

5-1-1949

A study of home influences on the 1948-1949 ninth grade of Parma, Ohio High School

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A STUDY OF HOME INFLUENCES ON THE 1948-1949
NINTH GRADE OF PARMA, OHIO HIGH SCHOOL

By

Elmer H. Wright

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Contributions of the Graduate School
Indiana State Teachers College
Number 618

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the
Master of Arts Degree

1949

The thesis of Elmer H. Wright,
Contribution of the Graduate School, Indiana State
Teachers College, Number 618, under the title _____
A Study of Home Influences on the 1948-1949
Ninth Grade of Parma, Ohio High School

is hereby approved as counting toward the completion
of the Master's degree in the amount of 8 hour's
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Date of Acceptance May 2, 1949

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In making this study, the writer has needed both guidance and criticism. To the members of his thesis committee, Professor Sylvan Yager, chairman, Professor Orvel Strong, and Dr. O. G. Jamison, he wishes to express his thanks.

The writer is also indebted to Miss Angela Imburgia and Miss Jenny Givens for giving the questionnaire to the students in their ninth grade English classes.

E.H.W.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The home, the church, and the school have long been considered the basic institutions whereby youth receives its training. The idea of the family is deeply imbedded in the human race. The home was the first school. The first teacher was the mother. The processes of learning how to live and of living centers in the home. The kind of life one lives depends largely upon the kind of household of which one is a member. This is particularly true as applied to young people.

The social test of the family is its ability to produce wholesome social individuals. Its biological function centers in the offspring. Its sociological significance lies chiefly in its training of children.

The influence of the home has long been recognized as a powerful force in the life of the nation. The individual citizen, being a product of the home, reflects directly in his own standards of living the ethical and intellectual standards as well as the physical standards of his home. To the extent home standards are high, the standards of the nation are raised.

But change is obsessing the modern world, and we are just beginning to be conscious of the problems confronting

the type of society in which we live. Nothing in our economic, political, or social life can happen without some reflection upon the family. Not the least of these changes has been the shifting of the responsibilities of the other primary institutions to the schools. Since schools have been made complete and attractive, home life may seem less interesting. Some parents have come to expect the school to teach everything, for example, morality, health, biology, and manners. For these things parents must continue to be partly responsible.

In the light of the maladjustments, mental ill-health, and general unhappiness in the country today, our present educational set-up will have to be considered as somewhat of a failure. There may be no more frontiers to conquer in the sense of fighting Indians and extending territorial boundaries, but scarcely a beginning has been made in the gigantic undertaking of adjusting human relationships.

Education can help the family along the six major lines of interest that we distinguish as the physical, vocational, social, recreational, spiritual, and mental welfare of the individual.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. To a large extent useful citizenship and right, happy, healthful, and efficient

living chiefly depend upon the growth of worth-while habit-pattern formations in childhood. These in turn are greatly influenced by the types of examples, adult and juvenile, which surround the child. Wise training, guidance, and opportunities to practice desirable activities are the beams supporting wholesome personality construction. The institutions responsible for this training and guidance are the home, the church, and the school.

Society is carrying on its shoulders the burden of a rapidly increasing group of maladjusted personalities; not all misfits to the extent of criminality but to the extent of mental ill-health. Maladjustments in children are often caused by environmental influences connected with the home. It is here that behavior habits are formed. It is the purpose of this study to present a general survey of home influences which contribute to mental ill-health in children.

Importance of the study. It is of utmost importance that those who professionally survey the entire educative process develop methods of interpreting the reality of home-school responsibility so that the activities of the home and school may be unified and integrated. Such interpretation should open the way for home and school to accept each other's counsel and to plan cooperatively. In order to meet the needs of the individual child and to be effective

in molding happy, responsible, effective citizens, the teacher must know something of the environmental influences which conflict with character training and healthful behavior habits.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Broken homes. In this study a broken home is any home in which either parent is absent due to separation, divorce, or death.

Economic status. In defining the terms "ordinary comforts of life," "luxuries," "bare necessities," and "less than bare necessities," it is conceivable that few individuals would reach agreement. In this study the meaning of these terms is determined by the opinions of the students being studied.

III. SOURCES OF DATA

All data used in this study were obtained by the questionnaire method. The questionnaire was given to two hundred fifty-nine fourteen- and fifteen-year-old students in the ninth grade of Parma, Ohio, high school. It was first presented to the principal of the school for his approval.

Students were requested not to write their names on the papers; they were thus encouraged to be perfectly frank in answering all questions.

