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# STATE AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

# FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

proposals of the National Commission on Children in Wartime

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

CHILDREN'S BUREAU

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

Parents must plan, if the needs of their children are to be met, for good home surroundings, care and education. Communities and States, also, must plan if their responsibilities toward children are to be fulfilled.

This report presents the suggestions as to the ways in which State and local planning for children and youth may be organized, prepared by the National Commission on Children in Wartime, through a Committee on Plans for Children and Youth. In the preparation of the report the committee has drawn on the experience of many individuals, both members of the Commission and others, who have worked to secure public understanding of the needs of children and youth and to stimulate action in their behalf. The report carries further the proposals on the same subject included by the National Commission on Children in Wartime as a major recommendation in its report issued in April 1945 under the title Building the Future.

The report is presented in the hope that it may help States and communities to develop their own planning programs, adapted to their own special needs.

The National Commission will welcome reports on the experience of groups which are attempting to put such planning on a firm and continuing basis.



LEONARD W. MAYO, CHAIRMAN.  
NATIONAL COMMISSION ON CHILDREN IN WARTIME.

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# STATE AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

## FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

### IN BEHALF OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

As the end of the war moves nearer, men and women look ahead eagerly to the day when they can center their attention again on making life in our Nation more nearly fulfill the ideals of opportunity, achievement, and security we hold for all, and especially for our children.

Repeatedly these ideals have been stated, and routes to their attainment have been mapped.

The White House Conference on Children in a Democracy in 1940 and the National Commission on Children in Wartime in 1944 both challenged the Nation to extend its public and private services so as to assure to all children the opportunities essential to their well-being and to their preparation for the responsibilities of democracy.

But the mere statement of ideals is not enough if our children are to be served. Means must be devised for people to join forces in determining and accomplishing social action in behalf of children in our communities and States and in the Nation.

This requires planning.

Planning cannot be left to experts or public officials alone. It must be participated in by citizens whose children are to be served and by voluntary organizations which share with public agencies the discharge of social responsibilities.

This statement is written to suggest ways in which leadership and joint action in behalf of children and youth may be developed in the States and local communities. It draws on previous experience in this field and is related to the planning now going on in other phases of State and community life.

Local communities, both urban and rural, come closest to the problems of children. But communities, to do their job, must draw for some of their strength on our larger units of government—counties, States, and the Federal Government. Each unit of government has its own special responsibilities and authority. In the exercise of its powers each government must relate its

acts to those of other units. Local planning and State planning must, therefore, be interrelated and must take into account Federal planning, policies, and programs. Federal planning, likewise, must be related to the planning, policies, and programs of communities and States.

All administrative bodies are constantly engaged in fact finding and program making, and it is important that general planning should not supersede the planning that is carried on as an inseparable part of administration. Direct cooperation among departments and agencies responsible for providing services is essential. General planning, however, is needed to stimulate and draw together the more specific planning of agencies operating in special fields, to determine unmet needs, to appraise the adequacy of existing services, and to point out how gaps in programs may be filled.

## STATE PLANNING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

### EXPERIENCE IN PLANNING.

Interest in comprehensive plans for the health, education, and welfare of children traces back at least to the children's code or child-welfare legislative commission movement, initiated in Ohio in 1911. It found expression later in the follow-up committees of the 1930 and 1940 White House Conferences on Children. During the war, committees on children in State councils of defense, and special youth commissions under various titles have carried this movement forward.

Since 1940, 38 States<sup>1</sup> have had White House Conference or defense-council committees on children and many States have developed both forms of organization. Committees for stimulating and planning the development of recreational services have been established in 20 States. Nongovernmental bodies whose functions have included review of child-welfare legislation and planning for children's services are committees of State conferences of social work and organizations concerned with health, education, housing, recreation, and other specialized fields.

General interest in both physical and social planning has been great in recent years. It has found one form of expression in the rapid development of State planning boards. For the most part these boards are concerned with planning for the development and extension of physical resources. Some State planning boards, however, deal also with services to meet the

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<sup>1</sup> Not including States with committees devoted exclusively to child care for children whose mothers are employed.

needs of people—health, welfare, education, and recreation services, for example.<sup>2</sup>

Review of all this experience indicates some of the principles which seem to be important in the continuous planning and interrelation of services which will be needed in the post-war period as well as during wartime.

