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TO THE GOVERNOR

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HANDICAPPED CHILDREN IN SCHOOL AND COURT

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HANDICAPPED CHILDREN IN SCHOOL AND COURT.

A revision of a report on the relation of child welfare to Connecticut school law and public school policy, submitted to the Connecticut Commission on Child Welfare (June 15, 1920) by Dr. Arnold Gesell, Chairman of the Commission Committee on Defectives.

The portions of the proposed Children's Code most directly related to the findings and recommendations in this report will be found on pp. 71-81 and pp. 104-111 of Vol. I of the report of the Commission on Child Welfare to the Governor, published by the state, January, 1921.

We recall, not without pride, that Connecticut has more than once taken the lead in the recognition and care of the handicapped. The very beginning in the education of the deaf in this country was made at Hartford in 1817, by the Reverend Thomas H. Gallaudet. (In 1819, the state of Massachusetts provided for the education of its deaf pupils as Hartford.) In 1816, the legislature of Connecticut appropriated $5,000 for Gallaudet's school, which was probably the first appropriation of public money for education not in regular schools.

The first formal effort to train the feeble-minded was also made in this same historic school.

Connecticut was also the first state to establish a home for blind infants, the present nursery school at Farmington.

The best way to maintain this fine tradition is to extend it by improving our public provisions in behalf of all classes of handicapped children. The purpose of this report is to indicate, in particular, the great possibilities for the development of such provisions within the public school system.

A complete classification of handicapped children would include all those children who, by virtue of exceptional circumstances or by inherent or acquired constitution, deviate so much from the normal as to cause a special status to arise with reference to their educational and social treatment. Sometimes the courts determine when the special status exists; sometimes it is
a matter of common knowledge; sometimes it is only recognized by experts; but in some way or other the handicapped child generally comes within the purview of the public school system and educational law.

KINDS OF HANDICAP.

A fairly comprehensive list of the consequential forms of handicap would include the following:

I. ENVIRONMENTAL HANDICAPS.

A. Abnormal home and economic conditions.
1. Children born out of wedlock.
2. Dependent and neglected.
3. Injudicious employment.

II. CONSTITUTIONAL AND ACQUIRED HANDICAPS.

B. Physical Defect.
4. Inferior physique (malnourished and diseased).
5. Crippled.
7. Semi-Blind.
8. Deaf.

C. Speech Defective.
10. Stuttering and related disorders.

D. Conduct Disorders.
11. Reformable delinquents.
12. Defective delinquents.
13. Psychopathic (including epilepsy and constitutional inferiority).

E. Mental Deficiency.
14. Feeble-minded.
   Custodial, supervisioanl, probationary.

For obvious reasons we shall direct our discussion mainly to the second group of children, those with constitutional and acquired handicaps.
HANDICAPPED CHILDREN AND THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

To a large extent the problem of child welfare for practical reasons concerns the reduction and control of the various handicaps which have been mentioned. One of the basic functions of the state is to ameliorate these handicaps and their social consequences. In a democratic state the responsibility may be stated in even more positive terms: A maximum chance for the maximum development of all children. This standard cannot, of course, be actually achieved; but it contains the only adequate principle for the guidance of a commission on child welfare.

This principle, is in fact, well rooted in our traditions, laws and court decisions. Nowhere is it more significantly approached than in our broadest, largest and most coveted social institution,—our public school system. The historical and actual administrative relations of this huge institution to the field of child welfare are of such importance that they deserve special discussion. We are often in danger of forgetting that our elementary school system itself constitutes the greatest, best organized and most powerful child welfare agency. Its historic sanction and strategic position in our commonwealth make it the most promising instrument for further developments of state policy in behalf of children. We may use the term elementary school system in its most liberal sense to indicate private as well as tax supported schools, in so far as the former come legally within the scope of public supervision.

One of the simplest but also one of the most significant of all the statutes of the State is that which requires school authorities to report every child over four and under sixteen years of age in each of the 169 towns which constitute Connecticut. (Chapter 48, section 902, General Statutes.) This annual roll call formally signifies the responsibility which the State bears to its children. By means of this official enumeration and by its special census of defectives and by its control over the attendance register of both public and private schools, the State aims in law and in fact to have cognizance of all children of school age. Nothing could be more erroneous than to think that the problem of defective and handicapped children is one of institu-
tions, asylums and hospitals. With the possible exception of the stone blind and the stone deaf, practically every type of defective child can be found in our elementary schools; and a great proportion of the dependents, defectives and delinquents who are now in institutions have spent part of their lives in the elementary school.

The actual situation is clearly reflected in the results of a census of handicapped children in the schools of Stamford, Connecticut. This census was made by means of the following syllabus which was distributed to the elementary school teachers:

A CENSUS OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN.

This census is being made under the direction of the state Commission on Child Welfare which was appointed by the Governor and empowered by law to investigate the entire question of child welfare and to report the results of its investigations to the next session of the general assembly.

It is necessary to secure accurate statistics concerning the classes of handicapped school children described below. School teachers are asked to report by name, age, and grade every child who belongs to one of these classes. If a child happens to belong to more than one class, indicate this fact on the report. In each instance give, in the last column, a brief statement describing the nature and severity of the handicap.

1. **Blind.** Total inability to see, or vision so impaired as to be of little actual value.

2. **Partially Blind.** Vision so defective that ordinary school work cannot be done satisfactorily, or only with the greatest difficulty. (State in last column at what distance the child can count your fingers or read newspaper print.)

3. **Deaf.** Total inability to hear or hearing so slight as to be of no practical value.

4. **Partially Deaf.** Hearing so defective that the child is seriously handicapped for ordinary school work.

5. **Stutterers.** Report here all severe cases of stuttering, that is, pupils who spasmodically or uncontrollably repeat syllables, words, or initial sounds of words.

6. **“Lispers.”** This group includes all severe cases of indistinct and disfigured speech and extreme difficulty in articulation.

7. **Crippled Children.** Include here all children who are, or will be when adults, seriously handicapped because they lack
normal use of skeleton or skeletal muscles (loss or defect of hand, arm, foot, leg; deformity of body, paralysis and disability).

