

**OUTLINES OF CHILD
STUDY A MANUAL FOR
PARENTS AND TEACHERS**

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Outlines of child study A manual for Parents and Teachers by Benjamin C. Gruenberg

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BENJAMIN C. GRUENBERG

**OUTLINES OF CHILD
STUDY A MANUAL FOR
PARENTS AND TEACHERS**

Child Study Association of America

OUTLINES OF CHILD STUDY

A Manual for Parents
and Teachers

EDITED BY
BENJAMIN C. GRUENBERG
FOR
THE FEDERATION FOR CHILD STUDY
WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY
EDWARD L. THORNDIKE



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TO
BIRD STEIN GANS
WHOSE INSPIRATION AND UNTIRING DEVOTION
MADE POSSIBLE THE EXISTENCE AND
CONTINUED GROWTH OF
THE FEDERATION FOR CHILD STUDY
THIS BOOK IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED
BY HER FELLOW WORKERS

INTRODUCTION

It is a privilege to introduce to those unacquainted with it one aspect of the work of the Federation for Child Study. Of all the organizations which have sought to stimulate parents to study and know their children, the Federation has had probably the most experience. For over a score of years its leaders have been guiding the reading and discussion of groups of parents and teachers, but especially of parents. Upon their experience are based these Outlines of Child Study. The arrangement is topical; and each topic is presented by (1) a statement of the general state of knowledge of the topic, (2) an outline which lists the detailed facts and problems concerning which there is information available, and (3) a list of helpfully graded references, ranging from attractive popular articles to technical monographs.

The treatment is comprehensive, both in the topics chosen and in the outline and references for each. Especially valuable are the sections on concrete aspects of human behavior, such as Toys, Manners, The Use of Money, Pets and Plants, and Hobbies, which the ordinary manuals of Child Study have relatively neglected. The treatment is modern; mental tests, psycho-analysis and the conditioned reflex receiving due (some conservative critics may think, undue) attention, and recent work in all lines being considered.

Suitable connections with the general sciences of human nature are made so that the student who follows the Outlines for any dozen or so of topics is almost certain to be made acquainted with representative scientific work in biology, psychology and sociology.

Many earnest parents and teachers will use this book and thank The Federation for Child Study and Dr. Gruenberg for it.

EDWARD L. THORNDIKE.

PREFACE

Every thoughtful person who has to deal with children comes sooner or later to realize that most of his acts, as well as most of the children's acts, arise, at least in part, from blind impulse. Some of these acts we recognize to be, if not harmful or foolish, at least futile or irrelevant. But, since we believe that whatever we do for the child or to the child should have a purpose in relation to his education, his development, his adjustment, we are driven by considerations of self-esteem to justify our conduct — to rationalize it, as the psychiatrists say — by attributing to it some approved purpose. We say, for example, that punishment, often but a manifestation of bad temper, is designed to teach the child a lesson; we say that our dismissal of the importunate questioner is for the purpose of teaching him to be considerate of busy people, and so on. The Federation for Child Study takes the position that we must make deliberate and systematic effort to replace impulse with purpose in all our dealings with children. We ought to know what we are driving at, we ought to know how our ends are to be achieved; we should not be content merely to carry on, merely to drive, for that is futile, and often pernicious.

Every attempt to substitute rational treatment of children for rationalized impulse raises the question of what is sound practise. And in no field are there more controversial issues. Here everybody feels free

to have opinions and nobody hesitates to give expression to his own. And with so many opinions to draw upon, so many that are supported by reputable names, it is very easy to continue upon our impulsive careers unchecked, for we have simply to claim that we are following this or that set of "methods" to make our conduct appear calculated and purposeful, not to say "scientific." The Federation has undertaken to separate usable knowledge from mere opinion. This does not mean that opinions can be wholly disregarded, for they cannot. Vast as is the accumulation of *facts* concerning the nature of the child, there are many questions about him that cannot to-day be definitely answered. The point is, first, to make use of such knowledge as is available, and second, to recognize where knowledge is lacking and where, therefore, we are using the best judgments to be had.

Finally, we recognize that between the child and his mentors there is always and everywhere — and necessarily — more or less friction. How much of this is inherent in the nature of man and of his young, and how much of it is potentially within the control of intelligence, we do not know; but we are led to hope that it is not *entirely* unavoidable by observing the experience of those who do actually manage to live with growing children under conditions of peace and friendship. The Federation for Child Study has assumed that responsibility for reducing this friction to a minimum rests with the elders, and that an essential element in dealing with the difficulties is a sympathetic understanding by them of the younger folks.

The aims of the Federation may thus be sum-