

A STUDY OF THE PERSONALITY ADJUSTMENT
OF CHILDREN FROM BROKEN HOMES

by

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B. S., Kansas State University, 1951
B. S., Kansas State University, 1954

A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

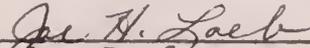
MASTER OF SCIENCE

School of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1964

Approved by:


Major Professor

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INTRODUCTION

The past half century has been a period of great social and industrial change in America. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the resulting social disorders are reflected in American family life. The American family is characterized by weakness, mainly that marriages are easily--and rather frequently--broken. Why do we have in this country and in this day the highest incidence in the world of broken homes due to separation and divorce? "The present high divorce rate is a concomitant of the general state of American society."¹ This family disintegration reflects an unstable state of the social order and, at the same time, tends to produce still further social disorganization. "The unstable family is both a result and a cause of social instability."²

In recent years counselors, educators, and psychologists have shown a growing interest in the relationship between the marital adjustment of parents and the emotional disturbances and personality problems of their children. As that marital adjustment has disintegrated, they have become more deeply concerned with the possible effects on mental health and juvenile behavior.

It has long been accepted that the individual child receives the most enduring and personality-shaping impact from his early family experience. Bossard stated that the family is the first

¹ Marion B. Smith, Survey of Social Science, p. 184.

² Ibid., p. 197.

society in which the child lives and is the "most powerful in changing original nature into the socialized personality."¹

He further noted that:

The family does more than merely transmit the culture . . . it selects from existing surroundings what is transmitted; it interprets to the child what is transmitted; and it evaluates what is transmitted. . . . The result of this selective and evaluating process on the part of the family is the formation of the child's sense of value, in regard to both personal pursuits and social behavior.²

Because life is varied and complex, personality development is a constant series of choices. These choices represent the person's values, and these values are in large part the results of family conditioning. Froehlich and Darley contended that no study of the student is complete unless his family background is taken into account. His family relationships are so closely related to many of his values and ways of behaving that they exert a correspondingly greater influence on him than even the school influence.³

There is a popular belief that, as a result of family disorganization, children from broken homes exhibit greater emotional and personality problems in their school lives than children from unbroken homes. This is only a belief, however. The obstacles to conducting scientifically sound intra-family studies are so

¹ James H. S. Bossard, The Sociology of Child Development, p. 52.

² Ibid., pp. 131-132.

³ Clifford P. Froehlich and John G. Darley, Studying Students, p. 10.

great there is little factual material available. As the United States Children's Bureau concluded, "Family life is such an intimate and private affair that it will take very delicate measuring devices indeed to get to the heart of it."¹

Statement of the Problem

It was the purpose of this report to determine, through a study of available literature: (1) if children from broken homes actually have more emotional disturbances and personality adjustments than those from non-broken homes; (2) if children from broken homes are more liable to juvenile delinquency and mental health problems; and (3) some ways teachers may help children from broken homes adjust to their problems, and ways in which they can prepare themselves to cope with the problems of these children.

Importance of the Problem

Whether there actually are more emotional disturbances and personality problems among children of broken homes than among those who have both parents, thus becomes a basic issue.

"Earlier writers in the area of social problems assumed that broken homes had a harmful effect on children, and this assumption was--and in many cases still is--reflected in the popular literature."² Current professional writers likewise assume that

¹ United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Your Child from 6 to 12, p. 87.

² William M. Kephart, The Family, Society, and the Individual, p. 632.

children from broken homes, particularly adolescents, have more problems. Some studies to date, however, have reported no significant differences between children from the broken and non-broken homes. It therefore seemed important to seek additional evidence as to the facts of the matter in order to have a sound basis for remedial measures.

Method of Procedure

This investigation of the emotional and personality adjustment of children from broken homes was carried out through library research. All available books, pamphlets, and periodicals in the main library of Kansas State University, the Washburn University Library, and the Topeka Public Library were studied.

Definition of Terms

Emotional Maladjustment. Interference with the satisfaction of natural drives; frustrations; and aggressive tendencies which produce a state of tension or nervous symptoms.

Personality Adjustment. The achievement of a balance of fundamental organic and psychological needs satisfactory to a human being, who, for the most part, conceives of himself as an individual separate from other individuals and objects.

Broken Home. The family unit which has lost a father or mother by separation, divorce, desertion, death, or the prolonged absence of one or the other.¹

¹ Martin H. Neumeier, Juvenile Delinquency in Modern Society, p. 160.

Juvenile Delinquency. A single act or "repeated acts of a kind which when committed by persons beyond the statutory juvenile court age of sixteen are punishable as crimes."¹

Family Disorganization. "A breakdown of unity, loyalty, consensus, and the normal functioning of the family unit."²

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Home Environment and the School

Socialization. Any review of literature will show that the give-and-take of a family group is basic to the success of a child in school. A child is not born a human being. He is born with the potential to become one. Only through interaction with others will he become sufficiently human to take his place in society. This process is called "Socialization." The whole process is so gradual and delicate that it is difficult to grasp and appreciate the changes involved in an infant's becoming a social adult.³ Therefore, a more thorough understanding of the nature of socialization must be gained to understand the American family's role in the socialization of its young.

Socialization is the process of learning the group's mores and standards and learning to conform to them, of learning the group's traditions, of becoming imbued with a sense of oneness with the group, and of

¹ Sheldon Glueck and Eleanor Glueck, Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency, p. 13.

² Martin H. Neumeyer, Juvenile Delinquency in Modern Society, p. 160.

³ William F. Kenkel, The Family in Perspective, p. 225.

doing all of this to a degree sufficient to command at least the tolerance of one's fellow men. . . . Socialization is thus education in its broadest sense; it includes all of the results of learning from other people, whether the learning takes place formally or informally and, indeed, whether or not the teacher and the learner know that it is happening.¹

The family must realize how important socialization is and that no child could long endure if it were not performed. There are various cases on record which show what happens when socialization does not take place or breaks down. Kenkel described the case of the "wolf-girls" of India, who were found by a missionary and given the names Amala and Kamala. They had a complete lack of human traits. They could not stand erect or walk. They moved either by running on all fours or by crawling on their knees. They showed extreme fear in the presence of humans. They did not use their hands to take food but lowered their mouths to the plate on the floor and would eat from the same plate with dogs if not prevented from doing so. Even under the affectionate and patient care of Mrs. Singh, it was three years before Kamala said her first word and could stand erect. She never did learn to run except on all fours. It was only after six years of captivity that she began to desire to be clothed.²

No one is sure how long Kamala lived with the wolves, although the presumption is that it had been since early infancy. Although nothing was known of her hereditary background, the case furnished an awareness of the importance of human contact in the

¹ William F. Kenkel, The Family in Perspective, p. 225.

