

brain is very immature at birth and needs sensory stimulation for normal growth, development and function. If the child does not get sufficient sensory stimulation, the brain develops and functions abnormally:

"Human infants and animals who are deprived of sensory stimulation during the formative period of brain development develop a biological system of brain functioning and structure which predisposes these organisms — these animals, these children — to pathologically violent behaviour."¹³

"The failure of nurturance in human relationships, beginning with the parent-child relationship . . . is the principal overriding factor . . . in the development of alienation, psychopathy, violence and aggression."¹⁴

88. Parental rejection may be more damaging to a small child than separation from either or both parents. The unsocialized, aggressive child is likely to be the product of a home in which it is an unwanted or illegitimate child, and has met with rejection from the mother.¹⁵ A study of violent offenders has found that many had been wards of Children's Aid Societies. Almost without exception, they had been shuffled between foster homes. Their life experience can be summarized as follows: "They were unwanted at birth; they had frequent placements in infancy; and then graduated, almost inexorably from minor offences to major crimes."¹⁶

89. There are many circumstances in life which incline to deprive an infant or small child of the affectional bonds needed for the growth of a healthy personality. In addition to those already mentioned, questions have been raised in your Committee about working mothers, single parents, broken homes and day care. These all involve circumstances which might, but do not necessarily, cause the child to be emotionally deprived. Much depends on the quality of the surrogate care.

90. There was strong evidence that placing children in day care centres with high standards at an early age does not, of itself, lead to emotional deprivation. The quality as much as the quantity of the time shared between parent and child is important. Many witnesses believed that the ideal situation was for the mother to be at home with the child during the early period of life. Assuming that the mother wants the child, "there is no alternative that could possibly be better than the infant experiencing the smell, the taste, the sound, the feel of that human being by whom it was created."¹⁷ But this frequently is not possible. We now have a society in which it can take the income of two people for the family to survive: usually the mothers who have to go out to work have no choice, no alternative.¹⁸ In some cases the quality of mothering might in fact be improved by the mother going out to work, perhaps within a few months after the birth, if she would otherwise feel unhappy and frustrated by remaining at home. The quality of care that