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The Institute for Child Health  
Hecksher Foundation for Children.

The number of children showing physical and mental defects due to preventible ante-natal and post-natal influences is well known. In a large cosmopolitan city like New York the proportion of such defectives is enormous, both absolutely and relatively. While many social agencies, including the Health Department, have made strenuous efforts to arouse interest in the possibility of preventing these defects, there has been a feeling among those qualified to render an opinion that a central organization is indispensable in this city if prophylaxis and cure of physical and functional deviations from the norm is to be carried out effectively. It may be said that the child in this city has profited least from the recent medical achievements. Appreciating this long-felt need Mr. August Hecksher has established The Institute for Child Health.

The first aim of this Institute will be to recognize that a child has a right to be well born. The modern teaching of eugenics have given us sufficient knowledge which can be applied in the prenatal care of the generation to come. This Institute will have a division which will advise prospective parents in the prevention of the transmission of unfavorable hereditary traits. It will guide pregnant mothers along the line of modern hygiene with a view of preventing unfavorable prenatal influences. It will follow up the care of prospective mothers so that children may come into the world healthy.

The infant needs special care and proper regulation of feeding to enable it to grow and develop without halt. It is the most difficult period of adjustment to environmental influences. Recent medical advances



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have demonstrated the benefits of early recognition and treatment of physical deviations from the normal baby. Modern nutrition has revealed methods of preventing the development of deficiency diseases. The Institute will have a division which will advise mothers in the care and feeding of infants. It will recognize potential disturbances in infants and aim at their alleviation. It will teach mothers along the lines of modern dietetics to perfect the methods of feeding. It will aim to eliminate any of the visible manifestations of nutritional deficiency in infancy.

The growing child requires constant supervision to prevent the development of physical and mental defects. Early childhood is the delicate age of greatest susceptibility to disease. It is the formative period of maximum mental growth and development of life habits. Recent medical progress offers effective methods of preventing disease and correcting developmental defectiveness. The Institute will have a division which will immunize children against infectious diseases. It will regulate their feeding to prevent anemia, dental caries and malnutrition. It will recognize physical and functional deviations from the norm and supervise their correction. It will detect deviations in personality development and advise adjustments. It will offer health education to parent and teacher to interest all in the proper prevention of ill health.

While the community appreciates the value of child health children must be examined periodically and their physical and mental defects alleviated by constant supervision if the methods of modern medicine are to be applied to childhood. Unless all the needs of infancy and child-



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Hood are fulfilled by a single organization the status of child health cannot be better guarded.

The Institute will be organized to render medical service involving every aspect of child growth and development. It will arrange lectures, demonstration, exhibits, plays and the like for children, parents and teachers, disseminate knowledge on everyday health. It will invite the leaders of preventive medicine to cooperate with the physicians of the city for the promotion of health and prevention of disease in infancy and childhood.