Attachment 2

*Longmans' Papers on Residential Work*

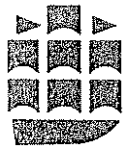
*Children in Care* Edited by R J N Tod
*Disturbed Children* Edited by R J N Tod
*Therapy in Child Care* Barbara Dockar-Drysdale

# Papers on Residential Work

# Children in Care

Edited by Robert J N Tod MA, AAPSW

With a foreword by Sir Alan Moncrieff CBE, MD, FRCP, FRCOG, JP
Chairman, Central Training Council in Child Care 1953–68
Emeritus Professor of Child Health, University of London



Longmans

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO LTD
London and Harlow
*Associated companies, branches and representatives throughout the world*

*First published* 1968
*Second impression* 1969
*Printed in Great Britain by Western Printing Services Ltd, Bristol*

# Contents

# Foreword

The Curtis Committee were so worried about the lack of training in child care that an interim report was published before the final recommendations which led to the Children Act of 1948. This interim report recommended the setting up of a Central Training Council in Child Care and I was privileged to be a member from the start.

The response from the various training centres was quite magnificent and the pattern for the residential child care courses and the courses for child care officers was soon established, although development was naturally slow at the beginning. Local authorities and the voluntary societies quickly became aware of the need for training of the staff dealing with children in residential homes. Indeed, it must be recognized that they were conscious of the problems presented, but facilities for special training were just not available except to some extent for care on the physical side.

The present book should be of great help to the tutors of the courses for the residential care of children and to members of the staff, trained and untrained alike. It is to be followed by a volume containing articles on a more advanced level. In reading the articles now collected together I became conscious of my own mistakes as a parent and how much better I might have been if this sort of information had been available as a preparation for parenthood. The psychological ill-treatment of children in their own homes is often distressing, and therefore this book should also help all those concerned with the broader aspects of child care mentioned in the first paragraph of the editor's introduction.

I should like to add that in the over twenty years since I have

been associated with the Central Training Council I have constantly been impressed with the staff of the Children's Department of the Home Office in their real devotion to the implementation of the Children Act and this also applies to the representatives of the local authority children's committees and of the voluntary societies and other members who have served on the Council.

Alan Moncrieff
Chairman, Central Training Council in Child Care
April 1967



# Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge with thanks special permission to reproduce articles in this book to the following journals and authors:

*Accord*, c/o Stevenage College of Further Education, Monkswood Way, Stevenage, Hertfordshire and *De Koepel*, Avenue Concordia 95, Rotterdam 16, Holland and Mr L. H. Fontein for no. 8.

*Case Conference*, 5 Sudbury Gardens, Croydon, Surrey and Prof. E. J. Anthony, Mr E. Ingram, and Miss O. Stevenson respectively for no. 7, no. 5 and no. 2.

*The Child in Care*, Beechholme, Banstead, Surrey and Dr A. L. Laycock for no. 10.

*Children*, the Children's Bureau, the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Welfare Administration, Washington D.C. 20201, U.S.A. and Professor G. Konopka for no. 4.

*Child Welfare*, The Child Welfare League of America Inc., 44 East 23 Street, New York, N.Y. 10010, U.S.A. and Dr M. E. Lowenberg and Mrs A. Richardson respectively for no. 6 and no. 9.

The Child Welfare League of America and Professor G. Konopka for no. 11.

*Mental Health*, The National Association for Mental Health, 39 Queen Anne Street, London W.1 and Professor G. B. Trasler for no. 3.

I would also like to acknowledge with thanks the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office for permission to include article no. 1 by Mrs E. M. Mason which is the script of a film lecture, commissioned by the Home Office Central Training Council in Child Care and is Crown copyright. I am grateful to Mrs Mason for her work in revising her talk for publication.

I should further like to thank the following for their help:

Mr G. A. Banner, Editor of *The Child in Care*; Mr E. J. Ellis, Librarian at the North-Western Polytechnic Library and the staff of the Home Office Library; and for advice and encouragement my colleagues in the Home Office Children's Department Inspectorate, in particular, Miss Joan Cooper, Chief Inspector and Mrs Clare Winnicott, Director of Child Care Studies.

R.J.N.T.

# Introduction

This book is the first of two volumes containing articles on residential child care and treatment which have, in most cases, appeared in English and American journals during the last ten years. Some of the journals are of limited circulation in this country and without republication the articles would have been inaccessible to many readers. Both collections of articles are intended primarily for students on residential child care courses and for residential staff already in the work, but I hope that they will also be of interest to members of children's committees and to other workers in the child care field.

One of the important tasks for the growing profession of residential child care is to identify the varying roles demanded of residential workers and to clarify the aims of different residential settings. These roles and aims will be influenced both by the personal motivations and self-awareness of the staff in charge, and also more importantly by the social and emotional needs of the children in their care. Apart from these personal factors, the actual size and layout, the location and administration of the establishment all have an effect, difficult to define, on the relationships and satisfactions of the people who live there.

Many of those who come into residential work have experienced reasonably secure and affectionate family life, and perhaps seek to recreate for the children in their care the childhood satisfactions that they themselves enjoyed. However, as several of the articles show, some children have had such adverse experiences of parental care that they cannot respond to normal affection. Some given patience and tolerance, and following a period of depression or rebellion, may in course of time be able to respond. Others may

feel so bereft or betrayed that they may react with aggression or withdrawal from human contact, or even with despair. Such children are not able to respond to ordinary parental-like care because their own internal images of parents and adults are distorted. They need a depth of understanding and acceptance that may come either from people who have themselves known pain and been healed, or from those who have been helped to develop their capacities for feeling the hidden hurt and loss of damaged children and are so better able to accept their consequent bitterness or bravado. To such experience or awareness should be added disciplined knowledge and training in child care which provides a reservoir of established concepts and tested experience to draw upon when the inevitable disappointments or set-backs occur.

In selecting the articles for the first book, *Children In Care*, I have had in mind settings which were similar in some respects to those of ordinary families. The staff in charge would be seen as temporarily filling to some degree the roles of parents and the children would be those able to respond either immediately or in the foreseeable future to the give and take of family life. Children living there would in most cases see themselves as temporarily apart from their parents to whom they would feel a prior attachment and sense of belonging and to whom they would hope to return. In other respects such homes need to do very much more than reproduce family life. Those in charge require more professional knowledge and skill and more sensitive awareness of feelings than many good natural parents possess. In my selection I have tried to choose articles that would satisfy these needs. I have imagined myself in the role of a residential worker confronted by both human and practical problems and have chosen contributions that conveyed in the first place the immediacy of direct experience so that the situations described would seem alive and real. I have also included articles that attempted to formulate some general principles which would give meaning to these experiences and would help those reading them to apply such principles to comparable situations.

