

How 'Goodies' Help Behavior Problems Of State Home Kids

By KATHY MORAN

If good behavior came in flavors instead of patterns, chocolate would be the favorite at Plymouth State Home and Training School. Chocolate and other sweets are the tasty rewards for good behavior at the Northville Township institution — and the treats make the children actually want to behave. The institution houses mentally retarded children.

Children with the severe behavior problems are learning to dress themselves, stop throwing temper tantrums and avoid causing fights simply because they can earn "goodies" by being good and are ignored when they cause trouble.

OPERATING WITH the simple premise that good behavior — not bad — should be rewarded, Paul MacCormack and other officials from PSH are helping children form behavior patterns suitable for living in the community.

Though Joey doesn't realize it, he learned to dress himself through positive reinforcement. After every difficult step of dressing he was given candy and, more importantly, attention.

And now Amy feeds herself instead of throwing the spoon on the floor because she earned attention and candy while learning the motions of brushing the spoon to her mouth.

Both children are among the more than 100 from the institution who had severe behavior problems and were selected for the "behavior analysis and therapy" (BAT) program.

Since it was started in October of 1970, the program has been opened to community children. So far, 30 have participated in it along with their parents.

Any parents of retarded children living at home can apply for admission to the program. Children are selected for the program based on their behavior problem.

ALL THE CHILDREN have behavior problems — but the community children have the advantage of having parents who can be taught the behavior modification approach and then individually cared for, MacCormack said.

Children from the institution can improve their behavior after participation in the intensive program. But then they have to return to the wards where they become one of a group of children again and lack the intensive attention.

When the children are selected for the behavior modification program, they are grouped according to size, rather than age so smaller children aren't threatened by the larger ones.

"Once they are put on the BAT ward, they are observed, their problems are identified, and then they are put on the "token plan."

If a child must learn to dress himself, he is given candy — an immediate reward — for accomplishing the many little steps involved in putting on a shirt or pair of pants.

If the child constantly fights and bites his peers, he is segregated from the group, and his bad behavior is ignored rather than reinforced by attention from the attendant or doctor.

The same is true for a child who throws temper tantrums.

SOON THEY learn that the way to win attention is to behave.

The behavior modification theory is also being applied to the more serious cases of children who abuse themselves. Both MacCormack and Dr. Henry Corte, PSH psychologist, say that some children begin abusing themselves as a way to get attention — and not necessarily because of misanthropic tendencies.

Reversing that pattern is difficult and sometimes the positive reward system fails.

As a last resort the therapist will use small doses of electric shock to discourage the self-abuse. The shock is not at all like the "shock therapy" used years ago.

In those times, the shock was intense and traveled through the person's body. Now it is used in mild doses and it only travels through a one-inch span between the two prongs attached to the skin.

THE SMALL, battery-operated shock is attached to

Regional Affairs



PROGRAM DIRECTOR Dorothy Mayes spreads her attention among all the children, including this one whose self-abusiveness is being corrected through the program. (Observer photo)

SC Dean Is On Committee

Fred Stefanski, Schoolcraft College dean of arts and sciences, has been elected vice chairman of the Michigan Engineering - Community College Liaison Committee, which held its charter meeting in Traverse City in May.

The organization has been formed to coordinate engineering programs throughout Michigan so that students who take their first two years of engineering in community colleges may transfer to any of the state's four - year engineering colleges as juniors with the maximum amount of credit.

Representatives from the 29 public community colleges, nine engineering colleges, and the State Board of Education constitute the committee.

Serving with Stefanski are Dr. William J. David, assistant dean of engineering at Wayne State University, chairman; and Dr. John Polomsky, Michigan State University College of Engineering, secretary.

Antique Show Opens June 15

Collectors will have an opportunity to view and purchase a wide variety of wares at the seventh annual University - Leggett antique show to be held June 15-17 at the Leggett Campus, 850 Briarcliff Drive, Grosse Pointe Woods.

New Canoe Rules Are Toned Down

The Department of Natural Resources' proposed river-use rules for troubled stretches of the Au Sable, Manistee, Pine, and Pere Marquette rivers were unanimously approved this week with several problem-solving changes by a joint legislative committee on administrative rules.

