

struggle to live in his new situation. When he finds himself alone for the first time, the child engages in exploratory activity. He begins to throw out "feelers," as it were, in the direction of finding out to what extent he can really control the home, the foster parents and the worker, each coming in for its own testing at specific times. This activity is very natural in every respect. Any person being thrown into a strange and unknown situation tries to get his bearings—to see what he can take hold of. Fortunately, the child soon finds that the experience is not as annihilating as he feared it might be and that he can relax his efforts to control. Furthermore, when the child finds that he still lives, there is aroused in him a desire to go back to his former familiar situation, his own home. This he learns he cannot do. His two struggles—the one for self-preservation, by controlling the new situation, and the other to go back, operate almost simultaneously until, with the worker's help, there begins to develop a growing acceptance on the part of the child that, "I do not need to control everything. I cannot go home—I must go on from here."

The child can go on from here and we hope that he will, because he is now at the point where he can begin to enjoy the

possibilities for normal growth which the placement agency is set up to give him. In other words, after a painful period of disruption from which he has worked through to a new balance and stability, he is ready to resume and carry on with his own growth as it interrelates with living in a family group. We realize, of course, that the authentic quality of the emotional and physical living in an own home cannot always be fully reproduced in a foster home. We have to admit this with the deepest humility. Even though our justification for placing children in foster homes is based upon the relationships found in family living, the experience in the child's own home before he comes to us is likely to influence his whole living in placement. We, therefore, have to recognize that a foster home cannot always be an identical substitute for an own home. Nevertheless, it has been demonstrated that there are many positive elements in foster home care which can encourage children to grow and develop into normal adults, fit for society. This, in the last analysis, is the whole purpose of foster home care. In the truest sense of the word, then, ours is a social service, in which are inherent therapeutic values both for the child and for society.

A STUDY OF REPLACEMENTS

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CHILD placing agencies have always been confronted with the problem of replacement. In 1937, a year in which the Jewish Children's Bureau served 777 children, there were 206 replacements involving 146 different children. In many of these cases, the situation had reached a point where the transfer could not be avoided. In other instances, questions arose concerning the advisability of the replacement. The agency's concern with the implications of these "questionable" replacement situations lead to the appointment of a staff committee to study the problem.

The Jewish Children's Bureau is a child care organization, acting *in loco parentis*, and accepting responsibility for any Jewish child whose family and home are unable to meet his needs. With the exception of those requiring protective care in state institutions because of mental disability or illness, the agency extends its services to children from infancy to adulthood regardless of social background or individual handicap. A very considerable proportion of its children have both parents living, but unable to fulfill their parental responsibility because of illness, incapacity or incompetence.

The Committee on Replacements, consisting of five members, has been functioning over a period of one and one-half years, meeting weekly during that time. Its function has been to study "questionable replacements" in order to evaluate such situations more thoroughly and to act in a consultative capacity to the staff. Twenty-five cases were presented

to the Committee by staff members. For purposes of clarification and uniformity, the Committee formulated an outline to serve as a guide for the material submitted by the staff members. This outline included:

"Reasons for referral of the situation to the Committee; brief summary of the family situation, both at the time of original and current placement; past and present foster home experiences; the child's problems; and agency planning."

Following a thorough discussion and evaluation of all factors in the situation, the Committee made one of three recommendations: to replace the child; to continue the child in its present foster home; or to study the situation further before making a decision. Within three to six months following the original presentation the situations were reviewed by the Committee for further evaluation.

At the outset members of the Committee presented their own case material. Later, as the staff became aware of the value of such a service in the agency, situations were referred by other staff members. Cases requiring special diagnostic help were frequently presented at staff seminars conducted by the agency psychiatrist. These seminars were a factor in sharpening the workers' understanding of the implications of replacement. It was felt that such a Committee was of value to the staff because of the opportunity for group thinking.

The material presented in this paper represents an attempt to study the problem of "questionable" replacements only, and we recognize that the entire problem of replacement would warrant the same careful study and evaluation.

In our consideration of this problem, the Committee found that the following factors caused most concern to the agency:

1. The relationship between foster family and agency.
2. The prospect of the child's long time adjustment in a particular foster home.
3. The complaints of natural parents.
4. Community pressure, including that of lay people as well as social agencies.
5. The change in workers, bringing about a new evaluation of the situation and precipitating new resistances.
6. Fluctuations in plans of child's own family, thus disturbing the agency's plans for the child.

