

tious parents who are entrusting a most valuable possession to them.

The seven factors mentioned so far, and many others related to them, can provide a cornerstone of understanding for teachers when they look at their children and try to accept and appreciate the problems of the parents. But this understanding is a two-way street, for parents certainly must also work constantly to understand the problems of teachers. They may have difficulty with two children, but what about the teacher with 48? They may be tempted to criticize what a particular teacher does, but do they have all the facts? They may show favoritism toward one of their own children, so can they ex-

pect teachers not even to have human preferences for one person over another? Are they as objective about the job of the teacher as they might be?

In the current years of tremendous world strain, in a period of uncertainty and worry, there is more need than ever for parents and teachers to work together, for each to understand the problems of the other. More home visitation by teachers, more school visitation by parents, more striving to do a good job of educating a generation which faces a bigger challenge than any other has faced—that becomes the task ahead. The major incentive lies in the importance and worth-whileness of such a cooperative venture.

School and Home Cooperate To Meet Juvenile Delinquency

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Only as home and school participate in getting at basic causes can problems of juvenile delinquency be effectively met.

ANY STATE or community program aimed at preventing and controlling undesirable behavior must center most of its efforts in two areas. First, it must make a coordinated and scientific attempt at early identification of children who are vulnerable or exposed to delinquent behavior. Second, it must follow through with a system of individualized therapy based on a careful study of the predelinquent or delinquent child and his total environment. In view of the origins of much delinquent behavior, few agencies which come in close contact with children for

any period of time can offer greater mutual aid to the delinquent or predelinquent than that which arises from the bilateral force of the effective school working hand in hand with the good home. There are a number of promising ways in which school and home can work together both to reduce or minimize, by way of prevention, those community factors which have been shown to foster problems of delinquent behavior, and to help, by way of rehabilitation or treatment, those children who have already established undesirable patterns of behavior.

Since inefficient schools, marked by excessive failure and retardation, truancy, early school leaving, purposeless and abstract curricula (at least from the child's point of view) and unsanitary emotional climate, have been shown to precipitate and frequently to cause delinquent behavior, it is imperative that the school first set its own house in order if it expects to cut down delinquency through prevention or through rehabilitation of habitual offenders. However the school in a bootstraps operation cannot hope for much improvement without the steady support of parents. On the other hand, the same research studies also reveal that marginal homes, characterized by strained personal relationships among family members, a general lack of family cohesiveness, frequent use of extreme punishment or complete laxity, overcrowding and excessive mobility, frequently play a strong causative role in the genesis of much delinquent expression. Hence the home also must set its house in order. With the assistance of the school, the marginal home can often be raised to exert a stronger positive force in the child's life. In an effective community approach to combat juvenile delinquency, the home must assist the school to become a better school and the school must help the home to be a better place in which children are nurtured. Lacking this reciprocal relationship, neither agency can expect to attain its optimum effect on children and youth—delinquent or non-delinquent.

Parents Can Assist

More specifically, parents can assist the school to become a better place in

which to live and learn by: assisting in programs of curriculum development; helping to improve reporting and evaluation techniques; working as resource persons with specialized skills or knowledges useful in connection with classroom units of work; assisting with building surveys or school evaluation activities; cooperating in the extracurricular program of the school; joining and working with the PTA or child study groups; visiting the schools regularly; inviting the teachers to their homes; studying and discussing the annual reports of the superintendent of schools and his staff; attending school board meetings; and by sponsoring wholesome recreational activities in the school centers after school hours. Parents should not be asked to take over in amateur fashion the specialized functions of classroom teachers, principals or supervisors in such activities. However, parents as observers of the product of the school and as individuals directly concerned with the objectives of the school's program and with school costs have a real contribution to make in the development of an effective school program. The basic principle should be recognized that the improvement of any phase of the total school program for all children and youth constitutes a direct attack against undesirable behavior as evidenced frequently in juvenile delinquency.

