



The Hatfield Polytechnic

SOCIAL SCIENCES

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Mrs. Hilary Land,
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13 Endsleigh Street
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19.2.70.

Dear Hilary,

Thank you for
the signed copy -
it's damn good too.

Thank you also
for the mention -
I am at last.

All the best,

Ruth

CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT

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Report on study of educational experience
of children in large families

Kathy Michaels
Feb-68

Introduction

A pilot study in depth of 86 large families, living in London having been made by Hilary Land, a member of the Essex/L.S.E. research team investigating poverty it was decided that a follow-up study of the educational experience of the children in these families, still at school, would complement her report.

To act as a control group seventy one small families were included in the survey. The large families had been drawn at random from the Ministry of Social Security's records and in an effort to hold constant neighbourhood environment the control group of families were located in the same streets. The definition of a small family to be one having three or less children, with at least one child at school. As such families could be embryo large families the parents were asked their attitudes on family planning. More than 80% of the small family mothers declared their families to be complete and the majority ^{many?} were using some form of mechanical birth control. *(what about the pill)*

Class could not be held constant and the following table shows that the large families were more heavily weighted towards the lower end of the social scale.

Social Class	Fathers in survey		Males in Gr. London Gen.
Occupl. class			
Econ. active males			
Reg. General scale	Large	Small	
	%	%	%
1. Professional	6	2.9	5
2. Managerial	8	10.2	16
3. Skilled Nonmanual) " Manual)	48	60.0	52
4. Semi-skilled manual	24	16.2	18
5. Unskilled "	14	4.4	9

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5. Unskilled	14	4.4	9

The object in investigating the educational experience of the children in these 86 large families was to cast some light on the patterns of under-achievement expected of such children. As the survey would be complementary to a study in depth of the same families it was hoped that this would be a fruitful piloting.

Numerous studies conducted during recent years have indicated that the child from the large family is at a positive disadvantage compared with the child from the small family. He is more likely to be living in relative poverty and as was pointed out in *The Poor and the Poorest* (Abel-Smith and Townsend 1965) the economic position of large families was relatively worse in 1960 than in 1953. The Plowden Report (1967) found a correlation between the large family, the lowest paid and lower I.Q. scores (Ch. 5) and suggested that the parents of large families have less time to give their children encouragement and stimulus. That fathers were more likely to be working long hours, night work and shift work in the semi-skilled and unskilled manual classes than in other classes and as these classes have proportionately more large families both mother and father would be likely to have less time to take an interest in their children's progress. Earlier reports had found similar correlations. The Newsom Report, *Half our Future* 1963, had noted that the less successful children tended to come from the large families. The Robbins Report in the same year showed clearly how the size of family, as well as its social and cultural background affects the education of the children (Appendix 1, para. 34) so that "a child who is one of two is more than twice as likely to reach higher education as a child from a family of four children and about four times as likely as a child from a family of five or more children, whatever the education of the parents". J. W. B. Douglas who has made a continuing study of 5,000 children born in a certain week in March 1946 presented evidence of the disadvantages of the child in a large family. In his report

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The Home and the School 1964, he found that the large family children scored less well in prepared tests, that they are more likely to be placed in low streams and less likely to be pupils at the academically successful schools as measured by success in securing 11+ places. Children from families with more than four children gained fewer grammar school places than their measured ability would lead one to expect. His extensive report suggests that in all social levels family size has an influence on the measured intelligence of the children but the influence of family size is less marked in the middle class than in the manual working class, (Table XII(b)), and that by the age of eight the size of family has already exerted its effect on the child's chances of educational achievement.

Most of the investigations into family size and educational achievement have assumed that the large family child suffers from a relative lack of available mothering but a very recent study by Waldrop and Bell (Child research branch, National Institute of Mental Health) suggests that children of large families from birth exhibit particular characteristics and show different emotional needs. They found that from birth the large family child tends to be more lethargic and in school to seek more contact with teacher.

There were in the survey 371 children - 285 from large families, 86 from small families, divided into the following age groups:-

	5-8 years	9-11 years % (numbers in brackets)	11-15 years	15+
Large family	25.6 (73)	33.7 (96)	32.3 (92)	8.4 (24)
Small family	32.2 (28)	29.9 (26)	25.3 (22)	11.5 (10)

It was not possible to follow up all the children of school age because in some cases children were in residential schools and these schools were excluded from the survey and (5%) of the schools declined to co-operate and a further 6% were unable to make themselves available - the effective response rate from the schools being 89%.