The articles are intended to be read in the order in which they are presented. The first three articles examine the child's links with his own family and the distress and anxiety experienced in leaving





home and meeting new people and places. The following ones deal with some of the practical problems of residential care, routine, orderliness, food and play to help us to discover some more coherent and meaningful basis for our methods. The next one by Professor Anthony stands by itself, it is concerned with the particular difficulties that children present to those caring for them and also with our own difficulties in caring for other people's children. Then two articles describe some ways in which adults and children adapt to each other in a residential setting and with the difficult subject of discipline. The following two articles discuss the special needs of adolescents in residence. The final one is intended to help residential staff to look at themselves and at their relationships with other staff who share responsibility for children. In selecting articles for different occasions it has been impossible to avoid some duplication of ideas as well as some difference of emphasis.

A further collection of articles entitled *Papers on Residential Work: Disturbed Children* is published simultaneously. The emphasis of these is on the needs of children whose experiences of family life have been so adverse and painful that they have built up inside them a confused or menacing picture of the adult world and need to be helped to communicate with understanding adults to enable them to sort out the real and the imaginary in their past before they can respond to reliable affectionate care and meet new people and situations with confidence.

Robert J N Tod
April 1967

# I

# The importance to a child of his family

## *E Mary Mason*

*Mrs Mason suggests that children, even quite young ones, have inside them very strong ties to their own parents, although they do not show them to us. Drawing upon her own experiences with young children, she invites us to put ourselves in the place of children and to be aware of their secret thoughts and feelings about leaving their parents. If we understand why a child's family is so important to him and what he loses by separation from it, we can see better what a child can gain from good reliable, practical care from one person, who thinks him in some way special. Our reward may not be gratitude, we may never be idealized, but the child, when he leaves, may take away with him as part of himself, all the important things we have stood for, an essential part of our personality.*

If you are looking after other people's children one of the most difficult things to accept is the extent to which any child is involved in a relationship with his parents, even though he is separated from them and even if they have neglected him or treated him cruelly. There are various reasons why we find this so hard to accept. Some are to do with the children and some are to do with ourselves. The children themselves make it difficult for us to realize because at all ages, especially when they are small, they tend to cover up the shock of separation from home and for some time only show by the most minute signs that they really are distressed and disturbed.

Recently I was looking after a small boy of nineteen months, while his mother was in hospital for five days. I had stayed with the family for two weeks before the mother went into hospital, so he knew me fairly well and his father also remained in the home.

He was extremely easy during those five days. He didn't wet or soil himself as he had been doing occasionally before; he ate very much better and there was no sleeping disturbance. Only, you would have thought he was a little too good. He called for his mother at any moment of stress, 'ama, ama', but, if I went to him, he apparently accepted me instead of his mother quite well. I took him to see his mother in hospital the first day and he knew her; he played and was interested in everything. I took him on the second day and he looked at her, with a strange look as if to say 'What are you doing there? I'm not quite sure.' Next day, he looked at her under his eyebrows, not at all pleased with her, not even sure that he knew her. When she came out of hospital I went to meet her with him in the car; he clung to me and wouldn't go to her. His father kept saying, 'There you are, you see, he didn't miss you at all'. I said, 'You will see he has missed you.' By the evening, he was turning to his mother and clinging to her and then, within a day or so, there was some of the behaviour you might have expected at the time of separation; regressing in every way, wetting, being difficult over food, tempers, whining, clinging to his mother. Now the father kept saying. 'It's just naughtiness, he is just being naughty because his mother gives way to him'; of course it wasn't. It's as though he thought, 'If only I can be very good, if only I can behave as mother wanted me to, perhaps she will come back,' and only when she was back was it safe to let out his angry feelings.

Another child I knew, a little girl of three, who came to my nursery school, was with me when her father died. Her mother, very wisely, told her at once that her daddy was dead and wouldn't come back. Every day she came to the nursery she would say, 'My daddy is coming to see me this week', 'My daddy is going to give me a toy,' 'My daddy is . . . going to do this and going to do that', though the mother went on telling her, 'No, daddy can't come'. Children tend to deny their suffering; they hold it off and pretend nothing has happened because it is too painful. Unless we are very quick at seeing this denial and the slight signs of disturbance, we are apt to say, especially if we are very fond of the children, 'Oh, you see the child hadn't taken it in or he doesn't miss his mother or his father at all, he's perfectly all right.' Then, when he becomes difficult, we think that this relates to us, whereas





this behaviour really relates to the lost person. In this way children do not help us in making us aware that really their parents matter very much to them. Sometimes they don't say anything because they are very much afraid that being separated and losing the parent is a punishment, or they are afraid that something has happened to the parents because of their own naughtiness. Older children sometimes very much resent the fact that their parents have apparently not bothered about them and left them and so they pretend they do not care.

The other reasons for not recognizing the importance to a child of his family are in ourselves. If we are 'good with children', we are apt to identify very much with them; if they have been cruelly treated or neglected, we are apt to think, 'Of course he couldn't love his parents after they have done this to him'. We feel so much for the child that our own feelings from the past get mixed up with the child's feelings. Our past unhappiness tends to come back in our identification with children, and at the same time past resentments that occurred in early childhood also come back and colour our feelings towards the parents and we feel resentful towards them. But children can still love and need their parents even if they are unloved. I once saw a mother and father who said they hated their boy of six. He constantly said, 'I do love you Mummy'. He clung to her and was upset when he was naughty. He felt it was his fault he was not loved. A child is tied to his parents by his need to be loved by them.

Another reason why we do not always let ourselves realize that his own parents are important to a child is that we may have a great desire to be a perfect mother or father to the children in our care, and then it is hard to tolerate the fact that a child really belongs to somebody else. He belongs to his own mother and father who take less trouble with him, much less trouble than you take and it is then really very hard to give the parents their due, or to realize that they do matter to the child.

Sometimes children who have been in care a long time, following early separation, appear to forget their parents but there is a great deal of underlying feeling about them which may not appear until much later. Often in adolescence these children start looking for their parents. They ask, 'Where is my mother?' 'Where is my

father?' 'Who is my father?' 'Who is my mother?' or they may even run away.

