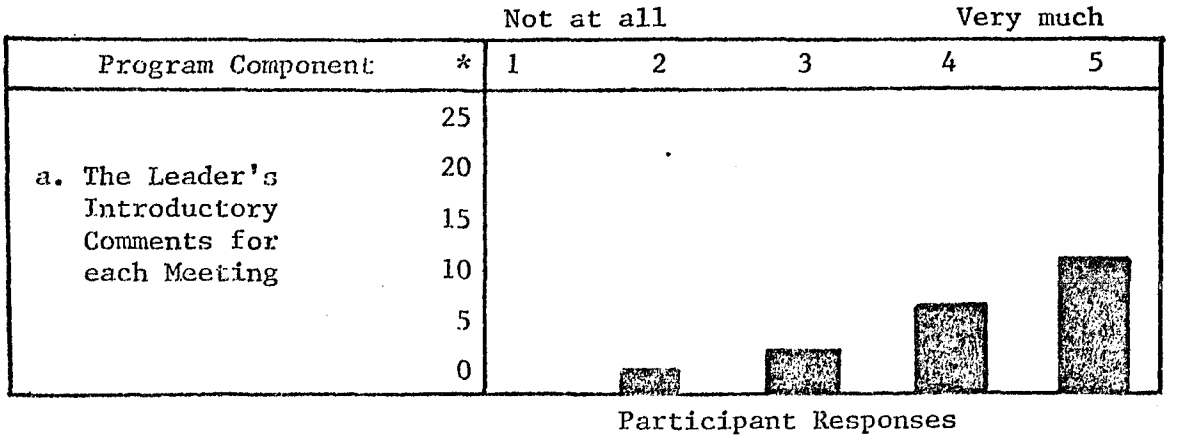
The answers to question number six are most revealing, and the responses are shown graphically in the charts on pages 80 and 81. Because of the small sample, participant ratings are presented on the charts in absolute frequencies rather than in percentages. The number of participants responding are shown on the X axis and the frequency of responses in a particular category on the rating scale are shown on the Y axis.

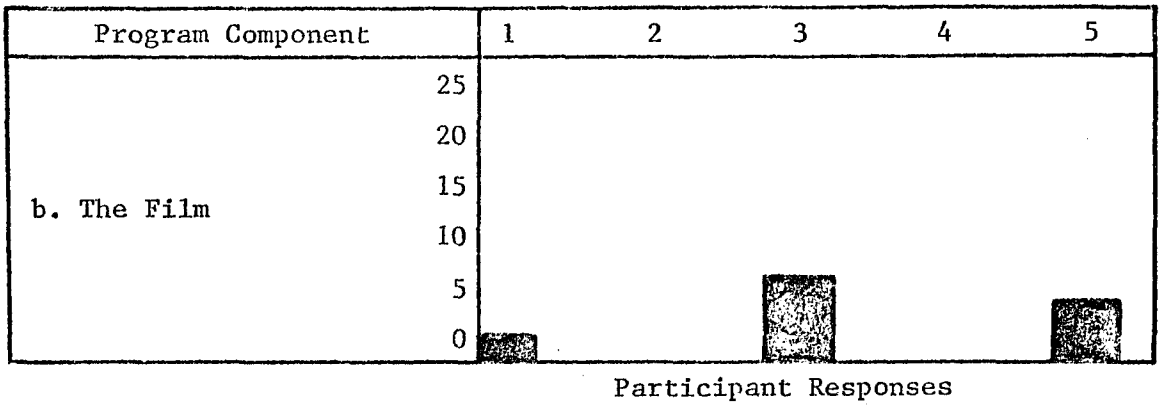
It is evident from this profile of the responses to question

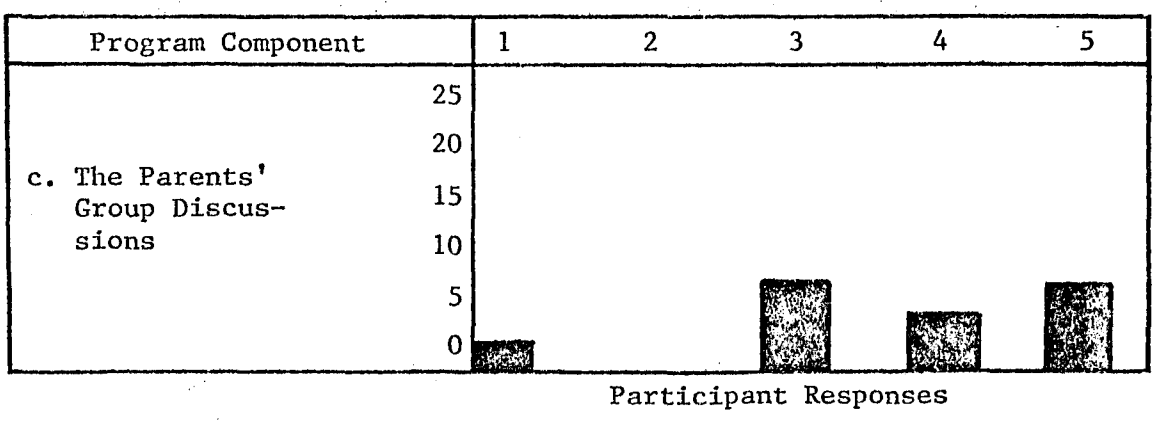
CHART #3

PARTICIPANT EVALUATIONS OF PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Question 6: How helpful did you find the following parts of the Program? N=20





