SERVICES FOR ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

An exploratory study of needs and attitudes, Vancouver, 1961

by

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ABSTRACT

The suggestion is growing that adoption agencies have been severing ties with adoptive families too quickly following finalization of the adoption. Some social workers believe that the adoption agencies should offer services to adoption families after the adoption has been legally established. The purpose of this thesis is to study the attitudes of adoptive parents toward this suggestion; and to learn what kind of services they would use.

For exploratory purposes, fifty adoptive families were selected from the files of the Vancouver Children's Aid Society. The adoptions had been completed between 1953 and 1957. Each child was placed as a small infant. A questionnaire was mailed to each family with an accompanying letter explaining the purpose of the study. The intent was that the adoptive family should show their desire to use post-adoption services, and indicate the specific kinds of services that they might find to be most helpful. A series of post-adoption discussions, offered by the Vancouver Children's Aid Society in cooperation with the University of British Columbia Extension Department, has been the only service available in Vancouver especially for adoptive parents.

The analysis of the material obtained from the returned questionnaires indicates that the adoptive families do not desire any additional services in the community which are especially designed for adoptive families. Those families who have made use of available services uniformly report them as most adequate. The families responding indicated that adoption is a very satisfying means of obtaining a family, although also there are special challenges in the roles of adoptive parenthood.

Unfortunately, the sample returns were approximately only twenty per cent of the total sample. This may indicate that most adoptive families are not experiencing problems and are therefore not conscious of the need for services. There is the possibility, however, that because the families were not prepared for participation in the study in advance they were reluctant to do so now. Indications are that further research ought to be conducted on some different basis in the area of post-adoption needs and services.
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SERVICES FOR ADOPTIVE FAMILIES
CHAPTER I

THE PRACTICE OF ADOPTION

Adoption, the process involving the acquisition of legal parents other than by birth, is practically as old as history itself. It was practiced by the Ancient Greeks. Roman Law made provisions for the adopting of adults in order to assure the continuation of a family line. Adoption of adults has also provided for continual strong political leadership in some ancient dynasties. Each century has made its own unique contribution to the adoption story. In the entire field of social work there is perhaps no instance which affords a warmer response than that moment in which a child, who needs a home, is placed in a home that needs a child.

Today, in North America, there is universal concern with adoption. This concern is traditional, and traditionally has been expressed in many forms, all the way from the individual from any walk of life intent on doing good for others, to the unscrupulous black market operator whose goal is money.

It must be acknowledged that happy results have often come from some of the more or less haphazard adoption methods of child placement. It is also known that frequently much human suffering and despair have been the results. It is impossible to measure the actual consequences in terms of human relationships because of the multiplicity of tangential results. The knowledge that much suffering has resulted, coupled with an ever increasing understanding of the importance of establishing solid family ties early in a child's life has led to the necessity of employing every possible safeguard to assure lasting ties. The interests of the individual demand the use of these safeguards as well as the interests of the community.

For the past four decades, much effort has been directed in trying to understand these safeguards and to provide them through means of professional adoption services. Interested professional and lay leaders in social work have taken much of the initiative in this effort. Related professions have contributed information by working on similar problems in their respective fields, for example, the legal and medical professions. Much progress has been made; and in more recent years there has been some courageous experimenting in inter-racial adoptions and placement of handicapped children as well as a marked increase in agency adoptions.

Adoption in North America is usually of four different types. One type, the adoption of a child by a person
whose spouse is the biological parent of the child, or step-parent adoption, is becoming increasingly more common. For example, if a divorced or widowed mother were to remarry, it would be necessary for her husband to adopt any children brought to the marriage by the mother before the children could legally use the name of the husband.

A second type is that in which a child, biologically unrelated to either of the adopting parents, is adopted by a couple who have had children born to them or who are able to have a child of their own. This type of adoption is called a fecund adoption. Most often the fecund adoptive couple have had one child or more of their own, but for some reason, most frequently a physical one, are unable to have any more children. In order to increase the size of their family they turn to adoption as a way of doing so. Fecund adoptive couples have most often experienced biological parenthood.

The non-fecund adoption is a third type of adoption; that is, the adoptive couple have never had a child born to them. In this case the child adopted by them is biologically unrelated to either spouse. This latter type of adoption is one with which adoptive agencies are most familiar. Indeed, the inability of a prospective adoptive couple to conceive a child themselves has been a requirement of many adoption agencies up to the last few years, since it was felt that those who could have a child should have their own. Agencies are
becoming a little more flexible in this matter; sometimes this flexibility is due to a shortage of adoption applications, but more often is due to the need for homes for hard-to-place, physically or mentally handicapped children as well as children of mixed racial background.

A fourth type of adoption, not commonly witnessed nowadays, is the adoption of a child by a single parent. Most statutes relating to adoption still permit adoption by single individuals. However, many authorities recognize one parent cannot adequately meet all of the emotional needs of the child.

Legal Aspects of Adoption

On the whole present-day adoption laws are unable to meet current needs of adoptable children; that is, within the precepts considered sound for good social work practice. In some instances adoption laws and their interpretation by the law courts reflect old concepts and practice which are outmoded by modern conditions as well as newer, scientific knowledge.¹ There have been many changes in the whole area of adoption practices. It is anticipated that as more and extensive research in child welfare is carried out adoption practices will undergo even further modification.

Generally, however, adoption laws throughout North

America are similar. The courts usually require that a child must have resided with the adopting parents for a specified period, on the average about one year, before permission to adopt may be requested from the court. In the Province of British Columbia according to the Adoption Act, the stated period is one year. Before the adoption petition can be presented in Supreme Court, there are particular legal procedures that must be followed. At least six months before the petition is filed, the Superintendent of Child Welfare must be notified of the intention to adopt. The Superintendent reports to the court recommending that the adoption order be issued or not. The report is prepared by the social worker who supervised the adoption home during the probationary period. On the basis of the report, the judge, if satisfied that the home is suitable for the child, issues the adoption order. This order establishes all legal privileges and responsibilities between adopting parents and child.

In submitting the report to the court, the following written consents are required:

1. Consent of natural parents;
2. Child's consent if he is 12 years of age or over;
3. Legal husband's consent if the natural mother was married at the time of the birth of this child (if the mother was unmarried her consent is sufficient).
Under special circumstances the consent of the natural parents may be waived, for example, when the parents are incapable of giving consent or if they cannot be located. In this instance it is necessary to submit to the court an affidavit enumerating the reasons why the consent cannot be obtained.