Feelings for the parents are strong and irrational whatever the past has been.

When children come into care we should notice very carefully the little reactions to separation such as being too good; clinging to one special thing; showing little interest in play, or walking around making no relationship with anyone. Only these very small signs indicate that children are suffering. I think we don't acknowledge or see these things, because we do not like to think children suffer. But suffering is not a sign of lack of health. Suppose a child was separated from home without any suffering, we would think that child was in a very bad way. It is not a healthy or a desirable reaction if a person experiences loss and shows no suffering.

Suffering is part of life; it is the normal reaction to loss and we have to learn to understand it for our children as well as for ourselves, and to be able to see signs of pain.

We have also to be honest and to acknowledge from the beginning that it is really very hard to do a good job of being a mother or father to other people's children, especially if the children constantly say how marvellous their real mother or father is. I was once with some children whose mother treated them harshly, and the whole time they would say if they heard anyone singing on the wireless, 'Mummy sings better than that'. If they saw a dress in a shop window, they would say, 'Mummy would look lovely in that dress'. I found it very hard to stand as I knew what she was really like. But children, because they know in their hearts that the parents are not ideal, build them up so that they can feel they are marvellous.

But why is a child's family so important to him? Some people suggest it is because it gives him a feeling of belonging. It is partly that. But this is something you too can give your children if you do your job well. They can feel part of the new family you make for them.

Another reason why a child's family is important to him is that he is usually overestimated by his mother in infancy. Most mothers feel their baby is more beautiful and more forward than any other. It is a tremendous help in life if someone thinks you are wonderful





and a little bit extra. It does wonders for you. But you can work this wonder for a child if you take the trouble to find in what way he is a special person and like and respect him for it.

The child belongs to his family, and he is overestimated by his family. Both these things can be given him when he is living away from home. The real importance of the family is continuity of care in which a child develops from one phase to another. He grows from being almost one with his mother through to the next period when she simply is 'a thing what takes care of you' as a little boy once said to me. She supplies his needs and protects him. A baby when he wakes is aware of his mother just as a 'thing' so he goes off to sleep again. Gradually as he wakes more and more he becomes aware of her as a 'person', but still a person who is only important because she fulfills his needs or thwarts him. If you have a child in care who has been separated when he is still at that stage he is very difficult to settle because he is excessively demanding; he is quite ferocious in his demands, he will never be satisfied, he cries for attention, because he was broken from home before he worked through that stage. But if he stays in the family, he works through this stage and his mother becomes more to him; he gets to the point when he is the bossy, dominating toddler. Then he reaches the stage, at about three and a half, when the mother is really loved and remembered, and at that point one can safely separate a child for a short time, because he remembers his mother, he loves her whether she is loving to him or not, whether she satisfies him or not; quite an achievement for three and a half! After the first year the father comes more and more into the picture. If you are parents some of you may have suffered from the stage when the child constantly gets up in the night and comes into your room and you do not get a peaceful night because he always wants to be in the picture with both parents, and always wants to know what you are talking about. A little boy will very often be quite a rival to his father, wanting to be the only pebble on the beach with the mother; a little girls wants the same with the father. And then they come to the stage when for the sake of the parents whom they love and whom, by now, they are identifying with and trying to be like, they manage all these feelings and begin to repress them and push them down.

This is what is missed if children are separated from home and

what we have to try and build in. If you can give them one person to hold on to, the damage can be repaired to some extent. It is not as easy as it is in the family where there is a natural development; all the strength of feeling coming out and being equally strongly controlled. In the bad old days children who lived all their lives in very big institutions and had little individual care, had very often a lack of drive and not much strength of personality and not very good control of impulse either.

The chief damage in separation from home takes place in the early years. However much children suffer from being away from home later, it is not so damaging because their tie to the family is different. Those who have children know it is when they are little the parents are the centre of their lives. At six and seven when they are enjoying school they become interested in their fellows, and it is almost as if they have turned away from the home. Family ties are still important underneath, but it is as though they are sealed off. In adolescence you get a new situation in which, interestingly enough, there is a swing back towards dependence. Adolescents can be very childish, very dependent, and at the same time show excessive rebellion, kicking against the parents and fighting against them. Here separation can be a very useful thing, and can be helpful in growing up.

If you allow for the importance to a child of his family I think it means certain things in your dealing with children and their parents. Even if the parents are a nuisance or are tiresome one has to help them and accept them. Remember the child really belongs to them whatever you may think. Sometimes these parents who seem so indifferent, who won't visit, who don't bother, begin to enjoy the child themselves if you enjoy him; they can accept him and feel less guilty if you are not critical. One is apt to think a child is not worrying about his parents so we say nothing about them in order not to upset them. But it is very important to talk to the children about their parents from the beginning and from the moment of separation. They will take over your feelings of approval or disapproval towards the parents very quickly, and it is very important that you should talk of them with approval. With older children you have sometimes to help them to understand their parents.

The most difficult thing of all of course is to do this and to go





on giving the everyday mothering and fathering. To little children this means washing them, putting them to bed, getting them up, feeding them, putting them on the pot. That is mothering, not just being vaguely affectionate. It is the real down-to-earth physical care which means love to a child. It is difficult to do this and not expect the reward that the absent mother gets in being idealized. You have your own reward, of course, because what happens is, if you work well, the child keeps what is important, his picture of the parents and an identification with you. You have kept something intact for him but, just as important, he will have taken away all that you have done for him, all that you have stood for. He identifies with the person with whom he lives. He becomes all the things that you have wanted him to be and know he can be. So your part in mothering other people's children is well worth while.

*Mary Mason first qualified as a teacher and had experience of teaching all ages of children from nursery school age upwards. She then trained as a psychiatric social worker and worked for a time at the London Child Guidance Clinic. Later she became Principal of a training college for nursery school teachers in South Africa. On her return to this country she was for a short time tutor to the Residential Child Care Course at the North-Western Polytechnic and then trained as a psychotherapist; she is currently a child psychotherapist at the Hampstead Child-Therapy Clinic. She is also a free-lance lecturer.*

A film of the talk on which this article is based, made for the Central Training Council in Child Care by the Ministry of Defence Film Unit, is obtainable from the Home Office Children's Department, Horseferry House, Dean Ryle Street, London S.W.1. (Size: 16 mm.; running time: 25 minutes.)

2

# Reception into care – its meaning for all concerned

*Case Conference*, vol. 10, no. 4, September 1963.

