

FACTORS PRECIPITATING AGENCY CARE OF CHILDREN

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

in the Department
of
SOCIAL WORK

We accept this thesis as conforming to the
required standard

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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II

Abstract

This study, undertaken at the Children's Aid Society of Vancouver, B. C., was an attempt to isolate and identify certain social and environmental factors which precipitate agency care of children. Such a study should be of value to any Child Welfare Agency concerned with strengthening the family and maintaining the child, whenever possible, in his own home.

The rationale for the study was based on three major assumptions:

1. that service to families and children in need of protection has been hampered by lack of foster home resources.
2. That in providing substitute care for children Child Welfare agencies have emphasized the psychological dynamics of the family situation, attributing the need for agency care to the personal pathology of one or more members, and have paid insufficient attention to the possibility that social and environmental conditions may have contributed to the need for foster home placement.
3. That whenever feasible the child should remain in his own home.

In formulating these assumptions we were influenced by the findings of other researchers. Alfred Kadushin in his article "Introduction of New Orientations in Child Welfare Research" (The Known and Unknown in Child Welfare Research, Miriam Morris & Barbara Walters eds., Child Welfare League of America, N. Y., 1965) pleads for greater understanding of the social situation of families, since it is his opinion that adverse environmental conditions play a significant role in the placement of children. Similarly Jenkins and Sauber (Paths to Child Placement, Community Council of Greater New York, N. Y. City Department

of Welfare, 1966) emphasize the importance of social conditions, particularly income, housing and health on a family's ability to remain together and function effectively. From both these research findings it was apparent that the provision of community resources such as homemaker service and day care centres could reduce the number of children requiring placement away from their own home by supporting and supplementing the family during periods of situational stress.

With this in mind our study was to be concerned with identifying the social and environmental factors which played a role in developing conditions requiring agency care of children. In addition we were also concerned with the process that went on prior to agency contact, specifically how families coped with their adverse situations before accepting or requesting agency intervention. Such information would serve as a basis for developing community resources to increase the family's ability to withstand pressure and stress.

We hypothesized that the findings of other researchers as mentioned above were as valid in Vancouver as elsewhere and should therefore be of equal concern to Child Welfare Agencies here.

Our original design was to develop a schedule to provide data for testing the significance of certain social and environmental factors that we had identified by consulting the literature and agency personnel. The variables to be tested were:

1. Household composition
2. Housing
3. Neighbourhood

4. Health
5. Income
6. Employment
7. Education

In order to discover the problem solving activities of the families in relation to these variables, coping questions were inserted into the schedule. These questions were designed to elicit information about the client's perception of the problem, his initial response and its effect, and the people and/or organizations he involved in his coping attempts.

A draft schedule was devised to be administered over a one month period during the intake process to all persons requesting or referred for service with the exception of transients. The schedule was to be readministered six months later and a comparison made to determine the differences, if any, between the social and environmental situations of those families whose children were placed and those families who remained together.

Unfortunately at this time the agency was unable to participate in such a project and the administration of the schedule was abandoned. We were not free to take on this task ourselves and it had been our intention from the beginning to introduce a research element into the agency as part of professional practice by the involvement of personnel in this effort. We still believe that the agency would find the schedule useful and have included it in Appendix I with the recommendation that it be considered for inclusion in any future project in this area.

As an alternative, agency personnel suggested that we examine existing Intake data to see if the information we sought might not be

already available in the files. Thirty-six files were examined and thirteen workers consulted. We found that information regarding the variables was either inconsistently recorded or absent entirely. Where information regarding the coping patterns of these families was recorded it tended to be limited to the source of referral without any further elaboration.

Our findings indicated that a review of agency records was not adequate for research purposes since the variables sought were not systematically recorded during the intake process.