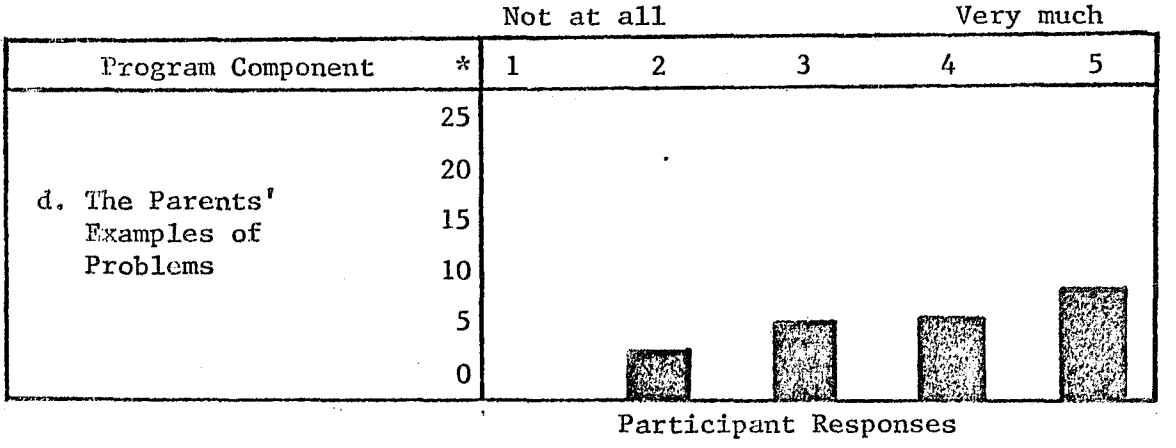


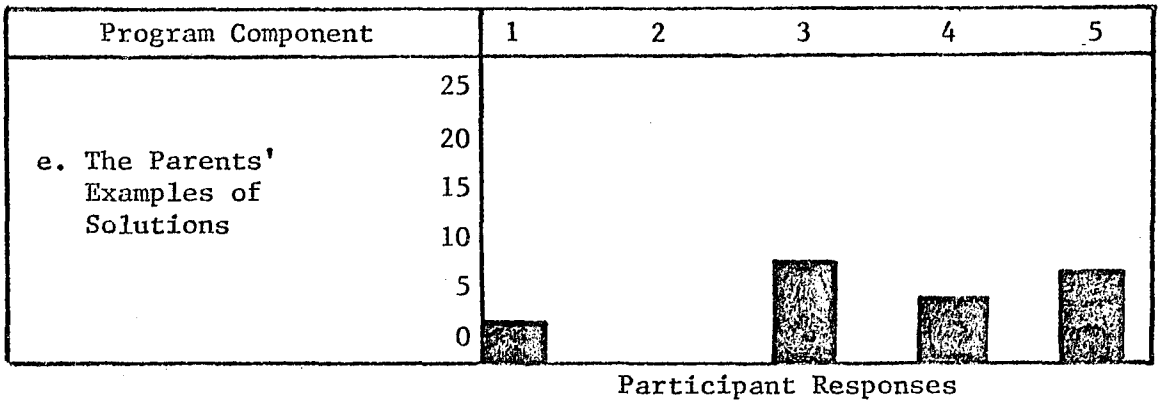
*Frequencies of Response are shown on Y axis.

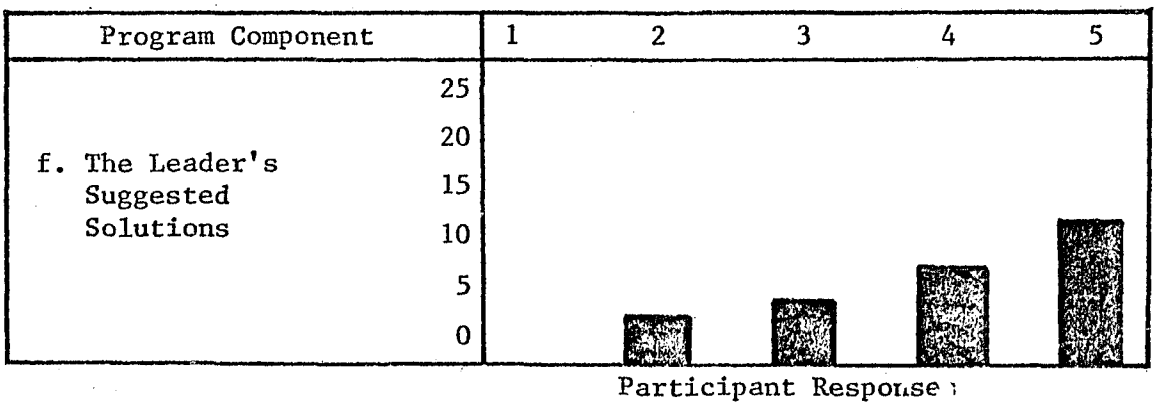
CHART #3

PARTICIPANT EVALUATIONS OF PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Question 6: How helpful did you find the following parts of the Program?
N=20







*Frequencies of Response are shown on Y axis.

number six that the participants were most positive about "leader" type activities and least positive about "parent" type activities. There were eighteen positive responses for leader's introductory comments and seventeen positive responses for leader suggested solutions; seven negative responses to parents' examples of problems and nine negative responses to parent solutions.