IV. PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS IN THE FIELD

In recent years various agencies and organizations have been at work to improve the human and democratic relationships between schools and homes. The White House Conferences on Child Health and Protection have shown the vital interest of the nation in its responsibilities to children and youth. Commissions have been appointed by national educational organizations to make studies of problems confronting the youth of our nation. Civic clubs and college groups have their committees for the improvement of the status of the underprivileged children. That the public is becoming conscious of childhood and youth problems is evidenced by the prominent place given this movement on the radio and in popular as well as professional magazines.

In reviewing the literature relating to the present subject, however, one finds a meager number of studies pertaining definitely to the mental hygiene of adolescents. Much has been written about the subject, but very little material was to be found which showed how generalizations had been arrived at.

As far as the writer has been able to determine no completed study has been made definitely pertaining to the subject of this thesis.

V. ORGANIZATION OF REMAINDER OF THIS STUDY

Chapter II deals with seven problem areas as revealed by the questionnaire. They are discussed in the following order: family background, physical influences, social influences, recreational influences, ethical influences, vocational influences, and mental influences. Chapter III gives a summary, conclusions, and recommendations. A copy of the questionnaire used in this study is found in the appendix.

CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

This chapter deals with the relationship existing between the home influences discovered through the survey described in the preceding chapter and the mental health disclosed in the same survey. Two hundred fifty-nine high school freshmen--one hundred twenty-nine boys and one hundred thirty girls--were studied.

Most parents realize that the first responsibility of the home toward the child is physical well-being; but countless parents still know almost nothing of how frequently the child's problems are due to maladjustment in the home. Nor do they recognize symptoms of maladjustment as anything other than misbehavior. They punish rather than attempt a healing.

Mental hygienists point out the fact that family background and physical, vocational, social, recreational, ethical, and mental influences are the factors which cause mental ill-health.

I. THE FAMILY BACKGROUND

Broken homes. Of the two hundred fifty-nine students studied forty-one came from broken homes. In twenty-two cases the break was due to death of one or both parents; sixteen divorces were recorded and three separations as shown in Table I.

TABLE I
 TYPES OF HOMES FROM WHICH THE CHILDREN COME

	Death	Divorce	Separated	Unbroken
No. of cases	22	16	3	218
Per cent	9	6	1	84

It is almost a truism among welfare workers and child guidance clinics that a divided home sacrifices the child. Few children survive such a disruption of normal environment without serious emotional strain. If this does not work out in some form of misbehavior, it is almost sure to leave a subconscious sense of shame, loss or resentment.¹

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the child desperately needs the security of a stable home. Many jurists in criminal courts state that broken homes are responsible for large numbers of juvenile delinquencies. In thousands of homes, children have never known domestic happiness. They have been constant witnesses of quarrels, profanity, drunkenness, debauchery, and infidelity.

Economic status. That the happiness of the family is influenced very much by financial problems has long been recognized. Table II shows that forty-nine per cent of the group have the ordinary comforts of life and twenty per cent have luxuries. Eight per cent have bare necessities and

¹ Frank E. Howard and Frederick L. Patry, Mental Health, p. 159.

two per cent have less than bare necessities. Fifty-four cases, or twenty-one per cent, gave no report on economic status. This showing would seem to be an effort on the part of many students to conceal embarrassment about the real condition in the home. With widespread inflation and the high cost of living many families have an income so small that they can scarcely maintain even a minimum standard of living.

TABLE II
ECONOMIC STATUS OF HOMES FROM
WHICH THE CHILDREN COME

	No. cases	Per cent	Have spending money		Earn spending money	
			Yes	No	Yes	No
Luxuries	52	20	52		28	13
Ordinary comforts of life	127	49	124	3	103	24
Bare necessities	21	8	18	3	16	
Less than bare necessities	5	2		2	1	4
No report	54	21				
Total	259		194	8	148	41

The question "About how much do you spend each week?" brought out a very significant point. Thirty-two boys whose homes provided the ordinary comforts of life, reported spending money ranging from two dollars to seven dollars a week.

Although all but two of this number stated that they earn the money they spend, it would seem that the parents had failed to teach them much in regard to economy, thrift, and the proper use of money. This does not make for integrated personalities.

Education of parents. The aim of education is the development and training of the individual for effective living in his social environment.

Popular opinion and the judgments of educational philosophers unite in recognizing that the most important outcomes of education are the general habits and attitudes that make the individual better able to attack his life problems, rather than the specific skills and bits of information that he acquires.²

The handicap of a small inadequate family income is always made worse where there is a lack of knowledge of how to utilize the available resources. It is generally conceded that the broader the educational background the better able one is to "balance the budget."

