

Problems of Child Care in Prolonged Hospitalization

A discussion of child care practices which help children to hold their own under the stress of prolonged hospitalization.

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PROBLEMS OF CHILD CARE HOSPITALIZATION

Emma N. Plank

Assistant Professor of Child Development
Department of Pediatrics
School of Medicine
Western Reserve University
Cleveland, Ohio

THE problems inherent in child care outside the family become highlighted most dramatically when a hospital has to take over child care functions, especially when, as so often happens, no preparation is possible.¹ In addition to the illness itself and to separation, the traumatic experience of some hospital procedures, whether the child is subjected to them himself or is merely an onlooker and suffers in fantasy, complicates his adjustment. All this is intensified in long hospitalization. Further problems arise when a child who is ready for discharge has to stay on because of family breakdown during his illness, or because factors of neglect have come to light through the illness and placement has to be planned.

The Child Care Worker's Role

We use the term "child care worker" to refer to a person on the clinical team who is responsible for the children at play or in the

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