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Teenagers

Do teenagers have needs that are special to that age? Delys Sargeant, Peter Kueffer, and David Lancaster think they do, and at a Melbourne seminar on July 21, will explore questions which commonly concern those living or working with teenagers. Delys Sargeant is Director, Social Biology Resources Centre; Peter Kueffer works in the area of Pupil Welfare, Secondary Schools Division, Victorian Education Department; and David Lancaster is a consultant Psychiatrist.

Some of the issues which the speakers have found important in their work are:

What happens at School? — expectations of teenagers — kids rights.

The "Me" Generation — hedonism vs social responsibility — which does the system promote? — my body and me. How do we promote or demolish the self esteem of a young person?

Teenagers and Parents — the power struggle - the need to break away.

The seminar is designed for youth workers, welfare workers, clergy, teachers, health care personnel and others who work with young people. Between them they have a wealth of experience which it is hoped they will share during the discussion.

Enquiries:

The Centre for Continuing Education,
Monash University,
CLAYTON. VIC. 3168

CRESWICK FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIP IN FAMILY RELATIONS AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

With the increasing complexities of rearing children in industrial urban societies, especially those with a disability, many families are unable to provide adequate nurture for their children and as a result many grow up with varying degrees of helath, educational, or social handicaps or a combination of them. Early recognition and support of such families can often do much to prevent the development of these handicaps.

Applications are invited from educationalists, nurses, social workers, psychiatrists and psychologists and other professional persons who are experienced and working in this field to further their knowledge by study in an approved centre overseas for a period of approximately 3 months. One or two short visits to other centres would also be acceptable.

Applicants will be expected to have contributed in some aspect in this field, be able to indicate how they wish to extend their knowledge and how they plan to use this experience in training or teaching on return.

Financial support up to \$7,500 Aust. In addition the Foundation will pay the return economy fare. Application forms may be obtained from:—

THE CRESWICK FOUNDATION

C/- Mr. R. Kimpton,
404 Glenferrie Road,
Kooyong, Vic. 3144

CLOSING DATE: 31st July, 1980

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACTION — N.S.W.

In-service training sessions for staff in the residential child care field are being sponsored by the N.S.W. Association of Child Caring Agencies. Proposed topics include "National Parent Relationships", "Using the Media", "Burnout", "For New Workers to the Child Care Field", "Networking", and "Interpersonal Relations — Staff Management". The October 13th session will be led by

Fr. Felix Donnelly from New Zealand, and will centre on Adolescent/Youth Workers.

The 1980 A.C.C.A. Conference, "Working with Children and Adolescents in a Residential Setting", will be held at the Carrington Hotel, Katoomba, September 15 — 19. The Conference leader will be Dr. Naomi I. Rae Grant, M.B., F.R.C. Psych., F.R.C.P.(C), of the Chedoke Child and Family Centre, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

Enquiries:

N.S.W. Association of Child Caring Agencies,
P.O. Box 2244,
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N.S.W. Government Announces Child Care Finance

In a statement issued on May 5, the Premier of N.S.W., Mr. Neville Wran, announced new financial assistance to help foster parents and non-Government agencies providing substitute care for children.

Mr. Wran said the \$25 per week paid to agencies for children in care would now be paid to foster parents and the one month qualification period for the allowance would be eliminated.

Previously the allowance had only been paid to foster parents when the child had been committed by Court Order.

"This is in line with the Labour Government's policy of ensuring that wherever possible, children are placed in family situations rather than institutions."

"The Government has a continuing concern with the welfare of children at risk and in the interests of these children we must work together to see that their needs are properly satisfied."

The Department of Youth and Community Services will administer

the new benefits which will come into effect immediately.

As a further measure the Premier also announced that a Task Force would be established to look at facilities and needs in the caring of children and a view to planning future services for Government and voluntary agencies involved in caring for children.

