TERMINATION OF SERVICE
BY FOSTER HOMES IN A CHILD-PLACING AGENCY

A Review of One Hundred Closed Foster Homes of the
Children's Aid Society of Vancouver, B.C.

by

MAMIE SYBIL ANDERSON

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ABSTRACT

A REVIEW OF THE PROBLEM OF TERMINATION OF SERVICE BY FOSTER HOMES IN A CHILD-PLACING AGENCY

Issues in foster home recruitment and maintenance in a child-placing agency are considered in this thesis. References are made to literature about the historical development of the foster home method of child care and this includes the set-up of the Children's Aid Society of Vancouver. There is the recognition that foster home placement is not the only plan for each child in agency care but that it is one important answer. Placement problems are raised and discussed.

Specific factors in the closing of 100 foster homes are examined and the reasons are discussed. Records of 100 closed used foster homes are studied from the standpoints of reasons for closing, motives for boarding children, length of time of service, and number of children placed. A comparison is made of the number of homes closed for avoidable and unavoidable reasons and tables are drawn up to illustrate the factors examined. Case illustrations are used from Children's Aid Society records.

The study found that approximately one-third of the homes closed for practical reasons while two-thirds closed for reasons bearing further examination. The largest group closed because of non-acceptance of foster children and their families, and the next largest group closed because of the difficult behaviour of foster children. A considerable number decided they wanted children on a more permanent basis than foster home placement. Over half of the closed homes served the Agency less than one year and a little less than half boarded only one child before closing. A large group stated their original motives for boarding a child as "company for own only child."

Conclusions reached about foster homes are around three basic topics; namely the recruitment of homes, the home study, and placement practices. The most important factor in getting good foster homes is a better selection of applicants in the first place. This can more easily be done by treating foster parenthood as a job with preparation and satisfying remuneration. A thorough home study can be facilitated when there is a better selection of homes from which to choose and when skilled, experienced homefinders have ample time to complete the study satisfactorily. With this groundwork good follow-up placement practices such as pre-placement conferences and casework service after placement should do much to recruit and maintain a higher standard of foster homes.
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CHAPTER I

Development of Foster Home Care

Since history has been written, stories are told of children who have been reared by persons other than their own parents. In Bible times Moses was cared for by Pharoah's daughter. In feudal times dependent children were the concern of one man, the lord of the manor. By the Middle Ages, after the breakdown of the feudalistic system, these growing numbers of children were cared for by the church in institutions.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century efforts were being made to place dependent children in foster family homes rather than in institutions on the principle that most children deprived of their own parents were better off under the care of foster families than in institutions. "The foster home agencies emphasized the needs of the individual child under care, recognized the importance of maintaining kinship ties and urged that only children without family were to be separated permanently." 1

"The quickening twentieth century conscience translated into law benefits and services related to the needs of these children."2 During the early twenties there was considerable controversy between foster home care as against institutional care. There were those who thought that individual foster care was the only answer and others who thought that all foster children should be placed in institutions. The feeling existed that a decision must be made between the two plans. The choice would then be used for all children who could not live in their own homes. The majority of child care workers now recognize the importance of both types of care with the objective of both


2. This is a quotation used in the exhibit of Department of Health and Welfare, British Columbia, at Pacific National Exhibition, 1955.
to make easier the personal and social adjustment of the child who comes for help.

Placement planning must be based on the understanding of the needs of the individual child. For some children individual care through foster home placement might be better, while for other children group care would be more suitable. Success is due to the ability of the child for growth and the capacity of the foster parents to help the child develop.

Foster home care is one of the answers of social workers of today to the question, "What is the best we can offer a child to make up in part for removal from his own home?" Through this thesis "foster home" means a home used by the Children's Aid Society for boarding children in their care and does not include adoption homes.

1. Historical Development of Foster Home Care

Child welfare services have been built on a foundation of legislation and in Canada this is the "protection of children" acts of the various provinces. Besides many other services it includes foster care for children. These acts put into statute form the responsibility of the state to assume guardianship of children who are in need of protection. These acts provided for officials and societies to carry out the provisions and assume guardianship of the child.

"The English influence on our social history especially in the period before 1860, has been very great." At the beginning of the 19th century work was considered the best type of training for children dependent on public relief and "the children paid for their own support by their daily toil. This was the idea behind the ......work program of the early institutions for dependent children."
Abuses and national scandals when children worked in cotton-mills were popular arguments against the apprenticeship system. This is the beginning of child labour legislation and the forerunner of child protection laws.

Child labour was one of the evils of the industrial revolution. There was serious exploitation of children in large mills and workshops and there was a persistent fight for the rights of children and child labour reform.

"Great effort was made to bring the child labour and compulsory education laws into harmony so that each would reinforce the other". ¹ The story of child labour legislation shows how the state began to take over the protection of children from some parents. By the close of the nineteenth century a new conception of the obligation of the state to provide general protection for children was finding recognition in the United States and other countries.

The use of free foster homes was at first in a wholesale manner and then on a "one by one" basis with follow up supervision. At first there was a sympathetic, sometimes sentimental attitude, where placement of children was concerned. Stories are heard of young foster children singing at concerts in an effort to attract foster parents and get a home.

Gradually, because so many placements did not turn out successfully, people began to examine the plan and ask "What does the child really need?" This was the beginning of case records about the boarding out of children and was designed to relieve the evils of indenture. It commenced to be recognized ²

¹. Ibid. p. 264

². Indenture means that a child was bound out to some reputable family where as soon as he was able he was expected to earn his way until the age of 21.
that each child has different needs. Thus began the gradual development of the complete foster home study which is undertaken in reputable child-placing agencies with high standards.

The Home-Study

In the first years of foster home placements there was little emphasis on any supervision of the child after he was once placed, and it seems apparent from stories of that time that many of the children placed were lost and never contacted again. In recent days it is notable that standards for foster family care emphasize not only placement but following casework supervision. The Child Welfare League of America recommends that "There should be a continuous process of evaluation of the child's adjustment throughout the period of placement." ¹

It is also recommended in the same pamphlet that "A home suitable to the particular needs of each child should be selected for him and prepared for his coming into it." ² For a child who cannot fit into family life a small cottage-type institution with a home-like atmosphere might well be the answer. So it must not be assumed that every child can fit himself comfortably into a foster home.

Although it is the hope that, through foster home care, agencies have come nearer to meeting a child's total needs, every social worker knows that this does not always prove to be the case. It is in an effort to discover some of the causes of the termination of the use of certain agency foster homes that this study is being done.

The initial choice of a foster home for a particular child is most important. By the time the child has reached the child placing agency he has

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². Ibid. P.1
been taken from his own home, faced the separation from his own parents, come to the new strange surroundings and people of the agency, and perhaps also the receiving home. One of the main jobs of the homefinder in the agency is the selection and continuing maintenance of helpful foster homes. In most cases multiple placements of children in foster homes are regarded as harmful to his total welfare.

In the maintenance of foster homes the best basis is the choosing of a satisfactory home to begin with. Some homes are judged by skilled workers, for different reasons, to be incapable of satisfying the child's needs and they must be refused. For other reasons, homes once used are closed.

A great deal of time and effort goes into the finding of a foster home, and such a home plays a large part in shaping the life of the child who comes to the Agency's care. Therefore it would seem good business to examine some of the homes which no longer work with the Agency in an effort to discover reasons for their closing and to make some recommendations for possible future economy.

This proposes then to be a study of 100 approved foster homes at Children's Aid Society of Vancouver which were closed for use in the period September 1952 to June 1954. It is hoped to discover some effective means of conserving more homes for a longer period of usefulness.

Homefinding in Children's Aid Society

When the Children's Aid Society of Vancouver first came into being,
children were maintained in large homes and institutions, similar to orphanages, until suitable free foster homes could be found for them. The 1901 annual meeting reported that 29 children had been taken into care and planned for by the society. The number of children in care gradually increased, bringing with it the problem of reconciling the expense of their care with the collecting of sufficient money by the directors.

At that time children from any part of the province were sent to Vancouver for placement and no one was under obligation to pay for their maintenance, which was then raised mainly by charitable donations. Other children were sent from Vancouver to free foster homes in all parts of British Columbia where committees of local citizens were formed to visit wards in foster homes and advise the Children's Aid Society of their conditions. Repeated representation to the provincial government of the need for financial maintenance of all wards brought results when in 1930 the total financial responsibility was assumed by the provincial government and was shared by municipalities in 1931. This action directly affected the position of foster homes as it was the beginning of ability to guarantee board payment for a child.

In the first three decades of the 1900's a child placing committee did its utmost to find suitable permanent free homes and, in the case of older boys and girls, precautions were taken to try to ensure that they were not being used as unpaid labour. Supervision of a sort was exercised by local committees. This same child placing committee went over applications offering homes for children and about a third were refused each year. 1

1. Minutes of the Child Placing Committee Children's Aid Society, Vancouver, B. C.
Children were kept at the agency's home on Wall Street until suitable foster homes were found. Sometimes there was a tendency to keep the older ones too long, perhaps because they were more difficult to place. In straitened times it seemed hard to offer free homes for older girls and boys due to the high cost of living. There was a static population of older boys and girls. Sometimes there were boarders who lived there indefinitely and without a future plan.

During the 1920's the idea was developing that homes were better than institutions in caring for children. Serious consideration to this was given by the Children's Aid Society and the recommendation was made at annual meetings that attention be given to supervised foster homes rather than large institutions to care for children.

In 1927 interested citizens of Vancouver, led by board members of the Children's Aid Society, requested an evaluation of the whole plan of child welfare in the province with a view to its reorganization in the interests of better service to children. Miss Charlotte Whitton, then Executive Secretary of the Canadian Council for Child Welfare, was asked to undertake this survey. The survey committee, with members from service clubs and social agencies, was asked to appoint an executive officer to carry out recommendations of the survey report. At that time there were no trained professional workers available in the province and, because of this, social workers from eastern Canada were considered.

Following the survey many recommendations for improved services to children were made. Among other things, the members strongly urged that there should be greater emphasis on efforts to keep children in their own homes.
whenever possible. Up to this time institutional care was emphasized rather than boarding homes with casework services. It was stressed that, if the latter plan were utilized, it would not only improve the service to the child but would result in reduced expenditure for buildings.

In 1925 there is the first recorded mention of home-finding and a recognition of its importance. In Miss Whitton's study of 1927 she said in part "...and foster home placements were in ill repute in B.C. as all are free or wage homes and supervision is carried out in a haphazard manner." The survey recommended that carefully selected boarding homes be used and that the home study be done with the greatest care and consummate skill. The survey recommended trained workers and a foster home scheme as opposed to institutional care.

At first there was much opposition and part acceptance; some citizens and Children's Aid Society members thought an institution was still the better place as there seemed no guarantee that children in foster homes would receive proper care and attention. However, Miss Laura Holland and her four trained assistants who had come to British Columbia from Ontario to carry out survey recommendations of Miss Whitton, placed all the children in paid boarding homes except four who were placed in institutions and six placed in industrial schools. Over a period of time the Children's Aid Society medical staff, who examined the children in foster homes, indicated that there was a great improvement in their general well-being. The foster home program was well launched by the end of 1928, although the responsibility for care and maintenance of wards was only finally accepted by the British Columbia provincial

1. op. cit., P. 28.
government in 1930 and by the Vancouver city council in 1931.

In 1930 Miss Holland told the annual meeting of the Children's Aid Society that a visitor could only adequately supervise 35 to 50 children in foster homes while, at that time, workers were expected to be responsible for approximately 80 children. She recommended that an extra worker be added to the staff in order to attain minimum standards.

Between 1940 and 1946 foster homes became scarcer and three receiving homes were established to help the situation. The agency staff members became keenly aware of the need in Vancouver of supervised boarding homes for boys in their first jobs who could not meet the full cost of decent maintenance.

Previous to 1928 homes were found and decided on by the child placing committee. Immediately after 1928 homefinding was done by a worker and volunteers, and all homes were approved by the child placing committee. Still later, when social workers were assigned to certain districts, a worker did her own homefinding in her own area. In some ways this proved unsatisfactory as applications were apt to be neglected for emergencies. Also, in some districts there was a more suitable supply of foster homes than there were in other districts. For instance homefinders report that they find fewer foster homes in the industrial area than they do in the section of the city east of Ontario Street.

After 1949 there was a full time professional homefinder, and in 1950 one other professional worker. In 1954 there were four workers doing home-finding under her supervision.

During the past fifty years the planning of the Children's Aid
Society for dependent children has swung over from institutional care to the use of foster home care for most children, with some exceptions when the child cannot fit into a foster home. Along with this change in methods of child care come new problems peculiar to this plan.

Some of the Problems that Arise

"In a technical sense home finding consists in discovering families willing to accept one or more children for foster care, either without charge (for example, possible or prospective adoptive parents) or in return for the payment of stipulated sums for the board of the child."¹

Miss Phyllis Burns, secretary of the Canadian Welfare Council, spoke about foster home-finding at the Children's Aid Society on February 5, 1953. At that time she observed: "The fact still remains that in most of our child placing agencies there is an inadequate supply of the kind of homes we would like to have. It is also generally conceded that once you are able to establish the feeling that this is a satisfying job foster parents recruit new foster parents."

Taking a child into one's home is fraught with difficulty. Not all children have the capacity to take on the relationship that is required in a foster family. They cannot respond and they expect to be given to rather than to give. To foster parents the most disturbing of their expressions of unhappiness are enuresis, stealing and sex problems.

So foster home service cannot meet the needs of all children and in the attempt to do so lies one of the causes of the breakdown of many foster homes. To offset this some agencies experiment with temporary homes


². Richman, loc. cit.
to determine whether or not disturbed children and their parents can take placement. The effectiveness of foster homes will be enhanced in direct ratio to our understanding and skill in determining what children can best benefit by this form of care.

In the past it was the practice for agencies to stress altruisms as "Foster parents are considered mercenary when they request compensation commensurate with their service." Mr. Richman expresses the view "foster parents who are rendering a service to the community as well as to a particular agency should expect reasonable compensation for actual costs and service." Most social workers agree with this opinion but the problem that arises is the one of added cost to budgets. It is a long and difficult process to increase board rates and yet if low board rates exist and there is a high turn-over in foster homes, a poor impression is created about being foster parents.

Again, sometimes foster parents feel resentful that they put so much into the care of a child and then must give him up. They have been aware of this all along but it is part of the difficulty of the job that the final parting comes as a painful experience. Some find it too hard and give up. Some find it impossible to give enough of their feelings and warmth under these conditions and conclude they cannot continue to care for foster children.