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There were in the survey 371 children - 205 from large families, 66

from small families, divided into the following age groups:-

	5-9 years	9-11 years	11-15 years	15+
	(numbers in brackets)			
Large family	25.6 (77)	33.7 (96)	32.7 (92)	8.4 (24)
Small family	32.2 (26)	32.9 (26)	35.3 (22)	11.5 (10)

It was not possible to follow up all the children of school age because in some cases children were in residential schools and their schools were excluded from the survey and (2) of the schools declined to co-operate and a further 64 were unable to take themselves available - the effective response rate from the schools being 69%.

Method

Having located the schools the children attended we wrote for an interview (copy of the letter included in Appendix) with the head teachers and class teachers, having previously obtained permission from the ILEA or the education officer of the outcounty boroughs, to do so. When an interview had been arranged part 1 of the questionnaire was posted to the head teacher. In this section the head was asked to give information as to the physical data of the school, its size, age, defects, numbers on staff, percentage of immigrant children, the percentage of children gaining grammar school places or staying beyond 15 or proceeding to full-time further education depending on the status of the school. Their comments were invited on their staffing situation and reasons why they had or did not have a parent teachers association. They were also asked to classify the area from which their children were drawn by social class. At the interview both head teachers and class teachers were asked for information on the individual child. The heads, with few exceptions, were willing to give their time and co-operation to enable us to build up a picture of both the child and the family as seen by the school. Generally speaking the head teachers in the infant and junior schools knew more about the children and their family background than secondary school heads.

Information was requested about the child's attendance and health records, his standard of work and progress, the reason for any noted deterioration and whether he or she had any social or welfare problems. If the school felt it was able to cope with such social /welfare problems itself or if any outside aid had been sought and if so from which departments. We also enquired as to when the head had last been in contact with one or both parents and finally we invited any general comments on the child and the family.

The teachers were interviewed separately whenever this was possible but this was not a condition which we were able to insist on which has obvious implications for the tenor of the response. Some heads preferred to remain present whilst the teacher was interviewed but most were kind enough to vacate their rooms and replace the teacher in the classroom so that we could conduct the interview in peace. Sometimes it was necessary to interview the teacher in the classroom whilst the children were at work. Interviewing during the lunch hour or after school was not easily received by the teachers as a proposal. We were anxious to have the teacher's own assessment of the child and to find out how much the teacher knew of the family and any problem the child may have. Teachers, without exception, were very willing to co-operate and to give personal data as to their qualifications, length of time on the staff and how long they had taught the child. They were asked to assess the child's standard of work, the stream or set the child was in and his standard of dress, whether they considered they had sufficient contact with the parents and if they were aware of any welfare problems.

We did not ask to see the children as we did not wish the child to be embarrassed by such attention, however, on several occasions when the teacher was interviewed in the classroom the child would be pointed out.

At some schools we were enquiring about several children and thus able to talk to a number of the staff. This helped us to form a more comprehensive impression of the school and of the general attitude to education. Did teachers see their role primarily as an agent for instilling the three R's or did they have a broader conception of the role of the teacher?

The physical appearance of many of the schools was depressing in the extreme but one soon gained the ability to detect, within a few minutes of entry, the gentle hum of the "well oiled" school. Dreary corridors were often enriched by vivid paintings and friezes and ancient classrooms

by posters and exhibits of the children's work. One learned not to judge a school by its external fabric.

The interviews in the schools were carried out in the period September 1966 through March 1967.

SECTION I

The prime object was to discover how our large family children fared in school. Whether in fact they could be distinguished from their colleagues from small families. Did they make as good progress, was their attendance similar or different, were they placed in upper streams as often, was their health record distinct and if it was what were the type of ailments they suffered from. Were they to be found in the older schools, in the schools with the most physical defects, in schools whose academic record (judged by success at 11+ or numbers going on to full-time further education) were less promising than the schools our small family children attended.

Many features of the schools were studied and some results will be given in a separate section on the schools but where possible the findings on the schools have been correlated to the data collected for the children, in most cases giving comparisons between large and small family children.

Progress

In looking at the assessment of progress, head teachers were asked to say if the child's standard of work had improved, remained constant or deteriorated. Table 1 separates the children into age groups and compares these groups as between the large and small family children.

