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PERSISTENCE OF EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE REPORTED AMONG SECOND  
AND FOURTH GRADE CHILDREN. INTERIM REPORT NO. 1.  
NEW YORK STATE DEPT. OF MENTAL HYGIENE, SYRACUSE  
ONONDAGA COUNTY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSN., SYRACUSE, N.Y.

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CHARACTERISTICS, ONONDAGA COUNTY, NEW YORK,

A 4-YEAR FOLLOWUP STUDY WAS DESIGNED TO IDENTIFY EARLY  
SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCES IN CHILDREN AND TO DESCRIBE  
THOSE THAT PERSIST LONG ENOUGH TO BECOME SERIOUS PROBLEMS.  
FINDINGS CONCERNING CHILDREN WHO IN 1961 WERE IN THE SECOND  
AND FOURTH GRADES OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN ONONDAGA COUNTY,  
NEW YORK (EXCEPT IN SYRACUSE) SUGGEST THAT THE MAJORITY OF  
EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCES AMONG YOUNG SCHOOL CHILDREN DO NOT  
PERSIST MORE THAN 2 YEARS. THE 6,788 FOURTH AND SIXTH GRADE  
CHILDREN WHO ADVANCED TWO GRADES BETWEEN 1961 AND 1963  
REPRESENT 81.9 PERCENT OF THOSE SURVEYED IN 1961. IN 1961,  
515 CHILDREN WERE DESIGNATED BY THEIR CLASSROOM TEACHERS AS  
EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED, AND 160 OF THESE WERE DESCRIBED IN THE  
SAME WAY IN 1963. THERE WAS NO SIGNIFICANT VARIATION BY GRADE  
OR SEX. ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION, THESE CHILDREN WERE ALSO  
DESIGNATED AS PROBLEMS IN THE CLASSROOM. STATISTICAL ANALYSES  
SUGGEST A CLUSTERING IN URBAN AREAS OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS  
RANKING HIGH IN THE PROPORTION OF CHILDREN REPORTED  
EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED. A SECOND FOLLOWUP STUDY WILL BE  
CONDUCTED IN 1965. CHARACTERISTICS OF PROBLEM BEHAVIOR AND  
EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED BEHAVIOR ARE DESCRIBED AS WELL AS EARLY  
INDICATORS OF EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE. FIVE TABLES AND A MAP  
ACCOMPANY THE TEXT OF THE STUDY. (TE)

ED018892

# *Onondaga County School Studies*

Interim Report No. 1

Persistence of Emotional Disturbances Reported Among  
Second and Fourth Grade Children

**MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH UNIT**

N. Y. STATE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HYGIENE  
STATE OFFICE BUILDING  
SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

IN COOPERATION WITH THE

**ONONDAGA COUNTY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE  
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Onondaga County School Studies

Interim Report No. 1

Persistence of Emotional Disturbances Reported  
Among Second and Fourth-Grade Children

In 1961, a follow-up study of children in the second, fourth, and sixth grades of the public schools in Onondaga County, exclusive of Syracuse, was initiated by the Mental Health Research Unit of the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene in cooperation with the Onondaga County School Boards Association <sup>1/</sup>. The findings reported here are a small part of the complete study, which is planned as a series of three

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<sup>1/</sup> Initially the study received financial support from a grant made by the Community Mental Health Services Division of the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene to the Onondaga County School Boards Association. Continued support for the follow-up phases of the study is being received from NIMH Grant 01030-02 to the Mental Health Research Unit, New York State Department of Mental Hygiene, Syracuse, New York.

The project is under the immediate direction of Dr. John Cumming and Isabel McCaffrey, Director and biostatistician, respectively, of the Mental Health Research Unit. Other members of the permanent research staff are: Barbara Pausley, Jeannette DeLongo, Charles Eysaman, Susan Rice, and Mary Ann Thompson.

The project is being carried out under the general guidance of an advisory committee composed of representatives of various disciplines selected from the schools of Onondaga County. It includes: E.H. Beebe (Chairman), Rieta Balmer, John Calvert, Mary Ellen Clark, Phillip J. Falise, Rose Giambronne, Arthur Hobday, Lee Rising, Harriet Rowell, and Theodore Stewart.