8. Non-Attendents at School. Include here all children between the ages of six and sixteen, resident in your school district, who are living at home and not attending school because of some physical or mental handicap. Indicate in each case in the last column, the nature of the handicap which prevents the child from attending school.

It will be noticed from the above syllabus that teachers were specifically requested to report only the serious and severe cases of handicap. The following figures, which represent a total elementary enrollment of 4,410 pupils, cannot, therefore, be regarded as an overstatement:

- Partially blind .................. 11
- Stuttering ........................ 9
- Crippled .......................... 37
- Partially deaf ..................... 7
- Lisping ............................ 19
- Non-attending ...................... 4

This makes a total of eighty-three definitely handicapped children, which number does not include some fifty feeble-minded children who are now enrolled in three special classes in Stamford.

We shall give additional figures to show the reality of this problem of the handicapped school child. Meanwhile, it is well to remind ourselves that the statistics stand for actual children, and represent so many individual child welfare situations.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM AND CHILD WELFARE.

Our public school system is our largest official child welfare institution. It is also our most inclusive institution; practically every type of child, handicapped, average, superior, attends some elementary school. Moreover, it is the most extensive, the most pervasive of our public institutions. It is found in the remotest rural corners, as well as in all villages and cities of the whole state. By virtue of tradition, legislation, and actual machinery the state has a child welfare relation with 345,000 children of
school age. A children's code must give full recognition to this situation.

Even in colonial times Connecticut made the establishment of school and school attendance compulsory. In 1872, Connecticut enacted a modern compulsory attendance law. This principle of compulsory education is most fundamental with respect to child welfare. Its significance has been well stated by Cubberley. "Neither does the state establish schools because by state co-operative effort they can be established and conducted more economically than by private agencies, but rather that by so doing it may exercise the State's inherent right to enforce a type of education looking specifically to the preservation and improvement of the State."

Public education has become a public necessity.

Out of this central principle have grown others of similar importance, so closely related and so weighty that they will never be abandoned; such as the right of tax, to supervise, to maintain standards, to regulate child labor, to safeguard health, to provide equal opportunity, and to formulate new minimum standards to promote the maximum development of children.

It is remarkable to what degree the problems of child welfare are essentially educational. Indeed, "Education to-day has become the great constructive tool of civilization."

It follows from these joint propositions that the elementary school system should be used as a fundamental constructive instrumentality in the development of child welfare policies. Our recommendations with regard to defective and handicapped children indicate how this may be done.

It is sometimes argued that the business of the public school is to teach the so-called statutory subjects like reading, writing and arithmetic, and it is asked, "Should not the public school exclude children so handicapped that they cannot profit by ordinary instruction?"

Legislation of the last quarter century both in Europe and in this country has answered this question emphatically in the negative. The practice of exclusion is out of sympathy with the democratic spirit of the public school. Exclusion cannot develop into a constructive policy. It leads nowhere.
The public school system is, therefore, steadily shouldering the burden of defective and handicapped children. This is true in England and Canada as well as in progressive states and cities in this country. Cleveland, for example, has special classes, special schools, or auxiliary teachers for practically every type of handicapped child mentioned in our classification,—blind, deaf, crippled, incorrigible, speech defective, tuberculous, feebleminded, etc. Similar provisions are found in representative cities like Boston, New York, Milwaukee, St. Louis, Los Angeles, etc. Ohio, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, New York, Minnesota have all passed far-reaching laws providing for the public school care of the main types of defectives, jointly under local and state auspices. The state board and the state superintendent, or commissioner of education, hold the supervisory power.

For example, Minnesota appropriates annually $200.00 for each blind child, $150.00 for each deaf child, $100.00 for each speech defective, and $100.00 also for each mentally subnormal child instructed in special classes or special public schools.

It is unnecessary to go to extremes and to contend that special state institutions for defective and handicapped children are to be systematically discouraged. Such institutions have an important work in the care of those cases who, for practical reasons, cannot be reached in any other way, but as a matter of public economy and public policy we should do everything we reasonably can to keep certain types of defective children near their fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters. Indeed, there may even be good reasons for doing what England is doing, namely: placing small groups of children (like the crippled or deaf) in family homes located near public schools where these children can get the same sort of training which they might otherwise have to receive in some more remote central institution. The whole drift of legislative and social progress is in the direction of expanding the authority and scope of our public school system in such a way that local communities, like cities, towns and counties, can take primary responsibility for the care of their own child welfare problems.
THE BLIND AND SEMI-BLIND.

We do not know how many blind children of school age there are in the state of Connecticut. This fact, itself, is significant. We should have a method of enumeration and registration which would enable us to know, if possible, the name of every blind child and youth in need of educational or other attention.

Sec. 293 of the General Statutes (1918) requires the selectman of each town to report annually the number of blind persons therein. The law has fallen into disuse and apparently has favored the reporting of adults rather than children.

The last school census reports in all fifty-seven cases of blindness in children under sixteen. These figures seem to include the ten children in the nursery school at Farmington, but not the fifty children enrolled in the school department at the Connecticut Institute for the Blind.

The adequate reporting of cases is further complicated by the fact that parents and relatives regard blindness as a disgrace or stigma.

Unfortunately nurses and midwives seem to share this feeling because, although the law lays a penalty, they often fail to report cases of opthalmia neonatorum. This law can probably be improved. Its enforcement can also be increased by further activity of the state board of health. The desirability of a special clause to insure prophylatic treatment should be considered, and would no doubt receive the support of Secretary Ryan of the State Board of Education for the Blind.

Of major importance, however, is an improved method of reporting all children of school age who are afflicted with blindness. We cannot rely on the old selectman law nor on voluntary agencies, nor on both together. Here, as elsewhere, we should develop the possibilities of the existing school census and of the public school register. A comprehensive law which will provide for the annual or biennial enumeration of all types of defective and handicapped children, under regulations perfected by the State Department of Education, is best calculated to meet the situation. Such an enumeration should extend, as it does now, to children who may attend or are attending private schools. All such schools are now required by statute (by Sec. 839) to "Keep
a register of attendance in form and manner prescribed by the
state board of education for the public schools." A slight exten-
sion of this law and of the law relating to the census of all chil-
dren of school age, will accomplish a very important end,—the
registration of those handicapped and exceptional children
toward whom, for social or child welfare reasons, the state has a
peculiar responsibility.