² Ibid., pp. 227-228.

early years of life in order to develop into a normal social being.

There are also other cases on record in which children from infancy have been locked up and isolated with but a minimum of human contact. Davis described the case of Isabelle, who was illegitimate and was locked with her deaf-mute mother in a dark room of the mother's parental home. When Isabelle was discovered at the age of six and a half, she could scarcely make a sound and it was difficult to determine whether or not she could hear. "Her behavior toward strangers, especially men, was almost that of a wild animal, manifesting much fear and hostility."¹ She was believed to be feeble-minded.

A program of training was begun for Isabelle. After a slow start, she developed very rapidly. Within two years her speech and mental development were judged normal. She entered grade school and within a few years it was reported that she was doing well and participating in all school activities.²

This case shows how far from being socialized a normal human being is when kept from human interaction. It shows, too, that even six years of isolation does not eliminate the possibility of becoming a socialized being with proper treatment.

These studies show the vast amount of learning from others that is needed in the production of a social being. They also show clearly what happens when an individual is not socialized.

¹ Kingsley Davis, "Final Note on a Case of Extreme Isolation," American Journal of Sociology 52:436, March, 1947.

² Ibid.

If then the human personality is dependent on socialization, it is reasonable to suppose that the nature of personality would be related to the nature or content of socialization and other environmental factors. The family, as the basic unit in society, must have a role in the process. For the family has a unique advantage in being the first cultural agent to attempt to socialize the child. Almost every day for eighteen year or longer the child spends part of his time with the family.

Never again in his life will the individual be as pliable or as malleable as he is at the time that his family receives him. . . . The child will never be more susceptible to being shaped or molded, or for that matter warped or twisted.¹

Family Development. It is essential to understand the vital process of family life in the same way one attempts to study a particular child.

Ackerman stressed that health in family living is related to the balance of family values and functions, which provide a congenial setting for child rearing. When family relations and the potentials of growth are impaired, this domestic failure may result in social and mental disorders.²

So important is the family to the child's welfare that Freud and Burlingham, in their study of children reared apart from their parents during World War II, concluded that it was generally emotionally disastrous for children to be suddenly removed from

¹ William F. Kenkel, The Family in Perspective, p. 237.

² Nathan W. Ackerman, Preventive Implications of Family Research, p. 146.

their usual physical surroundings and usual family contacts and placed in other settings, no matter how kind and conscientious the substitute parent-figures were. They related the family setting of the child to his character development by contending:

Even the secure and uninterrupted relationship of a small child to his parents is full of conflicts, disappointments and unfulfilled longings. The child wants to possess father and mother exclusively and in every sense of the word, which it cannot do. . . . The first family setting is the framework within which the instincts and emotions of the child grope towards their first objects. The child can never completely possess these objects, but in this first display of its feelings it learns "to love," to cope with its instinctual forces and thus lay the foundations for its character formation, a process which entails a great deal of discomfort.¹

Gruenberg recognized parents as the chief molders of children's attitudes and values. The attitudes of a child's mother and father toward school and life in general are of prime importance in the child's learning processes.²

Interrelationship of Home and School. In the modern setting of home and school there should be no boundaries drawn between the two; parents give informal education at home; teachers give the more formal education at school. The United States Children's Bureau recognized the inter-community of interest between family and school life and stated:

School is life, nowadays, and the education that a child is getting at home is an inseparable part of that life. As subject-matter boundaries are broken

¹ Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham, Infants Without Families, p. 61.

² Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg, "Our Children Learn at Home," Childhood Education 36:160, December, 1959.

down, so the dividing line between home and school should be broken, too.¹

A child's home, his school and community, and his culture work together to establish values, provide stability, and stimulate growth toward helping him with emotional problems and personality adjustments.

Certain conditions, such as parents being away from home, do affect the learning process of the child at school. Rouman investigated school children's problems as related to parental factors. Data from some four hundred case studies were analyzed in terms of four categories: (1) mothers employed full-time away from the home; (2) children living with step-parents or guardians; (3) homes in which the adult male was absent; and (4) those involving none of these conditions. All categories were used to make referrals for school guidance services, but category one contributed one-fourth of the referrals, the youngest children being affected most. It is interesting to note, however, that younger children were less affected by the absence of the male parent than were the older children. Furthermore, younger children also appeared better able to adjust to step-parent and guardian situation than did the older children. In the control group, where none of these conditions were present, the concentration of school children's problems was at the younger ages.²

¹ United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Your Child from 6 to 12, p. 50.

² Jack Rouman, "School Children's Problems as Related to Parental Factors," Journal of Educational Research 50:105, 112, October, 1956.

Family Disorganization

The family, through its previously-mentioned role in the socialization of the child, provides the natural bridge between forces of culture such as the school and the internal mechanism of personality. When those cultural forces overwhelm a child, it is to the family that he retreats. Bossard contended that the family is today more than ever before the "final refuge" for those who find little security elsewhere.¹ For this reason family disorganization resulting from such factors as broken homes wreaks emotional havoc upon children by depriving them of that refuge.

Though LaPiere and Farnsworth admitted that "the only safe generalization that can be made regarding the modern family is that no two will be very much alike," they insisted that the modern family is not a system at all and hence fails to provide that natural refuge.² They wrote:

It is no more than the fragments of a system that has become shattered by the forces of social change. As one consequence, the modern family frequently malprepares its children for the situation to which they must subsequently adjust.³

Ackerman pictured the relationship between cultural disharmony and family instability or disorganization as follows:

The family of today . . . as a result of the extraordinary rapidity of social change . . . often

¹ James H. S. Bossard, The Sociology of Child Development, p. 138.

² Richard LaPiere and Paul Farnsworth, Social Psychology, p. 218.

³ Ibid.

fails in its functions as psychic stabilizer for child, adolescent, and adult. Many families left to their own resources fail utterly to achieve and maintain a balance of essential functions. Intervention from the outside is indispensable to the restoration of family control. Often the balance of family role relations is disturbed: man to wife, parent to grandparent, parent to child, and child to sibling.¹

As tensions and anxieties mount, the trend toward breakdown of family organization becomes greater.