Illustrative of a questionable replacement arising from an unsatisfactory foster family-agency relationship is the situation involving a 17 year old girl, who had lived in one foster home for a period of two years, this being her only placement. At the time the girl was placed by the agency, she was in need of good physical care and assistance in making a social adjustment. About a year after her placement the agency began to be concerned because it questioned whether the girl's health could withstand the responsibilities she willingly assumed in the foster home, such as caring for the foster mother's child and giving other household service. The girl was undernourished and considerably underweight. Inasmuch as work with the foster mother did not modify the situation for the girl, the question of replacement arose, and was discussed with both the girl and the foster mother. The latter resisted such a plan, asserting that her own home was meeting the girl's needs. She was at no time able to see her own responsibility in the situation. The girl vacillated in her feelings concerning replacement and the worker was unable to establish a relationship with her because the foster mother blocked such attempts by instilling in her distrust and fear of the agency. She, therefore, continued to remain in the foster home for another year, during which time the foster mother was resistive to accepting any agency plan to meet the girl's needs. The case was then brought to the attention of the Committee because the worker was concerned over her inability to establish a working relationship with the foster family and therefore questioned whether a replacement should be effected. Since it was felt that there were many positive elements in this home

for the girl, it was recommended that a more intensive effort be made to help the foster mother accept the agency's function in relation to the girl, and that transfer not be effected.

In many situations, where long time care for the child was indicated, the workers questioned the ability of the particular foster home to serve the purpose. In these instances replacement was considered. An example of such a situation is that of an infant placed in the home of a middle-aged couple. She received excellent care in this home and the foster parents were accepting of the child's own parents, who were very interfering. When she reached the age of three, the parental situation made it apparent that long-time placement would be necessary. At about the same time, the foster mother, who was approaching menopause, developed other medical complications. She feared that the agency would remove the child but at the same time recognized the possible justification of such a step. The worker wondered whether this bright, attractive child, who could easily find acceptance by other foster parents, should not be given an opportunity with younger, healthier parents.

Further study of the situation revealed that the foster mother's illness was not serious and was amenable to treatment. The child had found an unusual degree of acceptance in this home and it was anticipated that the natural parents, who had disrupted many foster placements of another sibling, would probably cause the same difficulty were this child to be removed. It was therefore recommended that the child remain in this home in spite of its limitations and that the foster mother be given the security attendant upon such a decision.

The next case is one in which the agency became concerned because of parental complaints. The situation is that of a seven year old boy, placed in the foster home at the age of three, who at the time of placement was a health problem and in need of special care. Because of the excellent care received in this home, the boy's physical condition improved and he developed into a mature, healthy child. Although satisfied with the child's development, the agency showed concern because of the complaints of his own parents about the care he received in this home. In the analysis of the case, the Committee concluded that the parents' complaints were based upon their own guilt, due to their inability to accept foster home placement for their child, and that replacement of the boy would not alleviate the situation.

Not only are we confronted with pressure from parents but occasionally from social agencies in the community. An example of this was the case of a seven year old boy, epileptic since infancy and living in the same foster home during this entire period. Replacement had never been considered for this child because of the agency's satisfaction with the care he re-

ceived in the foster home. The mother's neurotic complaints were accepted by the Juvenile Court, which, in turn, brought pressure to bear upon the agency for the child's replacement. This caused the agency concern because it felt that transfer was undesirable from the standpoint of the child's welfare. Accordingly steps were taken in order to interpret and clarify the situation for the court.

Sometimes we are hesitant in carrying through a replacement plan because of the foster family's status among a group of foster families serving the agency. The Committee was confronted with one such situation, that of a foster family who had served the agency for fifteen years, rearing two boys, one of whom they adopted. In this home was a five year old child, placed there in an emergency at the age of eighteen months. Replacement was considered because of the foster mother's infantilization of the child. Although in considering the child's difficulties, a transfer seemed advisable, it was felt worthwhile to attempt to work further with the foster mother before deciding upon such a move.