In some instances where parents are incapable of giving satisfactory care to a child considered adoptable, the child is made a ward of the agency, that is, guardianship is transferred from the parents to the agency by court order. If the child is subsequently placed for adoption, however, parental consent is required. This is necessary because the natural parents have the right to petition the court for the return of their child after guardianship has been transferred to the agency. The natural parents also must sign a "consent" to the adoption of their child into another home. This has usually been discussed with them and their approval of this home is needed. In British Columbia, consent at time of placement does not constitute a final relinquishment of the rights of the natural parents. Should the adoption placement fail and should the child subsequently be placed in a second adoption home, another consent would have to be obtained from the natural parents.

Agency Adoption

Adoption agencies differ somewhat in their techniques but generally, agreement is found in fundamental areas. Agencies
set up certain requirements which applicants must meet if they are to be considered for a child. These requirements are related to the agency's responsibility to the child, the agency's function, geographical location and coverage as well as the auspices of the agency and kind of children available for adoption.

When it is learned that the applicants meet the initial agency requirements, a home study is initiated. In the home study the agency evaluates the applicants' strengths and weaknesses in their capacity to be parents to a child who is not their own. By means of the home visit, office visit and application form, the agency attempts to know the applicants as well as possible, individually and in relation to each other. The agency also aids the applicants to discover whether or not they want a child and whether or not they are ready to adopt.

Once the home study is completed and the applicants have been accepted for a child the agency has the responsibility to select the child whose physical and emotional needs can best be met by this applicant. Matching factors are considered important in so far as similarities in backgrounds of both applicant and child tend to facilitate integration of the child into the home. This factor is accepted by most adoption agencies.¹ The rationale behind matching is that "a child

¹ Shapiro, op. cit., p. 53.
wants to be like his parents, that parents can more easily identify with a child who resembles them, and that the fact of adoption should not be accentuated by placing a child with parents who are different from him.1

Following the placement of the child into the adoptive home, there begins the period of supervision. Miss Audrey Taylor,2 in her study of adoptive families, has indicated that as soon as the child is placed in the adoption home, his status changes from that of an isolated individual to a member of a family group. The information given to the family about the child, and how this information is used is clearly outlined.3 The supervision period lasts from six months to one year and even longer in some situations. The purpose of the adoption post-placement supervision period is to aid the adoptive couple in making a mutually satisfying adjustment between the child and themselves.

Professional Practices and Theories

In April 1956, Michael Shapiro reported on a comprehensive study completed by the National Conference on Adoption.4

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2 Taylor, op. cit., p. 53.
3 Ibid., p. 53 ff.
4 Shapiro, op. cit., p. 65.
Approximately two hundred and seventy adoption agencies responded to a survey in which one of the question was whether or not the agency provided services to an adoptive family after legal adoption. Eighty-six per cent of those answering this question replied in the negative. Traditionally, most adoption agencies have felt that the main focus of their adoption program is on the adoption home study since "The time when the (adoption) agency carried the heaviest evaluative responsibility is before placement, not after. The decision to make the placement is proceeded by a careful study of the applicant's basic capacity for parenthood...."¹

In the words of another experienced writer, "The decision to accept a child at the time of placement rests with the couple. Once these decisions are made, there should be confidence on all sides that placement is right and will be lasting."² Because of the serious obligation that the adoptive agency has for making the best possible placement of each child it is clearly understood why much emphasis has been placed upon the importance of the home study. Once the child has been placed almost all agencies maintain contact with adoptive parents during a supervisory period. During this time the agency assists in the adjustment of child and parents.

¹ Shapiro, op. cit., p. 65.
These supervisory visits following adoption vary in number from several times each month to two or three times per year. Some agencies offer supervisory visits when necessary. The rationale upon which "post placement supervision" is based is that the process of integrating a child into the adopting family does not happen all at once, no matter how skillful the original placement. Shapiro points out that the role of the agency during the supervisory period is twofold: "1. offer protection to the child; and 2. give help specifically related to the adoption situation."\(^1\)

At the 1955 National Conference on Adoption the opinion seemed to be that the worker should remain out of the case once the adoption has been legalized. It was stated, "Once the adoption is completed, the parent-child relationship, genuine in every respect except the biological one, has been created. Therefore these agencies consider that adoptive parents need services after legal adoption for the same reasons as do natural parents."\(^2\)

Dr. H. David Kirk has suggested that the biological factor in the parent-child relationship mentioned above might have far more importance than was previously thought.\(^3\)

\(^1\) Shapiro, op. cit., p. 89.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 65.
Kirk describes how the fact that, in a "biological family", when a new member arrives much emphasis is placed upon integrating the new-comer in becoming a member of the family. In due time the child is permitted to move outward, to find companions and playmates outside the family circle. The child begins to develop alliances with groups other than his own family group. There would appear, then, a twofold requirement of parents toward a new child: 1) initially, to do all they can to integrate the child into the family, and, 2) to then permit the child to move outward from the family. In the biological family, Dr. Kirk says that this progressive movement from integration to increasing autonomy is facilitated by the fact of blood-familial ties. Members of the biological family know that within rather wide limits they are free to do what they please since their place within the family cannot be easily forfeited. Biological parents know that the child, in spite of his growing up and away from the protective familial situation, will always belong to the family because of the child's membership through biological bonds.

For the non-fecund adoptive couple, Kirk suggests that in the absence of such biological bonds, it appears that they must place more emphasis on integration than on the differentiating forces of autonomy. The adoptive couple has the same role obligations as the biological parents: but, Kirk implies, the adoptive couple are probably more threatened by the aspect of differentiation. He states that "Adoptive
parents can be expected to respond by greater-than-ordinary protectiveness to the child by trying, with all the means at their disposal, to make inviolable the integrity of their familial unit."

One means, which at first, appears to be logical would be to hide the fact of adoption from the child as well as from others. Thus, as long as the secret was undiscovered the adoptive couple could move toward integration of their child in the same way as any natural family. However, complete secrecy could seldom be achieved. The couple would fear that the child's background might be discovered. Further, they would be facing the possibility that, if the child learned of his identity, they might be rejected by him. For this reason authorities have insisted for the past several decades the necessity of the candidness between adoptive parents and children concerning the adoptive status of the latter. Such authorities have insisted that the adopted child be made aware of the fact of adoption and have counseled that the word "adoption" be made a household word.

If this advice is followed it is possible that the child's familial membership and reference group focus may be blurred. In a natural family the child has but one primary focus of membership within his family. For the adopted child

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1 Kirk, op. cit., p. 318.
there is one clearly visible in his adoptive family and a second, rather nebulous one from the reality of his biological forbearers hovering in the past. By complying with the advice of the adoption experts the adoptive family find themselves in the position of giving their child a unique position in the family and society. They are required to tell the child rather early in his life about the fact of adoption at the same time that they are struggling with the requirement of basic familial integration.