The report of the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy, meeting in 1940, states that the American people decided long ago that education is so necessary for national well-being that it must be provided at public expense.

Table III shows that fifty per cent of the parents of

²L. F. Shaffer, The Psychology of Adjustment, p. 501.

these students had only a grade school education and seventeen per cent did not finish grade school.

TABLE III
EDUCATION OF PARENTS

	Did not finish grades	Grade school	High school	College	No report
Father	58	131	50	14	6
Mother	28	126	77	24	4
Total	86	257	127	38	10
Per cent	17	50	25	7	1

Lack of education of parents might have been a contributing factor in the failure to secure better physical and mental health for their children.

II. PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Health. One of the first considerations of the home is the health of its members. Factors which contribute to good health include food, clothing, shelter, and sleep.

Table IV gives information about these physical factors that were reported good, fair, poor, and bad in the lives of the students. In answer to the question, "My health is good, fair, poor, bad," seven reported poor

health and fifty-eight only fair health. The same question in regard to food, clothes, and housing brought the report of poor food from only two students, poor clothes from five and bad houses from four. Eleven failed to report regarding the condition of their clothes, and twenty-six failed to report concerning the condition of their house. This seems to indicate a hesitancy to reveal the true conditions or an attempt on the part of the students to conceal worries which tend to lead to mental ill health. Fifty-eight students or twenty-three per cent reported poor or bad chances for study at home. Thirty-one gave too much noise as the cause; twenty-one, too much talking; four, poor light; and one, a cold room. One said, "I can't explain."

TABLE IV
PHYSICAL FACTORS

	Good	Per	Fair	Per	Poor	Per	Bad	Per	No
	Per	cent	Per	cent	Per	cent	Per	cent	report
Health	185	74	58	23	7	3			9
Food	204	81	45	18	2	8			8
Clothes	141	57	102	41	5	2			11
House	133	57	96	41	0	0	4	1.7	26
Personal appearance	120	51	114	48	1	4			25
Chances to study	117	47	75	30	16	16	18	7	9

Sleep. Children must have the proper amount of sleep in order to grow at a normal rate.³ During normal, healthy sleep, vital activities are reduced or slowed down. At this time the body is especially free not only to mend worn-out tissues but to build new ones. This building of new tissues is called growing. If a child is to grow properly, he must have adequate sleep.

Table V shows hours of sleep ranging from seven to ten. According to U. S. Children's Bureau, boys and girls thirteen to fifteen years of age need ten to twelve hours of sleep. Twenty-three students reported irregular hours of sleep, and ten per cent showed insufficient sleep to promote growth and to take care of body changes incident to adolescence. Sleep should always be sufficient to leave one refreshed and ready for a day's work. When such is not the case, health becomes impaired.

Not only insufficient sleep was shown in table V, but also very irregular bed time was reported by twenty-five students. Regularity in going to bed is one of the requisites of sound, restful sleep. Need for food and need for sleep recur at regular intervals, and irregularity makes for discomfort and a sense of ill health. How well we sleep is as important as how long we sleep.

³U. S. Children's Bureau Folder 11, "Why Sleep."

TABLE V
BED TIME AND HOURS OF SLEEP

	No. cases	Hours of sleep	No. cases
7:00	7	10	65
8:00	33	9	106
9:00	62	8	20
9:30	47	7	6
10:00	39		
10:30	14		
Later	5		
Irregular	25	Irregular	23

Table VI shows that one hundred sixty-five students have good opportunity for sleep, twenty-one have fair, and five have poor.

TABLE VI
OPPORTUNITY FOR SLEEP AND REST

	Good	Fair	Poor	Bad	No report
No. cases	165	21	5	0	68
Per cent	64	8	2	0	26

III. SOCIAL INFLUENCES

Size of family. When grandparents or other relatives live in the home or near enough to have direct contacts with the family circle, their influence may be highly constructive and enriching. The more varied the interests and outlooks of those with whom the child has personal relationships, the better prepared he becomes for later adjustments. His adaptation to adult relatives and their interest in him are frequently positive and beneficent influences in building the child's personality. With these constructive and desirable effects there is possible danger of too much interference. Strong, dominant personalities are apt to assert themselves too freely and to become virtual dictators in families other than their own. There are others who consciously or unconsciously exert undesirable influences in more subtle ways. Interference of relatives in the discipline of children is particularly detrimental for it makes consistent control impossible.⁴

Twenty-six families of the group studied, included within the family circle adults other than father, mother, brothers, and sisters. Twelve homes include two adults beside the immediate family. In four homes grandmother is the only additional member; in two homes both grandfather and grandmother reside; in another, grandmother and an uncle; and in six homes both an uncle and an aunt complete the family circle. Six homes include an uncle in their midst, four, an aunt, and three homes shelter a brother and his wife.