We know still less about the number and status of the semi-
blind. A semi-blind child suffers from vision so defective that
he cannot do ordinary school work satisfactorily or only with the
greatest difficulty. In a recent census of the New Haven schools
183 children out of an enrollment of 24,000 were reported semi-
blind. The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind found over
4% of school children had less than one-half vision; and of this
number one in ten, or in all 0.4%, were of such defective sight
as to need special consideration.

Connecticut has had since 1904 the following law (Sec.
2251):

"The State Board of Education shall prepare or cause to be
prepared suitable test cards and blanks to be used in testing the
eyesight of the pupils in public schools, and shall furnish the
same, together with all necessary instruction for their use, free
of expense, to every school in the state. The superintendent, prin-
cipal, or teacher, in every school, during the fall term in the year
1904, and triennially thereafter, shall test the eyesight of all
pupils under his charge according to the instructions furnished,
and shall notify in writing the parent or guardian of every pupil
who shall be found to have any defects of vision or disease of the
eyes, with a brief statement of such defect or disease, and shall
make written report of all such cases to the State Board of Edu-
cation."

This law, which has been on our statutes for over fifteen
years, gives an interesting evidence of the natural relations of
the public school system to the whole problem of handicapped
children. Measures which are rational, and expedient with refer-
ence to children with deficient vision, are equally applicable to
children with other types of handicap. Mental deficiency, for ex-
ample, is simply a species of blindness more or less extreme,
which happens to dim the light of intelligence.
In any event, this problem of partially sighted children is large enough to merit our recognition. We should recommend at least permissive legislation which will encourage the larger communities to organize special public school classes for the partially sighted and even the blind. A law which would further require the state board of education to furnish special instruction and materials of instruction to teachers of partially sighted children in the smaller communities is also indicated. The present eyesight test law should be retained, but in a modified form which will bring it into harmony with general provisions empowering the state board of education to direct special educational measures in behalf of educationally exceptional pupils.

As the official titles of the main state agencies for the blind indicate, Connecticut has consistently emphasized the educational aspect of the problem of blindness. We approve of this policy. The whole work should be brought into still closer relations to the state public school system and department of education.

We have discussed in some detail the situations relative to blind children because it typifies in many ways the situation with respect to other types of handicap.

DEAF AND SEMI-DEAF.

Again it is difficult to get accurate statistics. The school census of 1919-20 reports eighty-nine cases of deafness, but to what extent these cases are additional to the 266 which are enrolled at the Hartford School for the Deaf and the Mystic Oral School, we cannot determine. The law depends upon selectmen of each town to report annually the number of deaf persons therein. This law has the same defects as were noted in the section on blind children. The remedy is also the same, namely, a comprehensive system of reporting all educationally handicapped and defective children through an improved school census and school register.

There are no satisfactory data for determining the number of semi-deaf children in our public school. A recent canvass of the New Haven schools revealed seventy-seven cases, or one child in every 308.
Connecticut has done notable service in behalf of the deaf; in caring for her own deaf and those of four other states, in furnishing pioneer instructors to other states, and in setting standards for the country. The General Assembly of 1919 appropriated $250,000 for the erection of new buildings at Hartford, and also acquired title over the school at Mystic. The institutional aspect of the problem is, therefore, complicated, and one which hardly falls within the province of the commission.

We should, however, recommend the development of public school facilities for deaf and semi-deaf children as a supplement to the present institutional provisions. Recent legislation and practice have amply demonstrated the feasibility of such, even though the education of the deaf has been called "one of the most difficult undertakings in our entire educational plan." In 1916, there were seventy-one cities in fifteen states which maintained as part of the city public school system, special classes or day schools where deaf children were trained to speak and to read the lips, without being separated from their homes and from companionship with more fortunate schoolmates. There are, of course, many cases where "institutional" provisions are necessary and of superior advantage; but this fact should not prevent the development of day schools and public school classes in a state as thickly populated as Connecticut. We shall not attempt to detail all of the manifest benefits of such an arrangement to parent and child alike. One of the most important is that it would encourage the beginning of the oral method at the tender age of three or four when families are naturally reluctant to commit to a distant institution. There are many other reasons of policy and expediency which have been set forth in general terms in behalf of all handicapped children. Moreover, the argument of economy is, here, of considerable weight. The average per capita expenditure for current expenses and outlay in the education of the deaf, in the state of Connecticut is $432.00 (government report of 1917-18). The total amount spent for all purposes by forty-nine city day schools for the deaf, during the same period was $294,952, or an average cost of $195.00 per pupil enrolled. These figures indicate an annual per capita saving of $237.00 when a deaf child is taught in special classes in a public school.
SPEECH DEFECTIVE CHILDREN.

There are two major types of speech defect: stuttering and lisping. In stuttering there is a spasmodic or uncontrolled repetition of word syllables or initial sounds. Lisping is a faulty articulation, slurring, mispronunciation or substitution of sounds.

In a recent survey of the New Haven schools elementary teachers were asked to report all cases of very faulty articulation and of stuttering. The total number of cases was 302, or one child in seventy-eight. Evidently this is a problem of no small dimensions. Even if we disregard the cases of lisping altogether and also the milder cases of stuttering we should find that there are about 500 severe cases of stuttering in the public schools of the state.

These stuttering children are sadly in need of attention; for, as a rule, they are neglected both by parents and physicians. Only those familiar with the subject can appreciate how serious this handicap is, what suffering it causes, and what effects it produces on the personality of more sensitive children. Stuttering is a disease often associated with serious mental and nervous complications; but it is definitely curable and responds to corrective training.

For many years European public schools have provided this speech corrective work, and it is coming to be considered an obligatory functions of schools in this country as shown by recent legislation in Ohio, Wisconsin, Minnesota and elsewhere. Connecticut should at least have a permissive statute to encourage the establishment of speech corrective classes, and the State Department of Education should have an expert who is qualified to initiate and to direct special measures in behalf of those children who cannot have the benefit of special class instruction.

CRIPPLED CHILDREN.