*Olive Stevenson*

*The point of reception into care is a crucial time for the child, for the parents, but also for us. The previous article examined the vital need of a young child to live with his own parents and at the difficulties we meet in trying to make up to him for his loss. This one looks particularly at our part in helping a child through the experience of reception. Most of us have chosen to work with deprived children because in simple terms we want to help them to be happier than they were: probably all of us have followed our instinct of trying to cheer up a sad child or divert his interest. Here Miss Stevenson brings us bang up against something else–suffering. Mrs Mason has already mentioned this, and Miss Stevenson tells us that we all need to suffer anew each time a child comes into care and leads us to see how our capacity to suffer may enable us to understand better and so help both children and their parents.*

*This article was based on talks given at conferences of the Children's Departments of Kent and Hertfordshire.*

This title has been chosen to emphasize that reception into care is an action which is deeply significant to everyone involved in it. Or at least, it should be so and, if it is not, something is seriously wrong. Although there are many variations–long stay, short stay, committal to care, reception with the agreement of the parents and so on–there are problems and feelings common to all the variations and it is these that I wish to stress in this article.

I begin with the assumption that all the participants in this situation are 'emotionally involved'; the social workers and residential staff no less than the client, adult or child. Without such involvement there can be no concern and therefore no helping,





though we may search for understanding and control of our involvement so that we may help people more.

In a sense, the workers must suffer anew each time a child comes into care–suffer with the child and with his parents. Familiarity must never breed contempt or indifference; we must not seal ourselves off from the experience by denying its impact or meaning for those involved in it. Of course, repeated experience of these situations brings a certain acceptance in the worker, both of the inevitability of pain and of the fact that healthy children can and do make adjustments which enable them to tolerate and even thrive in their new situations. So there is no need to be permanently miserable about it all. But each time this 'reception into care' happens, we must remain sensitive to its impact on others and on ourselves; we must seek to observe *freshly* in each case what it means to the individuals concerned.

Let us therefore think about each of the participants in the situation; the child, the central point; the parents, foster parents or houseparents and the Child Care Officer.

## THE CHILD

What child? A child of one or of ten years? A dim child or an intelligent child? In generalizing about the impact of this experience on children, it is perhaps helpful to see progress towards maturity as finding a balance between independence and dependence, which is based on a certainty of one's own worth and inner resources, combined with the acceptance of a need for others. Looking back to the baby, we can see the new human being utterly dependent, without certainty of his beginnings and endings, of his identity. In the normal family, the mother, father and others work with the child to bridge that gap between the baby and the man. We can see how very gradually the strong primitive ties of the child to the mother are slackened–watching how the toddler runs in and out of the room a dozen times in an hour to check that mother is there–watching the faces of the five-year-olds walking into school for the first time. Observing all this, and much else in normal, healthy situations, it is hardly necessary to remind ourselves that when we receive into care we are breaking prematurely the lifeline of the developing child. The fact that many of the

children received into care have not known this sound, sensitive upbringing simply makes our problem the harder. For deep down the children know it, and have unsatisfied longings. So we need to ask ourselves not simply what *age* is this child but what *stage* is this child, for it may be that if his two-year-old longings were unsatisfied, the twelve-year-old in his behaviour and attitudes will be in effect pleading for what he missed and we must adjust our treatment of him accordingly.

Of course the whole design and purpose of the Child Care Service is to mitigate the effects of this 'breaking of the life-line' and many improved provisions reflect this. Yet still, as each child comes into care, there is a need to try and get inside the meaning of this experience to him. Kindness and warmth are not enough. There must be awareness of those details of a child's behaviour and speech which may give us the clue to how he is feeling. It is so tragically easy to miss the significant moments which we need to help the child.

A student was working in a children's home. As she got two little girls ready for bed, she noticed that one whose dressing gown was too large needed a cord to pull it together and she borrowed it from the other little girl. She became aware that gloom had descended upon the child whose dressing gown cord had been taken and presently she turned to the child and said something like 'I think you're upset because I took the cord' . . . The child burst into tears and said 'My mother gave it to me'. The illustration is a small undramatic one. Yet how many such moments must pass unnoticed, and the child unhelped; to say 'you feel its something of Mummy you've got here and you miss her' is to acknowledge and accept as natural the grief and maybe the anger of the child. Such feelings unexpressed may fester and poison other relationships. My general impression is that we are, in the Child Care Service, much better now at telling the child what has happened to him but still have a long way to go in talking about it with him. To do this, of course, we need knowledge of the limitations of his understanding; for example, in the toddler or the retarded child–intellectually or emotionally–the concepts of time and distance may be undeveloped so that our soothing comments about 'seeing Mummy next week, etc.' may have no reality. It is vital, too, to remember the primitive ideas of cause and effect





working in the child's mind so that he may see his separation as caused by his own naughtiness.

The need is therefore for intuition and knowledge; intuition which enables us to divine the feelings of the child at a given moment, through our imaginative identification with him; knowledge to check the intuition, to give us a framework for our hunches. The recent W.H.O. publication *Deprivation of Maternal Care: A reassessment of its effects*[1] is a useful addition to our knowledge. Despite the battles that have raged over Bowlby's work and the continuing need for research, this pamphlet shows us clearly that we are right to go on striving to mitigate the effects of this experience for the child. But a recent article in the American Journal *Child Welfare* by John Rose[2] suggests that more extensive knowledge of child development will reveal how diverse are children's reactions to separation, depending partly on their constitutional capacities for adaptation, partly on the environment prior to separation. In other words, for the social workers there is no substitute for the individual study of each and every child, as he comes into care. One can, however, make one generalization from the theory about reception into care. If the child, as Bowlby and Robertson suggest, goes through three phases of protest, despair and detachment in his reaction to separation, those who care for him cannot and should not prevent the first or even the second; we cannot deny him his grief; we must stay with him and permit his grief. But by staying there and holding him (whether physically or psychologically) we may prevent him from withdrawing from relationship because there is no safe adult in his world.

Stated simply this may all sound platitudinous. Yet we forget. In a children's home I heard of, a new rota for staff meant that small children were not being woken up by the person who put them to bed. There were anxious questionings from the younger ones: 'Will you be here in the morning, miss?' This is such an easy thing to happen, yet it all contributes to the bewilderment of the child. It is essential to ensure that in the casework, administrative

[1] M. D. Ainsworth and others *Deprivation of Maternal Care: A reassessment of its effects*, World Health Organization, Geneva 1962.