Time ran out on us following an examination of the files and we were unable to consult again with staff or to discuss alternative ways of obtaining the information. We did, however, make a number of recommendations based on our experience which may serve as a guide for continuing research in this area:

1. that an exploratory study be conducted using an interview schedule which includes the variables suggested above. Our draft schedule is available in the body of this report.
2. That the schedule be administered through the Intake Department with a follow-up study several months later. The use of an independent researcher seems to be warranted since agency personnel are not available to take on this added task due to time pressures of their own.
3. That the intake face sheet be revised to include information pertaining to the social and environmental situations of clients as an aid in identifying recurring patterns of stress that may necessitate substitute care of children.

Acknowledgements

The research group wishes to express its sincere thanks to Mr. R. C. McClelland, Field Supervisor from University of British Columbia, for his guidance and support in helping us to carry out this project.

We also extend our appreciation to Mrs. M. Murdoch, Director of the Children's Aid Society, Kingsway Branch, and to Miss Joan Kolson, Supervisor of Intake, Children's Aid Society, Kingsway Branch, for their time and patience in considering the theoretical and practical problems with us. We also wish to acknowledge Miss P. Hicks and Miss E. Kinaird, both Supervisors of Protection, Children's Aid Society, Kingsway Branch, for the helpful information they provided.

To Mr. Louis Reimer, Research Director of Children's Aid Society for Greater Vancouver , our appreciation for helpful direction.

III

Introduction

The number of children brought into "care" has increased in the last decade. If the number of children admitted to "care" annually continues to increase, Child Welfare Agencies such as The Children's Aid Society of Vancouver will be faced with serious difficulties in coping with the situation. Foster homes, adoption homes and supporting services are in short supply and these are becoming increasingly expensive to establish and service. Large caseloads and high staff turnover in agencies are placing severe limitations on the quality and quantity of service available. Facilities are not available to adequately cope with the number of children requiring substitute parenting, children are not receiving the type of care that justifies their removal or separation from their parents. The problem is that reliable, valid and empirically tested knowledge is not available as to why children are coming into "care" in the Province of British Columbia. As Kadushin has stated, "Child Welfare lacks the essential basic statistical data about phenomena which are its prime concerns." There is an obvious dearth of information on, "... the kinds of children in foster care, the reasons for how they came into such care, and for how long, the likelihood of their being returned home, how many children require placement, for what reasons, and the social characteristics of the homes from which they come." (5. p. 38). It is this last area, regarding the social characteristics of the homes, with which the present authors concerned themselves.

If the contributing factors to child placement can be established, particularly in the realm of environmental factors, some other means of treating the situation might be more efficient than removal of the children.

If certain unique clusters of social and environmental features within families who have children in "care" can be distinguished, agencies and social workers will be enabled to: (a) recognize these potential breakdown families before an irreparable transaction leads to a crisis situation; (b) work more effectively with the families, and (c) pressure for the creation of necessary services and resources that will minimize the stressors of a social and environmental nature. The result of recognizing the precipitating factors and of making the necessary changes, in the light of this knowledge, would be: (a) a decrease in the need for emergency action in bringing children into "care"; (b) a decrease in the need for the provision of substitute parents, and (c) an increase in the efforts toward preventive, institutional service rather than residual, emergency service, and, directly related to this would be an increased emphasis on the research and community organization aspects of social work in Child Welfare agencies, so that the purposive element of social work is always existent.

Results of a recent study suggest that less than a desirable amount of exploration and work is being done prior to the admission of children to "care". Alfred Kadushin has pointed out the trend toward new orientations in Child Welfare Research. (5. p. 29). He explained that the new "research orientation" is more highly differentiated than the "practice orientation" which was so prevalent in the past. The research orientation suggests that "... the family and the social milieu as an open system in interaction, and the placement decision as the result of a variety of vectors ..." (5. p. 29) some of which are rarely included in the psychotherapeutic interaction of the latter. It is this research orientation which has colored the frame of reference underlying the study

conceived by the present authors. The emphasis on the "... impact of environmental stress factors on the family with the current life situation ...", is cited as, "... precipitating the difficulties resulting in separation factors such as limited income, discrimination, poor housing, poor health, chronic fatigue, mental deficiency, unremitting child care, the presence of unwanted pregnancies." (5. p. 29) Another study conducted in New York (4) lends support to this view by pointing out that a prime factor precipitating placement of children was the absence of other preventive resources in the community with which the family was interacting and involved. Often, the availability of a Homemaker or Day Care Service would have been sufficient to curb intensification of already existing stress arising out of psychological and social factors.