When these tensions and anxieties are acute and prolonged, they may result in emotional hazards. Klein and Lindemann described an emotionally hazardous situation as:

. . . any sudden alteration in the field of social forces within which the individual exists, such that the individual's expectations of himself and his relationship with others undergo change. Major categories of hazards include (among others): (1) a loss or threatened loss of a significant relationship and (2) the introduction of one or more new individuals into the social orbit. . . . In all instances, it is believed, the hazardous circumstance is patterned by institutional and other socio-cultural arrangements.²

The loss or threatened loss of a significant relationship would include, for example, the case of the working mother. Hand reported a portion of an investigation of the home and family conditions of 102 elementary school children. The results revealed that the percentage of working mothers was slightly greater for the maladjusted boys than for the well-adjusted boys. The reverse was true in the case of girls.³

¹ Nathan W. Ackerman, Preventive Implications of Family Research, pp. 146-147.

² Donald C. Klein and Erich Lindemann, Preventive Intervention in Individual and Family Crisis Situation, p. 284.

³ Horace B. Hand, "Working Mothers and Maladjusted Children," Journal of Educational Sociology 30:246, January, 1957.

Since the number of working mothers has increased during the past decade to 40 per cent of those with school age children in 1958 as compared to about 25 per cent in 1950, the problem has increased correspondingly.¹

Separation of Parents. The loss or threatened loss of a significant relationship might also include separation of parents. Gardner studied the effect of the separation of the parents on the emotional life of children, considering situations in which the absent parent was alive with varying degrees of accessibility to the child. The prolonged and essentially permanent absence of one, generally male, parent from the home had a traumatic impact in terms of the child's feelings of personal worth, especially upon his "concept of self" as well as on his "concept of human beings."²

Attempting to ascertain the extent of the problem, Ogburn found as long ago as 1940 that about one in twenty families was broken temporarily or permanently by the separation of the husband and wife through situations other than divorce or death. Though separations were more numerous among non-whites, in cities, among childless couples, and in service occupations, and were higher than average among the low-income groups of the laboring class, all classes suffered to a degree.³

¹ Henry David, Work, Women, and Children, p. 187.

² George E. Gardner, "Separation of the Parents and the Emotional Life of the Child," Mental Hygiene 40:63-64, January, 1956.

³ William F. Ogburn, "Marital Separation," American Journal of Sociology 49:316, January, 1944.

Strangely enough, although a child often suffers from the effects of family disorganization, he may consciously or unconsciously assist in the process. He may, for example, be the instrument that precipitates a quarrel between his parents.

Josselyn stated:

. . . their manifest antagonism has many pleasurable aspects for him. It permits him to dream that he can win his battle with his father by default; if the mother respects the father, he can perchance slip into a valued place which the father never really occupied. . . . But the apparent victory has a bitter taste. The pleasure is not complete. . . . He is frightened by the fantasied fulfillment of his wish. . . . The child often considers himself to blame for disharmony between parents even though he has not consciously stimulated it.¹

Divorce. Divorce is another major factor in family disorganization and a growing threat to the family. The divorce rate has risen to almost eight times that of 1860, and in 1955, 47 per cent of divorced couples had an average of approximately two children per couple.² There are a million and a half children of divorce under the age of eighteen in the United States, and the number of children affected by divorce cases in 1957 was 379,000.³ Indications are that about two-thirds of these children are under ten years of age. Mothers receive custody in close to four-fifths of all cases and the fathers in only about one-tenth. In the remaining cases, both parents are given custody

¹ Irene Milliken Josselyn, The Happy Child, pp. 71-72.

² Paul Harold Jacobson, American Marriage and Divorce, p. 91.

³ William M. Kephart, The Family, Society, and the Individual, p. 631.

for part of the time, or the children become orphans and are awarded to a relative or guardian.¹

Actually the annual number of orphans whether by death or custody exceeds the number of children affected by divorce. Whereas in 1955 about 350,000 children under eighteen became orphans, fewer than 340,000 children were affected by divorce.²

The greatest difficulty is working out an arrangement for the children whereby each remains as a parent to his children despite antagonistic feelings toward his spouse. A way must be found to let the children know and love both parents and for both parents to share in their growing up.

The separating parents must realize that they are ending their marriage, but they cannot abdicate their parenthood.

According to Egleson and Egleson:

Much of the children's sense of security, their peace of mind, their feelings about themselves as individuals, the concept of family relations they develop, and their understanding of adults and adult relationships, will be shaped by the spirit in which the two divorcing parents approach their future relationship.³

Both parents must realize the child needs to have one home, one place that is really his base at any given period of his life. They must be flexible in the arrangement regarding the children, as children need regularity and dependability in their lives.

¹ Paul Harold Jacobson, American Marriage and Divorce, pp. 129, 131.

² Ibid., p. 135.

³ Jim Egleson and Janet Frank Egleson, Parents Without Partners, p. 38.

Not all authorities supported the current belief in the relationship of divorce to maladjustments in children. Goode gathered interview data from some four hundred divorcees who were mothers. Though his conclusions were tentative, he questioned the assumption that divorce leads to poorer adjustment in children. He summarized in part:

When broken homes are classified into different types (widowed, separated, divorced) there is evidence that the separated home may lead to as many child problems or juvenile delinquency as divorce itself. Moreover, there is some question as to whether it is the divorce or the marital conflict that does the damage, and whether the different types of parent-child relationships might create the damage rather than the divorce or marital conflict. Almost all mothers worried about the effects of the divorce on their children, but that almost all unmarried mothers subsequently thought that their children's lives had improved after the divorce . . . that their children had better lives as divorced children than they would have had as children in marital conflict.¹

Despert, too, believed that divorce is not automatically a destructive experience, but that the emotional situation within the home with or without divorce determines a child's adjustment. When the marriage relationship is disturbed, the child will sense the difficulties between his parents and may himself become disturbed. Lack of harmony between parents can never be completely veiled from children. Legal divorce has always been preceded by a period of emotional disruption which can be called emotional divorce. The impact of the divorce itself can be lessened somewhat by sharing with the children the knowledge that

¹ William J. Goode, After Divorce, pp. 329-330.

the parents are planning to separate and that grownups can make mistakes. The child should be assured that he is in no way to blame for what has happened and that his parents simply do not get along together. He should be reassured that whatever happens, he is still loved and will not be deprived of the love of either parent.¹

Desertion of Parents. Though the extent to which children are affected by desertion is less widely understood, in some ways desertion is more detrimental to the interests of children than is divorce. There are statistical data to indicate that insofar as the effects on children are concerned, the problem of desertion has been underestimated. In Philadelphia, for example, the number of desertions per year has been significantly higher than the yearly number of divorces, thus increasing the relative number of children so affected. Furthermore, more desertions than divorces involve minor children. Philadelphia Municipal Court data revealed that over the years, approximately 75 per cent of the reported desertions included minor children.² Then too Steigman pointed out,

The deserted children have their own set of problems. They often feel that they are inferior to the other children in the neighborhood because they do not have a father. . . . The difficulties encountered by the child who thus loses his opportunity of working out the parental conflict in a satisfactory manner may

¹ J. Louise Despert, Children of Divorce, pp. 9-10, 45.

