

Minnesota School for Feeble-Minded.

1890?

Fairbault, Minn.,

189

DISCIPLINE OF CHILDREN.

1. No kind of punishment should be administered without having for its purpose first (and most important) the FORMATION OF CHARACTER IN THE CHILD and second the effect upon the associates.

The best control is exercised when there is the least display of authority, and the latter should be exhibited only when absolutely necessary.

Threats, as such, should be avoided. Inevitable consequence of bad conduct should be explained honestly and judiciously, and the consequences should as honestly follow.

2. A quiet firm will and manner, a genuine sympathy with and love for the child that insures his confidence with sufficient dignity to command respect, a patient investigation of the case and the administration of discipline (when necessary) without a shade of resentment, passion or partiality, are the requisites of a good disciplinarian.

3. Feeble-Minded children are deficient in will power and mental stability, and frequently lack ~~nutrition~~ nutrition and possessions of insanity, and these conditions conduce to irritability and explosions of temper, which often pass away as quickly as they arise. The condition must be recognized by attendants and officers and the greatest tact exercised not to unnecessarily develop an issue. When such issues arise, the best course in most cases is isolation from the cause of excitement: first by simple withdrawal from the irritating surroundings for a few moments for a quiet talk and ~~an~~ an effort to obtain the child's confidence, or if this is not sufficient, or the child cannot comprehend the verbal influence, seclusion in the quiet room until the excitement subsides.

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Fairbank, Minn., 189

If this is not sufficient, the case must be reported directly to the Superintendent.

4. Every case of ill-directed energy is a subject for re-direction of energy, and every means for doing this should be employed before any directly antagonistic discipline should be employed. Children should never be idle if it can possibly be avoided. Employment wherever possible should be insisted upon, but always made as pleasant as possible. A proper division of the time between industries, (active or passive) reading and games, will obviate nearly all discipline.

5. Limitation of bodily freedom is seldom required, and then only by Camisole, Muffs, or Seat Cord, by direct of the Superintendent.

6. Absolute harmony of action between different officers is essential to successful discipline throughout the house. A courteous interchange of views and experiences concerning different children between the different officers is exceedingly beneficial, and no child (or employee) should ever by word or manner have occasion to suspect a lack of unanimity among the officers as to the discipline exercised by any one of their number.

The officer having disciplinary charge of any pupils must make a study of the temperament and peculiarities of each child under his care and keep so in touch with the children and the attendants acting under his direction that he constantly knows how the child is treated, this applies to oversight of other people than attendants to whom children are detailed.

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Avoid casting an approbrium upon any department of the institution.

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Fairbault, Minn.,

189

of discipline. The population of the Custodia consists of two classes, and this should be understood by the children generally, viz: (a) those most afflicted by helplessness or irresponsible for action, and (b) those who having passed the school age, are capable of becoming helpers. A child might be shown how persisting in a certain line of conduct might lead to the conclusion that he did not know any better, and that he might therefore have to live with the other unfortunate children who are irresponsible.

8. The above indicates the spirit and policy that should be cultivated in every department of the institution, and the following Rules are to be promulgated and observed everywhere:

(a) There must be no whipping, slapping, cuffing, pinching, or jerking, anywhere or by any person.

(b) Use of the Quiet Room is limited to the following officers, each acting at the time in charge of his own consignment, or from the Superintendent personally, viz: Assistant, Physician, Matron of Center, Matron Boys' Custodia, Matron Girls' Custodia, and Principal Teacher.

(c) Bodily restraint is only to be used by the personal direction of the Superintendent.

(d) A record must be made by the officer administering discipline of the kind, cause, and time of same, in a book kept for that purpose.

(In use of the Quiet Room, time for going in and coming out must both be recorded.)

(e) When the Quiet Room is used, the officer directing it must know personally that it is comfortably heated and ventilated, and is clean and tidy in its appointments, while in use and when left.