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**now
they
are
grown
!**

now they are grown!

*Information for Parents of Teen-Age and
Young Adult Trainable Retarded Children*



RETARDED CHILDREN
CAN BE HELPED

*Originally published by
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National Association for Retarded Children

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR RETARDED CHILDREN, INC.
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FOREWORD

NOW THEY ARE GROWN was produced by the Conference Committee on Mental Deficiency of the Minnesota Department of Public Welfare. This is a committee composed of representatives of organized groups of parents of the mentally retarded and Department staff members. The latter represent county welfare boards, institutions for the mentally retarded and the central office of the Department. The purpose of the Conference Committee is to bring about an understanding between parents and staff so that there will be a closer relationship in meeting the needs of the mentally retarded wherever they may be.

We wish to thank Mr. Morris Hursh, Commissioner of Public Welfare in Minnesota, for permitting us to issue this book under our imprint. We believe this excellent work of our colleagues in Minnesota deserves the widest possible circulation.

Minnesota has long been a leader in the field of Mental Retardation. *Now They Are Grown!* continues the high standard of quality consistently maintained by the staff of the Department of Public Welfare.

Every day we receive letters here at the National Association for Retarded Children from parents of teen-age and young adult retardates, asking for guidance and information for this new era in their children's lives. We are very happy to be able to make available to them this excellent source of knowledge and help.

— GUNNAR DYBWAD, *Executive Director*
National Association for Retarded Children

December 22, 1959
New York City

INTRODUCTION

THIS is a pamphlet specifically concerned about those teen-age and young-adult mentally retarded who are broadly defined as "trainable"; it is a pamphlet designed to help parents of those mentally retarded persons who will always require supervision. The term "supervision" means that you will always have to know where your child is and what he is doing; it means you will always have to direct and help him. The following material can also be useful as a road map for parents of younger children, although its specific purpose is as a guide for those parents whose children are in the immediate vicinity of adulthood.

The pamphlet should be read in its entirety because the sections are closely related to one another. Suggestions in the section on behavior problems, for example, are dependent upon an understanding of the sections dealing with interest development, family and community acceptance, and sexual behavior. Throughout this publication the terms "he" and "man" or "men" will refer to both sexes, unless the text specifically indicates that the term used refers to the male.

Material is largely based upon the suggestions of parents and professional workers and upon talks with and observations of teen-agers and young adults who are mentally retarded. It is designed to help you to discover those ways through which you can help your son or daughter to be a happy individual within the family, within the social community, and within himself. While it discusses how we as human beings all share common emotions, it also points out that we all differ as to how we react to different things because we are all different as individuals of various mental and physical capacities and various personalities. This means that as parents you must be careful to see your child in relation to his own needs and goals, and not in relation to your particular needs or goals or to what you wish were his.

Your child's individuality makes it impossible for all suggestions to apply to him. He may not be able, for example, to do some of the things mentioned in the chapter on interest development. You should not frustrate him and yourself by expecting that he can or should achieve everything considered here. You cannot insist upon training him to do something or to behave according to a generalized picture of what may be possible for some trainable

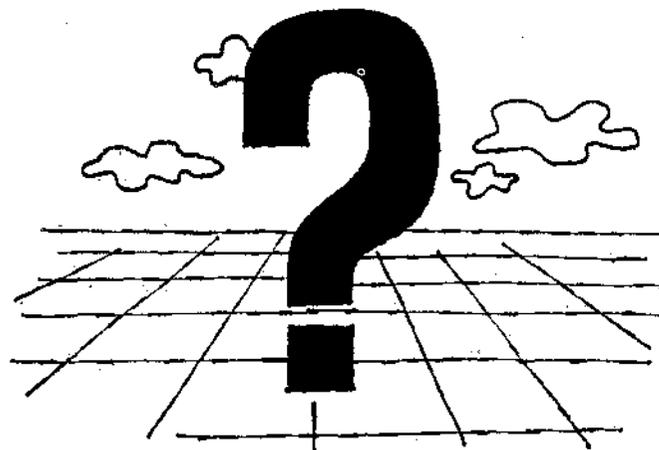
persons. Your observations and efforts to see what he can or cannot do and consultations with concerned professional persons will help to reveal your child's capabilities and limitations. Don't push him. Accept him for what he is and what he can do. You have to help him to be himself and to function within his mental limitations, always remembering that what is a good plan for one child is not necessarily a good plan for another. The trainable category embraces persons who when adult function from a four-year-old mental age level to that of an eight-year-old level. Obviously much depends upon the mental age of your child. And, although this pamphlet is designed to help you care for your child at home, readers should recognize that certain situations such as behavior problems, loneliness, lack of suitable activities, and family and community welfare, may require placement in an institution.

Suggestions which follow, therefore, are broad in scope. They are offered to help you to discover how you may be able to answer certain questions and solve certain problems.

How can you try to make your teen-ager, your young adult happy? He is no longer a child; he is about to be or is a man. But he is also mentally retarded; he will always require your direction and supervision or the direction and supervision of others. How can you accept and how can you get your normal children and your neighbors to accept this member of the family who is an adult in years, but who can never be so mentally? How, too, can you preserve that happiness which should be yours while promoting that which should be his? What consideration should you give to that time when you, through illness or death, can no longer care for him? How can you make him a contributing, significant, and yet disciplined adult member of the family? How can you help him to develop satisfying friendships and interests? How will you meet behavior problems which are socially unacceptable for this age group? Should you be concerned about sex education? Will sex problems arise, and what can you do if they should? Can you realistically hope for some measure of self-support for your child?

These are some of the questions which will be discussed in this pamphlet; the answers, of course, must be considered in relation to your particular child. You will have to observe him as an individual, as an individual who will have to be treated as a human being who cannot be portrayed in a pamphlet. The pamphlet,

therefore, is designed to offer suggestions which you have to adjust to the specific needs, capacities, and interests of your teen-ager or young adult. *What can you expect of him? What happens now that he, too, in his way and in his sense, shares with you that added "pain of being a man?"*



LOOKING THROUGH THE YEARS

A Definition of the Individual Who Is Trainable

Now that your child has reached adolescence or adulthood the word "trainable" which is used to describe him may be even more confusing to you. What does it mean? What implications does it hold for the adult who is mentally retarded?

The immediate meaning to you is this: Your child will always require direction and supervision. The personal significance to you is this: Your child is an individual whose needs may be fulfilled and whose abilities to develop may be aided by your guidance and the guidance of others equipped to help you. Although he cannot benefit from the usual program of school subjects, your child requires and can benefit from specific training which will help him to make the most of his potential in the home and in the community.

"Trainable" is a category useful to those professional persons concerned about the welfare of your child. It serves as a broad basis for predicting what can be achieved socially, academically, and emotionally by persons found to fall within its descriptive range. The physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, public health nurse, and teacher use the term "trainable" to refer to those persons whose mental functioning in adult years approximates that of a mental age of from four to eight years. Indi-

viduals functioning on these age levels usually achieve a score of from 25 to 50 on I.Q. tests. There are, of course, persons classed as trainable who may have a higher score or even a lower score; regardless of their score, observation may show that they function on a trainable level. "I.Q." stands for "Intelligence Quotient," which is determined by extensive testing and observation; it is a technical term based upon the relationship of a person's mental age and his age in years. The test result helps to indicate our capacity to reason and to achieve academically and intellectually.

We are all limited mentally to some degree; just as we are not created equal physically, we are not created equal mentally. Some persons are physically gifted; they may excel at sports. Some are intellectually gifted; they may, if they make use of their gift, excel academically. Some are physically handicapped; they will always be limited by the things which they cannot do with their bodies. Some are mentally handicapped; they will always be limited by the things which they cannot do with their minds.

The I.Q. score which reveals our ability to achieve intellectually does not increase with age. None of us, however, stops learning within the limits of our ability. Neither does the person who is mentally retarded. The point is that the goals for him must be realistic. He will only become frustrated, worried, and unhappy if he is expected to learn complex, abstract things which he is incapable of understanding. Similarly, he can become frustrated, worried, and unhappy if he is overprotected and not permitted to benefit from new experiences and not given the opportunity to try to do those things which he may be able to do. All of us must at least be given the opportunity to fail at something in order to discover what we can achieve. Your child is mentally deficient, but he has many feelings and emotions that are similar to those of adolescents who are not handicapped. Man has many attributes other than his intellect that influence how he shall get along in the world.

"Retarded," however, really isn't the best word to describe your child's mental capacity. He is not just a very slow learner. He can never "catch up"; he can never "grow out of" his mental handicap. The trainable adolescent may never learn to read or write; he may be able to read a primary grade reader, although he may not understand as much of it as you might think; he may learn to write his name and simple sentences. He cannot

progress beyond the trainable stage into the educable stage, the category embracing persons with I.Q. scores usually falling somewhere between 50 and 80 who are capable of learning some academic subjects to some degree, or into that area of normal or average intelligence. Why frustrate a person by expecting that he should read when he doesn't have the capacity to do so or to get either understanding or enjoyment from what he does read? What can he do? What makes him happiest? Those are the questions most worthy of consideration.

One mother expressed the point through the saying "It isn't what you have; it's what you do with what you have." There is little more that we could ask of anyone. For to you and to all persons concerned about your child, he is much more than an I.Q. score. Certainly he is handicapped in other ways — socially, physically, or emotionally. But this doesn't mean that he won't acquire new skills within the limits of his ability or that he cannot be trained to handle these other handicaps. He will, of course, take longer to learn those things which he can be taught. He can profit by new experiences, although he will need simplified and repeated explanations and instructions to do so. And, although his training may have to be somewhat different from that which you give his normal brothers and sisters, he may be trained to act acceptably in social situations, to get along with his physical handicap, and to behave satisfactorily.

What your child can do of course depends upon many things — his personality, his interest, the degree to which he may be physically handicapped, his likes and dislikes, and the extent to which his brain was affected. In other words, the word "trainable" involves a whole person. And the people who use this word recognize that it cannot describe everything about an individual personality; it can no more tell you all about a person who is mentally retarded than the word "normal" can tell you what another person is like.

Physical and Mental Health

That is why your child should be taken to those persons who have the facilities to diagnose him as an individual. As an adolescent and an adult, your child should have periodic examinations by the physician and the dentist. Some persons who are mentally retarded are especially susceptible to certain respira-

tory illnesses; the family doctor can tell you how to guard your child's health in the cold winters and warm summers. The public health nurse in your area can also be called upon to give you some training clues about good health habits. The county child welfare worker may help you to plan for your child and to consider his over-all needs.

Facilities and Reference Sources

There are facilities available which are designed to help you to discover what your child can do. The National Association for Retarded Children, 386 Park Avenue South, New York 16, N. Y., can guide you to activities which will benefit your child.

There are pamphlets which will explain your State facilities and help you to know when home care or institutional care is best for your child. Other pamphlets are of help concerning care of retarded children while they are young. Write to the National Association for Retarded Children for their list, *Windows of Understanding*.

Now, however, some of you may be concerned because your child may still present problems usually associated with small children while acquiring those physical characteristics and those years of life which mark him as a man and her as a woman.



BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

How to Promote Acceptable Behavior

Material throughout this pamphlet is concerned about the many things that can be done to help your child develop behavior acceptable to his own needs and to the requirements of the society in which he lives. No longer a child, he now has to be helped to develop behavior which is acceptable for an adult. You and those professional persons equipped to advise you will have to help him to develop this behavior. Together you will have to train him so that he will know what he should do and can do, and what he should not do and cannot achieve. This also means that you will have to set limits for your child; we all face them, but the individual who is mentally retarded has to have limits definitely set by you. He needs controls imposed by you; he does not have the ability to set them for himself, and he needs that sense of security which comes from knowing just what he is supposed to do. You must, therefore, be consistent about the limits you set.

Behavior problems may occur, however. Some can be corrected so that your child may remain at home; others may require placement in an institution. It depends upon many factors. For example, many trainable children suffer from brain damage which in turn may lead to unpredictable and uncontrollable behavior. Problems, of course, may occur whether or not the brain has been severely affected. Indeed, all adolescents have to be supervised, and some problems arise just because we human beings

are so complicated that no one can anticipate all of our needs and desires. We all have feelings; the way in which we express them has to conform to regulations established by the society in which we live. And, as one mother described her child who is mentally retarded, "he is like any other individual, only more so." He, too, became frustrated just as we all do at times, but he was apt to display behavior which went to an extreme. When he was angry, he was crying, fist-pounding mad. And when he was stubborn, nothing could move him.

There are a number of things which you may be able to do to avoid possible misbehavior. One is to make sure that your child really understands what you are telling him. What looks like stubbornness may just be lack of comprehension. He just doesn't understand what you mean, or you may be asking him to do the impossible. While you tell him something, show him what you expect him to do. When you want him to learn how to set the table, don't just tell him. Set the table while you explain what you are doing. Then let him try it. Trainable children learn fast by imitation and repetition. And if he won't do something, try something else. He may become quite worried, even fearful, if he isn't given the opportunity to find something that he can do satisfactorily. Give him praise for accomplishments, but don't expect perfection.

Set limits for your child. He will always have to be limited more than others, because he will always require supervision and direction. If he doesn't conform to these limits, punish him by taking away something he likes to do — but do it immediately so that he will understand why he is being punished. If he doesn't react to this form of correction, try something else. Separation may work, for example. And be consistent. Don't let him "get away" with something today that you punished him for doing yesterday. Although he may not understand the reason why something should or should not be done, he may be able to understand that he should not disobey you. And if he gets what he wants by misbehaving, he will continue to misbehave. What individual doesn't use this technique sometimes to get his own way? Women are sometimes said to know when tears are advantageous! It may be a good idea to let your child know when you have to do something that you'd rather not do; let him know that we all face limits which stand in the way of what we might want to do.

Also let him know that you make mistakes at times, and help him over the embarrassing situations that might occur for him when he makes them. If he passes some food to someone and drops it or spills it, show him how to pardon himself and how to avoid similar mishaps in the future. Don't scold him — all of us have had our most embarrassing moments. If he walks in front of someone, tell him to say "excuse me." And say it yourself when you walk in front of someone. The example which you set will help him to acquire it. For example, if other members of the family use objectionable language, he might imitate them, and he might use the four-letter words at moments extremely embarrassing for all concerned. You can't protect him from hearing others use these words, but if he should use them, you can tell him that although some people use words that aren't nice, you and he wouldn't want to use them. But don't scold him or punish him for something he doesn't yet recognize as a social error or as something you don't want him to do.

These are a few of the things that you can do to promote acceptable behavior. What happens when unacceptable behavior occurs? What can you do then?

Uncontrollable Behavior

All of us experience moods in which we are mad at everyone; we are hurt, we are depressed, we don't know what to do with ourselves. But most of us are able to control ourselves so that we behave in a manner acceptable to others. Of course, we do "take it out" on the family sometimes. A bad day at the office, on the farm, or in the kitchen may mean a bad evening for other members of the family. Or it may mean an unnoticed kick at the fence or a good cry in the privacy of the bedroom. But we are usually aware that while we can take some things out on the family, we can go just so far. We know what will hurt a person physically or emotionally, and try to avoid those situations.

The individual who is mentally retarded cannot put himself in the other person's place; he is more self-centered, more "self-bounded" than normal persons. He must be trained; he requires your direction and help in actually showing him what to do and what not to do. Oftentimes he may be trained to replace his objectionable behavior with participation in an acceptable activity. But in some cases where the brain has been severely dam-

aged or affected, he cannot. Then he needs your understanding and the help of a physician, psychologist, social worker, or pastor.

There are times, in other words, when an adolescent or adult who is mentally retarded may reveal uncontrollable behavior, and all your efforts to help him are fruitless. There was Jim, for example. He was 17 years old when he began to throw himself on the floor to pound his fists in apparent exasperation. He cried. He screamed. And then he began to throw whatever was near him at whoever was in range. Jim was a big boy. He weighed nearly 200 pounds. His parents could not understand why he behaved in this manner; in fact, this young, well-built man was heart-sick and sorry when he recovered from temper tantrums which he never had as a small boy. His parents could not control him, but neither could Jim control himself. The good training, the love, and the care which had been given him by his parents could not help in this case. He had to be placed in an institution for his own protection and the protection of others. Why? Physicians and clinical psychologists discovered that Jim's brain had been damaged during or before birth to the degree that as he grew older his behavior became more and more impossible to control or predict. His behavior could not have been prevented.

Jim had a severe disorder caused by organic damage, but what about temper tantrums that occur in adolescents who are not severely brain-damaged? Again, of course, it may not be possible under the best family conditions to keep this individual in the home. And, again, this behavior is the result of circumstances beyond anyone's control. So much depends on so many factors involving the individual personality of a person who is mentally handicapped. There are some situations which he might have been able to handle with your help if he were not retarded. But, with the handicap, he may not be able to do so. There was Mary Ellen, for example, who had lived with her parents on the farm for all of her 22 years of age. Her brothers and sisters had played with her when she was younger, but now most of them were married and had homes of their own. During her teens Mary Ellen no longer cared to play games which she considered to be babyish because she saw that her brothers and sisters no longer played them when they grew bigger. So she too helped her mother around the house. Under her mother's direction, she made all the beds, scrubbed the floors, helped to prepare meals, fed the chickens,

and even took complete care of a little garden of her own. Her parents had helped her to achieve those things which she could do; they gave her their love and treated her as a human being who had dignity and something to contribute. But Mary Ellen craved companionship. She wanted friends; she desperately needed them. This was a part of her particular personality, but she was unable to fulfill this need. Frustrated, Mary Ellen would have uncontrollable crying spells during which she would hit her head against the wall and kick and bite whoever came near her. Now in an institution, Mary Ellen no longer has these tantrums. She has found friends, and she is very excited about visits with her family on the farm — she knows that she has companions who are waiting for her return and a family that will visit her, write to her, and welcome her vacations. Loneliness and lack of suitable companionship and activities may merit consideration of placement in an institution.

Problems That Can Be Handled in the Home and Community

There are a number of problems which may come up that can be successfully handled in the home. Many can be solved with the aid of community resources. These problems may take the form of tantrums which can be prevented or of bed-wetting, thumb-sucking, masturbation, or over-affectionate gestures which may be interpreted as sexual misbehavior. There are others, of course, that you may observe in your child. Parents and professional workers agree that the main way to cope with these problems is to direct the child's activity to some other interest. Suggestions for interest development and for activities can be found in the following chapter.

If, however, your child is hyperactive and sometimes becomes terribly over-excited, it is best to place him in some quiet area of the home where he can avoid over-stimulation. Don't give him the impression that you are punishing him by placing him in quiet surroundings; speak soothingly to him, letting him know that this is simply a good time to relax.

Again, there are circumstances in which you may find you can't cope with these problems; they too may be caused by some organic damage or affected part of the brain over which you or your child have no control. They may be caused by personality

factors which, complicated by the individual's mental handicap, may require admission to an institution. Professional diagnosis and advice can help you to determine the best course to follow.

In many cases, however, there is something that you can do in the home and community to solve these problems. Tim, for example, was a tall, strong, good-looking boy of 19. He had always been friendly and was particularly eager to win the approval of his parents. But now he appeared somewhat sullen at times; he would stay in his bed in the mornings, absolutely refusing to get up. And sometimes he would shut the door to cry, throwing things at it to prevent anyone from coming in. Oftentimes he would throw a book, one of a series of primers. His parents wondered and worried about his behavior. Then, one day his father talked the matter over with the county welfare worker. She came out to the house, and she had several talks with Tim, his parents, and his younger brother. Twelve-year-old Kent liked to read; he was a good reader and read adult classics with ease.

Both parents had noticed the enjoyment Kent received from reading, and both had worked with Tim, believing that he too could find pleasure through books. As a matter of fact, Tim did unusually well. He slowly went through a first-grade reader, had read the second-grade reader, and was now on the third. But he didn't like it. He was frustrated; he couldn't understand what he read and had trouble in making out many of the words. He did, however, want his parents to be pleased with him. He tried, but he was trying to achieve the impossible. Talking this over, the welfare worker, Tim's parents, and his brother came to the conclusion that perhaps Tim would be happier doing something he liked to do, and could do reasonably well. Just because Kent could read and liked it didn't mean that Tim could receive the same pleasure. Tim doesn't cry anymore now; he gets up right on time to help his family and neighbors with yardwork and to develop his special hobby. He has a workshop in the basement where he paints furniture and knick-knacks. He and his parents found something he liked to do, and his parents are just as pleased about what he paints as they are about what Kent reads. Each of their sons is doing what he can do and likes to do.

In contrast to Tim, Shirley didn't do much of anything. Her mother had always protected the girl who had been diagnosed as mongoloid shortly after she was born. As a teen-ager Shirley did

nothing but sit in her room and play with her paper dolls and other toys. One day she threw all her toys down the stairs, and she kept on throwing them whenever they were returned to her. Her parents took her to a city clinic. On the advice of a team of psychologists and social workers, Shirley went back to her home where her mother began to interest her in helping with the housework. Shirley is now a good helper; she dusts, sets the table for every meal, and goes without her mother on errands to the corner store. She didn't want her paper dolls back; she collects phonograph records. And she is very careful with them.

Temper Tantrums

Temper tantrums may be just an attention-getting device, a way to get one's own way, or the result of frustrations such as those experienced by Tim and Shirley. At times, of course, they are the means used to get around your necessary discipline. You have seen young children successfully use this technique to get what they wanted. Indeed, all of us sometime feel like going into a rage when something or somebody stands in the way of our wishes. But most of us accept the fact that, living within a family and within society, we can't always have our own way. The individual who is mentally retarded cannot understand the reasoning behind this, but he can learn to accept and conform to what you show and tell him to be appropriate behavior. He can observe that his parents and other adults do not behave in this manner.

Your example is important; he will imitate your behavior and he will note how you act towards him. If you treat him like a baby, he may act like one. He has to be helped to become as nearly like an adult as possible.

One way then to avoid future tantrums may be to leave him alone when he has one. You of course will have to see that he doesn't harm himself, but don't make a big fuss while he is having the tantrum; you will only encourage him. In most cases you can determine why he is having the tantrum. Maybe he has one whenever you are about to leave the house. Don't give in! Don't talk to him while he is having the tantrum, and leave when he is through. He has to be trained to respect the fact that you have a life of your own.