In the absence of any evidence to the contrary it is to be assumed that these other relatives exert a wholesome and desirable influence on the young members in the home

⁴Frank E. Howard and Frederick L. Patry, Mental Health, p. 160.

for each report that he is happy and further reports no unethical conduct.

Ten students or four per cent of those studied were classified as "only child." This constitutes a problem area, for the only child is deprived of the broadening interest that brothers and sisters bring to each other. The emotional life of a boy or girl is enriched by having some one of his or her generation to share in experiences. Character traits are influenced by the daily necessity of being unselfish, considerate, and cooperative. Here the lesson of adjustability is taught.

Sharing family funds that seem inadequate for even a smaller group may be made to yield values in mental and spiritual life that far outweigh any values the individual might secure were the income not so shared.⁵

Friends. The companionship of friends is essential to an integrated personality. Many social maladjustments are caused by a lack of social experience combined with an intense desire to make friends. The hunger for friends, or the feeling that one is disliked, may manifest itself in forms that seem on the surface to have no relation to any such desire.

There are numbers of children who want friends, who have not tied themselves emotionally to any other one person or to a small group of persons, who have the

⁵Margaret M. Justin and Lucile O. Rust, Problems in Home Living, p. 362.

desire to be of service to others and know the pleasure to be gained by being needed by others, but who do not know how to win friends. They need to be taught the various techniques of social adjustments. These techniques are easily learned if they are practiced in childhood. They are best learned when the child is not aware that he is learning them. They are not so easily acquired by adults who have become fixed in their social habits and attitudes.⁶

The adolescent's concern with his friends' problems is in marked contrast with his usual attitudes to peers in the gang during late childhood. Now he is assuming responsibility for helping.

That the adolescent takes up with peers his personal problems--whether of superficialities of appearance and conduct or some of deeper importance to him--suggests that among his friends he feels a responsibility for his own adjustment, of attempting to meet demands and expectations of others, of changing if necessary. The criticism has a validity lacking in that which comes from those of different experience and different objectives. In the desire to be liked by his own group, the adolescent usually does his best to conform to its standards, even at considerable cost to himself.⁷

Table VII indicates that ninety per cent of this group have many friends, and answers to Question 14 of the questionnaire disclose the fact that sixty-five per cent spend leisure time in the homes of friends.

Eight students, three girls and five boys, reported few friends. All but one of these indicated that the family

⁶ Morgan, The Psychology of the Unadjusted School Child, p. 252.

⁷ Zachry, Caroline B., Emotion and Conduct in Adolescence, p. 255.

income provided only bare necessities and three of the five had no spending money. The only boy of the group who was happy was allowed no evenings outside the home. The other two spend their leisure in the recreational hall.

TABLE VII
FRIENDS

	Many friends	Few friends	No friends	No report
Boys	118	5	0	6
Girls	115	3	0	12
Total	233	8	0	18
Per cent	90	3	0	7

Attitude toward school. In the transition from childhood to adulthood the individual is confronted with the necessity of making certain profound adjustments in emotion and conduct that are basic to all later adaptations and readaptations. During these years he is striving to reintegrate a changing personality on shifting ground.

The way in which those studied are making adaptations to their present and immediate future is indicated in Table VIII. Eighty-nine per cent reported a liking for high school, but only eighty-three per cent expected to graduate. Thirty-one planned to quit school at the age of sixteen years, the

the age limit for the compulsory school law in Ohio. That most of this group came from homes providing the ordinary comforts of life and that eighty-nine per cent reported liking high school was somewhat of a revelation.

TABLE VIII
ATTITUDE TOWARD HIGH SCHOOL

	Like high school		Expect to graduate		Quit at sixteen	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Boys	118	11	108	21	16	113
Girls	112	18	107	23	15	115
Total	230	29	215	44	31	228
Per cent	89	11	83	16	12	88

IV. RECREATIONAL INFLUENCES

Guided recreation provides one of the greatest opportunities for the education of desirable traits of personality in the young. This task of guidance becomes the duty as well as the privilege of the parent. It thus behooves parents to make provision for wholesome use of the leisure time of their children.

Table IX shows that forty-four students were permitted to spend seven nights a week outside the home; twenty-five as many nights at they wish to, and thirty-five were permitted to spend four or more nights outside the home. This shows a shocking lack of parental supervision.

