

STATEMENT BY THE
AMERICAN PSYCHOANALYTIC ASSOCIATION
ON THE
REPORT OF THE
JOINT COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH OF CHILDREN

The American Psychoanalytic Association endorses the aims and major recommendations of the Joint Commission on Mental Health of Children. As one of the original co-sponsors, we have maintained regular contact with the Commission through the active involvement of many of our members in the various task forces, committees and on the Board of Directors. Also, we have responded to the draft material in our statement of April 7, 1969, to the Commission's Executive Director. We view the Commission's Report and the development of recommendations resulting from its extensive studies and reports as a crucial opportunity to provide resources and mechanisms to insure better care for all mentally ill children and more effective programs to prevent mental illness in childhood.

As the Commission's Report is being prepared for publication and as legislative channels for implementation are being developed, the American Psychoanalytic Association wishes to facilitate and strengthen the impact of this report through the following recommendations:

1. That the mobilization of supplying energies and resources for programs designed to implement the Joint Commission's Report maintain a balance of direct clinical services, research and training programs and indirect services that are preventive. There can be no adequate training, research or preventive programs unless we provide mentally ill children with the finest clinical services of which this affluent country is capable.

2. That the advocacy system be developed nationally, regionally and locally in a manner that avoids or minimizes political exploitation enabling the advocates to assist us in improving our capacity to upgrade effectively the priorities of children in the provision of health care.
3. That the Report's insistence on preventing physical and mental deprivation in the first four years of life be emphasized and accorded immediate urgent national attention.
4. That mental health professionals be encouraged to concentrate on their special areas of professional competence in order to apply their expertise most effectively, and to avoid the risk of diffuseness that results, for example, when the nurse, psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, psychologist or social worker responds to expectations that they function as experts on unemployment, pedagogy, economics, political action or on other issues.

The American Psychoanalytic Association wishes to express its appreciation to the Joint Commission on the Mental Health of Children for its devoted efforts and reports. We plan to continue our sustained involvement in proposing, refining and implementing the reports and recommendations of the Joint Commission, welcoming opportunities to be of further assistance in these urgent activities for children.

Royden Astley, M.D., President

The American Psychoanalytic Association

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