

PROBLEMS AMONG COUNTY SCHOOL CHILDREN
CAUSING RETARDATION IN SCHOOL

X.

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Advanced Principles of Nursing

History of several cases encountered this year

Those with normal or abnormal responses or physical defects:

General outline

General introduction with explanation of the type of cases taken.

Result of concentrated work with the corrections when necessary.

General results of whole program with comparison or results accomplished.

13 - years - 7th grade

General history of past illnesses of sleeping sickness when very young with inability of muscular control now.

General ability in school, especially in reading and language.

General recommendations from Medical School Clinic

8 - years - 3rd grade

Family history of Tuberculosis

Mentally about average, retarded due to eye condition.

Corrections with the results.

8 - years - 3rd grade

Normal mental ability.

Problem - not talking in school for the past two years.

Attitude toward people in general

Attitude in school, then and now.

Responses indifferent situations

7 - years - 1st grade

Mentally normal with abnormal symptoms at
first of the term

General appearance then and now

General responses then and now

General ability in art, reading, and spelling

Family history apparently normal

7 - years - 1st grade

Mentally below normal

General appearance

Results of physical examination

Family characteristics

10 - years - 4th grade

Difficulty in school

Eye condition - corrections with results
in school work

General appearance then and now

16 - years - 5th grade

Difficulty in school

Attitude of parents regarding condition

Mental ability about normal - physical handicap

Results accomplished

6 -7 -9 -10 - family - all under grade for age

Family history and apparent mental ability

Difficulty in school

Solutions of problems of children seem hope-
less at present time.

ADVANCED PRINCIPLES OF NURSING

In writing for this paper I have taken cases of children who have had difficulty in school or who have some physical handicap which seems to be a stumbling block for them. I have tried to give the results which have been obtained or the results which we hope to attain with these children. Some of the help has seemed to prove helpful ~~**~~ or worthwhile while with others the results are not so promising.

The first case is that of a boy 13 who is in the seventh grade and who does not seem to be getting along very well in his work. The family history is negative to any abnormal things regarding mentality or other things, such as might throw any light on his difficulty. He is the oldest of the family and has only one other brother, who is ¹¹ ~~****~~ years of age. As to the parents of the boy, his mother seems to be very much interested in his welfare and apparently of average intelligence. The father it is rumored is in Salem in the hospital for the mentally sick.

As for this boy, he gives a history of having had sleeping sickness when about three years of age. His mother states that at the time he was very ill but apparently recovered normally, but with the beginning of his school life things seemed different. His age for his grade seems to be normal, but in the present school he did not seem to get along very well. His ability in language and reading seemed quite a bit above the average boy or girl, but in his other subjects he had a great deal of trouble. Then too the teacher and principal seemed to think that he did not get along well with the

other children on the playground and in the classroom. With the aid of his mother and the teacher an appointment was made with the Medical School Clinic for the boy to be examined by Drs. Martin and Dixon. This was coming along very nicely when the mother up and moved her family. Dr. Martin had suggested that the boy not be pressed with such school subjects as the ones which he had difficulty with, and that he be placed on a farm where he could do such things as he enjoyed doing. Due to his inability to control his muscles and also to the inability to compete in athletics, he seemed more or less to compensate ^{this} by reading and I believe gave him his ability to excel in language. As the boy is again in a city school it is impossible to carry his case further.

The general physical history of our next boy, aged eight and in the third grade, seemed negative to any physical difficulty until about fourteen months ago. At that time a home call ^{was} made in regard to his eleven year old sister, who was very much in need of glasses. As these people were Japanese and things in gardening had not been prosperous I suggested the mother take the child to the Medical School Clinic for an examination. This she agreed to do very soon, but while talking with the mother I wondered just what could be her trouble, as all during the conversation she coughed a great deal. I also noted that the mother was pregnant so I inquired as to how she was feeling and as to whom she was going for care. Finding out these things I suggested she too attend the clinic, as I suspected her of having tuberculosis. Upon examination of the mother it was found that she was a far advanced case of TB,

and also ^eeven and a half months pregnant. Within a weeks time the mother was in the county hospital to await delivery and from there she was to go to one of the state sanatoriums. Death of both mother and baby followed delivery.

Our next problem was to have the six children examined and also the father. It was found that the father was O K but that the oldest girl had the disease and hospitalization was recommended. The youngest child was soon admitted to Shriners with tuberculosis of the spine. Even though she was over two years old she had never walked due to this condition. At the present time she is at the home of one of the nurse's mothers, in a brace and apparently getting along very well. The little boy next to her has secondary type, and the other children have childhood type TB. Since going to the sanatorium the girl has passed away.