² William M. Kephart, The Family, Society, and the Individual, p. 556.

subsequently appear as behavior problems or neurotic symptoms.¹

Lack of money to provide the necessities is not the least of the problems caused by desertion. In 1957, Steigman estimated that there were about 5,500,000 women and children who lacked adequate support as the result of the desertion of their families by husbands and fathers. More than one million men were involved. This made a total of more than 6,500,000 people who faced some aspect of the desertion problem. With an additional 100,000 men deserting their families yearly the problem is growing. Some women also resort to flight from stress as a method of solving their family adjustment problems, though fewer women than men desert.²

Lerner explained that exact statistics on desertion are difficult to obtain because of the various ways it may be manifested. An unmarried mother, for example, is not technically deserted and yet actually her child has been deserted by the father from birth. Or a father may say he is planning to move his family to where he is working, but may never do so.³

Death of Parents. Many mothers and fathers come to realize that anything that parts a child from a parent, or parents from each other for an unusually long time is apt to leave its mark. In death or divorce there is no return to "normalcy" and the

¹ Joseph E. Steigman, "The Deserted Family," Social Casework 38:167, March, 1957.

² Ibid.

³ Samuel H. Lerner, "Effects of Desertion on Family Life," Social Casework 35:4, January, 1954.

change in the child's life is permanent. In case of the death of a parent, a child often suffers not just the loss of that parent but the change of attitude in the survivor. Goode said that there is no reduction in the emotional attachment between spouses in illness; death comes as a shock, and is followed by what widowed parents describe as "an emptiness that cannot easily be replaced."¹ The behavior of the parent is thus apt to change and the separation occurs in an atmosphere that itself is threatening to a child's sense of presence, security, and well-being.

Some of the same adjustment problems of desertion have been seen in children's reactions to the death of a parent. Keeler cited three case studies to illustrate the dynamics of grief found in eleven children who showed pathological states of mourning. The children held very strong feelings for the deceased parent, nine positive and two negative. Depression was found in all and reunion with the dead parent or identification were common defense mechanisms employed.²

The youngster's involvement in activities outside the home helps him to retain perspective, but no child can remain completely unshaken by the loss of a parent. Kaufman warned:

. . . the (surviving) parent must understand that the child is confused, that the loss of father or mother leaves an empty place in his life, that often he blames himself for having caused the loss. It is important that we do not belittle the changes that have

¹ Jim Egleson and Janet Frank Egleson, Parents Without Partners, p. 17.

² Paul H. Hoch and Joseph Zubin (eds.), Psychopathology of Children, pp. 109-120.

taken place in the child's environment.¹

The extent of these disturbances in human relations has recently been summarized by Pierce and Ware. They stated, "One in every nine families today has been torn apart by death, desertion, disease, or divorce. These four D's have left fatherless one-fifth of all children in any typical urban community."²

To prevent the further decay of our family system, Zimmerman recommended the creation of a new, central coordinating agency, "The American Family Institute."³ He concluded, "Three-quarters of the problem of the modern family in relation to our civilization is a matter of re-creating and impressing family value systems. The other quarter of institutional help will come naturally if we do the first."⁴

Children from Broken Homes

Paternal Absence. Since children from broken homes are almost always awarded to the mother, they suffer doubly from the break-up of the home: first, inadequate male influence because of the lack of a father in the home, and second, a too great female influence because of the over-protectiveness of many divorced mothers.

¹ Jim Egleson and Janet Frank Egleson, Parents Without Partners, p. 154.

² Wendell H. Pierce and Anna B. Ware, "Troubled Children," National Education Association Journal 49:31, December, 1960.

³ Carle C. Zimmerman, The Family of Tomorrow, p. 239.

⁴ Ibid., p. 250.

The effect of paternal absence from the home varies greatly with the age of the child involved. Historically, the father's function as head of the family did not include emotional closeness to the family. Despert said that during the first two and a half to three years of life the child's major concern revolves around nurturance. The father's role during this period is definitely secondary to that of the mother. After this stage, though, the child increasingly develops a relationship with his father, corresponding to his role and availability, and the father's separation or removal from the family after that point can be distinctly traumatic. This is especially true when absence is caused by death. To the younger child, death means absence or disappearance. The circumstances of death, the emotional attachment to the father, and the developmental state of the child are primary considerations. The child may in some instances feel responsible. In other situations, the child might feel that his behavior or wishes were contributory, or he might become anxious about his own death.¹

Mohr was equally emphatic in his belief that fathers are of primary importance in establishing a secure and stable world for children. He contended that the break-up of family life is potentially one of the most shattering experiences for children and one of the farthest-reaching in its effects on their emotional development.²

¹ J. Louise Despert, "The Fatherless Family," Child Study 34:23-24, Summer, 1957.

² George J. Mohr, When Children Face Crises, p. 26.

Ostrovsky was another who felt that inadequate male influence, occasioned by the father's absence, involves danger of inhibiting the child's emotional growth and the strong possibility of more or less serious psychological disturbances. Eight case studies were cited of the experiences of a male teacher with elementary grade school children, four from united and four from broken homes. The report suggested that male participation in early child-rearing should be increased, both within the family and outside it, to correct the general imbalance between feminine and masculine influences.¹

A study by Stolz gave even further support to the importance of fathers in the home to the child's emotional growth. She made a comparison of the behavior of children who had both mother and father in the home with the behavior of those whose fathers were separated from them because of military service. By comparison with the children not so deprived, Stolz's subjects showed a greater number of feeding and similar problems, reduced independence, poorer relations with their age-mates, and increased anxiety.²

While not mentioning the loss of fathers specifically, Scott and Yocham, in a survey of elementary school adjustment problems, reported that 9.7 per cent of the enrollees were children from homes broken by divorce, death, or separation. They generalized:

¹ Everett S. Ostrovsky, Father to the Child, pp. 10-12.

² L. M. Stolz, Father Relation of War-Born Children, pp. 316-328.

