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APRIL AND MAY  
WEIGHING AND MEASURING TEST

PART 1  
SUGGESTIONS TO LOCAL COMMITTEES



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**SUGGESTIONS TO LOCAL COMMITTEES<sup>1</sup>**

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**COOPERATION.**

The whole program for the Children's Year looks toward using the help of every agency interested in child welfare and of every organization representative of the varied interests of the community. Therefore in organizing the local work for the Weighing and Measuring Test, which is suggested as the first activity for the Children's Year, the attempt should be made by the local committees of the State committee on child welfare of the council of National Defense to obtain the cooperation of all local organizations

The number and names of the cooperating organizations will vary greatly, in the larger towns and cities the list will ordinarily include the mayor and city officials; the city health department, especially its division of child hygiene or child welfare, if this exists, all women's organizations; the school board and principals and teachers of the schools, the local medical society, the local infant-welfare society; the local visiting-nurse society, the churches, all charitable organizations and settlements; the Camp Fire Girls, the Boy Scouts, the playground authorities; the newspapers, chamber of commerce, labor unions; fraternal orders; other men's organizations, etc

In a county campaign the help also of all county officials and organizations should be sought—the county commissioners; the county health officer, nurse, and demonstration agents for agriculture and home economics; the county medical society, the county superintendent of schools; etc.

**ORGANIZATION.**

Experience has shown that every community knows best how to organize its own committees. Moreover, the character of the subcommittees will vary with the method of carrying out the test, the size of the community, and the additional work undertaken.

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<sup>1</sup> A separate pamphlet, *Suggestions to Examiners*, is published by the Children's Bureau as Part 2 of this publication and should be distributed to physicians and others who are conducting the test.

The following outline of subcommittees of the local defense committee may be useful:

*Executive committee.*

*Publicity committee.* If the Weighing and Measuring Test is to be successful, it must receive wide publicity in advance.

*Finance committee.* However inexpensive the campaign may be, a few essentials will have to be provided.

*Enrollment committee* In charge of enrolling children to be examined

*Committee on place and equipment.* This committee will be responsible for finding suitable places to hold the Weighing and Measuring Test, for procuring the essential equipment—scales and measuring apparatus—and for sending a request to the Children's Bureau for the necessary number of examination cards, blanks, and suggestions to examiners.

Further details of these duties are discussed on page 6.

### SAFEGUARDING AGAINST CONTAGIOUS DISEASE.

In whatever manner the weighing and measuring is carried out, the most important thing is to provide conditions which are safe and comfortable for the children.

The bringing together of a large number of children always involves a risk of spreading infection, which is especially great at the time of any general epidemic, such as of measles, whooping cough, infantile paralysis, grippe, or any other contagious disease. Where such an epidemic is present, or where there is any special reason to fear one, it is better to have the parents (or their own physician) carry out the test in the children's homes. At any rate, in such cases the local or State public health authorities should be consulted before the plans are made.

At all times, even in the absence of any epidemic, great care should be taken to prevent the spreading of infectious diseases. This can be done if certain precautions are observed. Every effort should be made to prevent the crowding together of a large number of children. This can be accomplished if the children are examined by appointment only, the appointments being made in advance. Not more than two or three children, with their mothers, should be admitted to the waiting room at the same time. It has been the experience with children's health conferences in the past that, when appointments are not made and the conference is popular, the rooms are sometimes crowded with mothers and babies awaiting their turn, many of them, after remaining several hours, go home without the examination. It is obvious that such conditions are very undesirable.

Moreover, children suffering from contagious diseases or those who have recently been exposed to them should not be brought to be weighed and measured. This fact should be made known in all the publicity material. In addition, a nurse should be given the duty of looking over every child as he comes in and of excluding those with any evidence of contagious disease, including bad colds. As the test may be carried on throughout a considerable period (60 days), parents may be assured that they will have the opportunity of having their children who are not eligible at one meeting examined later.

### METHODS OF CARRYING OUT THE TEST.

Methods will vary in communities of different sizes. A special set of suggestions for committees in large cities will be furnished by the Children's Bureau on request.