Some of the difficulties which foster parents find concern foster children's parents. Foster parents find it difficult to give up children. They wish to assume responsibilities not their own. There are often periods of discouragement and if they do not get satisfaction in some form they will

1. Ibid. p.8
terminate the relationship with the agency.

Foster homes wear out too fast by overcrowding. There may be lack of consideration for foster parents and they are not helped enough at first and at the time of crisis. Foster parents become discouraged by an especially difficult child and the extra laundry bill; they become ill and have to give up children sometimes only temporarily.

Because of these special difficulties "the agency owes to foster parents regular and continuing case work help to support them in this conflict as well as in other areas." Even then some foster parents cannot work well under supervision, and because they feel that this casework service is interference these people stop serving the agency. An observation is that "foster parents can accept and use such help only within the framework of a positive relationship with the caseworker." This implies that homefinders and workers must have sufficient time and skill to form these relationships and to offer casework help. In agencies where workers have large and active caseloads this is hard to do in every case and foster parents may be left to manage alone, while something more pressing takes up the worker's time.

**Casework Skills in Use of Foster Homes**

Suitable foster homes are valuable in a child placing agency but it is sometimes hard to remember that, once found they should be used economically. "As in all casework situations, diagnosis and evaluation both of child and foster parents are a continuous process serving at the outset to help us select the right home for the child, and later guiding the treatment plan and determining the casework skills to be used to maintain the placement." 3

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1. Ibid. p.11
2. Ibid. p.12
Speaking of continuing casework Dorothy Hutchinson says "Really efficient evaluation will only take place after a child is placed and the foster parent is actively engaged in the new responsibility."\(^1\) She concludes that agencies "must not expect to find perfect homes for there are none and they should remember that all foster parents ... are a little neurotic even as we all are."\(^2\) Other writers maintain that "the educible foster parents who make homes for disturbed children need special understanding and care."\(^3\) There is also the necessity to realize that "other foster parents need but cannot use casework services. In these instances the caseworker's skill lies in her ability to make such an evaluation, and then to exert special care to place only a child who fits into the home as it is, since we cannot expect the foster parents to change."\(^4\)

These same writers also emphasize that "the preplacement preparation of foster parents plays an essential role in determining the success of the placement."\(^5\) Agencies are under great pressure so use foster homes too soon. They also use them before the child is known well enough. Often this has to be done because the child needs immediate shelter and there are no such temporary provisions. These homes have to be used as an expediency measure and perhaps not for their most useful purpose.

"Another factor which tends to interfere with the caseworker's application of skills is her identification with the child."\(^6\)

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2. Ibid.
5. Ibid. p. 342.
6. Ibid. p. 341.
The agency's purpose is of course to see primarily to the welfare of the child, but sometimes the worker makes this felt so urgently that she forgets that the foster parent is a person interested in the child too. The worker needs to remember that "to be of positive value to the child, we need to become adept at meeting the feelings of the foster parents, and recognizing when they are psychologically ready to learn." 1 It sometimes takes a long time to realize that while "all children have the same basic needs ... the need to love and to be loved, the need to be secure and the need to achieve," 2 yet "not all children can take love from foster parents or give it in return." 3

The main problems that arise in maintaining foster homes seem to be around the scarcity of a supply of homes, the evaluation of the homes used and the use of approved foster homes. This study concerns foster homes which have terminated service with the agency, in the hope that some light may be thrown on reasons for homes closing.

1. Ibid. p. 342.
2. Richman, op. cit. p. 11.
3. Ibid.
CHAPTER II

FOSTER CARE PROGRAMME OF CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF VANCOUVER, B.C.

Present Programme Policy in Foster Home Placement

"One of the functions of a Children's Aid Society or other children's agency is to provide temporary or permanent care for children who can no longer be cared for in their own homes." 1 It is generally agreed that for many younger children the best type of substitute care is offered by foster parents who care for them in their own home. Care on this boarding basis is paid for at a certain rate by the agency, which rate usually covers food, with clothing and medical care supplied extra. The boarding rate generally varies with the age of the child and the rate for older children is increased. It is based on the actual expenses involved and does not as a rule reimburse the foster parents for services. A sound foster home programme requires all types of foster parents of different ages, of varied interests, and in various situations:

Foster parents assume a large responsibility for the child's total well being. So it is of the utmost importance that in coming to a decision about using a prospective foster home the focal point is the particular need of the children for whom the agency is wanting foster homes.

The Home-Study Process

The aim of the agency's Homefinding Department is to meet the needs of any child removed from his own home who requires a foster home. It is an art or skill which involves a home study made by the social worker. It is basically a process of getting to know people well enough so that it can be determined whether or not any particular family is suitable as a foster home for any child. This resource is expected to provide homes for all the kinds of children who come into care. It involves provision for a shelter, a treatment service, and a new permanent family for the child who needs to become part of one. In reality children cannot be categorized but each has particular individual needs which must be met by the individual foster homes.

The homefinding section 1 finds all foster boarding homes except the ones that children find for themselves or special ones which workers find. Boarding homes are temporary or permanent. The basic aim is eventually to have a choice of homes. In that case it is most important to know the needs of the workers in each of the geographic units into which the Children's Aid Society territory is divided.

Homes must be found for children requiring temporary, permanent, or indefinite care with or without family contacts. For instance, short or sometimes long term care is provided for the child who is a victim of such a crisis as the mother taken ill.

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1. "Homefinder" & "homefinding section" throughout this study refer to those of the Children's Aid Society, Vancouver, B.C.
When she makes a home study the homefinder aims mainly at finding homes which approach the normal in family life and living. However although the home study is done on the basis of the general needs of children, the choosing of a child's home should be a particular study. So in the home study homefinders discuss children in general with applicants, even though they may use a particular child's story to illustrate. She may speak of the need for a home for a teen-aged Chinese girl. Not necessarily will this produce such a home, but it may result in finding one for another child.

In order to understand homefinding it is necessary to know what we are aiming for in a home. Every child has needs which must be fulfilled if he is to develop into a satisfactory adult. Therefore some homes which are not average and normal might meet the needs of a particular child and be useful.

Good parents meet the need for affection by their relationship with the child in the home. Other emotional needs are met by giving him a share in family work and play. By letting him make some of his own decisions and encouraging him in school work and other worthwhile tasks they help him to stand on his own feet. They give him praise and show confidence in him.

Foster parents must have additional special qualities to meet the special needs of foster children. In addition to the needs of children in their own home, the foster child needs to be convinced that he has a place in the home and hearts of the foster parents. Moreover, the foster child needs understanding and help in relation
to his sensitivity about placement and his feelings of discrimination. He needs help with his mixed feelings of resentment against his own parents coupled with divided loyalties and conflicts. He needs help and understanding to meet the emotional shock of separation from his own home; he also must face what his past experiences and deprivations have meant to him.

In order to meet these problems, foster parents must have special qualities in addition to those of any good parent. They must accept and recognize that no matter how fond they become of a foster child he can never be their own; and yet they must feel a reasonable possessiveness which results from genuine affection. They must have the ability to face facts realistically and should not feel hurt if the child does not accept them completely.

Ideally foster parents should not resent the natural parents for their claims on the child. They will need to recognize that the child's love must be waited for — not taken for granted as with natural children. In short, they must realize that being a foster parent means that they must have many special qualities added to those of good own parents.

Homefinders feel that there should be two parents of a suitable age generally young enough to have been able to have naturally the child placed. These parents should be understanding, warm-hearted adults who live happily together. Foster parents' ages are factors in terms of health and the duration of placement. It is desirable, as far as possible, to avoid replacements, and so placement should be where the child can secure normal family care for as long as he needs it. Thus people who
are in their sixties are not encouraged to foster young children as a permanent plan.

Exceptions to the rule of a home with two parents are where the child has special problems or needs a special relationship. Perhaps at times a child benefits from an "aunt" "grandparent" relation for a specified length of time; sometimes he needs a special relationship with one parent and here widows have a real contribution. Such a home might also be used for emergency care for short periods of time where health is good and age does not interfere with the child's normal activities. Also in such a case kindness and warmth is very important. The situation must be carefully assessed in terms of both the child and the foster parents.

In special cases single women are used as foster parents when an "aunt" relationship is desirable but this is usually a relative. Such arrangements are for short periods of care by competent, mature women.

At the Children's Aid Society the Foster Home Committee has a twofold purpose, firstly that of interpretation and liaison between community and professional persons, bringing to both and giving back to both; secondly it proposes to give direction of programme, assisting in implementing programmes needed, and laying down policy as to how these needs should be met.

Recently 1 this committee recommended that an exception be made to the standard rule of a home with two parents. These homes are to be chosen on the basis of careful selection and discrimination. They

1. Minutes of Committee on Foster Homes and Adoptions, Children's Aid Society of Vancouver, May 21st 1954.
propose to be used for emergency type of care for short periods of time and the homes should measure up to usual standards of physical and emotional care.

The Agency's present policy concerning boarding home rates paid is that higher rates are paid for temporary care of babies than for permanent care. This is done in the belief that the former does not bring with it the same satisfactions that come to foster parents who offer a child a permanent home. This distinction has not yet been made between older children as they are generally in care on a more permanent basis. All child-caring agencies seem to be facing this same problem of whether or not to pay for services. In this agency the problem is now met by paying special rates, particularly in reference to children with severe medical problems and for emotionally disturbed children. Recently a sub-committee of the foster home committee has been set up to study board rates.

As an art or skill, homefinding involves basic minimum criteria in the effort to assess the value of each home. The applicants must be respectable; the income must be adequate to care for the child; foster parents must be young enough to give care for the length of time necessary and to avoid replacements; health must be reasonably good to ensure that replacements will be avoided for this reason. Ideally there should be two parents in the home but there are exceptions in the case of children who require special homes. One example might be the neurotic child who needs a motherly widow or a grandparent relationship.

Before a foster home is accepted the Children's Aid Society homefinder checks references after having seen foster parents together
and separately and having made at least one home visit to the whole family. Until September 1952 a committee gave their final decision to the approval of a foster home but since that date they have given consultant advice only on doubtful homes.

Foster parents who board a child under the age of seven in Vancouver require a city permit costing one dollar, and renewable each year. Sanitary and fire regulations require that there shall be no dual occupancy which includes boarders and basement suites in foster homes. There should be no overcrowding and this means adequate room space and a separate bed for each child. Housekeeping standards should ensure good physical care. Wiring, heating and plumbing must be in safe condition.

After the child's placement, foster parents sign an agreement which is a contract between the agency and themselves regarding boarding of the child. It requires that the caseworker be informed of changes in the home and in the health of the child. Foster parents are discouraged from boarding other children privately. It has been found from experience that this leads to difficulties, particularly because of the contrast between children with and without responsible parents. This agreement includes specifically the responsibilities and rights of both agency and foster parents with emphasis on treatment of the foster child as a member of the family.

Placement Planning

In order to use this foster home to best advantage, a caseworker visits the home at intervals before and after the child is placed. She
offers professional assistance to the foster parents while asking them to follow certain agency policies and regulations. It is hoped that a frank working relationship will be established amongst the three involved, namely, the child, the foster family and the social worker.

The caseworker chooses a home which she thinks particularly suits the child to be placed and then plans for the placement well ahead of time through a pre-placement conference, preparatory talks and visits with child and his parents, and the foster family. This preparation cannot take place in emergency placements, but the latter should occur rarely and only when unavoidable.

Board is paid by cheque and continues regularly at the middle of the month following which the child has been placed. Half the usual board payments are paid for the first ten days a child is at camp, and full board payments are made for the first seven days of a child's stay in hospital. All clothing is supplied by the agency by means of a voucher system with foster mother purchasing the clothing at any one of several department stores in and near Vancouver. Out of the Family Allowance the Agency pays $4.00 monthly for an increase in the basic boarding home rate. The balance is kept in a trust account for the child's special use. If the placement is likely to continue,  all the Family Allowance may be sent directly after the first year to the foster parents to provide benefits not included in ordinary maintenance. Rental of school books is paid for from Agency funds. Some larger school items may be provided for from Family Allowance trust funds.

Children in the care of the Agency are covered for medical, surgical, dental including orthodontic and optical needs, besides drugs.
They are encouraged to have religious training and are expected to attend school regularly and the schools are encouraged to deal with them as they would with children and natural parents. "The foster parent, the school and the social worker are a team working in the best interests of the child. In most school matters the foster parents should be dealt with by the school as in the case of natural parents. If, for some reason, this does not seem advisable the social worker may recommend otherwise. The school should always feel free to ask for the social worker's participation." 1

In many situations children keep in touch with their own parents so plans for visits with them are talked over with foster parents beforehand. Sometimes, if convenient, the parents visit in the foster home, but if this does not work out, office visits are arranged.

If a placement has to be terminated, the caseworker discusses this as far in advance as possible with the foster family. In turn, if foster parents wish to discontinue, the Agency likes to know soon in order to plan for the child. The Foster home agreement states in part:

They shall maintain the child in their care so long as both parties hereto are satisfied with this arrangement; should they desire to return the child they shall give to the Society two weeks' notice of their intention so to do. 2

Special Problems in Availability of Foster Homes

The selection and continuing supply of enough foster homes, within the limitations of agency policy and standards, from the applicants who want to be foster parents is the total homefinding job.

2. Children's Aid Society Form F.H. 4
The development of 'homefinding' "has been spasmodic and irregular." The methods used vary from place to place and agency to agency. However, one thing most child-placing agencies have in common is a general shortage of foster homes. "There are times when the need for homes is so much greater than the supply that the agency may experience a sense of hopelessness." 2

The major selection problem is generally one of scarcity; homefinders agree that there are just never enough homes since approximately sixteen to eighteen out of every twenty applicants are rejected for obvious reasons. 3

During the month of April 1954, which is considered an average month for foster home applicants, the Children's Aid Society of Vancouver received 130 applications. Out of these 82 were withdrawn or immediately rejected (63.08%); 12 were awaiting decision; 22 were uninvestigated; 14 (10.77%) were approved for use. If only the 63.08% were considered the total unapproved homes could then only possibly be 36.92% accepted. It is also quite likely that of the 10.77% already approved one or two may still withdraw. The fact is clear that most child placing agencies have an inadequate supply of the right kind of foster homes.