Help was obtained for the father through the Family relief unit, and in the years time conditions have improved considerably. The three children in school seem to be getting along very well, but especially so since they began to take on weight and with the change of diet they are improving greatly. The other members of the mothers family have been examined and it was found that her seventeen year old brother had a case of moderately advanced tuberculosis and has been hospitalized within the past three months. It was quite difficult to convince the boy that the best place for him was in the sanatorium, as all he thought of was his niece who had been where we wanted him to go. Other members of the family have been examined and I believe all their reports were negative.

Back to our boy again. He had been having difficulty in his school work due to an inability to see very well. This may seem strange but it seems to be a family characteristic, especially of the three children in school, and of the girl who died. Glasses were obtained through the clinic and with a few months time work in school has improved to a great extent. At mid-term promotion he was placed in the fourth grade, and he apparently was getting along very well when school closed. As for his general physical condition, there is a great deal of improvement in his general appearance since getting this added help from the welfare. The improvement made in the building up of these children and ~~the~~ the fact that they were found in childhood may insure them a much brighter future.

One very queer case which was brought to my attention this past year was of an eight year old boy, who had never talked in school even though he had attended school for two years. Mentally alert, but with this peculiar mental twist for which his mother and no one else could account. He attended a one room school with but six pupils, and he had never talked to any of them, either in the room or on the school grounds.

In talking to the mother it was found that he did not talk to any of them unless it was in answer to a question, but that at times he talked quite freely with his four year old sister. The father was very indifferent to our interest in the boy and said that he would get over it in time. The mother's

attitude was quite different and she felt that something should be done for him, but due to the father's attitude nothing was done during last summer and again the same situation prevailed this past year.

On talking to the boy one day while visiting the school, I found that he was afraid and did not want to talk for fear someone would laugh at him. I got this from him in writing, and I tried to show him that he need not fear the rest of the boys and girls, but with no avail. In his school work he had no difficulty and always seemed mentally alert.

With the beginning of school this past fall a new teacher was on hand and she seemed to encounter the same situation, until without any apparent warning things were changed within the past three months. At that time he seemed to talk and still is conversing with his fellow schoolmates. When school closed he was doing good third grade work, apparently is over all of his difficulty and without any other problems resulting. As yet he talked to me in only a whisper, but things seem quite bright for then. ^{In the fall} ~~At that time~~ his sister will enter school, and the same teacher will be back to take up her work.

This little chap which I wish to speak of now is a seven year old boy in the first grade, and with the general appearance of a boy who might be a little lacking mentally, upon entering school this past fall. He seemed to have no control over his muscles at times and could not look one in

the eye while talking to him. In his school work he seemed utterly hopeless and this continued until after the Christmas holidays, then with the kindness and patience which his teacher used he began to snap out of whatever the spell was. His general appearance changed, the expression on his face changed, and his whole general appearances were transformed, as if over night but never did the teacher lose her patience with him. His responses to conversation and to everything around him seemed so different. What it was that seemed to bring about this change no one knows, but this chap is not the same boy who entered school last fall.

The ability with which he could draw, just anything that anyone asked him to do, his ability to spell with out any hesitation, and his ability in reading his first grade book, all these things with no explanation as to how or what happened to cause this decided change and in such a short period of time.

In talking with the grandfather, I found no history of any mental illnesses on either his mother or his father's side of the family. He was the younger of two boys, his brother being about eleven years old, and apparently getting along very well in school. His mother had worried about his condition and had brought her problem to the teacher, who in turn took a great interest in the boy. I did find out that the boy seemed to have a natural ability for art and at an early age had drawn very well, even things which he had never seen. I saw this ability expressed and know that it is very easy for him to draw anything at all. With this change in his make-up

I believe he will not have anymore trouble in his school work, especially if he makes as much improvement in the next year, as he has in the past.

Our next is a girl of seven who has been in the first grade for the past two years and is to remain there a third year, though I advised placing her in the second grade even though she could not do the work. Her two years in the first grade have netted her absolutely nothing at all, and I am afraid school will never be able to give her anything at all. Her general appearance is very short and stocky, as the build of a boy with broad shoulders and narrow hips, her face is that of an adult, and appearances seem to bend toward dwarfism. During the physical examinations at the school she was among the ones to take it. The doctors who were present thought she might be a cretin and one of them suggested the medical school clinic in hopes something can be done for her, that is before it is too late to help her at all. She is of a very sunny disposition, can carry a tune fairly well, but that is the extent of her accomplishments.