In the examination of our findings, another outstanding factor was found to be the length of time a child lived in a particular foster home. We tend to work under the supposition that because the child has been in one foster home for a number of years and seems to have become a member of that family, removal from such a home would be a very traumatic experience. In cases where a certain degree of stability has been secured by long time placement in one home, particularly with a group of children placed at an early age who seem to have a tie to the foster family, we show hesitancy in considering a replacement.

The experience of the Committee would tend to indicate that this might be otherwise. One of the cases for consideration, that of a nine year old girl, who had lived in the same home since infancy, illustrates this point. From time to time while the child lived in this foster home, workers questioned the advisability of her remaining because of the foster family's laxity in caring for her physical appearance and because of the problems which the child developed as she grew older. The agency became aware of these problems not through the foster family but through the school, camp and other community institutions. Workers continued to be handicapped in dealing with this foster family because of the resistances of the foster mother and her over-protective attitude toward the child's problems. When this case was discussed with the Committee, it was pointed out that since this girl had experienced positive relationships with adults, there was reason to assume that she might well be able to move on a new foster home experience; that as she did not seem to be deeply attached to the foster family, there would be reason to assume that

she could make new attachments in a foster home.

In the case described here the agency over-emphasized the possibility of the placement being a traumatic experience to the child due to her long stay in the home. Our experience with other cases bears out the fact that children who have established positive relationships with adults are likely to continue the same type of relationship in new situations.

The following situation differs from the one described above in that replacement was avoided by virtue of the foster family's ability and willingness to work with the agency. This was the case of an eleven year old girl who had lived in the same home since infancy. The agency was primarily concerned because of its feeling that the child was underplaced. Throughout the period of placement, workers questioned whether the foster family was able to provide stimulation for this child of superior intelligence. However, they did not question her physical care and general emotional adjustment. In its analysis the Committee felt that in view of the child's normal development and the foster family's ability to work with the agency, the necessary stimulation could come through community resources and a closer relationship between the worker and the child.

The child's age as related to the problem of replacement was another important factor. With infants it was found that transfers were frequently made because, (1) the foster family were unable to continue to give care; (2) the agency was dissatisfied with the care given; (3) parental complaints and interferences forced the transfer. Our experience also indicates that frequently replacements are necessary because of the strong emotional attachment of the foster family to the children, for whom permanent plans cannot be definitely formulated at the time and who eventually will need to be removed. This subject is outside of the scope of this paper and, therefore, is not being further discussed. It might be of interest to state that because of the awareness of this problem in the agency, it was necessary to change our method of handling adoptions and planning for unattached infants.

With a child between one and five years of age, it was found that the problems

presented at replacement were dependent upon the child's previous experience in relation to parents who either helped or hindered the separation process. With children of this age, where it is not always possible to know feelings and reactions in relation to replacements, we are apt to move them about when the agency feels it advisable. With this young group it was found that where there was a positive relationship between worker and child, replacement was less traumatic for the child. The importance of this as a technique in alleviating the possible trauma of the replacement, was illustrated by the case of a four year old boy, placed in early infancy, accepted by the foster parents and very much attached to them. The child's own mother visited, but had no meaning for him. In terms of long time placement the agency did not feel that this foster home was meeting the child's needs even though there were psychiatric recommendations to the contrary. Because of the worker's meaning for the child and the cooperation of the foster parents in working through the replacement plans, the child made the change to another foster home with ease.

However, in another replacement situation involving a three year old child who was a health and feeding problem, the replacement was a traumatic experience. Transfer was necessary because the child's needs were not being met in the particular home. In this situation the worker was unable to be of help to this child at the time of transfer. It was not possible for the worker to establish a relationship with the child due to the foster mother's resistance to the establishment of such a relationship.

In our study the largest number of children considered for replacement were found to be between the ages of six and

twelve. In the current agency population, fifty percent of the children are under fourteen. Children between the ages of six and twelve are old enough to begin to articulate their feelings and reactions concerning the foster home. We are in a better position to help these children because of this. It is at this age that we see the difficulties the child encounters when he has been unable to work through the separation from his own parents satisfactorily. In addition, the child's contacts with his parents continue to arouse conflict concerning his status in his own as well as in the foster family. This confusion increases the child's problems and makes adjustment in a foster home much more difficult.