The small family infants showed strikingly higher improvement than their large family cohorts. 42.9% of small family infants were said to have improved their standard as compared with 15.1% of large family infants. This can possibly be linked with the fact that 43.8% of small family boys and 50% small family girls are reading normally or above in

Round percentages
to nearest
whole number

this age group (5-8 years), whilst only 21.1% large family boys are reading and 22.9% of large family girls (Table 2). In the age group 9-11 both large family and small family children in our samples showed similar improvement - around 30% - but by the time the children are in the 11-15 age group the small family child is pulling away. 45.5% of them were judged to have improved their standard compared to 25% of the large family children. At 15 plus they are closer together, as one might expect if both sets of children are still at school beyond statutory school leaving age, with 20% small family and 16.7% large family children making continued improvement.

Attendance

In looking at the attendance record of the children, the children were divided by age groups, sex and family size (Table 3). For both sexes and in all age groups the small family children were better attenders only in the 9-11 age groups did the large family children come anywhere near the proportion being good attenders and as noted above this was the age group when both sets of children made similar progress. The poor attenders were mainly found among the large family children and of these the boys were, on the whole, the worst offenders. The proportion increased with age, rising from 21.1% in the infants, dropping slightly at 9 - 11 and climbing to 34% in the 11-15 age group and 45% at 15+. At this age only 11 large family boys in our sample were still at school but to find 45% of them classified as poor attenders was an unhappy finding. 15+ appears to be the age in which both boys and girls among the large family children make less effort to attend school; 61.5% of our large family girls were poor attenders at this age. If one correlates this table with the table and comments on school leaving age in Miss Land's report (p.97) it possibly indicates that rising the school leaving age to 16 would probably only raise the effective leaving age of these children to 15.

why not
say 5 boys
a percentage
of anything
less than 50
is a bit
dubious. It's
better to give
proportions
- half, a third
etc.

For both large and small family children those whose work was said to have improved were also the good attenders (Table 4). 79.4% of the large family good attenders had improved and 93.8% of the small family children, whereas only 8.8% of the large family poor attenders had improved their standard and 6.3% of the small family poor attenders. Conversely 58.1% of the poor attenders from large families had deteriorated. There was no example in our small sample of small family children to connect poor attendance and deterioration. The small family poor attenders were, as noted above, in a very much smaller proportion and of them 6.3% improved and 6.5% had maintained constant progress (Table 4). It is interesting to correlate the results of this table with our figures indicating what the head teacher saw as the chief reason for the child's work deteriorating (table 5). Home circumstances were seen as the major determinant, lacking concentration and absence as secondary. While it is difficult to disentangle all three reasons the head teachers inclined to place emphasis on the home circumstances, the children were not even within the school environment for substantial periods of time. Absentee rates for the whole class in the top of the secondary modern schools was not infrequently 50% over the whole term.

Meaning
what kind
of things?

The schools were asked to assess the reason for absence and of the four possibilities, illness, minding the family, other responsibilities or truancy, illness was the major reason for absence in all age groups among the small family children and the major reason for large family children with the exception of the 15+ age group. At this age more than half the large family boys and two thirds large family girls were away from school for reasons other than illness.

Truancy

There were hardly any cases of small family children being away due to truancy but among the large family children no age group was entirely

without its truants. The proportion was in most age groups higher for the boys and truancy increased with age. ^{13%} 13.2% large family boys were considered to be truanting at 9-11, ^{21%} 20.8% at 11-15 and ^{27%} 27.3% at 15+. The large family girls were more often considered to be home minding the family than the boys and ^{31%} 30.8% were absent for this reason and 15.4% truanting. Our truancy figures, based on the head teacher's assessment, are considerably higher than either the national figure for truancy among secondary school children of average or less than average ability or the reasons mother gave for absence at the home interview (see p.97 Miss Land's report).

What evidence
did the teachers
have for
saying this?

Clothing

An attempt was made to assess whether there was a connection between teacher's assessment of child's standard of clothing and the stream in which he or she placed (table 7) and progress (table 8) made.

