

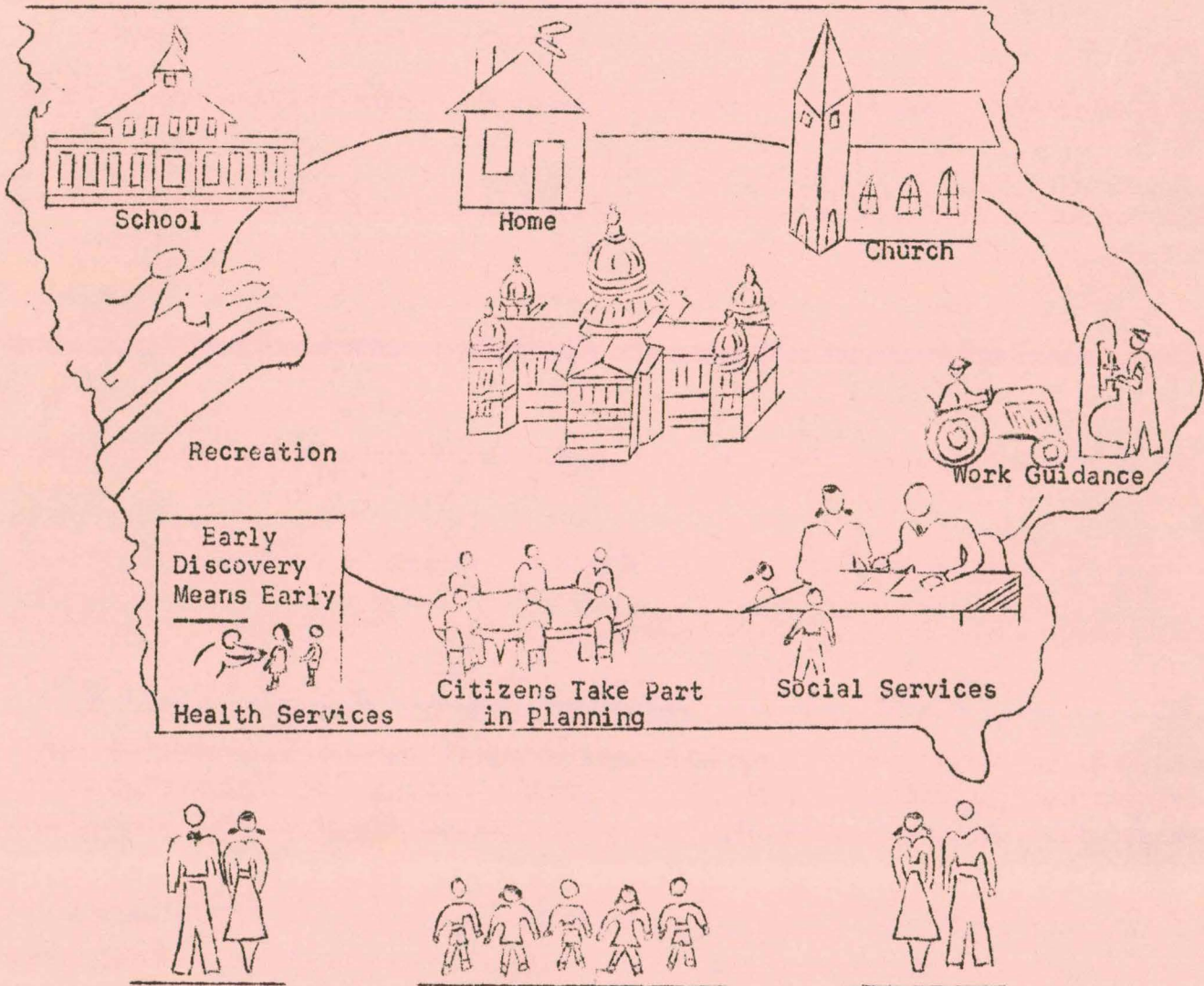
Iowa Child Welfare

IOWA COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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PURPOSE AND ACTIVITIES

January, 1959



Iowa Commission on Children and Youth
Fourth Floor, State Office Building
Des Moines 19, Iowa

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IOWA COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

----- A channel for ALL THE PEOPLE to consider the needs of Iowa's young people and to build together the kinds of services and programs that will make possible their growth into successful members of their communities.