3. Burns, Phyllis, speaking at Children's Aid Society of Vancouver on February 5, 1953, said that 80% or more was considered an average number of rejections in Canadian child-placing agencies.
Table 1. Children's Aid Society of Vancouver, B.C. Placement Picture
from Sept. 1952 to June 1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Admissions</th>
<th>Discharges</th>
<th>True Placements</th>
<th>Children in Foster Homes</th>
<th>Foster Homes In Use</th>
<th>Applications &amp; Reopenings</th>
<th>Closed Foster Homes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>554</td>
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<td>Oct</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>559</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>873</td>
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<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>877</td>
<td>570</td>
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<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>41</td>
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<td>557</td>
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<td>862</td>
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<td>Sept</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>551</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>840</td>
<td>529</td>
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<td>Mar</td>
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<td>539</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>847</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>59</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>838</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>493</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 689 735 1046

* True placement means any permanent placement of a child into a foster home, and does not include a hospital stay, a camp holiday, placement in a subsidized boarding home, or any short temporary move.
The Agency's placement job is difficult to describe statistically as there are some nebulous factors. During the period from September 1952 to June 1954 inclusive, 689 children were admitted to care and 735 children were discharged from care. However, some of the children already in care were replaced to other foster or adoption homes. The number of true placements during this period studied was 1,046. The average number of children in foster homes during each month was 859 and the average number of homes in use during each month was 547.

During this time there were 493 foster home applications and re-openings (this does not mean homes approved for use) and 560 homes were closed (this includes applications used and unused homes). As figures for approved homes during this period are not available, assume that 20%, a high percentage, is approved for use. This would result in 98.6 or 99 new approved homes.

During this same period there were approximately 100 closed used homes so that this number practically equals the number of new approved homes.

These figures mean little unless the kind of placement requests are known, whether they were for well children, children in need of prolonged medical treatment, babies or older boys and girls, well adjusted or emotionally upset children. Individually suited foster homes had to be provided for 1,046 children during the period studied.

Homefinding departments do not always attract the right foster parents in the first place for financial as well as many other reasons. "With some foster parents there is pressure to increase board rates and the request bears consideration. Increasingly social work thinking is modifying from suspicion of such motives to a frank examination."  

1. Ibid.
Why should foster parents not ask to be paid for service rendered.

Social workers who were once inclined to question the motives of applicants interested in the financial aspect of boarding children, find that this attitude can be examined more fruitfully when there is a good relationship between foster parents and worker. This indicates skill on the part of the worker in giving supportive help if rates cannot be raised.

In Ontario in 1953 York County Children's Aid Society decided not to increase board rates but to increase the staff as a means of improved service. In Toronto where board rates have been increased, all the child-placing agencies in that city should find the answers to the questions, "To what extent is the job not worthwhile financially?" "How will it affect the supply of foster homes?" Board rates should be high enough so that foster parents will not only not be asked to subsidize but also that they will be paid for service.

"If there is an attractive board rate a value is attached to the job done; otherwise we demean the status of the job." It would be interesting to note what would happen in terms of availability if a better than average rate were offered.

Homefinders find difficulty in attracting professional or semi-professional people whom they wish to recruit, as these persons are sometimes not interested because they feel the job is not in good repute. In certain areas boarding of children does not have community approval perhaps due to one unfortunate unfavourable experience. Bill, aged 9, an agency ward whose own parents had separated, responded to placement with

1. Ibid.
an inability to like his new foster-parents. He continually ran away and sometimes was found and brought back by the police. Radio announcements asked help in finding him. Friends and neighbours may conclude from this that the job is too difficult and filled with anxiety.

Another basic problem in foster home operation is the "own family contacts." This needs to be carefully observed so that a child's parents do not impose on the foster parents' home life beyond their convenience. This can be controlled through the worker. If it is too noticeable to the point of possessiveness of a temporary foster-child, the foster home should be re-evaluated.

Perhaps, because of the scarcity of available foster homes there is not enough preparation for the job of being foster parents. They are needed so urgently and are used too soon. A disturbed child may be placed and then these people are sometimes left to work out the problem by themselves. They may not have been forewarned that with many foster children return of affection is usually slow in coming due to former experiences.

Foster children have their own peculiar problems which are not the same as those of natural children. For instance there are the matters of his relationships to his own parents, to his foster parents and to the new community in which he now lives. If help is not given in these areas, some foster parents give up the struggle as too much for them.

In some communities foster home care is not recognized as a service but censure is quick when something goes wrong. If there is not enough support from the beginning, foster parents will be inclined to give up the job as not worthwhile.
Homefinders have found that "difficult to place" children present the greatest challenge.

In this group the rejected, emotionally disturbed child is the most troublesome and least understood. One boy, Bob, aged 10, shy, over-controlled and conforming had parents who are divorced and no longer interested in him. He feels but cannot express his anxiety about what will happen to him. It will take him a long time to trust these new parents enough to risk showing them affection.

A special problem is the finding of a foster home for the teenager who does not fit into the average home. Present day thinking points to more consideration of the group living home or subsidized boarding home for these children but this is a service for which we must pay more. The questions to be answered are "Can this child adjust in a foster home?" "If so can a home be found to meet his needs?"

Other children who are often in need of foster care are those mentally retarded who are not eligible for Woodlands School. To the majority of foster parents this group of children do not offer enough satisfaction in return for care given. They require more supervision with special patience and understanding. A minority of people will agree to board them and then often expect a higher board rate. However one agency foster mother has cared for three boys classed as dull normal, for several years, and has managed to give them a feeling of their own worth, and that this is their home. They are adjusting well and their


attainments are in keeping with capacities.

Homes must be found for a child of mixed racial background, babies awaiting adoption, an abandoned baby who needs emergency care. Some children are abandoned and taken to police station by neighbours when there is no parent to be found, so must be planned for without delay. The rare instance of physical cruelty to a child on the part of parents, where the child must be immediately removed, means that a foster home must be available for him at that time and there can be no waiting.

There is the physically handicapped child, such as a child with cancer, an epileptic boy, a girl with cerebral palsy or a deaf child. Alice, 8, a lively red-haired girl of attractive appearance and superior intelligence spent her pre-school days in a foster home which she now regards as her only home. Now at school age she attends the School for the Deaf during the week and goes home every weekend and on holidays.

Some children come from suburban areas to Vancouver foster homes while receiving special medical treatment. It has been the practice of the homefinding department to advertise individually for a special home for such a child.

On June 25, 1954, the following advertisement was placed in the classified section of the Vancouver Sun:

PROTESTANT SOCIAL AGENCY REQUIRES FOSTER HOMES FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Help them help themselves by giving them normal family living. Martin, age 6, cannot walk now, but will be helped to walk with the encouragement of understanding foster parents. He is attractive and cheerful and there will be satisfaction in helping a child who really needs you. Agency pays special board, supplies clothing and medical care. Apply Box 1643, Sun.
Results from this advertisement were not considered successful. From the thirteen replies received a suitable home was not found for Martin although it is possible that from the applicants at least one or two foster-homes were later used for other children. From time to time such advertisements are placed in the paper and along with other methods are a gradual means of interpretation of the need for foster homes.

Because of the shortage of foster homes a problem sometimes arises when a home does not meet policy standards, but has many other values which make the application most acceptable from all other aspects. The question then becomes one of whether sound policy which has been set down for good reason should ever be deviated from and whether because of need of homes exceptions should be made. For instance basement bedrooms for foster children have not been acceptable and otherwise satisfactory homes have been refused for this reason.

Related to the problem of keeping homes is the problem of keeping homefinders. "It is no accident that homefinders themselves are hard to find and once found, hard to keep. There are real reasons for this." The homefinder must be a particularly mature person, with skill in diagnosing the complex motives of applicants, with knowledge and precision in coming to a decision as soon as possible. She does not have the satisfaction of a long term contact with her client and there is always pressure to produce homes for children who so badly need them. She must feel conviction when a client is refused.

Scarcity of enough suitable foster homes to meet the basic needs of every child who comes into foster home care is the main problem of homefinding departments. Once a foster home has been chosen its closing for other than practical reasons may be because of many reasons. Community misunderstanding and lack of status in the job can prevent desirable people from applying at all. Financial dissatisfaction also deters another group who would make good foster parents. Lack of agency support especially around the time of placement and crises will cause homes to close when they might otherwise have continued. Overcrowding has caused some foster parents to feel that the job is too hard. Invasion of the home by many workers and the child's parents caused others to close their home for foster home use. "Multiple placements of a child in foster homes are regarded by social workers as harmful to the child." So, apart from the financial loss, the explicit reasons for closed foster homes will be examined with the hope of better future service to children in foster homes.

CHAPTER 3
An Analysis of Reasons Why Homes Closed

During the period chosen for study, September 1952 to May 1954, 105 approved used homes were closed and 100 of these have been chosen for study. Five were omitted as information was incomplete or circumstances changed suddenly so home was never used. Some of these homes were chosen by the agency, and in some others service was terminated by the foster parents. The following is an examination of factors in their closing and their service to the agency. Only the most noticeable reasons will be explored but it is understood that there are other corollary factors such as intense religious interest and occupation, which will not be treated here except if outstanding. The purpose is to indicate future direction in the availability and use of foster homes.

Table II
Total Used Foster Homes Closed..........................100

Closed because of change in foster family plans ........35
Closed as unsuitable for further service to agency ......65

Of the one hundred homes examined 35 were closed because of a change in plan on the part of foster parents, and 65 were considered no longer suitable to serve the agency. However, it must be understood that in some cases where homes are unsatisfactory foster parents are encouraged to withdraw and the agency is satisfied to close the home. In other cases, when satisfactory foster parents terminate their service with the agency,

m "used"- means child placed there.

m Source - Children's Aid Society, Vancouver, B.C. records - all quotations in this chapter are from these records.
it is with regret that the agency closes the homes. So in classifying these homes this thought has been in mind.

It is sometimes difficult to tell exactly why foster parents terminate service. Often it is less embarrassing to give a practical reason for a deeper feeling of discomfort. Based upon the written records, categories have been made to designate the apparent reasons for the closing of these homes.

Table III
Reasons for Foster Homes Closing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has own or adopted child</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved away</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want permanent or adoption placement</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special for 1 child</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-acceptance of foster children and their parents</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcrowding</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult behaviour of foster children</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial only</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital difficulty</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-acceptance of agency</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health (includes pregnancy)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the first group of Table III, 35 homes were closed for service with the agency for apparently practical reasons. Six families, now with own or adoptive children gave up caring for foster children, as they felt they had enough to do in caring for their own. 13 families moved away; 12 wanted only a permanent plan or a child on adoption basis.
It should be explained here that the latter twelve homes are transferred to the adoption department so are not lost to agency use. Four were special homes for a particular child and were not available for the use of any other. These four homes should be in a special category and not listed as agency resources.

**Care of Natural or Adoptive Children (6)**

Two foster families which first requested adoption took some children to board for temporary care while waiting. After placement of children on an adoption basis these homes were not available for placement purposes.

A third family helped out temporarily for a two-week period with adequate care but this foster mother had always stated her intention of not continuing as she had three children of her own. A fourth who gave short term care to three young children said that, besides having too much work to do with her own three children, her husband objected to foster children.

In the case of a fifth family the placement of three difficult teenagers proved too much for a foster mother who also had to look after her own children. In a sixth foster home, where there are five own children, the foster mother understandably says she has enough to do, but she also objects to low board rates and teen-age girl's behaviour.

**Moved Away (13)**

Of the thirteen foster families who moved away three foster parents took the foster children with them, either on adoption or permanent foster home basis, so they could be considered as continuing although not with this agency. A fourth "did a good job with one difficult teen-ager"
for one and a half years before giving her up on leaving the province.
Two other foster parents who moved away served the agency satisfactorily for one short temporary period each.

Another Negro family gave excellent temporary care to babies, with five placements in five months but moved away leaving no address. In these two situations the question is whether the move was planned beforehand and known to the agency. If so, could the permanency of service to the agency have been better known at the time of the home-study?

Another family which had boarded several difficult teen-age boys for the agency moved away and switched to operating an old people's home. Before moving, this family boarded a boy who was severely disturbed; they tried to co-operate with weekly play interviews and natural parents' participation, but the whole experience had a great deal to do with their decision to change the type of care offered, although financial consideration was also involved.

Two other families gave doubtful care and would have required re-evaluation if the agency had continued to use them. One of these was a widow who seemed unsettled and her move was called "impulsive" by the worker.

Three foster families moved away and two of these were transferred to provincial supervision as continuing foster homes. In the other home, the foster mother, a nurse, gave satisfactory short term care to a 2½ year old boy recovering from polio, before she joined her husband away from Vancouver. However before she went she asked that the boy be removed as both she and her daughter were ill. Recording
does not clearly indicate the worker's opinion as to whether this illness seemed to be associated with rejection of the child placed there. Homes of widows or fatherless homes are accepted for agency use only under special circumstances. In this case it was because of the foster mother's nursing experience and the short placement planned for the boy.

Want Permanent or Adoption(12)

In this group of twelve closed homes the parents applied for children to be placed permanently with a view to adoption. They seemed to have heard through friends that this might be a quicker way to get an adopted child. They may also be in the low preference group of adopting parents due to age or income.

The above homes were all used by the agency as temporary, sometimes emergency, placements and in all but one case foster parents eventually withdrew. The basis of foster placement here is not sound if the foster parents think that by boarding foster children they earn the right to adopt a child later.

Three families gave practical reasons such as "change in circumstance," "boarding the teacher," "taking children privately." Five helped out the agency with temporary placements but finally said they did not wish to continue on this basis and would "wait for a permanent child."

In another home an older girl was placed at her own request as a part-time domestic helper but the placement broke down in five days. Yet this foster mother's health did not permit younger children being placed and she withdrew her request. The agency was content to let her as "she seemed a perfectionist." This home would not likely have been
used but for the older girl's request and was on the verge of being refused before the withdrawal.

In two cases foster parents appeared to withdraw completely. Both felt it was too hard to part with children and seem to have been hurt by the experience. The first who took a child in temporarily, supposedly for ten days, but actually longer, said it was "too hard to part with children." The other foster parents boarded two children for three years and became very attached to them. When the time came for the foster children to return to their own parents both foster parents helped them in a mature way and the return was made easier for the children. However, the foster parents withdrew and the foster mother said it was "too much for them" and that she had "lost her maternal instinct." There is a need here for preparation of the foster parents from the beginning of the placement plan, against the time when the children will be leaving. Even then it is hard but at least is not so unexpected.

One home was closed because the child boarding there was adopted by the foster parents. Although sometimes other foster children are placed to board in such homes, the agency felt that these foster parents should not take more children.

Special for one Child (4)

In this group four homes were special placements for particular children and were not interested in any others.

In the case of the first home the foster children's parents knew and contacted the foster parents. As parents were now capable of taking on more responsibility for their children and at the request of the foster parents the home was used as a private boarding home with
own parents paying the board.