TABLE IX
EVENINGS PER WEEK OUTSIDE OF HOME

	None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	As many as desired
Boys	3	12	20	25	9	0	6	35	13
Girls	5	4	19	42	18	2	0	9	12
Total	8	16	39	67	27	2	6	44	25

One of the most potent causes of juvenile delinquency is the fact that youth are allowed to roam about aimlessly after school hours and especially after dark. Studies in juvenile delinquency all show that a large proportion of youthful criminals come from environments where real home life is either lacking or sadly warped.

Leisure time. Table X lists in the order of their popularity, where students in this study spend their leisure time.

TABLE X
WHERE LEISURE TIME IS SPENT

	Homes of friends	Public library	Bowling	Recreation hall	Skating	Pool room
Boys	71	22	33	30	16	24
Girls	98	19	32	5	22	0
Total	169	41	65	35	38	24

Reading materials in the home. Table XI lists reading materials found in the homes of the students studied. Perhaps the satisfaction that is most frequently cited is that magazines and papers bring the interests of the outside world to the family.

TABLE XI
READING MATERIAL IN HOMES

	Daily paper	Weekly paper	Magazines	Novels
No. of homes	226	102	204	134

The most frequent combination of reading materials found in the homes was "daily paper, magazines and novels," and the next most frequent was the combination "daily paper and magazines."

Choice of reading materials. As would be expected in the age group in this study, there was a wide difference in the reading material preferred by the boys and that preferred by the girls.

TABLE XII
CHOICE OF READING MATERIAL

	Wild west stories	Love stories	Newspapers	Comic strip	Novels	Magazines
Boys	32	4	48	41	43	29
Girls	7	28	19	18	56	31

Table XII shows that newspapers lead as a preference with the boys and novels with the girls. Novels appeared as second in popularity with the boys, with the comic strip running only two behind. Magazines ranked second in popularity with the girls, but love stories were almost their equal. Thirty-two boys preferred wild west stories. Five girls mentioned the Bible as their preference, although it was not included in the list asked for.

Radio. Radio programs seemed to be a favorite recreation with most of these students. Other than music, the favorite programs in order of their popularity were the Aldrich Family 38, Jack Benny 37, plays 15, Fibber McGee 12, stories 10, quiz programs 10, I Love a Mystery 9, Charlie McCarthy 9, and others of individual preferences.

TABLE XIII

PREFERENCE OF RADIO MUSIC

	Band	Jazz	Hill-billy	Symphony	Chorus and Choir
Boys	27	33	52	16	6
Girls	33	57	30	9	10
Total	60	90	82	25	16

Table XIII lists preference of radio music with jazz orchestra leading and hill-billy music running a close

second. Band music was appreciated by only two-thirds as many as jazz orchestra. Symphony orchestra, representing the cultural type of music, was preferred by only ten per cent of the students, and chorus and choir by less than seven per cent.

Movies. Much leisure time is spent in the movies as evidenced by Table XIV. Thirty-one per cent of the boys and thirty-five per cent of the girls attend the movies twice a week, and twenty-six per cent of the boys and nineteen per cent of the girls attend once a week. Three per cent of the boys and nine per cent of the girls never go to the movies. The movie is one of the potent influences, for good or for ill, in the lives of boys and girls. Carefully guided choice of movies provides great opportunities for education of desirable traits of personality; but if selected "mine run," movies may become the source of maladjusted personalities.

TABLE XIV
MOVIE ATTENDANCE

	Twice a week	Per cent	Once a week	Per cent	Once in a while	Per cent	Never	Per cent
Boys	40	31	33	26	52	40	4	3
Girls	45	35	25	19	48	37	12	9
Total	85	66	58	45	100	77	16	12

Hobbies. Some well-developed system of mental and physical outlets aside from vocation is necessary for a well-regulated personality. By employing new patterns of thought and action the individual may find release from the tensions incident to his vocation. Many people fail to develop avocational interests which contribute to mental health.

Sixty-three boys and eighty-nine girls reported hobbies of a wide variety. Table XV lists these hobbies. The girls reported a much greater variety of hobbies than the boys.