This girl comes from a large family of Italian people and is the youngest in the family I believe. The parents are very peculiar people and do not like to be interfered with in raising their family, but all of the children are problems in school. The oldest boy graduated from the eighth grade this term but it was not because he got passing grades, but due to his age he was sent on. As yet I have not succeeded in getting anything done for this girl at the clinic but I hope to suc-

ceed before the summer is very old, but time will only tell what can be done for her.

This is a brief story of a ten year old girl who seemed to be having some type of difficulty in school and the teacher asked my advise regarding the girl. On examination of her eyes I found that she was having great difficulty in seeing the work which ^{are} was in front of her. In such cases I usually contact the parents and see what can be arranged, but the girls mother is rather queer, according to the teacher, so she wished to speak with the mother first, which was ok with me. It was found that the mother resented our examination at the school, but said she would see what could be done for the girl. In place of the mother taking the girl to an oculist she just took her to a man who fits glasses. I talked with him and he said the girl did not need glasses but on my next visit to the school, I found that glasses had been fitted to her and she apparently seemed to be getting along slightly better in school.

One thing which made me suspect the child was having trouble with her eyes was her unsteadiness on her feet. She would be walking along and at times she would put her hand out to seem to touch an object, apparently feeling her way along, and too she seemed not able to walk straight in front which appeared to be because she had a fear of falling. After wearing the glasses which she was fitted up with this condition seems to be improved. One other thing which has changed

is her ability to write on a line without running off, as if she could not see. Her facial expression and her general appearance has changed with these other things which have taken place.

Our next story is of a girl sixteen and only in the fifth grade, but this story differs in as much as the parents had tried to get the girls eyes fitted to glasses but the doctors all said there was just no hope or help for this condition. After the teacher brought the case to my attention I got in touch with Mr. Dry at the school of the blind at Salem, as the girl was just unable to see anything but very large print, and this only if it were very close to her face. All these years she has been ploding along in a room where she did not fit, until such time as her age and school grade would put her out of the grade school. Then to what?

The mother was soon contacted by Mr. Dry personally and a visit to the blind school was arranged for, just before the beginning of this last school year. Things seemed to be suitable to both parties as at the beginning of the school year this girl enrolled as a ^hscolar at the Salem school. I have not seen her since she went but at Christmas time she came to see her old teacher, and I must say it was a very happy girl who came to see her teacher. The report to me was that she is a changed girl in as much as she is very happy in her new school among people like herself. Also she told of the many things she is able to do at the present time, many of them things which she never could have learned ploding along

along in our normal school ~~school~~ buildings and competing with pupils who have their sight. Through this step I think that this girl will be a very useful citizen, where as otherwise I often wonder just what would have become of her in another year or two.

Our family history in this next case begins with the marriage of a woman of danish parentage and a swedish man. Home conditions have been deplorable, as I think it is the dirtiest house I ever set foot into, and never anything in its place. The furniture is all broken up, with but about three chairs in the whole house. This would not have been bad had the mother ever cleaned the floor, changed the bedding, or at least cleaned the dishes off the table, but never ^{have} ~~did~~ I seen this done in this home. During her pregnancy I visited the home several times and always I have found the mother reading true story magazine or some other of that type, while the smallest child, than about a year old, lay~~ing~~ in its buggy wet and dirty, and I would not begin to guess when it had had a bath. As for the mother I know that she more than likely was the cleanest she has ever been, when she had the baby in the hospital a short while later.

In this family there are seven children with four of them in this little one room school, and oh how dirty they came to school. Each one of the children faired about the same when it came to their brains, as it just seemed impossible for any of them to progress very rapidly in school.

I believe a great deal of this mental difficulty could be traced to the home environment and to the lack of wholesome food. The teacher in this school took a great deal of interest in this family and it was through her that it was found out that the boys in this family had no bed and not even a mattress to lay on at night. Through the red cross conditions were bettered to a certain degree, but about three week after they received the bedding and other things I was in the home again and the new comforters which had been given them were just about as black as the other covers which had been used on the bed for ever and a day.

The children in school have a great deal of difficulty not only in their work but in their ability to play with other children, and I believe this is due to the odor which seems to stay with the children as they do not have a bath or clean underwear for a week or more at a time. This is changed at times as the teacher sends them home occasionally to have a bath^{to} and clean up. I would like to try my hand at taking the children out of that environment and just see what could be done for them. This would have to be done very soon as their habits of health as well as their other* impressions are now being formed. What a wonderful place this world would be if everybody was given the same opportunity to make as much of himself as he could.