

SPOILED CHILD TOPIC OF KAWIN DISCOURSE

Juvenile Research Expert Addresses Large Audience at Winnetka Woman's Club

Miss Ethel Kawin, director of the Pre-School branch of the Chicago Institute of Juvenile Research, spoke to an audience of more than 200 people on March 8, at the second session of the March series of Child Study Conferences being conducted by the Winnetka Woman's club. The substance of Miss Kawin's analysis of the problem of the spoiled child was as follows:

"It would be interesting, in approaching the subject of the spoiled child, to follow the by-paths of social philosophy into which it leads, but there is no time to pursue this alluring task. However, it is assumed that any treatment of the subject is dependent upon the particular social philosophy that one holds. We will consider the subject from three standpoints today. First, what is a spoiled child? Second, why are almost all parents in danger of spoiling their children? Third, how may parents avoid spoiling their children?"

What Is Spoiled Child?

"First, then, let us turn to the question, What is a 'spoiled child'? The Webster definition, 'to vitiate, destroy, ruin,' is helpful, but not adequate for our purpose. Assuming that the goals we desire in child training are the development of the child's own personality in a continuous adjustment to the social group, it seems plain that the spoiled child has two outstanding characteristics:—first, he cannot make a good adjustment to any situation in which he does not have his own way; second, he cannot get along well with others. It is well to remind ourselves that we cannot define a spoiled child merely as 'one who gets what he wants, for if the child's purposes are sufficiently social this would be commendable achievement. But if the child demands what he wants, regardless of others, then he is spoiled. Frances Wicks, in her book, 'The Inner World of Childhood' says, apropos of this,—'To be psychologically adult one must have found an individualized way of life, as distinct from the pursuit of collective standards,—and yet this individualization must be socially motivated. This means conscious control of attitudes in a continually evolving process.' Alfred Adler considers the question from his general viewpoint of the problem-child being a victim of a conflict between the egoistic and social tendencies within the self. To him the spoiled child is one who has lost social feeling, and who, in order to satisfy his craving for superiority, is procuring satisfaction in unsocial, and therefore useless, ways. Doctor Adler considers the following points characteristic of a spoiled child:

1. Disorderliness.
2. Anxiety, if left alone.
3. Cowardliness in many situations.
4. Enuresis.
5. Lack of concentration and distractibility.
6. A fighting attitude toward parents, expressing itself sometimes in an attack upon the parents' weakest spot, sometimes in an unconscious effort to hurt the parents in attacking points most valued by them.
7. Temper outbursts, or sulking. This is apt to indicate that the child feels inferior, and since he does not feel sure of himself, he is trying to terrify others.
8. Special ability to meet people well often indicates that the individual was a spoiled child, for this ability may be the outcome of intense effort to gain social approval!

"With this conception of a spoiled child in mind let us turn then, to the

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