

Baby Day Camp of the Providence District Nursing Association.*

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The care of the sick baby in summer in the homes of the poor is a problem in every city, and if the baby must be artificially fed, the difficulty is greatly increased.

Even in the cities where there is ample hospital accommodation, the problem is not solved; for while the hospital cures, it does not prevent illness, and it is well known how often a child is returned to an ignorant mother, only at once to fall a victim to the same disorder of which it has just been cured at the hospital. This has been seen too often to be ignored, and the social worker connected with the hospital, the district nurse, and others doing work among children, are striving to bring about a new order of things, and by education of the mother to strike at the root of the matter.

All visiting nurses, however, know the hopelessness of entering a house, ready primed to teach milk modification and to preach fresh air and cleanliness, when they find a dirty, stuffy house, an impossible back yard, and a mother who certainly may be taught, but with whom the process will undoubtedly be a prolonged one. The question is, will the baby live while we educate the mother, for death does not await the convenience of others.

In some cities there are special arrangements to meet just this situation, places where the mother can take her baby for the day, and where skilled care will be given it.

In other cities there is nothing, except the already overtaxed children's wards of the hospitals, where in all probability the beds will be full of children more acutely ill.

Copying, though in a smaller and less expensive way, the Baby Day Camps of Chicago, of which we first learned at the Visiting Nurse Conference, a day camp was started in Providence.

Some of the details of our modest effort may be of use to other visiting nurses, who, if they are to do anything of the sort at all, must do it economically.

A lady offered us her beautiful grounds, with a summer house and a broad shady piazza, also the use of the gas stove and telephone. The family was to be out of town for the greater part of the summer, and the house left in charge of servants. It was ideally

situated for our purpose on the edge of one of the most congested parts of the city. The same lady also gave us \$100 toward equipment and running expenses. Beds, bottles, bottle racks and ice-chest were loaned to us. In buying the simple equipment the temptation to get "hospital supplies" was withstood, and only such articles purchased as could be afforded by the poorest mother, for the whole object of our scheme was to teach the mothers by example, and demonstration, what they themselves could do for their babies.

The ticks were stuffed with straw, which could be readily removed, the measuring cups, pitchers, etc., were of agateware, the long table was covered with enamel cloth, the rubber nipples were kept in glass preserve jars; everything, in short, though scrupulously clean, was such as might be found in any home, for we hoped that the whole might prove valuable as an object lesson.

It was decided to limit ourselves to ten beds, so that the nurse might have time for instructing and talking with the mothers. We engaged a nurse with good experience in baby work, and we also engaged an assistant, a public school teacher, with an aptitude for babies, who was glad to use her vacation in this way, and who did excellent work under the nurse's guidance.

The District Nursing Association had added to the staff three special nurses, for the summer months, to do advisory work with children, and to these nurses was given the responsibility of sending in the babies.

One of the younger doctors took medical charge of the camp, and a large amount of its success has been due to his devotion to it, to his willingness to follow up the babies at home, and to his talks with the mothers.

The mothers brought the babies at half-past eight in the morning (on Sunday as well as on week days), having first bathed them at home. They brought with them enough clean diapers for the day. Of course, real diapers were rarely seen, but the stipulation that the clothes must be clean and not washed with naphtha soap was insisted upon. On arrival the babies were undressed and a night-gown put on, their clothes being kept clean to wear home.

The milk was modified every morning for the twenty-four hour feedings, to meet the requirements of each baby, according to the doctor's orders, and at night every mother carried away with her the bottles needed for the night, paying for all five cents a day. The soiled diapers were also taken home to be washed, heavy paper bags being provided for the purpose. The articles used for each child

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