By a crippled child we mean one who is, or who will be when an adult, seriously handicapped because he lacks normal use of skeleton or skeletal muscles. There are so many kinds and degrees of this particular handicap that it is rather useless to attempt to give specific statistics. The most complete and care-
ful survey of the subject was made in the city of Cleveland, where six cripples were found for each 1,000 inhabitants. (The survey was made during the year 1915-16). Twenty-two per cent. of all the cases were under fifteen years of age; nine per cent. were from fifteen to nineteen years of age. We may say, therefore, that out of every two thousand of the general population, there are about three crippled children.

The handicap is chiefly a vocational one and for this reason the problem is primarily educational in character. It can only be reached by highly individualized application of medicine and education to each particular case. Sometimes this application can be given most advantageously in special institutions like the Home for Crippled Children at Newington, Connecticut, and the Seaside Sanatorium for Tubercular Children in New London.

But even after the extreme cases have been provided for by hospital treatment there remain a rather large group of children more or less disabled and handicapped who are attending public or private school, but who need a specialized type of education. In the larger cities the number of crippled children is great enough to justify the establishment of special classes, as has been amply demonstrated in New York, Boston, Cleveland and other cities. Other ways, however, should be found for reaching crippled children who cannot be assigned to special classes. Even a moderate grant of state aid for each child attending school would help to establish the right principle and foster the development of specific measures to overcome the effects of the handicap.

The development of a vocational guidance service in different parts of the state would also be of benefit to these children. We should also support any legislation which would provide for the transportation of crippled children to and from school, the expense of such transportation to be paid in whole or in part by the state. (See, however, Sec. 836, Ch. 44 of the General Statutes.)
UNDERNOURISHED CHILDREN.

The writer recently made a survey to determine the status of health work in fifty school systems, each with an elementary enrollment of over 500 pupils and an aggregate enrollment of 170,000.

The figures relating to school physicians and school nurses show considerable lack of uniformity throughout the state, and suggest the necessity for a greater equalization of medical and hygienic benefits. Here again the issues of a more complete democracy are involved. Fully one-half of the communities reporting have no school physician, either on part or full time; eighteen are in addition without a school nurse. This means that in the aggregate there are over 22,000 children in this group of communities who receive no official medical or hygienic oversight. Although this group contains only school systems with an enrollment of less than 3,000, it includes nine with an enrollment of over 1,000. Only four school systems out of fifty employ full time medical inspectors; nineteen employ full time nurses.

Recently 500 teachers of the New Haven elementary schools were asked to report every child who was, in their opinion, poorly developed and seriously undernourished; 275 such children (1 in every 86) were so reported.

This is not, of course, a scientific finding; but it is significant enough. We purposely used the broad term “physical inferiority” in order to exclude minor physical handicaps.

It would take minute statistical analysis to reveal the actual situation in detail. Many considerations are technical. But the grosser facts should at least come within the comment of the commission.

Here again the constructive possibilities of the public school are enormous.

Take, for example, the most fundamental factor in the very growth and development of the child,—nutrition. The normality of nutrition is indicated by a very simple index, namely the relation of weight to height, an index which any school teacher can ascertain with scales and ruler. Children 10% under weight for their height are seriously undernourished. There are probably 20,000 such children in the state attending our public and private schools. Moreover, only a small fraction of the subnormal-
ity of diet is due to economic poverty. Most of it is due to ignorance, and the correction is education, and the tool for the correction is our school system.

Open-air classes and nutrition clinics and classes and a complete physical examination of every school beginner should be encouraged by proper legislation as part of the Children's Code.

I also hope that our commission will see fit to recommend a pioneer law requiring the periodic measurement of weight and height of every school child in the State. Such a law is entirely feasible and could be readily administered through the State Board of Education without any special appropriation by the legislature. It is a measure so simple and yet so fundamental that the mere enactment of the law would confer an incalculable boon on the children of the future.

DELINQUENT CHILDREN.

The problem of delinquency is a very complex one and will not be discussed in this connection. There are two types of delinquents, and both of them are educational problems,—the reformable delinquent and the non-reformable delinquent. Most of the cases must be handled in regular classes and must be attacked as complicated individual problems from a variety of angles. In the larger cities there may be reason for the establishment of one or more special classes for refractory pupils and for truants, but there is no hope of solving the problem of juvenile delinquency by this method. The problems of delinquency are so highly individual that they do not yield rapidly to group treatment. A revised juvenile court procedure and an improved probation system are best calculated to meet the great difficulties involved. The special problem of the defective or non-reformable delinquent will be referred to later.

The problems of the psychopathic child, the neurotic child and the epileptic with normal intelligence, are also highly individual. Children of this type usually need a modified educational program. But there is no practical way in which the status of these children can be improved by legislation. The special provisions developed to meet the needs of other types of defectives will, however, indirectly prove of great benefit to this particular group.
MENTALLY SUBNORMAL CHILDREN.

Mental subnormality constitutes another kind of handicap for children. In some respects it is more serious than certain handicaps already discussed, and in other respects it may actually be less serious for the individual and less Onusome to the state and more promising from the standpoint of social control. In any event we should never regard the feeble-minded as being a peculiar species whom we separate from the rest of the human family.

Mental subnormality is first and foremost a deficiency in intelligence. Intelligence is the most practical aspect of the mind. It is the capacity to profit by experience and the power to make adaptations to new situations as they arise, or even before they arise. It is that mental part of us that means preparedness to meet the demands of life. And this is just what the mentally deficient child lacks to some degree. The idiot lacks it to such a degree that he cannot guard himself against common physical dangers.

The imbecile stands somewhat higher in the intelligence scale. The Mental Deficiency Law of England defines imbeciles as "Persons in whose case there exists from birth or from an early age, mental defectiveness not amounting to idiocy, yet so pronounced that they are incapable of managing themselves or their affairs, or in the case of children, of being taught to do so."

Among the mentally deficient the most important and most numerous group is the Moron. He stands near the borderline of normality. It is the Moron who makes so many problems for the schools and for society. The mental deficiency law furnishes the following definition of this group: "Persons in whose case there exists from birth, or from an early age, mental defectiveness not amounting to imbecility, yet so pronounced that they require care, supervision, and control for their own protection, or for the protection of others, or, in the case of children, that they, by reason of such defectiveness, appear to be permanently incapable of receiving proper benefit from the instruction in ordinary schools."