A study by Reimer et al, (2) has indicated that social workers' orientations to, and perceptions of, the severity and nature of events was related to factors such as: sex of the worker, work district, and size of the community in which the social worker was raised. The implication is that placement decisions across a province for instance, are made with less than a high degree of consistency. This study attempts to identify a number of characteristics prevalent in families whose children come into care. At the request of The Children's Aid Society we are also examining the coping patterns of these families prior to their current contact with the agency.

IV

Assumptions

Two assumptions which were basic to formulating an instrument for determining factors precipitating the admission of children to "care" were established.

These were: (1) social and environmental factors play a role in precipitating the need for "care", that is, at least, as important as the role played by the factor of the psychological state of the parents or guardians of the children, and (2) clusters of unique and different social and environmental factors are present as stressors in those families whose children eventually come into "care" that are not present as forces in those families whose children do not come into "care".

V

Hypothesis

The hypothesis which guided the present authors in the attempt to create an instrument of measurement, for the purpose of this type of research, was as follows:

Social and environmental factors have a prominent role as factors contributing to family breakdown and the need for the service of Child Welfare "care". The greater the stress exerted by these clusters of factors, the greater the probability that the family will break down and one or more of the children will be brought into "care". Therefore, it is hypothesized that a positive correlation exists between the degree of stress exerted by a particular cluster of social and environmental factors and the probability of admission of the children into "care".

The level of the research design which was seen to be required, in the light of current knowledge about factors precipitating the agency "care" of children, was "exploratory".

VI

Variables

In order to determine those variables which might be related to those children coming into "care", a survey of literature and recent studies was undertaken that provided a basis from which pertinent variables could be selected. As a result of this, a number of factors were postulated as social and environmental variables, possibly precipitating agency "care" of children, and, these were incorporated into a rough draft schedule which is the type of research design originally selected for this study.

With a view to exploring the factors which precipitate agency "care" of children, the authors proceeded according to the following pattern of action. The specific goals, which were initially established, involved: the specification of assumptions underlying the study; the exploration of concepts, utilized; the development of a hypothesis; the elaboration of variables to be tested, and the creation of an instrument of measurement with which to observe the relevant factors. Following this, another aspect of the original goal was to pretest the instrument and to revise it where necessary, and, to report upon the activity in order to facilitate the implementation of the measurement instrument, in a formal study to be conducted by subsequent research groups.

When the rough draft of the designed measurement instrument was presented to the agency, it was considered necessary to validate the choice of variables and the type of research design which was selected. The original goals, with regard to finalizing the research measurement instrument, were altered in order to validate the need for the instrument. Because the proposed schedule was deemed, by the agency, to be too extensive for the staff to administer, at the present time, the following

reformulated, specific objectives were undertaken in order to re-examine the method required for studying the area of difficulty. The reformulated objectives therefore, required the authors to undertake, with the agency personnel; a re-evaluation of the variables to be researched; the establishment of what information is already available in the agency, and the presentation of recommendations with regard to methods for obtaining the data which is not available for research purposes.

As mentioned, the conceived research was not carried out, as planned. Research of this nature required close co-operation and relationship between the researchers and the agency personnel, however, the particular agency, in which the research was to be administered, was undergoing a major reorganization and restructuring of the roles of each of its departments, consequently, Intake procedures were still in the process of becoming established. Time was not available for collaboration with researchers, or for the introduction and administration of such a comprehensive schedule, and, it was not deemed feasible to conduct this kind of research in this agency at this particular time.

