

programs for the handicapped

May 9, 1969

69-4

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Secretary Finch Greets President Nixon
on his Recent Visit to the Department

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

Secretary's Committee on Mental Retardation

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Washington, D.C. 20201

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE HANDICAPPED

1. Federal Employment of the Handicapped

President Nixon in a special memorandum on Administration policy on April 18, 1969, urged a greater effort by the Federal Government in employing the handicapped. The memorandum to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies is as follows:

Policy for Federal Employment of the Handicapped

It is the policy of this Administration, in staffing the Federal service, to give full consideration to the employment and selective placement of the handicapped.

Administrations of both parties, since World War II, have set examples of national leadership in opening the Government's doors to more than one-quarter million citizens who, though handicapped, have nonetheless been occupationally qualified. Today throughout the economy we find general acceptance of the reminder: "Hire the Handicapped - It's Good Business."

I have personally observed the mutual benefits that derive from hiring the handicapped, and I want this "good business" to continue and prosper.

Therefore, I ask each of you to make a commitment to removing any remaining barriers to the Federal employment of

- the physically impaired who are not occupationally handicapped when assigned to the right jobs.
- the mentally restored whose only handicap is that they once suffered an emotional illness.
- the mentally retarded who can demonstrate ability to perform the simple and routine tasks that need doing in all organizations, regardless of size.

The Civil Service Commission will provide leadership and direction for the overall Federal effort in carrying out this policy.

I am confident that you will give this policy and the Commission your earnest support.

(SOURCE: "Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents",
April 21, 1969)

2. Establishment of the Office of Child Development in the
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

President Nixon on April 9, 1969, issued a statement on establishment of a new Office of Child Development in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

The President said that "In my message to the Congress of February 19th on the Economic Opportunity Act, I called for a 'national commitment to providing all American children an opportunity for healthful and stimulating development during the first five years of life.' I again pledge myself to that commitment.

"No such commitment has ever before been asked in our Nation. No such pledge has ever been given.

"Two fundamental developments bring it about.

"The first is one of the most characteristic developments of the modern age: new knowledge, new facts. We know today--and with each day our knowledge grows more detailed--that the process of human development is in certain fundamental ways different from what it has been thought to be. Or perhaps it is the case that mothers have always understood, but that only men have failed to take notice.

"We have learned, first of all, that the process of learning how to learn begins very, very early in the life of the infant child. Children begin this process in the very earliest months of life, long before they are anywhere near a first grade class, or even kindergarten, or play school group. We have also learned that for the children of the poor this ability to learn can begin to deteriorate very early in life, so that the youth begins school well behind his contemporaries and seemingly rarely catches up. He is handicapped as surely as a child crippled by polio is handicapped, and he bears the burden of that handicap through all his life. It is elemental that, even as in the case of polio, the effects of prevention are far better than the effects of cure. . . .

"The delegation of Head Start to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare was the first step in fulfilling my commitment to the first 5 years of life. In HEW, this program can be supported and supplemented by other Federal programs dealing with children in the early years.

"The second step, which I announce today, is the creation of an Office of Child Development, reporting directly to Secretary Finch's office. This Office must take a comprehensive approach to the development of young children, combining programs which deal with the physical, social, and intellectual.

"Preliminary evaluations of this program indicate that Head Start must begin earlier in life, and last longer, to achieve lasting benefits. Toward this end, Secretary Finch has decided to expand the Parent and Child Center and Follow Through programs, while reducing summer programs.

"We must remember that we are only beginning to learn what works, and what does not, in this field. We are on the verge of exciting breakthroughs, but much more must be learned before we can prepare a successful nationwide preschool program.

"There are any number of urban problems that can be dealt with promptly--and should be. Others can be approached in terms that admit of clear results in 2, 3, and 4 years. But some matters take longer. Above all, the process of a child's maturing is one of slow and steady growth that will not be speeded up for all our scientific knowledge.

"America must learn to approach its problems in terms of the timespan those problems require. All problems are pressing; all cry out for instant solutions; but not all can be instantly solved. We must submit to the discipline of time with respect to those issues which provide no alternative.

"The process of child development is such a matter.

"Our commitment to the first 5 years of life will not show its full results during my administration, nor in that of my successor. But if we plant the seeds and if we respond to the knowledge we have, then a stronger and greater America will surely one day come of it."

(SOURCE: Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents", April 9, 1969)

PROPOSED REGULATIONS ON GERMAN MEASLES (RUBELLA) VACCINE ISSUED

Secretary Robert H. Finch, on April 3, 1969, issued proposed regulations which establish standards for the production of a German measles (rubella) vaccine.

German measles is a threat to susceptible pregnant women at any time, but the threat increases significantly during epidemic years. One of the most tragic and disastrous epidemics to hit the United States in modern times was the German measles epidemic of 1964-1965. This resulted in about 50,000 abnormal pregnancies. About 20,000 infants were born with such crippling defects as mental retardation, heart disease, blindness and deafness. The remaining 30,000 pregnancies terminated in miscarriage or stillbirth.