Kirk suggests that the adoptive family would compensate for their lack of support by striving intensely for family integration. If this is true, telling the child that it is adopted — actually a differentiating act — will confront the adopting parents with an insuperable conflict.

The biological factor in adoption, according to Kirk, thus appears to be a significant one. Because of the biological difference between a natural family and an adoptive family, the latter might meet stresses that the former would not experience. It is suggested therefore, that an adoptive family might need, some time or other, services of an agency precisely because of the adoptive nature of the family.

Ruth Michaels, an experienced caseworker has written that "increasingly, agencies are offering casework services after placing a child in a home, in order to help parents handle their own unanticipated reactions to being parents to a
adopted child, rather than to the biological children they had hoped to have.\(^1\)

Florence Brown, Executive Director of the Louise Wise Services in New York City recently wrote:

I would like to restate my conviction that adoption agencies have an important service to offer parents and their adopted children in later years. Some of these services are given at the initiative of the parents or grown adopted children. In addition, I believe that agencies should be ready to take the initiative in offering extended services. Discussion groups can be of great help to adoptive parents, and can also enrich our knowledge in the adoption field. Such a program supplements what we try to do during the post placement period and offers a further opportunity of strengthening family life.\(^2\)

Miss Brown goes on to say that in most ways the adoptive parents do not differ greatly from the other parents and should therefore use the available community resources. However, the adoption agency should continue to help in those areas which relate to the adoption directly.

Jules Schrager, Resource Staff member, Association for Family Living in Chicago, Illinois wrote:

Perhaps agencies could offer help to adoptive parents at points which are known to be

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'critical' in the developmental process of all children.... Such services might properly be offered by agencies whose primary purpose is something other than adoption. This would seem important in order to avoid anxiety on the part of some parents that the agency which has the power to give can also have the power to take away babies.1

It is seldom true that adoptive parents are failing entirely as parents, although some might think so. For the most part they are carrying complete responsibility for their child. Should a family come for help, for whatever pressure, it is an acknowledgement of their responsibility for their child. Whenever the caseworker can show them that they are adequately filling their parental role he demonstrates to them their basic worth as well as their parental capacity.

"Adopting parents are especially vulnerable on the subject of their functioning as parents; it is natural that they should feel more threatened than other parents by their need for help in their relationship with their child."2

Agency Setting - Vancouver Children's Aid Society

The Vancouver Children's Aid Society, a modern child placement agency, believes that the child is the primary focus of its policies and procedures. They also believe that adoption is the best plan for every child who is free for

2 Michaels, op. cit., p. 22.
adoption and who will benefit from the security offered in normal family living. They have observed that early placements are preferable, directly from the hospital, if possible. They see the importance of continuous loving care beginning at the birth of the child.

Planning for the infant to be placed for adoption follows a well established procedure at the Children's Aid Society of Vancouver. Weekly conferences are held and attended by the adoption department caseworkers and supervisors, the caseworkers involved with the adoptable children, as well as the placement supervisors. At these conferences the mother's worker presents the background information of the child. The adoption worker, on the basis of this information, may feel that he has a home that might meet the needs of the child. The mother's worker and the adoption worker then discuss in the conference the suitability of the various homes available and decide together on one (or two, if necessary) families.

The chosen home is then discussed with the natural mother. No identifiable information is given; only sufficient, relevant information is offered. If the mother is satisfied with the description, the adoption worker is notified who in turn contacts the adoptive parents and discusses the child with them. Background information is given to the adoptive couple, usually beginning with what the prospective parents want to know.
If the adopting parents are interested they are shown the baby. The parents are given adequate time to think and talk over between themselves and with the worker their decision about taking the child. If the couple appears to be accepting of the child, who in turn, responds to the parents, the worker arranges for the couple's doctor to examine the child. When the doctor is satisfied that the child is reasonably sound of mind and body, he advises the adopting parents who informs their worker.

On the day of placement the adoption worker accompanies the adopting parents to the hospital or foster home. The couple are given the necessary information regarding feeding formula, eating and sleeping habits and care of the baby. Before the child is transferred to the adopting couple, the worker must make certain necessary consents are in order.

The probationary or the after-placement supervision period follows. The worker's role is to help with problems that arise in the adjustment of the child and the parents to each other. The worker observes the child and in his discussion with the parents is able to assess the child's development. The child's general health, appearance and activities indicate to the worker his adjustment in the home. The adoption of the first child should be legally completed before a second child is placed, except in the case where siblings are placed together. The placement of an older child
should not follow the placement of a younger child. A second child should not be less than ten months younger than the first child as would be true of a natural, fecund family.

**Purpose of Study**

The special purpose of this study is to attempt to learn if adoptive couples want services of adoption agencies after the probationary period has ended and the adoption has become legalized in Court. If the adopting couples do want services of the adoptive agency at this period, do they want these services as an adoptive family or as any natural family might want them?

The method chosen in this study was a mailed questionnaire sent to a selected group of adoptive parents to obtain their opinions about adoption services. These parents, chosen from the files of the Vancouver Children's Aid Society; completed their adoptions between the years 1953-1957. The parents were not asked to participate in this study prior to sending out the questionnaire. Had there been more time available, it would have been advantageous to have prepared them for the reception of the questionnaire and to have sought their willingness to participate in the study.

The study is deliberatively exploratory and qualitative in form. The particular years were chosen because the agency's present adoption policies have not been greatly
changed. It was also thought that those families who completed an adoption prior to 1957 would not at this time be in the process of adopting.

A letter accompanying the questionnaire explained the purpose of the study, indicating that it would be of value in helping new adoptive applicants, if the adoptive family could evaluate and share their experience.
CHAPTER II

METHOD OF STUDY

Most people who adopt children today feel that adoption is a natural and satisfactory means to have a family when it is not possible for one reason or another to have their own children. Adoption is accepted by these parents although the fact of adoption is pushed back into their minds as they more and more come to love the child as if it were born to them. Adoptive parents usually accept their responsibility of telling the child that it is adopted. In recent years the necessity of doing so has become less a struggle for the adoptive parents. More consideration is now being given to the "when and how" it is to be done.

Almost all parents experience time and time again what, for lack of a better word, is called a 'problem'. Children who are growing and learning pass through stage after stage of upsetting or irritating behaviour. Almost every mother of a happy eight month old child has been dismayed to see the child burst into tears at the sight of a neighbour who is anything but a stranger to the child. The father of a two year old is often astonished to see his "big boy"
suddenly cling to his mother and hide his face in her skirt. Are there parents anywhere who have not experienced in their children some form of lying, swearing, using "dirty words", disobedience, rudeness, and so on which seem to show up without any obvious reason? Frequently parents blame themselves. They feel that somehow they are failing as parents. They ask themselves questions such as, have they over-disciplined their children? have they indulged them too much? have they somehow caused them to feel insecure?