. . . in many instances the children from these broken homes are insecure, nervous and easily disturbed. They have difficulties with other children on the playground and do not do their best work in the classroom. Many of them crave affection and attention.¹

Maternal Overprotectiveness. In addition to depriving children of male companionship, the absence of the father may impair the mother's effectiveness. Bronfenbrenner, while noting the special importance of the father in the socialization of boys, particularly observed:

The absence of the father apparently not only affects the behavior of the child directly but also influences the mother in the direction of overprotectiveness. The effect of both these tendencies is especially critical for male children; boys from father-absent homes tend to be markedly more submissive and dependent.²

Rush went a step further with these mother-only boys. Using the Haggerty-Olson-Wickman Behavior Rating Scales to determine the relationships among mothers' expressed attitudes toward sons, the sons' attitudes toward mothers, and the sons' behavior in school, he found that these submissive dependent boys were discontent and unaggressive--more so than withdrawn children.³

Wohl investigated the differences between the school achievement and adjustment of elementary school children who had been reared in mother-only homes for all or the major part of

¹ Mildred E. Scott and Pearl Yocham, "Broken Homes: Their Influence on Children," Journal of School Health 29:206, May, 1959.

² Urie Bronfenbrenner, "The Changing American Child - A Speculative Analysis," Merrill-Palmer Quarterly 7:80, April, 1961.

³ Bernard Rush, "An Investigation of Parent-Child Relationships in Broken Homes and Their Relationship to School Behavior," Dissertation Abstracts 16:1509, May-September, 1956.

their school years and reached only slightly different conclusions. Matched groups of fifteen boys and fifteen girls from mother-only homes were contrasted with an equal number of students from the two-parent homes on several adjustment criteria tests and a standard achievement test. His conclusions were that: (1) there were no differences in the warmth of mothers toward their children in broken or united homes; (2) achievement scores are not related to the number of parents in the home; (3) boys from mother-only homes showed significant identifications with their mothers' values; and (4) the adjustment of children from two-parent homes was rated by their teachers as superior to that of children from one-parent homes.¹

Broken Versus Unbroken Homes. Though most authorities cited believed that the broken home is responsible for emotional and personality maladjustments, there were a few who did not agree. A British study indicated no significant differences in emotional disturbances of children from broken homes as contrasted with those from unbroken homes. Rowntree reported an investigation covering five thousand randomly-selected children born in England during the week of March 3 to March 9, 1946. Follow-up data were obtained on these youngsters at two-year intervals for their first six years. By 1950, 67 children had lost either a mother or father by death; 42 had divorced parents; 69 had separated parents; and 111 had parents who were separated temporarily because

¹ Jonathan Wohl, "A Study of the School Achievement and Adjustment of Children from One-Parent Homes," Dissertation Abstracts 23:933, September-October, 1962.

of illness or employment requirements. Only legitimate children living with the mothers were studied. At the age of four the children from broken homes showed no more emotional disturbances, as evidenced in eating difficulties, thumb sucking, nail biting, or night terrors, than did the controls. However, they did show significantly more bedwetting. By the age of six even this difference was no longer evident.¹

Strangely enough, children of broken homes may look back to the unhappy unbroken home which preceded the break-up with little realization that it was an unhappy home. A study was made by Judson Landis of the reaction of 295 college students whose parents had divorced when they were approximately nine years of age. Though 38 per cent had been too young to remember the conditions in the home before the divorce took place, of those who did remember their previous home life, 10.9 per cent felt they had had a "very happy family"; 50.8 per cent, a "happy family"; 30.6 per cent, an "unhappy family"; and only 7.6 per cent, a "very unhappy family." Younger children seemed to be less aware of the traumatic effects of divorce than older children.²

Many studies have been made to discover the relationship between emotional and personality adjustment problems in children from unhappy but unbroken homes and those from broken homes. Judson Landis made another study, involving three thousand college

¹ Griselda Rowntree, "Early Childhood in Broken Families," Population Studies 8:247-263, March, 1955.

² Judson T. Landis, "The Trauma of Children When Parents Divorce," Marriage and Family Living 22:7, February, 1960.

students with the focuses upon children of unhappy non-divorced and divorced parents. His conclusions were:

. . . that it is the unhappy marriage that is more disturbing to children than the fact of divorce. There were few statistically significant differences between children from divorced and unhappy non-divorced marriages other than that girls from divorced marriages tend to be more distant from their fathers and closer to their mothers.¹

Nye believed that the adjustment of children in broken and unbroken but unhappy homes does not differ significantly. He gathered data from three Washington high schools including boys and girls in grades nine, ten, eleven, and twelve. He reported that:

As a group, adolescents in broken homes show less delinquent behavior and better adjustment to parents than do children in unhappy unbroken homes. They do not differ significantly with respect to adjustment in school, church, or delinquent companions.²

He noted, too, that research findings tend to favor the "reconstructed" family which includes a step-parent or the "partial" family of one parent and child or children.

When compared with adolescents from normal happy homes, however, Torrance found a group of adolescents from broken homes in a military academy to have more academic retardation, more over-achievement where one or both parents were dead, and more behavior, emotional, and health problems. Separation and divorce

¹ Judson T. Landis, "A Comparison of Children From Divorced and Non-Divorced Unhappy Marriages," Family Life Coordinator 11: 65, July, 1962.

² F. Ivan Nye, "Child Adjustment in Broken and in Unhappy Homes," Marriage and Family Living 19:356, November, 1957.

³ Ibid., p. 359.

seemed more productive of problems than parental death. The boys from broken homes also showed more tendency to anger, more self-centeredness, less sensitivity to social approval, less self-control, and more depression than adolescents from non-broken happy homes.¹

Paul Landis investigated the relationship of broken homes to teen-age adjustment in a study in which he presented a check list of 250 problems to 4,400 Washington high school seniors. Comparisons were made in terms of numbers and percentages of problems reported by children from homes where the parents were living together and homes broken by separation, divorce, or death. The findings showed that the youth from broken homes checked the most problems in the areas of finances and living conditions. They also checked more personal problems and family problems than did those in complete families. Little difference was found in proportions checking vocational problems, social problems, boy and girl problems, school problems, and problems in the field of morals, religion, and the future.²

Juvenile Delinquency. Sociologists' findings regarding the significance of broken homes as a causal factor in juvenile delinquency have often been contradictory. However, there has been little disagreement regarding the negative effects of the preliminary conflict situations engendered by family separation,

¹ Paul Torrance, "The Influence of the Broken Home on the Adolescent Adjustment," The Journal of Educational Sociology 18: 360-361, February, 1945.