Since adolescents have more frequent and direct contacts with workers, both because of their age and because the agency program for adolescents facilitates it, their attitude toward the foster family and their foster home adjustment is more easily determined. In this age group more than in any other, the requests for replacement came directly from the child. These requests were generally based on complaints concerning the foster home, usually having little reality, and more often reflecting the child's own anxieties. In some situations the worker was unable to interpret the child's complaints because of the close worker-child identification. In discussing the cases involving adolescents, an analysis of the worker-child relationship was therefore very essential.

One of the cases studied by the Committee which illustrates this point was that of a sixteen year old boy. He had lived in his current foster home for less than one year, although under the agency care for a period of seven years. Prior to placement in this home, the worker resisted its use for the boy. However, since no other foster home was available, he was placed there. At the very beginning of this placement the worker seemed to identify with the boy against the foster family, thus antagon-

izing the foster mother. As in previous placements, the boy complained about the foster family and requested transfer. The complaints were directed primarily against the male members of the family, whom he felt were indifferent toward and uninterested in him. This boy of superior intelligence presented many problems in the foster home, including that of enuresis. A new worker taking over the case was able to give the foster mother acceptance and assurance, thus alleviating the strain and making it possible for the agency to evaluate the total picture more objectively. At the same time, the worker was able to establish a relationship with the boy which resulted in the conclusion that his own anxieties were primarily responsible for his dissatisfaction with the foster home. Further analysis of the boy's situation indicated that he was very much confused about his relationship to his own parents and was baffled over his father's rejection of him.

In addition to the factors already cited, the Committee analyzed the children's problems, family background, and potentialities for growth and treatment. The study revealed that the majority of these children were from psychotic and unstable backgrounds. In sixteen out of the twenty-five cases the parents were found to be psychotic; the others were dull, unstable or feeble-minded. Following foster home placement, it was found that the majority of the natural parents continued to remain in close contact with both children and agency. These very disturbed parents in the community and in contact with the children are a very active force in complicating the children's adjustments. This, therefore, constitutes an important factor in our consideration of the problem of replacement. We found that the presence of these parents was most detrimental in the cases of the older children who were better able to understand the implications of their parents' psychotic condition and, as they grew older, became increasingly fearful of their own futures. This has also been observed among other cases in the agency, and the organization has become conscious of it as a serious problem.

It was found that most of the children, prior to placement, had lived in homes where there was domestic discord, where living conditions were sub-standard, and where they were generally neglected. Hence, at placement, various problems were presented by them, including those of poor habit training, infantile behavior, temper tantrums and excessive masturbation.

In examining the problems presented by the children at the time of placement, the Committee found that in twenty-five per cent of the group studied, dullness constituted a special problem. As the dull group grow older and become more aware of their inherent limitations, their own feelings of inadequacy become a source of unhappiness. The dull children who present problems of an aggressive nature usually require intelligent, careful handling in habit training and general supervision. The type of home that can meet these needs may ultimately tend to be dissatisfied with such children, and they, in turn, cannot help but feel that they are a disappointment to the foster parents. The placement of dull children has been found to be a problem at best, regardless of whether or not they have their own ties.

At the time of consideration for transfer, the Committee found many other problems presented by the children. In the group under six, the predominant problems were those of health, poor habit training, and lack of opportunity for emotional growth. In the six to twelve year old group, there was frequently concern because the child's infantile, demanding, aggressive behavior resulted in a poor social adjustment. Among the adolescents there were cases of neurotic children, with aggressive and provocative behavior. In analyzing the cases of many

of these older children, it was found that they had never been able to accept the separation from their own parents; that as they grew older and were able to contact their parents more easily, the possibility of their adjusting in the foster home became increasingly difficult.

It may be of interest to know the extent to which psychiatric services were necessary in dealing with the problems presented by these children. Nineteen out of the twenty-five children studied had been known to psychiatric and child guidance clinics. In addition, the staff psychiatrist was consulted regarding many of these situations; special therapeutic play groups and camps had to be utilized in order to meet their needs. For the older children special vocational counseling was utilized. In some of the cases intensive psychotherapy was considered but not indicated because of the inherent limitations of such children.

In our study, when discussing children who continually failed to adjust in foster homes because of their limitations and problems, the Committee often questioned whether another type of care could not have met the needs of these children better. However, from this study no significant conclusion could be drawn.