[2] John A. Rose, 'A re-evaluation of the concept of separation for child welfare', *Child Welfare*, vol. 41, no. 10, 1962, pp. 444–58.

and domestic processes concerned with receiving children into care, there is constant revision and development. The Children's Act 1948 sprang from the concern of the Curtis Committee that the care of the deprived child had become somehow sterile and unrelated to the needs of the child. This is the moment, after fifteen years, to take care that we do not enter into another phase of insensitivity; even if we do know more of the children's needs and problems, there are still so many unexplored areas, and still so many unique puzzles in the individual child coming into care.

## THE PARENTS

We know that we affect the whole family when we receive into care. So what of the parents? We have to deal with parents at every level of emotional development; so that we may be working with people who behave like adolescents–stormy, rebellious, up against authority; or like three-year-olds, unable to tolerate much frustration, demanding of attention and affection; or even like babies–this last often the most difficult–people who have never formed the capacity to see others as really separate from themselves, who have never learnt, as the baby does in the first year of life, that there is someone who can be trusted to stand them. But these people are *not* children. They have had a child and that child is part of them. Reception into care breaks the primitive tie which can be seen in all species of animal, in endless variety of pattern. So something is done to the parents, too, by this action, but what their feelings are about it will obviously vary greatly according to the particular circumstances. In a routine short stay reception, intervention of the children's department may be seen simply as an extension of good neighbourliness, providing the foster home which is equivalent to the relatives or friends whom Mrs Brown might have had in different circumstances. But–she did not have those relatives or friends and every short stay reception is indicative to an extent of a breakdown in normal relationships. About this the parents will have feelings. At the least, it will be the feeling of loneliness and lack of support where the mother has moved away from her wider family circle. We know for example, that young mothers in new housing estates have used maternity and child





welfare clinics more, presumably missing the advice and support of their own mothers and other relatives.

Furthermore, perfectly normal parents will feel that in asking for help, even for a short period, they have revealed their own inadequacy as parents and it will be a part of our service to them to help assuage such feelings. The very fact that they are relatively stable people may mean that their guilt and anxiety about this is easily admitted–because they have enough confidence in their worth as parents to admit to a doubt. In fact, of course, every Child Care Officer knows that many short-stay applications reveal a history of difficulty within the applicant's family–quarrels with relations, marital discord and so on, which greatly increases the guilt about asking for help.

Social workers work with every imaginable variation of parent from the relatively normal, to those who continually disappoint or let their children down and of whom one must at times in desperation ask: 'Do they really care at all?' There must be occasions when one meets parents who are so impoverished that it seems they have nothing to give their children. But for every one of those, there are dozens who with help will still have something to offer their children. Now the point of reception into care is a crucial time in establishing the possibility of continuing contact. It is at this time, when we are breaking the biological tie, that so much can be done to alleviate the sense of despair which causes these parents to turn away from their children, make the promises they do not keep, and gradually widen the gaps in the family. There are so many ways in which both the Child Care Officer and the residential worker, can help the parent by sincere recognition of the part he has played in the child's life. It is difficult sometimes to perceive the needs of the parent through the smokescreen of defiance or apathy, or the hundred other ways in which we at all times, in more or less degree, hide the reality of what we feel, not only from others but from ourselves. But we need constantly to remind ourselves that to make a success of parenthood, perhaps especially motherhood, is one of the fundamental gratifications of most human beings, through which they achieve a sense of worth and of fulfilment. How many 'problem mothers' who have babies annually despite all offers of help to prevent this, do so because for them it is their one achievement? Disillusioning and trying

experiences withparents must not blind us therefore to the fact that somehow, somewhere in the vast majority of instances, the parents we work with do care. Our sensitivity to this will inform and illumine our dealings with them and will help us to cope better with the guilty bags of sweets or the last minute funk which fails the waiting child; the sullen resentment of those who are seen as making a better job of caring for the children. We will recognize too, that because of the limited practical and intellectual ability of many of these parents, we may need at the time of reception to play quite a positive rôle in helping them keep contact–by looking up trains and buses, by giving lifts and so on. We do this not simply because 'John will be so disappointed if his mother doesn't come' but because in doing it we convey to the parent the value we place on him for the child. Thus the parents' awareness–however tenuous–of our respect for his relationship to his child makes it more possible for him to cope with the deep doubts he may be experiencing.

## FOSTER PARENTS AND HOUSE PARENTS

Now I will turn to those who care for the child day by day, both foster parents and residential workers. Obviously there are many differences not only between those two groups but within them. Indeed one of the most acute problems in child care today turns on the residential workers' need to define their rôle in relation to the children they care for. It is not therefore possible to generalize much about such widely differing situations; one can only bring out certain points which will have validity for some. In this context, I have taken 'reception into care' to mean 'receiving a child into your home' though I realize it may be after a period elsewhere.

The one generalization one can make is that everyone has to cope with the impact on himself of a child's distress. There are so many ways in which this distress shows itself–not just straightforward tears. The tears may be difficult enough, our instinct being to divert or cheer up, probably because we ourselves cannot bear to be reminded of the crying child within us. More difficult still, however, may be the child who cannot respond, even with tears. Some of us need quick responses or we begin to feel rejected in turn. Foster mothers will often need help to wait quietly for the





moment when a dazed or angry child can begin to respond. The reactions to the child will always be a personal and intimate one–some for instance can bear an angry child better than a tearful one. Some the other way round. Behind it all there must be acceptance that it is right and proper to be moved by receiving a child because it is such an important thing.

But other feelings will enter in for some. Some may feel guilt that they are indirectly 'taking the children away from their parents'. The more strongly they long to make these children their own, the more anxious they may be about usurping the parents' rôle. They may seek to find fault with the parents, to prove that they *are* better parents and are justified in their desires to possess the child. Much of the friction which arises, for example over clothing, at the time of reception is attributable to such feelings in foster parents, combined with the parents' guilt.

Sometimes, too, those who care for children must feel resentment against parents who seem to find it so easy to shelve responsibility and hand over their children. Those of us who have struggled hard and perhaps suffered too in our own lives may see others as 'getting away with it'. I suppose it partly depends on what one means by 'getting away with it' bearing in mind the suffering implicit in breaking the tie between parent and child. Nevertheless, more may be roused than just our parental feelings; it may call out a deep sense of the injustice of things–perhaps of injustice to those who are left 'holding the baby' as well as injustice to the child. This may seem illogical in that those who care for the child have chosen to do so–but this is an area where strange mixtures of feelings are always present.