Another home was found by a teen-age girl with people especially interested in her. Here she received much understanding and affection and still looks on this as her home although she is away working. These foster parents are not interested in any other children.

In the two others the teen-age girls who found the homes began working and paid their own board in these homes which were most satisfactory for them.

Non-acceptance of Foster Children and Parents (25)

In the home-studies of the above homes, several factors are noticeable. In nearly all the homefinder had questioned the real sincerity of foster parents interest in children. In some homes, the husband's attitude is antagonistic, not interested or not known. It is significant that in all these closed homes the homefinder expressed doubts about one or both parents concerning their real acceptance of foster children and their families. Noticeable in the records are remarks as "uncertain about foster children", "wants conformity", "no feeling", "woman neurotic although husband a strength", "foster mother nervous, overconcerned about foster children's health and husband dominant", "asked removal on Christmas Eve", "had difficulty with own children now grown up."

It is notable that five of this group stated their motive for boarding children as companionship for an own only child. In each case a complete home study was done with specific recommendations for the kind of child to be placed and for placement preparation before and after. In all five there was inability on the part of either foster parents or their own children to accept the foster child. Such recordings as "own child too insecure to accept foster child", "own child jealous of foster child", "own
"neither foster mother or daughter could accept foster child's behaviour". There is a need to examine successful foster homes of this kind to determine the predominance of termination, or if they continued, how much they permit the normal growth of the child. Whether there is removal or not, there is placement damage to the child when coldness, over-demand for conformity, nervousness, abnormal jealousy and neurotic attitudes exist on the part of foster parents.

In a sixth home the foster father was unable to accept foster children and on reviewing it appears that approval of this placement was doubtful at first and then the home was suddenly used without the worker feeling the study had been completed satisfactorily. This shows the importance of assessing the foster father's attitudes and giving them weight in acceptance or otherwise of the home. Here it is also strongly recommended by the writer that the following workers who visit in any foster home should participate in the continuing evaluation, and that their observations be recorded regularly on the foster home record.

In another home used as an emergency placement, the home "seemed to have strengths" but "unfortunately the foster parents knew the family of this boy and they requested his removal", saying they were no longer interested in foster children. Another family showed inability to accept ties with parents. In an issue of the Social Casework magazine, Dorothy Hutchinson remarks that "The foster child old enough to have developed strongly etched images of his own parents takes these with him to the foster home where they continue to plague him, his foster parents, and the worker." ¹ Later she comments, "The only way such a child is able to turn to them (foster parents and worker) is for him to see that they like his parents, that they think well of his parents, that they act kindly about his parents' mistakes." ² Foster parents and workers, too,

² Ibid.
need help with the acceptance of these statements so that they can put them into practice from the very beginning of placement planning.

When parents tell their child about going to a foster home and the reasons for him going, he will benefit more from the stay there. If the same worker who places him also visits his parents, arranges for their visits with him and tells them and the foster parents kindly about mother and father, the two sets of parents can better serve the children. There is the need of the foster family's acceptance of the child's parents with understanding and so the worker must present a positive picture of natural parents. 1 This is as important in foster home placement as in adoption.

The foster mother of one home in this group had herself been a foster child. Within a short time of placement of a teen-age girl, a rivalrous situation developed between them. The tension increased to such an extent that foster mother requested closing "as she was caring for her mother-in-law". The agency was satisfied that she was unable to be a foster mother as it too closely resembled her own situation. The worker's task here is to assess whether she can help the foster mother use her own experience to identify with and help the girl, but not become rivalrous. It is important to observe how the foster mother had dealt with her own problems and help her to use this same way to give help to the girl. This enabling of the foster parent requires skilled casework help from the worker.

1. Kohlsaat, Barbara and Johnson, Adelaide, "Some Suggestions for Practice in Infant Adoptions", Social Casework, Vol. XXXV, March 1954, pps 91 to 99. The authors discuss what the social agency should or should not reveal to adoptive parents about the baby's background, and believe that any personal history not pertinent to the baby's future development should be withheld.
Overcrowding (7)

Some foster homes close and the reasons given are "overcrowding" or "overused". Two homes were "overused" by numerous difficult placements and one health problem with a foster child. In the latter case an emergency placement gave the worker no chance to prepare for this.

One foster home was first known as a private adoption home in 1940 and then as a foster home in 1949. The foster mother mentioned during the home-study that her "husband wanted her to take children", and said that her own motive in boarding children was to help her loneliness. This woman's motive in boarding children was focussed on her own need and the worker's task is to assess whether this is infantile or mature. All people have needs but when the emphasis is on hers and not the children's this is a danger signal. Why was she lonely, and what was the meaning of her wish for many babies regardless of their needs? The workers of various children who were placed here looked on this as a satisfactory foster home although one said that she "noticed she gets upset and should not have too many". This foster mother found it hard when the babies had to leave the home. Her own physical strength was not too great but she constantly said that the babies helped her.

Because of this foster mother's willingness to take in babies at short notice the home was overloaded and finally a serious family disagreement resulted in the closing of the home by the agency. It became evident that the husband in this home had not been consulted in the plan to board children. It was also eventually clear that the foster
mother was boarding children to make up for lacks in her own home life as she had said. She welcomed the overloading of her home with children, until the situation became so tense that in the interests of her health her service was terminated. This closing was brought on by overcrowding in a home where the marital situation was not too satisfactory. In this home the husband's attitude should have been checked especially carefully to find out why he was willing that his wife should be so busy.

**Difficult Behaviour (10)**

Some of the reasons given in the records for closing homes are "child badly disturbed", "could not manage", "took two very difficult girls", "quarrelled".

Some foster parents agree to board teen age children although this has not been their original request. Four such foster homes withdrew as teen age children were placed and it was too much for them.

One of the homes took at separate times two difficult teen age girls, while awaiting completed adoption of two younger children placed in their home. Foster mother dealt well with both girls but foster father finally objected to any more older girls in the home. Although they continued for a while with short emergency placements, they finally withdrew from service as a foster home. The Agency felt that this home had given excellent service over a period of four years. However the general rule is that there should be no placement of foster children in pending adoption homes either in the year of probation or too soon after completion of adoption. In this home there is the possibility that the girls would feel especially left out, with the other two children becoming the foster parents' own. There is, too, the importance of respecting the applicants' interest and their feelings about where they
can best serve. If the plan is not agreeable to them and they feel the child is not appealing they cannot help him.

Another home in this group was chosen by the teen age boy himself, but he quarrelled with the foster mother who showed "not too much insight into teen age behaviour". She was hurt by the experience and said she was "no longer interested".

In three others where the stated motive was companionship for own children, difficult younger children were placed and proved too much for the foster home. The need is to ascertain what they meant by "companionship". Their meaning may be to keep the own child busy or from taking up mother's time, or to overprotect their own child. They may want to keep the own child from needing to mix in the neighbourhood outside. The thought may be to "make own child appreciate how well off he is," or "make him unselfish," or "set him a good example."

One family gave good care to a teen age boy for $1\frac{1}{2}$ years after previously serving the agency for 13 years. "Although still interested in this boy he outgrew the place and his difficult behaviour, such as extreme cruelty to the farm animals, led them to recommend and help with his transfer". "They helped with his move with understanding and acceptance and still inquire about him. Excellent foster parents."

Two other homes "appeared to be unable to cope with foster children's difficult behaviour."

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1. All quotes in this paragraph are from foster parents applications, unpublished material collected by Mrs. Helen Exner.
Recently an experiment is being carried on at the Boy's Industrial School of Oregon with special placements of difficult boys on farms. Caseloads are kept at fifteen or below so that close supervision is possible and work is done especially with foster fathers.¹

Financial Only (4)

Four used homes were closed as unsuitable foster homes as the foster parents plainly showed their interest in nothing but the financial angle and were described as "not understanding beyond physical care," or "boys placed worked too hard on farm," "cheap help - not much to offer as a foster parent", and a girl "felt like a boarder." Although the financial aspect is an important consideration, people who board children for this motive alone, without an accompanying concern for their welfare, are not considered desirable foster parents and the Agency closes them.

Homes Closed Due to Marital Difficulties (4)

In one home closed because "the husband-wife relationship was lacking", the husband was Chinese and wife was Occidental. Possibly the scarcity of Chinese foster homes influenced the approval of this home in the first place. This foster mother eventually told her worker about her lack of satisfaction in the marriage and her inability to accept foster children.

Another foster mother applied in 1950 for a teen-age girl "as husband in the Air Force and busy". In 1953 this home was closed as foster parents divorced.

In a third home where the original motive for taking children was for company, the homefinder stated that she suspected "teen age cheap labour" and the husband "seemed complying with wife's wishes". One person

¹. See Appendix C.
seen as a reference said about this couple's marriage relationship "seems to be O.K. now". These foster parents asked removal of a thirteen year old girl placed there and then they separated.

In the last home both foster parents were warm understanding persons but the foster father's own family interfered with the home relationships. It became impossible to continue using the home until as one worker put it "father develops maturity to outgrow his mother's interference with his wife". Note here the high incidence of marital difficulty.

Non-acceptance of Agency (1)

One home could not accept working with the Agency nor its board rates. The worker for the home records "puts own needs before child's needs", "is not warm and accepting". The foster parents here found it impossible to continue working with the Agency and this home had to be closed but there was also inability to give to foster children.

Accommodation (4)

Of the four homes closed because of lack of accommodation all seemed to have additional reasons which could point up other dissatisfactions.

One family requested closing because of lack of accommodation and gave as their reason that they are now caring for relatives. On further examination, the record shows that this family had given excellent care to an asthmatic child for two months but now their own daughter was not well. Foster father was not well enough to be considered for an adoptive parent and so they said they might be interested in boarding other children later. In this case one would think that health and motives should be most carefully reviewed before using the home again.
An earlier review might have prevented the breakdown through the extra pressure of giving foster care.

Three other homes were closed because of lack of accommodation. In one home the foster mother, a widow of poor appearance, had "little to offer but gives good care, is kindly and puts herself out to serve". Before her husband died they had boarded boys and since then she gave very good short term care to a disturbed child placed in her home. Although she was helpful in this last placement, the lack of a father in the home, her limited means and lack of accommodation forbade her continuing as a foster parent.

In the next home where accommodation was given as the reason for closing, understanding of a teen age boy placed there was lacking. Another home which even at first seemed to be doubtfully approved, due to limited finances, was closed as "moving to smaller location"; however foster mother was "nervous" and foster father not understanding of parents due to his own "bitter background". These foster parents said that the child placed was "O.K. but a handful and want an older child". There is the question of exposing a foster child to this nervousness and lack of understanding.

**Age (3)**

Three foster homes were closed due to the advanced age of the foster parents, as all were in their late 60's or early 70's. There is a special need to watch this in terms of children who may need permanent or long-time homes, as the "unadoptable" children.

Two homes gave short term care to teen agers and in both cases the Agency found them willing but unable to meet the children's needs and
to understand teen age behaviour. In the first case the foster mother gave good boarding home care and was accepting of the poor personal habits of a dull employed teen age boy who was himself puzzled by their very religious habits and objected to being influenced by them. The other placement of a teen ager where the foster parents had originally asked to care for a handicapped child lasted for a week. Again there is the importance of considering the foster parents own request.

The parents of one foster home requested closing because of their age but in reality it had a lot to do with foster father's reluctance to continue. In the first place, foster parents had come to the Agency offering a special home to a certain teen age boy, while complaining of his care in a foster home near them. Foster father and this boy had been friendly but living in the same home was too much for all of them. It is safe to say that this home closed because of age and also non-acceptance of the boy's behaviour. This is one special placement found by a teen age boy which did not work out.

Health Including Pregnancy (6)

Six homes were closed because of health reasons although there seemed to be other related factors.

One home closed after applying for eventual adoption of a girl. When a baby girl was placed permanently with a view to adoption it was too much for foster mother and she asked for the baby's removal. Foster parents in a second home found the care and giving up of temporary children to be, as expressed in their own words, "too hard on the nerves". This foster mother had herself been an abandoned child, knew nothing of her own background and was critical of foster children's parents.

The foster mother in another home was affected with "a nervous condition" which "husband blames on boarding children", so they requested
that the home be closed.

One home, closed because of illness of a psychosomatic nature, was a "kindly accepting one in spite of foster mother's neurotic need to be of service". This home was closed on the basis of the foster mother's previous health condition and its recurrence after the home had been used as a temporary emergency placement for an eleven year old girl and a ten year old boy. Removal was requested by the foster mother who wished to continue boarding children, but the Agency declined.

Two other homes closed because of foster mother's pregnancy. The first "is a good foster home for problem children" and the recommendation in the record is that it be used again but after restudy. The second home was used as an emergency placement before the home-study was complete. The Agency felt the foster father in this home to be an unstable person but prior to rejection, the foster parents withdrew and the home will not be used again by the Agency.

Working (1)

In one home the foster parents helped out the Agency by taking a ten year old boy for two weeks. It was known that this was only a temporary arrangement as foster mother planned on working.

Table 4. Motives for Boarding Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motive</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total homes closed</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fond of children</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted adoption or permanent placement</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company self or own child</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To satisfy own needs</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It would appear from the records and the statements of home-finders that it is often difficult for foster parents to express in words their motives for boarding children. The motives in the table above are as stated by them unless it is obviously something more clearly stated by a worker.

Out of the 100 closed foster homes 21 stated their motive as "fond of children" and yet also expressed a financial need to board children, or that need to augment the income was present. There is the need to find out how they visualize the child they are asking for and in what ways they differentiate the foster child from their own. Nineteen were boarding children mainly to help out with finances and were without understanding of the children. These first two categories of motives are often very difficult to separate as usually both elements are present to a degree in a foster home. However in Table 3 in only four cases was this stated as the main reason.

In 16 homes the stated motive was adoption or they wished to keep the child permanently with a reasonable hope of adoption later. These parents, when studied, could be helped to the adoption department and the social worker's job is to help them conclude this.

Thirty-six foster parents originally stated their motive as being company for self or own child and of these 20 asked for a child as a companion for an own only child. It would be interesting to study separately the results of a research project on the success of placements in such instances and as to what was really meant by such companionship. Of these homes closed eight foster parents applied to board children as a means of building up their own self-esteem or to bolster a shaky family situation. They did not originally state this motive but it came to light
after the home was used. In all failures it is necessary to examine similar successful foster homes in use.

Table 5. **Length of Time Closed Homes Used**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>No. of homes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 shows the length of time the closed homes served the Agency. The largest number of homes closed in less than a year. As the majority of closed homes were terminated at the request of foster parents it can be assumed that many of these foster parents found that looking after a foster child was not what they expected or desired.
and so decided not to continue. It would be interesting to have some estimate of the extent of clarification of the job done before placement. To what extent did workers help them to understand placement of foster children?

