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# Pot Pourri

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## SEMINAR IN RESIDENTIAL CARE

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In conjunction with the publication of "Residential Child Care, a Manual of Practice", the Residential Child Care Advisory Committee in South Australia has arranged a series of seminars on themes raised in the manual. The seven seminars commenced in August and will run through to December. Topics being covered are:

- Behaviour Management of Children in Care
- Sexual Development of Children
- Educational Needs of Children in Care
- Religion and the Child in Care
- Working with Families of Children in Care
- Outreach Work
- The Residential Care Process

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## POVERTY PAMPHLETS

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Two pamphlets on poverty have been issued by a Melbourne welfare agency, the Mission of St. James and St. John.

"Poverty in Australia — Fantasy and Reality" is a concise resource paper covering the facts on poverty in Australia drawn from the Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Poverty headed by Prof. Ronald Henderson. "Poverty in Australia" is an activity guide for children related to the former document. Both are available from the Mission at 8 Batman Street, West Melbourne, Vic., 3003.

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## FOSTER CARE

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In addition to its monthly newsletter "Caring", the New South Wales Association of Child Caring Agencies is progressively issuing a series of discussion papers on matters of interest to the Child Care field. Included in these is "Planned Foster Care", a discussion paper on the needs of children and young people presently in non-government residential care or at risk in the state of New South Wales. The paper was prepared by a working party on foster care comprising staff members of six agencies, with consultants from the Department of Youth and Community Services and the North Ryde Psychiatric Centre.

The discussion papers, and other information about the N.S.W. Association of Child Caring Agencies are available from the Association, P.O. Box 2244, North Parramatta, N.S.W., 2151.

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## ACCESS TO INFORMATION BY BRITISH ADOPTEES

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Section 26 of the U.K. Children Act 1975 made provision for an adopted adult to receive information about the record of his/her birth. This provision was retrospective. Because adoption arrangements under the previous Adoption Act had been entered into by both the adopters and the natural parents on the understanding that the children would not be given access to their birth records, the 1975 Act requires that all adopted adults must be counselled before receiving the information.

However, as the law stands at present, the Registrar General has no power to arrange counselling to take place outside Great Britain. This is proving a difficulty for persons in Australia who were adopted in Britain, and who are now seeking information regarding their origin. They have been informed that information cannot be given to them under the Act unless they can arrange to travel to Britain for counselling. British authorities have indicated that there is no way in which the counselling pre-requisite could be made available in Australia under the Act.

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However, enquirers have been informed that, if an adopted person has been told by his adopters sufficient information to identify the record of his birth, it is open for him to apply for a certified copy of that entry.

Further enquiries can be made to:

The Registrar General  
General Register Office  
St. Catherine's House  
10 Kingsway  
London WC2B6JP U.K.

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## IYC CONFERENCE

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The IYC unit in the Department of Social Security are planning a national conference to be held in Canberra from the 16-19th March 1979.

The conference is planned to attract a broad cross section of participants and will focus on four themes.

The rights of the child  
Children with special needs  
Child development  
New approaches to programs

Overseas speakers will be Professor Ragnar Berfenstam (Sweden) and Gisela Konopka (U.S.A.).

Information regarding the Conference is available from:

IYC Unit  
Department of Social Security,  
P.O. Box 1,  
Woden  
ACT. 2606

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## COURT HELPS FAMILY SEPARATION PROBLEM

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The Melbourne "Age" reports that the Family Law Court is setting up a course to help separated parents communicate better with their children.

Ms. Robyn Weir, the Family Court counsellor who organised the course, is worried about the special problems that both access and custodial parents have with their children. She is concerned about the emotional problems of children when they are swapped from week to week to each parent. One parent would be better for the child, psychologically she said, as long as the other parent had some form of access to the child. "Often the child would just like to be split down the middle," she said. "But rather than giving both parents equal amounts of time, it would be better if one parent took over. Parents have to look at the needs of the child, rather than their own needs."

The seven-week course, which is called "Communicating with Children", started on October 4. Ms Weir said some of the topics covered in the course would be the purpose of children's misbehaviour, their uses of emotion helping children solve their own problems, communicating a parent's needs to the child and mutual problem solving. She said people often had difficulties with children when they saw them only on weekends or for any limited amount of time.

"The child is often upset about going with either parent because he feels he will hurt the other's feelings. This is the biggest problem. Children are so worried about their parents' feelings and it makes them so vulnerable," she said.

Ms Weir said some parents even told their children they were going shopping when they dropped them off at the Family Law Court creche on their way to applying for a divorce. "These children are totally unprepared for what is about to happen to them," she said. At the other extreme some children are so well prepared for the divorce between their parents, that they were sick of talking about what would happen to them. "Just tell us where to go," was the reaction from some of these better informed children, she said.

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## CONSUMERS VIEW ON CHILD CARE

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The Children's Welfare Association of Victoria has published a brief study of the attitudes of families who have been the recipients of child welfare services in Victoria. The objectives of the study were to assess the quality of some welfare services as seen by their users, and to identify practical methods to improve the quality, and thereby, the effectiveness of these programmes.

Nineteen clients were interviewed most of whom had contact with children's homes and related services. A large number of changes to existing welfare services were recommended by this group of consumers in the following areas:

- make them better known
- make them easier to use
- make them easier to get to
- people should be given what they need
- people should have a say
- agencies should work together better
- services should be made more effective