TABLE XV

HOBBIES

Hobbies	Times mentioned
GIRLS:	
Collecting stamps	11
Collecting pictures of certain people	7
Collecting pictures of movie stars	7
Writing stories	5
Bowling	4
Singing	4
Sketching and writing	3
Collecting wild flowers	3
Drawing	3
Photography	3
Collecting snapshots	3

TABLE XV (continued)

HOBBIES

Hobbies	Times mentioned
GIRLS:	
Collecting Indian pennies	2
Collecting novelty pins	2
Collecting handwriting	2
Collecting buttons	2
Collecting souvenirs	2
Scrap book	2
Riding bicycle	2
Knitting	2
Foreign correspondence	2
Cooking	2
Skating	2
Growing flowers	2
Collecting letters	1
Collecting pictures of Lincoln	1
Collecting match books	1
Collecting butterflies	1
Collecting post marks	1
Collecting airplane pictures	1
Collecting pictures of Gene Autry	1
Collecting dogs	1

TABLE XV (continued)

HOBBIES

Hobbies	Times mentioned
BOYS:	
Building model airplanes	19
Stamp collecting	9
Work with wood	6
Drawing	4
Bowling	3
Collecting stones	3
Hunting	3
Playing ball	3
Chemical analysis	2
Collecting odd coins	2
Scrap book of sports players	2
Taking pictures	2
Fishing	2
Hiking	1
Collecting guns	1
Collecting knives	1

V. ETHICAL INFLUENCES

Through the home, children receive their understanding of culture. It is the place for establishing religious ideals. Reverence of God should be taught in the home. The moral standards learned in the home are those which are most likely to become firmly rooted in character. Ideals of honor, a sense of responsibility, self-control, loyalty, and honesty should be cultivated in the home.

Church and Sunday School attendance. People need the inspiration, encouragement, and help which the church gives to keep them well-balanced and happy.

TABLE XVI

CHURCH AND SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

	Weekly	Occasionally	Seldom	Never	Not reporting
Boys	48	45	21	10	5
Girls	69	45	5	6	5
Total	117	90	26	16	10
Per cent	45	35	10	6	4

Table XVI indicates that the church and God have been largely forgotten by the group studied. Six per cent never go to church; about ten per cent seldom go, and thirty-five per cent go only occasionally. These children are being

deprived of the influences of the church in relation to morals.

Families which have definite religious convictions and practices are often more successful in family relations. Religion gives them a definite code of excellent morals.⁸

Knowledge of Ten Commandments and Golden Rule.

Table XVII gives an indication of the limited knowledge of religious fundamentals, the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule being the most generally known fundamentals. Twenty-one per cent of the students did not know even one of the Commandments, and thirty-one per cent did not know the Golden Rule. Six students failed to know either. One wrote, "The Lord is thy shepherd," for the Golden Rule, and two wrote the same statement for one of the Ten Commandments. It is interesting to note that "Thou shalt not kill," was known by the largest number of students and, "Thou shalt not steal," by the second largest.

TABLE XVII

KNOWLEDGE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS
AND GOLDEN RULE

	Commandments		Golden Rule	
	Knew	Did not know	Knew	Did not know
Boys	97	32	78	51
Girls	108	22	101	29
Total	205	54	179	80
Per cent		21		31

⁸ "Education for Family Life," Nineteenth Yearbook of American Association of School Administrators. p. 105.

Unethical conduct. The changed attitude toward drinking has had its effect on some homes. Fifty years ago drunkenness in families was usually considered seriously as something to weep over and hide. Today in many circles it is considered more lightly as something smart to laugh about. It used to be indulged in by the men of the family; now it seems no worse for women than for men.

Table XVIII gives a mental picture of the unethical conduct of the group studied. Thirty-six students or fourteen per cent of the group admitted drinking. More than one-third of this number were girls. Forty-seven per cent admitted they swear. Approximately thirty-two per cent of those who swear were girls. Eleven boys admitted stealing, but only three admitted stealing anything of value. No girl admitted stealing.

A lack of knowledge of religious fundamentals and lack of the uplifting influence of church attendance may be the factor most directly responsible for this unethical conduct.

TABLE XVIII

UNETHICAL CONDUCT

	Boys			Girls		
	Often	Seldom	Never	Often	Seldom	Never
Drink	6	16	107	1	13	116
Swear	21	63	46	4	34	92
Smoke	27	31	71	0	4	126

VI. VOCATIONAL INFLUENCES

The family of a few generations ago was more self-sustaining than it is now. The children began early to contribute something to its economic welfare. The home today is unlike that of any other period. Modern science and invention have made great changes. Much of the work done in the home a generation ago has been taken outside to factories, thus lessening its productive activities and at the same time robbing boys and girls of valuable lessons in character building. It is largely through sharing responsibilities in the home that lessons in self-reliance, originality, industry, and dependability are learned. The need for these virtues and values continues.

Personality is determined more by performance than by intention, desire, interest, or good will. The doing of worthwhile tasks is the very core of education and mental sanity. The most effective way to give mental and moral training is to give the child tasks for which he is responsible and in which he can succeed with reasonable effort, impressing him with the fact that failure to perform means loss of things desirable.⁹

Both parents and teachers have a tendency to do too much for children and do not give them a chance to do things they want to do. In every home there are many tasks that could profitably be done by the boys and girls, thus giving them experience in assuming responsibilities.