Approaching this problem from the other side, the school can help make for more effective family life through the following types of activities: devoting more time and space in the curriculum to achieving at every grade level the objectives of worthy home membership; hiring liaison workers

such as the visiting teacher or school social worker to help bridge the gap between school and home; conducting classes or study groups for adults faced with everyday problems of home living and child care; making available the specialized services of a school psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker and of guidance personnel on a consultant or child-study basis; conducting periodic teacher-parent conferences in which the school performance of the child is interpreted to the parent; developing skills and desirable attitudes in the area of family recreation; stimulating regular and more effective home visitations by teachers through an in-service training program; and by giving sufficient direction to the program planning of PTA's to make them a more wholesome influence in the child's life. Most of these suggested activities are not uniquely geared to the needs of the delinquent child alone; they represent desirable adaptations which help improve the total school and home setting for all youth but especially for delinquent youth.

Community Patterns Vary

As a rule, the local delinquency story varies both in type and degree within each community setting. No two communities have the same kinds of juvenile problems, nor do they offer children and youth the same kinds of hazards and helps. Home and school can do much by forming the nucleus of a fact-finding committee to study the local delinquency picture within the local scene. Of course such a committee should also include representatives from all other child serving agencies. Home and school, working with these

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agency leaders, should investigate the kinds of bothersome juvenile behavior that are present in any amount in the local situation. They should assist in the survey of the personal, social, home, school and neighborhood characteristics of those boys and girls who have been through the local juvenile courts and child guidance clinics. The failure of many delinquency surveys in the past which have been conducted solely by professional teams of child experts have been due to the fact that their reports have remained meaningless, dull and irrelevant as far as the average parent is concerned.

At the same time all available child serving resources in the community should be enumerated and appraised. Needed child study or treatment resources should be noted and methods of procuring and financing such services should be explored by this combined parent-professional team. Child serving agencies that have ceased to meet local needs should be revamped or replaced by more effective services. Only when community services are understood, accepted and desired by teacher and parent groups will they tend to be fully utilized to the ultimate advantage of all youth in the community including the behavior deviates. Lacking such a cooperative and participatory fact-finding survey, the community's approach to the delinquency problem will usually tend to be superficial, fragmentary and beset with the common stereotyped complaints against those social scapegoats: TV, comic

books, movies, delinquent ancestry, and lack of "discipline." The stimulus and leadership for such cooperative community study can come strategically from the combined school-parent groups.

One of the most valuable and unique services that home and school can render, either jointly or independently, is in the very early spotting of those children who by nature or nurture are vulnerable or exposed to the development of delinquent patterns of behavior. A number of tools¹ have been evolved recently that can be used with professional guidance to uncover those children who are most susceptible to delinquent behavior development. These tools are based on studies of differences between those children who became delinquent and those who did not express themselves in this fashion. Since delinquency is not a 24-hour malady, children frequently give off for a long period of time any number of telltale signs or warnings that are characteristic of those children who very frequently become delinquent. What is needed is an alerted teacher and parent group that can note these danger signals and offer a helping hand to these exposed or vulnerable youngsters. This is the core of the prevention problem.

Many authorities in the field of juvenile delinquency are convinced that seventy to eighty per cent of the delinquents who will appear in the juvenile court sessions of tomorrow can

¹ Sheldon Glueck and Eleanor Glueck, *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency*, New York; The Commonwealth Fund, 1950.

William C. Kvaraceus, *K D Proneness Scale and Checklist* (Revised), Yonkers, New York; World Book Company, 1952.

be identified today by an alerted school-parent and child expert team.

Signs of Maladjustment

What are some of the predictive factors as revealed by various research studies? Those factors in the school which tend frequently to be associated with those children who become delinquent include: limited verbal ability, singular lack of success in school work, many failure marks on the report forms, lack of interest in the school program, nonpromotion, special class membership (as in classes for the mentally retarded or the disciplinary cases), strong dislike for school, inability to adjust to reasonable school authority, frequent transfer from one school to another, intent to leave school early, feeling of rejection within the classroom and non-participation in extracurricular and supervised group activities.

