

THE LISTENING POST

More Federal Aid for Mothers and Children

Something new and worth while was added to the federal and state programs serving our nation's children when the Seventy-ninth Congress passed and the President approved the *Maternal and Child Welfare Act of 1945*. This Act was based upon a bill sponsored by Representative Mary T. Norton of New Jersey and Representative Augustine B. Kelley of Pennsylvania. It was in the form of an amendment to the Social Security Act of 1935.

The Maternal and Child Welfare Act provided a fund of twenty-two million dollars—almost twice as much as ever before—to be made available through the U. S. Children's Bureau to the states for maternal and child health, child welfare services, and services to crippled children. According to Miss Katherine Lenroot, the bureau's chief, this act was "the greatest step forward in behalf of the health and welfare of children since the Social Security Act was passed."

The federal funds made available through the Act supplement state funds and thus enable the states to expand their present services and to develop new ones—particularly to help children whose problems are so serious as to demand immediate and special attention. As a result, many communities are now able to furnish for their neglected, dependent, and delinquent children the following kinds of assistance:

1. Individual guidance and social services for children in their own homes by child welfare workers.
2. Temporary child care in foster homes.
3. Day care services.
4. Services aimed at improving existing conditions.

As yet, however, much needs to be done in this important field. Only one out of six counties in the United States, for example, has at least one full-time welfare worker paid from public funds. It is obvious that a state or community can take

advantage of federal funds only if it has set up and financed, in part, its own programs and staff for child welfare services. Since finances play a most important part in such planning, it is also obvious that cities where population is concentrated are financially able to contribute to such a program and thus procure federal aid, while the poorest counties are unable to do their share.

It is well, too, that consideration be given to a broader viewpoint concerning child welfare. Other services, such as the following, which have in part, welfare, and in part, an educational function, might well be a cooperative project of welfare and education:

1. Child care services under the supervision of educators, and aiming towards the best in physical, mental, and social development.
2. Educational services in conjunction with social services.
3. Extended school services with an educational purpose.

Nearly all public school people are concerned with education of all the children. Large and growing numbers of teachers and school administrators are concerned with "the whole child"—with his economic, social, and physical welfare as well as with this educational progress. They are asking themselves: "What financial and other assistance to child welfare is being supplied by our state and our community?" "What kinds of child welfare services does our community offer?" "How can our schools cooperate most effectively with public and private child welfare agencies?"

Through asking and following up on such questions as these, school people are helping to make the most of available child welfare services. They are also helping agencies responsible for these programs to do the best for the children whom they were set up to serve.—DOROTHY M. LEWIS, *ASCD Legislative Committee*.

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