## NEED FOR STATE PLANNING.

The responsibility of State governments for many aspects of the well-being of their citizens is clear. It has been written into State constitutions, and expressed in legislation in the fields of health, education, employment, and social welfare. During the past 15 years State governments have assumed additional responsibilities for assisting families and individuals in need. Provisions for education, child-labor safeguards, maternal and child-health services, and services for crippled children have been extended, and social services for children have been developed in areas where services of this kind were unknown before. Much of the progress has been attained through cooperative programs carried on by State and local agencies, with financial aid from the Federal Government.

Since the well-being of a child depends in the first instance on the ability of his family to give him the care, affection, training, and material necessities he requires for growth and development, services in behalf of the family as a whole are of primary importance. Hence services for children and plans to meet their needs must be related closely to activities and services in behalf of families.

Increasingly, people are coming to understand that the needs of children are interwoven and interrelated, and that planning for them, if it is to be effective, cannot be departmentalized. As the 1940 White House Conference report states: "The child is an indivisible whole as he grows from infancy to manhood and must be planned for and served as such."<sup>3</sup> State and local committees for follow-up of conference recommendations and also defense-council committees on children in wartime represent efforts to provide unified planning for children.

State responsibilities for children, however, have been divided among various departments and agencies dealing with health, education, labor, and social welfare. In few States is there a continuing, officially recognized group concentrating on long-range planning for children and youth and on

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<sup>2</sup> See *Wartime and Postwar Problems and Policies of the States, Report and Recommendations of the Interstate Committee on Postwar Reconstruction and Development, Council of State Governments, Chicago, May 1944.*

<sup>3</sup> *Children in a Democracy, General Report adopted by the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy, January 19, 1940. Washington, D. C., p. 9.*

comprehensive fact-finding and public interpretation concerning children's needs and the services that can meet those needs.

Furthermore, there are serious gaps and inadequacies in present State and local provisions for children and youth. In many sections of the country, especially in rural areas, educational opportunity, for example, falls far short of the acceptable minimum preparation for responsible citizenship in a democracy. Employment at too early an age and under harmful conditions continues to retard or make impossible the finest development of many boys and girls. Effective Nation-wide coverage of all essential services is necessary to assure to every child the rights and opportunities which are at the heart of democracy. A unified approach through national, State, and local planning and collaboration will achieve both coordination of programs and balanced development of all types of necessary resources.

Often both laws and appropriations lag behind public acceptance of responsibility for safeguarding children. Here again over-all planning has a function to perform in reviewing laws and administrative practices to determine in what degree they fall short of meeting needs, and in measuring financial resources against need. Such over-all review should harmonize and supplement the continuous planning done by State departments responsible for developing and operating facilities and services in specialized fields.

## NEED FOR RELATING PLANNING FOR CHILDREN TO OVER-ALL PLANNING.

State planning has been under way since State governments were established. It has been done by committees of State legislatures, by State agricultural and land-use planning committees, special commissions, and more recently by State defense councils and State planning boards. Almost all of the States have a planning board or agency. Such bodies promise to be of increasing importance in the post-war period.

In some States, defense councils may be continued after the war, perhaps under new names, and may provide citizen participation to supplement the work of State planning boards.

State planning boards until recently have directed their efforts mainly toward planning physical facilities and developing economic resources, but there is increasing recognition of the need to extend their activities to planning for health, education, recreation, and welfare services. The high percentage of State and local revenue devoted to education and other services

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<sup>4</sup> See Wartime and Postwar Problems and Policies of the States, Report and Recommendations of the Interstate Committee on Postwar Reconstruction and Development, Council of State Governments, Chicago, May 1944.

for children is evidence enough of their importance in State planning. Effective planning for programs that will benefit the whole population can contribute much to providing the services children need.

## EVALUATION OF WARTIME EXPERIENCE.

During the war children's committees have often had to struggle against limitation of authority, the absence of clear-cut definition of functions, overlapping with other committees, and, especially, lack of financial resources for essential leadership and staff service. In some States staff shortages were overcome to some extent through loan of staff by cooperating agencies, but this was not wholly satisfactory. These obstacles must be overcome if planning for post-war needs is to be of maximum usefulness.

