

YOUR CHILD

and

WILLOWBROOK





WILLOWBROOK STATE SCHOOL is an institution, maintained and operated by the Department of Mental Hygiene of the State of New York. It is the largest institution of its kind in the country and in the world; but, this need not concern you. You and your child will be treated as individuals. If you are like the average family you have been going from clinic to clinic and from doctor to specialist and specialist to doctor, until the diagnosis has been established that your child is suitable for admittance here. It has been a big step for you to come to the conclusion that the best thing for you, your family and your mentally defective child is to have him cared for and treated at Willowbrook. Even though he is admitted here, you have not "surrendered" him to the State; nor have you "put him away". If this is your child's first admission to an institution, then, he has lived, probably, within a very protected environment. He has not been exposed to children's or communicable diseases. We shall do all we can for your child, but YOU also CAN HELP. Remember, the doctors, nurses, attendants and all the personnel at Willowbrook are geared to take care of your child. While they will cooperate with you, they should, and must, have you cooperating with them. If you can maintain the attitude that you have placed your child here for care and treatment, then the transitional period will be more tolerable. A program is planned for each child admitted. This is decided only after many time-consuming examinations and conferences. You must remember



that children at home do become sick; children do have accidents; children do break bones; do receive cuts and lacerations, and that these things do happen within the confines of Willowbrook State School, the same as they do in any community. We like to have our children mingle as much as possible, in order to have them become socially adaptable to one another. As children communicate with one another in school, and play and live together; things are going to happen. Our objective is toward making the child as "FREE TO GAIN" as possible - your child as well as every other child. There is much more you should know about the institution, but if you carry these few facts with you, they will help considerably in the adjustment period.

1. HOMESICKNESS: Homesickness is one of the most difficult problems for our newly admitted children. In many instances, it is pathetic to watch the child who has been living closely with his parents and family; who has been attached to the people at home; who has been familiar with their movements, their gestures, their tone of voice, their mannerisms, their odors, their sense of touch, and their method of handling - suddenly projected into a totally new environment. Without warning, all of these factors which he had gradually learned to accept as his home environment, to which he had attached himself, are removed and a strange set substituted. Some children make this transition readily, others experience a little difficulty, and others suffer from loneliness, depres-

sion, and other symptoms which we designate "ADMISSION SHOCK". These children sometimes lie in their cribs and beds inert, take no interest in their environment and refuse food and fluids. The type of feeding which the child will receive here may be somewhat different from that at home and there may have been some special methods of feeding from which the child is to be weaned. It must be remembered that children deplete themselves very rapidly of fluids and that we cannot wait for these things to happen. We must have the cooperation of the parents at once, so that, if there had been any peculiarities or any tricks used in the feeding of the child, the nurses can become familiar with them and use these stratagems until the child is weaned. T L C (tender loving care) is very important at this stage, and all stages for that matter, but particularly so during the first few weeks following admittance. For this reason constant contact with the nurses should be maintained until the child begins to accept us.

You will be lonesome at home. You may worry about whether we are feeding your child properly; whether we are giving him enough fluids; whether we are bathing him and keeping him clean; whether we are keeping him covered and protected against the elements. You will be wondering whether you have done the right thing. You may be blaming yourself for having relinquished your responsibility for your child. Sometimes, a few talks with a physician at the institution might help, or a



talk with your family doctor. This is why we have the orientation class with the social worker, held twice monthly. You should return to the institution as often as you can during this trying period. The nurse will guide you. (Remember, the presence of your child in the institution creates a new environment for some other child.) REMEMBER, we are doctors, nurses and attendants taking care of your child, and your child is not just a case to us. He is a child who is sick, mentally as well as physically in many instances, and our efforts are directed toward doing all we can for him.

2. SUSCEPTIBILITY: As your child is being admitted to a new environment, his admission produces a new environment for some other child. Having lived in a protected home, he has established very little, if any, immunity or resistance against common illnesses, particularly those which happen in infancy. Children react to illness much more severely than do adults, particularly children with the low resistance of a mentally defective child. An illness which might be mild in some other healthy individual may become a serious one in these children.

3. NOTICE OF CHANGE OF CONDITION: We shall try to notify you by mail if there is any change in the physical or mental condition of the child following his admittance. There may be times, however, when this will not be done due to the human factor involved. At the same time, it is well if you will keep in contact by becoming acquainted with the

physician taking care of your child and the supervising nurse and attendant, so that you may know first-hand exactly what is going on. If your child becomes seriously ill, notification will be sent you. If your child's condition turns from serious to critical, you will be notified by telegram or telephone.

4. TELEPHONE INQUIRIES BY RELATIVES: To conserve doctor time, by which is meant the time the doctor has to devote to the care and treatment of the children, it is requested that you make all telephone calls between 2 and 3 P.M. The doctors make this time available to receive telephone calls. If the line is busy kindly bear with us since many people are calling during this time. If you call at other hours, it means you are taking the doctor away from the care of a sick child. However, IF YOUR CHILD is SERIOUSLY ILL or CRITICALLY ILL, you may call at ANYTIME.