Table 6. Number of Placements in Closed Foster Homes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Placements</th>
<th>Homes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 child</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 children</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 children</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 children</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 children</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 children</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 children</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 children</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 children</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 children</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 children</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 children</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 shows the number of children who boarded in the foster home during the length of time the agency was served. 48% of the homes boarded one child. It can also be assumed that many in this first group
are amongst the first group in Table 5 who served the agency for less than one year.

The examination of used closed foster homes reveals that 65% are closed as no longer suitable for agency use. A fairly large group, 35%, closed for practical reasons because of changes in plans. Other than that, one of the largest closed groups was for reasons of non-acceptance of foster children and parents. There are also noticeable groups in those who close because they really want adoption or because of difficult behaviour of foster children or overcrowding. An examination of the original motives reveals that those who apply to take a foster child for company for their own child are the largest group, 36. Over half of the hundred homes studied were closed within the first year of service and nearly half of the number of closed homes, 48, have boarded only one child.
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CLOSED HOMES EXAMINED

Importance of Home-Study Process

The concern of this study has been with reasons for closing of foster homes used by the Children's Aid Society of Vancouver during the period September 1952 to June 1954, inclusive. In this examination there is acceptance of the importance of placing children in normal, happy homes where the parents have the ability to give sufficient love to foster children and to recognize individual needs. Assuming this, the significance of a thorough study and evaluation of a home becomes clear; also the belief is that failure to know the foster home and the child accounts for repeated replacements. Thus the homefinding process is important in maintaining foster homes as well as in finding them.

Part of this study has been concerned with the homes which closed within 12 months after they were opened. If we are to believe that the home study is in any way related to the length of time a home remains open, then it seems indicated that the more thorough a method, and the more skilled the home-study, the more worthwhile it is. In this chapter the purpose is to study the home to the point of its closing in order to find out the reasons for closing, so that the knowledge will be of use in the homefinding process.

Conclusions About Homes Closed for Practical Reasons

In Table 2 - Page 33 - it is notable that 35 homes closed because of change in plans in foster families and these can usually be considered
"acts of God" and not to be foreseen at the time the home was accepted for use.

Closed homes which have adopted children are not really foster homes; nor can permanent homes with a view to adoption be considered true foster homes. In general people who want to adopt a child do not make good foster parents.  

The birth of a natural child should not make a difference in a good foster home, but sometimes a young woman will give a baby temporary care before she has children of her own. Otherwise one would question the motive in taking foster children until own children come, and then giving them up.

Homes where the families move away after a reasonable length of time of service are unavoidably closed unless the move is impulsive after a short term of service; in that case one would expect this to have been assessed in the home-study.

Some homes where the mother begins working close but here also this might be expected to have been picked up in the home-study. It is likely that the original motive was partly to augment income and did not realize this wish or her real wish.

Special homes for one child serve that one child satisfactorily and their closing is to be expected. Sometimes health comes under this heading unless the situation could have been cleared during the home-study.

Approximately one-third then of the homes examined closed for practical reasons and there would seem to be no purpose in this study to examine them further.

Further Reasons for Closing Foster Homes

Under the reasons which we are interested in examining further then come such things as health, age, accommodation, non-acceptance of foster children and parents, interested only financially, want permanent or adoption, difficult behaviour and overcrowding. Out of 100 closed homes there are 65 closed for such reasons because they are unsuitable for further service to the agency.

Thirty of the 65 foster homes requested their own closing or withdrew of their own accord. With some of these the agency would no longer have been able to use them even if the foster parents had so wished it. Thirty-five had to be refused. The focus of the job is on the child and in cases when the applicant is infantile or there is the prospect of injury to a child the agency must take a stand and say "No", definitely.

Except for some problems of health, pregnancy and working it is questionable whether some of the homes closed because of the avoidable reasons should have been originally accepted for use by the agency. On the other hand could homes closed because of placement of too difficult children and overcrowding be saved for future agency use?

1. Families Who Moved Away

Two foster families mentioned on Page 34 who moved away continued to serve as foster homes in provincial districts.

Of the 13 families mentioned on Page 35 who moved away, 8 can be deemed satisfactory in their service to the agency. In the case of the remaining five the plans of the foster family do not seem well-known; one home gave only a few months service; another move was "impulsive" and
another closed partly because of difficult behaviour of foster child as well as the financial consideration. In these situations if the original home-study had produced information about the possible permanency of these people the homes would not likely have been used. The impulsiveness of the one move could be an indication of restlessness or loneliness on the part of that foster mother, a widow, as the record states that she suddenly went away to live with relatives. Could this have been discovered earlier if there had been more time spent in making a thorough home-study? Was this fatherless home used for a special purpose?

In the case of the closed home which boarded difficult teen-age boys, (P.36), the questions are "Should such children be placed in foster homes rather than in treatment centres?" "How many and what homes can handle severely disturbed boys?" "What happens to the children and to the foster parents?" "What does the agency gain or lose by doing this?" The home mentioned above was closed to agency service but this is not convincing proof that closing happens in every instance. There is need for further research than can be included in this study to find the answers to these questions. If such homes do not close to agency service, do they ask removal of the difficult child or are they operating successfully as foster parents? Could the home mentioned on P. 44 which had served the agency for 13 years have been saved for further use if it had not been used for the disturbed teen age boy who was lastly placed in this home?

2. **Accommodation**

Lack of accommodation in a home should ordinarily be a reason for rejection before a home is used. When used homes are closed for this reason it may be unavoidable. At other times it may be a superficial
reason given for a deeper dissatisfaction. Four homes which closed because of not enough room (P.46) stated that they were taking in relatives or friends instead but on further examination there proved to be other reasons. In one the health of foster father was doubtful, two others appeared unable to cope with difficult behaviour and the other seemed unable to deal with foster children. It should have been possible to discover these factors in the home-study and the homes would not have been used.

On P. 47 in homes closed because of lack of accommodation the foster parents' personalities also seem unsuitable with "little to offer", "lacking understanding" and "nervous". One home was "doubtfully approved". One wonders why such homes are originally used but since these findings which come out after the home is used, there is a need to reexamine the home study content. Also in a child placing agency the temptation to try them is great when the supply of homes is short. However the "trial and error" method in home assessment can be practically replaced by skilful home-study practices.

3. Pregnancy and Health

One home (P. 49) which closed because of a pregnancy was first used emergently before the home-study was complete. Later when the foster father was felt to be an unstable person, they were helped to withdraw.

On P. 48 in another home the husband objected to foster children and another home was closed for health reasons. It is reasonable to say that some of these factors should have been known before the homes were used. This is also the case in the home mentioned on P. 48 where the children were "too much for nerves".
4. **Working Parents**

The home mentioned on P. 49 where the mother frankly planned on working was used by the agency as an expediency measure. As a rule when the mother in the home is working it is not used for a foster home. This points up the scarcity of homes for use in emergency situations.

5. **Age**

The homes mentioned on P. 48 closed because of age would not likely have been used in the first place if alternative resources had been available for teen age boys. One home was used for a "temporary emergency placement" and then closed. This was done because of an urgent need for a home and was frankly recognized as such by the worker. Some foster parents gave their closing reason as being on account of old age. On further examination it proved to be dissatisfaction with the presence of the foster child in the home.

6. **Non-acceptance of Foster Children**

On P. 39 there is described a group of foster parents who were unable to accept foster children or their families. During the home-study in some cases the worker was undecided about whether to use these homes and in all cases the recommendation was for the placement of a well-adjusted child with careful placement preparation before and after. In one case a home was used suddenly on expediency basis. True non-acceptance of foster children contradicts the role of foster parents but in some of these homes would good supervision and more work with the foster parents have held the homes?

In the group of homes refused for further service because they are unsatisfactory after placement there are the ones who close because
they find the children too difficult. A notable one is on P. 36 when the record states that the foster family changed from looking after teenagers to operating an Old People's home. At first their interest in teenagers had been keen but they finally became too discouraged when a disturbed boy was placed with them. What placement facilities do we have in Vancouver for disturbed youngsters? This study cannot attempt to answer that but can point out that 13 foster homes out of 100 closed because of difficult behaviour of the children placed there.

The above situation also holds true in the case of the young boy (P. 48) who could not adjust in a foster home but might have benefitted from living in a group home. This lack of placement accommodation not only concerns this agency (C.A.S.) but is the responsibility of the whole community and the province.

In the case of the teen-age girl (P. 39) her placement offered by her own friends was notably successful. It is the opinion of workers and homefinders that there is a higher degree of success in teen-age placements in proportion to their participation in the plan. Rita, 15, a pretty brown-haired tomboyish girl who came to Vancouver from the East chose for herself a home of quiet somewhat conservative standards. Her worker doubted the wisdom of the choice but wisely left it to her. However Rita settled completely with this family, went through high-school, got a job and married from the home as she would have with an own family.

Another group of closed homes (12) asked for permanent or adoptive children. On exceptional occasions the agency has enlisted the help of these foster parents in emergency temporary placements. Although this group was closed for service to the agency some homes have operated

1. Children's Aid Society of Vancouver records.
successfully on this basis. Only rarely can a home not acceptable as an adoptive home be considered for use as a temporary shelter for children awaiting permanent placement. The special feeling of frustration rises from their feeling that the agency has been "paid" and now they expect returns.

One foster home (P.43) served the agency in like manner while awaiting adoption of two children already placed in their home. The recommendation here is that the foster home be most carefully assessed before so using. Also, if a temporary placement is requested of them, when they originally requested a more long-term plan, it should be made quite clear to the foster parents where they stand and whether the agency plans to place a child with them later. It is never a good practice to use them temporarily when you know that eventually they will be rejected. For instance (P.38) one child was so placed for 10 days and the placement dragged out until foster parents became attached and found it hard to part with him. These foster parents were lost to agency service. The planning here was no doubt unexpected but nevertheless is bad for public relations.

On P. 38 the foster parents who had the two children for two years had originally asked for permanent children and although it had not been explicitly promised they hoped to adopt the children. Long term planning for these children was not definite and these foster parents did not know their position clearly or of the natural parents' inability to give them up. Even though such situations are sometimes unavoidable, there is still the adverse publicity when neighbours and friends hear about it. There is then the necessity for as clear-cut a diagnosis as possible in the original planning for the child.

Some foster parents consent to board teenagers although this was not the original request. It is accepted by experienced workers that the placement
of a teen-ager in a foster home needs skilful preparation, planning and
guidance after placement. Before placement is decided on the question
should be answered, "Can this child benefit from a foster home or does
he need some other resource?" Some teenagers cannot live in a family
other than their own as they do not wish to take on new parents.

In one home (P.47) the record states that understanding of a
teen-age boy was lacking. The record also states that two older foster
parents gave care to teen-agers and although willing were unable to under­
stand their behaviour or meet their needs but gave good boarding home care.
This last home could possibly be used for a working boy but not a younger
disturbed boy needing treatment.

7. Desire for Permanent Children

On P. 37 mention is made of a group of foster parents who origi­
inally applied for permanent children with a view to adoption. All these
closed homes were used for temporary placements and all but one finally
withdrew. It is obvious that these families were helping out the agency
by taking children but finally either became discouraged about ever getting
a child or decided to take only permanent children. If the agency cannot
place a child permanently with such a family, should the foster parents not
be told as soon as possible? Also if the agency plans eventually to place
a child, should the foster parents not know? In other words, the agency's
planning for the use of the foster home should be frankly shared with the
foster parents. The practice of using permanent homes for temporary place­
ments has not worked out in ll of these homes. The acceptance of "adoption
parents" and "permanent foster parents" is completely separate. The diffi­
culty of separation makes the use of adoption homes for foster homes question­
able.
However this is not always so as we read on P.43 of one home where the foster parents took two difficult teen-agers temporarily although in this case two adoptive children had also been placed in the home. This is not a usual agency practice but an exception was made in this particular situation. In another case on P. 38 after the child was adopted the home was closed as a boarding home even though these parents wished to continue.

On P. 38 the reactions of the two sets of foster parents showed their great hurt by the experience. However if these foster parents who were considered excellent had been used for adoptive children or for children staying more permanently might they not be still serving children?

Speaking of one foster mother the worker said "she seemed a perfectionist". If this were proven to be true, how much time a skilled homefinder would save to assess this as early as possible. Occasionally the only way to find out is through the actual involvement of being a foster-parent. As small a percentage as possible of homes should have to be tried out in this way as homefinding skills and service sharpen. The concern felt is for the effect firstly, on the children placed and, secondly, on the foster parents who are really asking for a child of their own.

The same consideration might well be given to homes which agree to take teen-agers while awaiting their original request. Six such homes closed as the experience was too much for them. As previously mentioned, a study would need to be made of such homes where possibly they are carrying on successfully.

On P. 44 when difficult younger children were placed in homes where the stated motive was companionship to own only child, three homes closed, which means that this is not what they had wanted and they do not
wish to continue the experience.

8. Overcrowding

Results of the overuse of homes by overcrowding as described in two homes on P. 42 are so obvious that they need little mention. There will always be such times in an agency until there is a better supply of foster homes or some alternative. In both these homes placements termed "emergent" were the means of termination of their service to the agency. This brings the question to mind "What constitutes an emergency and how often could these be prevented?" "Could there be temporary or receiving homes for such situations?"

On P. 46 the short term care of the 2½ year old boy placed while still ill appeared too much after both foster mother and her own child became ill.

It is noticeable in the above instances how hard it is to get homes for temporary children. Homefinders constantly seek to build up and maintain the supply of temporary homes. This is a situation which plagues a child-placing agency and until we develop this service as a creative job it is doubtful if there will ever be enough such homes. Certainly they do not prevail now. One of the reasons is that to many foster parents it is a less satisfying job emotionally. Children are placed and then removed just when an attachment is beginning.

A recent magazine article 1 written by a social worker tells the experience of himself, his wife and daughter when for three years they offered their home as temporary care for foster children. Among other interesting comments was the conclusion "We came out with the firm conviction that many children can have a creative experience under foster family auspices." 2

2. Ibid, P.16.
The job of being a foster parent to children placed temporarily is a joint one, partly the foster parent's and partly the social worker's. The focus of both is around certain main areas of help. They help in meeting the initial separation. They share with the study of the child and his needs. Both, but especially the foster parent, build up the child's health. Together they prepare for a permanent foster home and for the child to go on. These are the same ways that baby homes help.

One home was overused because the foster mother was so willing to take in babies in any number on short notice. This was convenient but resulted in overloading and finally closing.