This wartime experience indicates that the following characteristics of a planning body are basic to effective planning for children and youth:

1. Recognized authority derived from the method of appointment and the auspices under which the planning body functions.
2. Clear-cut definition of function and of relationships to other planning bodies and administrative agencies.
3. Membership broadly representative of various interests, official and unofficial, and of majority and minority groups in the population.
4. Effective organization of work through executive and other sub-committees.
5. Resources for the employment of an executive secretary and necessary staff, and for other expenses.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR ORGANIZATION.

States differ greatly in the development of general social planning, in the extent to which planning for children and youth has been carried on in the past under White House Conference committees, defense councils, or other auspices, and in the adequacy of present provision for such planning. It is impossible to outline a pattern which would be equally applicable to all States. Planning must still be regarded as a pioneer undertaking, in a fluid and experimental stage.

The following suggestions drawn from the experience of State committees during recent years are offered in the hope that they will be helpful to States that do not have an effective planning agency for children and youth or that feel the need to provide for the continuance or modification of existing planning bodies in the children's field. The type of organization and the pro-

cedure best suited to each State must be determined by those in the State who have first-hand knowledge of conditions and possibilities.

### **1. Emphasis on children and youth in work of general planning agencies.**

Planning for children and youth should be an important part of planning for the whole population. State planning boards and similar bodies engaged in planning to meet the needs of the whole population should give major consideration to planning for children and youth, since their welfare and the opportunities they have for the development of their capacities and powers are of first importance to the future of the State and the Nation.

### **2. Planning agency for children and youth.**

Whatever the resources available for general planning there should be in each State a continuing body representing the concern of the community for children and youth. This body should be charged with responsibility for reviewing conditions affecting children and youth and the obstacles to their full development. It should promote and assist in developing sound social policies and services for all children and youth, as needed, wherever they may live, and whatever the circumstances of their personal and family life.

### **3. Name.**

The name of the body might be the State council or commission on children and youth.

Whether the term council or commission is used, the organization should function, not as a body of delegates of various agencies, but as a group of informed and competent persons in a position to exercise personal judgment on the issues that arise.

### **4. Authority and auspices.**

Where there is a State planning board whose membership and program are appropriate, the council or commission on children and youth might well function under its auspices. If not so organized, the council might be appointed by the governor and directed to perform such functions as he may prescribe.

To be fully effective, the council on children and youth should be authorized by act of the legislature, and should be required to report to the governor and the legislature, directly or through the planning board.

In some circumstances it may be desirable to set up the council under voluntary auspices of such prestige as to enable it to obtain the active

cooperation of State officials and the interest of the legislature. Such a council might have as one of its objectives the establishment of an official planning body for children and youth as soon as feasible.

## 5. Functions.

The functions of the council on children and youth should be:

- a. To ascertain the facts concerning the children and youth of the State. Successful planning in any field involves collection and interpretation of facts concerning needs to be met, services available, and the utilization of these services by those for whom they are designed. This requires adequate research. Such research should be carried on, whenever possible, by the departments or agencies of the State government responsible for providing services in the fields of health, education, social welfare, employment, and related services. It should be the responsibility of the council on children and youth to utilize and correlate results of such research done by these and other agencies, both public and private; to encourage and promote the development of adequate research programs as an essential part of the work of these agencies; and to conduct such fact-finding activities of its own as may be necessary to supplement the information otherwise available.
- b. To review legislation pertaining to children and youth and appropriations made for services in their behalf and to consider revisions and additions needed.
- c. To appraise the availability, adequacy, and accessibility of all services for children and youth within the State.
- d. To consult with public agencies, private agencies, and citizens' groups, including youth groups, on the services available, the degree to which the needs of children and youth are being met, and the measures that should be taken to meet these needs.
- e. To formulate proposals for action on behalf of children and youth in specific fields such as health, child guidance, social service, education, recreation, child labor, and youth employment, to be submitted for consideration to administrative officials, legislative bodies, voluntary agencies, and citizens' organizations.
- f. To report findings to the public through printed material, press, radio, motion pictures, conferences, and other channels.
- g. To maintain contact with Federal officials and agencies concerned with planning for children and youth.

- h. To encourage and foster local community planning and action.
- i. In general, to provide a center of information on children and youth and to promote action in their behalf. The council's work should be supplemented by citizens' organizations which study the recommendations made and give their active support to those that, in their judgment, promise constructive achievement in behalf of children and youth.