If biological parents react this way, it is possible that adoptive parents experience an even greater challenge to prove themselves to be faultless in their approach to parenthood. On the other hand, it is possible that because of adequate preparation for parenthood by the agency prior to the actual placement, that the parents are capable of meeting the challenges thought to be present in adoption. The professional assistance received from the caseworker, as well as the potential of the prospective adoptive parents must not be overlooked. Each adoption placement is unique. No two children and no two adoptive couples are alike. For many problems which an adoptive child might have, solutions will be found that vary from one adoptive couple to another. Reputable adoption agencies are now asking themselves whether or not they ought to offer some special service to adoptive couples in helping them meet problems related to the adoption of a child. In planning this study the aim was to learn from the
adoptive parents their desires in the matter of post-adoption services; what services, if any, do they need and want within the community, in addition to services presently available. In addition, the adoptive parents were asked to show their willingness to use community social services.

The University of British Columbia Extension Department in conjunction with the Children's Aid Societies (Roman Catholic and Protestant) of Vancouver announced in February, 1959 a post-adoption group discussion series entitled, "A Family - By Adoption". This discussion series was the results of the efforts of Mrs. Catherine Collier and Mrs. Anne Campbell of the Vancouver Children's Aid Society and Miss Marjorie Smith, Director, Family Life Program of the University of British Columbia Extension Department.

Miss Smith had recognized for some time that, although the Family Life Program was developing rapidly in the Vancouver area (there were 50 groups of from 30 to 40 parents receiving services under the supervision of trained group leaders), there seemed to be a special group of parents not receiving any particular attention. Parents of children with special needs were not receiving specialized services. Parents of adopted children were in this category. Miss Smith recognized the importance of learning more about the special needs of adoptive families, what were the problems, if any, and how were they being met within the community?
Mrs. Catherine Collier, Casework Supervisor, had observed that, occasionally, adoptive parents returned to the agency seeking help in meeting some need peculiar to their own family situation. Mrs. Collier and Mrs. Campbell subsequently wrote, "Although it has been the practice for adoptive parents to sever connections with the adoption agency when legal adoption has been completed, some parents have subsequently returned to the agency for help with a specific problem."\(^1\) Prior to February 1959 the Children's Aid Society offered no specific post-adoption family service. Each family returning to the agency following the finalization of adoption was dealt with on an individual basis. This sometimes involved a referral to one of the specialized social services of the community, such as the Child Guidance Clinic in Burnaby or the Family Counselling Service. Most often, however, an attempt was made to meet the need of the family within the agency's own services.

A circular describing the discussion series was mailed to over one hundred and twenty-five adoptive families who had adopted children from the Vancouver Children's Aid Society. A letter from the Society discussing their part in the series accompanied the circular. The intention of the series was to limit participation to about twenty-five persons, parents of

\(^1\) Collier, Catherine and Campbell, Anne, "A Post-Adoption Discussion Series," *Social Work*, April 1960, p. 192.
pre-school, adopted children. Those families who received an announcement therefore, had adopted children after 1954.

The discussion series was held on five consecutive Wednesday evenings beginning February 18, 1959. No publicity was given the discussion series other than by means of the circularized announcement.

Twenty-seven persons attended the first session, twenty-eight attended the second, twenty-six attended the third and twenty-three the fourth and twenty-nine attended the fifth and final discussion session. The parents had been asked to submit any question they wished discussed. The questions were sent in writing along with the application form. Judging from the frequency particular questions were asked, the following were most important:

(1) Questions relating to explaining to a child it is adopted.
(2) Concern of adopted children and adoptive parents about natural parents of child.
(3) Questions pertaining to illegitimacy which implied a need by the adopting parents for a deeper understanding of the implications of this factor for the adopted, illegitimate child.
(4) The probation period -- its value and its difficulty for many adoptive parents.\(^1\)

\(^1\) Collier and Campbell, op. cit., p. 193.
Of those parents attending the discussion series seeking help with their problems it was said that "to our knowledge none of the parents sought help for the child nor had any of these children special difficulties in school", and further, "it seemed obvious that all members were seeking help with some aspect of adoption." 

No formal research was entered into by the Children's Aid Society or the Extension Department prior to the advent of the post-adoption discussion series. The series was based in part on the number of adoptive parents who had actually sought some assistance with a family problem. The need for the series was also based upon the Extension Department's desire to reach a larger number of families with the Family Life Program. There were no statistics available based upon a study of adoptive parents indicating that they experienced problems as a group and what percentage of adoptive families needed social services relating to the fact of having an adopted child in the home. No one actually knew what number of the total adoptions had been successful. (A successful adoption is thought of as one in which the parents and child had made a satisfactory adjustment and no problems relating to the factor of adopting were present in the home.) It was presumed that most of the adoption placements made by the Vancouver Children's

1 Collier and Campbell, op. cit., p. 193.
2 Ibid.
Aid Society had been relatively satisfactory. It was a fact that some parents returned to the agency seeking help with their adoption problems, therefore there might be some parents who were experiencing problems for which they could use help, but failed to return to the agency because of the widespread belief that no specific post-adoption service was offered by the agency. Some parents might turn to the agency for help with their problems for other reasons, either real or imaginary.

It was important to learn from the adoptive parents who did not respond to the original invitation to attend the post-adoption discussion series, the reason for their indifference. A questionnaire, it was hoped, would make known some of the reasons for this; also, to learn from the adoptive parents what services, if any, they would appreciate having available in the community to meet their specific needs and if they would use these services. There was, initially, some question concerning the propriety of contacting the adoptive parents by a mail questionnaire without first asking their permission to participate in this study. The adopting agency guarantees the adoptive couple that their adoption will remain confidential and their names will not be given to anyone who is not directly involved in the adoption. The adopting parents had not been prepared at the time of adopting for eventual contact by the agency in terms of research. It was felt, because of the limitation of time available, it would be impossible to solicit the willingness of adoptive parents to
participate in the study. For this reason the questionnaire was sent to fifty adoptive parents with an accompanying letter over the signature of Mr. S. H. Pinkerton, the agency director, requesting the recipient to participate in this survey, but to ignore the request if a fear was present of violating the confidentiality of the recipient. By this means the adoptive parents who did not wish to participate would not be offended by having received this request from the society.

Explanation of the Questionnaire

The purpose of the questionnaire was threefold: to learn from the adoptive parents if they used services available in the community. If they did not, was it because they did not need services, or because they were unable to locate a service which would be helpful to them. Finally, would adoptive parents use a specific service for adoptive families if it were offered to them?