Most important, if he has a tantrum because he wants to do something he should not or cannot do, give him something else

to do. If he is upset because his younger sister goes out with friends and doesn't include him, you could contact the Association for Retarded Children in your area to find out what social activities are offered for him. Take him out as often as possible, even if it's just for a walk down to the lake, around the block, or about the farm. Sometimes include him when you have company; at other times, of course, you want to be alone with your friends. You have your own lives to lead; parents do not include their children, no matter how old their children might be, at all their gatherings. One teen-ager who was mentally retarded even looked forward to the time when his parents had company with whom they wished to be alone. At those times their son received "room service" for dinner just as if he were in a hotel! Of course, he was included at other times. Training in good table manners and how to sit quietly while others are talking will help him to become socially at ease and give him a feeling of being a significant member of the family. And, as he can be trained to respect your activities with your friends, so can plans be made to give him special evenings.

If you live in an area where there are no associations for the retarded, perhaps you could help to organize regularly scheduled social get-togethers for adolescents and adults who are retarded. Your local or state health department or welfare department and the local or state association for retarded children can be of help. If you live in an area where this isn't possible, you may be able to direct his attention to television, or you could have an evening set aside each week as the evening which would be his. On this evening the family could participate in activities that he is particularly interested in. Other adolescents who live nearby might very well welcome an invitation to participate.

Whether you live in the city or on a farm, you will have to observe your child to discover what is bothering him, consulting your physician and the social worker to obtain outside advice on what may be the matter and on what can be done about it. Then you can concentrate upon directing your child's interests to something which will eliminate the need for tantrums.

Treating him as much like an adult as possible, always remembering that he still requires your direction and supervision, giving him suitable responsibilities, providing recreational outlets, and

showing him that a tantrum isn't going to solve his problems will be steps forward.

Bed-wetting, Thumb-sucking, and Masturbation

Other problems such as bed-wetting, thumb-sucking, and masturbation also may be the result of some problem that is bothering your child. Again, observation and help from concerned professional persons can help you to discover the cause and enable you to direct his attention elsewhere. None of these problems will be solved by ridicule. Ridicule can only upset him more.

If your child still wets his bed as an adolescent, you can help him by encouraging him not to drink liquids before bedtime and to go to the toilet directly before he goes to bed. Do not punish him, but do praise him when he wakes up without having wet the bed. Medical attention may reveal some other cause for bed-wetting; seek your physician's advice. If some emotional upset is the cause, the psychologist and social worker may also give you some suggestions.

The physician, psychologist, and social worker can also give you advice about thumb-sucking, although you may be able to handle the problem yourself. Don't draw a lot of attention to the habit; the more attention that is given, the more established the habit becomes. Say little about it, and eliminate the need for it. This would mean finding some activity which would involve the use of your child's hands.

Work or recreation, such as housecleaning or pasting pictures in a scrapbook which contains material of particular interest to an adolescent or adult, is also a way to direct interest away from masturbation. There are social taboos about masturbation, and you and others probably find it embarrassing if your son or daughter engages in this activity in public. Doing so can't harm your child, but it is socially embarrassing. Therefore, when he or she does so, immediately direct his or her attention to something else. Do not punish him; punishment may only aggravate him and confuse him. He probably won't understand that he is doing something that is embarrassing to others. While you are directing his attention to another activity, you can, however, point out that one's hands can best be occupied away from oneself.

Young children usually masturbate more often than do adults, primarily because they are just going into the stage of development in which they are curious about their bodies and about feelings which they experience through their bodies. The individual who is mentally retarded may just be going through that stage during adolescence or even later. Therefore, you should not punish him for natural curiosity, but redirect his interests to some activity which will occupy his hands or attract his complete attention. And do it casually; if you make a big fuss about it, he may either become more interested in himself or become overly worried. Also check his clothing; what looks like masturbation may just be an effort to get relief from too tight clothing. It may also mean that your child should bathe often or more thoroughly. Medical assistance may reveal another cause which can be corrected by a physician.

Problems Which Look Like Sexual Misbehavior

Other problems may occur which may be interpreted as sexual misbehavior. Actually, these problems usually do not arise from the sexual interests or perversions which we attribute to persons who are only too well aware of the proper way to behave. For the mentally retarded individual who is trainable, these problems usually arise from a desire to get attention or just as something to do, curiosity, or as carry-overs from affectionate gestures which are acceptable for children but not for adults.

Remember: Your child must be trained. You have to direct him. He does not understand what is acceptable behavior and what is not. You have to show him — not just tell him, but show him what to do while you explain how he should act.

Exposure problems can occur; in most cases they can be overcome by training. Your child should be told that zippers should stay zipped, buttons remain buttoned, and young ladies always keep their dresses over their knees in public. Watch your child; if he zips down the zipper or she pulls her dress up in the home, you should immediately take his or her hands and guide them in arranging the clothing properly. While you are doing it, explain that the only time he or she needs to do differently is when going to the toilet or when undressing for bed. Then provide something else for him to do. If you are out in public or have friends in your home, it is best to arrange the clothing yourself.

One mother was extremely upset when the neighbors told her that her 15-year-old son was lifting up the dresses of little girls in the neighborhood. Actually, the boy had no intention of harming these little girls. He was just curious. He was just entering that stage which very young children go into when they become more interested in others than in themselves. He just wanted to find out what was under the dresses.

Usually, however, the individual who is trainable will not be this curious about others. If he is, direct his interest elsewhere. Perhaps your physician can give you some suggestions about how you can get him over his curiosity.

The chapter dealing with questions about sex, which appears at the end of this pamphlet, points out that sexual development and/or desire is often retarded to the degree that the trainable have little or no sexual interest. In cases where problems occur when sexual development and intent is mature, placement in an institution is usually the only practical solution.

One of the biggest problems in this area of behavior, however, usually arises because a child is not trained or is not capable of being trained to substitute acceptable gestures of affection for those used by young children. A baby is considered to be cute when he climbs up on an adult's lap, but the same adult will only be frightened if an adolescent or adult climbs onto his knee or throws his arms about him. Your child may be able to be trained to substitute a handshake or a greeting for the child's display of affection. Tell him that it's all right to kiss his mother or father or other members of his immediate family, but that a handshake or a "hello" is the best way to let others know that he likes them. When he starts to hug someone, stop him immediately. If necessary, take his hand and place it in the other person's hand. Show him how to do it. A family friend would probably be more than happy to help you and your child to practice. Tell your friends not to encourage your child to hug or kiss them; get them to help by shaking his hand rather than permitting him to engage in behavior which our society reserves for small children. You cannot expect that your child is going to be able to make the distinction between close friends of the family and strangers that he may meet. He may be trained to meet them in a socially acceptable manner if you make it clear that kisses and hugs are only for the immediate family.

Other Problems

There are, of course, other problems that may arise; each can be approached by:

1. Trying to understand why he behaves as he does
2. Consulting your physician and other professionally equipped persons for help and for advice as to how to handle the problem
3. Substituting acceptable activities and interests for the unacceptable behavior, making sure that you do so immediately
4. Providing responsibilities and recreational outlets
5. Avoiding ridicule and avoiding scolding for unacceptable behavior which could only be encouraged by emphasis
6. Explaining what is appropriate behavior while showing your child what he should do and what he can achieve.

It is usually needless to worry about juvenile delinquency, especially if you are able to provide careful and consistent supervision and direction for your child. There are few cases of delinquency among the mentally retarded individuals who are classed as trainable. Most cases reported have either been caused by misinterpretation of behavior and erased from the records upon satisfactory explanation, or caused by another person who encouraged the mentally retarded individual to take part in a crime or to accompany others while they committed a wrong. The retarded individual didn't know that he was doing wrong; he was taught to do what he did, a case of getting into the wrong company. Within himself, he is not going to develop plans to commit crimes against society. Your direction and supervision will guard your child against the company of individuals who have the mentality, but who do not have a sense of responsibility or of respect toward their fellow men.

Other cases involve "unintentional" types of delinquency. The retarded individual may do something, such as throwing something at someone or some object, because he cannot comprehend the injury or damage that will result. Again, your supervision and direction may eliminate the occurrence of "unintentional" wrongdoing.

The problems which occur do not involve crimes against society; they involve socially unacceptable behavior. Some of these problems, through no fault of your own, cannot be solved by you or by the resources in your community and can best be met in the environment of an institution. Many, however, can be met in the home, with advice and help available from community resources when you need it. But whether the answer lies within the home, the community, or the institution, your continuing affection, encouragement, and discipline can oftentimes meet those problems which occur because the individual who is mentally retarded is above all a human being.



INTEREST DEVELOPMENT

Your Child's Needs and Attributes

The observation that your child is quiet and "doesn't bother anyone" does not mean that he has satisfactory behavior. Although he may present no problems because he does nothing to harm or embarrass others or to harm himself physically, his behavior is not satisfying to others or to himself if he is not given the opportunity to do what he is capable of doing. He is as frustrated when he is permitted to do nothing as he is when he is expected to do too much. He has needs to fulfill; he has attributes other than his intellect which can enable him to be useful, to be respected, and to attain status. He should be permitted to make use of those capabilities and drives which are his despite the fact that he does not have the intellectual capacity to achieve academically or professionally. He is now older. He may have a mental age of from four to eight years, but he has lived longer than that. He probably considers the games and toys of childhood too babyish now. He should be permitted to discover what he can do to take his place in the adult world.

This, however, involves far more than a permissive attitude on your part; he will always require your supervision and direction. You have to help him to discover what he can do and what he likes to do. You have to develop a method of supervision and direction which strikes a necessary balance between too lax control on the one hand and too much protection on the other. You have to give your child the opportunity to be himself. And you have to

accept the fact that you cannot push him beyond his capacity to achieve. If your child functions on a low mental-age level, you cannot expect that he can accomplish some of the things mentioned here. Even if he functions on a comparatively high level, you cannot expect that he, as an individual, can or will do certain things.

If your child is physically handicapped as well, the family doctor can help you to determine which activities your child should avoid and which he should try. It is not advisable to over-protect the multi-handicapped individual; he may be perfectly capable of doing certain things within his mental and physical limitations. The physician, public health nurse, and occupational and physical therapists can help to train your child to get along with his physical handicap. They may be able to train him to develop methods that will enable him to do in a different way what the physically able can do.

You cannot assume that your child cannot do something or, on the other hand, that he can do something. You must always keep his mental and physical limitations in mind, but you can't predict what your child can or cannot do on the basis of what other individuals who are classed as trainable can or cannot do. You must keep trying; he never stops acquiring new skills within his intellectual limitations. If you protect him too much, you may block him from mastering things which will help him to get along and which will help him to acquire confidence in himself. You will have to work a great deal with your child to find out just how much he might be able to do. For example, when you think your child is sufficiently trained to take care of his own basic needs and to obey your instructions, you may discover that he might then be able to master short errands and bus trips by himself. Day-time trips are best, because darkness may hinder your child from finding his way and may simply encourage unscrupulous persons to take advantage of his lack of ability to distinguish between genuine friendliness and a falsely assumed attitude of regard—a problem of concern to all parents of teen-agers, but of particular concern to you.