## **6. Relationship to other organizations.**

The council on children and youth should have a close working relationship with other organizations whose functions include research, planning, and support of programs of action.

- a. Planning by councils on children and youth should be correlated with planning for all groups of the population.
- b. Councils on children and youth should relate their work to the work of bodies planning for the whole population in special fields such as health, housing, education, recreation, social security, and family welfare.
- c. Administrative departments of State government responsible for conducting programs benefiting children should bring to the attention of the council on children and youth unmet needs and their recommendations as to programs and legislation to meet these needs.
- d. The council on children and youth should not take the place of advisory committees needed by State departments to assist in the formulation of policies for the administration of services for children.

## **7. Membership and organization.**

- a. To be adequately representative of the citizenship of the State the membership should be drawn from official State agencies and from the general public and should be broad enough to assure planning in all the major fields of service to children and youth.
- b. State departments concerned with health, education, social welfare, labor, and related programs directly affecting children and youth should be represented by officials nominated by the department heads for a fixed term contingent upon continuance of official status.
- c. Nonofficial members should be chosen because of their broad interest and knowledge, their ability to make contributions in specialized fields, their concern for children, their effectiveness in promoting the

interests of children, and their ability to make articulate the points of view and the problems of various groups in the population to the end that the needs of all children may be known and considered. It is important that the membership include persons representative of major groups of citizens interested in children and of numerically substantial racial groups. Nonofficial members of the council should be appointed for overlapping terms.

- d. The size of the council should be such as to assure wide representation and effective executive action. This can be accomplished through—
  - (1) Small membership (for example 11 to 15) with committees on which persons not members of the council might serve with council members, or
  - (2) Large and representative membership, with a small executive committee and such other committees as are necessary.
- e. Whatever the membership of the council, provision should be made for consultation on special subjects with representatives of different groups and interests. Youth should be encouraged to contribute to the work of the council in terms of their experience.
- f. The chairman of the council should be in a position to give broad leadership without undue emphasis on any one field of interest.

## 8. Financial support.

- a. It is desirable that funds for the council on children and youth be provided by direct legislative appropriation to the council or to the State planning board where it is a part of that board.

As alternatives, funds might be allotted from those available to a department or departments of the State government, or might come in whole or in part from contributions by private agencies, foundations, or individuals.

- b. Under any plan, financial support should be adequate to provide for effective staff service and committee work. Experience has shown that the following are essential for the most effective work:
  - (1) A competent and qualified executive secretary.
  - (2) Staff for assembling and analyzing factual material and distributing information.
  - (3) Clerical and stenographic staff.

- (4) Travel for council members, staff, and members of advisory groups, as necessary.
- (5) Printing, supplies and equipment, postage, and rent if free quarters are not available.

While much of the legal authority and some of the financial resources needed to build services for children and youth reside in State governments, the local community is the place where these services directly touch the lives of people.

State planning, therefore, to be effective, must go hand in hand with local community planning. An important part of the effort of the State council on children and youth should be directed toward facilitating local planning and action.

Which starts first, community or State planning, is less important than that they function together. One can stimulate the other into existence. Both will prosper best when each can draw on the knowledge and experience of the other.

## COMMUNITY PLANNING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

People who live near each other and form a local community have a strong motive for joint planning and effort since by acting together they can secure for themselves facilities and services of common benefit. This opportunity is especially important to families rearing children since they depend on the community for health service, schools, libraries, parks, churches, social agencies, and protection against physical and social hazards, in addition to the streets, utilities, transportation, and other facilities required for living and working in a community.

Wartime emergencies have pulled many communities out of shape. Tremendous migrations of workers and families have overtaxed the resources of some communities and impoverished those of others. With the coming of peace comes the opportunity not to let community life slip back into its pre-war shape but to remold it into something more sensitive and more responsive to the needs of people than it ever was before.

Children and young people, more than all other citizens, have suffered from the wartime lack of community services. Their needs, under pressure of manpower and material shortages, have had to take a low priority. In all justice, their needs should come first in peace.

These needs of children and young people cannot be met haphazardly. First, they must be measured. Second, they must be balanced against existing services. Third, deficiencies and inefficiencies in existing services must be remedied.