THE PURPOSE

Every ten years since 1909, Presidents of the United States have called a WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH to review on a national scale the progress made in programs for the proper care and training of the young and consider new goals. These conferences are inter-professional. Iowa has shared fully in each of these meetings.

In 1948, preparations for the MIDCENTURY WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE began, with staff employed to guide states in reviewing their progress since 1940 and in accomplishing as much as possible toward establishing goals before 1950, and to report the findings. This national movement led to -----

----- THE START IN IOWA

The Iowa Commission was organized on October 8, 1948, at a meeting of representatives of some fifty organizations with programs for children and youth. They were members of professional groups - such as in education, health, welfare, recreation, religion, law, labor, farm organizations; and of clubs of many kinds which undertake civic responsibilities. Its membership has continued this broad representation,

The results of surveys by nine committees appointed in 1949, were reported first to an Iowa Governor's Midcentury Conference on Children and Youth in October, 1950, and then to the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth in December, 1950.

OFFICIAL APPOINTMENT: On September 12, 1949, in response to a telegram from the President of the United States, Governor Beardsley appointed the Commission to represent Iowa officially in the preparations for the Midcentury White House Conference. Afterwards, the Governor asked the Commission to continue, so that there would be a central planning and study group which could bring matters of vital concern to the well-being of Iowa children to as many action groups as possible.

On August 16, 1957, Governor Loveless officially designated the Commission to carry on this interprofessional, inter-organization work for Iowa. On September 22, 1958, he asked the Commission to serve as the liason with the National Committee for the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth.

Organization and Regular Meetings: The Commission is organized under by-laws. The officers are a president, three vice-presidents, secretary, treasurer, who, with three members at large, constitute the executive committee. There are standing committees in the fields of family life, health, education, youth employment, recreation, exceptional children, delinquency. The Commission meets bimonthly. Committees report on their work; policies are determined; reports from various fields of interest are shared with others. The impact of proposals on various interests are considered. Thus the Commission acts as a clearing house and information center, and material it makes available reaches out to civic groups through their representatives.

The Commission has the services of a part-time executive secretary loaned by the State Division of Child Welfare, and clerical help, mailing, and some miscellaneous expenses.

Conferences on Children and Youth: Each autumn, the Governor of Iowa joins with the Commission in sponsoring a state-wide conference on children and youth, which has been held in four different areas of the state. This is a citizens' conference, including many young people. Among the topics which have been discussed are: protection of children through juvenile courts and social agencies; better health programs and services; youth employment and work experience programs; juvenile delinquency; family life problems - youth marriages, marriage laws, family life education in the secondary schools, family counseling services, divorce laws and their relation to help needed by families in trouble; youth codes and their development; recreation development at the community level.

PREVIOUS ACTIVITY MOVES FORWARD

Compilation of Laws Relating to Children: In 1954, this compilation was published in cooperation with the Institute of Public Affairs of the State University. It has served as a very popular resource reference throughout the state. In addition, it was used to study the need for revised laws - the first general review in 30 years. From this study, the Commission collected many recommendations for a Juvenile Code Commission. Definite plans for this are under way. Some proposals made by the study groups have already become laws.

Commonwealth Conference on Juvenile Delinquency: The Commission cooperated with the State University in sponsoring a state-wide citizens' conference in 1956 on juvenile delinquency. Preparatory to the Conference, a technical committee of several professional groups made a survey and prepared a booklet, JUVENILE DELINQUENCY - IOWA'S PROBLEMS AND RESOURCES, which is a comprehensive summary of the situation in Iowa to guide planners in this field. It was also designed for public information because there is a great deal of interest in the subject. Recommendations from this Conference are current guides for the Delinquency Committee.