In all used homes where workers question foster parents' interest in children, are the homes used for expediency reasons and because of scarcity of homes? Can we or should we in most cases wait until a suitable home is found before accepting a child into care? The answer is that the setting of the Agency forbids. In a great many instances apprehension of the child can be delayed for a time while a suitable home is found but the agency operates under the "Protection of Children Act" which compels that any child in need of protection shall be taken into agency care. Pressure forbids waiting as there are times when with little warning children must be planned for. The placement worker must act quickly in cases of illness of parents, serious neglect, or abandonment. So the need is for more temporary homes where both the child and foster parent think of the stay as temporary until better planning can be completed. The meaning of the word temporary should be clearly understood in terms of weeks or months. Three months' stay in a temporary home should usually be considered the ultimate.

9. Financial Interests

Four homes were closed as unsuitable as parents showed plainly
their interest in the financial aspect alone and not in the children. In another home (P.46) agency policy and board rates were unacceptable. Do such dissatisfactions call for an examination of board rates? A family who cannot accept agency policy must certainly cease to serve but may this not be sometimes a non-acceptance of rate of payment?

It is now more generally conceded amongst social workers that a financial motive is not necessarily unacceptable and that it is often acceptable if other desirable factors are present. It is quite logical that a person might wish to augment income by being of service in boarding children. If more attractive rates were offered could the agency not get better standards and service from foster parents?

10. Marital Difficulties

A need for more time and skill getting to know prospective foster-parents is pointed out when marital difficulties come to light after the home has been used. In the case of the three homes mentioned on P. 46 several clues to possible friction were given by the worker in the home-study. One person seen as a reference spoke of a couple's adjustment as "O.K. now". When there is subsequent separation or a divorce in a family it must be indicated beforehand that an unstable relationship existed for quite some time.

In another home (P.42) the visiting worker noticed that the foster mother was easily upset. Her family and her husband's feelings about foster boarding are not at first evident but an eventual serious family disagreement took place over her persistence in taking children. In order to save further threatening of the relationships the home was closed.

1. Charnley, op. cit. P. 147. "Most foster parents are interested in some financial gain, a fact that is understandable and healthy".
It is noticeable that in the 25 homes closed because they could not accept foster children into their family the homefinder originally expressed doubts about family relationship in the home-study. When the homes were eventually used it was doubtless because of the scarcity of homes of the kind the agency would like to have. The original motivation for taking children is significant and the importance of examining this in the home-study seems to be pointed up here. There is the temptation to use a home on the possible chance of success despite contra-indication but this is not sound. What then does an agency do when it just does not have enough homes?

Motives

When motives are examined in Table 4, P. 49, it would seem clear that of the 100 homes 21 have definite possibilities as foster parents if their stated motive is sincere. Eight whose motive was to satisfy own needs should not have been used. The other homes should be as skilfully examined to find out the real motive as is done with adoptive parents.

It is noticed also in the records examined that children were placed in some homes contrary to the recommendations given by homefinders. Any change in the plan for using the home should be discussed with the home-finding department first. However when the stated motive was "adoption" or "a permanent child" a child who will be staying temporarily should not be placed unless under exceptional circumstances and with very mature foster-parents who understand and share the plan.

As has been noted before, it is difficult to discover true motives for boarding children. However one motive can be stated in the words "company for self or own child". In Table 4 on P. 49 this was stated as the original motivation in 36 out of 100 closed homes. While
this is not conclusive evidence that all people who apply with this motive in mind will not be accepting of foster children, it does point up the need to examine and continuously evaluate carefully such homes. Is their motive altruistic or do they hope to give their own child something they have thus far not been able to grant. There is also the question with this group "Would more intense follow-up supervision with the foster-home have held the situation?"

The writer feels that the evaluation and preparation of a foster-home should not end with the home-study but should be a continuous process as long as the home is in use. This means that any worker who visits the home should feel a responsibility for evaluating the home as she visits in it and should record her evaluation regularly.

As much time and skill should be directed to a foster-home study as to an adoptive home study. Being a foster parent is a harder role than that of an adopting parent who eventually has complete permanency with the child. There is the importance here also of assessing the home for its best use in the first place. If it is to be an adoptive home let it start as such from the beginning and not turn into one because a child has been there a long time.

It is accepted that when the motive is to bolster up some serious lack in personality or in family relationship a child should not be placed. It is granted that these clues do not always readily show up but if defences are great, homefinders should spot this too.

In one home-study the recommendation for a child was "Refined well-adjusted boy of artistic bents". This would lead one to wonder whether applicants are accepting of children and would suggest a further examination of motives. The possibility of such a child coming into care is remote so
this home should not be accepted for use.

Motives of all foster parents should be as clearly known as possible. If the plan is to reject the home it should not be used for any child. Besides other disadvantages it has the effect of poor public relations. Other applicants say "Why do you use that home and not mine?"

Homes found to be motivated by purely financial or selfish interests should of course be refused. Another group who apply for a child as company for an own only child should be very thoroughly examined before using. There is a growing public understanding of what constitutes a good foster home. Stronger than the poor public relations caused by rejection of applicants is the public reaction to poor placements. Thus skilled homefinders are needed with time to do a thorough initial job of selecting homes.

**Time of Use**

54% of homes which closed were used less than one year. This would seem an extremely large number and would bear further examination. Is it economical even in terms of time and expense if a home is used less than a year? Why are these homes closed? Could the reasons have been foreseen in the home-study? Would they have closed if there had been more supportive help for them? This in itself is subject for a research project.

Another serious notation is that 48 homes closed after the conclusion of one placement. If nearly half of closed homes do this, what are the main reasons? Should they have been used in the first place? A suggestion here is that all these homes be separately examined to find out reasons for closing within one year.

The statement has previously been made in this study that it is
sometimes difficult to tell exactly why foster parents terminate service
and that the reason given by them is not always the only or basic one.
This has proved so on examination of the records. It has been previously
said in this study that foster parents who move away and leave no address
do not seem well-known enough to the agency. Also, is it satisfactory
from an agency standpoint if a home serves for one short temporary period
only? As a rule should this move not have been anticipated near the first
interview? For instance if the man applicant moves around frequently in
his jobs, his immediate plans should be discussed and if the family plans
a move they should be told they cannot be used as a foster home. As a rule
families should be established at least one year in a job before being con­
sidered as foster parents. There is also the fact of the inability of
social workers to keep in touch with vacant homes. A recent plan in the
agency to cope with this has been to keep an index of all vacant homes in
the homefinding department. The success of this plan depends on the work­
er's accuracy and promptness in reporting vacant homes.

In one record we read of a home where parents helped out the
agency temporarily for two weeks but had never intended to keep on as a
foster home. What about using other resources here? Is this not a place
for using temporary homes or receiving homes?

In most of the homes where short term care was given the reasons
given for closing are ones which should reasonably come out in the home­
study, for instance, "husband objects to foster children".

In others, placement practice such as overcrowding was the appar­
ent reason for closing. We read of one foster home where "3 difficult teen­
agers were placed and although this was a good home it was closed".

One of the basic reasons for the failure of a foster home is the
selection of homes which must be used often for expediency sake because of the scarcity. Some homes, incompletely studied, are found in use because of the urgency to use the home before the homefinder could complete her home-study.

Poor placement practices such as overcrowding, and problems beyond the foster parents' skills point up the need for other kinds of placement rather than foster home care, such as treatment centres and temporary shelters. There should be more resources for difficult-to-place children, teen-agers and the emotionally disturbed child. Unanticipated changes of plan such as moving impulsively, taking in relatives or children on a private basis indicate dissatisfaction with foster care. When closing is basically for financial reasons it points to the need for a rise in board rates.

Overcrowding points to the need for more applications of a type suitable to the children who require placement so that the selection of a home is not because of expediency. This requires a sufficient number of skilled homefinders with time to complete home studies, and a more aggressive policy of reaching the community to put the need across. They should have the ability, maturity and training to put into effect good homefinding practices generally, such as recognition of marital problems, lack of acceptance of foster children, and signs of poor health. The homefinder should know her community. For example when looking for homes in Vancouver she should know that the area south-east of Granville Street in the residential sections has so far been one of the more productive areas for foster homes.

Difficult behaviour and overcrowding in homes also shows the need for a co-ordination between children admitted and placement resources.
Children in need of protection must by law be admitted to care so more resources for their care must be provided. In order to get more foster parents of the type an agency wants, the job must appeal as a satisfying one. Then this source will recruit other foster parents more productively.

Board rates should be high enough so that foster parents are not asked to subsidize. The examination of rates should be shared with the board and the community, with attention to cost of living indices and changes, and to the standard of living most often found in foster homes. Besides being available, homes must be suitable.

Newspaper advertisements in the classified columns have proven to produce only a 10% return. This means may be threatening to public relations as such a large percentage must be refused. It would pay to look carefully at its effect. The experience of homefinders has been that advertising generally is unsatisfactory and results are little better for a specific child as in the advertisement P.30. There is a need for a long range building up of the program.

A more consistent search for foster parents is needed and this should include an appeal to other agencies and ethnic groups for suggestions of names of people to approach.
Recommendations

Conclusions reached about foster homes centre around three basic topics, namely, recruitment of homes, the home-study, and placement practices. The recommendations in this thesis will be concerning these needs and are often difficult to separate as all are inter-related. This shows up particularly in recruitment and maintenance of homes as one reflects on the other to a great extent.

There should be a definite effort on the part of the Homefinding Department to seek out possible foster-parents in the community through its key clubs, churches, Parent-Teachers-Associations and leaders. Information about Vancouver city districts can be obtained through the Community Chest. One suggestion is that this could be begun in one agency unit at a time and with the hope that the unit supervisor with the unit workers would be involved as well as the homefinders.

Besides knowing the possibilities and resources in each area, homefinders should be familiar with the kinds of homes required for the children needing placement. So there is need for homefinders and unit workers to work closely together, each sharing her knowledge with the other. District workers should be alert to report possible foster parents to homefinders and all workers should help in reporting possible foster homes.

In January 1953 the Jewish Child Care Association of New York initiated a program of group activities for foster parents to stimulate the securing and maintaining of a sufficient quantity and quality of foster homes. ¹ Foster parents planned actively with Board and staff

on committees. Foster parents' activities included such things as a "Coffee Hour" and informal meetings to discuss foster parenthood, with special invitations to foster fathers. Panels on which foster parents participated were used successfully. Representatives and foster parents from other agencies were invited. Group meetings were held for prospective foster parents to learn about the program. The project brought foster parents closer to the agency and enlisted their help in homefinding. They felt the support of getting together in groups.

In this program for whose development a full-time person was employed the following objectives were considered important:

1. To increase the number of referrals of prospective foster families by current foster parents;

2. To decrease the turnover of foster homes;

3. To develop experienced foster families as resources for meeting the increasing problem of finding homes for "disturbed" children;

4. To improve, as by-products, the climate in which the caseworker operates and the climate in which the foster parents rear the children.¹

The writer continues that "whether foster parents do so knowingly or not, they are constantly "selling" or "unselling" foster home care".² So foster parents need to have a feeling of loyalty and partnership with the agency from the very first contacts. They must have satisfaction in the work they do, in order to impart it to others.

1. Ibid. P. 14

2. Ibid. P. 20
Recently in Boston eight child-placing agencies participated in co-operative homefinding and shared the use of the foster homes. For one thing the Boston agencies found that they felt less the pressure of having too few good homes, and many times there was a greater choice for a child with special needs. Another such plan is called "Jackie", which is a permanent joint committee formed by the three San Francisco Community Chest child-placing agencies for finding foster homes. Some continuing plan for recruitment is needed for every child-placing agency.

Regular columns in the newspapers should not be a generalized thing but should outline a job with typical problems and children in need of placement. Ryther Child Centre of Seattle used this method successfully. Such a column reaches more people and a different group than those who read the classified advertisement sections.

Radio and T.V. can be used to recruit foster parents. The Child Welfare League of America has short movies on foster placement which can be rented.

There should be constant efforts at interpretation of the worthwhileness of the job. One of the things which potential foster parents most often resent is "red tape". There should be a great deal of interpretation to the public of the reason for this. It should be pointed out that the home-study is done with a sense of responsibility for the interests of children. It should also be acknowledged realistically that foster parenthood is a hard job and that as in any family, problems will arise but that they are giving help to children which cannot be matched for service, and the agency will support them.

Fundamental criteria for the selection of homes has already been drawn up in Chapter 2 of this study. This agency under study aims at following closely those standards drawn up by the Child Welfare League of America. The home-study is designed to determine the use and prepare the home for work with certain children in agency care.

So the homefinding service of the agency requires specialized skills and should be regarded as a distinct service. The job is recognized as one of the hardest in the agency due to its peculiar demands. The homefinder has to assess with people their abilities to be foster parents, with the focus on children's needs but without the direct contact with children. She must be able to withhold or deny with sureness where best for both family and children. Dorothy Hutchinson writes of the worker with a "tough mind" and a "tender heart." "The tender heart selects the new surroundings hopefully, perhaps intuitively, but the tough mind knows by conscientious study of the child and his family whether or not the people in this new environment can offer him the necessary nourishment for his emotional growth".

So homefinders should be chosen because of their training, maturity, experience and diagnostic ability. Concentration should be on maintaining high standards of home studies. In order to do this the specially


qualified homefinder must have sufficient opportunity to carry through a satisfactory completed home-study. The accepted standard of the Child Welfare League of America is for one homefinder to every two hundred children in care. Judging by that, as there were 1638 children in CAS foster homes during the year 1954 there should be eight homefinders on the agency staff.

In a Buffalo agency the accepted number of completed homes by one homefinder in a month was four or five when she handled recruiting, an average of 44 applications and inquiries regarding foster family care.

Homefinders benefit from the stimulus offered by a special institute on homefinding lead by an expert in child-placing work. A summary of one such a meeting is found in Appendix B.

Because homefinders need to be in close touch with the community so they can seek out more foster homes, consideration should be given to assigning one or more homefinders to each of the five units of the agency, although not necessarily homefinding exclusively in that one area. There is the added benefit here that the homefinder is closer to placement needs when helping to locate a suitable home for a particular child.

Worker and homefinder should know the child well enough so that the foster home can be used most effectively. This points up the need for a most careful and continuing diagnosis before and after children come into agency care. The pre-placement conference is most important in all prospective placements and gives direction to work with the children in the foster home.

Homefinders and workers should not be separated on the job but

there should be a direct relationship between homefinding and the placement. The evaluation of a home does not end with its approval for use but continues to be evaluated by the worker visiting the home. Her observations should be clearly noted in the foster home file and she should feel as much responsibility for this as the homefinder.