This requires community planning by parents and other citizens together with professional workers and public officials—those who are closest to children, those who are best informed of their needs, and those who have access to community resources for meeting those needs.

Because no community lives to itself alone, community planning should go hand in hand with planning done by neighboring communities and by the State. Some of the service and protection children and young people require stems from State governments. Some can be strengthened by cooperation with State governments. State-wide plans for children and youth have an intimate relation to community plans, and should be considered in all local planning.

## EXPERIENCE IN PLANNING.

Communities have become increasingly conscious during the last two or three decades of the need for systematic and continuous planning to attain progressively better adaptation of land use, facilities, and services to the needs of their people.

Recognition of this need has brought about many surveys, some dealing with one phase, and others with the broad aspects of community life. The desire that community planning should be continuous has led to the establishment in many communities of councils of social agencies, city and county planning boards or commissions, and county agricultural committees working on land use and community facilities. Public and private agencies within their fields of health, labor, education, welfare, housing, and recreation are continuously planning for improvement in their facilities and services.

The city planning movement has become an important resource for the development and improvement of civic life. City planning commissions have been concerned chiefly with physical planning and the gearing of such planning to economic and social activities and needs. The American Society of Planning Officials reports that some 1,500 city and town planning agencies, official bodies or bodies quasi-public in character, have been established to develop plans for the growth and development of their communities. In many rural counties, county and community agricultural planning has been carried on with the encouragement of the Agricultural Extension Service

and State universities and with the participation of neighborhood and community leaders. Other aspects of local planning include neighborhood and community councils, special neighborhood or city-wide demonstration projects, and coordinating councils.

Local defense councils were established as part of the organization for national defense in 1917-18, and again during the present World War. Usually they have been appointed by the mayor or the board of county commissioners and have included in their membership public officials and representative citizens. The Office of Civilian Defense described the job of the defense council as that of bringing together all the agencies and organizations in the community to deal with wartime problems on the home front. Through committees of the civilian war service branch, the defense councils have dealt with community problems affecting the welfare of families and children in many fields, such as child care, consumer interests, education, health and medical service, housing, nutrition, recreation, social protection, and transportation. In connection with defense councils many special child-care committees have been established, concerned chiefly with the care of children whose mothers are employed. The defense-council organization has tapped many new sources of citizen interest in community planning, given many people valuable experience, and reached many communities which had had no organization for such planning. Doubtless some defense councils, modified perhaps, will be carried forward into the post-war period.

In communities where councils of social agencies existed, the functions of these councils and the new defense-council committees were developed chiefly in accordance with two plans: (1) the defense council set up its own committees which worked in cooperation with committees of the council of social agencies, or (2) the divisions of the council of social agencies became the committees of the defense council.

In many cities councils of social agencies have broadened their scope and forms of council organization have been modified to meet the impact of war conditions. Many councils have raised their sights to the community as a whole, looking beyond the problems of the agencies making up council membership. Traditionally the divisions of the council have been health, family, child care, and recreation. The interest of the child-care division has been confined principally to foster care and other forms of social services for children. Sometimes such a division has included childhealth and group work. The divisions of councils of social agencies have been supplemented by committees cutting across functional groups, such as committees on adjustment of returned servicemen, juvenile delinquency, and social protection.

Councils of social agencies as instruments of community-wide planning have some limitations. Most councils are seriously understaffed. They are

usually financed by private funds, mainly from community chests. The factors influencing public planning, including especially financial support, are very different from the factors influencing planning for services financed from community-chest funds. Federal and State policies, services, and financial assistance must be taken into account in local planning for public services.

Wartime experience in many communities has provided the opportunity for greatly increased citizen participation in social planning and social action. It has demonstrated the value of wider understanding of community needs. Both cooperation of public and private agencies and participation of citizens' groups have been found to be essential, not only to the formulation of sound and practicable plans for the community and its people, but also to the growth of public confidence in and understanding of the plans proposed and the measures undertaken.

Whatever planning body is set up, planning by community agencies having administrative responsibilities and cooperation between agencies in such planning should be encouraged and facilitated. Day-by-day planning and interagency cooperation with respect to the operation, strengthening, and coordination of programs are of the utmost importance.