The categories well dressed, reasonably well dressed and poorly dressed were correlated with upper, lower or slow learner streams. Only one small family child in the sample was considered to be poorly dressed and he was in a lower stream. Of the large family poorly dressed children 10% were in an upper stream, 17% in a lower and ^{22%} 21.7% in the slow learner group (figures do not add up to 100% because considerable proportion of children were in unstreamed schools). The well clad child had a better chance of being in the upper stream. ^{43%} 42.5% of the well dressed large family children were in an upper stream as were 45% of the reasonably well dressed. The proportion is even higher for the small family child, ^{76%} 76.2% of the well dressed small family children were in an upper stream and ^{24%} 23.8% of the reasonably well dressed. Our findings would appear to emphasise the correlation between dress and maternal care with streaming in the primary schools and as table 7 included all schools the correlation would appear to hold in the secondary school (see Douglas

The Home and the School, Ch. XIV). However, as stated above, quite a number of the children were in unstreamed schools so the correlation between progress and dress is more comprehensive.

Table 8 in fact indicates a similar correlation. ^{34%} 33.8% of the well dressed and 50% of the reasonably well dressed large family children had made progress. Only 13% of the poorly dressed large family children had made progress, ^{18%} 18.2% of them maintained a constant standard and ^{36%} 35.5% of them had deteriorated. A significant proportion, 40%, of the reasonably well dressed large family children had also deteriorated, ^{39%} 38.7% and ^{23%} 22.6% of the well dressed. (A word on teachers' assessment of clothing might be opportune here. On cold wintry days a child wearing a cotton dress and cardigan might be assessed by her teacher to be reasonably well dressed. Possibly judgement was affected by the general standard of clothing in the class rather than by any outside norm.) There was only one poorly clad small family child and he had made progress, of the other small family children the well dressed had made progress in 68.8% cases as had 63% of the reasonably well dressed.

Land reports that of the mothers she interviewed (large families only) 11% did not know whether their children were making progress in school or not and many mothers were more concerned about the children's behaviour than their academic achievements (p. 96 H. Land report). If one can associate the poorly dressed child with the families most likely to be living at or below the basic National Assistance level the proportion of parents who did not know about their children's progress rises to 19%. Our poorly clad child's lack of progress is thus most likely to be associated with poverty and less aware parents.

you could
test this by
using my
income data.

Streaming

In looking at streaming, a straight comparison was made between large and small family children, in the various types of schools. The infants and junior schools streamed less than the secondary schools. More than half the junior schools did not stream and nearly 70% of the infants were unstreamed. In those schools that did stream invariably a lower proportion of large family children were placed in upper streams compared to small family children. They were randomly distributed in the comprehensive schools (table 9).

In the junior schools that streamed ^{11%} 10.7% of the large family children were in upper streams compared to 15% of small family children. At secondary modern schools ^{13%} 12.5% large family compared to ^{43%} 42.9% small family. At grammar schools ^{39%} 38.9% of large family children were in upper streams (or sets) and ^{71%} 71.4% small family pupils. In the comprehensive schools ^{35%} 35.3% of large family children in upper streams and ^{39%} 38.5% of small family children.

With the exception of the comprehensive schools more of the large family children were placed in slow learner streams. ^{12%} 12.1% at junior schools compared with 5% small family children. Similarly ^{44%} 43.8% in slow learner streams in secondary modern schools compared to ^{29%} 28.6% small family pupils. The grammar schools did not have a slow learner category but ^{39%} 38.9% large family children were in lower streams compared with ^{14%} 14.3% of the small family children. In the comprehensive schools the positions were reversed with ^{38%} 38.5% of small family children in slow learner groups compared with ^{29%} 29.4% large family children. Again the small family children were doing better in infants schools. None of our sample of large family children was in an upper stream of a streamed infants school whilst ^{7%} 7.1% of small family children were, but the numbers involved were very small as so few infants schools in fact streamed by ability.

Teachers were not asked specifically whether children had moved from one stream to another but in the few cases where information was volunteered the children who had been moved down were invariably from the larger families. Some examples of these have been written up into the case studies and most of them were said to have taken place because the child's work had deteriorated due to home circumstances and absences.

It is difficult to assess the figures for streaming for the junior and infants schools compared to other reports on streaming and this table is based on both streamed and unstreamed schools. The general picture remains that the large family child is more likely to be found in a lower or slow learner stream and less likely to be, or remain, in an upper stream. If streaming at junior school is a guide to which stream he or she is likely to be placed in at secondary school then the figures reinforce previous suggestions that streaming tends to make for a rigid selective system.

Health

The incidence of some illness is higher among the large family children, with the exception of the age group 11-15. Girls aged 5-8 from large families showed a high incidence of illness, 40% and girls aged 15+ even higher, 53.8%. If this last category of 15+ girls from large families is excluded there is a general tendency for health to improve with age in the large family whilst the small family children have a less perceptible pattern. Taking both groups of children together 72.4% were considered healthy, the rest to have had some illness.