It is possible to differentiate these three groups by psychological classification which uses the Intelligence Quotient as the
unit of measurement. The I. Q. of a child, as the Intelligence Quotient is usually called for the sake of brevity, is a ratio between the child’s mental age and his chronological age. The mental age is determined by a graduated scale which has been used on thousands of children and has proved to have a certain accuracy. The chronological age of the child is, of course, his entire life age expressed in years and months. When mental age and chronological age are equal we get a ratio of one, or on the percentage basis, one hundred per cent., or an I. Q. of one hundred. If the mental age is two and the chronological age is three we get a value below one hundred, an I. Q. of sixty-seven. An I. Q. as low as sixty-seven usually means feeble-mindedness. For convenience, we may regard an I. Q. of seventy as representing the border line which indicates the upper limit of mental deficiency.

Though it is somewhat arbitrary, we may say, for purposes of classification, that morons range from an I. Q. of seventy to an I. Q. of fifty; imbeciles from an I. Q. of fifty to an I. Q. of twenty, and idiots from an I. Q. of twenty to zero. The definitions of the mental deficiency law, however, are more significant from the point of view of the Child Welfare Commission, because they reflect the legal and sociological concept of feeble-mindedness.

Of these three groups idiots are the least numerous; and morons by far the most numerous. There are three or four times as many morons as idiots and imbeciles put together. A few idiots can be found in our elementary schools, and not a few imbeciles, but most of our morons of school age are to be found there.

This is an extremely important consideration from the standpoint of the Connecticut Commission of Child Welfare. It means in plain terms that feeble-mindedness in children and youth is largely a public school problem. Although we need increased institutional facilities for the more difficult and custodial cases, we need still more a state-wide public school policy which will cope with the problem of the high grade defective who cannot and should not be excluded from public school attendance.

The actual situation with respect to the number and distribution of juvenile feeble-mindedness can best be pictured by a
statistical summary based on actual surveys of representative school systems and of child-caring institutions in the state of Connecticut. These surveys were for the most part made by the writer or under his direction.

NUMBER OF JUVENILE FEEBLEMINDED.

1. The Mansfield Training School and Hospital.

The number of children up to eighteen years of age in this institution is about two hundred. The average mental age of this group is about four years. This means that most of the children at Mansfield are of idiot and imbecile grade of intelligence, and represent for the most part custodial cases. This is very natural, for it is the custodial cases who are most helpless, and to state and family so burdensome that they cannot be maintained under ordinary conditions. The urgency of these cases and the physical limitations have so far prevented the Mansfield Training School from developing, to any large extent, educational provisions for higher grade cases. This fact is in no sense a reflection on the situation at Mansfield.

Even as the situation stands, we are justified in saying that there are a very large number of cases on an actual or potential waiting list who may be regarded as urgent and as belonging to the custodial group. This means that our state provisions for custodial cases, as well as for the higher grade educable cases, are incomplete. The great majority of feebleminded children of Connecticut are to be found outside of the official state institution at Mansfield.

2. County Temporary Homes and Institutions for Dependent Children.

The county temporary homes have tended to become permanent residential homes for a large number of non-placeable, non-adoptable children, many of these children being seriously feeble-minded. We have canvassed the situation in some of the larger county homes by means of individual mental examination of the most backward children. As a result of these mental sur-
veys we found a distribution of feeble-minded children as follows:

New Haven County Home .................. 30
Litchfield County Home ........................ 15
Fairfield County Home .......................... 20
New London County Home ..................... 5
Hartford County Home .......................... 5
Estimated for remaining county homes ....... 25

In a recent study of 124 unselected children from the St. Francis Orphan Asylum, all of whom were individually examined, it was found that thirteen had an I. Q. of less than sixty-six, and that seven of these were definitely institutional cases. This proportion is fairly typical of the general situation with respect to institutional orphans and needy children. Average normality of intelligence among county home dependents is about as rare as brightness among ordinary children; while mental deficiency appears to be almost as frequent as dullness ordinarily is. It is conservative to say that mental deficiency is about ten times more prevalent among dependent and neglected children than in the ordinary population.

3. Reformatory and Industrial Schools.

In our institutions for delinquent children the proportion of mental defectives is likewise excessive. For example, if one takes a large group of unselected girls one finds that only one per cent. have an I. Q. of seventy or less. At the Middletown Industrial School, however, it was found that 21.3% of the girls had an I. Q. of seventy or less.

A study made at the Cheshire Reformatory by Dr. Miller reveals similar figures: 478 commitments were investigated and 131 cases, or 27% of the total, were classified as feeble-minded.

A survey is now being made of the mental and educational status of 380 boys at the Connecticut School for Boys. These boys are distributed among nine separate schools within the institution, and are classified into the eight elementary grades. One of the most significant findings is that which shows the ages of the boys in the various school grades. The following table embodies the facts:
The median age of a first-grade child in the ordinary public schools is about six and one-half years. At Meriden it is eleven years and eight months, which represents a retardation or over-ageness of five years. A similar retardation is indicated for the other grades. This fact itself is significant of the type of material with which the Meriden school has to deal.

Individual mental examinations were made of 125 of the Meriden boys, drawn chiefly from the most retarded group; ninety of these boys proved to have an I. Q. of seventy or less. Mental deficiency is easily twenty times more prevalent among our delinquent juvenile population than in a normal population of unselected school children.

The total number of children and youth in institutions for delinquents is 1,130 in round numbers. We may say that 200 of these are mentally defective. In other words, a very large proportion of our problem of juvenile delinquency is not a problem of delinquency at all but one of feeble-mindedness.

A defective delinquent child or youth may be defined as one in whom an inborn or acquired deficiency or disorder of intelligence results in chronic delinquency or anti-social conduct.