The following case illustrates some of the problems discussed above. It concerns a thirteen year old girl of borderline intelligence who had been known to the agency since the age of seven weeks, when her psychotic and unmarried mother lost complete interest in her. Paternity was never established. As an infant her physical progress was slow, and her further development was complicated by a positive Wasserman and vaginitis. School placement started with a special group to which she reacted with a feeling of inferiority. Poor concentration plus a specific reading disability made school progress slow and difficult. With her tendency to stammer, blinking of her eyelids and hyperactivity, she was at the outset marked as a "nervous" child. Observation revealed a rich fantasy life with regard to her real parents as well

as a special interest in boys, which was followed by an aggressive interest in them at the age of thirteen.

Two attempts were made to give the child a permanent home; first at the age of three, and again at the age of six. Each time the foster parents were disappointed because of her poor school progress and apparent dullness. In the second home, she remained for six years, however, as the foster parents were undecided about giving her up. The agency, doubting that a more accepting home could be found, continued the placement in this home, supplementing the care by special services, such as camp placements, special tutoring, and special recreation programs. The agency was aware, however, that many of the problems presented by the child were due to lack of full acceptance. When the problems of adolescence forced a change, a home was found where this child could be accepted in spite of her dullness. However, the family was baffled by the child as she seemed to be clinging to the previous home. It was at this time that the case was presented to the psychiatrist for further diagnosis. It was suggested that this child was suffering from the trauma of having been shifted about. It was thought that she was sufficiently dull to have been disappointing but sufficiently aware to know that she was disappointing. Her fantasies indicated that she was suffering from lack of love as she never was fully accepted. It was felt that this lack could not be completely made up by foster mother at this time, but the worker, who had a long standing relationship with her could play a very supportive role. The foster mother also would need support in helping this child through adolescence. Her fantasies indicated a condition which it was felt could be helped through psychotherapy. The outlook for this girl was considered favorable as she had reacted positively to certain demands put upon her and in spite of the lack of full acceptance in a foster home, had profited by the many special aids offered through the agency's facilities.

In our study, not only the child's situation but that of the foster family was carefully evaluated. This led to clarification of a problem that workers had been facing in many foster homes, namely, resistance in relation to the agency and its function. One such foster home situation was that of S's, where a child was placed in infancy and remained for eight years. Re-evaluation of the original study revealed the following: At the time of the application, the applicant stated that she was too busy to appear

at the office for an interview and requested that instead a worker see her at her home. At the very outset the relationship between the worker and the family was on a personal level. There was no clarification of "motive" regarding application. Although the applicant specifically requested the placement of an older child in her home, following a temporary placement of such a child, she was given and accepted the placement of an infant.

All members of the family were not seen at the time of original study so that their attitudes were not determined until long after the child had been placed in the home. Although at first the board rate seemed to be acceptable, the foster mother soon began making demands for increases and special considerations. The foster mother did not carry out recommendations or suggestions offered by the clinic, the nurse, and the workers. These factors continued to be present during the eight years of the agency's contact with the foster family, causing the various workers to be anxious concerning the child's development in this home. This emphasizes the importance of evaluating the child's situation not only in and of itself but in relation to the total foster family situation. Although we recognize that, perhaps with few exceptions, the foster family cannot be a substitute for the child's own family when the child's own parents are in the picture, the child living in the foster home is affected by and reacts to that particular family situation. Therefore, in any consideration of either placement or replacement of children in foster homes, one cannot underestimate the importance of a very thorough study and evaluation of the homes involved.

In some instances, although a home was found to be inadequate for one par-

ticular child, it was felt that it might function for another. An illustration of such a case is the L. home, where a brother and sister were living. This twelve year old boy, who presented such problems as running away, stealing and immaturity, although accepted by the foster family, was not being helped toward growth. The foster mother's need to keep him dependent upon her hindered his progress. On the other hand, the sixteen year old sister, who was already a self-sufficient girl, benefited greatly by the foster family's kindness and acceptance.

The Committee found that workers frequently tend to evaluate the child's problems per se without being fully aware of the total picture in the foster family itself. Such a case was that of a foster family in which a disturbed sixteen year old boy lived. The worker felt that the members of this family were not sufficiently interested in the boy. There was no relationship between the boy and the male members of the family, particularly the foster father. It was known that the foster father was in poor health. However, in analyzing the child-foster father relationship, the man's health as a possible serious factor hindering such a relationship was not given due consideration.