We tried to establish what type of health defect the child in ill health suffered from (Table 11). A minority of small family children had a physical or nervous defect but no chronic illness. The 15+ girls from large families were those with most defects. In their case 23.1% had some physical defect, 15.4% some nervous handicap and 15.4% were

I've got data
on their
health
from their mothers.

considered to suffer from malnutrition. None of the small family children suffered from malnutrition or were considered undersized whilst a small but persistent number of all ages of large family boys and girls were in these categories. No regular pattern of distinction could be drawn between large and small family children as to incidence of physical or nervous handicaps other than that stated for the 15+ large family girl.

Were these
the poorest?

Type of school attended

The hypothesis was that the academically successful schools would take fewer pupils from large families; that the large family children would be more likely to be in older schools, in schools with fewer amenities. Only part of the hypothesis was proved. It was found that there was little significant difference between the proportion of large family and small family attending the junior schools with high 11+ success rates, (Table 12). Around a third of both groups of children were to be found in junior schools who placed 10-20% of its pupils in grammar schools, and another third, in both groups, were at schools having 21-30% success. A small percentage of both groups were in schools having rates in excess of 31%. The only distinction one can draw from these figures is that more large family children (14 in number) were in junior schools gaining less than 10% grammar places compared with (2) small family children. The majority of both groups of children were in comprehensive schools where more than 50% of pupils stayed on beyond 15, but somewhat more small family children were in comprehensive schools where more than 20% pupils went on to full time further education and a higher proportion of large family children in those where less than 10% went on to full time further education. More of the large family children were at secondary modern schools but the majority of them at schools where more than 40% of pupils were staying on beyond school

leaving age. Those large family children who were in grammar schools were nearly all in very successful schools where more than 60% went on to full time further education. In fact a higher proportion of large family grammar school pupils were in such schools than small family grammar school pupils.

Another part of the hypothesis was disproved. Only the small family infants were in more modern schools than their large family cohorts. At all the other types of schools there was little difference to be noted. Two thirds of the junior schools visited were pre-1919 and more than half the secondary schools post 1919. The secondary moderns and comprehensive inevitably had more post 1945 buildings than any other type of school. But although there was no distinct difference in the age of school the children attended the small family children tended to be at those schools which had fewest physical defects. All the schools had been asked to list defects, such as sanitation outside, substandard site, no warm water supply and so, from the Ministry of Education's list of recognised defects. The infants were again the group which differed most. Only one fifth of large family infants were at schools having none of these defects whereas over two thirds of small family infants were in such schools. One third of the junior schoolchildren were in schools with no defects but more large family pupils were in junior schools having two or more defects. Only one small family child but 16 large family children were in schools having more than three defects. If it can be presumed that it is the school with the more thrusting head teacher and management committee who get physical defects attended to then it can be suggested that the small family child is more likely to be found in these schools.

Teachers

Teachers were asked whether they were qualified, probationers or

unqualified. The very few unqualified teachers were in junior and infants schools attended by large family children.

Books

An unexpected finding was that the large family children were very much more likely to be in schools where the teacher expressed dissatisfaction with the books. Quite what significance can be attached to this is uncertain, unless perhaps it can be allied with the defects scale and this was another instance of low amenity (see table 13).

Social/welfare problems

More than a third of all the large family children were known to have social or welfare problems (105). For the 15+ large family girls the proportion rose to more than a half. Few (11 in number) of the small family children had such problems and there was no change of pattern with age. Head teachers were asked to define the cause of the problem if they could and whether they considered mother was able to cope. Poverty and multiple factors were cited as the major reasons and mother appears to be able to cope with poverty far better than she could when problems arose from many cumulative reasons. When there were multiple problems facing her, more than two thirds of the mothers were described as not being able to manage. There was only one case of a small family mother facing multiple problems and she was able to deal with them and her child was at a grammar school. Those large family children who were at grammar school were most likely to come from homes without problems; if there were problems Mum was more often able to cope than not, tables 14-15. The schools appeared to be able to manage the children's problems when they were at junior schools, but becoming less effective as the child grew older. It may well be that in the secondary school specialist teaching prevents any one teacher

were there
in the lower
income group?

what do
you mean
by multiple
factors?

having close and maintained contact with a child. Many of our case studies support this view. About half the teachers interviewed felt that the school curriculum gave them too little time to learn whether a child had a problem or not, it was only in the school where a tutor/housemaster system was in operation was it likely that enough time could be given to the individual child's problems. The head teacher had more contact with the parents (usually mother) in the infants and junior schools than in secondary modern or comprehensive schools. There was little significant difference between small family and large family contact with head teachers, only in the infants schools did small family parents have more contact. This pattern of liaison was carried through to the teacher. The only group of teachers who felt liaison with parents to be reasonably adequate were in those infants schools which our small family children attended. There was a general feeling among teachers that they had insufficient contact with the home.