² Paul H. Landis, "The Broken-Home in Teen-Age Adjustments," Washington Agricultural Station Bulletin No. 542, pp. 1-11, June, 1953.

divorce, or desertion. Monahan felt that there also is evidence to support the view that children from "socially" broken homes tend to have a greater delinquent involvement than those from orphaned-type homes. He claimed that aspects of social disintegration such as desertion, divorce, and illegitimacy, have accounted for an increasingly larger number of broken homes than has death since the beginning of this century.¹

The Gluecks reported that more delinquent boys than non-delinquents came from homes "broken by desertion, separation, divorce, or death of one or both parents, many of the breaches occurring during the early childhood of the boys."² They further indicated that the fathers of the delinquents tended to be irresponsible in family matters and to have far poorer work habits than the fathers of the non-delinquents.³

They found differences between the delinquents and the non-delinquents on two major points--character traits and personality traits. They concluded that the kind of relationship that existed in a home between the boy and his parents had far more to do with delinquency than whether he lived in a slum area, or grew up among conflicting cultures, or came from a family where there was much ill health, or had a high or low I.Q.⁴

¹ Thomas P. Monahan, "The Trend in Broken Homes Among Delinquent Children," Marriage and Family Living 19:364, November, 1957.

² Sheldon Glueck and Eleanor Glueck, Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency, p. 280.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 279-280.

A more recent book by the Gluecks on predicting delinquency appears to have established a handicap rating for missing parents. In explaining the use of their social prediction factors in identifying potential delinquents, they noted:

In cases in which one or another parent has left or been removed from the home before a child was three years old, and there is no parent surrogate (step-parent, foster-parent), discipline of the missing parent is graded as "lax," affection as "indifferent," and supervision as "unsuitable." But if there has been a substitute parent, at least since the child was three years old, the discipline, affection and supervision of the parent substitute is rated.¹

Bower discussed the difficulties presented to teachers in assessing potential delinquents by using the Gluecks' five-factor index, as follows:

First, the appraisal of families and of such highly abstract states as affection, supervision, discipline, and cohesiveness would present problems of reliability and validity of observation and inference; indeed, the definition of love is in itself a major undertaking of some duration. To make such an appraisal, the teacher would have to spend some time in the home of the child and be prepared to work through the facade which the family would undoubtedly produce for the teacher's benefit.²

It is difficult to assess to what extent family breakdown, in and of itself, contributes to juvenile delinquency. Smith found in 1953, 81 per cent of the delinquents in Detroit came from homes in which they stated there were no quarrels. In addition, 94 per cent of them reported that they liked their homes.

¹ Sheldon Glueck and Eleanor Glueck, Predicting Delinquency and Crime, p. 28.

² Eli M. Bower, Early Identification of Emotionally Handicapped Children in School, p. 25.

When delinquents were matched with control groups, the factor of broken homes lost its significance.¹

However, a study in Connecticut found delinquency to be essentially a symptom of family breakdown. From his findings, Robinson concluded that when the family disintegrates, the child may be deprived of affection, feelings of security, social opportunities, and physical necessities. If a delinquent gang can satisfy some or all of these needs, the child comes to rely upon it and transfers his primary loyalties to this group. Though the study identified the lack of family protection to be a basic cause of children's delinquency, it conversely cited several instances where there had been overprotection given during upbringing.²

Ruch maintained that in a dynamic society, the quantification of cultural forces and relationships is a practical impossibility. The problems of economic factors are so intimately related to broken homes that they cannot be separated for study. Another aspect that is reflected in the higher rate of delinquency for children from broken homes, as measured by court cases, is that of different treatment. A child picked up for stealing is more prone to be let off with a warning if he has a father willing to make restrictions and to promise closer supervision.³

¹ Philip M. Smith, "Broken Homes and Juvenile Delinquency," Sociology and Social Research 39:307-311, March, 1955.

² Reginald Robinson, "Beneath the Surface," Survey 83:42-49, February, 1947.

³ Floyd L. Ruch, Psychology and Life, p. 407.

Mental Health Studies. The broken home may be a major factor not only in juvenile delinquency; it may contribute also to the breakdown of mental health later on in life. Madow and Hardy reviewed the literature and concurred that there was a significant relationship between broken families and the neuroses of children. They cited the investigation of 211 neurotic soldiers who were studied to learn if the broken family was a prominent factor in the background of neurosis. A total of seventy-six soldiers came from families broken before the service men were sixteen. Fathers raised 25 per cent; mothers raised 48.7 per cent; and others raised 26.3 per cent. Of this group from broken families, 59 per cent indicated a definitely unhappy home situation, as compared with 22 per cent of the group raised by both parents.¹ The authors found that:

Almost all standard textbooks of psychiatry state that one of the etiologic factors in the production of neuroses is the broken family; but a review of the literature reveals very few, if any, statistical studies on the actual percentages of broken families among the neuroses.²

Richmond and Lipton agreed that it was probably not the separation itself, but the degree of parental deprivation that is of significance in understanding the consequences of separation upon the child. They considered it more significant to think not only of what the child is being separated from, but in terms of

¹ Leo Madow and Sherman E. Hardy, "Incidence and Analysis of the Broken Family in the Background of Neurosis," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry 17:525-528, July, 1947.

² Ibid., p. 521.

what the child is moving toward. They maintained:

. . . we need to know something of the "quality" of the experience--or stimulation--of which the child is being deprived; the "degree" to which he is being deprived; the "time" at which it occurs developmentally in the life of the child; and the "duration" of time over which it takes place. Also, we need to know more of the impact of multiple mother figures in early life on later personality development. The difficulties in comparing various studies are obvious when one contemplates these varied, interacting factors.¹

Teaching Children from Broken Homes

The most pressing task facing current education is the development of adequate programs for children with emotional and personality problems as well as those with delinquent behavior. The behavior of these children is too threatening for the culture to ignore; thus their needs must be more skillfully met or repressive measures will be applied.

"Alone and afraid in a world I never made"--this phrase may well summarize the disturbed child's view of life.² His experiences have led him to feel that he must face the world alone, because in times of stress the adults he has known have not protected or helped him.

Concerned parents or teachers, aware of what could happen under certain combinations of circumstances, are in an adequate

¹ Julius B. Richmond and Earle L. Lipton, Studies on Mental Health of Children with Specific Implications for Pediatricians, p. 106.