We find that the defective delinquent complicates many situations. It is almost impossible to manage such a delinquent on parole or probation. It is next to impossible to place out a defective delinquent dependent in a family home. If he is detained in a county home he may make no end of trouble there. A fraction of the girls and young women at the Connecticut State Farm are defective delinquents completely outside of the pale of reformation. A significant proportion of unmarried mothers now handled by protective associations and other organizations are defective delinquents who do not respond to the treatment which they receive. Even in an institution like the Mansfield Training

**Grades by Ages.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Runs from</th>
<th>to</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>9-0</td>
<td>13-7</td>
<td>11-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>15-11</td>
<td>12-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>10-9</td>
<td>17-0</td>
<td>13-0</td>
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<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>10-6</td>
<td>17-0</td>
<td>13-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>11-3</td>
<td>16-3</td>
<td>13-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>12-3</td>
<td>17-9</td>
<td>15-1</td>
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<tr>
<td>VII.</td>
<td>12-4</td>
<td>17-6</td>
<td>15-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII.</td>
<td>14-0</td>
<td>17-1</td>
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School and Hospital, the defective delinquent may create serious difficulties. His presence at Mansfield is a disturbing factor and he cannot be freely welcomed there. The defective delinquent usually has no definite psychosis, and, therefore, cannot be committed to either of the hospitals for the insane. The result is that the large body of defective delinquents not now in public schools are to be found in the state prisons and reformatories; that is to say the Middletown School for Girls, the Cheshire Reformatory, Wethersfield, and Meriden.

Parenthetically it may be noted that the General Assembly last year passed an act authorizing the Governor to appoint a special commission on this particular problem of the defective delinquent. This commission has not yet formulated any findings. Unless their findings and evidence point very strongly to the contrary, we believe that there is no practical reason at present for the establishment of a separate specialized institution for the defective delinquents. The defective delinquents must have specialized treatment, but it seems at present more feasible administratively, and probably it is more economical, to provide differentiated care in existing institutions.

4. Elementary School System.

Our elementary schools constitute our largest child welfare institution, and we should not be surprised to find that the aggregate number of feeble-minded boys and girls attending school is large. A careful survey of the Meriden school system in 1917 revealed fifty mentally deficient pupils out of an elementary school enrollment of 4,000. A similar mental survey of the New Haven schools revealed 370 cases out of an elementary enrollment of 24,000 pupils. Investigations in smaller villages and rural communities like North Haven, Southington, Hamden, Rocky Hill, Westville, etc., revealed very similar conditions. It is conservative to say that one per cent. of our elementary school population may be classified as being mentally deficient.

Rural Schools. It should be emphasized that the problem of mental deficiency is by no means limited to the large cities. In 1917-1919, writer, in his official capacity, made mental examinations of 340 retarded children, most of whom were attending rural or village schools under the supervision of the state board
of education. These examinations revealed that the percentage of mental defect equalled, and sometimes exceeded, that in the non-urban communities of the state. It is significant, however, that in only forty-five cases did we feel justified in recommending exclusion from school attendance.

In round numbers we are compelled to conclude that there are some 2,500 feeble-minded children in the state of Connecticut, who are attending our elementary schools.

SUMMARY.

Recapitulating the above figures, we find the distribution of mentally defective children in the state of Connecticut to be about as follows:

1. Mansfield Training School and Hospital 200
2. Homes for Dependent Children ............ 200
3. Institutions for Delinquents ............... 200
4. Elementary Schools ....................... 2,500

Total ........................................ 3,000

For convenience the figures have been made round, but they should not be regarded as an overstatement. The main deduction to be drawn from this table is that feeble-mindedness as a child welfare problem is, to a large extent, located in our elementary school system where we can cope with it most economically and most advantageously. Far from being a hopeless task, it is about the most manageable problem which we have. What have we done to meet it?

PROVISIONS FOR JUVENILE FEEBLE-MINDED.

The entire provisions for the feeble-minded may be summarized as follows:

a. There are about two hundred children officially diagnosed and committed through probate court in the state institution at Mansfield.

For purposes of accuracy we should add to the above number some twenty-one defectives, eighteen years of age or less,
transferred or committed to the state hospitals for the insane at Norwich and Middletown. Five of these are classified as cases of inbecility; five as cases of epilepsy with psychosis, and eleven cases of mental deficiency with psychosis.

b. The cases in the county temporary homes have no official status so far as their mental deficiency is concerned. They have been committed as dependent or neglected children. There are no official provisions for the recognition of their mental defect, but the County Commissioners of New Haven have, at their own initiative, established a special class with an especially trained teacher for twenty of the mentally defective children in the New Haven County Home. The Fairfield County Home authorities have recognized the desirability of a similar special class, but none has been actually established.

c. It is probable that a special class will be established in the St. Francis Orphan Asylum in the near future.

d. There are no special provisions for defective delinquents at the reformatories and industrial schools. The mental status of the girls at Middletown has been determined by a systematic examination of each individual case, and the educational treatment of the girls is modified by the results of the examination. In this sense the defective group of delinquents is receiving special attention at Middletown. At Meriden very little has been done in this direction.

e. Provisions in the public schools of the state are very unequal. In some communities, the very existence of the problem is all but unrecognized. In other communities splendid progress has been made in the detection and special education of mentally defective pupils. A recent survey of fifty communities, with an aggregate elementary enrollment of 170,000, showed that there are twenty-three special classes in the state taking care of about 340 mentally defective pupils, which means that about six out of every seven pupils are as yet without special provision. To show the unevenness which exists between various communities attention should be called to the fact that Meriden has three, and Southington two special classes, while Bristol, Danbury, Norwich and Waterbury have none at all. Bridgeport has four, Hartford two, New Britain one, Stamford three, and New Haven seven. New Haven has in contemplation a system of
special classes and special schools which will take care ultimately of three or four hundred mentally deficient pupils. One special school, the Fair Haven Training School, enrolling 100 subnormal pupils, has just been established as part of the New Haven program. This school furnishes all the educational advantages of a good institution, but the children remain at home with their families. They are being trained along manual and vocational lines. Many of them so trained will, with guidance and help, be able to remain in their communities. By means of this special school and seven additional special classes, New Haven is actually making provisions for 200 mentally defective children,—a number equal to the total number of mental defective children cared for at Mansfield by the state.

Summarizing the above provisions we may say that in all about 600 Connecticut children (under eighteen years of age) are receiving some specialized institutional or educational treatment as recognized mental defectives. The actual total number of mental defectives in the state, under eighteen years of age, is about 3,000.

EXTENSION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL CARE OF DEFECTIVES.