You should, of course, make certain that your child can recognize signs of concern to his personal safety before you permit him to go out by himself. If he cannot recognize "Stop" and "Go" or the corresponding red and green signals, he obviously needs to be

accompanied by someone who can watch and direct him. Again, much depends upon the various personal attributes and upon the mental age level at which your child functions in determining whether or not he can recognize certain signs. You can discover, however, if your child is able to profit from your training. You may be able to train him to recognize traffic signals and such other signs as "Exit" or "Entrance" or the signs indicating appropriate public bathrooms — "Men," "Women," "Gentlemen," "Ladies," "Boys," "Girls." Similarly, some trainable persons can memorize their own addresses and telephone numbers; some cannot. You will have to find out whether or not your child can do so, avoiding attempts to force him to learn if his mental handicap obviously prohibits him from doing so. You cannot even assume that your child knows the difference between cars coming toward him and cars going away from him. If possible, you will have to train him to know. You can hold practice sessions with the family car—drive away from your child; drive up to him. Show him the difference; show him what to do.

When you find that your child has become sufficiently alert and interested in his surroundings and concerned about his personal safety, you should experiment further to discover what he can do. Go with him again and again to the corner store, and then let him make the trip alone. If you live on a farm, and a neighboring farm or town is in walking distance, give him the opportunity to walk to a carefully designated spot by himself. If you live in a city or in a rural area serviced by bus, give him careful directions about a bus trip to a certain place, pointing out signs and places that he can recognize as you make the trip with him for a number of times. And then let him make the trip alone.

Your child is an individual. As you cannot discover what he can or cannot do without experimenting, you also cannot expect him to be interested in doing those things that you like to do anymore than you can expect that normal children should be interested in their mother's liking for sewing or their father's occupation. There are cases on record of normal children being forced to play the piano, performing disinterestedly and badly, just because their parents wished they had had lessons. Your child is mentally retarded, but he is also a human being capable of reacting to approval and disapproval, to understanding and lack of understanding, to acceptance and rejection. He is your child, but

he is also himself. *He needs his own identity apart from you; you must supervise and direct him, but you must give him the opportunity to develop his own interests, his own personality, his own being. His is a growing, changing personality. He must be observed in relation to his own needs and goals.*

A desire to imitate what other persons his own age do plays a large part in determining what your child does. Motivation and inclination also influence the extent to which he can achieve. That is why you cannot predict what he can or cannot do within the limitations of his mental handicap. Some individuals who are trainable will never read or never be satisfied with the limited understanding they receive from the primary-grade books which they may be able to read. But others, as they grow older, may indicate a desire to read. This does not mean that their mental age is increasing; it means that they were slow to realize the capabilities and interests which they had. Therefore, if your child indicates a desire to read, don't discourage him. Help him. When he comes to a word which has no meaning for him, try to show him the object which the word symbolizes. Get some clues about how to help from a teacher or librarian. But do not force him to go beyond the reading level which he finds satisfying. Similarly, do not insist that he read if he has no desire to do so; like Tim, described in the previous chapter, he may become frustrated, sullenly unhappy, and discouraged.

The Inability to Comprehend Abstract Functions and Ideas

Reading is very abstract. It is a symbolic function, and it is quite difficult for mentally retarded individuals to understand how the word stands for something; how, for example, to make the relationship between the word "table" and actual tables. Indeed, he may only be able to make a connection between the word and a particular table in your home, not being able to understand the concept of tables in general.

Arithmetic is especially difficult for mentally retarded individuals to understand; a failing which they share with many normal individuals. But the individual who is mentally retarded has difficulty in comprehending the relationship between numbers and different things. He may be able to count to 100, but he may not be able to count 100 people or even two. You can train him to

count three pears, but if you replace them with three apples, he may not be able to count them correctly.

It would be better, therefore, not to waste valuable learning time teaching your child to count to 100. What is important is to see if you can train him to distinguish different types of coins. Some individuals who are trainable can learn to handle money fairly well; others cannot. The use of money, like the ability to read and to count, is a symbolic function. You cannot expect, however, that your child will be able to handle money with ease; he probably will never be able to subtract or add figures.

This inability to generalize, the lack of curiosity and a limited desire to learn are important for you to understand in your efforts to help your child to develop interests. You cannot ask your daughter if she would like to sew or ask your son if he would like to collect pictures of car models and expect her or him to want to or to do it on her or his own initiative. You must demonstrate what is to be done; and you cannot expect that if your daughter does produce a cross-stitch, French-knot design on one towel that she will then be able to do so on another towel of a different pattern. You must show her. If you find that your son shows an interest in automobiles and likes to collect pictures of them, you cannot assume that he is going to recognize the difference in makes of cars. Patience and willingness to show him the difference are necessary. Maybe she will never be able to embroider different patterns without instruction each time; maybe he will never be able to understand the difference between cars in general and a type of car in particular.

It is possible, however, that one individual who is trainable may not be able to distinguish the differences between things included in one general category while becoming quite proficient in another area. One boy couldn't distinguish the differences between the different makes of cars, but he could tell the difference between coins. One girl became adept at embroidery, eventually having no difficulty in adjusting to new patterns. But she was unable to understand the need for a different table arrangement when company came for dinner. This means that you have to experiment. If one thing doesn't work, try something else. And no matter how slight an accomplishment may look to you, give your child praise for it. It is a big step forward for him. He needs your approval; he needs status as a significant, contributing member of the family who is

loved not because he is handicapped, but because he is an individual.

Goals You Can Help Your Child to Attain

There are, of course, a number of things which you want your child to be able to do. In addition to training him to care for his bodily functions and to dress himself, you want to train him, for example, to be able to communicate his needs, to respond to directions, to recognize signs of importance to his personal safety, to be well groomed, to share with others and respect their property, and to be courteous. And you want him to acquire adequate work habits and attitudes and to develop recreational interests. All of these things will help him to get along within the family, within the community, and within himself.

Therefore, you must ask yourself how important it is that he be able to read and write. We oftentimes base our expectations upon what others do; consequently, one is likely to think of reading and writing as being of great importance to his child. For the trainable person, however, the important consideration concerns what he can do to get along in the world. Few people will notice his inability to read or write; because he will not be competing with others in situations involving reading and writing. Many will note his abilities to fulfill the expectations noted above.

Ability to communicate one's needs does require that one be able to speak satisfactorily or be able to express his desires through gestures. Many individuals who are mentally retarded have difficulty with speech. Just recently, in fact, there has been increasing professional interest in what can be done to improve the speech of the mentally retarded. Now that your child is older, he may be able to profit from the help of a speech therapist; oftentimes, however, he may not. Your State Departments of Health and of Education (Public Instruction) are proper sources for information. If help is not available in your area or if there is no apparent improvement after your child has had help, you should make every effort to accept his speech difficulties as part of his handicap.

It may be, however, that you can develop activities that will help your child with his speech. One thing that you can do is to talk to your child while you are showing him how to do something; this not only may help him correctly to use and pronounce

words, but will help to generate interest in what he is doing. If, for example, you are teaching him to set the table, tell him the names of the utensils and when they are used, and get him to repeat what you say. Television and radio also help to stimulate speech; ask him to tell you about the programs he has watched or listened to. But do not exert pressure on your child where it will mean nothing. Don't force him to speak more clearly if he is obviously unable to do so.

Interest in what he does will stimulate your child to express himself in his own way. But, if he does not say something, it does not mean that he cannot understand what you say. In fact, talking to him will help him to build up a desire to express himself and to respond to your directions. When you direct him, show him how to carry out the directions, and get him to repeat them. Include him in family conferences, asking him to describe what he has done and what he thinks you could all do to improve family work habits and entertainment needs. If he suggests the impossible, take time to tell him why it is so, using concrete examples.

Within the family conference it is also a good idea to indicate to your child when he should speak -- "Would you like to say something now?" In this way you can train him to understand that communication involves listening to others as well as speaking to them. He may be able to learn that when he is included in company gatherings, he should not monopolize the conversation but contribute when it is appropriate for him to do so. Another help in building up his ability to express himself is also one that will help him to achieve a feeling of status within the limitations imposed by the need for your supervision and direction. Therefore, if possible, give him the opportunity to choose what he wants to do. Would he like to watch television that evening or would he prefer to go for a ride in the car? Would she like to wear her dressy dress or would another dress be more to her liking?

Consideration of what your child would like to wear is basic to good grooming. He is going to be more interested in good grooming if he has some choice in the matter. In fact, a large number of mothers feel that the time they trained their sons and daughters to understand and appreciate color and design differences was well spent. Now their children pick out their own clothes; parents accompany them to the department stores, but the final choice is actually that of an individual who takes pride in how he looks.

Daughters should have the dressing-table materials which mean so much to women. Your daughter may not like to color in a coloring book anymore, but she may spend satisfying time learning how to apply lipstick. And, if possible, she, too, may enjoy the satisfaction of having a new hair-do at the beauty parlor. Similarly, your son may find more pleasure in his appearance when he goes to the barbershop. The beautician and barber can probably give you and your child some good tips about grooming. Fathers can give sons the best directions about shaving. Many fathers discover that their sons do a smooth job with safety or electric razors. Some nicks were experienced during first tries, but what man doesn't experience a few jaw-twisting mishaps?

There are numerous personal needs which require grooming attention. The appearance of one's teeth is noticed by most persons; the condition of your child's teeth, therefore, is an important appearance consideration as well as being of utmost health importance. Regular appointments with the dentist are necessary; he and the dental hygienist can help you to train your child properly to care for his teeth. If your son or daughter wears glasses, take time to consult the optician so that you, he, and your child can pick out good looking frames after the eye-doctor (ophthalmologist) has prescribed lenses. Care in selecting becoming frames will further enhance your child's interest in his appearance. Interest in how one looks is also increased by interest in fashion magazines, designed for men and for women. Looking through them, clipping or tearing out pictures of particular interest, and putting them in files or scrapbooks is not babyish. It is a frequent adult pastime which may provide satisfying leisure time for your child in addition to enhancing his interest in good grooming.

All persons should have a place to keep their scrapbooks and what-have-you. So should your child; if possible he should have a place that is sacred to him, a place that is his alone. And he should not have to account for it or its neatness unless certain unforeseen circumstances absolutely require your interference. Certainly, much of what he keeps there might appear to be just plain junk to you, but all of us have prized possessions which other persons, to our dismay, would probably regard as suitable only for the garbage can. This is the right of every human being: to have his personal property respected by others. This is the first big step toward learning to respect the property of others. Respect

your child's property and you will have a direct basis for teaching him the meaning behind the golden rule. As you do not touch his prized possessions, neither does he interfere with yours or with that of others. Point out that he, of course, will receive satisfaction from sharing with others; tell him about and share your appreciation of what is yours with him. When you get a gift of candy from someone, make a point of giving some to him. Suggest that he share what he receives, remembering, of course, that we all have some things which are ours alone. These are the things which help to give us our identity apart from others, and which we sometimes cherish the more because we take them out only when we are alone with ourselves.

Similarly, the best way to instill a courteous attitude toward others is to set a good example yourself. "Thank you," "you're welcome," and "may I help you?" are expressions that the entire family should cultivate. You will have to both set the example and give your child instruction and opportunity to practice social courtesies. Your child may learn to use these expressions appropriately, and, in fact, may even correct you! He, too, may learn the magic of a smile and the "bit of blarney" which we all appreciate.

Home Work Habits and Attitudes

Everything that you do to develop your child's interest in his attitudes and his appearance, and everything you do to set an example and to train him will point the way toward increasing his interest in helping others. This can be a great source of satisfaction to him, because it will increase his confidence in himself and promote his status as an important member of the family.