5. VISITING: The regular visiting days are Wednesdays and Sundays from 1 to 4 P.M. In the buildings in which we treat our infants and acutely ill patients, visiting hours are from 2 to 3 in the afternoon. The reason for this is that in the latter, much more time is needed to feed, clean and nurse the infant and sick child than in the buildings in which we care for ambulatory patients. However, if you notify the physician in charge, that you are going to make your visit some other time, he will arrange for that visit. The seriously ill patients throughout the institu-



tion may be visited between 10 and 11 A.M. and 2 and 3 P.M. and the critically ill patients may be visited anytime during the 24-hour period. Homesick or poorly adjusted patients should be visited according to the directions of the physician in charge. Children under the age of 12 should not visit the school because they may carry in communicable diseases or take them out with them. Pregnant mothers are advised to check with the physician in charge to see if quarantine is present. Please, when you visit, DO NOT bring food, matches or any tools, toys or instruments which may be dangerous to your child or any other children here.

6. CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER: It is your responsibility to keep us informed as to your address, where mail can reach you. If there is a change in address, you should notify us immediately, preferably by letter, so that we can have a written record of it. Likewise, your telephone number should be left with the nurse or supervising attendant. It is your responsibility also to keep us informed as to any changes in this number or if there is some other way of reaching you by phone. You should keep us informed as to how you can be reached by telephone.

GENERAL INFORMATION: There is a community exchange store on the grounds at which patients can make purchases of small luxuries such as candy, fruits, toilet articles, etc. For this purpose, if you wish purchases to be made for your child, funds should be sent to

the institution. Make the check or money order payable to Willowbrook State School for the use of your child. Be sure to include your child's name, and specify how much money you wish to be spent per week. In order to save bookkeeping work, it might be well if the sum you sent were at least \$5.00. DO NOT send cash; send a check or a money order.

#### TRAVELING DIRECTIONS:

Take any subway to South Ferry, Manhattan.

From there, take the Staten Island Ferry to St. George, S. I.

From the St. George Ferry Terminal, take bus No. 112 marked Cartaret Ferry, if operating; otherwise, take the No. 6 or No. 111 to Meiers Corners and change at Meiers Corners to bus No. 112. This bus goes directly to Willowbrook.

By car from St. George Ferry Terminal, turn left along Bay Street, then right into Victory Blvd. Follow Victory Blvd. to Willowbrook State School (about 7 miles).

Staten Island can be reached from Brooklyn by the 69th Street Ferry to St. George Ferry Terminal.

From New Jersey, Staten Island can be reached by the Bayonne Bridge, Goethals or Outerbridge crossings. If using the New Jersey Turnpike, leave the Turnpike at Exit No. 13 - Elizabeth, and take the



Goethals Bridge to Staten Island. Proceed up Forest Avenue to the second traffic light; turn right here onto Richmond Avenue. Proceed on Richmond Avenue to the first main traffic light on Victory Blvd. Turn left on Victory Blvd. Proceed on Victory Blvd. for about 3/4 of a mile for the entrance to the institution.

#### CLOTHING:

The following is a list of clothing required for babies and older boys and girls. The proper clothing should be bought and all clothing, except diapers, should have name tags sewn on. The type of clothing purchased & quantity should be governed by the condition of the child; that is, untidy children need more clothing than tidy children. Where strong clothing is indicated, denim should be purchased. Clothing should be of the washable variety.

#### CLOTHING REQUIRED BY BABIES:

- 2 dozen diapers
- 6 undershirts (seasonal) cotton
- 3 sleeper suits
- 6 pair of white socks
- 1 pair of booties - leather bottoms - knitted tops
- 1 sweater - washable wool - cardigan preferred
- 1 snow suit - hood attached
- 1 pair mittens
- 2 Sunday dresses or rompers - cotton referred to as best
- 2 white cotton slippers
- 1 pair of white hightop shoes

## CLOTHING REQUIRED BY BOYS:

- 1 pair oxford shoes (daily use)
- 6 pair white cotton socks
- 3 pair of cotton pajamas
- 6 cotton "T" undershirts
- 6 cotton briefs
- 3 dungarees
- 3 shirts (durable material)
- 1 belt or suspender
- 1 sweat shirt
- 6 handkerchiefs
- 1 pair washable knit gloves
- 1 mackinaw - lined - for winter
- 1 cap - wool - skull type
- 1 dress shirt
- 1 sport shirt
- 1 bow-tie
- 1 pair of slacks
- 1 pair of dress shoes
- 1 suit
- 1 comb
- 1 toothbrush
- 1 bathrobe
- 1 pair of slippers
- 1 set of rain-gear, rubbers included

## CLOTHING REQUIRED BY GIRLS:

- 1 pair comfortable oxfords
- 3 white cotton bras or knit undershirts
- 3 cotton slips
- 3 cotton dresses - washable colors
- 3 pair of panties
- 3 pair socks - white preferred
- 3 nighties or pajamas
- 1 pair of washable gloves
- 1 kerchief
- 6 handkerchiefs
- 1 sweater or sweat shirt
- 1 foundation garment - optional
- 1 stormcoat or woolen topper - line preferred
- 1 pair of dress shoes
- 1 pair of stockings
- 1 garter belt
- 1 rayon or nylon dress
- 1 comb
- 1 toothbrush
- 1 bathrobe - cottoncrepe preferred
- 1 pair of slippers
- 1 set of rain-gear - hood attached - rubbers
- 1 large package bobby pins



### CORRESPONDENCE

Kindly address ALL correspondence to the Director as follows:

H. H. Berman, M. D.  
Director  
Willowbrook State School  
Staten Island 14, N.Y.