At the same time, the profile of responses reflects a rather wide range of reaction to all parts of the program. Not all participants answered question number ten, requesting suggestions for improvement of the program; but, of those who did, the responses clearly indicated this spread in reaction. The following excerpts quoted verbatim from the evaluation forms are illustrative: One participant wrote: "Try to get feedback from each parent who attends the meeting. Make sure that the parents stick to the specific subject matter so that they can better try to come up with solutions to the problems at hand. This is a must because as I noticed it is very easy to get over-emotionally involved and then start to stray off in a tangent." Another wrote simply: "Thinking of the 'way' to solicit more response (participation) from parents." To this same question, another said: "I feel this program should be repeated throughout the year." Two longer responses clearly show contrasts in reaction. One: "Yes. I feel that the leader's lecturing might have been too much for some parents. It is not that he was not interesting or that he was boring. I feel that he inadvertently 'stepped' on some sensitive feelings. Perhaps he should try more opening statements from the parents. However, I personally benefited from him." The other: "I would love to see more parents come out and join us. 'I loved it'. I feel if some

of the parents were aware of some of the interesting topics we discussed they would be willing to join us. They would really learn something. I did! I feel as if I was useful, and other parents were useful to me, in the form of sharing their thoughts with the group."

No attempt has been made to assess the impact of this small project on the original problem presented by the agency, the behavior of the children. The engagement of the parents, with that original problem as the rationale, was seen as the goal of the project. The author does know that there was an excitement in the agency about "the project", that the worker was much under foot and made numerous demands on both administration and staff. The project's "just being there" had to have some impact on the total climate.

Analysis of the Results

The initial hypothesis regarding engagement seems to be supported by this study. The agency had identified forty two parents for the program, and twenty two or 52.4% of them were engaged and actively involved in the program.

Attendance at the parent sessions ranged from a low of twelve to a high of twenty two, with an average attendance of eighteen. Only parents who attended a minimum of three of the parent sessions were considered in this accounting. Eleven parents attended every session, and eleven attended five sessions.

Four major strategies were used to recruit these parents. These were: (1) the parent-teacher meeting at which the worker was presented and the program described, (2) an initial film showing, with discussion, (3) individual contacts, and (4) group meetings. These contacts

have been tabulated and the attendance at each one compared with the attendance in the series of parent sessions, in an effort to assess the effectiveness of the various strategies. (See chart on page 85)

In this chart the category "PTA Meeting" refers to a specific parent-teacher meeting called for the purpose of presenting the worker to the parents and to describe the project. The category "Film" refers to the film showing planned by the worker to initiate the project. The category "Individual Contacts" refers to direct, face-to-face contacts by the worker with identified parents. The category "Group Contacts" is limited to contacts with members of the parent planning group. The category "Attendance" indicates attendance by the parent in at least four of the planned meetings. The "Involvement" category refers to active participation in at least three meetings.

Of the forty one parents who attended the film, eight were members of the identified group, and all eight became participants in the ongoing program. Of the thirty three individual contacts with members of the identified group, nineteen became a part of the ongoing program. This appears to be a very high 86.5%; however, this factor is reduced when one considers that five of the parents on the chart apparently attend every activity, so can not be seen as recruited. This is especially shown in the category of group contacts which refers mainly to meetings with the steering committee. Five of the members of this cadre apparently attend everything, and no particular strategy can be seen as recruiting them.

Given this fact plus the fact that only eight parents who saw the film became a part of the project, and five of them attended all other activities, the project does not show the film showing to be a

CHART #2

PROFILE OF ATTENDANCE

Recruitment Phase						The Program	
Parents listed by Number	PTA Meeting	Film	Individual Contacts	Group Contacts		Atten-dance	Involve-ment
1	x		x			x	
2	x	x	x	x		x	x
3	x	x	x			x	
4	x		x			x	
5							
6	x		x			x	
7							
8			x				
9			x			x	
10			x				
11	x	x	x	x		x	
12			x				
13	x					x	
14	x		x				
15			x	x		x	x
16						x	
17			x				
18			x				
19	x		x			x	
20	x		x			x	
21							
22		x	x	x		x	x
23			x				
24							
25			x				
26	x	x	x	x		x	x
27							
28			x				
29	x	x	x	x		x	x
30	x		x			x	
31			x			x	
32			x				
33			x				
34							
35			x			x	
36			x				
37	x		x				
38		x	x			x	x
39			x			x	
40	x		x	x		x	
41							
42		x	x	x		x	x
Totals	15	8	33	8		22	8

strong recruitment strategy.

The project does seem to support earlier findings that face-to-face contacts are the most effective recruitment technique.[3] Even allowing for the parents who apparently attended every activity, fourteen or 63.7% of the group that attended the sessions can be attributed to this strategy.

Eight parents were seen as involved in the parent sessions.[4] These were the parents who carried the bulk of the discussion and raised most of the questions.

In comparison with the results obtained in efforts to involve similar target groups, the results of this effort are seen as positive.[5] The more immediate problem and the one to which the project was addressed was the involvement of the parents. The agency had provided a list of forty two names--and with it the admonition that they were unreachable. The worker was able to involve twenty two or 52.4% of these parents in at least a beginning consideration of the problems of children and of parents in relation to children. From this perspective, it would appear that the project succeeded to a considerable degree.

LIST OF REFERENCES

[1]Edward A. Suchman, Evaluative Research, Principles and Practice in Public Service and Social Action Programs (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1967), pp. 38-39.

[2]This is a basic assumption that has enough general acceptance and support to be considered base for the activities in the project. While there are some mixed views on this--See: Arthur R. Jensen, Genetics and Education, p. 26, above--the weight is by far on the side of the causal effect of parent-child relations. See: Wesley C. Becker, Consequences of Different Kinds of Parental Discipline", p. 26, above; also, Ira A. Gordon, A Home Learning Center Approach to Early Stimulation (Gainesville, Florida: Institute for Development of Human Resources, 1971).

[3]See Discussion of Project Enable, p. 9-10, supra.