⁹Frank E. Howard and Frederick L. Patry, Mental Health, p. 182.

How well the parents have met their obligations in teaching responsibilities may be determined by referring to Tables XIX and XX.

TABLE XIX
HOME RESPONSIBILITIES

Task	Boy	Girl
Make beds	35	115
Wash dishes	19	114
Sweep and dust	30	110
Go to the store	102	91
Mow lawn	98	27
Help with cooking	20	89
Iron clothes	8	87
Fire furnace or stove	86	13
Wash windows	35	60
Care of small children	21	55
Sew and mend	12	54
Other tasks	60	29
No tasks	11	0

TABLE XX

NUMBER OF TASKS PERFORMED REGULARLY

Tasks	Boys	Girls	Total
None	1	0	1
One	0	2	2
Two	3	2	5
Three	16	5	21
Four	29	26	55
Five	27	11	38
Six	15	16	31
Seven	9	19	28
Eight	6	15	21
Nine	10	15	25
Ten	3	12	15
Eleven	3	10	13

VII. MENTAL INFLUENCES

To think of mental hygiene as being concerned exclusively with mental illness and behavior problems of children and their prevention or improved care is to ignore the larger significance of mental hygiene as it is now being understood. In addition to the many thousand now in institutions we must begin to realize how many warped, twisted, and distorted personalities there are who will never become inmates of institutions or otherwise be brought within the category of mentally ill, but who will continue in their daily lives exhibiting every form of

destructive activity and defeating human needs and values and obstructing social order while existing under stress and strain and tensions that progressively undermine their health and their capacity for living.¹¹

Unhappiness. Six boys and five girls confessed unhappiness. Three of the boys reported few friends, only bare necessities, and no money to spend, and one reported less than bare necessities. Two lived in homes broken by divorce. All six reported general conditions not conducive to happiness. Three of the unhappy girls had the comforts of life. One girl's parents were separated but not divorced. One complained, "I don't get my way hardly any." Two mentioned quarrels in the home as cause for their unhappiness, and two were unhappy because they desired certain friendships they couldn't have.

¹¹ "Mental Health in the Classroom," Thirteenth Year-book of Department of Supervisors and Directors of Instruction of the N. E. A. p.3.

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. SUMMARY

The problem was to discover home influences that contribute to mental ill-health in children.

A group of two hundred fifty-nine students in the ninth grade of Parma, Ohio, high school were studied. The data were secured by the questionnaire method. Students were instructed not to write their names on their papers, thus encouraging frankness in all answers.

The following paragraphs summarize the principal findings of the study.

1. Forty-one students or sixteen per cent of the group came from broken homes.

2. Forty-nine per cent of the group had the ordinary comforts of life; twenty per cent had luxuries, and the remaining thirty-one per cent had only bare necessities or less than bare necessities.

3. The amount of spending money was well out of proportion to the family income.

4. Fifty per cent of the parents of these students had only a grade-school education and seventeen per cent did not finish grade school.

5. Seven students reported poor health and fifty-eight

only fair health; five reported poor clothes; four reported bad houses, but only two reported poor food. About ten per cent showed insufficient sleep; two per cent reported poor opportunity for sleep, and eight per cent reported only fair opportunity for sleep.

6. Ten students were "only" children, but twenty-six families included in the family circle adults other than the immediate family.

7. Eight students reported few friends.

8. Twenty-nine students or eleven per cent did not like high school, and twelve per cent expected to quit at sixteen.

9. Forty-four students were permitted to spend seven nights a week outside the home; twenty-five, as many nights as they wished, and thirty-five were permitted four or more nights out.

10. By far the greatest number of students spent leisure time in the home of friends.

11. Two hundred forty-three homes had reading materials in various combinations. The most frequent combination was "daily paper, magazines and novels," and the next most frequent was the combination of "daily paper and magazines."

12. Thirty-two boys and seven girls preferred wild west stories, but four boys and twenty-eight girls preferred love stories. Newspapers and magazines were widely read by both boys and girls.

13. Radio program preference other than music seemed to lean heavily to comedy, while radio music of the jazz and hill-billy type was predominant. Music of truly cultural type was greatly in the minority of choice.

