

The Needs of Children (1974). PRINGLE M. KELLMER, A personal perspective prepared for the Department of Health and Social Security. Pp. 191. London: Hutchinson. Price: £2.75.

The book begins with a foreword by Sir Keith Joseph, the then Secretary of State for Social Services. He explains how Dr Pringle, the Director of the National Children's Bureau, was asked to prepare an account of present knowledge of the needs of children and to provide a review of the literature on the subject.

The terms of reference were: "To prepare a comprehensive document about the developmental needs of all children, about the ways in which these needs are normally met, and about the consequences for the emotional, intellectual, social and physical growth and development of children when, for one reason or another, these needs are not adequately met."

The book's first chapter is concerned with some basic concepts in child development. There are five basic premises underlying Mrs Pringle's concept of the psychosocial needs of children. These are: that the environment is of overriding importance; that the early years of life are particularly vital to later development; there are individual differences in the extent and pace of growth; there are vast improvements yet to be obtained in emotional, social, intellectual, and educational achievements; and, finally, that strategies used in the health field may be successful if applied to developmental needs. The first chapter also contains a well reasoned and balanced account of the nature-nurture controversy.

The second chapter looks at the needs of children. The needs which are discussed are of

love and security; new experiences; praise and recognition; and the need for responsibility. Dr Pringle sees these needs being met largely by parents, the family, and the school. The third and fourth chapters therefore look at the parental and family roles, and discuss the relationship between behaviour problems and learning difficulties.

The consequences of failure to meet these basic needs is the subject of the fifth chapter. The sixth chapter outlines children who are especially vulnerable and 'at risk'. This is a summary of much of the work reported in the Bureau's book *Born to Fail?* (Peter Wedge and Hilary Prosser—Arrow books). The book ends with some concluding thoughts and unanswered questions. Suggested changes are described. An excellent reference and accurate index complete the book.

This is a most important book and deserves to be read by all who are concerned with children. This book is about the children whom we see everyday in our consulting rooms, and those of us who are truly family doctors are no longer only concerned with the 'purely' medical problem but with the total child—his health, development, happiness, and potential.

It is natural that the book leans heavily upon research done by the National Children's Bureau but, apart from the fact that Dr Pringle does not make it clear whether or not she recognises the existence of specific learning problems as opposed to psychosocial aetiologies, it is difficult to fault. Dr Pringle has an aptitude for expressing the humane and compassionate viewpoint and backing it up with the results of research findings. The effect is devastating and defies repudiation.

MARGARET POLLACK

CHRONIC BRONCHITIS : METHOD OF CIGARETTE SMOKING

Male volunteers from mass radiography examination, aged 40 or more, were questioned about their sputum production, smoking habits, and, when applicable, their method of smoking cigarettes.

Of 5,438 cigarette smokers 460 (8.4 per cent) smoked their cigarettes without removing the cigarette from the mouth between puffs ('drooping' cigarette smokers) whereas the rest smoked in the normal manner.

Persons who admitted to producing sputum from their chests on most days of the year or on most days for at least three months of the year for a minimum of two years were classified as chronic bronchitics in the absence of other causative disease.

The rate of chronic bronchitis among the 'drooping' cigarette smokers (41.5 per cent) was considerably greater than that among those smoking cigarettes in the normal manner (33.6 per cent). The same pattern was maintained when age and cigarette consumption were standardised, though 'drooping' cigarette smokers had a slight bias towards plain as distinct from filter cigarettes and towards a lower social class this was not sufficient to account for the excess of chronic bronchitis among those using this method of smoking.

REFERENCE

Rimington, J. (1973). *British Medical Journal*, **1**, 776-778 (Author's summary).