Dinners

We enquired as to whether the child had dinner at school or went home, and if he stayed whether he had free dinners. Very few small family children had free dinners and more of them went home. Of the large family children at grammar school none was having free dinners. The highest proportion of free dinners was found among the large family children at special schools, 87.5%, otherwise the proportion for large family children was somewhat more than a third. Miss Land reported that 11% large family children who were entitled to free dinners did not have them. A small number of large family children were said to go home at luncheon time in order to help mother.

Clothing grants

Very few head teachers were able to express an opinion as to whether clothing grants were adequate or not. The majority admitted they simply did not know, only in the secondary moderns did the number of

having close and maintained contact with a child. Many of our case studies support this view. About half the teachers interviewed felt that the school curriculum gave them too little time to learn whether a child had a problem or not, it was only in the school where a tutor/housemaster system was in operation was it likely that enough time could be given to the individual child's problems. The head teacher had more contact with the parents (usually mother) in the infants and junior schools than in secondary modern or comprehensive schools. There was little significant difference between small family and large family contact with head teachers, only in the infants schools did small family parents have more contact. This pattern of liaison was carried through to the teachers. The only group of teachers who felt liaison with parents to be reasonably adequate were in those infants schools which our small family children attended. There was a general feeling among teachers that they had insufficient contact with the home.

Dinner

We enquired as to whether the child had dinner at school or went home, and if he stayed whether he had free dinners. Very few small family children had free dinners and none of them went home. Of the large family children, a smaller school none was having free dinners. The highest proportion of free dinners was found among the large family children at special schools, 67.3%, otherwise the proportion for large family children was somewhat more than a third. This had reported that if large family children who were entitled to free dinners did not have them, a small number of large family children were said to go home at lunchtime in order to help mother.

Other meals

Very few head teachers were able to express an opinion as to whether other meals were adequate or not. The majority admitted they simply did not know, only in the secondary moderns did the number of

heads thinking them adequate rise to 25%. Generally it was considered that grants or other material aid went to those children who appeared the most poorly clad. Nearly half the poorly clad secondary school large family children had received either a grant or material aid.

the poorest?

General information on the schools

The majority of the schools were in working-class neighbourhoods. More than a third of the schools described the catchment area from which they drew their pupils as entirely working class, over half as mainly working class with some proportion of middle class and barely a tenth as mainly middle class. Of the schools in middle-class areas the majority were in the outcounty authorities. There were very few schools with less than 200 pupils but those that were this small had twice as many of our large family children as small family. For the rest of the schools were spread over a range having from 300 to 1,000 pupils, the comprehensive schools, as one could expect, being in the majority of those with more than 1,000 pupils. More of the schools were under-occupied than overcrowded, only 15% were overcrowded and of these the majority had less than a tenth too many pupils in the space available. Nearly half of all schools had sanitation outside and large family infants were even less likely to have their lavatories inside. Once again the infants of the small family fared better, only a third of them were in schools without indoor sanitation compared to more than two thirds large family infants.

Stability of school population

The majority of schools considered their school population to be relatively stable. One third having low mobility, one third usual mobility, one third had to contend with high turnover rates. The junior schools had the highest mobility rates and the grammar schools the lowest but there was no distinction to be found between large family

and small family children, 40% of both groups were at highly mobile junior schools.

Immigrant

A quarter of the junior schools had more than ten per cent immigrant pupils, another quarter more than 30%. The grammar schools had hardly any, and the other secondary schools a proportion somewhere between 10% and 30%. Of the immigrant pupils the majority spoke English but for the children who did not we found that the schools were largely left to cope with the problem themselves. Half the schools with non-English speaking immigrants did not make any special arrangements for the children, leaving them to pick up the language as they went along, the other half arranged special reading classes. In only a very few local authorities did the borough itself provide special reading sessions and in these instances the children would visit a reading centre for certain periods, as part of their school curriculum. Many head teachers were perturbed by the lack of local authority facilities and would have liked a specially trained teacher to visit the school to take these children for one or two periods a week. One headmaster said he and his teachers used mime, which he demonstrated by jumping onto his desk and acting out a typical performance. It was impressive but one wonders if it did more than relieve tension for the staff and children concerned.