Three ways of carrying out the test are suggested; committees will choose the method which is most appropriate to local conditions:

1. In connection with children's health conferences.
2. At one or more centers, but without a children's health conference.
3. Through the giving out of individual cards to parents.

#### The Weighing and Measuring Test in connection with children's health conferences.

It is hoped that in many communities the Weighing and Measuring Test may be held in connection with children's health conferences, where the children are given a full physical examination by experienced physicians. A pamphlet of directions on how to conduct such a conference has been issued by the Children's Bureau.<sup>1</sup> If this plan is followed, two record cards will be filled out for each child:

a. The Weighing and Measuring Test record card, one-half of which is given to the parents and one-half returned to the Children's Bureau.

b. The detailed record of the physical examination, which is filled out by the examining physician and returned to the mother.

#### The Weighing and Measuring Test without a children's health conference.

In many communities a shortage of physicians may make it impossible for them to give enough time to hold conferences. In this case, the test without the more detailed examination may be carried on at one or more centers throughout the community.

<sup>1</sup>Bradley, Dr. Frances Sage, and Sheibon, Dr. Florence Brown. How to Conduct a Children's Health Conference. U. S. Children's Bureau Publication No. 23, Miscellaneous Series No. 9. Washington, 1917.

In cities having infant-welfare centers or stations, arrangements may be made to have at least part of the weighing and measuring done at these centers on certain days.

In cities not having such centers, other places may be chosen—a public library, woman's club, courthouse with public rest rooms, school building, or other public rooms. A school building may be opened all day on each Saturday, during the 60 days, for the weighing and measuring. In large and even in medium-sized cities it will probably be found advisable to establish a number of centers where the test may be carried out on certain days of the week or on every day throughout a certain period. A neighborhood committee of residents in each district should be appointed in order to help with the test and to make it known.

It is hoped that the Weighing and Measuring Test will be carried out in the country just as widely as in the city. County chairmen may arrange for many centers scattered throughout the county; each school district may organize to hold the test in a rural school, perhaps on each Saturday throughout the 60 days; and neighborhood tests may be arranged, all the children of a neighborhood being invited to one house.

In carrying out the Weighing and Measuring Test many of the arrangements will be similar to those advised for a children's health conference. Committees should therefore read over with care the pamphlet on *How to Conduct a Children's Health Conference*.

Enrollment in advance should be as carefully carried out for the test as for a conference. The importance of this can not be too much insisted upon. More children may, however, be enrolled than for a conference, as each examiner can weigh and measure from six to eight children in an hour. (For further suggestions as to details of enrollment, see page 7 of *How to Conduct a Children's Health Conference*.)

The committee may arrange the time for holding the test in any one of several ways. The weighing and measuring may be carried on every day for several days or one or more weeks, until all children whose parents desire appointments have been measured; or one or more days in a week may be set aside for the work during the whole period of two months—April 6 to June 6.

### **The Weighing and Measuring Test by parents at home.**

Where it is considered impossible to arrange for centers of any kind for weighing and measuring the babies and children, a committee may carry out the test by obtaining a supply of cards from the Children's Bureau and giving them to parents to be filled out by themselves or by their family physicians. The committee should see that the second half of the card is returned to the Children's Bureau. The committee may collect this portion of the cards given out and, at the

end of the period of the test, send them in a package under frank to the bureau, or it may direct the parents using the cards to mail the second half direct to the bureau. (This portion of the card is franked and requires no postage)

The committee should take pains to make known by all means possible—newspaper articles, announcements at meetings and churches, letters to mothers, window cards, etc—that record cards may be obtained by parents who wish to carry out the test. The name and address of the person from whom the cards can be obtained should be clearly stated.

Even in communities where the Weighing and Measuring Test is carried out at conferences and centers, it is possible that a certain number of parents will find it impossible to bring their children to the centers and will wish to obtain record cards to make the test themselves. All committees, therefore, should arrange to give out record cards for this purpose.