The composition of the family is important and for this reason it was necessary to ask the family the age and sex of each adopted child. Knowledge of relative or proximate closeness of the adopted children to each other was also necessary because of the possible relationship of their closeness to specific problems, for example, sibling rivalry. The age of any adopted child when placed in an adoptive home is significant. The adoptive family appears to prefer receiving
their adopted child as an infant directly from the hospital.\textsuperscript{1} The process of integrating the child into the family unit is usually much less complicated if the adopted child has no recollection of its own natural family. In the case of adopting a newborn infant one would not expect the adoptive family to meet as great a challenge in integration as would a family who adopted a child around the age of three or four years.

During the supervision period following placement an effort is made by the caseworker to prepare the adoptive couple for eventual separation of the family from the agency. By encouraging the parents to be independent and to use their own natural abilities as parents the caseworker is attempting to help the adoptive parents to see themselves more as do natural parents who have the full responsibility for their children. The fact of the legalization of the adoption makes the child their child in the fullest sense of the word. The degree to which the adoptive parents can complete emancipation from the agency would seem to be significant in relation to future parent-child relationships and the parents' ability to solve, within their own capacities, any problems arising from these relationships.

Learning from the adoptive parents how well they

\textsuperscript{1} Taylor, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 59.
understood or to what degree they interpreted the adoption services of the agency is of importance in relation to their ability to subsequently call upon the agency for assistance with a problem. Any negative or positive feeling which they received was expected to become known by their explanation as to how the services might be improved.

The adoptive parents' ability to recognize a problem is important when considering their desire to obtain community services. If the parents fail to understand a problem or the need for help in meeting a problem there would exist a direct relationship to their not using the available community services. There did not seem to be any way in the questionnaire to learn if a parent was unable to recognize a child's problem. It would seem important to learn from the adopting parents their views on existing gaps in community service. A question in relation to this question was intended to obtain these views.

Adoption has important considerations relating to the adopted child. To learn from the adoptive parents their interpretation of the effects of adoption on the child a question was added with rather vague wording. The intention of this question was not to confuse the parents but to learn whether or not they considered that, because their child was deprived of its natural parents, the adoptive parents were placed in the role of having to compensate for the loss of
natural family ties with an extraordinary amount of affection and attention.

The process of integration, thought to be a special challenge in the adoptive family, can be supported or made more difficult by the support or lack of support on the part of the adoptive parents' relatives. For many couples seeking a child through adoption the support of relatives is an important factor. Some risks are present in adoption. Doubt and uncertainty appear to be present to some degree in every adoption. If relatives are not supporting of the prospective adoptive parents' desire to adopt prior to the adoption, the couple could experience further doubt as to the desirability of adopting. Following placement, should a parent-child problem develop, the parents might be slow to seek help with the problem for fear of the relative's further disapproval of their decision to adopt.

During the post-adoptive group meetings held at the Children's Aid Society many adoptive parents expressed concern about the community's attitude toward adoption. Many felt that the general trend seemed to be a lack of support due to a misunderstanding on the part of the community of adoption and its meaning. It was important to learn if most adoptive parents had the same experience.

Support of the adoptive parents on behalf of the community can aid the couple in their attempts at integrating
the adopted child into the family unit. Lack of community support could be a distinct disadvantage in the process of integration as well as differentiation. Since Dr. Kirk has suggested that society has not yet fully sanctioned the adoptive parental roles nor adequately defined them, it is important to know what amount of support the adoptive parents received from their community. Positive community attitudes might well indicate the community's readiness to provide the resources of social services needed by the adoptive families in meeting any problems specific to the adoptive parent roles.

In one sense the adoptive families, especially the parents, can be thought of as "experts" in the adoption field. They are the people who are living with the day-to-day experiences of adoption in the community. If the adopting parents are meeting some negative responses from the community it is important, not only to know what they are, but also to learn from the adoptive parents their suggestions as to how the negative attitudes might be eliminated or modified. A question was asked in an attempt to learn what suggestions the adoptive parents have for improving community understanding and acceptance of the adoption method as a means of obtaining a family.

1 "Community" is thought of here as being the immediate geographical area in which the adoptive family lives, e.g. Greater Vancouver, New Westminster, etc.
A question was formulated to learn from the adoptive parents their attitude about the effects of adoption on the child and the effects of adoption on the adoptive parents. If there is no recognition of any special challenge in adoption in relation to natural families the adoptive parents would more than likely not be interested in obtaining any community service specifically established to aid the adoptive parents in meeting problems in the nature of a child-parent relationship. It was also hoped that some expression of the parents' attitude about using their own family resources or depending upon community resources might be received.

A social service which might be helpful to some adoptive parents would be a supportive service in which the adoptive parents are helped to review the advantages of obtaining a family through adoption. From time to time some reassurance might well be offered to those adoptive parents whose personal attitudes might have changed from their initial exuberance to a somewhat more negative one. It is possible that some of the challenges adoptive parents meet could effect their attitudes about the wisdom of obtaining a family by adoption. It seemed important to clarify whether there is a need for a supportive service.

It was expected that because most adoptive parents identify with the phenomenon of adoption they would welcome magazine articles about a subject to which they were so close.
Should the parents suggest that they were interested in very specific aspects of adoption it was thought that they would indicate the area in which they were experiencing some particular difficulty and thus seeking some definite solutions. If the adopting parents indicated their desire to see more articles dealing with the general idea of adoption this would be interpreted to mean that they were asking that articles appear more for the interest of the general public; thus the general public's understanding of adoption would lead to a more adequate support of the roles the adoptive parents have undertaken.

The importance of the biological difference in adoption is stressed by Dr. Kirk in order to fully understand the process of "integration - differenciation". It was necessary to learn whether or not the adoptive parents were aware of any significance of the biological factor in adoption and if it held any consequences for them. Is it not possible, on the other hand, that the inability to conceive a child was not a particular handicap to an adoptive couple in their role as parents to an adopted child?

The final question was asked in an attempt to learn if the adoptive couple would work together in completing the questionnaire. In the post-adoptive discussion groups it was specifically noted that the adoptive fathers were much more active and vocal than the mothers. It was thought important to learn if the adoptive father always took the lead in matters dealing with the adoption in the family.
It would have been extremely valuable to have been able to interview, personally, a number of the families who responded to the questionnaire in order to obtain some qualification for the manner in which they answered the various questions. It was not known if the respondents fully understood each question answered. Any doubts might have been clarified in an interview conducted personally. Unfortunately, it was not possible to make arrangements for personal contact by the author.
CHAPTER III

ATTITUDES OF ADOPTING PARENTS

Louise Raymond, an adoptive mother has written, "When you are on the prowl for problems, you will be sure to find them".¹ It was not the intention of the questionnaire to encourage the adoptive couples queried to make a detailed and intricate analysis of their innermost thoughts about adoption. It has already been pointed out that all parents, both natural and adoptive, face problems and solve them in their day to day work in rearing children. Adoptive parents cannot be expected to have any less difficulty in raising children than natural parents have with their children. The question which Dr. Kirk raises is indicative of the greater challenge which adoptive parents have because of their lack of a role pattern sufficiently defined and sanctioned by society to support them in carrying out culturally required behaviour. That is, the behaviour required by society of parents in their parent roles.