Migrant Agricultural Workers: A field study was made to secure definite information as to the extent and type of problems of children of migrant workers and information prepared for action. Out of this grew some local as well as state planning for migrant children. Up to this time, there had been practically no awareness of this as a problem in Iowa, since the number of migrants is smaller and their distribution more extensive than in many states. In 1958, a pilot project of service in one area was inaugurated and considerable expansion is being planned for 1959. In 1957 and 1958, immunization clinics were held for the first time with the help of Commission interest.

The Commission assisted the Governor in holding a Conference on Juvenile Behavior on May 3, 1958, and published the report. This is being used by county committees and citizen organizations as a guide to thinking about current problems needing public attention.

The Governor appointed citizen committees in every county in the state in May, 1958, to work on prevention of youth problems and on promotion of adequate remedial services. He asked the Commission to provide leadership and central coordination for these committees. The Commission prepared a pamphlet, "Guide For Local Committees Organizing in Behalf of Children and Youth." Some field service is being provided, and the Commission keeps in touch with the committees through correspondence. Some are regularly sending copies of their minutes to the office.

The Commission continues to cooperate in helping civic groups get accurate information about legislation, national and state, during legislative sessions. Informational bulletins are issued.

RADIO and TV Programs: Many groups express concern about the effect of mass media on the attitudes and behavior of children. The Commission has for several years been making available to clubs and interested citizens material on organizing for study of programs and reporting to an action group their rating of programs so that public opinion can be crystallized and made known to producers. There has been considerable increase in this organized effort.

CURRENT COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

In addition to continuing activity outlined above, each committee of the Commission is preparing a report of developments in its field in the past ten years. Iowa has four publications based on surveys for commissions resulting from previous White House Conferences on Children and Youth. The reports for the 1960 Conference will show the progress made in eliminating problems recognized in the former reports and in extending or developing programs to meet changing conditions. Some specific problems are under investigation as well as routine and general subject matter in each field.

The Family Life Committee made a study of family life education in the public high schools of the state. This is being brought up-to-date with a follow-up survey; also with a survey on high school marriages. It is cooperating with the State Division of Child Welfare in a study of child welfare in relation to working mothers. Attention is also being given to developments in housing; to problems of trailer camps and trailer living, although detailed scientific studies may not be undertaken at this time.

The Health Committee will integrate developments in the mental health and school and dental health fields in its report. Also, the movement toward interprofessional cooperation in the protection of children in adoption and in planning for mothers having children out of wedlock.

The Education Committee has exciting news on school reorganization, development of better school-community agency teamwork, problems arising from reorganization which need civic attention; focusing more school attention on the dynamics of child behavior; and a detailed long-range study of school drop-outs.

The Youth Employment Committee works closely with the State Bureau of Labor in bringing information to the public on need for revision of the state child labor law, and in preserving essential protections. It has also studied and distributed widely information on community work experience programs with a positive focus for youth development. It will study developments in the use of State Employment Service for helping youth make the transfer from school to work; migratory labor problems; extension of vocational education and guidance programs since 1950 -- for its new report.

The Recreation Committee has revised the state camping directory. One prepared jointly with the State Development Commission in 1950 proved very useful, but is now out-of-date. Many developments have taken place in camping programs since 1950.

The Committee on Exceptional Children has a broad development in programs and services for the mentally handicapped to report; also growing concern for more help to gifted children. There are many projects in this area.

The Juvenile Delinquency Committee is working with the Institute of Public Affairs at the State University on publication of a handbook of resources for dealing with delinquents; also is evaluating probation services and community programs; and has recommended and is helping to establish a clearing house of state agencies to assist courts in making the best possible use of available resources in very difficult cases.