## PRINCIPLES BASIC TO COMMUNITY PLANNING.

The following general principles appear from experience to be basic to the community planning for children and youth that will be carried on into the reconversion and post-war periods:

1. Community planning includes physical planning, economic planning, and social planning, each impinging on the others. In order to plan for land use, transportation, and utilities, it is necessary to know how the people of a community make their living and how agricultural, manufacturing, trade, and service industries are developing. In order to plan for housing, parks, stores, health centers, schools, social services, libraries, streets, police protection, and transportation, it is necessary to know how people live, where they work, buy, and play, what their health problems are, what their school needs are, the relation of incomes to rents and food costs, and many other economic and social factors. Such planning also requires knowledge of density of population and of areas where social problems are especially marked.
2. Planning must be based on adequate study and research. Without this underpinning, it may become planning by *opinion* and its character may be determined by special interest or pressure groups.

3. In every community there should be a group of people interested in planning to meet the whole range of human needs, the organization for planning varying among larger and smaller communities and rural areas. In urban areas several different organizations may be interested in various aspects of planning. Their activities should be related in some way to a community-wide and comprehensive planning agency. In rural areas community planning usually is closely related to county agricultural planning activities.
4. There should also be in every community a group of citizens reviewing what children and youth need, exploring the extent to which those needs are met, and stimulating community agencies and planning groups to develop the services or policies found to be necessary.
5. Public authorization, official appointment, and public support are desirable for county or community planning bodies responsible for physical, economic, and social planning.
6. Planning groups should include the administrators whose programs may be affected, and nonofficial persons in sufficient numbers so that they will be really vocal in the group. Broad citizenship representation is essential in community planning.
7. Official community planning bodies should have close working relationship with voluntary planning councils and organizations, including among others, councils of social agencies.
8. Public and private agencies should develop effective means by which day-by-day cooperation and coordination of their operating programs can be accomplished. From this experience such agencies can bring to the attention of planning bodies many evidences of need for long-term planning that should be undertaken.
9. In maintaining effective cooperative relationships with agencies operating programs for children and youth the community planning body should draw upon such agencies for information and suggestions.
10. The existence of broad planning bodies in a community will not take the place of the advisory committees needed by operating agencies to help guide the administration of their programs and to point out the directions in which they should be expanded or modified.
11. Whatever the planning structure in a community, there will be need from time to time for the establishment of special committees

to deal with special problems. Through such committees the vitality of new groups and individuals who have not previously been active participants can be brought into community activity and planning.

12. Committees planning for children and youth can stimulate the organization of general community planning bodies, recognizing that the planning body that considers all age groups is needed, as well as the body especially concerned with children.

Every community has its own resources in experience, leadership, and ways of accomplishing common objectives. These will determine its choice of the kind of organization needed for post-war community planning. An existing planning agency may be used, with such changes in structure or functions as may be necessary, or a new agency may be established whose functions will include the development of working relationships with other agencies or groups serving in part, but not wholly, community needs for social planning.

Planning should be regarded as a public function which should be discharged by a body bringing into effective participation public officials, those engaged in community services under private auspices, and representative citizens. Public sponsorship and auspices are desirable.

In some cities the welfare federation or council of social agencies may be sufficiently broad in its representation of community interests to be the natural center for community planning. Perhaps in some instances a body created to deal with a particular problem, such as juvenile delinquency, may be expanded to cover the broad field. Where a local committee has been organized as a part of a State-wide plan for follow-up of the White House Conference recommendations, this group may be the one which should be responsible for developing the community program for post-war years. Or a defense-council committee on children in wartime may be the logical nucleus of the group which will be concerned with long-range planning. Whatever the origin, the planning body should be organized in a manner which will assure its acceptance by the community as a center for community-wide planning for children and youth.

The planning body for children and youth will find many organizations in a position to cooperate in the development of its work—parent-teacher associations, youth groups, clubs, leagues of women voters, church groups, business, labor, and farm organizations—each with its own committees and programs relating to children and youth. Such groups will welcome com-

munity-wide planning that will make use of and strengthen their interest and effort in behalf of youth.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR ORGANIZATION.

The following suggestions may be helpful to communities considering ways of equipping themselves for the type of planning that will give children and youth the opportunities essential for their full development:

### 1. Continuing community planning agency for children and youth.

There should be in each community (city, town, or county) a continuing body charged with responsibility for reviewing conditions affecting children and youth and for promoting the development of adequate services for the whole community. The services needed for children still under family control and for older boys and girls approaching adult independence will differ in some degree. One committee can effectively deal with the problems of both age groups provided the membership of the committee includes individuals familiar with the needs of each age group. This will eliminate the inevitable overlapping that would result from having two committees, and provide for consideration of the whole cycle from infancy to maturity.