In response to this situation, the plan of action which was originally conceived, had to be altered. To promote implementation of any research endeavour, it was felt that the immediate needs and concerns of the particular agency involved in the administration of the research instrument, must be given precedence above any general research ideals. The aim of the present authors, therefore, became that of focussing on the six following tasks:

- 1 establish with the agency personnel a close involvement
 in the research process.

- 2 Determining, clearly, what the experienced agency personnel consider to be areas of their immediate concern with regard to recurrent factors leading to "separation", and, collaborating their concerns with the researchers' concerns for reliable and valid research.
- 3 Exploring the opinions of the agency personnel with regard to the type of research design which they consider would yield practically applicable findings by the most economical means -- in terms of time and finance.
- 4 Determining what resources are readily available, within the agency, for utilization for the purpose of yielding the information required about the factors concerning the agency personnel.
- 5 Determining where the gaps exist between the information required and that which is, already, readily available.
- 6 Presenting recommendations regarding methods of obtaining the necessary but unavailable information.

A re-examination of the variables to be researched, in collaboration with the experienced agency personnel, resulted in a delineation of specific precipitating factors which were thought to be relevant variables to be measured. Consultation with the personnel also led the present authors to view the coping component as an integral part of their consideration. Essentially, this incorporation involved the establishment of a more balanced orientation regarding environmental and psychodynamic factors in relation to the phenomenon of separation.

Seven major variables were delineated which, in isolation or

in combination, might be precipitating factors of separation. Within each, descriptive characteristics were included as operational definitions in order to aid the researchers to identify the variables as they appear in agency files or in the discussions with the agency personnel. For the purpose of the researchers, the information regarding these variables was available if it could be defined as being found in the recording in the files.

The outline of the variables is included, below, however it should be noted that the variables about which the agency felt the greatest concern, were the three major areas of housing, income and health. These, however, could not be dealt with in isolation because they tended to appear in combination with one or more of the other variables they related.

VARIABLES

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| (1) <u>Household Composition</u> | i.e. presence of both parents
absence of bread-winner
presence of step-parent(s) or
step-children
presence of non-family member |
| (2) <u>Housing</u> | i.e. structural defects
overcrowding
inadequate interior facilities
(plumbing, heating)
number of bedrooms |
| (3) <u>Neighbourhood</u> | i.e. availability of facilities in
the neighbourhood for
school, recreational
activities, church,
shopping, etc. |
| (4) <u>Health</u> | i.e. mental or physical illness of
parent, child or breadwinner
nature and onset of illness |
| (5) <u>Income</u> | i.e. level of income
source
one or both parents working |
| (6) <u>Employment</u> | i.e. nature (unskilled, skilled, |

white-collar, etc.)
 stability and frequency
 shift work

(7) Education

i.e. level of parents
 child's performance in relation
 to age
 presence or absence of learning
 or discipline problem

Because of the focus on, not only those variables that present problems for the client, but also, on the client's means of coping with the problems, the following questions were formulated to guide the researchers in exploring: the effectiveness of coping, the lack or availability of resources, and the client's knowledge and perception of these. The questions were posed to the regular workers of the sample clients in order to determine what information about precipitating factors they had retained for their own knowledge but had not recorded on the file. It should be noted that the coping questions were in relation to whichever of the major variables was seen to be a contributing or precipitating factor in that particular case. The questions were:

COPING QUESTIONS

- (1) What is the client's perception of the problem, if any?
- (2) What was the client's initial response to the problem?
- (3) Did he try to solve the problem?
- (4) To whom did he turn for help (i.e. family, friends, community resources)?
- (5) Why did he try to solve the problem in this way?
 i.e. Did he not know of available resources, or the source had been helpful in the past.
- (6) What happened when he sought help? i.e. He was turned down, given the run-around, or was helped.

- (7) Did he seek help from the Children's Aid Society? If not, why not?
- (8) What does he think of the Children's Aid Society?
- (9) What is the worker's perception of the problem?
- (10) What is the worker's rating of the objectivity and validity of client's perception?