² Louis E. Harper and Benjamin Wright, "Dealing with Emotional Problems in the Classroom," The Elementary School Journal 58:316, March, 1958.

position to prevent or at least minimize the child's difficulties.¹ The teacher needs to be able to understand a child, not merely in terms of psychological generalities but in terms of his particular experience. He needs to know what factors have shaped each child's personality and the resulting needs each may have. Even then the reeducational process is a long, complicated, tedious procedure which requires understanding, great competence, skill, and organized planning and effort.

Waldfoegel and Gardner stressed the school's opportunity for early detection of maladjustment to enable effective child guidance. Emotional disturbances are not readily reversible during the early stages of their development. The authors recommended the employment of well-trained mental health consultants and teachers who are equipped to detect even subtle signs of emotional turbulence and to participate in the corrective program.²

The California State Department of Education conducted a study with early identification of emotionally disturbed children. The purpose was to discover if the teacher could identify these children and to what extent information might be used. Results collected showed that the emotionally disturbed children scored lower on group I.Q. tests, on reading and arithmetic achievement tests, differed in self-perception from other children, and 87

¹ Louis E. Harper and Benjamin Wright, "Dealing with Emotional Problems in the Classroom," The Elementary School Journal 58:316, March, 1958.

² Samuel Waldfoegel and George E. Gardner, Intervention in Crises as a Method of Primary Prevention, p. 308.

per cent were poorly adjusted in the class. The differences of these children seem to increase with each grade level.¹

Pupil-Teacher Relations. Knowledge of the child's life before he goes to school and the kind of life with which he must contend outside the class helps the teacher to understand the child with family problems. Harper and Wright believed the teacher has to become someone upon whom the child can depend for safety. The teacher's action accomplishes far more than words, and he must be ready to meet the child's needs with the right thing at the right time.² "To protect the child's self-respect, the teacher has to accept the child for what he is and not reject him for what he is not or for what he does."³

Johnson stated that the teacher has more daily contact with the child and consequently more opportunity to influence him in a positive or negative direction than any other one person outside the home.⁴

Structuring Classroom Learning. The value of a structured classroom environment is particularly applicable to educational problems; and it is apparent that what is good for educational progress also is good for emotional and personality development.

¹ James F. Magary and John R. Eichorn (eds.), The Exceptional Child, p. 348.

² Louis E. Harper and Benjamin Wright, "Dealing With the Emotional Problems in the Classroom," The Elementary School Journal 58:320, March, 1958.

³ Ibid., p. 324.

⁴ G. Orville Johnson, Guidance for Exceptional Children, p. 628.

The importance of effective learning for classroom management of behavior problems, attitudes, and emotional well-being is obvious for scholastic reasons.¹

Hurlock concluded that the child's school work suffers when emotional tension is present because his ability to concentrate suffers. This is especially apparent in reading problems, which are more common among children predisposed to emotional tension than among those predisposed to emotional calm.²

Failure in reading has frequently been associated with emotional problems and, in turn, emotional problems have been attributed to reading difficulties. MacDonald found in an investigation that the attitude toward child-rearing practice of the parents of unsuccessful readers did not differ from the attitudes of parents of successful readers. Due to the fact that the unsuccessful readers were all males, future studies may examine the relationship between the unsuccessful reader and his father.³

Plants did a limited study of children from the second, fourth, and sixth grades in an elementary school to determine the relationship between creative writing and the social-emotional adjustment of children. He concluded that creative writing may

¹ Norris G. Harding and E. Lakin Phillips, Educating Emotionally Disturbed Children, p. 52.

² Elizabeth B. Hurlock, Child Development, p. 241.

³ Dorothy P. MacDonald, "An Investigation of the Attitudes of Parents of Unsuccessful and Successful Readers," The Journal of Educational Research 56:437, April, 1963.

be used to help children become better adjusted emotionally.¹

Teacher Personality. Learning does not take place in a psychological vacuum but is intimately related to the personalities of the teacher and the learner and the various psychosocial dimensions of the school setting. Teachers should hold a realistic view of themselves and their relationship to others and to their environment. They should be spontaneous and creative in their activities and have a hearty and enthusiastic outlook upon living and working. In addition, teachers should live a comparatively self-actualizing life outside of teaching. Harding and Phillips observed that teachers of children with classroom problems should display the following basic traits in their teaching:

1. A calmness in the way they respond to and deal with the problems and conflicts of children.
2. An unshakable stability in all phases of their relationships with children.
3. An attitude of fairness and sincerity with children.
4. A firm belief in the potential of all children.
5. An unyielding firmness in holding limits once set and clearly defined.
6. The ability to apply and direct teaching materials in an orderly manner.²

Training and Professional Experiences. It is frequently assumed that a teacher understands the nature and needs of all

¹ Robert Wayne Plants, "Creative Writing and its Relationship to the Social-Emotional Adjustment of Children," Dissertation Abstracts 23:2797, January-February, 1963.

² Norris G. Harding and E. Lakin Phillips, Educating Emotionally Disturbed Children, pp. 109-110.

children. Cruickshank concluded that an aspect of education is the orientation of general educators to the needs and characteristics of exceptional children. When children with emotional and personality adjustment problems from broken homes are in the public schools, staff orientation provides the general understanding for a successful program.¹ Workshop programs have been developed in some schools, with specialists in different areas of education providing valuable information for regular classroom teachers.

Of equal importance is the pre-service information given to college men and women who plan to enter the teaching profession. Some colleges and universities offer courses dealing with the nature and needs of exceptional children.²

Magary and Eichorn stated that teachers should have an understanding of child growth and development; learning problems; social and cultural factors; a knowledge of agencies which work with children who have problems; and the teacher should know her limits.³

Ojemann indicated concern for the teacher's relation with and behavior toward pupils as well as with the formal content that is read and studied. He stated:

. . . we would have to prepare and revise content to be taught to incorporate a causal orientation to human

¹ William M. Cruickshank, The Exceptional Child in the Elementary and Secondary Schools, p. 106.

² Ibid., p. 109.