In receiving a child into a children's home or foster home, there has to be a readjustment within the existing group. It is natural, therefore, to see the approaching child as an outsider; every group is a mass of subtle interactions. Introduce someone new and you change the pattern. Consciously or unconsciously, the 'insiders' are aware of this. The age and stability of the group of children will determine to an extent how the newcomer is seen. Young children will see him as a rival, yet another emotional mouth to feed. Older children may look forward to a companion; yet in a group of deprived children, there must even in the older child be a

fear that the newcomer will mean the available affection will be spread more thinly and the grown-ups may wonder if they have enough to spread over one more. Grown-ups and children alike may fear a threat to the existing stability–perhaps hard won–of the group. The residential staff have to be aware of their feelings about this so that they may the more effectively help the children to receive 'the outsider'. The need is particularly acute for the unlucky 'special school child' with all his comings and goings. Even in a foster home the introduction of one child is of great significance to the existing group.

## THE CHILD CARE OFFICER

We are left then with the Child Care Officers, scurrying hither and thither in motor cars. It is not a pleasant duty to be the 'receiver into care'–the person taking an action which results in separation. In the early days, to 'rescue' children from unsavoury homes seemed on the surface compatible with the desire–a motivating force in most Child Care Officers–to help the child. More knowledge and experience, however, has greatly increased our doubts about the breaking of family ties; this has added to the emotional impact of an action which cuts across the Child Care Officer's fundamental concern about parent-child relationships. The Child Care Officers today, therefore, are wiser and sadder at this part of the job. There is anxiety too in the better Child Care Officers that in so many cases there cannot be proper planning to mitigate the distress to the family. Even though many emergencies can be averted, there are times when action is not related to the immediate emotional needs of the child–when there is no mother at home to say what soft toy Johnny takes to bed, no chance to reassure the mother he is not being 'put away', no opportunity to avert distressing scenes in court. This is, of course, a part of the challenge of every area of the Child Care Officer's job. She has to have on the one hand her standards of good child care, to know what is right and fight for it, yet, on the other, to find some acceptance of the limitations of her own powers and of the inevitability of children's suffering. To find this balance implies an ability to hold on to an imaginative ideal and yet to adapt to the dictates of reality. Reception into care offers many illustrations of this dilemma and





the Child Care Officer has to endure and come to terms with a permanent strain.

All this makes the theme of reception into care sound sad, even depressing. It is. But only by recognizing the truth about this infinitely complicated process can we begin to lay the foundations for good work. I have only begun here to examine the issues involved.

The theologian Paul Tillich has written:[1]

> The depth . . . of suffering is the door, the only door, to the depth of truth. The fact is obvious. It is comfortable to live on the surface so long as it remains unshaken. It is painful to break away from it and descend into an unknown ground . . .

But as each child is received into care we need to look for the truth and the depth of this experience for everyone involved in it. This demands courage and honesty from the professional workers. But it also offers a constructive and positive approach to an action which might otherwise seem destructive and negative.

*After gaining a degree in English from Oxford University and diplomas in Social Study and in Child Care from the London School of Economics, Olive Stevenson worked for four years as a child care officer in Devon and then took the Tavistock Clinic Advanced Course in Social Casework. Since 1959 she has been a university lecturer first at Bristol for two years and then at the University of Oxford Department of Social and Administrative Studies, where she is Lecturer in Applied Social Studies to the course for Child Care Officers and Probation Officers.*

[1] Paul Tillich, 'The depth of existence', *The Shaking of the Foundations*, Penguin Books, 1962, p. 66.

# 3

# The consequences of separation

*Mental Health*, vol. 21, no. 3, 1962.

*Gordon Trasler*

*Miss Stevenson was concerned about the complicated feelings aroused in children and parents at the point of separation and reception into care. Professor Trasler discusses the longer-term problems of helping children to come to terms with the reasons for separation. He mentions, as Mrs Mason has done already, the child's need for an individual, indeed an exclusive, relationship with a member of staff. He also mentions the child's need for accurate information and for opportunities to act out his feelings about what has happened. This latter idea connects with what Mr Ingram has to say in his article about the value of impromptu plays in helping us to gain some insight into the unspoken difficulties of children.*

When a child is removed from his parents three separate and distinct problems are created. A new home has to be found for him; his recovery from the shock of separation must be facilitated; thirdly, there is the difficult task of repairing the breach which has been made in the continuity of his experiences and memories.

The energetic discussions which followed the publication of the Bowlby monograph[1] were almost exclusively concerned with the first of these. It was pointed out that many of the large children's homes and nurseries of the time were not capable of providing a sufficiently warm, personal, individual environment for a child—especially for the exacting needs of a very young child who had lost his mother. Dr Bowlby presented evidence from a series of American studies which showed that children who had spent a considerable period of time in rather impersonal institutions frequently exhibited severe conduct problems and developmental

[1] J. Bowlby, *Maternal Care and Mental Health*, WHO, Geneva, 1951.





backwardness. It was believed that these were, for the most part, consequences of growing up in institutions.

In recent years this conclusion has been questioned. It is now known that substantial periods of residential care, even if they are spent in fairly austere and poorly staffed institutions, do not always give rise to the personality distortions and intellectual stunting which Goldfarb and Spitz described. There is evidence that when damage occurs it is not the consequence of institutional experience *per se*, but the result of providing an inappropriate human environment for a child who is convalescing from a particularly traumatic separation.

When a child leaves his home and is taken to a nursery or children's home he is put into surroundings which are inevitably strange and confusing. It is easy to overlook the sheer magnitude of these problems of reorientation, and to forget how much more important things and places are to a child than they are to a grown-up. Ordinary everyday objects like his bed, his place at table, and his teddy-bear are so closely connected in his mind with the vivid experiences of childhood that they are, to him, much more than just things; they have the sort of emotional significance which adults usually reserve for people.

In these circumstances many children show a tendency to 'make themselves at home' in new surroundings in a miraculously short time. This unconcern is surely a protective device, and no experienced worker would take it at its face value; but it still succeeds in concealing the real extent of the child's bewilderment and despair. These changes of milieu necessarily slow the progress of the child's development for a while; until the surroundings of his new life become familiar he will be uncertain, cautious, less spontaneous in his behaviour and responses than he normally is. Most of a child's learning is active learning; his experience, and his capacity for abstraction, are too limited for him to imitate the adult trick of thinking through complicated problems without engaging in them directly. A period of relative inactivity usually means a temporary hiatus in development, and this applies to what we usually term 'intellectual' and 'educational' progress as well as to social and personal growth.