14. Thirty-three per cent of the group attended movies twice a week, and thirty-eight per cent attended once in a while.

15. Forty-nine per cent of the boys and sixty-eight per cent of the girls reported hobbies of a wide variety.

16. Ten per cent seldom went to church or Sunday School, and six per cent never went.

17. Twenty-four per cent of the boys and seventeen per cent of the girls didn't know even one of the Ten Commandments. Forty per cent of the boys and twenty-two per cent of the girls didn't know the Golden Rule.

18. Fourteen per cent of the students admitted drinking; forty-seven per cent admitted swearing, and four per cent admitted stealing.

19. Twelve different tasks, ranging from carrying in coal and firing furnace to going to the store, were listed by this group.

20. Six boys and five girls confessed unhappiness.

II. CONCLUSIONS

This study reveals the fact that the influences of the majority of homes were conducive to good mental health, but that in many homes there were influences that contribute to mental ill-health.

Family background. From the standpoint of family background the large number of broken homes presents an influence which necessarily disrupts the normal environment and produces emotional strain. The economic status of ten per cent of the group is on the level of bare necessities or lower, and this necessarily brings mental depression. Another striking influence is that of the education of the parents. Sixty-seven per cent of the parents had not gone to high school, a fact that sadly disqualifies them for solving the present day problems of youth. It is not to be expected that parents of their educational background will understand the importance of behavior patterns and character training.

Physical influences. Physical conditions reported in most homes were those which promote good health, but ten per cent of the students were not getting sufficient sleep, and ten per cent were sleeping under unfavorable conditions. Since sleep is one of the four necessities of life, such loss will surely undermine the physical health, which in turn

may tend toward mental ill-health.

Social influences. Another problem of home environment is that of social influences. Sixty-nine students were permitted as many nights a week outside the home as they chose to take. This over-indulgence on the part of parents is probably responsible for twenty-four boys spending leisure time in the pool room. However, one hundred sixty-nine students reported spending leisure time in the home of friends. Only eight admitted having few friends. One of the great socializing influences is that of having many friends.

Recreational influences. Table XII gives the idea that parents have given very little supervision in the choice of reading material, and Table XIII that little of emotional stability and culture has been gained from radio programs. Table X shows that only sixteen per cent of the group spend leisure time in the public library in pursuit of cultural reading, whereas thirty-three per cent go twice a week to the movies where every conceivable type of crime and debauchery are portrayed to youthful minds. Surely parents have been lax in their responsibilities along these lines. The hobbies listed are in the main well-chosen for mental and physical outlets and a few were types which may take on the permanence and stability of vocational interest.

Ethical influences. Tables XVI and XVII seem to

charge many parents with having failed to teach religious fundamentals in the home and then with having failed to compensate in any way for this laxity by seeing that the children have the benefit of teaching at church and Sunday School. Table XVIII presents a sad picture of unethical conduct and suggests that morals are by no means one-hundred per cent good.

Vocational influences. The small number of tasks performed by eleven per cent of the group as shown in Table XIX robs youth of its opportunity to form habits of industry and responsibility, and parents should realize that in such lack of training important stones in the foundation of character are being omitted.

Mental influences. Very few students admitted unhappiness, and one would be led to believe that little unhappiness existed were it not for the fact that other questions brought to light conditions that would inevitably cause mental stress and strain. Perhaps this contradictory evidence is due to youth's reluctance to reveal its worries to any but the most intimate friends.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Home life should be improved through the educational program. More courses should be offered that deal

with the normal problems of family relationships.

2. College courses for teachers should include certain required courses that would fit teachers for a better understanding of the total personality of the child and the normal problems of family life.

3. School personnel should include a psychiatrist, a pediatrician, school nurses, and a visiting teacher to help interpret the child and the home to the school, to eliminate much needless waste in classroom practices, and to protect the physical and mental health of the child.

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APPENDIX

42. If unhappy, mention the things that make you unhappy
43. Father's education--finished
a. grade school b. high school c. college
d. did not finish grade school
44. Mother's education--finished
a. grade school b. high school c. college
d. did not finish grade school
45. Are both your parents living? yes no
46. Are they living together? yes no
47. Are they divorced? yes no
48. Other persons living with the family: sisters brothers
grandfather grandmother aunt uncle any other person
49. Is your family income sufficient to provide: a. luxuries
b. ordinary comforts of life c. bare necessities
d. less than bare necessities
50. Do you have spending money? yes no
51. Do you earn your spending money? yes no
52. About how much do you spend each week?
53. Do you have a. many friends b. few friends c. no friends
54. I drink tea often seldom never
55. I drink milk often seldom never
56. I drink coffee often seldom never
57. I drink beer often seldom never
58. I drink whiskey often seldom never

59. I swear frequently seldom never
60. I smoke frequently seldom never
61. I steal frequently seldom never

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