³ James F. Magary and John R. Eichorn (eds.), The Exceptional Child, p. 339.

behavior and we would have to train teachers both to teach such content and to practice (i.e., demonstrate) the causal approach in their daily interactions with pupils.¹

Teachers feel frustrated when they learn about a child's needs but do not know how to meet them under classroom conditions. The child learns from the behavior of the teacher, and Ojemann stressed help in three areas:

1. Developing an appreciation of the effect of past cultural influences on behavior to enable the teacher to accept himself without excessive guilt as to his noncausal attitudes in the past.
2. Expanding the appreciation of the nature of child behavior.
3. Learning how the feelings of children can be handled under classroom conditions, along with techniques for helping children express their feelings in constructive ways.²

Teachers feel even more frustrated at the resistance to active intervention by the school which rises from these four sources:

1. School administrators who object to diverging funds for this purpose.
2. Teachers who feel that there already has been encroachment on their pedagogic role.
3. Parents who resent intrusion of the school into the emotional life of the family.
4. Clinicians who fear meddling by persons not competent to deal with serious emotional problems.³

¹ Ralph H. Ojemann, Investigations of the Effects of Teaching and Understanding and Appreciation of Behavior Dynamics, p. 383.

² Ibid., p. 388.

³ Samuel Waldfogel and George E. Gardner, Intervention in Crises as a Method of Primary Prevention, p. 320.

Numerous writers have contended that public education, in attempting to please everybody, has regressed to the mean, offering education for mediocrity and gainsaying the pursuit of excellence. As Maslow said:

Education in practice too often adapts the child to the convenience of adults by making him less a nuisance and a little devil. More positively oriented education concerns itself with the growth and future self-actualization of the child.¹

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The home, the school and community, and the culture work together to establish values, provide stability, and stimulate growth toward helping a child with emotional problems and personality adjustments. He receives the most enduring and personality-shaping impact in his early family experience. Consequently, when the home is broken by such factors as divorce, desertion, separation, or death--as one-ninth of all homes today are--the children of such broken homes suffer.

The absence of either parent may constitute an emotional hazard. Though fewer children are deprived of mothers through family break-up--four-fifths are awarded to the mother--even the absence from the home of a working mother may affect the children's emotional adjustment, the boys suffering more than the girls.

The effects of the absent father upon the children were noted, as they impinged upon the family setting. The absence of

¹ A. H. Maslow, Motivation and Personality, p. 365.

the father may have a traumatic impact in terms of a child's feeling of personal worth as well as his concept of human beings in general. Studies showed that children without fathers are insecure, nervous, and easily disturbed. They have difficulties with other children on the playground and do not do their best in classroom work. The effect of paternal absence from the home varies greatly with the age of the child.

Emphasis was placed on research that treated the relationship of mothers to their children, especially when the mother was the only parent. Mothers in mother-only homes tend to become overprotective. This over-protectiveness is especially critical for boys, since they become submissive, dependent, discontented, and lacking in aggressiveness.

Though there is disagreement, some studies have found juvenile delinquency and other overt signs of maladjustment to be essentially a symptom of family breakdown. Moreover, there seemed to be sufficient studies to indicate that the broken home may contribute to the breakdown of mental health later in life.

Findings of the relationship of broken homes to personality development were inconclusive. Disastrous as is the family break-up, some studies showed that the unhappy unbroken home is more disturbing to children than the broken home. One authority stated that adolescents in broken homes showed less delinquent behavior and better adjustment than did children of unhappy, unbroken homes. Research findings favored the reconstructed or partial family.

Teachers aware of what could happen to children's emotional and personality adjustment problems under unfavorable environmental conditions are in a position to at least minimize these difficulties. Structuring classroom learning seems to be one answer in dealing with emotional problems, although more study is needed in this area. Disagreement still persists on the question of whether the emotional problems are a cause or a result of the reading disability. Certainly, emotional tensions and the ability to concentrate are apparent in reading disability. For this reason creative writing, in which the child is able to relax, has been used successfully in the structured classroom. The recognition of emotional and personality problems is essential in structuring the classroom for effective learning.

The connection between the family and the school, regarding the adaptation of the child to his culture, should more clearly spell out the role of the school in areas of personal and social adjustment. As educators, family-life researchers, and others in the area of child development, the concern should be the discovery and identification of individual differences, translated into a workable program to provide the necessary services.

The school can help meet certain psychological needs, particularly those of children being raised in a fatherless or motherless home. On the elementary school level, young male students from mother-only homes should have an opportunity of learning in association with men as well as women teachers. Equally, young female students from mother-only homes should have the opportunity of associating with masculine parent figures.

A variety of men and women teachers are required on the faculties of elementary schools, in addition to counseling services.

There definitely seems to be a need for more research on the adjustment problems of children from broken homes. Children from broken homes can never be handled effectively unless they and the backgrounds which produce them are understood. Understanding can come through intelligent and integrated research. Research teams should attempt longitudinal studies of children in the primary grades and of adolescent development with follow-up studies of later successes of boys and girls from broken homes.

The psychodynamics of intra-family relationships should be intensively studied. The homes that are psychologically broken but give the appearance of happy homes, as well as the legally broken homes, should be studied to find their effects on children living under these conditions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The writer wishes to express her sincere gratitude to Dr. Joe H. Loeb of the School of Education for his advice, criticism, and guidance in this study.

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A STUDY OF THE PERSONALITY ADJUSTMENT
OF CHILDREN FROM BROKEN HOMES

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

School of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1964

The purpose of the study was to determine (1) if children from broken homes actually have more emotional and personality problems than children from non-broken homes, (2) if children from broken homes are more liable to juvenile delinquency, and (3) some ways teachers may help children from broken homes adjust to their problems and ways in which they can prepare themselves to cope with the problems of these children.

Research included a review of all available books, pamphlets, and periodicals dealing with this problem.

It has long been accepted that the individual child receives the most enduring and personality-shaping impact from his early family experience. His home, his school and community, and his culture work together to establish values, provide stability, and stimulate growth toward helping him with emotional problems and personality adjustments.

When family relations are impaired through breakdown and disorganization, this domestic failure may result in acute social and mental disorders, including juvenile delinquency.

The common assumption that the broken home leads to emotional instability in children has been questioned by some writers. These authorities believed that a broken home was far better for the child's emotional and personality adjustment than an unhappy unbroken home. These same authorities thought a "reconstructed" family or the "partial" family was better for the child than an unhappy unbroken home.

Likewise, authorities questioned the assumption that juvenile delinquency and other overt signs of maladjustment would more

likely occur in a disorganized home than in a united home. However, there seem to be sufficient studies to indicate that the broken home may contribute to the breakdown of mental health later in life.

Authorities stressed the school's opportunities and responsibility for early detection of maladjustment to enable effective child guidance. They recommended the employment of well-trained mental health consultants and teachers equipped to detect subtle signs of emotional turbulence and to participate in the corrective program. The writers stressed that structured classroom environment was particularly applicable to the healthy emotional and personality development of children from broken homes.