[4]It is interesting to note that with one exception, all of the parents who were seen as involved had rather clear family or parent-child problems. They included a divorced mother living with her parents, a working mother whose husband would not work, a widowed mother of four, a separated mother of two, a divorced father with custody of a young child, and a working mother, supporting a husband who was still in school.

[5]See: pp. 10-12, supra.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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Summary

This report describes an exploratory project designed to engage parents in a program focused on improvement of their roles as parents. The project began with the goal of developing strategies of intervention intended to change the nature and quality of transactions between parents and children. The parents in the target population were non-voluntary and not overly cooperative. Without their cooperation, nothing could be done to attain the goal. The more immediate focus of the project was shifted to a subsidiary objective--namely, the development and analysis of strategies of intervention toward engagement of non-voluntary parents.

Against the backdrop of busy life schedules and the most severe winter in a century, the worker set out to involve these parents in a series of activities designed to force them to reexamine their roles in relation to their children. The first task was to get the parents. To this end, the worker used both formal and informal contacts, both individual and group. One strategy was the development of a cadre of eight interested parents and using them as liaison with the total target population. However, the most effective strategy proved to be face-to-face contacts with parents by the worker.

The effort to reach the parents began in January, 1978; the

first parents' discussion session was on March 8, 1978 and continued for seven consecutive weeks. Of the forty two designated parents, twenty two or 52.4% agreed to participate in the sessions; and, of this group, there was an average attendance of eighteen at the parent meetings. The program was planned and conducted on the basis of propositions and propositional statements deriving from practice theory. (See: pp. 50-52, above)

Limitations of the Study

This study has several apparent limitations. One is that it was a one-time program from which it is hard to generalize. However, the study was seen as field and exploratory in nature rather than laboratory, precise. Another limitation was the size of the sample, which makes it difficult to generalize these findings to other similar target populations. Both factors were conditioned in large measure by the nature of the problem and the available resources. Even with these limitations, the project has yielded insights which could be useful to both social work education and practice and as a basis for further research. These will be discussed in the sections on conclusions and needed areas of research, below.

Conclusions

The results of this project have led to the following conclusions, which must be considered tentative in view of the limitations described above:

Two conclusions emerge clearly from this project. The first is that non-voluntary parents <u>can</u> be reached but that they are not likely

to be reached within the context of systemized, rule-governed worker behavior. The investment of time, energy, and self involved go well beyond the expectable requirements of ordinary employment.

The second conclusion is that these parents have needs for themselves that supercede the needs of their children. This conclusion evolved from both individual and group contacts with the parents. During the recruitment phase when the worker was trying to involve them in a project centered around children, the reasons given for not being available centered around transportation, parking, lack of time, household pressures (having worked all day and having to prepare a meal), and lack of responsible babysitters. All of these reasons are obviously related indirectly to the needs of children, but they related much more directly to the needs and energy levels of the parents.

During the early period, the worker spent considerable time in or near the agency, especially in the mornings and late evenings-- the times when parents would bring their children or pick them up. On one morning when it was not only very cold but also raining in a steady down pour, he was sitting in a car waiting for the rain to slacken when he saw one of the mothers from the target population approaching the nursery. With the hand of a small child in each of her hands, she was bent forward, fighting into the rain and literally dragging the two children toward the door. All the pressures of an entire day were reflected in that picture. She had to get the children to the nursery, get back to some kind of transportation, and battle the clock to arrive at a job somewhere on time. She probably loved her children, but the need to survive and the pressures involved in that survival of necessity received high priority.

Implications for Social Work Education and Practice

The results of this project would seem to have considerable significance for both social work education and practice. Of all the strategies attempted to reach the parents in this population, the most productive was the face-to-face contact with the worker. The findings suggest that emphasis should be placed on qualities rather than activities; tenacity and perseverance, knowledge, and "style" were the qualities most responsible for the engagement of half the target population. All of these vary from worker to worker which makes the tasks of explication and replication exceedingly difficult. However, prior research and this project have pointed to this as the critical factor.

This obviously raises the question of whether what was accomplished here could have been achieved by any well-intentioned worker. This is the "given" upon which other such projects apparently have been based; but, the reported results from prior projects with this type of target population seem to negate this possibility.[1] There is a body of knowledge and skill requisite to the successful development of such a project.[2] From this body of knowledge and skill and within the context of the experience from this project, the author would suggest certain principles in relation to social work education and social work practice. Both areas are included, because one seems to be contingent on the other; and, because the reported failures are sufficiently pervasive to indicate reason for concern in both areas. For each area the relevant principles will be set forth, followed by a brief discussion of each principle.

Social Work Education.

It has long been accepted that social work education should focus on both cognitive and affective components of learning.[3] It is the author's view that the profession has done much better with the cognitive than with the affective. Thus, the practice principles related to professional preparation which emerge from this project are largely rooted in this area. They are:

1. Social work education should focus more attention on the teaching of empathic response.

2. Social work education should assure that all masters level social workers, regardless of method or practice area, acquire the basic techniques of initiation or engagement, interviewing, assessment, intervention, and termination.[4]

3. Social work education should focus more attention on field practice experiences which assure cross-cultural exposure for the student.

The Teaching of Empathic Response.