### 2. Name.

This body might be called a commission or council on children and youth, with the name of the city or county in the title. Whatever term is used, the organization should function not as a body of delegates of various agencies, but as a group of informed and competent persons in a position to exercise personal judgment on the issues that arise.

### 3. Area covered.

The area to be covered will be the county, city, town or village and surrounding farms, depending on the habits of association of the community under consideration and the governmental units responsible for services for children.

There are advantages in using the county as the planning area since certain public functions with reference to children are usually vested in county government. County agencies are, in general, the outlets for the programs to which the State and Federal Governments contribute. Together, the county units in a State afford complete coverage for planning for the needs of all children in the State. However, county lines sometimes have little relation to the natural areas of community life, and the communities and organizations within a county sometimes do

not have sufficient cohesion to make it possible for a county planning body for children and youth to exercise effective leadership.

A city and its adjacent suburbs (or a town or group of towns, as in New England) may be the best area for a planning body for children and youth, particularly if there is a council of social agencies or a municipal planning body covering the area. In such cases the communities in the county may cooperate in making plans that are county-wide in their scope.

In cities and in rural areas there are neighborhoods where the citizens naturally associate and plan for their common interests. Such neighborhood groups may be drawn into the study of conditions affecting the well-being of children and youth and into the discussion of plans for children in their home neighborhoods and the whole community. They will then be ready to assume their appropriate responsibility in seeking action needed within the neighborhood and to join with others in seeking community-wide action on broader programs.

#### **4. Authority and auspices.**

It is desirable that the commission or council for children and youth be organized under public auspices. Whatever the auspices, the body should be in a position to give effective leadership.

a. Public sponsorship may be provided through—

- (1) Authorization and financing by the city council or commission, or by the county board.
- (2) Appointment by the mayor, city council or commission, or county board.
- (3) Appointment by an official community planning body responsible for planning for the whole population.
- (4) Appointment by the official defense council or its post-war successor.

b. Voluntary sponsorship may come from a voluntary community organization, such as a council of social agencies, provided the interests of the whole community are represented. It is essential that such an organization give adequate emphasis to the role of public agencies in social planning, and recognize that planning for all the needs of children and youth in the community goes beyond the programs of the agencies that are financed through community chests.

#### **5. Relationship to general community planning.**

The commission or council for children and youth should be a part of or should work in close relationship with community agencies responsible for general or for social planning for the entire population. The

needs of children must be given consideration in all areas of community planning, and especially in planning which relates to family welfare and family services. Similar committees cutting across functional lines may be needed for other population groups but the need for such service is particularly important for children and youth.

Whenever possible, the children's planning agency should influence general planning in directions favorable to children and youth. It should draw together and evaluate from the point of view of children's needs the functional planning that goes on in specialized fields, such as housing, health, recreation, education, and family welfare. Such planning is frequently carried on under the auspices of a council of social agencies.

## 6. Functions.

The commission or council should be concerned with what is happening in the community to children and youth and what lacks exist in the community provision for their welfare. Experience indicates that the commission or council should deal with all phases of community service and protection for children and youth—relating to home life, health, education, recreation, cultural interests, social services, and employment protection and opportunity. It should bring together agencies working in different fields in order that the composite of services needed and the problems of each agency in providing its share of such services may be understood.

Paralleling the State council, the community commission or council should:

- a. *Know* what is happening to children and youth.
- b. *Review* legislation affecting children and youth.
- c. *Appraise* all services for children and youth.
- d. *Consult* with all agencies serving children and youth.
- e. *Draw up* proposals for action in behalf of children and youth.
- f. *Report* findings to the public on the needs of and programs for children and youth.
- g. *Maintain* contact with State agencies planning for children and youth.
- h. *Recommend* constructive programs for children and youth.

## 7. Membership and organization.

- a. Planning a program of community action involves first of all utilizing the experience of people who have dealt with human problems on a

community basis. Membership of the commission or council should, therefore, include men and women who have taken an active part in community services during the depression and the war, as well as persons whose professional equipment will make available to the committee guidance in the various fields in which technical knowledge is essential to the development of a sound program.