Equipment

Most of the schools were well equipped having both film and still projectors, radio, T.V., record players and tape recorders, only the infants schools lacking some of these. Most of the schools had used their equipment during the preceding month.

P.T.A.

The overwhelming majority of schools did not have a P.T.A., only the grammar and comprehensive schools having them to any extent at all. Most

head teachers claimed that a P.T.A. was unnecessary, as there was ample provision for parents to meet the staff on open days or by appointment. Nearly a fifth of comprehensive heads were openly opposed to the idea, their response to the question being "We run the school". Some heads feared they would be likely to have only the "wrong type of parent" on such an association and quite a number feared there would be little response even if they proposed forming a P.T.A. The general impression being that most heads preferred to carry on without a P.T.A. if they could avoid having one. On the other hand where a P.T.A. was in existence many heads spoke highly of the, both as liaison links and as fund-raiding bodies, which drew staff and parents closer together.

In summary this investigation into the educational experience of children in large families reveals the extent to which they were at a disadvantage compared to the small family children.

Of our 285 large family children 105 children were said by their schools to be suffering from some social or welfare problem whilst only 11 of our 86 small family children were in such a situation. In itself this is enough to bear out the contention of one teacher that "there is no equality for children". The problems were rarely attributed to one specific cause. More than a fifth of children with a social welfare problem were said to be affected by a complexity of problems. Poverty, poor housing and underlying problems (ill health in the family) but the inability of mother to cope with a multiple problem situation was perhaps even more significant. Whilst at junior school the child could to some extent be bolstered by the stability of school life, contact between the parents (usually mother) and the head teacher was closer at primary school and many heads were able to give a comprehensive picture of the family and its problems. Heads were aware that the child's work was suffering as a result of the home background but rarely felt they were able to counterbalance this influence effectually.

There was no single instance where a head said this child is intelligent and despite his problems we will make sure he stays in an upper stream.

Only when mother was felt to ~~overcome home difficulties~~ be coping herself to overcome home difficulties, occasionally a child would be was it considered that a child could have a chance of making progress, despite problems, but this would be the child with a very high I.Q. and as other studies have suggested the very intelligent child will make the grade regardless of circumstances. In this study one very intelligent girl had gained a grammar school place despite a very adverse home background but had later been transferred to a secondary

What does
this mean
exactly

how do you
(and the teachers)
define coping.

well fed and
well dressed?
or
well-behaved
children

modern school and this case is described in our case studies. The average, or less than average ability child in a problem situation appears to conform to a pattern. A pattern of the under privileged child. He or she will be likely to be poorly dressed, be placed in a lower stream or in the unstreamed school be considered an unlikely candidate for a grammar school place. A child in such circumstances, even if seen as a voracious reader and one of potentially high ability can yet be described by his headmaster as "unlikely to go to grammar school".

Head teachers in junior schools were often prepared to be helpful in so far as this involved providing material aid in the form of clothing or making themselves available to mother when they would be willing to pfer advice. In fact many heads gave the impression of being positively matriarchal but few felt they had the power or the resources to give these children additional help to enable them to achieve their potential. Yet despite this concern for the child's social situation, many teachers and some head teachers had no knowledge of what possible grants were available to the children. While recognising the individual's difficulty there was a general unwillingness to regard this as poverty requiring resources.

At secondary school the large family child with a problem background appears to conform to a similar pattern and in addition he or she is left more isolated. The junior school may not ~~he~~ have been able to push him very far academically but there was some chance for the child to form a social relationship with the teacher taking him for all subjects. At secondary school, specialist teaching deprives the deprived child of this stability. At this age mother finds it increasingly hard to manage the familial problems and exert control over the child. Very often this results in attendance dropping off and the child's work