The writer acknowledges the difficulty of even defining empathic response which compounds the difficulty of teaching it. Siporin suggests that "Empathy refers to an ability to experience someone else's feelings and perspectives, as if they were one's own; to take the role, or step into the shoes, of the other, and then step back into one's own shoes. An empathic process consists of the construction of a mental representation or image of the other person, and utilizing this in the steps of identification, incorporation, reverberation, and objective detachment."[5] With the current emphasis on computerized operations in the public agencies to which the target population is exposed, the face-to-face contact and the dimension of worker empathy are critical factors in the process of engagement. The crucial dimension in pro-

fessional preparation is the dislodging of the personal "set" occasioned by the "conditioning" which the embryonic practitioner brings to graduate study.[6]

There is ample research that documents the existence of cleavages between blacks and whites in the society.[7] It is incumbent on schools of social work to take these findings into account when planning programs for the preparation of workers to deal with this target population. The situation with regard to blacks, however, is only the most visible tip of the iceberg. As Howe suggests: "Certain facts are clear. Despite the focus in the media on the affluent and the poor, the average man is neither. Despite the concentration of television commercials on the blond, blue-eyed WASP, the real American prototype is of Italian or Irish or Polish or Greek or Lithuanian or German or Russian or any of the still amazing number of national origins represented in this country--a 'white ethnic', sociologists soberly call him."[8] This situation makes for a cultural gap between the would-be helper and the targets for intervention, and this gap results in their being involved in the same situation but not really reaching one another in terms of communication and mutual involvement in problem solution. Rather, they spar with the superficial facades that each has erected in self preservation and protection.

Other professions have dealt more directly with the teaching and measurement of empathic skill.[9] Social work education might well profit from some examination and possible adaptation and incorporation of the work of David Aspy in Edcuation, as well as some of the work of Carl Rogers and his students.[10]

The Teaching of Basic Techniques.

Social work education at the masters level should assure that all students, regardless of specialty area of practice, acquire the basic techniques of initiation or engagement, interviewing, assessment, intervention and termination, with different kinds and sizes of target populations. As far back as 1951, in their extensive study of social work education, Hollis and Taylor commented that "there is need for social workers to find ways of being more effective in work with the general community and in using more extensively the findings of related fields in practice and in education".[11] Schools of social work have tried, with varying degrees of success, to heed this admonition; but, in their efforts to do so, they have segmented the curriculum in such a way that many professionals can complete their graduate study without acquiring the basic techniques listed above.

At the present time, social work education seems to face an era of external challenge and internal strain. Externally, the profession has to face a period of tremendous social dislocation, accruing from the disruptions of World War II and extending through the sixties and seventies including the black revolt, the women's uprising, the "rebellion" of youth, and the backwash from the Vietnam War. Both societal values and tradition are being severely challenged. Internally, the proliferation of new "knowledge", "theories", and ideas, the competitiveness between specialties and methods makes it difficult to know what content to include in the curriculum and how to most effectively package it for the development of a competent practitioner. In discussing this state of affairs, Meyer comments:

> Practice need not be tied to clinical definitions of cases in order to be effective, and, in fact, cases themselves need not

> remain insular in order to be identifiable. Furthermore, social workers need not be desk bound in order to be expert, nor must professionals perform every task in every case action in order to maintain high levels of service. The world has relaxed, and social work practice as a social institution reflective of that world must relax as well. If social work practice does not closely follow the life style of this present civilization, social work services will become meaningless and practice will atrophy. . . The primary purpose of social work practice is to individualize people in the mass urban society . . .[12]

In an effort to meet this new challenge, the profession seems to be moving to a problem centered approach in professional education.[13] The practitioner would then be taught the basic techniques referred to above within the context of a particular social problem. The author has no problem in accepting this approach; however, there seems to be general agreement among most authors about the techniques suggested here, but there is insufficient differentiation between worker-centered knowledge/skills and worker-population-centered knowledge/skills. The experience with this project would suggest the latter category as the more important area.

The Field Experience.

Social work education should focus more attention on field practice experiences which assure cross-cultural exposure for the student. Of all the components of professional education, the field experience is the one over which schools of social work have the least control.[14] However, there are basic guidelines which the schools set forth with the selection of field practice agencies occurring within those parameters. For example, workers are differentiated into methods mainly on the basis of the size of population served. As a basic premise, would it not be possible to assure that, in the course of a field

experience, every student would have the opportunity to work with an individual, a family, a group, and/or a community?[15] Skills and techniques from all these areas were essential to the implementation of the project described here. Another basic premise could be that every student would be required to provide some kind of service to a target population different from that in which the student had been acculturated.

Principles Related to Practice[16]

Given the type of worker preparation described in the section above, the following principles for implementation emerge from this project:

1. The worker should attend rigorously to the mechanics, the "nuts and bolts" aspect of implementation.[17]

2. The empathic response of the worker to the target population is as important as the directional or cognitive leadership he or she may provide.[18]

3. The worker should attempt to bring about any feasible time or structural adjustments that will make the profferred service more congruent with the life styles of the target population.[19]

4. When the service offered is deemed to be in the best interests of the target population but is one which they have not requested, the worker should use an indirect approach in efforts toward engagement.[20]

5. The worker should have an "institutional" orientation, and this should guide intervention. The plan for implementation should include "adjusting" the environment to the target population as well as the reverse.[21]

6. The worker should plan for participation by the target population in the process through which the project is finalized.[22]

These conclusions about education and practice raise an obvious con-

flict. The literature generally, and the state of our current knowledge, suggest that the worker should operate on certain principles within a given agency structure or organization. The results of this project suggest that, for this type of target population, there is need for more flexibility on the part of both agency and worker, with the needs of the target population as the central focus.

The area of worker impact is an area where more research is needed. What, for example, is the impact of ethnic identification? In this instance, the worker and the target population were of the same ethnic origin. Would it make a difference if they were not? It would seem that a more sophisticated design involving a control group and workers and target population of diverse origins might provide at least partial answers to these questions.

Overall, the total project could be viewed as a "success" in terms of involving an unusually high number of parents. At the same time, it indicates that an even larger number could be involved, if we could find a way to reduce some of the reality pressures under which these parents labor.