The proposed regulations, published April 3, 1969, in the Federal Register, were prepared by the Division of Biologies Standards a unit of the National Institutes of Health. Technical, step-by-step production methods

are outlined and standards of safety, purity, and potency are established for the vaccine. Interested persons have 30 days to comment. After comments are considered, final regulations will be published in the Federal Register. Subsequently, a German measles vaccine that meets the standards can be licensed.

The regulations apply to vaccines containing a live virus strain known as HPV-77, which is grown in either duck embryo or dog kidney cell culture systems. Experimental vaccines produced in accordance with the standards have undergone extensive community testing in the United States and abroad.

It is hoped that more than one vaccine will be available. Regulations covering the use of other virus strains and culture media for rubella vaccine production will be formulated on the basis of extensive tests now going on.

For additional information on the Standards, write to the Division of Biologies, National Institutes of Health, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Bethesda, Maryland 20014.

A SPECIAL PROGRAM TO PLACE MENTALLY RETARDED PERSONS IN FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT — A PROGRESS REPORT

A highly successful program to employ mentally retarded persons in the Federal Government was initiated in 1963. The Civil Service Commission with the advice and cooperation of the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration, established a special hiring authority for mentally retarded persons.

In 1967, the District of Columbia Department of Vocational Rehabilitation conducted a follow-up study (funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration - RD-2425-G) of the initial 2,800 mentally retarded placements. This article will review the findings and implications of the follow-up study.

The placement program is unusual in several respects. Federal agencies enter into written agreements with the Civil Service Commission, designed to protect the interests of both retarded persons and employing agencies. The agencies agree to use the services of State Vocational Rehabilitation Departments in carrying out the hiring authority. They are also asked to identify, with the help of rehabilitation officials, tasks suitable for retarded persons. The judgment of rehabilitation counselors is substituted for the usual testing procedures to determine employability. The counselor certifies in writing that the retarded individual has the ability to perform a given job, is physically qualified to handle it without hazard, and is socially competent to function in that particular work environment and during after-work hours.

The hiring agency is also required to consult the counselor before separating an employee. This means the employer need not keep an unsatisfactory employee. It also assures the retarded client that continued rehabilitation services will be available.

Thus, a team effort in selective placement and follow-up of retarded persons was achieved. It permitted client evaluation, review and analysis of job tasks and work environments before placement, and continued contacts between employer and counselor afterwards to assure work adjustment.

As a result of this teamwork over 2,800 placements were made throughout the Nation during the first 3 years of the program (1964-66). By October of 1968, 5,210 had been placed.

The District of Columbia Department of Vocational Rehabilitation follow-up study obtained data from unsigned questionnaires completed by vocational rehabilitation counselors, personnel officers, job supervisors, and retarded employees involved.

Implications for Action

- The success of this program to hire retarded persons in Federal Government is sufficient to warrant its continuance on an indefinite or permanent basis. This should encourage State and local government agencies and private industry to follow suit, for the program is also suitable for them.
- Absenteeism and unacceptable habits and behavior may cause failure on the part of some clients unless counselors intervene. Follow-up with client and employer until job adjustment seems assured is needed if these main sources of failure are to be remedied. Counselors and their supervisors, even though already heavily burdened, need to bear this in mind.
- Counselors need to remember that IQ, grade level completed, and reading achievement may have little relation to job success; and that good job performance does not guarantee social adequacy.

Supporting Findings

- Over 100 different jobs in about 40 Federal agencies are being performed by these retarded persons. Thirty-one percent are white collar, 69% blue collar.
- Typically, they are young--about two-thirds were 20 to 24, and some were teenagers. However, a few were 60 or over. Nine out of 10 were single when employed, and three-fourths lived with parents or guardians.
- The ratio of men to women was four to one.

- Some trends indicate there is little relationship between job performance and such factors as IQ, grade level completed in school, or reading skills.
- The two major causes of failure were absenteeism and unacceptable social behavior. In addition, inability to perform job tasks was a common reason for involuntary separation.
- Major unmet needs which, if satisfied, might have prevented failures: more helpful home environments, more realistic level of aspiration, more appropriate pre-employment training, and more community services to help the employees with off-the-job problems.

For further information on the follow-up report itself which is entitled "A National Follow-up Study of Mental Retardates Employed by the Federal Government" (RD-2425-6, 1968) write to the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Government of District of Columbia, Washington, D. C. 20005.

NEW PUBLICATIONS RELATING TO THE HANDICAPPED

The following publications have recently been issued by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Community and Field Services:

1. A Summary of Selected Legislation Relating to the Handicapped 1963-1967
2. A Summary of Selected Legislation Relating to the Handicapped 1968
3. Mental Retardation Grants - Part II Research and Demonstration - Fiscal Year 1968
4. Financial Assistance Programs for the Handicapped
5. A Review of Selected Program Activities in the Education of the Deaf - February 1969

Single free copies of these publications may be obtained from the Secretary's Committee on Mental Retardation, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D. C. 20201