Similarly, factors in the home which are characteristic of children who frequently turn to delinquent expressions in the adjustment process include: family disrupted by divorce, desertion or death; personal relationships among family members characterized by severe tensions; poor home disciplining—very lax, extremely rigid or very erratic; feeling of rejection in the home; drunkenness in the family; family members are delinquent or have court record; family belongs to a marginal or repressed group; child lives in other than his natural home; poverty; overcrowding; mother employed and away from home; family is migratory and mobile; home is situated in high delinquency rate area; family lacks cohesiveness.

In the past, schools and homes too often have pursued the policy of con-

cealment and protection of the vulnerable child from any official assistance of the child guidance clinic, juvenile court and its probation services. This misguided and sentimental overprotection from "stigma of agency contact" results in a great disservice to the child prone to delinquency expressions. In order to obtain certain types of social and psychiatric services in most communities the affected or threatened child needs to be on his social death bed before any aid will be summoned. Yet it is possible for an alert school-parent group to locate these children who need to be strengthened to a greater immunity against factors contributing to the onslaught of delinquent behavior.

Obviously it is not enough simply to identify the children most susceptible or exposed to delinquency. They need to be referred systematically to the appropriate agency for study and subsequent treatment and therapy based on an individual appraisal of the child and his background. Too many communities beg off on this point, indicating a lack of adequate child-study resources. Yet these same communities will seldom make the maximum use of services that are already available to children. If it is true that the community is without any form of child-study service, parent-school cooperation is needed in order to procure the basic child services including those of the psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker and school guidance personnel.

Even with such resources, an effective study of the predelinquent or delinquent child is not possible without the active assistance and cooperation of

parents and teachers who live and work with these children every day. Specialized personnel in the child-study agency must work with and through the parents and teachers of the children they are trying to aid. Some understanding of the functions of the psychiatrist, psychologist and social worker will go a long way in improving the chances for more effective study of the child and his problem.

Once an analysis of the child's background and needs, particularly as these are served through delinquency expressions, has been made the promise of readjustment through effective therapy and treatment will be greater to the extent that continued cooperation and assistance are forthcoming from the same parents and teachers. In most cases of delinquent conduct the treatment must be socially oriented around home, school and neighborhood. Few cases of delinquency can be "cured" by treatment oriented exclusively around the psychiatric couch. Severe limitations are placed around any child-study service that does not enjoy and employ the understanding support of the child's parents and teachers.

Areas of School-Community Cooperation

The success or failure of a state or community program aimed to prevent and control the problem of juvenile delinquency ultimately depends upon the extent of home and school participation in such a program. If full support is not forthcoming from both groups or if their efforts are uncoordinated, overlapping or at cross purposes, the basic factors that precipitated or caused delinquent behavior will not be

touched or easily removed. Because defects in either home or school agency in themselves tend to weaken youth and stimulate undesirable behavior expression in the adjustment process, it is imperative that home and school place their houses in order. There is a great deal the schools can do to strengthen home life and there is much that the home can do to support and to activate more efficient and effective school living. Hence the first step in a community program should be a mutual effort to reduce inimical factors in home and school which can drive or stimulate the child toward delinquency as a mode of adjustment.

Local Study Needed

A second area for cooperation is suggested in the need for local study of the delinquency situation at the community or neighborhood level. School and home can spearhead the formation of community study groups so that an adequate appraisal-survey may result in an objective and realistic picture of the nature and extent of the local delinquency problem. Effective development of a coordinated agency program to meet the existing needs depends upon such a factfinding approach. The strategy of lay leadership

will result in a more rapid procurement of needed facilities and the more effective use of existing resources.

A third area of responsibility for school and home is in the process of early identification of children and youth who may be exposed or who are susceptible to the development of delinquent patterns of adjustment. This is a unique and strategic role that can be played most effectively by teachers and parents who are constantly in contact with all youth. Without this assistance in early discovery of likely offenders the delinquency problem can never be solved at the preventive level.

Systematic referral of vulnerable youth to appropriate child study agencies must follow the identification of susceptible youth. Continued support and cooperation through the treatment process will tend to promise greater delinquency control through effective readjustment or rehabilitation. Without such widespread and pervasive assistance through the coordinated efforts of homes and schools any planned program of delinquency prevention and control will fall far short of its primary objectives and will have little effect upon the social and personal adjustments of any large segment of the delinquent population.



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