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[1]See: pp. 8-13, supra.

[2]See: pp. 17-20, supra.

[3]Jesse F. Steiner, Education for Social Work (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1921); also, Katherine A. Kendall, "Curriculum Policy and Educational Practice", Education for Social Work: Proceedings, Annual Program Meeting (Council on Social Work Education, 1955).

[4]Here, the author is indebted to Dr. Moshe Sonnheim of The Bar Ilan University School of Social Work, Ramat-Gan, Israel. Some of the ideas expressed here on technique have been reflected through discussion and correspondence with Dr. Sonnheim, over the past year.

[5]Max Siporin, Introduction to Social Work Practice (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1975), p. 76.

[6]See: p. 18-19, supra.

[7]For examples, see: Racism in America and How to Combat It (Washington, D.C.: United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1970); The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society--A Report by the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1967); Twenty Years after Brown: Equality of Educational Opportunity (Washington, D.C.: United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1970).

[8]Louise K. Howe, ed., The White Majority: Between Poverty and Affluence (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 5.

[9]See, for example: David Aspy, Toward a Technology for Humanizing Education (Champaign, Illinois: Research Press Company, 1972); A. Scheurer, "The Relationship between Personal Attributes and Effectiveness in Teachers of the Emotionally Disturbed", Exceptional Children 37 (July 1977): 723-731.

[10]Carl R. Rogers, "The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Therapeutic Personality Change", Journal of Consulting Psychology 22 (February 1957): 95-110.

[11]Ernest V. Hollis and Alice L. Taylor, Social Work Education in the United States (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951), p. 51.

[12]Carol H. Meyer, Social Work Practice--A Response to the Urban Crisis, p. 3.

[13]See: Henry S. Maas, "Social Work Knowledge and Social Responsibility", Journal of Education for Social Work (Spring 1968).

[14]This may not be true in those instances where schools have faculty based field practice instructors; however, in most instances, the control of the field practice education is lodged in the agency and with agency staff.

[15]See: Note 4, supra.

[16]Most of the principles listed here have been discussed in the body of the paper. Where that is the case, it will be indicated by a cross reference note.

[17]See: p. 52, supra.

[18]See: pp. 55-56, supra.

[19]See: pp. 50-52, supra.

[20]See: pp. 9-13, supra.

[21]"Institutional" in this context refers to institutional as opposed to residual in the Wilensky-Lebeaux formulation. See: Harold L. Wilensky and Charles N. Lebeaux, Industrial Society and Social Welfare, pp. 138-140.

[22]See: p. 59, supra.

APPENDIX A

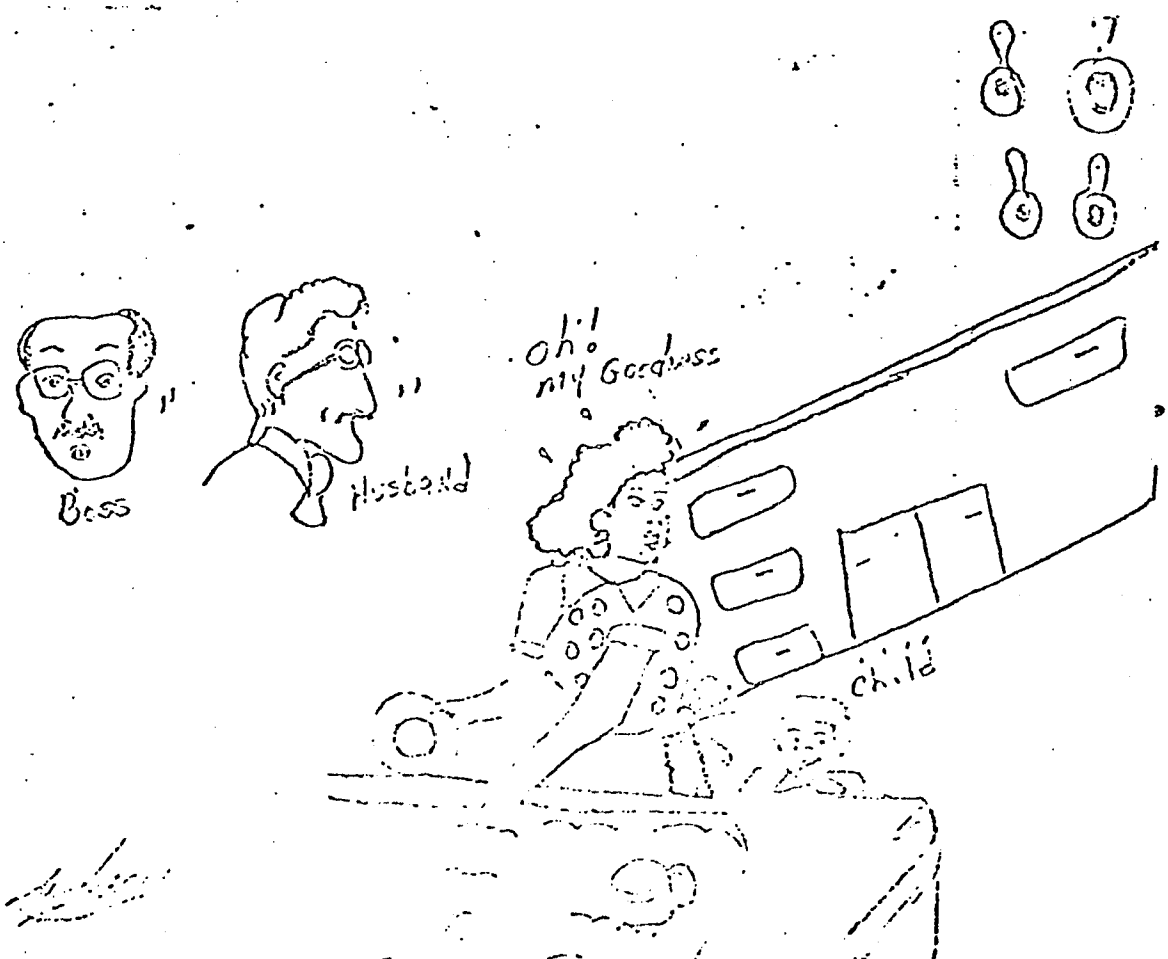
Dear Parents:

As parents of children who attend Community Day Nursery, we all have something in common -- The Welfare of our Children.