It is possible that many closed foster homes could be saved for agency use. They are needed urgently so are often used too soon. Could there not be opportunities for group discussions with foster parents as a preparation both beforehand and while doing the job? This should enable them to learn what is involved, help them to be interested in making the greatest contribution, and give them status with the feeling of belonging.

Another effort to attract and keep foster parents would be in the form of higher board rates to meet the cost to the family for the child's care. Where a child has special problems, costs entailed such as extra washing should be paid for and some token given for the added time spent.

Interpretation of the need for higher rates should be carried through service clubs, articles, radio, T.V., churches and other avenues. It should be the concern of the whole community to help supply more resources and fill in the placement gaps. So there must be involvement of other agencies and groups, as well as individuals in the meaning of and the need for more foster homes.

When the turnover in homes is great the reasons should be examined. It is noted in table 5 - Page 57 - that 54% of the closed homes studied served the agency less than one year. These homes must have been deemed as good possibilities for foster homes so why did they close before one year of service? If even a small proportion could be saved for agency
use, there would be that many more homes available.

Foster parents would continue longer if they felt there was status to the job so it is important that they have recognition in agency and community and special support in times of strain. Skilled workers must have sufficiently low caseloads so there will be opportunity to carry this through. The less casework help the more mature the foster parent must be. With more casework help there could be a greater selection of homes for use.

The comment has been heard that most of the older dependable homes who used to take children have been closed and no homes have come up to take their places. Why? Is it because of a reputation of the difficulty of being a foster parent? If workers could give more casework help to foster parents in this task, more homes must surely be saved.

If an agency can hang on to its good homes by giving extra support in times of stress many homes would be conserved. The feeling is that "one desirable home retained is more valuable (and economical) than a new home opened, and stability of foster homes depends to a great extent on the satisfactions derived from foster parenthood.” They must feel content that they have a shared responsibility for the child.

On the subject of satisfactions Mrs. Gladys Day says in essence that foster children cannot completely satisfy the need of foster parents to love a child and be loved in return. So foster parents must realize the added satisfaction of a respected and appreciated relationship with the agency.

1. Ibid. P. 19

"Foster parents who care for emotionally disturbed children for short periods of time must get their satisfaction from a job well done rather than from the love of children." If more could be done to save reliable experienced homes a permanent group would be established to serve as foster homes.

Once foster parents are chosen they should have special opportunities to learn about the job and to discuss common problems. They would stand to gain from the relief that others are facing the same problems. There is comfort in the sharing and exchanging of ideas, accompanied by an added feeling of worth and the recognition by the agency. In her book "The Art of Child Placement", Jean Charnley has described foster parents as staff workers of an agency who share with the social worker the job of rehabilitating children.

So there should be a study of all foster homes which are closed, both those used for a short time as well as ones used for longer periods. Placement practices in the use of these homes should be continuously examined with the ultimate purpose of retention of as many good homes as possible, once they have been approved for use. Good practices in placing of children should be constantly studied and brought to the attention of staff members.

In order that workers may have access to every suitable available foster home when placing a child a classified index of these homes should be up-to-date to show all possible vacant homes. Homes should be listed according to their recommended use; for example, whether for young or older children, girls or boys, or children of mixed racial background.

1. Ibid. P. 4.
The index should indicate lack in supply of certain kinds of foster homes and will help direct the Homefinding Department in the search for homes.

The most important thing in getting good foster homes is in attracting a desirable selection of applicants in the first place and by treating foster parenthood as a challenging job. A thorough home study can be facilitated when there is a high standard of homes from which to choose and when there are enough skilled homefinders with diagnostic ability, maturity and strength to complete the study satisfactorily. Sharpened placement practices such as pre-placement conferences and case work service before and after placement should do much to increase and retain the kind of foster homes agencies want.
SUMMARIZED RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Previously, on Page 73 of this study, the suggestion was made that recruiting for foster homes be organized and developed one agency unit at a time. Shared plans for the recruitment of foster homes should be considered in the future for the Catholic and Protestant Children's Aid Societies of Vancouver and the Social Welfare Branch, all of which at present use foster homes in the same areas of Ladner, Langley, Aldergrove, White Rock, Surrey, Steveston, Lulu Island, New Westminster and Burnaby. There would necessarily be the same standards for foster homes and the same board rates. The objective would be a choice of foster homes for most children placed.

2. Advertising for foster homes should be a continuous plan and not alone when the need for a home arises, and should be through the regular columns of the newspaper, rather than in the classified advertisements, in order to reach the desired people. As this is costly there is the possibility of enlisting the interest of a service club in this as a project.

3. Foster parents recruit other foster parents so they need satisfaction in the work they do in order to impart it to others as an appealing job. Every effort should be consistently made to have them feel the worthwhileness of the job and that the agency recognizes them. Preparation for the job beforehand and education afterwards should be through group meetings together, and with Board and agency staff members, to discuss common problems. The suggestion is that one worker be responsible to see that such a plan is organized and carried out continuously during the year, and the need is to explore the possibilities for foster P.T.A. groups, or night classes for foster parents with the Vancouver School Board. Foster parents might take part in panel discussions and T.V. programmes concerning the job.

4. Every effort should be made to interpret to other agencies and groups, and also to the public the need for foster homes, treatment centres and receiving homes. It should be the responsibility of one worker to see that this plan is carried out consistently during the year. All workers in the agency should have the opportunity of helping in this plan.

5. There should be co-ordination between placement resources and children admitted to care and foster homes recruited accordingly. An accurate account of placement needs should be kept from year to year.
6. In order to be in close touch with placement requirements workers and homefinders should be in constant touch. Consideration should be given to having one or more homefinders especially interested in one unit's placement needs, while still remaining part of the homefinding department.

7. Granting that the financial consideration with foster parents for a chosen job is understandable and healthy, board rates should be raised to allow for cost of living plus reimbursement for service rendered with extra payment for extraordinary expenses and time spent.

8. (a) More temporary and foster homes are needed especially for emergency placements and when a child is not well-known. This service should be developed as a job so that the foster parent understands her part in helping the child on to a more permanent home and gets satisfaction from this rather than in returns from a child's affection.

(b) Special foster homes for disturbed children, teen-agers, mentally retarded children, physically handicapped children and infants awaiting adoptions are scarce and need to be particularly recruited. These homes should also be developed as a special service.

9. The number of foster children in one foster home including own children should not be more than five, with not more than three of these pre-school age children. No more than two infants under one year in age should be cared for at one time in a temporary home for babies.

10. To relieve overcrowding in foster homes there should be other group living resources. There is need for a receiving home for some children coming into placement. There is also the oft-repeated need for a treatment centre, for emotionally disturbed children whom most foster parents cannot accept and who do not fit into family living.

11. A classified index of available vacancies in foster homes should be kept up-to-date routinely with the help of clerical workers, and notice sent by them to the Homefinding Department of every vacancy in a home. The index when studied should indicate lacks in resources and should direct recruitment.

12. Every closed home should be reviewed to consider if a re-evaluation is necessary.

13. Homefinding is recognized as a special job in a child-placing agency. Therefore there should be enough skilled homefinders who can complete thorough home-studies and maintain high standards in foster homes. To conform with placement requirements a sufficient number of homefinders should be employed in the agency to allow for an aggressive recruitment programme. The predominance of marital difficulties in studied homes indicates the importance of examination of family relationships, and the inclusion of the foster father, as well as the foster mother and their children, in the planning.
14. People who ask for adoptive children are not asking to be foster parents and should not be used as temporary parents. When the motive for taking children is "company for own only child" the test should be the foster parent's ability to see the child's needs.

15. The first use of a foster home is often conclusive and special support is needed then. A home should not be used before its use has been determined. Before placement of a child there should be a pre-placement conference to include workers and homefinders concerned. Disturbed children should not be placed in new untried homes. Unless definitely recommended there should be no sharp changes in placements. After a child is placed, soon and more frequent visits and contacts should be made at first, with regular visits thereafter.

16. Foster parents especially need support from the professional worker at times of crises, when there is little response from children, and with foster children's parents. So trained workers should have sufficiently low caseloads so that they can visit concerning every child in agency care at least once in every two months. It is understood that many children need to be seen more frequently. Foster parents particularly need casework help when they take children with behaviour problems.

17. At least once a year one agency staff meeting or an institute should be devoted to the study of placement practices. Here failures could be contrasted with successes. The study of placement needs in the past year could act as a guide to needs for the next year.

18. Continued research in placement needs and resources is recommended especially in the area of motives and length of time homes are used.

19. One great need is for foster homes for children, especially boys, in all categories over the age of 10. So there is need for research about placement needs as compared to placement resources.
A MANUAL

FOR

FOSTER PARENTS

FIFTY YEARS OF SERVICE TO CHILDREN
1901 - 1951

Children's Aid Society of Vancouver, B. C.
1675 West 10th Avenue
To Mr. and Mrs. _______________________

WELCOME

The Children's Aid Society is happy to welcome you to our group of foster parents.

As foster parents you perform a very special and valuable service to our Society. Your interest, understanding, affection and day-by-day care are essential to children who are separated from their own families. There are many joys and satisfactions in helping a child through a period when he must live away from his own home. We do know, however, that there are also occasions when things do not run too smoothly. Our Society will share with you all the responsibilities for a child's care. We hope that we can work together as partners in order to help the children grow up to be happy, useful Canadian citizens.

One of our caseworkers, representing the Agency, will visit you at intervals. She will be anxious to know how the child is getting along and she will offer as much assistance as possible. We will ask you to follow certain policies and regulations. It is also possible that we may disagree with you on certain
matters. We hope that you will feel free to call on us at any time and we will be more than glad to offer our help and suggestions in working things out.

Youngsters who have suffered neglect and abuse need especially warm and friendly foster parents. There are many other reasons why a child comes into our care. Often we need a substitute home for a short period while his own home is being re-established. Again, we may be looking for permanent foster parents who eventually may adopt a child. You see that you are indispensable to us!

I. Planning for Placement

The Agency looks for a home that is best suited to help a particular child. In selecting your home for that child, the caseworker is anxious to consider also your needs and preferences. The caseworker will tell you about the child and talk over with you such matters as the reason for his coming into care, behavior difficulties and the interest of his relatives. Then it is up to you to decide whether you will take the child. Wherever possible the caseworker will work these things out with you well
ahead of time. You will realize of course that we are unable to do this during emergency placements.

II. Our Approval of your Home.

Before a foster home is accepted, we check with references submitted by you, usually the doctor, minister and three acquaintances. A committee of the Society's Board Members give their final decision as to whether your home is approved. This is done as a protective measure to ensure that only the best homes are used. After all a child's future development depends upon the early care and love he receives in his home.

If you are living in Vancouver and are going to board a child for us, under the age of seven, your home will be recommended for a license required by City By-Law. You will be expected to send a dollar to the City Hall, after which you will be forwarded the license. Your license expires at the end of a year. After the placement of any child you will be sent an agreement form which we ask you to sign and return to the Agency.

III. Changes in Your Home.

The caseworker needs to know of any change in the
number of people living in your household. When we accept your home it is understood that you are agreeing not to board children privately or from any source whatever, without talking things over with us. We like to be advised of any change in your address, even during a holiday period, for remember we are sharing with you the responsibility for the child.

IV. Financial Arrangements

The board rate of the Agency varies with the age of the child. The caseworker will discuss the payments before arrangements are made for you to take a particular child. Special rates are paid for children requiring extra care, such as a diabetic or blind and deaf children. The board is paid by cheque regularly every month. Your cheque will probably arrive about the middle of the month. For instance you can expect your January cheque to come to you the 15th of February. Board is not paid when the child is away from your home at camp or ill in the hospital. The board cheque is expected to cover such items as the child's food, laundry, school lunches, school supplies other than text books, incidental medical
supplies and breakages.

V. Clothing

Foster parents who are boarding children under the age of six, receive an initial outfit of clothing for these children, after which they meet all clothing requirements. The Agency provides clothing for all children over six. By means of a voucher system the foster mother may purchase the clothing at any one of several department stores.

VI. Family Allowance

After a child's placement, the Agency will send you four dollars of the Family Allowance regularly. The remainder is kept in trust for the child to be used for something special like piano lessons or a teen age party dress. The Allowance is intended to cover such things as pocket money and school supplies.

VII. Health Service

The Agency is responsible for the medical and dental care of the child. We arrange periodic medical and dental check ups. As foster parents it is up to you to keep us informed about the child's health at all times.
(a) **Illness**

If the child gets sick, we expect you to telephone the Agency promptly. The caseworker will plan with you arrangements for the child's care.

(b) **Night or Weekend Illness**

In the case of sudden illness or accident our worker on duty can be reached by telephone at the Agency night number, Marine 2474. However, if for some reason you are unable to reach the caseworker immediately, take the child to the nearest hospital and notify the Agency as soon as possible.

VIII. **School Days**

In accordance with our Provincial Legislation all children must attend school until they have attained the age of fifteen years. Every encouragement, however, is given to children to continue their schooling after that age.

IX. **Religious Training**

The Agency expects that the child in your care be given every opportunity to have religious training.
X. Visiting Relatives

The Agency believes that in many situations it is important for foster children to keep in touch with their own parents or responsible relatives. Plans for visits will be talked over with you beforehand. If visits do not work out as happily as anticipated, please feel free to discuss these matters with your caseworker so that better arrangements can be made the next time.

XI. Ending of Placement

If the time arrives for the child to leave your home the caseworker will endeavor to discuss with you plans for his future as far in advance as possible. In the same way if you find you are unable to continue caring for a child, we would also appreciate knowing well in advance in order to give us time to make a satisfactory plan for the child.

GOODBYE

As foster parents you are playing the leading role in giving a child a chance to develop normally. You know, all children have certain fundamental needs. They have growing bodies and need all the things provided for
vigorous growth. They are going to be with people all their lives and need to learn how to get along with them. They are going to have many problems and experiences with which they will want help. It is in these things that you make your special contribution towards a child's welfare and happiness.

In closing may we say that we hope you and your family will enjoy the experience of sharing your home with a foster child who needs your love and care.

P.S. As foster parents you may have enquiries from other people interested in giving a child a home. We would greatly appreciate your referring such people to us.
APPENDIX A

SAMPLE FORMS

1. MANUAL FOR FOSTER PARENTS
THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF VANCOUVER, B. C.

THIS AGREEMENT MADE THE ................................day of ..............................................19................

BETWEEN

THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF VANCOUVER, B. C.

(hereinafter called "the Society")

and

..................................................and..................................................

his wife, of ..................................................