From the above survey it is very evident that the problem of handicapped and defective children is, to a remarkable extent, a problem which comes within the purview of the public school and our common school law. The majority of all physical, mental and conduct defectives, under eighteen years of age, are actually attending some ordinary elementary school, and a large proportion of those now in institutions have previously had an elementary school career. Furthermore all the dependents who are attending schools in county homes legally are under the supervision of the State Board of Education; and such general educational supervision by implication should extend itself to all official child-caring institutions, like the Connecticut School for Boys and the Connecticut School for Girls.

Consider the vast potential power of the Connecticut school system as a child welfare agency. This immense "institution"
comprises 1,500 buildings, 8,000 teachers, and physical property valued at $35,000,000. We have barely begun to utilize this equipment in behalf of handicapped children.

From every point of view it is sound policy to extend the principle of public school care and control of handicapped and defective children. Such a policy is economical from the standpoint of dollars and cents. It is good social practice because it keeps the child at home when it is to his benefit to stay there; it puts a premium on local responsibility; it favors prevention and timely treatment.

The Connecticut Commission on Child Welfare should recognize this situation. Our vast elementary school system, which includes not only our common schools, but all private schools in the measure in which they come by law under public supervision,—this vast system with its hundreds of buildings and thousands of teachers, constitutes our greatest child welfare institution. The Commission does not need to recommend that it be created. It exists. Nor does the Commission need to propose the fundamental principle of compulsory education. That, too, exists, and has virtually existed since colonial times. The Commission needs simply to recommend the extension of compulsory education for the particular benefit of handicapped and defective school children.

This can best be accomplished by a law which will specifically recognize the existence of handicapped school children as an educational problem; and which shall create a subdivision or agency within the state department of education which shall render directive and expert assistance to local schools in meeting the needs of educationally exceptional children. We do not contemplate any serious interference with local autonomy; but we must frankly stand for some form of state co-operation.

The necessity of special classes for the training of mentally subnormal children is now so well recognized that Connecticut should, in the Children’s Code, definitely adopt the principle. There should be a broad permissive law authorizing the creation of special classes, fitting classes, or day schools for all the major types of physically and mentally exceptional children. These classes may all be put on a par, or there may be a special measure making certain provisions for mentally defective children.
compulsory, and granting state aid on a per capita or pro rata basis.

New Jersey, Massachusetts, New York, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Missouri, and Minnesota all have laws for the establishment of special classes for mentally subnormal children. In all of these states there is supervision by the state department of education, and in most of them some financial aid is granted by the state. Wisconsin bears one-third of the expenses for such classes; Pennsylvania one-half; Minnesota pays annually the liberal sum of $100.00 for each child receiving special class instruction.

The manner and degree of state aid in Connecticut are matters which require careful consideration. Some form of assistance must be secured by legislation so that special class provisions throughout the state shall be more complete and more equitable. We should also formulate a law which will extend educational assistance and oversight to the defective child in rural and village districts. We cannot insure control of the ubiquitous problem of feeble-mindedness unless we develop public school devices which will detect and train all subnormal pupils.

Such measures in behalf of handicapped school children imply increased facilities in the state department of education. They do not entail any novel or radical increase of power. Administratively, they could be most advantageously assigned to a subdivision within the present state department of education.

A DIVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND STANDARDS.

The chief duties, of what may tentatively be called a Division of Special Education and Standards, would be formulated in the general terms of the legislative act to cover the following functions:

1. To issue and enforce regulations regarding school enumeration and school registers, which will result in the reporting of all children of school age who, because of serious handicap or exceptional physical and mental condition, cannot be properly educated or trained under ordinary conditions. This would re-
suit in a simple form of registration very important for child welfare and social welfare. It would also furnish important information for the state board of education.

2. To issue regulations and printed forms, and to render expert advice and assistance in the educational measurement of mental examination of handicapped or exceptional school children, including children passing through the Juvenile Court.

3. To furnish similar direction and assistance in the organization of special classes.

4. To initiate and direct special educational measures in behalf of exceptional pupils who cannot be assigned to special classes, schools or institutions.

5. To administer the distribution of state aid for special classes and auxiliary education.

6. To maintain general inspection and supervision of all schools conducted in connection with special state or county institutions for dependent, neglected, defective and delinquent children.

7. To foster and direct, as far as expedient, measures of vocational guidance and supervision for the benefit of educationally exceptional or handicapped youth up to the age of eighteen or twenty.

It would be Utopian to expect a full realization of such a program; but some educational agency of this character is indispensable for attacking the problem of juvenile handicap and defect near their source. Much of the fundamental work outlined could be accomplished by one qualified person with ordinary office assistance in the state department of education. A moderate financial investment for so far-reaching a child welfare project!

It should be repeated that the above recommendations do not mean the setting up of an altogether new and independent agency, nor do they involve a radical increase of power of the State Board of Education. They represent a logical and reasonable application of fundamental powers now vested in this board. The activities of a Division of Special Education and Standards would be closely identified with the present work of the State Board of Education, and would be co-ordinated with the administration of laws relating to enumeration, attendance, employ-
ment and instruction of children as specified in chapters 44, 48, 130 and 140 of the general statutes.

RELATION OF JUVENILE COURT TO HANDICAPPED SCHOOL CHILDREN.

There is one other social institution which, like the public school, stands in important relations to the problem of handicapped and defective children. This is our court system. Historically developed for other purposes, our courts have not been able to escape the problems of child welfare; and, somewhat like the public schools, they must be adapted to meet the responsibility of these problems.

Furthermore, a juvenile court system and the public school system must readjust themselves to each other in the interests of the children and youth whom they serve. There should be legislation which should hasten this readjustment and bring both the school and the court co-operatively to bear on certain problems of juvenile delinquency and defect.

The following suggestions assume that an adequate juvenile court system will be proposed by the Commission. We assume that these courts will be located in some fifty districts throughout the state, and that they will have attached to them qualified probation officers, who, working under some form of state guidance, will attempt to bring the best available local resources to the support of children who have a court status.

All educationally handicapped children would have a certain legal status under the terms of the proposed Children’s Code. This legal status would become automatically established whenever children are of school age and subject to our compulsory education law. We need not send children to court in order to commit them to public school; but if any child is excluded or discharged from public or private school, and must be committed to a state institution, or must be placed on probation or parole, then court action is indicated.