And there is much he can do. Alfred's parents, for example, found that he could do a great deal to help on the farm. To their amazement, what he could do led to development of pride, responsibility, and membership in the 4-H. Alfred's brothers all had chores to do, but he had nothing to do. His parents came to the conclusion that maybe tall, husky, 15-year-old Alfred might be interested in doing something if he was given the opportunity and training. They started him out on washing the bulk milk tank. The first few times didn't go so well, but Alfred kept at it with his parents' encouragement, and his dad patiently showed him where he missed and just how he could do a better job. It wasn't long until the stainless-steel tank shone as it never had before.

Soon Alfred became interested in helping his brothers groom animals for 4-H judging contests. Noting his interest, his parents gave him three beef calves. He took good care of them and soon asked for some sheep to tend. Given a flock of 25, he diligently cared for them, going out every night before bedtime to make certain that all was well in the pen. He received all the income from the wool clipped and the lambs sold. Impressed, his brothers took him along to 4-H meetings; he was asked to join. And Alfred has won ribbons for his lambs.

Both boys and girls living on farms have gathered eggs, fed the chickens, shelled corn, planted gardens, and helped with housework. Bill has two acres of his own; you can always pick out Bill's acres from the highway, because the rows are crooked. But the produce flourishes and the income from it is his.

You can't expect perfection—the rows may be crooked, but the end result deserves praise from you and justified pride for the individual who is mentally retarded. He has done something to the best of his ability. Through your supervision and direction, he has achieved that degree of independence to accomplish what he can do. And he has received satisfaction from it.

Dan received satisfaction similar to that enjoyed by Alfred, although Dan lived in the city. Diagnosed at birth as mongoloid, he had been discharged from the public school when he was 12. At 17 he was of medium height, sandy-haired, and well mannered. His friendly smile and sparkling eyes were a pleasure to his family and friends. Encouraging Dan to help around the house, his mother discovered that he had developed muscular skill to the point that he could do a good job of ironing — he or his parents didn't regard this as "woman's work" because they knew a bachelor across the street and several veterans in the neighborhood who ironed and who helped with housework. In fact, Dan's father always helped with spring housecleaning. Dan did all the flat-piece ironing, washed the dishes, made the beds, finally began to take the bus by himself to religious training class, and was later accepted at a sheltered workshop for the physically and mentally handicapped. His favorite indoor pastime is watching television; he can even print the names of all his favorite performers and recite the commercials of the sponsors. And he always looks forward to summer vacations when he and his dad go to the ball games.

An individual who is mentally retarded can become quite handy at doing various things. One boy became the family specialist in ironing white shirts. It usually takes a long time to learn to do something, and many mistakes may be made, but there should always be an expression of family joy when something is accomplished. Then your child will know he has done something well, and will find happiness in your satisfaction as well as in his own accomplishment.

You will probably have to work diligently and patiently with your child to help him to develop motor skills that will enable him to do certain tasks; it takes a long time to develop eye and hand coordination and the ability to use small muscles. Therefore, if, for example, you think your son or daughter may be interested in darning socks, first train him or her to weave on a loom frame. Develop this, and then go on to train him to darn. Similarly, you must spend time training him to match buttons with buttonholes and how to put a needle neatly back and forth through material before you can train him to sew on a button.

You may find that your child doesn't try to do something which you are training him to do. Again, this may be because of many things. It may be just because he doesn't like to do it. None of us likes to do some things or is adept at doing what other people apparently like to do and do well. Of course, there are some things we all should learn to do, and your child, too, needs to be trained to do certain things and act in certain ways. Some of these things are mentioned in the section on goals. But, if your child shows no interest in doing something that isn't really necessary for him to do, try something else.

If your daughter doesn't like to sew, see if she wouldn't like to peel vegetables, make sandwiches, and prepare simple foods and pastries. Semi-prepared foods, such as packaged cake mixes, offer easy-to-make dishes for your child. If your son doesn't care to scrub or help in other ways with housework, see if he wouldn't like to cut the grass or shovel snow, or maybe he has that "green thumb" which could do wonders with a flower garden. Of course, your daughter may like to work in the garden, while your son may become interested in cooking—the best known cooks in the country are men!

What your son or daughter can do is dependent upon the many attributes which contribute to his or her individuality. You must

adapt the learning process to your own child's level and rate of learning. And you can best determine this by consulting concerned professional persons, by observing your child, and by working with him to train him to follow your directions.

Being certain that your child will remember and act upon your instructions, you may be able to leave him alone during the day; perhaps you can leave him alone during those evenings when you go out. It depends upon the capabilities of your child. Betty was an only child, and her parents both worked during the day. They would leave her to tend the house; she always kept the door locked, and never let anyone in except near-by neighbors that she knew well. She shut the windows when it rained, and would tell whoever might call on the phone that her parents would be home soon. And she would have a busy day, cleaning house, preparing her lunch and getting ready for the family dinner, and pursuing her various recreational interests.

All that was learned was learned directly, not accidentally, not in passing. You must train, supervise, and direct your child.

Developing Recreational Interests

Your child definitely needs recreational interests, but, as with work habits and attitudes, you must train him; you must help him to acquire these interests and to develop them. Again, he needs your training, supervision, and direction. You will have to experiment, and you will find that whatever he shows a desire to do has interest for him. Work, of course, can give him pleasure in addition to giving him status and a feeling of usefulness. Many people consider such activities as sewing, cooking, and gardening as hobbies rather than as work. But specific recreational outlets also provide a feeling of being a significant member of the family, and provide further means for developing acceptable social behavior.

Associations for the retarded and local or state health departments or welfare departments can give you many suggestions and can oftentimes direct you to recreational programs for the retarded. You can also get together with parents in your area to establish regularly-scheduled social get-togethers for individuals who are mentally retarded. Programs can include such activities as picnics, square dancing or whatever might be the current teenage "acrobatic-type" dance steps, singing, bowling, swimming, and

ping-pong. Parents can take turns driving the members to and from meetings and in supervising the gatherings. You may be able to acquire a trained recreational director for the group; or you may be able to find someone in your area who is interested in recreational activities and in the needs of the retarded willing to direct each program. Special holiday programs could include the entire family; others may feature entertainers in the area or entertainment by some of the members who have special talents.

Family entertainment is another good recreational outlet for your child. He, too, will enjoy family picnics, a special television evening complete with popcorn and soft drinks, or a gathering of relatives or friends. He might also enjoy a trip to Grandma's for a vacation, and both sons and daughters may look forward to a yearly fishing trip with Dad.

There are several summer day camps and resident camps designed especially for your child; information about them is available from the National Association for Retarded Children.

Other activities of special interest to him are Boy and Girl Scout troops, and Bible study or Sunday School classes. Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant classes are being established in increasing numbers for the retarded. Your priest, rabbi, pastor, or rector are good sources to consult for suggestions about religious training and recreational activities. Alfred, the farm boy mentioned earlier, told his Sunday School class about his picture of the Good Shepherd, and about how he knew what it meant because he, too, had tended a flock of sheep. He went on to explain how the picture meant that all of us as human beings were part of the Good Shepherd's flock. Alfred's parents and pastor used imagination to translate an immediate concrete experience into a meaningful lesson.

Interest development involves the need for translating certain adult activities into activities which your child will be able to understand and enjoy. If, for example, your son shows an interest in playing baseball, you may have to simplify a game held within the family, neighborhood, or get-together for the retarded into rules and procedures that are meaningful to him. Perhaps your child won't be able to go beyond the basic steps involved in some activities to the more complex stages of a game, but if he can accomplish these basic points and get enjoyment from them, that is what counts. Some mentally retarded individuals, for example,

become adept at handling some of the basic methods in baton twirling; others do well at simple card games.

Some individuals who are mentally retarded may not have the physical ability or coordination to participate in sports, but, like most of us, they may find pleasure in being spectators. If your child is well mannered and courteous, you probably will enjoy taking him to baseball, football, basketball, or hockey games. You can explain what is happening out on the field, court, or rink in terms meaningful to him; many men have had the experience of explaining the game in terms a woman can understand!

In addition to the outlets for recreation within the family and community, the individual who is mentally retarded also needs activities which he can participate in by himself. And many of the trainable show no reluctance to part with their childhood toys and games. Like Shirley, described in the previous chapter, they are aware that other young adults do not play with these babyish things. Television, therefore, holds great interest for individuals who are mentally retarded. It is a good idea, however, to supervise the programs your child watches. Many parents feel that it isn't good for their children to watch westerns, mysteries, or wrestling and boxing matches. These parents reason that their children do not have the judgment or ability to understand what it means when a person falls from a gunshot wound or from a hard body-blow. It is, therefore, wise to prevent the possibility for problems. Tops on the lists for mentally retarded persons are team-sport programs, comedies, and variety shows. News programs on television and radio can be used as learning experiences for your child; you can show him what happens to persons who don't follow instructions and who aren't careful about crossing the street or about staying away from strangers.

Phonograph record collections and disc-jockey radio programs are also good recreational pastimes for your child. These activities can lead to other leisure-time hobbies. Many teen-agers and young adults collect pictures of their favorite television, recording, and movie stars.

A number of parents give their children subscriptions to entertainment magazines and to magazines which contain pictures of news events or of scenic places. Many retarded persons also get enjoyment from newspapers. They may not be able to read them,

but in their own way receive satisfaction, just as we all receive different degrees of enjoyment from going over the papers.

Scrapbook collections of pictures are not babyish. Many adults clip out recipes, pictures of foods, and other pictures pertaining to their various interests. In addition to picture collections of well-known personalities, your child may be interested in collecting pictures of such things as automobiles, fashions, airplanes, cartoons, advertisements for various products, food labels, outdoor scenes, homes, flowers. The list could be endless. Your child may be able to use a scissors after careful training; if not, train him how to tear the pictures neatly out of publications. You will also have to show him how to turn pages carefully and how to paste.

What your child receives enjoyment from depends upon your trying to discover things he likes to do and training him to do them. If one thing doesn't work out, try something else. And don't expect your child always to operate at his maximum capacity. None of us do. There are times when each of us would prefer to be more or less idle. Your child should have time for himself. There is no reason that he should be occupied every moment. It also isn't necessary for every activity to be a learning experience or a time to further his social development. Just plain fun is an important ingredient in all of our lives.

Smoking and Drinking

Some parents have expressed concern about the importance of smoking and drinking to the just-plain-enjoyment needs of their children. Whether or not your child should be allowed to smoke or whether or not he expresses a desire to do so is an individual matter. If your son or daughter indicates a desire to do so, because he has seen you or others smoke, you should analyze his behavior to determine whether or not he has sufficient judgment to handle smoking so that it won't be a hazard. Make certain that he obeys your directions, and caution him never to smoke in his room. Train him how to light a safety match or to use a lighter. Train him to use an ashtray and to make sure that the cigarette, cigar, or pipe is out when he is through with it.

