

A PLAN FOR EXTRA INSTITUTIONAL CARE OF FEEBLE-MINDED GIRLS

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The higher type of feeble-minded girl can be trained to work well under supervision. At the Institution we have girls who can sew well, do housework well, help in the kitchens, help dress and feed the children, etc. In 1919 we had many of these girls who could work well but who were dissatisfied. Without any future, except continued residence in an Institution, is very discouraging to a feeble-minded adolescent or adult. Because of this outlook there didn't seem to be much incentive to work well or behave well, if there was to be no extra compensation. Discontent resulted and behavior problems arose which were not easily coped with. A possible solution appeared when it was decided to try one of the most troublesome girls as well as the best worker, in a downtown hospital. This girl seemed a good possibility because she had an I. Q. of .90. She justified the belief in her ability by making good for two years, 3 months, when she was discharged to relatives. Since we had success with a very troublesome girl, we decided to parole others who were good workers, of our highest group of mentality, and who, considering all factors, we felt would make good. In 1919 two girls were paroled, and the number increased until in 1924 we had 77 on parole.

The plan as carried out at Lincoln is as follows: Hospitals or private homes that desire a girl for housework, or similar work, apply to the managing officer. He interviews the applicants and chooses the girls who are to go. Girls who are good workers at the Institution and who behave well here, or who he thinks will behave well when out, are the ones who are paroled. Instructions and advice are given prospective employers and also the patient. The salary for the girls is \$3.50 a week including room and board, except if they are to be employed on a farm, where because of the harder work, they are to get \$4.00 a week including room and board. The girl is paroled for an indefinite time, good behavior being the criterion of the length of her stay. If the employer is dissatisfied with the work or behavior of the girl he can return her.

If, for any reason, the girl does not like her place she may come back. The employer comes for the girl and also returns her. The wages of the girl are put in our trust fund to her credit. Her clothing and pin money are taken out of her account. As a rule the girls get from \$1 to \$5 a month for spending money. The minimum chronological age of the girls sent out is 18 years.

In order to find out, definitely, just how our plan is working, we sent questionnaires to the girls' employers, and these, together with our records, constitute the basis of our statement of results. This study is based on an analysis of the records of 151 girls who have been on parole for some time during the last five years. We divided these 151 girls into 4 groups, somewhat arbitrarily and yet in order of their ability to make good. The first group consists of 60 girls who have been on parole and have never been returned, that is, they are making good, and we have not had to recall them to the Institution. The second group consists of 18 girls who have been returned to Lincoln but at the present time are out working again. The third group consist of 42 girls. These were out to work but proved unsatisfactory, were returned to Lincoln and are here at the present time. The fourth group consists of girls who were out to work but have now left the Institution, that is, they are either on parole to their own homes, on escape, or have been discharged. This group consists of 31 girls. We will discuss our results in terms of these 4 groups.

The factors that we believe would have an influence on the patients' ability to make good are: mental age, chronological age, behavior of patient while in the Institution, and the length of stay in the Institution previous to being paroled. We find the following results:

1. As to mental age
 - a. Of the first group, those who are on parole and have never been returned,
 - 39% had an I. Q. of less than .50.
 - 61% had an I. Q. of .50 or more.
 - b. Of those in the second group,
 - 33% had an I. Q. of less than .50.
 - 67% had an I. Q. of .50 or more.

- c. Of the third group,
 - 52% had an I. Q. of less than .50.
 - 48% had an I. Q. of .50 or more.
- d. The fourth group,
 - 24% had an I. Q. of less than .50.
 - 76% had an I. Q. of .50 or more.

We find, then, that the chances for getting along on parole are better for the moron than the imbecile.

- 2. As to chronological age,
 - a. The median age of the 1st group is 27 years.
 - b. The median age of the 2nd group is 25.5 years.
 - c. The median age of the 3rd group is 24 years.
 - d. The median age of the 4th group is 20.5 years.

In general then, the older girl makes good on her initial trial. The younger girl needs more than one trial before she can adjust properly.

3. In considering the behavior of the patient while in the Institution, we find that girls who behave well here, and also did their work well, were able to do the same when on parole. If they behaved badly here but yet were excellent workers, they came second in ability to make good. But those who were well behaved but only fair workers here were incapable of making good when paroled. Employers would tolerate a good worker even tho badly behaved in preference to a poor worker but well behaved.

4. Regarding the fourth factor as to length of stay of a patient in the Institution previous to being paroled, it was found that those of group one had been in the institution the longest. Group 2 came second in length of stay here. Since the majority of these girls are working in hospitals which are in themselves institutions, we would expect the more highly institutionalized girl to get along better. Other factors, such as previous training in housework before coming here and the fact that the patient has children in Lincoln for whom she might want to buy a few extras, would help her get along better on the outside.

As a summary of the factors influencing the patient's ability to make good we may say first, that the girl with an I. Q. of .50 or above, has the better chance; second, the older girl makes good the first time, the younger

girl needs a change of place before making a good adjustment; third, if a patient behaves well while in the institution, she will also behave well when on parole; and fourth, girls who have been at the Institution longer get along better when placed out to work.

Our primary consideration in sending girls out to work was because it made them more contented. We thought they would be happier earning their own living, and having nicer clothes, and money to spend which they could not have at the Institution. We find that the girls are happier and consider going out to work a privilege. But we now find that in addition to the girls' greater contentment, there is an economic advantage to our plan. We will give the figures which will make this advantage self evident. The total amount of money saved while the girls were on parole, exclusive of 13 accounts which are of girls that have been transferred to other Institutions or have not been settled, is distributed as follows:

Group 1	\$7,363.34
Group 2	1,363.74
Group 3	1,841.80
Group 4	1,745.59

The grand total is \$12,314.47. Besides this money that they have saved, they have paid for their clothes and other incidentals and have earned their board and room. While these girls are on parole they do not cost the State anything. The average cost per capita of clothing, feeding, and housing a patient at Lincoln is about \$285. We have estimated roughly that these girls while on parole save the tax payers a lump sum of \$51,000.

Our plan, then, altho in an experimental stage, justifies its existence both as to the greater happiness it gives our girls and also its economic value.