1. We, provisionally suggest, that the power of commitment of defectives to institutions continue with the probate courts; but that the juvenile courts be given concurrent jurisdiction in commitment.
2. We suggest that the juvenile courts be given the power to establish (on petition of reputable citizens and responsible organizations) a probationary status in certain groups of cases as follows:

- Reformable delinquents.
- Defective delinquents, but only in exceptional circumstances.
- Defective dependent children over fourteen years of age who must be placed out as non-adoptive, and as requiring very special supervision.
- Delinquent youth on parole from state institutions.
- Mentally deficient youth on parole from state institutions.
- Mentally deficient children and youth over fourteen years of age, who have been discharged from public school or special class and are physically fit for employment or special industrial training.

**VOCATIONAL PROBATION FOR DEFECTIVE YOUTH.**

Ordinarily the jurisdiction of a Juvenile Court is restricted to cases of delinquency; but the type of court which our Commission contemplates is essentially a court of social adjustment and supervision. It, therefore, is logical that this court should also have certain jurisdiction over defective children and youth. To begin with, a Juvenile Court could not escape the problem of mental defect even if it chose, because delinquency is so often associated with mental subnormality. A great many mental defectives are potential delinquents; and those who are not need some kind of supervision for their own protection and the protection of others.

The way to meet this situation is to establish a status of probation for all juveniles who need it, whether they be delinquent, potentially delinquent, or simply defective. In the case of the mentally defective the probation should be put on a vocational basis and should represent an effort to keep the subnormal individual safely at some gainful employment, in his own community, in lieu of commitment to an institution. It would mean a com-
community policy of aftercare for defective children when they leave school.

This provision for vocational probation, if carried out, would result in a great financial saving to the state, and would contribute a large measure to the solution of the problem of mental defect. There are easily 3,000 mentally defective children in the state of Connecticut. Many of these must be cared for in institutions or at home. Increased facilities for the care of such cases are sadly needed. The Commission on Child Welfare recognizes, however, that to a large extent the problem of the high-grade defective is a local community problem, and that adjustments should be made which would enable such defective youths to remain with safety in their own communities. Many of these youths need oversight and protection, but they do not necessarily have to be sent off to hospitals or institutions. Many of them can wholly or partially support themselves if they are favorably placed and supervised in their own communities. Here, again, the Juvenile Court is in a strategic position to safeguard these children and youths by granting them the preferred status to which they are entitled. The status of a vocational probationer makes immediate commitment to an institution unnecessary, and is far superior to deliberate neglect. It gives the defective a certain amount of external support which may enable him to make good in his own community. By this method of extra-institutional supervision thousands of dollars could be annually saved for the state.

The status of vocational probation should become effective when the defective is ready to go to work. Inasmuch as there are many mental defectives who cannot meet the present educational requirements of the employment certificate, it is just that an allowance be made for their educational incapacity, and that a limited certificate, under carefully safeguarded conditions, should, in certain cases, be granted at the age of fourteen as in the case of normal children.

We appreciate that the supervisory functions outlined are too extensive to be completely covered even by the improved probationary provisions contemplated by the Commission. We believe, however, that it is sound policy to unite the functions of moral and vocational probation and to co-ordinate them with
the school system on one hand and a children's court on the other. We cannot expect the probation officer to accomplish a superhuman amount of guardianship; but administratively his office should be used as the legal pivot for the organization of community supervision of borderline and manageable defectives and delinquents. Unquestionably the whole tendency of social welfare work now is away from institutional segregation, toward local community control.

The simple legislation above suggested would promote and give official validity to this very important principle. With the expert guidance which the probation officers would receive from the state, we are justified in expecting constructive results. It should be remembered that an important function of the probation officer is to mobilize voluntary co-operation and to release the energies of local agencies in the task of probation. Certain of these agencies may be given statutory powers, subject to the court and the probation officer. Co-operation with the public school authorities should be particularly close, and provided for by the law.

We propose that the law should require juvenile courts to obtain a detailed school report of every school child who comes within their operation. This report could be secured through the probation officer, during an investigation period, and would be filled out by teachers and principals on forms issued by the state department of education. These forms, accompanied by explanatory regulations, would furnish data as follows: Development and school history of the child; report of traits, conduct, and school work; standardized measurement of school work; conclusions as to probable mental and educational status of the child.

This psycho-educational report would in itself constitute a semi-expert estimation of the child's mental status, which would be of value to the court. If, on the basis of this report, the court believes that the child's mentality is subnormal or abnormal, the judge shall cause a diagnosis to be made by a qualified physician or a mental examiner, or by both.

It is highly desirable that the elementary school and the juvenile court should, in this manner, work in close co-operation. The elementary school is the first institution of the child, and the juvenile court is the last. Both are local institutions of the people and for the people; and both of them should have as their goal the ultimate reduction of
the number of commitments to state institutions. Both of them are child welfare agencies, and it is their business to understand the exceptional children and youths who come to their attention.

If a Bureau of Child Welfare is established it is clear that its activities would also in many ways be co-ordinated with court and school. Such a bureau would be particularly serviceable to the large groups of dependent, neglected and uncared-for children, but the opportunities of court and school with respect to the welfare of handicapped children are by no means contingent upon such a bureau.

We have, in this report, sketched in brief outline, a statewide system of welfare for defective and handicapped children, which will bring into articulation and co-operation existing institutions, a group of children’s courts, and the elementary schools. This system will receive the benefit of co-operation from state agencies without destroying local responsibilities and local autonomy. A system which does not emphasize state control at the expense of local initiative is suited to the traditions and conditions of our state. And because the scheme does not contemplate the creation of absolutely new machinery, it is financially feasible.

The main question before the commission, it seems to us, is, How can we reorganize and reshape the existing situation so as to insure the gradual development of sound child welfare policy for decades and perhaps generations to come? If this view is true, it is very important to look for well-formed principles rather than clever corrective devices, and to strengthen those agencies, like the common school, which, for historical and social reasons, have a claim upon the responsibilities of the future. In general, it should also be our policy to consolidate and to co-ordinate these agencies rather than to create new ones. Even the very fundamental question of state versus local control ought to be solved with a view of increasing co-operation and mutual responsibility. The question then becomes not so much whether the state or local units shall be supreme, but how can they be articulated so that both shall function at a maximum, in the interest of the child.