A small group of mothers got together for an informal talk, and we were able to share and exchange ideas about the care of our children. We found this session to be beneficial to all of us. We would like to invite you to come and share your ideas with us.

Sincerely yours,

Parents of
Community Day Nursery



APPENDIX B

COMMUNITY DAY NURSERY
OF THE ORANGES AND MAPLEWOOD

Parent Discussion Sessions

Evaluation Questionnaire Date_____

The parent discussion meetings in which you have participated have been designed to help you examine and assess your role as a parent. To help us evaluate the usefulness of the sessions and to plan for future programs of this sort, your candid and thoughtful reactions, criticisms, and suggestions will be most appreciated. Please cooperate by completing the following questionnaire.

1. Which meetings of the program did you attend, and how did you like those you attended?

	Did you attend?		How much did you like this meeting? Not at all--Very much				
Meeting 1 Film: "This is the Home of Mrs. LeVant Graham"	Yes _____	No _____	1	2	3	4	5
Meeting 2 "Parents Set the Pattern; but, Who has the Model?"	_____	_____	1	2	3	4	5
Meeting 3 "How Does Your Child Know You Love Him/Her?"	_____	_____	1	2	3	4	5
Meeting 4 Dealing with the "Parent Child"	_____	_____	1	2	3	4	5
Meeting 5 Problems of One Parent Families	_____	_____	1	2	3	4	5
Meeting 6 Discipline and/or Punishment	_____	_____	1	2	3	4	5
Meeting 7 Sexual curiosity and Education	_____	_____	1	2	3	4	5
Meeting 8 Ethnic Identification	_____	_____	1	2	3	4	5

a. To what extent did you enjoy the program as a whole?
1 2 3 4 5

Evaluation Questionnaire - page 2

b. What, if anything, did you especially like about the program?_____

_____

c. What, if anything, did you especially dislike about the program?_____

_____

2. Did you miss any meetings after you started coming? Yes____No____.

If yes, why?_____

3. Did you stop attending after the first meeting? Yes____No____.

If yes, why?_____

4. If you continued to attend meetings, what led you to continue? Did your feeling about the program change after you started it?

____Yes, became more positive
____Yes, became more negative
____No, did not change

5. Did you feel you understood the following things about the program?

a. The goals or aims of the program. Yes____No____Not Sure____.

b. How the discussions were related to the aims of the program? Yes____No____Not Sure____.

6. How helpful did you find the following parts of the program? (If you did not attend the whole program, answer for the part you did attend)

	Not at all--Very much				
a. The leader's introductory comments	1	2	3	4	5
b. The Film	1	2	3	4	5
c. Parent Group Discussion	1	2	3	4	5
d. Parents' examples of problems	1	2	3	4	5
e. Parents' examples of solutions	1	2	3	4	5
f. The leader's suggested solutions	1	2	3	4	5

Evaluation Questionnaire - page 3

7. Did the program change your image of the role of a parent? Yes__No__.
   If yes, explain:_____

   _____

8. Did the program change your view of yourself as a parent? Yes__No__.
   If yes, explain:_____

   _____

9. Do you feel that you learned anything that will be useful to you as a parent? Yes___No___. If yes, could you give an example?_____

   _____

   _____

10. Do you have any suggestions for improving this type of program?

APPENDIX C

THE PROPOSED TRAINING PROGRAM

THE PROPOSED TRAINING PROGRAM

The objective of this training program is to assist the parents of children who present disruptive behavior problems to achieve a better understanding of their children and their roles as parents. The planned program is based on the assumption that the behavior of children is a reflection of the transactions between the children and the significant adults in their environment. It is assumed that, if the purpose of the training program is achieved, it will lead ultimately to a change in the nature of parent-child transactions.

The training program is planned on the basis of a number of propositions and propositional statements about children and parents that emerged from a review of relevant literature. Examples of propositional statements related to children are:

1. Children need love and recognition.[1]
2. Children need to be "touched", physically and emotionally. Social stimulation is necessary for each individual.[2]
3. Children need to learn how to think and conceptualize.[3]
4. Children need to learn how their behavior affects themselves and others.[4]
5. Play is the language of children.[5]
6. Black children perceive themselves as "different", and this difference in perception is detrimental to their self perception and performance.[6]

In addition to these propositions related to child development, there are significant propositions related to the black parent. Some

examples are:

1. Lower class, urban black parents tend to be oriented toward the present.[7]

2. Lower class, urban black parents tend to have constricted experiences and an alienated, distrustful approach to society, outside of family.

3. Lower class, urban black parents tend to engage in limited verbal communication with relative absence of subtlety and abstract concepts.

4. Lower class, urban black parents are mainly from families in which there were low levels of educational-occupational achievement by parents.

5. The behavior of lower class, urban black parents is conditioned by feelings of powerlessness.

6. Lower class, urban black parents experience a poverty of resources (social and economic) relative to felt needs and levels of aspiration.