### **CERTAIN DETAILS OF THE WORK OF COMMITTEES.**

#### **Publicity.**

In whatever way the test is conducted, ample publicity should be arranged for through newspaper articles, announcements in churches and meetings, notices given out in schools and carried to parents by the school children, personal letters and telephone messages to parents. A series of articles on the Weighing and Measuring Test which may be suggestive for newspaper articles will be sent on application to the Children's Bureau. (For additional suggestions, see page 5 of How to Conduct a Children's Health Conference)

#### **Record Cards.**

These may be obtained, free of charge, on application to the Children's Bureau, United States Department of Labor, Washington, D. C. The chairman in charge of this part of the work should estimate carefully how many cards will be required and should write at once to the bureau stating clearly—

- (1) Name and address to which cards are to be sent
- (2) Number required.
- (3) Date of holding test (if this has been decided upon)

The record cards are arranged in two sections; one section is to be torn off and retained by the parents of the child examined, the other is to be returned to the Children's Bureau. The information on the cards will be tabulated by the bureau and will give an indication of the health of the Nation's children.

The cards to be returned to the bureau should be collected during the course of the test and, when the test is completed in the community, they should be sent to the bureau in a package, using the

franked label which will be sent out with each order of cards. The committee should, in addition, keep a permanent record of the children examined—of their ages, their heights, and their weights. From this list the committee can prepare a report for immediate use in the community, stating what percentage of the children examined came up to the average of height and weight. The list will also be important for carrying out follow-up work after the test.

This information may be entered on the report sheets which will be sent out with each order of cards.

*Committees are urged to make up their permanent records promptly and then to send in the package of original cards to the Children's Bureau.*

### **Equipment.**

The equipment essential for the test is simple:

1. Standard scales, the accuracy of which has been tested. Platform scales for weighing older babies and children are essential. Besides these, scales with a scale pan for weighing young babies are desirable but not essential.

2. Measuring rod or measuring apparatus and tape measures. Many standard platform scales are equipped with a measuring apparatus, and various devices for measuring the height of babies have been prepared. One of these is described on page 11 of "How to Conduct a Children's Health Conference." These, however, are not essential. A good supply of tape measures is essential.

In addition, the following should be provided at centers where many children are examined:

A table for measuring the babies. An ordinary deal table 45 inches long is perfectly satisfactory; it should be covered with a pad or folded quilt, an oilcloth, and a cotton sheet. This in turn should be protected by a fresh paper towel for every child.

A small table or desk for filling out the records.

A supply of milliner's paper bags, one of which is given to each mother to hold her child's clothing.

A supply of paper towels, both for the examiner's hands and for use on the table and in the pan of the scales. These should be changed after each examination.

A supply of canton-flannel squares (1½ yards) to wrap around the babies whose mothers have come unsupplied with towels.

Facilities for washing hands.

A supply of wooden tongue depressors and a thermometer for the use of the nurse who, as the children are brought in, looks them over for any evidence of contagious disease.

**Securing examiners.**

In order that the weighing and measuring may be uniform throughout the country, the Children's Bureau has prepared Suggestions to Examiners.<sup>1</sup> Copies of this pamphlet should be secured by the committee and distributed to those who conduct the test.

When possible, children should be weighed and measured by physicians. The committee should enlist the interest of the local medical society and invite its members to take part in the test. A statement should be obtained from each as to the days and hours he or she would like to serve. Each doctor should agree to furnish a substitute if, for any reason, the appointment can not be kept. It is hoped that physicians will look upon this work as patriotic service.

Because of the shortage of physicians, it may not be possible to have all the tests made by physicians. Nurses, especially those who have had experience in infant-welfare work, should then be asked to make the test. In any case, it is very desirable to have nurses to assist, and especially to be present in the reception room to look over the children as they are brought in, in order to avoid the spread of contagious disease.

Where it is impossible to have the help of either physicians or nurses, the weighing and measuring may be done by a committee of women. Such a committee will find the work easier if, before the beginning of the test, they rehearse the procedure of weighing and measuring, if possible under instruction by a physician or nurse.

In connection with the Weighing and Measuring Test special use could be made of the Home Health Volunteers enrolled under the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense. Information about the H. H. V. can be secured from the Child-Welfare Department of the Woman's Committee, 1814 N. Street NW., Washington, D. C.

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<sup>1</sup> Children's Year, Weighing and Measuring Test. Part 2. Suggestions to Examiners. U. S. Children's Bureau Publication No. 39, Children's Year Leaflet No. 2, Part 2. Washington, 1918.