If adoptive parents are having problems as adopting parents, these problems should be quite close to the surface. No amount of "insight examination" was necessary. If the adoptive parents are having problems with which they feel they need help they should have been able to answer the questionnaire with facility and ease.

The adoptive parents to whom questionnaires were sent were parents of families in which the legal adoption was completed between five and seven years ago. The study consisted of a mailed questionnaire sent to fifty couples. What was sought was not only the individual adoptive couple's attitudes, but an index of what adoptive parents felt in general.

Integration of Child Into the Family

It would appear from the manner in which the respondents reported on positive and negative attitudes which they have experienced in the community that the process of integration is aided by the general attitude of the community. Eighty-two per cent of the returned questionnaires clearly demonstrated that the parents have not met negative attitudes regarding adoption. One of the respondents insisted that a negative attitude was experienced on one occasion only, and from only one person. Some of the positive attitudes stated were: "They (the adopted children) are well accepted -- so very many families in our community have adopted children".
Another wrote "I would say the neighbourhood, as a whole, has accepted them (the adopted children) the same as the others (natural children)". A third couple wrote "We have found ready acceptance of adoption as alternate to natural children". One couple very succinctly showed the neighbourhood's positive attitudes with the following words, "There are ten adopted children in our immediate vicinity".

The attitudes of the relatives of the adoptive parents, seemed, in general, to be supportive of the integration factor in adoption. Fifty-five per cent of the sample indicated that the relatives were accepting before and after the adoption was entered into. Forty-five per cent indicated that the attitude of relatives improved following the adoption. No one reported a lack of support or acceptance on the part of a relative. In one case the respondent reported, "They (the relatives) were not aware of these intentions (intentions to adopt). They (now) try to make no difference between our adopted and our natural children but we believe they feel a difference". It should be noted that this case was the only one in which the parents had natural children as well as adopted children. In one instance it was reported that prior to adoption the relatives for the most part appeared to be "cooperative". Once the adoption had been made and finalized the attitude changed to "complete acceptance".

The positive attitudes of the community coupled with
the acceptance and encouragement on the part of the relatives of the adoptive families was evidently a definite aid to the parents responding in the survey. It would appear that the support received from these two sources helped the adoptive parents meet the challenge of the integration of the adopted child into the family unit.

Recognition of Difference of Adopted Children and Adoptive Parents in Adopted Children

In responding to the question, "Are there some special challenges inherent in the fact of adoption for the adopted child", forty-five per cent of the respondents indicated that there are definite challenges to the child. No respondent suggested that there were none, although fifty-five per cent failed to answer this question.

Some of the respondents suggested "Yes, wondering who their real parents were and why they weren't kept", and "Yes, and knowing it first is very important". One respondent felt that it was most difficult for adopted children to live and play with natural children because of "other children's remarks on adopted children".

Most of those answering this question answered with a "yes", but did not qualify their answer. It is not certain whether their adopted children had met some challenging experiences or if this was a feeling the adoptive parents
have about any adopted child.

**Challenge to Adoptive Parents**

Seventy-three per cent of the respondents recognized that there are special challenges inherent in the fact of adoption for the adoptive parents. Twenty-seven per cent failed to answer the question. The one factor that appeared to be the greatest challenge was the responsibility the parents have to tell the child it is adopted. This was stated in various ways. One reported, "I feel this ought not be a problem if explained to a child early, but we can never be certain we've done a good job of it till later". Another stated that a challenge inherent in adoption to the parents is "to tell children early and persist until adoption is understood by child". Still another felt that "to give an adequate explanation to the child of what adoption means to the child" is one of the most challenging jobs for adoptive parents. One respondent rather humorously stated that one of the greatest challenges to the adopting parent is "Answering questions that seem silly without losing patience to be tactful". Also, "to set a good example of a happy home and teach the child to follow" and "explaining to the child of their natural parents" were two significant statements of respondents.

One adoptive mother wrote, "Our little girl is only six years of age and we have never met with any difficulties and don't anticipate any; however, we have a good many years
yet before we could honestly answer this question. It was felt that those who did not attempt to answer this question had probably the same experience as the above adoptive mother. That is, they had not experienced any difficulties, and were not aware of any inherent challenges present in adoption for adoptive parents.

Adoptive Parenthood and Natural Parenthood Differ

In the study made thirty-six per cent of the respondents suggested that there is no difference between adoptive parenthood and natural parenthood. Fifty-five per cent indicated there is a difference. One respondent did not answer the question. The majority of the adoptive parents feel that, although they obtained their family by adoption, they are not parents in every sense of the word. The biological factor is significant to them since they have not been able to produce a child of their own. One mother stated, "Although I have had no children of my own I believe an adopting parent has a more intense love for her child and a more protective love which makes it a little more difficult to not overprotect and overindulge them". This parent seemed to indicate that an adoptive parent has to be on her guard in the role of a parent in order to refrain from emphasizing any difference that adoptive parents and natural parents have in their roles of parenthood.

An adoptive father and mother suggested that adoptive parenthood and natural parenthood not only differ in the manner
in which the child comes into the home, but also in the fact that adoptive parents, in every case, actually choose to be parents. The implication seems to be that natural parents have no choice in the matter. The parents state, "a family must really want children to adopt them".

Another adoptive father and mother felt strongly that parenthood either by adoption or birth is an equal challenge and that little difference is evident in either adoption or birth. They stated in the questionnaire, "parental attitudes and responsibilities are expressions of the parent's personalities -- a parent is a parent".

Differential Sex Preference

There was a total of eighteen children reported in the study. Of this number sixteen were adopted children, two were natural children of adoptive parents. Of the sixteen adopted children, eleven are girls and five are boys. In all but two cases, the first child adopted was a girl if a boy and girl were adopted into one family. In only one case was there a boy adopted before a girl; wherein both a boy and girl were subsequently adopted. In the remaining instance, twins were adopted, one of each sex. Adopting parents appear to exhibit a greater preference for girls. This phenomenon has been cited and backed with considerable evidence by Ruth F. Brenner

Understanding Services of Agency

In all cases the respondents demonstrated that they had a clear understanding of the services of the adopting agency prior to adoption and during the probationary period. All agreed that the service prior to placement consisted of group orientation, home visits, personal interviews, office visits by both prospective adoptive parents, and of telephone interviews. One respondent stated that the agency "thoroughly check your background". Another respondent added, the agency "investigates the mother's background". This suggests that one of the services offered the adoptive couple, but not always considered as a service, is the thorough study of the adoptive child's background prior to considering the child for adoptive placement.