7. Lower class, urban black parents are often unable--or for cultural reasons avoid--moving to their advantage through impersonal and bureaucratic channels.[8]

8. Lower class, urban black parents often present a facade to the external world and behave differently in their own communities.

The program is projected as a group experience in which an opportunity will be provided for the parents to discuss the available knowledge on child development and exchange with one another information on daily child rearing problems and attempted solutions. The group format was selected for the following reasons:

1. The group process may provide constructive experience which will assist the individual to feel differently about himself and others.

2. The group can give support or add pressure to the individual's attempt to behave differently.

3. The group can provide opportunities for the individual to discuss and examine problems which he/she experiences in all areas of his life.

4. The group can give the individual an opportunity to examine and analyze his impact on others as it is expressed in the group itself.[9]

Given the characteristics of the target population cited in the propositional statements, (See p. 110, above), the format of the program is designed to be flexible, with "lectures" minimized. Focus is to be on activities such as group discussion and role playing. However, the leader does have substantive information that seems relevant to the attainment of program goals, so the plan includes a proposed sequence of topical content areas. These include: common problems of children; cultural patterns, community patterns, and the child; discipline and authority, the one parent family, and sex education and the child. Content outlines for these areas follow:

Common Problems of Children

Objectives for this area:

1. Beginning acceptance by the parents that behavior means something. Behavior might be a symptom or an expression of a need.

2. Beginning ability to distinguish behavior which is a part of growing up from behavior engendered by the environment and the child's reaction to other members of the family.

Method--Group Discussion

A. Sexual Problems

Exhibitionism
Mutual sex play
Homosexual activities
Masturbation

Sexual problems--manifestation of what needs--based on what possible past experiences.

The need to rule out organic difficulties

B. Learning Problems

Reading problems
Speech problems

The need for parent encouragement
Sources of help for such problems

C. Behavioral Problems

Stealing
Destructiveness
Use of profanity and obscene language
Excessive aggression--hitting, kicking

D. Psychological Problems

Sleep disturbances
Tension
Anxiety
Stuttering
Bed wetting
Tics

E. Drugs

Abuse
Inadvertent parent encouragement
Availability

Leader's Role: Encourage parents to bring in examples of problematic behavior--Help move discussion into deeper understanding of problem. Help parents to recognize that each person has vulnerability in areas to which he/she is sensitive. Some persons can overlook, be sympathetic, or ignore certain behavior, while in other areas they are quick to be aroused, annoyed, agitated, disturbed.

Help parents to consider: possible reasons for behavior, the purpose it serves, the impact of the behavior on others, and how such behavior serves or hinders the building of relationships.

Cultural Patterns, Community Patterns, and the Child

Objectives for this area:

1. To help parents recognize that the child lives in a complex of cultural, social, racial, and religious heritages.
2. To help parents understand that the group experience in a day care center presents to the child a different "world" with

which he/she must learn to deal.

A. Understanding the child in terms of his ethnic and cultural background.

Affect of parent values on children
Conflicts arising out of difference
Child's self perception
Community expectations

B. Understanding the community

Community pressures and demands
Need for parental support
The world of work

Leader's Role: Encourage parents to identify and discuss behavior which could be explained as emerging from or being based on cultural or ethnic patterns. Help parents to understand how their verbal or behavioral reactions in these areas has impact on how children develop and how they behave.

Discipline and Authority

Objectives for this area:

1. Beginning distinction between discipline and punishment.
2. Recognition of how and when to apply corrective discipline.

A. Parental authority

Parent rights
Parent responsibilities
Use of legal sanctions
Sources of help in the community

B. The need for discipline

Setting appropriate limits
Shaping the child's behavioral responses
Learning respect for rules and laws

C. When to discipline--When to punish

Parent feelings of hurt, anger, resignation
Proximity of parent response to child's act
The nature of the child's misbehavior

Harm to others
Harm to property

D. Other factors to consider

Use of corporal punishment
Who does the punishing
Severity of punishment in relation to offense
Consistency of parental responses

Leader's Role: Encourage parents to think of discipline as a way of helping the child to learn appropriate ways of responding to his environment. Help them to develop an individual approach to discipline problems with different kinds of children, e.g. the withdrawn child, the acting out child, the punishment provoker, and the hyperactive child. Encourage parents to consider alternatives to physical punishment.

The One Parent Family

Objectives for this area:

1. To help parents begin to understand the impact on the child of having only one parent.
2. To help parents consider ways in which life can be "balanced" for the child who comes from such a family.

A. Significance of the mother

Nurturance
Basic "object relation"
Individual differences of children

B. Significance of the father

Protection
Economic provision
Role model
Social placement (social class)

C. Significance of traditional family model

Parent expectations
Child's expectations
Societal perception

D. Problems of one parent families

One parent may have sense of incompleteness and frustration
One parent may have sense of failure
One parent may have sense of guilt
There may be marked overt or underlying feelings of ambivalence between only parent and child
In practical terms, there is double work, double responsibility for the only parent

E. Sources of support or relief

The extended family (especially grandmothers)
Social institutions
More self awareness and self confidence of the only parent

Leader's Role: Encourage the parents, many of whom constitute one parent families, to discuss the problems they encounter. Discuss solutions for these problems and encourage consideration of alternatives. Suggest sources of assistance within the network of community agencies. Discuss ways of reducing guilt and building self confidence.

The plan includes the possibility of the use of role play, either in several sessions in relation to problems that emerge in those sessions or in at least one session where the group will plan in advance to come prepared to present problems and play out the various roles in them.

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[8]Ibid.

[9]Max Sugar, The Adolescent in Group and Family Therapy (New York: Brunner-Mazel, 1975).

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