An exploration of the sources of data, which are available in the agency, therefore was undertaken. A sample of thirty-six files was utilized for the purpose of exploring whether they contained information regarding the selected variables to be studied. The sample consisted of only those files which were opened or re-opened in the month of October, 1967. The category of Unmarried Parents' files was included in the sample because the agency personnel felt that the children involved tended to, eventually, be taken into "care". A problem which had not been anticipated when Intake was deemed to be the most feasible department in which to administer the study, was that their summary recording in the re-opened files was usually very brief and did not contain much of the information that is required for the study. It is logical to assume that some of the essential information was contained in previous recordings, however, the sample for the purpose of this study was limited to the information contained in recording that was done subsequent to the most recent Intake contact.

Of the thirty-six files which comprised the sample, twenty-three were categorized as Protection Cases while thirteen were the files of Unmarried Parents.

Following, is Chart I which illustrates the availability of information according to the selected variables and their descriptive characteristics.

Information on the variable of "household composition" was found to be such that the recording listed the names of the family members, however, it was difficult to ascertain whether or not they were all actually living in the same home.

With regard to "housing", minimal descriptive material was available in the file, although, in our discussion with agency personnel, this variable had been heavily weighted as an area of concern.

Recording about the client's "neighbourhood", was practically non-existent in any of the sample files. This was probably due to the urban nature of the geographic area, therefore, there is no information available about the client's relationship with the community and its services.

"Health", as a variable, appears to be a frequently mentioned area, however, precipitating health factors, as related in their effect upon family members and work relationships, are not consistently recorded.

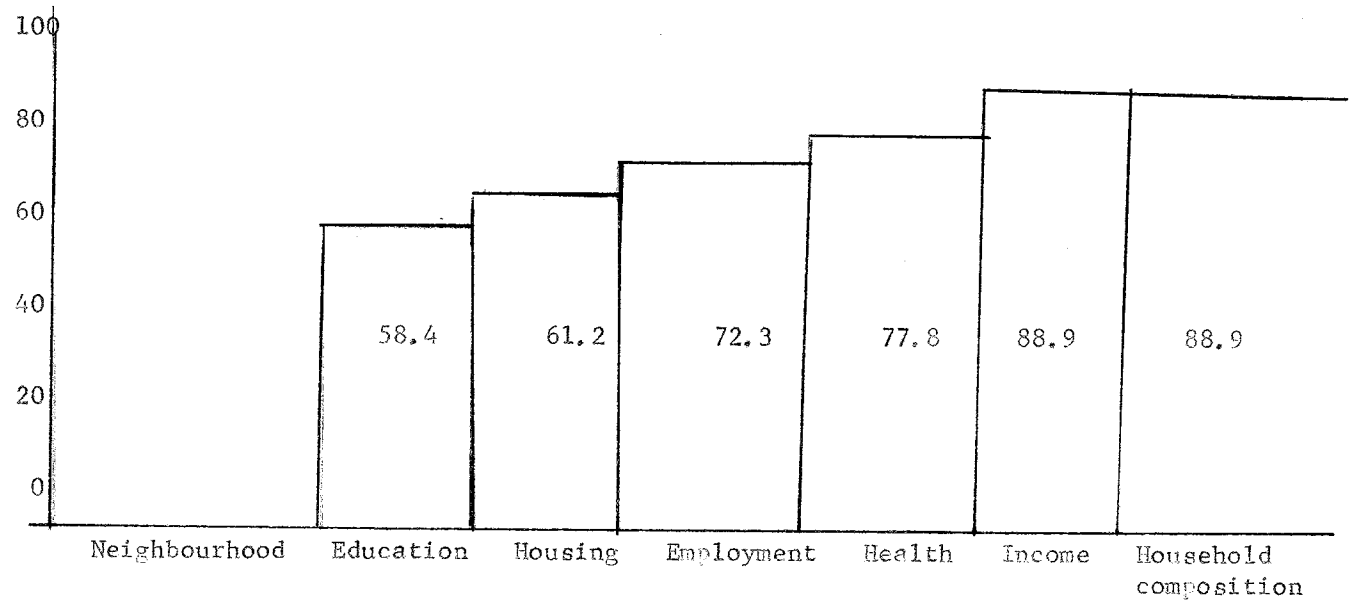
The actual income level is not usually stated, explicitly in the files, although occupational descriptions frequently appear. The source of the income is frequently mentioned, however, it is, sometimes difficult to ascertain who the breadwinner is, or, the stability or duration of his employment, if any. Income is not correlated with the other relevant variables such as health and housing or other living expenses. The problem of availability of information was largely due to the lack of consistency in the various workers' style and recording.