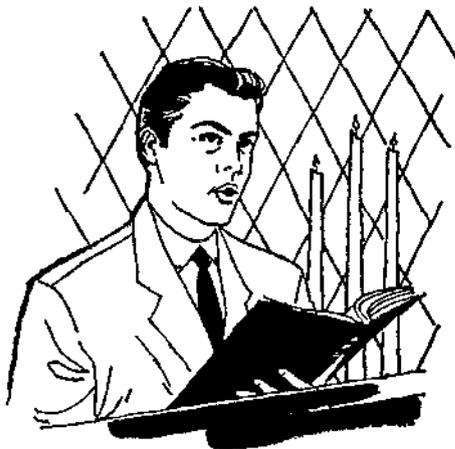
If you don't want your child to smoke, you might do what one father did when his 19-year-old daughter declared one eve-

ning that she wanted to smoke like her mother and father. Her mother was most upset; the father told her he would handle the problem. He gave his daughter a cigarette, lit it for her, and told her to breathe in. She did. The result was much coughing and gasping. She has never indicated a desire to smoke since; in fact, she feels somewhat sorry for her parents when they smoke.

As for drinking alcoholic beverages, the necessary thing to do is not to give your child the opportunity to drink. He should not drink. His lack of judgment and poor coordination would only suffer the more from drinking; your training and efforts to help him to coordinate better could suffer severe set-backs if your child were to drink. If he has acquired the habit, consult a physician, psychologist, public health nurse, or social worker to obtain advice and help.

Activities or behavior which you wish your child to avoid may be prevented by channeling his interests in other directions. You can help to develop your child's interests by:

1. Trying out any number of projects to see if he shows interest in them
2. Not forcing your child to do something he obviously does not want to do or cannot do
3. Consulting concerned professional persons who can analyze your child's capabilities, suggest ways for you to help him use them, and help you to plan projects and activities of interest to him
4. Showing your child what to do while you explain how to do it
5. Concentrating upon activities which will help your child to get along in the world rather than upon abstract academic subjects which will only frustrate, confuse, and depress him
6. Helping your child to realize his own individual needs and wants rather than wasting valuable learning time expecting him to be interested in what you like or what you can achieve
7. Giving your child praise for accomplishments, and encouragement to profit from his mistakes.



FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ACCEPTANCE

The Need for Acceptance and Understanding

An individual who is classed as trainable may not have the intellectual capacity to comprehend complex things or even things which normal persons regard as simple. He may not be able to verbalize to others or to himself how he feels. But he does have feelings; he can sense things. It is difficult to determine just how much he is aware of some things, or how he interprets what he sees, hears, and feels. It is, in fact, impossible to know how anyone other than ourselves really feels or to know what he thinks; indeed, we oftentimes are unable to analyze our own feelings. But most people can get a fairly good idea about how others might feel by imaginatively putting themselves in the other fellow's place. The wise person, however, does not assume that the other fellow is or should be exactly like himself. He accepts, understands, respects, and enjoys the individuality of man. And man responds accordingly.

The person who is mentally retarded is no different in this regard; he needs to be accepted, understood, respected, and enjoyed. He is an individual, a human being sensitive to the attitudes of his parents, his brothers and sisters, and of the community of which he is a part. What he can do, what he can

accomplish within the limitations of his handicap, is influenced, therefore, by the way in which others react toward him. We are all influenced by the reactions of others. We all would wish that our acceptance not be based on the self-inspired expectations of others but on appreciation of what we are with our faults as well as our assets, our limitations as well as our abilities. No man is perfect. And what actually is tragic about mental retardation is not basically the fact that an individual is mentally retarded, but that there are people who don't accept him, people who don't accord him the dignity and respect which are his due as a human being.

Parents and the Individual Who Is Mentally Retarded

All parents have to become adjusted to their children; all parents have to learn how to accept them. Certainly, it is difficult to accept a handicap, but the handicap is not all there is to an individual. Hospitalized persons may well become somewhat indignant when they hear themselves talked about as if they were a gall bladder, broken leg, or an appendix. A moment's thought, however, will bring the realization that being referred to as an ailment is just hospital jargon, a short-cut category which is of importance to those professional persons who serve the patients and to those who love them and are concerned about them. The term "mentally retarded" is also used as a category to describe a particular handicap and to enable concerned persons to help the individual who is mentally retarded to achieve what he can within his limitations.

You have already had to adjust to knowing that your child is handicapped; now you have to adjust to his being a man as well. All parents have to adjust to the period of adolescence and adulthood; most have to adjust to the fact that their child is an individual. You, too, have to accept this man or this woman for what he or she is and not for what you wish he or she might have been or could be.

What can you do to achieve this acceptance? First, of course, you should come to the conclusion that most thoughtful parents make: "This is our child; we want him to be happy. We want to help him to do what he can do." And you have to recognize the fact that your child's judgment is poor; you will always have to supervise and direct him; you have to guard him against acci-

dents and train him to avoid them. You have to help him to behave satisfactorily and to attain satisfying interests. And you want to praise him for accomplishment, not because a pamphlet tells you to do so but because you are justifiably proud. He is your child, and he has achieved something.

Having accepted the fact that your child will always require supervision and direction, this may be of increasing concern to you now that he is a man. You have to recognize that you, too, are growing older, and that you will not always be here to help your child. An accident could even occur tomorrow that would deprive your child of your guidance. Through illness or death you may not be able to care for him. Your local or state association for retarded children can explain guardianship plans to you or refer you to the proper source of information. Guardianship helps to provide security for you and your child. There is someone who wants to share your responsibility, to help you, and to help you to provide a satisfying, secure life for your child. Acceptance and understanding necessarily involve planning for his future security.

How do you accept him? You accept him for himself. You avoid false hopes, and cultivate that hope which helps him to be what he is and to do what he can do.

And you consult those professional persons equipped to help you and your child to lead satisfying lives. These people can help you and your child more satisfactorily if you accept the fact that your child is mentally retarded, and do not expect that he can achieve beyond his capacity.

As has been pointed out previously, your child's opportunity to lead a satisfying life is hampered if you expect too much of him or if you expect too little. Acceptance of what he is and can do will enable you to discover, with the help of professional persons, just what you can do to help him. He will not be able to achieve if you subject him to failure through trying to make him into what you think he ought to be. If you are realistic, you may obtain satisfaction from your child and provide it for him.

Parenthood with a Retarded Child

There are a number of other things that you can do to give and to receive these closely knit and shared attitudes of accept-

ance, understanding, respect, and enjoyment. A very important consideration is your own personal life. Your individuality needs to be respected. You are more than parents. You have lives of your own to lead, lives to lead apart from your children.

Admittedly, the fact that your child always requires supervision and direction does present a problem. Parenthood always involves responsibilities which require giving up youth's carefree attitudes; you probably have given up even more. Although every parent carries that feeling of responsibility, of that love which always involves concern, throughout their lives, you have to supplement it with active, participating concern. But some parents of persons who are mentally retarded give up too much. And this isn't good for your child. The satisfaction you receive from your own lives cannot help but be reflected in your attitudes toward your child. He can sense this; he can feel this.

What can you do, then, to further enhance your own lives? One thing you can do is to set aside time to go out together without your child, rather than merely relieving each other by taking turns to go out or by just staying in. Some individuals who are trainable, like Betty mentioned earlier, are able to stay alone for brief periods. Others are not. Therefore, if your finances prohibit having outside help, perhaps you could arrange to exchange time with other parents, or secure the help of relatives. If you have normal children, they can take charge — but they should not be required to give up too many of their own activities, either.

Camp vacations for your child or visits with relatives will also give you time for a vacation alone. A husband and wife need time to be alone together without their children; and the children need the opportunity to be away from their parents. It's an old saying that we enjoy our home and family much more after we've been away from them for a while!

Those times will then be even more pleasing when you truly want to take your child with you, and want to enjoy him and he you, at home. And do enjoy him; he probably has a sense of humor, too. Laugh with him, and when he does something which he obviously believes to be amusing, laugh at him. Indeed, you and he can even laugh at mistakes—the wise man is usually the one who finds that he can laugh over spilt milk. And don't talk

in front of your child about all his particular problems. He may not understand exactly what you are talking about, but he is likely to know you are talking about him. He may sense, he may feel that somehow he is more of a problem than a person.

Does he know he is mentally retarded? He probably uses the term himself, and that is certainly all right. He probably doesn't know what it means, but he may be able somehow to sense that he is different. And that is part of the sorrow or part of the pride that man sometimes bears because he is man. More likely, however, he has no idea at all. Indeed, you cannot assume that he has just because he uses the term. His use of the term is fine; he will hear it, and he, too, can accept it as part of his life. But do not talk about him in his presence; it is not wise to discuss any one at length as if you were somehow unaware of his company. Do not talk in front of him as if he were a handicap. He is not. He is a human being.

Your family unit is composed of human beings, of persons who need outside companionship as well as each other. It is not wise to isolate your family from normal entertainment and visiting. Your child may be trained to get along with company, and he may be trained to respect your wish to be alone with company.

Your acceptance, of course, is paramount. First you must accept, understand, respect, and enjoy your child before you can expect others to do so.

Brothers and Sisters and the Individual Who Is Mentally Retarded

You may be able to help your normal children to accept their retarded brother or sister and his or her development into adulthood. There are situations, of course, that may be beyond your control. Joe, for example, was born when his brother was two years of age and his sister seven. Frequently physically ill as well as retarded, Joe required much of his parents' time to the neglect of young Roger. Louise, his sister, was old enough to understand why Joe required so much attention. Roger always resented him. And Roger's resentment grew as Joe grew older. Nothing the parents could do would convince Roger that they cared as much for him as they did for his mentally retarded brother. And, as Joe entered adolescence, he became even more demanding of his parents' time, exhibiting temper tantrums every

time Roger shouted at him or did something Joe wasn't allowed to do.

Joe was placed in an institution; it was the best arrangement because of family circumstances. Parents must do what is best for the family unit, considering the welfare of all their children. There are many cases, of course, where the brother-sister relationship can be satisfactorily worked out in the home to foster the welfare and happiness of each member of the family. Much depends upon the age relationship of the mentally retarded person to his brothers and sisters, the degree to which your trainable child is retarded, and the personalities of each member of the family. What works for one family may not work for another.

Where workable situations could be established certain things were done by parents. For one thing, the fact that you accept your mentally retarded child may go a long way towards cultivating acceptance by his brothers and sisters. Take time to explain to them just what is meant by "mental retardation." Tell them that men are not born equal; tell them that we are all limited as to what we can do and what we can achieve; tell them that we are limited not only mentally and physically but by the many interests, drives, likes and dislikes which make up our personalities. Tell them that their brother or sister should be respected as an individual by every other member of the family.

Excessive indulgence of either your retarded child or your normal child is not good for either of them. Too much attention paid to your retarded child to the exclusion of even a display of interest in his normal brothers or sisters will probably foster their resentment. And if you indulge your normal child, he will probably look down upon his retarded brother or sister. You have to try to achieve a balance, carefully explaining to your normal child why you have to spend so much time with the retarded member of the family. At the same time you must be interested in the activities of both, and assured that each has satisfying interests. Explain to your normal child how he is capable of developing his own interests while his retarded brother or sister has to be helped to do so. And don't be overly alarmed at an occasional spat or two between your normal child and your retarded child. Brothers and sisters are like that! But do explain to your normal child the extent to which he should always consider the limitations of the retarded individual.

Your normal children can be a big help to you in training your mentally retarded teen-ager or young adult. Ask for their help and suggestions about activities in which their brother or sister might be interested. But do not give them too much responsibility for care and supervision; you do not want them to resent the presence of their mentally retarded brother or sister or to think of him or her as a burden. You can, however, draw them into your planning activities; they, too, need to have the feeling of being significant, contributing members of the family.

