

CDF found that innumerable children with special needs — the physically or educationally handicapped, mentally retarded, exceptionally bright, bilingual, pregnant, or poor children — are given inadequate education. Often they are misdiagnosed and placed in the wrong kind of classroom. Their parents almost never are informed about their problems or possible remedies. They are harassed, counseled, or encouraged to leave school. If they stay, they may be functionally excluded if there are no suitable programs for them. CDF has recommended a range of reforms for special needs children, including careful individual assessments, parental involvement and the public schools' recognition of their obligation to provide appropriate educational services. CDF will urge the Office for Civil Rights to investigate and end racial discrimination in special class placements as well.

There are many other exclusionary devices keeping children out of school. Copies of the report outlining them, and further information and assistance to work in local communities to end these practices, are available from CDF's Cambridge office. (Sally Makacynas.)

II. 1984 Project* (Recordkeeping Practices and Data Banking, Medical Experimentation and Behavior Modification)

A. The Right to Privacy

School, health and other records are often necessary tools for helping children. But they are too often misused for recording information which is neither accurate nor useful. Children and their parents may not have access to records or the right to correct, amend, or delete portions of them, yet other social agencies, the police, or employers do get access. With the increasing use of computers to store and retrieve information on children, the danger to their right to privacy is great. Erroneous, subjective, unsubstantiated, or stigmatizing labels can be distributed easily, with few checks on the uses to which the information will be put or the long-term consequences to children and their families.

CDF, with the Urban Policy Research Institute (UPRI) in Los Angeles, studied school recordkeeping practices in California. Teachers, school administrators, children and parents were interviewed in an effort to document the procedures used and the flow of information between schools and other agencies such as the police, juvenile courts, probation departments, credit agencies, the FBI, the armed forces, and so on. A report analyzing these practices and the laws and regulations affecting them will be available early in 1975 from CDF's Washington office or from the UPRI in Los Angeles. Information on follow-up to the report in California, and possible implementation of federal regulations for children's privacy in other states, will also be available from the Washington office.

CDF is also participating in the creation of security and privacy safeguards for a new Foster Care Information System, to be finished in late 1974 and tried on a demonstration basis in several states.

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