Breakdown of Variables

Employment									
	Health				Income			Type	
								Frequency	
	Household composition				Employed		Skilled	Regular	Education
	Housing				Unemployed		Unskilled	Irregular	
	Neighbourhood				S. A.		White collar		
	Physical								
	Mental								
	Pregnancy								
	No illness								
Information available per case	32	22	0	4	15	11	5	17	21
				9	6		13	9	
				8			8		
				7					
Information not available per case	4	14	36	8	4		10	10	15
Total	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36

Graph I

Percent of
Information
available



Information with regard to "education" offers nothing about the parental educational background, and, also relatively little about the child's school adjustment.

Chart II, which follows, illustrates the availability and unavailability of information regarding questions dealing with the effectiveness of the client's "coping behavior".

Generally speaking, the kind of information that is useful for research purpose is not explicitly available. For example, information on the question numbered "2", which most nearly gives an indication of the client's coping ability, was, for the most part, not available. Another example, following in this same vein, was the indication that the majority of clients, seeking help from the Children's Aid Society, were referred to the agency from other sources, however, there was no information as to the nature and amount of help which was forthcoming from these other resources. It was apparent that the information which was available in the files contained some descriptive aspects of coping behavior, but, this gave no indication of the evaluative aspects of this behavior.

Chart II

Coping Questions

Coping Questions	1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8	9	10*
			yes	no							
Information available per case	32	15	22	10	31	15	24	33	22	26	0
Information not available per case	4	21	4		5	21	12	3	14	10	36
Total	36	36	36		36	36	36	36	36	36	36

* Information was not available on the files with regard to this question. A sample of 13 workers was approached with this question. In general workers were not able to contribute any additional information, as most of them had not as yet visited the client.

Refer to Coping Questions on Pages 10 and 11.

Interviews and consultations with the workers of the clients whose files were used in this study, indicate that workers tend to record most of the information about social and environmental factors that they are aware of. For the purpose of obtaining the kind of information that is required, with regard to the specified variables for this study, consultations with the workers tend not to add supplementary information. They were unable, generally, to add supplementary information about social and environmental factors, although, they were able to do so with regard to psychological aspects.

VII

Recommendations

Since the files did not provide adequate information regarding the selected variables, it is suggested, at this time, that the resources within the agency should, most profitably, be used only as a supplement to information which is obtained by some other instrument of measurement, which would be more capable of yielding objective, systematic and comprehensive data. The rationale underlying this suggestion lies in the structure of communication within the agency itself, more specifically, the recording itself. The quality and quantity of recording available in the files does not lend itself, particularly well, to the needs of research. Understandably, the worker must individualize their recording for the particular client whom they are describing, but this process, together with the variations in workers' styles of writing, renders it difficult to establish the operational definitions of the variables, that could be applied to all of the files. Further, the research group felt that the tremendous amount of work required of the Intake staff at this particular phase of agency reorganization, did not afford them the time required to conduct the study.