- b. Agencies and groups drawn into the work of the commission or council, through membership in the planning body itself or through committee work or in other ways, should include the following: public-health and social-welfare administration and the school system; county extension service; family-welfare and child-caring and protective agencies under private auspices; the juvenile court and law-enforcement agencies; church groups; racial groups; libraries; recreational and youth-serving agencies; housing agencies; labor and employer interests; farm organizations; civic clubs; parent-teacher associations; and similar organizations of men and women concerned with various aspects of community life.
- c. The commission or council may be a relatively small group—11 to 15—of recognized leaders in services for children and youth, plus officials of public agencies conducting programs in their behalf. An alternative plan would be to create a large representative group, with a small executive committee and such other committees as are necessary.

If small, the commission or council will find it necessary to provide for wider participation through committees appointed to study special problems and through meetings at which representatives of all interested groups can discuss the proposals under consideration.

Whatever the membership, provision should be made for consultation on special subjects with representatives of different groups and interests.

- d. Youth should be encouraged to participate in the planning, either through the cooperation of youth groups or through service on committees on which they can make a contribution in accordance with their experience.
- e. The members should be appointed for definite, overlapping terms.
- f. The chairman should be selected for his ability to give broad and effective leadership without undue emphasis on any one field of interest.

## **8. Financial support.**

If the commission or council is under public auspices, funds for financing it should be provided from public sources by direct public appropriation, from the funds of an official community planning body, or from the mayor's contingent fund.

Private funds may be obtained from community chests, foundations, or personal contributions.

The funds should be sufficient to provide for adequate staff, public-information service, the mimeographing of material for consideration by the commission or council, and the printing and distribution of publications presenting findings and proposals to the public. In some cases staff may be loaned by other agencies, but this resource should be used only when the individual staff member can be loaned for a sufficient amount of time to see assigned work through to accomplishment. At the start the amount needed for the work of the commission or council should be determined on an annual basis, and so far as possible the funds for a full year should be obtained or assured while the initial proposal for its work enlists strong interest.

The commission or council for children should work in close relationship with the State planning body for children and youth. (See functions of State planning body for children and youth.) It is important that the development of community plans proceed in harmony with State-wide planning and take into consideration the financial assistance and service that is or should be available from State agencies. If the commission or council covers an area smaller than a county, its work must be related to planning in other areas within the county, and to functions of county government.

## A FAIR START, AN EVEN CHANCE

Some of our communities are distinguished by the health services they provide for children and young people, some, by their recreational programs, their schools, housing, or work for handicapped children. No single community excels in all services children and young people need if they are to have the chance to develop their full capacities. Nor does any one guarantee that every child within its borders has access to all it has to offer.

Every community can do *something more* than it is doing now to make life more secure and more challenging for its youngsters. Some will want to strengthen and extend their present services until they reach all children. Others will want to branch out into new ventures. Many will want to do both.

Whatever direction the expansion of services may take it will require planning if time, money, and manpower are to be used to best advantage. To move ahead on all fronts makes planning even more imperative.

Planning can start with just a handful of people highly resolved and willing to work to give the children they know a fair start, an even chance.

## CHILDREN'S BUREAU PUBLICATIONS

### related to programs of the Commission

Single copies may be obtained free of charge from the Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor, Washington 25, D. C.

Children in a Democracy; General report adopted by the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy, January 19, 1940.

White House Conference on Children in a Democracy, January 18-20, 1940—Final Report, Pub. 272.

Standards of Child Health, Education, and Social Welfare, based on recommendations of the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy. 1942. Pub. 287.

Our Concern—Every Child; State and community planning for wartime and post-war security of children, by Emma O. Lundberg. 1944. Pub. 303.

Community Action for Children in Wartime. Adopted by the National Commission on Children in Wartime. 1943. Pub. 295.

Goals for Children and Youth in the Transition From War to Peace. Adopted by the Children's Bureau Commission on Children in Wartime. 1944. Pub. 306.

Building the Future for Children and Youth; Next steps proposed by the National Commission on Children in Wartime. 1945. Pub. 310.

See also current articles in *The Child*, monthly bulletin issued by the Children's Bureau. Subscription price \$1.00 a year.

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