One of the illusions which young children have about their parents is that they can do almost anything they wish. It takes a

child a long time to grasp the fact that there are many things and events in the world which are beyond his parents' control, and it is longer still before he really believes that they are not even free agents in determining their own actions–that they are constrained and coerced by laws and rules made by others, and by the manifold problems to which adults are subject. To a young child, events and things are highly personal–volitional–and centred upon himself. Those setbacks which an adult is able to accept philosophically as unavoidable misfortunes are seen by a child as hostile attacks upon himself. He sees both people and things in black-and-white terms, perceiving them as benign if they help him to achieve what he wants, and malignant if they hamper his efforts, or remain indifferent to him.[1] For these reasons separation from his parents probably always has for a child something of the nature of rejection or abandonment by them.

To relate this discussion to the experience of the older child one must make two adjustments. Because of his more sophisticated knowledge of the world, a separation caused by the death or illness of his parents will be at once more distressing and more easily comprehended–distressing because he will understand the long-term implications more clearly, but easier to grasp and to assimilate because he will realize that this does not imply rejection by his parents–he will know that they could not help the parting, and so he will be bereaved but not betrayed. On the other hand, if he has been taken from his home by a court or for medical reasons, he may bitterly resent what appears to him to be a breach of faith on the part of parents who need not have let him go, and who could at any time demand his return. In certain circumstances, then, the more sophisticated thinking of the older child may increase the immediate shock of separation, although in other cases it may make the event less threatening.

The principal danger which attends the separation of the child from his parents is not the sadness and distress of the loss itself, but the fact that he has lost with them the confidence which has sustained him in a whole range of ventures and activities. A child's psychological development proceeds step by step, as bricks are laid one upon the other; the stability of each is dependent upon the one which came before. The first course of bricks is the

[1] S. Isaacs, *Childhood and After*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1948.





child's earliest dependent relationship with his mother; the next few courses represent the establishment of fully reciprocal affection with her, with his father, and with siblings; upon these foundations are built his later social relationships, the learning of codes of morality and conduct, and of the skills of social intercourse. Beside this structure and supporting it, stands the child's conception of himself as someone who is accepted, approved and loved by others. The separation experience is like a blow which shatters the first courses of brickwork; until these can be shored up or repaired, none of the subsequent courses of bricks, or (to abandon our analogy) none of the subsequent experiences and pieces of learning, is likely to be really sound and serviceable to the child. In psychiatric terms it might be said that the consequence of a trauma of this kind is that the child tends to regress to an infantile level of behaviour; in plainer language, one can express the same idea by saying that he is temporarily cut off from a whole segment of his previous experiences, and is therefore unable to respond properly to present social or intellectual stimuli.

In the past there has been a tendency to concentrate upon helping the child through the immediate aftermath of the trauma of separation, and to pay too little attention to the longer-term problem of helping him to sort out these alarming experiences and reintegrate them into the whole pattern of his life. In the early days of the children's services, caseworkers often knew very little about the background of a child received into care; he was, in many cases, actually rescued from some sudden emergency, and everyone's efforts were directed towards building up a new life for him. As a rule nobody knew much about the parents he had lost.

Often the child himself deliberately turns his back upon the past and shows a marked inclination to live from day to day in his new life, wanting to forget the unpleasant and frightening events which have gone before. This is so obviously a means of coping with a highly stressful situation that it is tempting to let him go on doing it, to make a real break with his earlier life. But there are good grounds for insisting that this, in the long run, is bad policy; if he is to grow up into a sound, confident human being he must somehow weld the two pieces of his life together into a single consecutive process. Before he can do that he must come to terms with the events of separation.

At this time the child has three pressing needs–for support, information, and an arena for constructive social learning. The kind of support the child must have can only be gained through the building up of a new relationship, similar to that which he enjoyed with his parents, in his new home. The essential ingredients of such a relationship are simply described; it must be, at least potentially, a warmly affectionate one; it must be utterly dependable, something which the child can eventually come to trust absolutely; and it must be a genuinely individual relationship, a special tie in which he need not fear the rivalry of others. This is an exceedingly difficult prescription to meet in a hostel or residential children's home, where there are many more children than house-mothers, and where staff changes and off duty arrangements are inescapable. But it is not quite impossible. Perhaps the greatest difficulty (and this is where foster care scores heavily) is to help a shy and often uncommunicative child to feel that someone in the hostel is his own special housemother–that whatever is happening he can always be sure of a warm response from her even if he has to share her practical attentions with others.

These qualities of dependability, warmth and exclusiveness are, of course, the special characteristics of the parent-child relationship. But it is false to deduce that the relation between the child and his housemother must always be a copy of the bond he enjoyed with his own mother.

One of the most striking findings of our Devon foster home study[1] was that some of the most effective foster mothers had established not a mother-child relation, but an aunt-like or even grandparent-like relationship with the foster child; in some circumstances this is much more appropriate to the child's needs. The most obvious case is when he is in constant contact with his own parents; it is important to avoid any direct clash of loyalties in the child's mind. He must be able to show affection for his mother and for the housemother without feeling that he is betraying either of them. Here it is valuable if the housemother is considerably different in age from the child's own mother; it is even more important that these two adults in his young life should show him that they like and approve of each other. The building of

[1] G. B. Trasler, *In Place of Parents*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960.





this sort of link between past and present is a vital part of the housemother's job.

Because of the danger of dividing the child's loyalties, it is sometimes believed that a child who is able to retain fairly frequent contacts with his own parents can make do with more detached relationships in the hostel–that he does not need the sort of exclusive tie with a housemother that the parentless child must have. This is probably a mistaken view, at least where children of less than thirteen or fourteen years of age are concerned. In times of stress all children seek naturally for a secret, confiding bond with an adult; the danger is that in his fearful, desperately diffident state after the shock of leaving home, the child will be permanently discouraged from seeking this kind of intimate contact, and will establish a habit of retiring into his shell instead of seeking comfort from others.