Special acknowledgment is made to the teachers, administrative, and other school personnel who have actively participated and supported the work of the research staff.

surveys at two-year intervals. The first and second surveys are completed; the third is scheduled to be done in 1965.

In each survey, teachers are interviewed and asked to designate and describe (1) children who present problems of any kind in the classroom, and (2) children who might be considered emotionally disturbed <sup>2/</sup>.

The purpose of the follow-up surveys is to identify early signs of emotional disturbances and to describe those that persist long enough to become serious problems. These persistent emotional disturbances are of particular interest because they presumably are the ones not reached or adequately helped by existing services.

Other studies have suggested that surveys of children might expect to find that five to ten per cent manifest signs of emotional disturbances, but little more is known about these children or the range of services needed to help them. It is to be expected that some of the emotional disturbances reported in single surveys will subside within relatively short periods of time, have little need for special services, and leave no telltale marks. Others, however, will progress to firmly fixed patterns of disturbed behavior and accumulations of failures in academic and social accomplishments. Hopefully, a better understanding of the origin and development of disturbed behavior and other problems will suggest not only ways in which services now seem to be deficient but also the kinds of children most in need of new or modified services.

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<sup>2/</sup> The reasoning which led to the choice of teachers as the primary source of information in this study has been included in a preliminary report published in October, 1961.

## **FOLLOW-UP OF PROBLEM CHILDREN IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

**Onondaga County, Exclusive of Syracuse City  
1961 - 1965**

The agency responsible for the conduct of the research is the New York State Mental Health Research Unit, located in the State Office Building in Syracuse. The project, however, is guided by a committee of representatives from the administrative, teaching and pupil personnel services of the public schools.

### **OBJECTIVE:**

The Onondaga County School Boards Association instigated the research when its members sought an answer to the following question:

"How many public school children appear to be 'neglected' in the sense that they do not receive all the help they could use in trying to overcome handicapping conditions which interfere with their intellectual and social development?"

Since the answer to this important question could not be found in existing data, a special research project was proposed and the Mental Health Research Unit agreed to the use of its research staff and facilities to assist in carrying it out. Subsequent support also has been received from a federal grant-in-aid.

### **DESIGN AND PROCEDURES:**

The design of the project employs a line of reasoning which is implicit in all of its operations:

- 1) Children who are in need of some kind of help which they are not receiving in school or elsewhere are likely to be regarded as problems in the classroom.
- 2) The children who persist in presenting problems year after year are the ones most likely to be in need of some kind of help over and above that being received.
- 3) Descriptions of the most persistent problems will suggest any important school or other community services that are lacking.

Three surveys at two-year intervals are required to identify persistent problems. In the first survey in 1961, all teachers of grades 2, 4 and 6 in all public schools of the County, outside Syracuse City, were asked to describe the problems presented by the children in their classes. In 1963, teachers of the grades to which these children



had progressed were interviewed and asked the same questions. A similar follow-up survey also is being conducted in 1965. A comparison of the 1961, 1963 and 1965 records of individual children will make it possible to determine the number of children who are persistent in presenting problems to their teachers and to describe the kinds of problems that have persisted over the four-year span from 1961 to 1965.

Every teacher is assured that everything said in an interview is regarded with the strictest confidence. Records are kept in locked files in the research office and may not be seen by anyone other than a member of the technical research staff. The form of all reports will be such that the identity of teachers and children will not be revealed.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

In the beginning, some teachers and other school personnel were inclined to be critical because the results of past research did not seem to be commensurate with the amount of time spent on it. Their gradual understanding, however, that this study is focused on questions to which they themselves want answers undoubtedly has contributed to their willingness to actively participate.

The project, however, has even wider significance. Its unique feature of a large, diversified study population followed over a four-year span will yield information which also will have practical applications outside Onondaga County.