And they, too, need to lead their own lives. They should go out, and they should have their friends over. One boy, Bob, was quite upset about his mentally retarded sister Sue, because she had always received most of the attention, and because he somehow felt guilty about going out with his friends while Sue forlornly sat alone. Rather than appearing sympathetic, he would call his sister cruel names. Name-calling was his way of releasing the frustrations he had experienced as a youngster when his elder sister received so much needed attention because of her frequent illnesses. It was also a way of trying to show himself that he didn't care that his sister apparently felt badly when he went out. Bob was 15 and his sister was 17.

Bob's parents talked the matter over with a social worker, and upon her advice they spent time discussing mental retardation with Bob, finally getting him to attend a meeting of parents of the retarded. Bob became quite interested in plans to stage a weekly get-together for the retarded. And he was at the first program. When the square dancing began, he asked his sister to be his partner. Sue had never smiled quite so broadly as she did when he took her by the hand, and Bob never explained square dance patterns quite so well. It was Bob who took so much time introducing the get-together members to one another. Sue doesn't mind it now when Bob goes out. And neither does he. They both know that each has something to do, some place to go where each will be with friends. Occasionally, however, Bob goes to Sue's programs with her; several times he brought some of his friends along.

Teen-agers who accept, understand, respect, and enjoy the member of their family who is mentally retarded usually do not have a big problem with their friends. Youth is oftentimes wiser than age in certain respects. Explaining about mental retarda-

tion to friends and telling them that their brother or sister was mentally retarded usually did not present any problems. In fact, their friends would often go out of their way to chat with the mentally retarded individual. Many normal brothers and sisters occasionally take their retarded brother or sister for rides or to the movies with friends. Not all the time, of course; they have their own lives to lead. And brothers and sisters don't go everywhere with each other.

Asked if she was hesitant about having her friends meet her teen-ager sister who was mentally retarded or if she ever encountered any friends who didn't accept her, one 14-year-old girl looked indignant and a little bit confused. "Of course not," she said, "she's my sister."

The Community and the Individual Who Is Mentally Retarded

The very fact that many normal sisters and brothers talk freely to their friends about the individual in their family who is mentally retarded is important in many ways. It not only does a great deal to help the retarded person, his brothers and sisters, and his parents, but the community as well. It goes a long way toward cultivating community acceptance. And it is a long way; it will be a long time before the community as a whole will fully understand and accept the mentally retarded. There are still many myths and misconceptions. A hush-hush attitude on your part will only increase them.

Community attitudes toward mental retardation are changing. There is more understanding. More is needed. Probably nothing can do more to promote it than your willingness to be matter-of-fact and conversationally open about the fact that your child is mentally handicapped. In this way you not only will be helping neighbors and friends to understand and appreciate the adolescent or young adult member of your family, but to understand and appreciate all individuals who are mentally retarded.

The role you play in educating your friends and neighbors is of the greatest significance. It will help to foster understanding of what the community can do to develop the potentials of the mentally retarded and how it can benefit from the contributions which these individuals can make by being able to live in re-

spect and in dignity in the community. This is how community resources—school classes for the trainable, recreational facilities, sheltered workshops, clinics—can be established to help your child; he can benefit from facilities set up because community opinion understood the need.

Newspaper and magazine articles, radio and television programs, and other widely distributed publications play leading roles in educating the public. The spotlight, however, falls upon word-of-mouth education. Much has been done in the past 10 years; much more remains to be done. Prejudice and misunderstanding are not erased overnight. It takes time. Your family can do much to start the chain-reaction process of word-of-mouth education. Be frank with your friends and neighbors; get them to understand your child, to treat him as a human being, and to accept his handicap and help him to live with it. Help your friends and neighbors to accept, understand, respect and enjoy your child as a member of the community. Your friends and neighbors will talk to their friends and neighbors who, in turn, will talk to others.

One thing to avoid is telling your friends and neighbors that they too could have a retarded child. Of course, it is possible; we know that mental retardation is frequently caused by some injury or damage occurring during pregnancy or birth. But most people don't want to hear that their child could be handicapped in any way. And this is only natural.

You can, however, tell them that your child is mentally retarded; the very fact that you accept, understand, respect, and enjoy him will help them to do so as well. Parents who have physically handicapped children certainly talk to their friends and neighbors about their child's handicap. They don't make a big fuss about it, but they naturally include discussion of it in their conversation. Why shouldn't they? It's part of life, and the welfare and attitudes of our fellows are always leading conversation topics. And it's no different with your conversation. Why should it be? Your child is a human being, a member of your family; of course you are concerned about him. And what greater compliment can we pay each other than sharing our concern, our love, our understanding, and our acceptance with each other?

Now that your child is a man, he, too, can help to educate your friends and neighbors. If you have trained him to behave

as much like an adult as possible, he is the more likely to be accepted. If he doesn't act like a baby, hugging and kissing outsiders, he is more likely to be treated with respect. It may be, however, that some of your neighbors act as if they were frightened when your grown-up child plays with their little children. Of course, your child may not care to play with them; he or she may be just amused by them as we are all amused by youngsters. Your child may even feel that he is helping to take care of them. One 20-year-old mongoloid boy was always on the alert to make certain that the little children in his block didn't go into the street. His mother had carefully explained his handicap to the neighbors and most of them were very pleased to see him with their children.

When their boy, John, was 17 years old, one family moved into a new neighborhood. The mother noticed that many of the neighbors took their children indoors when John went outside. She decided to invite them all over for afternoon tea in the yard. She also invited the president of the local association for the retarded. During the tea she asked for everyone's attention and introduced the president. He told the entire group about his daughter and about John; he told them that they need not be worried about their little children. He told them what is meant by mental retardation, and about the good training John had received. The neighbors were interested; they asked questions; later they talked among themselves; and they spoke to John's parents. Then they spoke to John. Some asked him over for soft drinks or hot chocolate; others saw him mowing his lawn and asked him if he wouldn't like to earn some money mowing theirs. When John stayed too long, the neighbors knew they could tell him to go home. They had been told by John's parents that it would be polite in John's case to let him know when he should leave. John is an important, well-liked member of that neighborhood. The children like him, too.

You, too, can talk to your neighbors. You, too, can obtain the help and advice of your local association and the welfare office. You, too, can reply when asked about your neighbors, "My neighbors? Oh, they're wonderful. They go out of their way to talk to my child—well, I shouldn't say that—; they don't really go out of their way to talk to him just because he is mentally retarded. You see, they like him."

They like him. And slowly, but with increasing significance, the community will begin to accept. Although it will take a long time, your concern should not only be for your child, but for all individuals who are handicapped in any way. Mentally or physically. Many states have passed permissive legislation—and some mandatory legislation—for funds to be allocated for the establishment of public school classes for trainable persons between the ages of five and 21. More and more school districts may begin to establish these classes. Maybe your child will be too old to benefit from them, but you and he can do a great deal within your family and within your community to benefit all individuals who are mentally retarded. In addition to school classes, other facilities might be set up in part because of the role you played in your own family, associations for the retarded, and community. The fruits of tomorrow are still a long way off, but the seeds can be sowed and begin to grow today.

Acceptance of the Retarded Individual as a Human Being

As you must accept your child and help others to do so, you also must permit your child to see what life is like. This is part of according him the respect and dignity of a human being. It is a part of accepting him as a member of the family and of society. There are some things in life that you cannot and things that you should not protect your child from knowing.

Your child will discover that people are not always nice; that people may be cruel to one another. We all have experienced unkindness; we all have had our feelings hurt. There will be people, for example, who will call your child "stupid." Tell him that the word "stupid" is oftentimes used when we do something that we might have been able to avoid doing. Don't be cautious about using the word yourself when you make a mistake or forget something—"Oh, how stupid of me!" Your child may be able to sense that the word is usually not used to describe a person, but to describe something he did. We all do "stupid" things. If some insensitive, irresponsible person uses this word just to be mean to him, be frank with your child. Try to help him to understand that a person could hardly be called stupid if he uses the capabilities which are his, and is understanding of others. As for the "dumb" it is a perfectly legitimate term to describe individuals who are unable to speak at all. Persons who use it otherwise are simply wrong, in addition to being unkind.

You also cannot protect your child from sadness about certain things that are a part of living. If you are sad about someone's illness or death, don't try to hide your sadness from your child. He can probably sense it anyway. Your pastor and physician can help you to explain these things to your child.

And your child, too, has to be trained to have responsibilities, and to face the limitations imposed by your supervision and direction. There are things he cannot and should not do, and he has to learn to obey you. We all have to give up certain things in order to accept responsibilities. We all have to fulfill certain demands of others in order to live within society. Your child also now has to share, in his way and in his sense, the responsibilities, the pleasure, the sadness, "the pain of being a man."

You can help your child, yourself, your family, and others by:

1. Accepting your child for what he is and not for what you wish he had been or could be
2. Respecting him as an individual with his own needs and goals, helping him to achieve happiness within his limitations and capabilities
3. Enjoying him as a person who needs to be laughed with and at
4. Planning for his future care in the event of your illness or death
5. Avoiding false hopes
6. Consulting professional persons for advice and help in meeting problems or for help in planning positive approaches for furthering acceptance, understanding, respect, and enjoyment of your child on the part of yourselves, your family, and the community
7. Considering your own lives as husband and wife, and considering the right of your normal children to lead satisfying lives of their own
8. Doing what is best for all members of your family
9. Not talking in front of your retarded child as if he were a handicap
10. Explaining matter-of-factly and naturally what is meant by mental retardation to your normal children and to your friends and neighbors

11. Thinking about and working for the welfare of all handicapped individuals
12. Helping your child to face the sadness as well as the pleasures of life.



SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT, MARRIAGE AND EMPLOYMENT

The Need to Be Realistic

Recognizing your child as an individual, you must also be aware that he has limitations as well as capabilities. The fact that he functions on a trainable level may also mean that his physical abilities and functions are impaired to some degree. A human being is very complex; what affects one area of his functioning is related to his whole being, affecting other areas as well.

You cannot, therefore, base expectations for your child upon the outlook which normal persons usually face within our culture. In our society, for example, we expect normal children to develop an interest in the opposite sex, to marry, to bear children, and to work as a housewife or bread-winner for themselves or their families. The individual who is classed as trainable does not develop mentally and oftentimes does not develop physically in the same manner as do normal persons, nor does he have the same interests. He will not be able to take on the same responsibilities. We know he can be helped to have interests satisfying to him, that he may be trained to behave in a manner acceptable to others, and that he may be taught to accept responsibilities which he is capable of handling. We also know that he can be ac-

cepted, understood, respected, and enjoyed by others. But he can only be so to the degree that one accepts him totally and realistically, with his limitations as well as his capabilities.

Sexual Development and Interest

A number of individuals classed as trainable never mature sexually; many may develop physically, but have no interest in the opposite sex, or even think of or know what it would mean to have sexual relations with them. Some have normal sexual development and interest. Usually persons who have an I.Q. rating around 35 or below have no sexual interest; of course, those testing higher may not either. Medical, psychological, and social diagnosis can help you to determine what you can expect. If your child does have normal sexual development and interest, the physician, psychologist, and social worker may be able to help you to channel your child's interests elsewhere. When it exists, the sex drive is oftentimes a strong force, but it is a force which we all use in ways other than those which we consider to be sexual. It can be and is channeled into interests furthering our capacity to work at and to enjoy other activities. In some cases, however, mature sexual development and interest coupled with the poor judgment and control of the trainable person may mean that problems will occur. Admission to an institution may be the best and only way of handling these problems. The welfare of your child, your entire family, and the community should be considered.