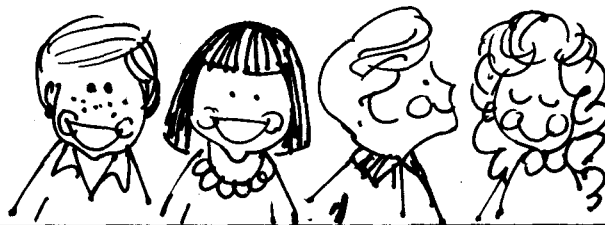
The five member Task Force will be convened by the Department of Youth and Community Services and will look at the location of facilities in relation to need and the pattern of non-Government services. It will comprise representatives of:—

1. The Residential Care Division of the Department of Youth and Community Services.
2. The Association of Child Caring Agencies.
3. The Premier's Department.
4. The Community — a person involved in caring for children.
5. A person who has academic qualifications and practical or research experience in this field.

The Task Force will report on alternatives to present per capita assistance.

Peter Quirk, Executive Director of the N.S.W. Association of Child Caring Agencies welcomed the Premier's announcement as a sign that the government was working to develop funding arrangements based on sound child care principles. Mr. Quirk stated that the members of his association, in responding to the Premier's announcement must:

- ★ Work further to extend our standards of quality foster care into a Families Helping Families Network.
- ★ Staff and maintain emergency care facilities and wherever possible move to accept family groups.
- ★ Co-operate fully to integrate access to our services with the statutory requirements of the Department of Youth and Community Services.
- ★ Stand firm on the question of STANDARDS and QUALITY, so that we all look not only to the cost benefits of a co-joint planned service but we use available resources and skills to provide the best for those most in need.



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CARDINAL RULES IN WORKING WITH CHILDREN

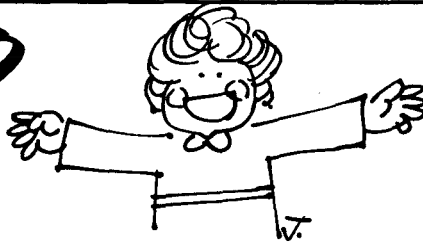
- 1) Avoid cliches in conversations with children. Most adults are uneasy in talking with children and sprinkle their conversations with innocuous questions ("... how do you like school?") or gratuitous comments ("... you must like living here!"). Children are adept in sensing the uneasiness of adults who do not know how to talk with them. Take your time. Use simple and direct language.
- 2) Assume that any child experiencing placement has deep concerns which have never been adequately explored. Such children have lost a succession of caretakers, parents, family members, foster parents, institutional workers. With few exceptions, the children have had no opportunity to understand what has happened. It is always safer to assume that no one has adequately assessed the deep and often confused concerns of the child assigned to you.
- 3) understand that all children in care have been damaged. There is often the temptation to believe that a particular child is "unscathed" by chaotic life experiences. While it is true that individual children react differently to stress, it is unwise to conclude that the child displaying no apparent difficulty has been untouched by events. Anxiety, strain, and confusion often emerge much later in behaviours never before demonstrated.
- 4) Learn how the child explains himself and his situation to himself and others. Unless you have good basic understanding of his self image, you

THE LONE FATHER AND HIS CHILD — REFERENCES from page 40.

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will not be able to represent him fairly to potential parents and caretakers. Knowing the child and his perception of self is an important part of the assessment process which is the first step in making the placement plan.

5) Develop specific concrete tools to help you in communicating with children. While discussion is a form of communication, in working with children visual and auditory tools provide the framework for discussion and reinforce the communication.

6) Become a dependable, predictable and regular fixture in the life of the child during your work with him. Your working relationship will be largely determined by the level of trust you generate. Even if caseload pressures do not permit frequent contacts you can schedule visits carefully and focus on your appropriate role and function.

7) Remember that each child's experience is unique. Even if brothers or sisters lived together, their individual perceptions and reactions will be different. Your own cumulative experiences, while valuable, cannot be generalized. Make no assumptions which cannot be altered in terms of the child's individuality.

8) Commit your skills to the development of a multi-faceted or composite view of each child. Critical contributors to your composite view are the child, his care-taker(s), teachers, therapist, social workers, and the complete written record.

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