Our specific recommendations are as follows:

- 1 Administration of the measurement instrument in the Intake Department. Although the issues of time and manpower should be considered, the possibility of using an independent interviewer for administering this could prove to be economical and practical in relation to the quality of information which could be attained, and, in relation to the long-run benefits. This department is recommended because it is here that the

social and environmental factors in the client's situation are evaluated in terms of need for separation or intensive preventative work.

- 2 The use of a schedule, which incorporates the variables, specified above, and takes the form of an exploratory level of research. See Appendix I. The sample population of the proposed study should be all children (and their families) coming into contact with the Intake Department of the Children's Aid Society of Vancouver, during a particular period of time which would be specified by the persons administering the schedule. Only the contacts by persons who are classified as "Transients" should be excluded from the sample population, because of the special circumstances of their situation. Since it is recommended that the Intake Department be used, it will not be possible to determine whether the contacts result in "separation" of the contacting families. A follow-up on the sample population, therefore, will be required in order to determine in a specified time subsequent to the administration of the schedule, whether the contacts result in the admission of the children to "ward care", "non-ward care", or in referral to available resources with no subsequent admission of the children involved, to "care". For the purpose of the study conceived, the study group would be, those families whose children came into "ward care"; the control group would be those families whose children came into temporary "non-ward" care, or do not

come into "care" at all, and, the total population, as represented by the information of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, would also form a control group, for the purpose of the study.

The rationale for choosing this plan for carrying out the research, and for choosing this sample, is that this approach is the one which would involve the least bias; the bias of the workers' various styles of recording, and of the researchers' interpretation of the recording, are felt to be sources of research error which negate the value of a study in retrospect by utilizing the material in files. This type of research instrument is suggested in preference to a questionnaire despite the fact that a questionnaire would be less expensive, in terms of time and manpower, because there would be inconsistency in the way the questions in a questionnaire would be answered, and also, there would be a problem of dealing with the falsification of facts, and, perhaps failure to return the completed questionnaire.

- 3 A revision of the Intake face sheet so as to include some statistical data regarding household composition, client's perception of the problem and the reasons underlying it, the kinds of responses to the problem, and the contacts with other agencies about the problem. These factors are suggested to be included, in addition to, those that are already there. This would provide necessary information without necessitating referral to the content of the file

and it might enable future studies to obtain
information at lesser cost.

VIII

Appendix ISchedule

1. In your opinion what was the main reason for your contact with this agency?

financial	1
marital	2
health	3
behaviour problems of children	4
interference from outside agency	5

2. How many times have you moved in the past year?

1	1
2	2
3	3
4 or more	4

3. How would you describe your present housing accommodation?

very satisfactory	1
satisfactory	2
unsatisfactory	3

4. Which of the following best describes your living accommodations?

self-contained apartment	1
housing project	2
private home	3
housekeeping room or rooms	4
other	5

5. How much per month do you pay for your present living accommodations?

under \$50	1
\$51 - 74	2
\$75 - 99	3
\$100 or more	4

6. If you are not paying rent, do you

live with other	1
own your own home	2
other (please specify)	3

7. If you own your own living accommodation what do you consider your

home is worth?

up to \$10,000	1
10,000 - 14,000	2
15,000 - 19,000	3
20,000 - 30,000	4
31,000 or over	5

8. How many bedrooms are there in the home?

1	1
2	2
3	3
4 or more	4

9. In your opinion how do members of the family get along with one another?

very satisfactorily	1
satisfactorily	2
unsatisfactorily	3

10. Did family relations have anything to do with your coming to the agency?

yes	1
no	2

11. Did you seek help from any other individual or agency prior to contact here?

yes	1
no	2

12. If answer to the above is yes, from whom did you seek help?

(a) relatives or friends	1
(b) school	2
(c) police	3
(d) public welfare agency	4
(e) family service agency	5
(f) health services	6
(g) other	7