In some instances it has been noted that foster homes can serve the agency well for only a limited number of years, but many workers are not sufficiently cognizant of the factors operating as the foster parents continue to age and the home begins to outlive its usefulness to the agency. An example of such a situation is the P. home, which served the agency well over a period of fourteen years. Two boys were reared in this home, one of whom was adopted by the foster parents. However, the placement

of a very young child in this home proved to be unsatisfactory because of the foster mother's present emotional needs, not sufficiently evaluated at the time of the child's placement because it was an emergency. In such situations we plan to use the foster home until a more permanent home is found. However, we are often misled by the initial satisfactory adjustment of the child in the foster home and overlook the original plan to use this home temporarily for the child.

The replacement of infants is a special problem which is related to the lack of sufficient foster homes in the community, and the inability of the agency to make early permanent plans for such children because of the involved family situations. The scarcity of foster homes for infants generally constitutes a serious problem. One of the reasons why it is difficult to secure a sufficient number of homes for infants is that foster parents fear the ultimate separation from such children. In our consideration of replacements, the foster home as a factor was found to be of basic importance.

In our study we have found that the children's inability to adjust in the foster homes is very closely related to their unreadiness to accept separation from their own parents at the time of original placement. At the present time the agency function is such that it must accept the responsibility for practically all Jewish children in the community requiring care away from their homes. The very fact that many of our children come to the agency from the Juvenile Court indicates that little help could be given the children in the process of separation. Our experience has been that it is difficult to work through these problems at a later date because both parents and children continue to resist separation. Fur-

thermore, the court does not use its function as a tool in working through such a plan with the agency. With children referred through other social agencies or by direct application, the matter of careful pre-placement evaluation and planning cannot be underestimated.

In retrospect, let us evaluate the operation and achievements of our "Committee on Replacements." During approximately eighteen months we were able to evaluate and study the cases of twenty-five children, their families and the foster families. In nine cases, replacement was recommended; in nine instances, it was recommended that the children remain in their current foster homes; in seven cases further study and work were recommended for stipulated periods, after which time the cases were to be reviewed by the Committee. In situations where further study was recommended, many new factors were brought out which helped to crystallize the problem and facilitate future planning.

Workers presenting cases before the Committee found that they received help in the clarification of situations, including their own role and the casework direction to be pursued. In many situations workers found that their anxieties were relieved. In the instances where replacement was recommended, workers received help not only in the specific casework steps to be followed in the replacement planning but also in the procedure of carrying out the plan. The Committee's supportive role for workers was very evident.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Our study points to the following conclusions:

1. That the worker's and agency's concern are not always based upon realistic factors in the situation;

2. That the worker's functioning in each situation requires evaluation;
3. That the degree to which replacement can help the child depends upon the family background, the child's own problems, his foster home experiences, and his potentialities for growth and treatment;
4. That a child's prolonged stay in one foster home causes us to be more hesitant in considering transfer;
5. That our planning for replacement is affected by the child's age; and
6. That some children can be served better by other than foster home care, such as special institutions or small treatment homes.

As a result of our study, we should like to emphasize further the importance of pre-placement as related to the problem of transfer and to recommend more careful and skillful diagnosis of situations at the time of intake, as well as the need for the determination, prior to placement, of the readiness and ability of parents and children to accept separation.

Our findings concerning foster homes would suggest:

First, that there is need to develop greater skill in the study of foster homes and in our diagnosis of their use;

Second, that it is important to continue to re-evaluate these homes as we work with them, being fully aware of new factors as they appear in the situations; and

Third, that it is necessary that workers recognize the importance of their own role in the development of the potentialities of the foster families with which they function.

We should like to comment further that the role of the workers in an agency similar to ours, where we act *in loco parentis*, is different from that of workers in other types of social agencies and requires special consideration. Workers who must assume the type of responsibility involved in such a relationship are necessarily more concerned about the welfare of the children. It is natural, too, for workers to feel frustrated when children under their supervision do not receive the type of care they would wish for them. The relationship between the worker and child was found to be of paramount importance in the cases of adolescent children.

From this discussion we can see that the problem of replacement is a complicated one, pointing to the need for continued study and evaluation of all aspects of child placement.