(hereinafter called "the foster parents"):  

WITNESSETH that the foster parents hereby covenant and agree with the Society as follows:

1. They shall receive into their home a child of the Society born on the ................day of ..................(hereinafter called "the child"), and shall act towards such child at all times with kindness and consideration, providing .........with food, clothing and other necessaries, and with opportunities for growing up to lead a happy and useful life.

2. They shall treat the child as a member of their family.

3. They shall send the child to school as required by law and for such further periods as the Society shall require. They shall notify the Society if the child fails to attend school, accepts employment or leaves their home.

4. They shall maintain the child in their care so long as both parties hereto are satisfied with this arrangement; should they desire to return the child they shall give to the Society two weeks' notice of their intention so to do.

5. They shall not permit the child to be visited by any person, regardless of relationship to the child, except when the Society has given the foster parents permission for such visit.

6. They shall advise the Society at least once in every three months of the progress of the child. Further, they shall give to the Society immediate notification of any accident to or illness of the child or of their removal or of any dissatisfaction or of the death of such child, or of the death or illness of relatives of the child should it come to their attention.

7. They shall not permit the care of the child to be taken over by any other person without the written permission of the Society.

8. The right is reserved to the Society to withdraw the child from any person having his or her custody when, in the opinion of the Society, the welfare of such child requires it.

9. The foster mother shall not leave her home over night without notifying the Society of her intention to do so and making whatever adjustment is required.

10. The child shall not be taken away from the foster home over night nor be permitted to leave the foster home over night without the consent of the Society.

11. They shall notify the Society of any change of or addition to the personnel in the home.

12. They shall not permit the child to drive any automobile or motorcycle owned or operated by the foster parents without having made certain that such use is in accordance with the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act of the Province of British Columbia, concerning the operation of motor vehicles by minors, and that their own liability insurance adequately covers such use. It is understood that the Society cannot accept any responsibility for claims arising from the operation of any such motor vehicle by the child.

SEALED, DELIVERED AND COUNTERSIGNED by the 
Executive Director of the Society 

SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED by the 
foster parents in the presence of: 

Executive Director

Husband

Wife
Newslette to Foster Parents.

Newsletter #17, October 14, 1955.

Dear Foster Parents:

You will receive this letter soon after Thanksgiving Day. It is a time when most of us are reminded to count our blessings. We at the Children's Aid Society are thankful every day of our lives for the foster parents who care for our children. We think of them as our partner in a team "pulling" for children who need help. If only some magic word would double your number, because we urgently need more foster parents just like you.

It is known and has been proven that the best and most reliable source for recruiting new foster parents is through experienced foster parents. You can speak with authority because you know the problems to be met and the qualities needed to meet them - the patience, the steady courage, the tolerant acceptance and the "giving" love. You also have experienced the thrill and the warm glow in your heart when an anxious, insecure, unhappy child finally gains security, self-respect and happiness through your efforts.

We need foster homes, particularly for the children of 12 years and over. These adolescent years are a sort of "no man's land". The youngsters are neither children nor adults and they are pretty mixed up about the whole thing. They are at the cross-roads and desperately need warm and sensible foster parents. Will you talk to your neighbours and friends? Tell them about your experience and above all, tell them of our need for more foster parents.

Yours sincerely,

Dorothy L. Coombe,
Executive Director.

NEWS NOTES

A book for parents entitled "Child Behaviour" by Doctors Frances Ilg and Louise Ames, was published last month. This new book treats comprehensively all ages from birth through 10 years, telling parents how to deal with each stage of the child's development.

If you or a friend is a foster parent (or both), it is reassuring to recognize the rhythms of growth and to know that children's behaviour is fairly predictable. So if your child is an angel at 2, a whiner at 3½, obeys at 4 and is demanding at 6, he is just growing up in a normal way.
CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF VANCOUVER, B.C.
1675 West Tenth Avenue, CE 8111

District Supervisors

1. West
   Miss Tuckey

2. Centre
   Mrs. Kaufmann

3. East
   Miss Martin

4. South
   Smith
   Mrs.

5. Country
   Mr. Sanders
   (N.W., Surrey, Langley, Delta & Richmond, South of Westminster Highway.)

Note
Areas outside City boundaries are used only for foster homes.

Oct. 1955
APPENDIX B

December 4, 5, 6 & 7, 1951
CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY, VANCOUVER

A. HOME FINDING INSTITUTE  lead by Mrs. H. EXNER, casework professor at the University of B.C.

Children's Agency Responsibility

1. PRIMARY CLIENT  (focus of service)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>Worker (ability to help depends on objectivity and understanding of child)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>在他的 needs</td>
<td>Foster Parents (ability to help depends on acceptance &amp; understanding of child)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. DANGERS IN DECISION TO ACCEPT, REJECT OR USE HOME.

A. Child being used to serve Foster Parents' needs - as to possess, show off, build ego, prove worth; as object of sadism; to serve other child, etc.

B. Child being used to serve worker's needs: to give to parents (guilt toward own); to punish parents (resentment of own); to punish children; to prove "miracle can happen" and emotionally handicapped people can be good parents; to reward certain standards (worker's own) as rigid cleanliness or behaviour; always to give and never refuse; to control and manipulate; to take the easiest path; to hope for the best; to try any home.

NOTE:  Foster Parent comes as client with need he sees as a child. If accepted he becomes a resource and part of a child's environment.

3. RESPONSIBILITY FOR AVAILABILITY OF HOMES

NEEDED:

(a) Recruitment (including publicity, feature news, stories, advertising, radio, talks to service and neighborhood clubs and churches, through current homes).
(b) Central file of homes, currently kept up, including closing undesirable homes with reason, available homes specifying qualities of family and the particular ages, sex (es), temperaments and problems with which they deal best.

(c) Assessment of Home (with acceptance or rejection), first as a Foster Home, and Separate Assessment (if accepted) for Specific Child.

NOTE: The more usual division is to have the general decision made by the Homefinding Department; if workers do part of the investigation, responsibility for general acceptance or rejection must be specifically assigned, so home can be listed as "available" and the foster parents know their status.

(d) Index of Number of Homes available for various types of child. While a few foster parents can accept any child, many can care for babies only, many best for pre-school, many best for school age, and some for adolescents. Variations occur in acceptance of own parents and in acceptance of types of problem (active, aggressive, withdrawn, fearful, etc.)

Such an index makes possible real assessment as to whether homes are available for the children accepted, and enables recruitment for shortage groups.

SERIOUS DANGERS:

(1) Hanging on to homes with little potential "just in case the 'ideal' child appears".

(2) Because of shortage of proper homes, forcing one to take a child whose problems they reject.

(3) Adding the one more child to a successful foster home who makes the burden too great and the home is lost.

(4) Allowing an emergency placement to become permanent without reassessment as to its ability to meet child's long-time needs.

(5) Using any home for more than three (preferably two babies) under five, or for more than five unrelated older children.

(6) Using foster parents without own children or experience directly with children (a) for babies except in adoption 
(b) for children with emotional and behaviour problems under adolescence.

(7) Not assessing a "permanent foster home" as the adoption home it is hoped it will become.
B. HOME FINDING PROCESS WITH APPLICANTS

FIRST NEEDS: To help applicants

(1) Feel that they are participating in seeing if they can happily accept a foster child.

(2) In understanding that good parents will not necessarily be happy or successful as foster parents. Caring for children of others is a different relationship, and the agency MUST be in close contact.

(3) In understanding that agency children have often been deprived and may not return affection to foster parents for some time (months or even years); that such children will have problems in behaviour and be babyish emotionally.

(4) In understanding that every child reacts to a change of home by regressing to babyish ways, and eventually by "trying out" foster parents to see if they can love him in spite of his behaviour.

(5) In understanding that the agency child may have parents to whom he is often and may need to be, loyal; about whose defects the foster parents need to be understanding; and to whom the child may return.

If parents visit foster home, the need for warmth toward them, but referral for decision and advice to agency.

(6) To understand in full the agency's primary responsibility as guardian, but also their availability to help regularly with discussion of problems.

The need also of the agency child to have the worker as an added friend to talk with privately.

(7) To understand the importance of full discussion of their background, feelings and wishes first, to test these against the problems of foster parenthood, and second in selection of the child of the age, sex, temperament and problems best suited to their family.

(8) To see the importance of giving the child a place to belong in so far as he wishes, with love asking no return, and the security of limits set with patience; to understand the job is one of making it possible for a human being to grow, in his own often surprising ways.

C. ASSESSMENT OF FOSTER HOMES FOR USE.

1. Essential areas of discussion.

(a) Wish to take a foster child:
(1) how long considered; why considered; ideas of what it will be like; why particular interest as to sex, age, background, etc.

(2) plans for care; extra work; discipline; love; making child at home; school; neighbourhood play, etc.

(b) Ideas about children - their relation to adults, to each other, their care and discipline, in specific terms:

(1) re own children (as eating, sleeping, obeying, toilet training, playing, affection, family planning and sharing etc.)

(2) re foster children (same as above; - ask also about child's first coming - ways of making him at home, etc. Also enuresis, masturbation, lying, pilfering, temper, etc.)

(3) Attitudes toward spouse - affectionate, understanding, joint planning, recreation, sharing chores, mutual interests.

(4) Attitudes toward parents of a foster child - accepting, understanding problems as described in "sample" instances, how to help child's feeling toward family.

2. Assess separately for Father, Mother and where pertinent for children in Foster Family:

(a) Real reasons for wanting a child, as money, to get love, companionship for self or child, to give love, to serve.

(b) Ability to accept child with (1) other family ties; (2) other standards; (3) deprived, with personality problems unable to belong and love at once; (4) with agency visiting and (5) who will surely try out foster family to see if they like him when naughty. (All this should be discussed clearly and fully with foster parents before they are accepted at all, and again around specific child. Belief in environment rather than heredity is essential).

(c) Strength of personality (Any mental illness at all should exclude use of home, as should delinquency in adulthood. Other illnesses may cause weakness as may early neglect or rejection. Specific feelings toward jobs, loss of jobs, neighbourhood, religion and government, i.e. authority, should be discussed.)

(d) Maturity (Assess patience, ability to wait; ability to adapt and adjust; ability to be firm; planning, sense of humour; and ability to love without immediate return. Watch out for overstrict ideas of behaviour; rigid cleanliness; overanxiety; self-blame; self-interest.)
(e) Feelings within family for each other and friends, as shown in discussion of details of daily living, inclusion in planning, affection; respect for opinions; enjoyment of living together; is it an "open-door" family with room for others.

(f) Discussion of own childhood; feeling toward parents; understanding of own problems; danger of over-indulgence - (things missed in childhood, or over-harsness, to prove it should be done the hard way); was there sufficient love so parent can give love?

**ABSOLUTE ESSENTIALS:**

1. To see foster father and mother separately, preferably in the office as well as together, and at home and with their children. This is to set professional tone, and to see both interaction and separate functioning - as child will experience it.

2. Adequate time to really know the family in a relaxed way and have them get to know the agency.

### D. ESSENTIAL NEEDS IN ADOPTIVE PARENTS AS COMPARED WITH FOSTER PARENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adoptive Parents</th>
<th>Foster Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Wish to have the child as own.</td>
<td>1. Ability to accept a child with other ties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Belief that child can become their own.</td>
<td>2. Own children, so need for own family is satisfied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Every evidence of ability in health &amp; finances of seeing child into maturity.</td>
<td>3. Some will offer good, temporary home, may be older, less well-off.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** Maturity and inner strength cannot be assumed in either group, since need for a child may be neurotic or immature.

4. Realistic acceptance of sterility - concern for mate.  

4. Understanding of natural parents.

**DANGER:** Easier acceptance of Adoptive Applicants because they may seem to offer more or be closer to worker's own educational or cultural background. Since agency supervision in adoption stops after a year, special care must be taken (1) in assessing parents (2) in helping parents.

### E. NEEDS OF FOSTER PARENTS:

1. Those dangerous to children: need to be loved; to have companionship; need to control; to have power; need to possess; enlarge self through child; need to have someone very dependant; need to punish and hurt; need to show off, feel superior and "bountiful".
(2) **Those good for children** - mature need for children as humans who need love but will grow up; need to love (without relation to return); need to create; to heal; to help a human grow; need to help even with some masochistic component.

**NOTE:** Such needs as companionship for child, for money or for occupation can only be assessed in light of the above.

(3) **Essential to Foster Parents:** To receive recognition of problems and of effort, and to feel co-workers in the agency, in rebuilding child lives.

Continuing help from the worker to understand the child, planned worker's visits, foster parent clubs, newsletters, bulletins, discussion groups and participation in publicity promote integration with agency, and feeling of worth.
APPENDIX C.

Excerpt From a Letter Written Nov. 9, 1955 by Mr. D. A. Miller,
Director of Foster Care Department of State of Oregon's McLaren
School for Boys, Woodburn, Oregon, Whose Superintendent is Mr.
James Lamb.

"our foster care program is now in its fourth year. We deal exclusively with delinquent boys who have been committed to us from the courts of this state. The age range is from twelve to eighteen years. We place boys in foster homes in lieu of institutional experience after the boys have had a period of time in our reception cottage in order that we might observe, diagnose, and plan for them.

We place boys in foster homes whose communities reject them, whose parents reject them, or who are not permitted to return to their own homes because of the inadequacies of the parents. Rarely, do we have a boy who is a true orphan. We expect the boys to have demonstrated the kind of behavior which could be tolerated in a local community. On the other hand we do not keep our boys on campus until they are "perfect little angels" prior to placement.

The process of placement is elective on the part of the boys. They could stay on at the institution or go to our camp. The boys have opportunities of visiting for a week-end in a foster home prior to placement. Some boys visit several homes before a decision for placement is made. Most of our boys on placement are in a full time school program although we have a few who are not. Our monthly rates of payment vary up to one hundred and twenty five dollars per month. We assume responsibilities for clothing, board, room, laundry, medical, and dental care.

Currently, we have four foster care workers who have caseloads between twelve and fifteen per worker. In some instances the case load includes two or three boys on campus who are in the process of getting ready for placement; it is our policy to have the case worker concerned become reasonably well acquainted with the boy prior to placement. The area of placement is within a radius of about forty miles of the training school; this is mostly an economical measure with reference to travel."
(a) General References


Howard, Frank M., - "Institution or Foster Home", Mental Hygiene, January 1946.


Smallman, Marjory Maude, Foster Homefinding, M.S.W. Thesis, University of Toronto, 1952.


Stubbins, Lorene, "Foster Home Care", Canadian Welfare Council, Ottawa, 1951.


(b) Specific References


Young, Ruth, - "As a Foster Mother Sees It", Concerning Children, Ottawa, Canadian Welfare Council, March, 1949.