The service offered adopting couples during the probationary period was clearly stated as a service which involved periodic visits by a worker from the agency whose responsibility it was to advise and "inspect" the home in order to determine whether or not the adoption placement was working out mutually for the child and the adopting parents.

In answering the question regarding service after

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the completion of adoption all agreed that no service as such, was offered, but one respondent stated that the agency is "there to help if needed". It was evident from the almost complete negative response to this question that the couples were not aware of any service which the agency might have.

Use of Community Services

Fifty-five per cent of those families studied reported that they had used one of the community services available to all children. The Child Guidance Clinic and the Metropolitan Health Services were among those most frequently mentioned. Thirty-six per cent of the sample said that they had not used any service and one respondent did not answer the question.

The Health Service was used principally for anti-polio vaccine and other types of innoculations. No one suggested that they had need for any service which they could not obtain within the community. One respondent not only stated that a community service had been needed and obtained but also commented that "excellent advice and results were obtained".

Suggested Services

Two respondents, or eighteen per cent of the sample, offered suggestions as to improving services within the community for adoptive parents. One adoptive mother would like to see playschools and kindergartens available for a larger proportion of children, but it is unknown whether she was
thinking of these facilities for the exclusive use of adopted children.

A second respondent felt that adoptive parents in general could use a service which would help the adoptive parents in "explaining to the child that he or she is adopted". Fifty-five per cent of the respondents failed to answer this question, while twenty-seven per cent were not able to suggest any service which would be helpful to adoptive parents after completion of adoption.

Interest in Magazine Articles Devoted to Adoption

Ten of the eleven respondents stated that they are interested in magazine articles dealing with various aspects of adoption. Seven of these would like to see more articles appear dealing with a variety of subjects discussing, "explaining to the child", "lawyer fees -- it is like going out and buying a pet at the pet shop", "how successful adoption is — more people would be inclined to apply for children", and "the attitudes people in general have, good and bad, more open talk, not so much 'pity' toward adopted children". One respondent stated that while there was no particular interest in any single aspect they would like to see articles "written by a well trained person and (who) avoids sensationalism type of reporting".

A mother wrote "whether good or bad, I would like to
see articles or discussions motivated by an adult, who had themselves been adopted and how they felt towards adoption; the difficulties they encountered, where they had succeeded or failed as adopted children or how their parents had failed or succeeded".

Statistical Summary

Twenty-two parents were involved in the completed study, eleven fathers and eleven mothers. All had completed grade school. Sixteen had only high school education, and of these, seven had completed high school. Six had university education.

Eighty-one per cent of the families made over forty-eight hundred dollars a year. Two families made less than this amount while one made less than twenty-four hundred.

Of the eleven questionnaires completed and returned, six were completed by the adoptive mother alone and five completed by the mother and father working together on the questions.
CHAPTER IV

SERVICE TO POST-ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

This study has attempted to deal with only two theories relating to services for adoptive families following the completion of adoption. One, the result of the Chicago study as reported by Dr. Shapiro indicated that once the adoption has been legalized, it has become final; that is, the adoption has been completed. Following the completion of adoption, an adoptive family would need the services of a social agency for the same reason any family would need these services. The fact of adoption would not be of any significance.

Secondly, Dr. Kirk has suggested, on the other hand, that as a matter of fact, the adoption is not completed at the time of the legalization. His theory implies that the adoption is more than a legal action; it is a continuing, ongoing process which, in a sense, is never actually completed. Dr. Kirk further suggests that adoptive parents have difficult roles to perform. They are complicated by the fact of the parents' inability to conceive as well as the community's failure to recognize and support, fully, the roles adoptive parents must fill.
In the last few years articles dealing with the need for a re-examination of adoption practices in relation to post-adoption needs of families have been appearing in the literature. Some social workers are apparently experiencing a need for some kind of specialized service which would meet the needs of adoptive families who are having problems in some area of family life. It is suggested the problems present are directly related to the fact of adoption.

Traditionally, adoption agencies have not encouraged adoptive parents to keep in touch with the agency once the adoption has been legalized. On the contrary, the agencies have more or less insisted that adoptive parents sever all ties with the agency since it was felt that, once the adoption is legalized, the family has been created.

For this reason, it seems to this writer to be valid that a study be made to determine whether or not adoptive parents actually want services following legalization of adoption and what services, if any, they would find most helpful. The experiment of post-adoption discussion groups in Vancouver has indicated that some adoptive parents do want some kind of service. It is not known to what extent this desire on the part of adoptive parents is present amongst all adoptive families.

Findings of the Present Study

This study revealed that the majority of adoptive
parents do not feel that they are experiencing parent-child relationship problems for which they need the services of social agencies. They have indicated that the community as a whole has supported them in their role as adoptive parents. This positive attitude of the community toward adoption, coupled with the additional support and encouragement on the part of the relatives of the adoptive parents, suggests that integration of adopted children into the family is experienced with relatively little difficulty.

That the adoptive parents responding are not meeting any particularly distressing problems was substantiated in their response to the question asking about their interest in magazine articles dealing with adoption. The majority of adoptive parents are interested in reading informative articles. Explaining to the child that it is adopted appeared to be of greatest concern. The implication was not whether or not a child should be told but what is the manner most appropriate for doing so. Most of the parents studied had pre-school children. Evidently they are not certain whether they have done an adequate job in explaining the fact of adoption to the child. Articles dealing with this phenomenon in adoption would give the parents some basis for comparing their approach to the approach taken by "experts". The adoptive parents indicate that they seek and accept support of their roles as adoptive parents.
It is interesting to observe that adoptive parents are not unwilling to use community services if they feel that they are needed. Over half of the parents studied had actually received help from services already available. Recognizing the need for help and seeking it is evidently not seen as a threat to the parents' abilities to be satisfactory parents. An adoptive parent would be able to return to the adopting agency for support or guidance if it was thought to be necessary and if the agency offered this type of service.

The adoptive parents studied do not feel that they are in all respects the same as natural parents. It is commonly agreed that, as adopting parents, they have special challenges inherent in adoption that they must be aware of and which influence their roles as parents. A fair proportion indicated that adopted children also have special challenges which have to be met that other children do not experience. It is felt that because of the awareness of these particular challenges the adoptive parents and children can deal honestly and straightforwardly with each other.