The important thing to do is to seek professional advice, and not become worried about problems that may never exist or which may be avoided. And if you find that certain problems are evidenced or that abnormal sexual behavior occurs, accept the necessity for placement in an institution. This, however, is oftentimes not necessary for the low-level trainable group where sexual development or interest is impaired or low. Your supervision and direction also may eliminate problems.

There are a number of things which you may be able to do. Your own attitude about sex is important. Your child may react more to your feelings than to what you are saying; therefore, it is important for you to be matter-of-fact and natural about such things as the growth of hair and about menstruation or nocturnal emissions. You will have to train your daughter how to take care

of herself during her menstrual periods, showing her how to adjust the necessary equipment. Be certain, too, she is aware that her mother and/or her sisters are menstruating; this will help her to be matter-of-fact about it and not alarmed or worried. There are cases of normal girls being very upset and even embarrassed when they first menstruate; their mothers had never told them about it and had always seemed "stand-offish" about anything dealing with sexual matters which are nothing to be ashamed about. Similarly, if you seem hush-hush and hesitant about it, your daughter may become upset, thinking that somehow she has done something wrong. Your son also may become upset if you aren't matter-of-fact about nocturnal emissions as something natural and not to be alarmed about.

It is possible that your son or daughter may never develop sexually, that he may never show normal and mature development or have nocturnal emissions, or that she may never menstruate. Your daughter may menstruate late in life and experience a very early menopause. Your son or daughter may reach puberty late in adolescence or in their twenties. Consult your physician; he may be able to advise you about your child.

Mothers can help their daughters with these matters and fathers their sons, although the parent who is best at explaining things may be the best one. The advisability or need for sex education for your child is something that can probably best be determined by you. Generally, most trainable adolescents and young adults are aware that there are two sexes. They can tell you who is a man and who is a woman. But, usually, the trainable are less observant than the educable or persons of normal intelligence. They may understand less than you think. The fact that you have explained something more than once does not mean your child has fully grasped your meaning. Many persons who are trainable are never curious, as are normal youngsters, about "where babies come from" or how they get there. And your explanations have little or no meaning. But if your teen-ager or young adult now begins to ask questions, the parent to whom the question is addressed should give him or her frank but simple and matter-of-fact answers.

It appears that individuals who are trainable and who live on farms may understand more about the reproduction process than those who live in the city. On the farm they have the opportunity

directly to observe animals and to appreciate and accept the process of reproduction. Parents who live in the city, of course, can try to use the traditional birds and bees as direct learning examples. But you cannot assume that your child is going to make any connection between farm animals and birds and bees and human beings. And there is little need—in fact it might also be unwise—to insist upon his understanding the connection. And the lower his mental age, the lower the chances that he can do so.

Whatever the understanding or interest of your child, you must be certain that your son or daughter will never accept rides with strangers or accompany strangers anywhere unless in your company or upon your directly stated wishes. You must be certain that your child will never let anyone in the house except relatives or neighbors you are certain he recognizes. If you find that your child is unable to master these rules, you must see that he is with someone who does understand them. You must be aware that, even if your son or daughter hasn't matured sexually or evidenced any interest, he or she could be exploited by uncaring, irresponsible persons.

This does not mean that you should be constantly on edge when your child is away from home. For example, if he or she is able to take the bus, you have trained him or her not to talk to strangers unless, of course, your child needs to approach someone for directions or to consult the bus driver or persons employed at the place where he or she is going. The usual daytime crowds contain a majority of friendly people who would go out of their way to help someone who politely asked for their advice. Measures of caution are followed by all persons, but it would indeed be a sad world if we had to fear for ourselves and our family every time we or they stepped out of the confines of our homes. Fortunately, human beings are generally law-abiding, considerate, and kind, and it would be needlessly foolhardy to deprive your child of the experience of going places alone if he or she is capable of doing so and properly trained.

Marriage

Sexual development and interest are obviously not the only considerations about marriage. Even if your son or daughter is sexually mature and interested, the only possible realistic attitude toward marriage is this: Your child should not marry.

There are two important questions you should ask yourselves if you feel that the companionship of marriage could be considered for your child: (1) Is my son or daughter likely to marry a normal individual or a retarded person like himself or herself? (2) Who is going to take care of both of them? And, if your child and the person he or she might marry are both sexually mature, you must also ask: Who is going to care for and be responsible for children that may result from this marriage?

Your child will always require supervision and direction. It is not likely that a normal person would be willing to provide that supervision and direction as a part of marriage duties and responsibilities. Marriage, as you well know, involves many responsibilities and many necessary day-by-day decisions. Knowing the needs of your child, it is not wise to consider the possibility of marriage for him.

You should not "play up" marriage as a goal. Doing so would only present new problems for him. One 17-year-old girl became heart-sick and sullen, crying frequently and losing interest in doing housework or participating in her various recreational activities. Talking to Lois, a social worker discovered that her parents had given her a hope chest for her birthday. Her parents told her that she was getting one just like those being filled by daughters of friends of theirs in preparation for marriage. Lois was broken-hearted. She thought her parents didn't want her, didn't love her, didn't like what she did to help in her home. To Lois, marriage meant leaving one's home. She had seen girls in the neighborhood leaving home and had been told they were "getting married." The social worker talked this over with Lois' parents. They really hadn't thought about it; they assumed that everyone got married. When they thought about it, they realized they were wrong. They hastened to reassure their daughter that they wanted her at home, and that they wouldn't know what to do without her. And Lois was very happy.

Getting married, furthermore, is not something everyone does. Many normal people prefer not to marry. There is no disgrace about not doing so. Many people lead satisfying lives without it. Your child can, too. At times he or she may tell you that he or she is going to get married. Don't be upset about this. After all, your child has probably heard the expression many times. Hearing it or repeating it does not mean that he really wants to or that

he really understands what he is saying. You can simply reply, "And leave me?" And your child will probably smile; he may even laugh. He doesn't want to leave you.

Employment

The trainable retarded are often incapable of performing any kind of paid work. However, many who function on a relatively high mental-age level do just that. A study conducted in New York revealed that 27 per cent of the trainable individuals included in the study worked for pay; an additional nine per cent had worked previously.* All were able, of course, to take care of their own basic needs. Most had a high level of functioning, were alert, had developed good work habits in their homes, were able to recognize coins, and had no secondary handicaps. It was found, however, that the appearance handicaps that some mentally retarded individuals have were a greater detriment to finding work than physical handicaps.

The work that trainable persons did, as noted in the New York study and as observed in Minnesota, is simple in nature. Some do household chores, farm work, or yardwork for pay for persons other than their family. Some can do unskilled factory work, such as cutting, light assembly jobs, and folding. Others work as stock boys or girls in grocery or small clothing stores. Some work in bowling alleys; others work as janitorial assistants. There are, of course, many other types of work undertaken by individuals who are trainable and who function on a high level, but all work involves some kind of simple labor--and, of course, that is just as necessary and important to society as the professional or highly skilled jobs which they cannot do. All work for someone who provides necessary supervision and direction. Many work only part-time, and many work in the place where their mother or father is employed or in the business of parents or other relatives.

It is the rare trainable person, however, who can be completely self-supporting; even if he is, he still requires supervision and direction on the job and at home. And he needs an employer who understands and accepts his limitations and capabilities. Help in

*Gerhart Saenger, Ph. D., director of project research, "The Adjustment of Severely Retarded Adults in the Community." A Report to the New York State Interdepartmental Health Resources Board, October, 1957, pages 120 and 166. The study summary of employment findings is on pages 166-168.

determining whether or not your child can secure employment and help in securing the work which he may be able to do is available from your State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Vocational rehabilitation counselors work with employers to see that they understand and accept the limitations and capabilities of the retarded employee and to see that the retarded person receives his fair share of work and benefits.

Help in developing the work potentials of the person who is classed as trainable is a fairly new concept. Much yet needs to be done. Sheltered workshops are needed for those individuals who for various reasons cannot compete in work with normal individuals, a place where the time element also is not overly demanding. Workshops are needed to provide a life-time sheltered situation for some and to provide training for others who may later be able to work satisfactorily in regular commercial industry. The need for these workshops is related to the need for community acceptance.

Only when the community adequately understands the meaning of mental retardation and appreciates the limitations and capabilities of individuals who are trainable will it be able to understand the need for sheltered workshops. In some areas you may be able to interest community sources in establishing a sheltered workshop which would also include a place for educable individuals who might need a sheltered environment for various reasons. It is also possible that an area in this workshop could be found for some individuals who are physically handicapped but not mentally retarded as well. Concern for all handicapped persons may help to secure a sheltered work environment for your child, particularly in areas where the community may feel that there are not enough trainable persons to warrant building, furnishing, and staffing a workshop for them alone.

It is only realistic, however, to remember that our economy is based upon the concept of competition. Employers must show a profit. They cannot be expected to employ persons who will not be able to produce satisfactorily. You cannot expect an employer to hire your son or daughter out of the goodness of his heart just because your child is handicapped. You cannot expect unions to accept your child unless he can fully keep up with the production and pay-scale demands of labor. Industry exists to make money because it can render a service. Unless your son or daughter can

make money for an employer, providing the necessary service, you cannot expect him to work outside of the home environment.

Therefore, you need professional help to determine whether or not your son or daughter can produce; you need to train him to develop the attitudes mentioned in the chapter on interest development. Various non-intellectual factors are of utmost importance to employers. Among them are grooming, personality, drive, willingness to work, ability to cooperate and get along with his employer and fellow employees, persistence, a sense of responsibility, punctuality and few absences, the ability to handle money, ability to accept and take criticism, and, of course, ability to dress himself and take care of his bodily functions.

Your son or daughter may or may not be able to work in industry. Perhaps work in a sheltered environment would be more suitable to your son's or daughter's level of functioning; but the fact is that there is not a sufficient number of sheltered workshops available. And it will take time before communities understand the need for them. Also, your son or daughter may best be suited to work that he can perform in his home.

Whether or not your child secures paid employment is not the most important consideration. The most important consideration is that he lead a life satisfying to his individual needs and wants. With the help of concerned professional persons you can discover what he can do, what he should do, and what he wants to do. Whatever his limitations, whatever his capabilities, he is your child. But above all he is a human being who has to be diagnosed, helped, and trained as an individual.

You can help your child by:

1. Realistically accepting his limitations, recognizing that he does differ from normal persons
2. Being matter-of-fact and natural about sexual matters that may be of concern to him
3. Consulting concerned professional persons for help in determining his sexual development and interest, and for help in determining how you can best train and educate your child about sex
4. Accepting the fact that your child should not marry

5. Seeking the advice of those persons equipped to analyze the employment potential of your child, accepting the fact that there is now an inadequate number of sheltered workshops available, and understanding that your child may not be able to have paid employment as a goal
6. Helping your child to lead a satisfying life within his limitations
7. Treating your child as a human being with individual needs and wants
8. Realizing frankly that your child will always require supervision and direction.