The study of foster children shows how important it is to a child to have access to as much information as possible about the separation itself, and about the previous phases of his own life. This is a requirement which sometimes seems quite superfluous. To adult eyes it may seem that an eight- or ten-year-old child must have a perfectly accurate recollection of this event, especially if everything is carefully explained to him at the time. But in times of stress most of us tend to be a little stupid; we are so preoccupied with the problem of the moment that we fail to notice elements of the situation which we afterwards realize were important, and we wish that we could recall them. This is particularly true of the disasters of childhood; it may help the child a great deal to have someone to fill in these factual gaps for him later on. Some elements of the situation will necessarily escape him at the time because he has not the experience, the intellectual tools to grasp their importance; as he grows older and wiser a great number of questions will occur to him, and–if he is not afraid of rebuff–he will ask them. Here a housemother with a really thorough knowledge of the child's background can be of great service to him in thinking out the tangled events which led to the separation.

The third element in the trinity of the child's needs is an arena in which to work through the traumatic events. This need reflects a child's tendency to learn by doing rather than by abstract thinking. It is a commonplace fact that rehearsing or acting out experiences

plays an important part in children's social learning; many childish games are opportunities for arriving at a better understanding of the behaviour of adults by imitating it. Often a child cannot make sense of something his parents have done until he has repeated the incident with the help of other children or of dolls; by acting their parts he can work out for himself what they felt and intended in relation to him. This technique is often of critical value to a separated child, especially in the form of what is usually called 'testing-out behaviour'.

Perhaps the most threatening element in losing one's parents is the suspicion that this was a kind of punishment–a retribution for naughty behaviour or even naughty intentions; many children are haunted by fantasies that they have themselves brought about the separation by harbouring unfriendly thoughts towards their parents. One way of resolving this nagging fear is to repeat the same kind of behaviour towards a new parent-figure–the housemother–to see what kind of response it provokes. This is why, after she has painstakingly built up an affectionate, trusting relationship with the child, a housemother is often rewarded by an outburst of particularly trying behaviour problems. She may strongly suspect that the child's devilment is ingeniously planned to try her temper–and she will be right. But if she can weather this storm, her patience will be well rewarded; the return of confidence in inter-personal relationships which the child will gain by this means is more valuable to him than endless verbal reassurances.

Many child care workers are concerned with children at a much later stage of their lives than those dealt with in this paper. Some will be children who have gone through separation and been reunited with their parents, only to break down into severe behaviour problems or illness later in their lives; some must have experienced not only separation from their parents, but failure–perhaps repeated failure–in foster homes. In many cases the problem is not to help the child to work through a recent trauma, but to identify and struggle with problems which have their root in an old trauma which has never been resolved.

It is dangerous to be dogmatic in so difficult and unexplored a field, but it is surely worthwhile to place a considerable emphasis upon the continuity principle even when the child's history is apparently hopelessly fragmented. One can never expect to succeed





by writing off a large chunk of the child's past as irretrievably lost. Clinicians sometimes meet people whose childhood years were spent in a variety of orphanages and institutions, who have no idea who their parents were, and know little of their own early lives. The sense of loss, of being cheated, which such people show is often quite striking; even more impressive is the extent to which their sense of their own identities, their perception of themselves, seems to be impaired. To have no roots at all is a tremendous handicap. The depressing thing is that at every stage in their lives someone knew a little about their immediate pasts; the fragments of quite full life-histories have usually existed from time to time, but those who had the care of these children let the fragments slip through their fingers–presumably unaware that they would ever be of any use. And so one finds a grown man saying: 'I'll never feel like other people, not knowing where I came from. . . . If only I knew just something about my parents, that would make all the difference in the world. . . .'

If it is true that a child's experiences are like brickwork, built layer upon layer, it is also true that breaches in the structure can only be repaired retrospectively–from the top layer downwards, if that does not make the analogy too unwieldy. And although in dealing with adolescents and older children with urgent conduct problems one must obviously pay a great deal of attention to present difficulties, efforts directed to strengthening their links with the past can be of great value, particularly if something can be done to seek out relatives, however distant, who can furnish additional family ties.

One of the interesting things about foster home failure is the extent to which it tends to provoke a reawakening in the child's mind of memories and fantasies of his previous separation from his own parents. When this happens, those who have the care of the child may find themselves giving help with two different sets of problems and fears, often almost inextricably confused in the child's mind, and demanding great patience and probably the searching out of case records and other information by the case-worker. The most testing problem in such circumstances is in building up a new bond of confidence with the child, for he is likely to be extemely wary of committing himself again; yet until he has somehow learned to trust and to lean upon another adult

the task of working through these experiences will probably be too hazardous for him to tackle.

In a case of this sort, which really represents a kind of repeated separation, the twin results of such an experience are often clearly evident and closely interconnected. In self-defence, the child often shows an emphatic tendency to cut himself off from earlier periods of his life, to turn his back upon painful memories and live in the present. Secondly, he tends to maintain new relationships, and especially child-adult relationships, at a safely superficial level; he is desperately unwilling to commit himself to any real emotional investment. But until he can be persuaded to do so, he is not equipped to work through the unresolved problems of the event of separation–and until he does that the residual effects of this trauma will continue to impair his capacity for interpersonal relations and for new social learning. Here is a particularly stubborn circle, which only immense patience and perseverance on the part of the housemother or social worker can break.

One of the difficulties which often arises in this connection is that this kind of supportive coaxing–one might even say 'wooing' –of a reluctant, resistant child, where the caseworker will inevitably meet with rebuff after rebuff, tries not only her patience but her own personal security too. Nothing is so conducive to despair as the realization that after months and months of devoted efforts, one has got no closer to the child than one was in the beginning. Here the individual caseworker or housemother badly needs the support of her colleagues. They can probably see more signs of progress than she, so closely engaged, can discern; they can save her from discouragement, and can spur her on with some approval and recognition of the value of the work she is doing.

We are surely justified in rejecting the older notion of separation as an event which always leaves behind irrevocable damage; we can put in its place the conception of the separation experience as a sort of hiatus, a gap in the essential continuity of the child's experience which can be bridged by careful, sympathetic help, and which *must* be bridged if he is to grow up a normal, confident human being. There are few tasks which demand more of the adults who undertake the care of other people's children, but there is no task that, in the long run, is more rewarding.





*Gordon Trasler is a social psychologist. He graduated in the University of London in 1952, and then spent three years in the County of Devon investigating the causes of failure in foster placement. The results of his research were published in 1960 as 'In Place of Parents' (Routledge & Kegan Paul). He was appointed to the Chair of Psychology in the University of Southampton in 1964. Professor Trasler is a doctor of philosophy of the University of London, and a Fellow of the British Psychological Society.*