Despite the committee's action, the measures remain blocked from taking effect until at least the end of July under a restraining order which was issued several weeks ago in Lake County Circuit Court.

The injunction against the rules stays in force through July 27-28, at which time a trial hearing will be held in that court to chart the next course of action on the much-discussed regulations.

IN THE MEANTIME, terms of the restraining order will enable the DNR to take further steps to meet administrative requirements for implementing the rules as they were passed this week by the joint legislative committee.

This means the DNR could have the measures ready to take immediate effect if and when they clear the court and several checkpoints under the state's administrative procedures system.

Under that system, the rules now must go to the governor's office for a minimum 10-day period of review, and then be filed with the secretary of state for 15 additional days.

AS APPROVED by the legislative committee, one of the major changes in the rules calls for a three-year "phasing-down" of daily watercraft permit quotas covering the main stream and south branch of the Au Sable River during weekends and holidays from the last Saturday of April through Labor Day.

Under this adjusted plan, the daily permit quota for the main stream from Grayling Pond Dam (US-27) down to Wakeley Bridge would be set at 150 for this year. It would be scaled down to 250 watercraft permits in 1973 and then be leveled off to 150 permits in 1974 and each year after that.

The DNR had proposed restricting the main stream's permit quota to 150 during Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, starting with this season.

THE ROAD Commission, responsible for operation of the Detroit-Wayne County Metropolitan Airport, needs an affirmative action minority employment program to qualify for government funds dispensed by the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA).

It is also required to have a permit totals covering the south branch of the Au Sable from Chase Bridge down to Smith Bridge.

As such, the permit quota for those waters would be established at 200 for this year and rolled back to 150 in 1973. In 1974 and each year thereafter, it would stand at 100, the level which the DNR had recommended for this season.

Dropped under another major change was the proposed time restriction which would have limited the daily use of watercraft to the 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. period on permit-controlled sections of the four northern Michigan streams.

Action was also taken to raise from two to five the number of seasonal watercraft permits that will be available for use by members and guests of non-profit clubs, which hold frontage along sections of the streams designated for permit quotas.

AS A NEW feature of the DNR's proposed rules, the committee added a provision which will enable each river guide to obtain one seasonal permit for traditional "longboat" or "riverboat" use on permit-controlled parts of the Au Sable, Manistee, Pine and Pere Marquette.

Another accommodation in the DNR's recommended regulations was made by adding a measure which will permit the use of non-motorized watercraft on Shellenbarger Creek between Shellenbarger Lake and the main stream of the Au Sable.

That liberalized change was adopted so that members of a Seventh Day Adventists organization may reach the main stream from their club headquarters on Shellenbarger Lake.

DNR officials, in reflecting upon all of these changes, credit the legislative committee for doing a thorough, first-class job of ironing out troublesome points in their recommended set of regulations.

"Frankly," notes a DNR spokesman, "the committee put its finger on those sections of our rules which were causing the most problems and controversy. We believe the committee has come up with some very fair and honest solutions to those problems, and we endorse its changes 100 per cent."

Minority Job Plan Hits Snag

The Wayne County Board of Commissioners has named a special coordinating committee to help implement a minority employment program in the County Road Commission.

Creation of the committee was agreed upon during a meeting at which union representatives complained that an affirmative action program adopted recently by the Road Commission conflicts, in some respects, with the seniority provisions of its labor contracts.

The Road Commission plan sets a five-year goal for increasing its non-white employment until it equals the 27 per cent proportion of minority population in Wayne County.

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It is also required to have a specific program for hiring and upgrading minority employees as a result of action by the Board of Commissioners.

In March the commissioners directed all county departments to submit an affirmative action program with detailed plans of operation.

The Road Commission proposal is the first submitted, and the first to come under review of the special coordinating committee.

Heilner Will Direct Ads

Real Estate One announced the appointment of Ronald J. Heilner to direct its advertising department.

Heilner has experience as a nationally published writer, a graphic arts specialist for the government, and several years in advertising, promotion and public relations. His educational background is in marketing, advertising, psychology and sociology.

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