13. If answer to 12 (a) above is yes, how were you helped during the past year by relatives or friends?

financial	1
child care	2
household help	3
moral support	4

14. Who is/are the wage-earner(s) in your family?

husband and wife	1
husband only	2
wife only	3
children	4
other	5

15. If regular wage-earner is not presently employed from what other sources are you receiving financial assistance?

public welfare	1
benefit payments (please specify)	2
relatives	3
friends	4
contributions from absent mother, father or spouse	5
other	6

16. What is your total income per month?

\$ 1 - 75	1
76 - 150	2
151 - 200	3
201 - 250	4
251 - 300	5
301 - 350	6
351 - 400	7
401 and over	8

17. How many jobs has the husband/father held in the past year?

1	1
2	2
3	3
4 - 6	4
6 or more	5

18. How many jobs has wife/mother held during the past year?

1	1
2	2
3	3
4 - 6	4
6 or more	5

19. What was the longest period of employment during the past year?

1 - 3 mos.	1
4 - 6 mos.	2
7 - 9 mos.	3
10 - 12 mos.	4

20. If you received social assistance at anytime during the past

year how long did payments continue?

1 - 3 mos.	1
4 - 6 mos.	2
7 - 9 mos.	3
10 - 12 mos.	4

21. Was your income for the past month adequate for meeting everyday living expenses?

yes	1
no	2

22. Do you think your financial situation had anything to do with your coming to the agency?

yes	1
no	2

23. Was any child in your family absent from school frequently during the past year?

yes (please specify)	1
no	2

24. If the answer is yes how many of your children were absent frequently?

1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5 or more	5

25. Based on the last report card check the boxes which best describe the school performance of each of your children.

	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Unsatis- factory
child number 1					
# 2					
# 3					
# 4					
# 5					
# 6					

26. In your opinion did any of your children have problems with teachers or a principal during the past year? Check the appropriate boxes below.

child number	had problems	did not have problems
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

27. As far as you know, do any of your children have close school friends?

child number	yes	no	not sure
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

28. Did you ever talk to anyone at the school (eg. counsellor, principal, nurse, teacher) about your child's performance or behaviour in the past year?

child number	yes	no
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

29. Which of the following categories best describes the educational level of the wife/mother?

high school	1
elementary	2
university	3
post-grad	4
vocational	5
technical	6
special class	7

30. Which of the following categories best describes the educational level of the husband/father?

high school	1
elementary	2
university	3
post-grad	4
vocational	5
technical	6
special class	7

31. If you have school age children check the box which best describes their performance level.

child	Above the usual grade for his age	In the usual grade for his age	Below the usual grade for his age
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

32. Are the members of your family in good health?

yes	1
no	2
don't know	3

33. If the answer to the above is no and if one or more adults are ill check the box which best describes the person, his illness, its

duration.

Person	Nature of Illness			Duration			
	Acute Physical	Chronic Physical	Emotional	1 - 6 wks.	2 mos. - 6 mos.	6 mos. - 12 mos.	more than 1 yr.

Mother/
Wife

Husband/
Father

Other

34. If one or more children are ill, check the box which best describes the person, his illness, and its duration.

Person	Nature of Illness			Duration			
	Acute Physical	Chronic Physical	Emotional	1 - 6 wks.	2 mos. - 6 mos.	6 mos. - 12 mos.	more than 1 yr.

#1

#2

#3

#4

35. Did the health problem of any member of your family have anything to do with your coming to the agency?

yes	1
no	2

36. Was looking after and supervising your children a problem in the last year?

yes	1
no	2

37. Did anyone from a school, social agency, or any other official (like the police) ever contact you about the behaviour of your children?

yes	1
no	2

38. Which of the following best describes the way in which you came in

contact with the agency?

referred by the police	1
referred by parents	2
referred by relatives or friends	3
referred by hospital or doctor	4
referred by court	5
referred by school	6
referred by self	7
referred by another agency (please specify)	8
others	9

39. Have there been any changes in family composition during the past year?

yes	1
no	2

40. If answer is yes, check the way or ways in which the change arose.

death
desertion
marriage
remarriage
birth
placement of child or children

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