The biological factor in adoption is an important one in the minds of adoptive parents. They have indicated that adoptive parenthood and natural parenthood are not similar and the dissimilarity is due to the adoptive parents not having given birth to their children. The majority of adoptive parents do not feel that this lack can be compensated for
by over-indulging the children with an extraordinary amount of affection and attention. There was some indication, however, that the parents must carefully guard against over-protecting the children because the children are seen as having been deprived of their natural parents' love. The factor of the inability to conceive a child does not severely handicap adoptive parents in their roles as parents.

Validity of Sample Returns

Eleven questionnaires were returned out of fifty sent to adoptive parents. This is approximately a twenty per cent return.

Adoptive parents are a rather select group of people. Because of this fact it was anticipated that a mailed questionnaire would be a valid research technique. The rate of refusal to respond was expected to be small because of the interest that adoptive parents usually have shown in a subject with which they are so closely identified.

A return of twenty per cent was not considered to be conclusive. A sixty to seventy per cent return was anticipated. No questionnaire mailed was returned by the post office because the addressee could not be located. It is presumed that each questionnaire reached the adoptive parents.

The questionnaire, possibly, was not well received because it was one that could not be answered in a short period
of time. It was so designed that it would necessitate some careful thinking by the recipient. It was felt that any question could have been answered with a minimum amount of reflection. Those who returned the questionnaire varied in amount of education from incomplete high school to university graduates. It is possible that the questionnaire appealed only to those adoptive parents with greater education.

Other Findings

The Vancouver Children's Aid Society has held five post-adoption discussion series. These group meetings have been well attended and the participation of those present has been excellent. From the questions discussed it is apparent that the adoptive parents appreciate the opportunity to discuss some of the problems which they are experiencing in their families. These problems are principally involved with: community attitudes toward adoption; telling the child that it is adopted; meeting the needs of teen-age adopted children; information about natural parents; illegitimacy; and, the value of the probationary period. It was apparent that each member present at the discussion group meetings was seeking help with some aspect of adoption. Many telephone calls have been received by the agency from adoptive parents who were not directly informed by the agency of the existence of the discussion groups, and who would like to attend such meetings in the future.
Conclusion

Many agency adoptive placements are very successful. If problems arise within the adoptive family over parent-child relationships there frequently exists within the family the resource for meeting the problem and finding a solution for it. The value of the home study is reflected in the large number of adoptive families who are not presently in need of service. It is felt that this is a large percentage of the total that have adopted through a qualified agency.

At the time of adoption, however, the adoptive parents should be informed that the end of the probationary period does not necessarily mean the complete severance of ties with the adopting agency. Post-adoption services have an important place in a good adoption agency. It would facilitate further research if the adoptive parents were prepared sometime during the home study or probationary period for eventual contact from the agency, possibly around five years after the adoption is completed. It would be necessary to explain that the agency was not "checking-up" on the family but was attempting to learn from the "experts" their recommendations for improving adoption practices.

Recommendations for Further Study

It is suggested that adopted children who have reached the late teen age years be studied in the hope that they would
have important suggestions to offer in helping future adoptive parents and children meet and overcome obstacles which they experienced. A survey of social workers in the field of adoption would also be an invaluable source of information to guide an agency in establishing a useful program of post-adoption practices.

Finally, additional studies ought to be undertaken to obtain more qualifying information from the adoptive parents, themselves. This author would like to suggest a study be conducted by the direct interview method of adoptive parents who would be prepared by the agency for such an undertaking. This preparation would conceivably take a longer period of time than is allowed in the school year, which is actually too limiting for an adequate and conclusive study.
APPENDIX A

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

School of Social Work

QUESTIONNAIRE

SURVEY OF ADOPTION FAMILIES INVOLVING THEIR USE OF COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES:

1. Ages and sex of adopted children? .............................................

2. Ages of adopted children when first placed in home? ......

..............................................................

3. Date last adoption was completed? .................................

4. Have you had contact with the agency since adoption was completed? ...............................  

5. What service does the Agency offer?

   (a) prior to adoption ..............................................

   (b) during probationary period ...............................

   (c) after completion of adoption ..........................

6. Where and how might these services be improved?

   (a) before adoption .............................................

   (b) during adoption process ..........................

   (c) after completion of adoption ..........................

7. Each Community provides special services available to all children such as Child Guidance Clinic, Metropolitan Health Services, School, Children's Health Centre. Have you had need for help from any of these specialized agencies? ....

If so, have you been able to obtain it? .............................

8. Can you suggest any different service that might be helpful to an adopting parent?

   (a) before adopting .............................................

   (b) during adoption process ..........................

   (c) after completion of adoption ..........................
9. Generally speaking, do adopted children need more than natural children? .........................
Could you explain .........................................................

10. What was the attitude of your relatives toward adoption when you first thought of a family through adoption?
......................................................................................
What is their attitude now? ..............................................

11. What are some of the positive and negative attitudes toward adoption that you have met in the community?
Positive ..................................................................................
Negative ...................................................................................

12. How do you think negative attitudes might be modified to create a better understanding of adoptive families? ......
..................................................................................................
..................................................................................................

13. Are there some special challenges inherent in the fact of adoption? (a) For the adopted child to face? ..............
..................................................................................................
(b) For the adopting parents which might have to be met?
..................................................................................................

14. What is your personal attitude now towards acquiring a family by adoption? ............................................
..................................................................................................

15. Do magazine articles about adoption interest you, generally speaking? ......................................................

16. Would you like to see more articles dealing with various aspects of adoption? ........................................
17. Which aspects of adoption would you most like to see discussed? ..............................................................
..............................................................................................
..............................................................................................

18. Would you please comment on this statement: "Adoptive parenthood and natural parenthood differ only in the way in which the child comes to the family" ..............................................................
..............................................................................................
..............................................................................................

19. Who completed this questionnaire? Father .... Mother ....
Mother and Father .............

Social Data (for statistical classification only)

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<th>Income Group</th>
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Elementary
High (incomplete)
High (complete)
University

Occupation of Father ..............................................................

(Please use the space below for any comments which you would like to make.)
We are writing to ask if you would be interested in participating in a research project concerning adoptions. Our Society considers it important to be continually increasing knowledge and understanding of adoptive families. Therefore, we are co-operating with the University of British Columbia and Mr. Thomas Pleas, who is conducting a study of "Adoption Services" for a Master of Social Work thesis. We feel that adopting parents themselves have much to contribute to the development of adoption practices. It is for this reason that you are being asked at this time to participate in the study. If you have any reluctance about this, please feel free to ignore this form entirely.

If willing, we ask that you complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to us unsigned so as to protect confidentiality.

Yours sincerely,

S. H. Pinkerton,
Executive Director.

AC/cb
Enclosure 1.
APPENDIX C

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