

# KIDS AND HOMES

**Varieties of Residential Experience**, Tizard, J., Sinclair, I., Clarke, R.V.G. (eds) Pp. XIII, 290, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1975, 6.50.

This book gathers together ten studies of residential institutions for children and young people, consisting of carefully and painstakingly executed empirical studies. The perspectives lean for the most part on sociological frameworks and thus follow in the footsteps of recent work. In particular the publication of the researches in the residential care of mentally handicapped children, **Patterns of Residential Care**, by King, Raynes and Tizard (1971) set the trend which was welcomed by many who were beginning to give some thought to the impact made by organisational factors in the care of such children.

The contributors to this volume are in the main, already well known researchers although new names like Peter Moss and Pat Cawson can be counted as coming from a new generation of researchers and on this showing we can expect to see some solid contributions from them in the future.

A few of the studies centre on the one-time designated Approved School now supposedly submerged in the Community Homes system. How much the school remains the school is however indicated by the work of Kevin Heal and Pat Cawson. The continuing use of the school model in these institutions retains a structure and regime at variance with what these establishments are expected to deliver today. Change imposed from the outside cannot be expected simply to be supported by those who work and often have worked for a long time in an essentially school situation. In another chapter, R.G.V. Clarke and D.N. Martin, in a study of absconding that goes on in a well-known approved school, now community home, (naturally not identified by name in the text itself) are pessimistic about the use of such

establishments in preventing future delinquencies. Far better, they say, to put your resources to modifying the social and economic conditions in the community which establish and maintain delinquent behaviour, or at least do more extensive work in the families, schools and work places of these offenders. Once they get to Approved School, it is really too late. It's a tall order though to expect that to work, maybe we could do better by redefining delinquent behaviour. It is of interest to note incidentally, that these two researchers shifted their stance of perspective from the theory of the internal causality of behaviour to an environmental/learning theory view (p.249) in the course of their work. It is good to know that they were willing to let their research experience guide them in such an important matter, a nice change from those 'idee fixe types' who start out with a theoretical frame to which the findings must be fitted, come what may.

Tadeusz Grygier's contribution consists of the application and validation of his Measure of Treatment Potential (M.T.P.). This is a measure of the extent of staff ward clearance or conversely the degree of correspondence of attitudes and goals. The success of this measure helped in establishing predictions which could be made about later,

adult criminality. So much so that it led to the Ontario Training Schools Act 1965, "the first law in Canada and possibly in the world, based on empirical research" (p. 162). Grygier does not discuss the ethical implication or the use made of the predictions so it is difficult to know whether to welcome them or not. I recall we had these arguments about the Gluecks' work fifteen years ago.

Contributions by Barbara Tizard on residential nursery experience, Ian Sinclair on the influence of wardens and matrons on the running of Probation Hostels and the measurement of staff-child interaction in units for autistic children by Lawrence Bartak and Michael Rutter, all underline the importance of staff regimes and staff-child ratios in the progress made by the youngsters. The fullest discussions on sociological concepts and theory in the book come from Spencer Millham, Roger Bullock and Paul Cherrett. This comes in the course of recounting their researches into schools, ranging from the public prep school to the modern, progressive school, concentrating on formal and informal systems and in particular on instrumental, expressive and organisational goals. Above all they show that social scientific research is a tough assignment. No one method can be said to be paramount, there

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is a message in it for the experimental researcher.

"The approach we have offered . . . enshrines all the problems of sociological theory. At one level the concepts add sophistication to a cosy, fact-gathering empiricism while allowing at another level inter-relationships to be drawn between components of the social structure." (p. 247)

### "Comparative Studies"

This is an important book, not for the layman to be sure — it is too advanced, but for policy makers, child welfare professionals, administrators and of course students.

The editors press for comparative studies in residential establishments.

Their very variety, numbers, purposes, and auspices make this desirable. Peter Moss, in his overview of residential care of children, notes that there are 4,278 residential units alone in the fields of child care, education and hospital; to say nothing of facilities for adults. Few of them appear to operate alike but some are clearly run better and offer more satisfying experiences to their users than others. And why are some so much better? Well, of course, that is why we instigate research, we want to find out. The fact that the literature in this field is beginning to expand is to be wholly welcomed. In child care, especially during the "Bowlby period", residential care was demoted in the hierarchy of care alternatives. Now perhaps, with the aid of studies such as those here presented, we can start taking a less jaundiced view and begin to sort out those that can be made to be useful from those which cannot. What is particularly pleasing too about these researches is that they are pieces of applied research, problem-centred, with the implicit, if not actually explicit, objectives of making the world for some less-fortunates a better place.

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## "Kids with Learning problems"

### THE CHILD WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND GUIDANCE ANDERSON, Robert P.

Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company 1970 pp. 83

Over the last decade or so there has been an increasing interest shown, both by lay and professional persons, in the field of learning disability. Despite all the attention devoted to research, assessment and development of remedial procedures the area of learning disability remains one characterised by confusion and disagreement amongst workers in the field.

The author's purpose in writing this book is to provide counsellors and teachers with an overview of learning disabilities. In a book of this size it is impossible to adequately cover the topic, and the author's bias towards a clinically oriented view of learning disabilities with a neuropsychogenic explanation, to a degree, prevent the author's aim being achieved.

### "Learning Disability"

The book is divided into five chapters with the initial chapter dealing with the difficulties involved in the use of the label "learning disability". Anderson notes that there are presently at least 50 descriptive labels in current use to describe the learning disability syndrome. He briefly discusses medical aspects of the learning disability syndrome and describes disorders of learning in the areas of language development, reading, written language, arithmetic, perceptual motor development and behavioural-emotional characteristics of children with a minimal

brain dysfunction which the author equates with learning disability.

The second chapter describes the process of diagnosis and evaluation and describes some of the more commonly used tests — W.I.S.C., Bender Gestalt Test of Visual Perception, I.T.P.A. and tests of achievement. The important role of the early grade teacher is pointed out in recognizing the child with a learning disability.

### Vote

The role of the counsellor is looked at in three areas — interpretation to, and counselling of parents and teachers; working with the child; and co-ordinating consultant services. Some of the difficulties involved in working in these areas are discussed and an attempt is made to describe three frameworks for interpretation —

1. neurological-maturational.
2. psychogenic, and
3. neuropsychogenic.

In the fourth and fifth chapters various ways of providing remedial educational opportunities and vocational planning are discussed. The suggestions offered regarding goals and principles in program development appear to be appropriate for all children. The mastery of facts and abilities to enable the student to survive in a competitive society, the use of the classroom as an ego building therapeutic tool, the school serving as a reality dispenser are concepts equally applicable to all schools and children.

Despite the author's bias, previously noted, and the almost total lack of discussion regarding the usefulness or otherwise of the label "learning disability" or "minimal brain dysfunction" this book does provide a useful introduction to the area of learning disability for teachers and other professionals.

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