

the parent or child directly requests help or someone outside the family complains about the care the child is receiving and by that time it may be too late to help the family.

The Committee believes that it is possible to preserve the integrity, privacy and sanctity of the family and, at the same time, offer support services to the family in the raising of their children. Community agencies and organizations can work effectively in conjunction with the family to improve the total environment in which the parent and the child must function. Schools or other community agencies offering services designed to educate or train the child to be a responsible adult and competent parent afford many opportunities for such parent-community collaboration. The parent, the child and the community benefit.

Your Committee considered important in the prevention of child neglect and abuse such self-help groups as Parents Anonymous. These groups consist of parents who have abused or neglected their children, who have the potential for so doing, or who feel they can benefit from such an association. In banding together, they give and receive support in improving their methods of child rearing.

The Committee, in noting the lack of support services to families with children, noted also that many services become available to a child once he has been removed from his own home because of family breakdown. The Committee recognizes that there are often no alternatives to the removal of the child. If appropriate support services had been available to the family from the time of the child's birth, it is possible that the child would have remained in his own home.

Your Committee noted that expensive services are required for emotionally disturbed children, for battered children, for broken families but, unless preventive services are also provided, the cycle becomes self-perpetuating. Services which enable parents to care for their own children can often prevent the need for protection.

PART IV—RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations and conclusions are based on the findings and deliberations of your Committee, from the point of view of the needs of the child.

Preventive Services

1. That there be a commitment on the part of governments at all levels to the concept of assisting families in the child-rearing process and thereby strengthening family life.

2. That governments at all levels encourage and assist the development of community resources for families with children.

3. That every child be entitled to adequate protective services in his own home and that these services include support services to parents as well as health and other community services to the child in his own right.

4. That communities consider a Block Parents program such as those which have been operating in several com-

munities for a number of years, in which block parents offer their homes to children needing assistance in emergencies (for example, when they are lost, have been molested or followed by strangers).

5. That community health and social service centres be established to provide a range of co-ordinated services appropriate to community needs.

6. That such centres consider the feasibility of providing home visits to every new parent with such subsequent visits as are necessary with a view to giving support and assistance to the parent, to making any referral which the parent may request or which may seem desirable, and to outlining the services available to families.

7. That the federal government consider the advisability of ensuring cost-sharing with the provinces through the Canada Assistance Plan, the proposed new Social Services Act or otherwise in:

(a) respite, remedial and other support services to families and children designed to assist parents to care for their children more adequately;

(b) programs designed to involve parents and prospective parents in discussions, meetings, courses on child rearing and training; and

(c) inter-professional and inter-agency seminars and staff training projects on child abuse.

8. That the Department of National Health and Welfare consider the advisability of promoting the concept of preventive services in both the health and welfare fields as they apply to children and of extending its consultative program for this purpose. In particular, the Department should encourage the development of preventive health and social services through integrated community health and social service centres.

Research

9. That the Department of National Health and Welfare consider the advisability of ensuring that funds are available for suitable research and demonstration projects in the health and welfare aspects of child abuse and neglect, and that it consider the advisability of encouraging research and demonstration in these areas.

In particular, that the government consider the advisability of encouraging research

(a) in all aspects of child abuse and neglect, including the interaction of the personality of the parents, the characteristics of the child, and environmental stresses; in the area of early identification of high-risk children; and on the positive effect of ethno-cultural differences and patterns on the etiology of child abuse and neglect; and

(b) in the periodic follow-up, evaluation and cost-effectiveness of the program of preventive services.

Statistics and Information

10. That the Department of National Health and Welfare consider the advisability of:

(a) encouraging and giving assistance to the provinces in the establishment of a common data base on all substantiated cases of child abuse for the purpose of faci-