deteriorating. The child may become deviant and a problem himself. A general pattern appeared in the survey where a child in this situation had been a fairly regular attender at junior school but became a poor attender shortly after entering secondary school. The same child may not have been involved in any personal misdemeanours in or out of school whilst a junior but begins to be so at secondary school. Often in those ~~extra~~ instances where the large family child was in personal trouble, brought before a court or placed on probation, the school would blame it on lack of parental control. In some cases father was known to be a long distance lorry driver or working night shifts and ~~that~~ it ~~was~~ was left to mother to supervise the children. Yet the tables show that when the large family child is a member of a family facing many problems it is even less likely that mother manages. If neither parent is able to exert effective control it is very unlikely that the secondary school situation will provide an alternative form of control. A very few schools of those visited had evolved systems especially intended to help the child with problems. As shown in one of the case studies a school can go to great trouble in an attempt to bolster such children but even in the extreme case cited the elaborate care of house-masters and co-operating welfare officers was of little effective help. The school felt powerless to help a child in a multiple problem situation but hoped that it could detect a personal problem early enough to be able to bring in assistance whilst there was still a chance to prevent the child becoming deviant. The small family child may have familial problems but is unlikely to have a multiplicity of problems. It is not surprising that the small family child was found to be pulling away at secondary level and nearly twice as likely to be making progress. It is not only the large family child with a problem who fares less well at school. The two thirds of the large family children who

were not known to have a specific social or welfare problem were still at a disadvantage. The large family children who were good attenders stood a higher chance of making progress but they were less likely than the small family children to be the good attenders. Illness was somewhat higher among the large family children, particularly the infant girls and those aged over 15 and although there was little to distinguish them from small family children in the number suffering specified physical or nervous defects they were often said by heads and teachers to be children needing most attention. A head would be unwilling to say the child had an actual nervous defect but would hesitate to describe him/her as absolutely normal. Teachers would confirm this by describing the child as one demanding a lot of affection. This seems to reinforce the Waldrup and Bell findings that the large family children seek more contact and this may be due to both congenital factors and lack of maternal availability.

Truancy was evident among all ages of large family children reaching its peak with the boys still at school past 15, when nearly a third were said to be truanting. Rarely was a small family child thought to be truanting, in nearly all cases of absence it was due to bona fide illness. Truancy was often accompanied by a history of personal misdemeanour and invariably with a deterioration of school work. In the few cases where a large family child had been demoted from an upper to a lower stream the reason was always said to be due to frequent absences. If mother was unable to cope with home difficulties it was unlikely that she could prevent the child from truanting. On the other hand a child could truant for personal reasons and mother could be the one that brought him back.

The infants stand out as being the most obviously distinct group. In J. Douglas's "The Home and the Child" it was considered that by 8 years

old the size of family had already exerted its influence and this study bears this out. The small family infant was very much more likely to be in a modern infants school, or if not at least in one with fewest physical defects. They were nearly three times as likely to be making good progress as the large family infant. Half of them were reading normally compared to only a fifth of large family infants. In a recent report ~~sent~~ for the National Foundation for educational research Dr. Joyce Morris stated that "poor readers with the greatest number of personal handicaps not only come from the least propitious homes but also have the most unsatisfactory primary schooling". It was found that the small family child was very much more likely to be in schools where teachers expressed satisfaction with the books available to them. Given that our control group of small families had been carefully chosen to come from similar neighbourhoods it suggests that the small family mother faced with a choice of local infants schools does not necessarily choose the nearest, as so many large family mothers indicated they had, but looks for the school

she knows or has been told has both physical and academic advantages. Thus the small family infant starts his school career, with fewer familial problems, with a higher chance of adequate mothering and with the likelihood of pulling away from his large family cohort from the word go. The child that is reading well and making progress is more likely to be placed in an upper stream of the junior school and the pattern of advantage over the large family child is established. The small family infant is also less likely to be away from school. Large family girls at the infant stage in particular were more than twice as often away ill as small family girls.

Given that the small family child commences school at a distinct advantage over the large family child it is not difficult to see why he is likely to retain this advantage. Even if the large family child is not in a "problem" situation various factors reinforce each other which together act to his detriment and disadvantage. He is more likely to be in poverty, hence more likely to be poorly dressed and the negative 'halo effect' or association established between assessment of clothing, streaming and progress suggests that his actual ability may be only a partial determinant of his achievement.

Teachers

The majority of teachers felt that they had insufficient time to learn of any problems a child may have. Only if a problem was outstandingly obvious or if the head deliberately brought them into the picture were they able to know much of the child's background. Many teachers felt that they should not probe into the child's home life, in the belief that this ensured that they would treat the child without partiality. Some teachers complained that the head preferred to deal with problems themselves and even if a child had been sent to the child psychologist they were not given any information such as the diagnostic