### Scope of this report

This report is the first in the series to give an account of the follow-up phases of the study. Specifically, it introduces some of the early findings on the prevalence and duration of emotional disorders among a cohort of 6,788 children who had been in the second and fourth grades in 1961 and were found in the fourth and sixth grades of the public schools of the County (exclusive of Syracuse City) in 1963. These findings are of interest because they suggest the kinds of information likely to emerge as the study progresses to other statistical analyses and additional follow-up.

The population of 6,788 fourth and sixth-grade children who advanced two grades between 1961 and 1963 represents 81.9 per cent of the original cohort of 8,293 children in the second and fourth grades in 1961 (Table 1). The remaining 18.1 per cent moved out of the county, transferred to other systems within the county (parochial or Syracuse City schools), or repeated a grade at some time between 1961 and 1963. The children who were not found in the fourth and sixth grades in 1963 because they had been held back in other grades at some time during the two-year study period comprised 6.1 per cent of the original 1961 cohort; those who had moved out of the county or transferred to other schools comprised 12.0 per cent. As shown in Table 1, both repeaters and "losses" from the county public schools because of moving or transfer were relatively larger in the second than in the fourth grade and, in each grade, relatively larger among boys than among girls. Efforts are being made to obtain at least minimal information on what becomes of the children in these groups.

- Table 1 -

Location in 1963 of children in the second and fourth grades in 1961

Grade in 1961	Location in 1963					
	County public school			Non-public school or out of county		
	Appropriate grade 1/ Grade		Per cent of 1961 enrollment	Other Grade		Per cent of 1961 enrollment
	Number	Per cent of 1961 enrollment		Number	Per cent of 1961 enrollment	
<u>Total</u>	<u>8293</u>	<u>81.9</u>	<u>6788</u>	<u>507</u>	<u>6.1</u>	<u>998</u>
2nd grade	4394	79.4	3491	319	7.3	584
4th grade	3899	84.6	3297	188	4.8	414
<u>Boys</u>	<u>4336</u>	<u>78.9</u>	<u>3423</u>	<u>341</u>	<u>7.9</u>	<u>572</u>
2nd grade	2334	76.2	1779	224	9.6	331
4th grade	2002	82.1	1644	117	5.8	241
<u>Girls</u>	<u>3957</u>	<u>85.0</u>	<u>3365</u>	<u>166</u>	<u>4.2</u>	<u>426</u>
2nd grade	2060	83.1	1712	95	4.6	253
4th grade	1897	87.1	1653	71	3.7	173

1/ Fourth and sixth grades, respectively.



### Children reported as "problems" in 1961

Among the 6,788 second and fourth-grade children who received regular promotions in the county public schools between 1961 and 1963, there were 1,037 (729 boys and 308 girls) designated as "problems" to their teachers in 1961. They comprise 21.3 per cent of the boys and 9.2 per cent of the girls in the cohort (Table 2).

### Children reported as "emotionally disturbed" in 1961

In the same group of 6,788 children who received regular promotions in the county public schools between 1961 and 1963, there were 231 (155 boys and 76 girls) who were reported as "emotionally disturbed" in 1961. The 155 boys so designated comprised 4.5 per cent of all boys in the group; the 76 girls comprised 2.3 per cent of the girls <sup>3/</sup> (Table 2). With few exceptions, those suspected of being "emotionally disturbed" were also designated as "problems" to their teachers.

### Other children with items of behavior identical to those of emotional disturbances

An essential part of the data of this study is the teachers' narrative descriptions of all "problem" behavior. These descriptions provide the means for determining the items of behavior most commonly associated with emotional disturbances and identifying another group of children (202 boys and 82 girls) whose

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<sup>3/</sup> The total prevalence rates in grades two and four in 1961, including 87 emotionally disturbed boys and 30 emotionally disturbed girls who had been held back or transferred to other school systems, was 5.6 per cent for boys and 2.7 per cent for girls.

- Table 2 -

Emotional disturbances and other types of problems as reported in 1961  
among second and fourth-grade children promoted to fourth and sixth grades in 1963

Grade in 1961	Total number in cohort <u>1/</u>	Problems with emotional disturbances						All other problems	
		Total problems		Designated		Not designated <u>2/</u>		Per cent of cohort	
		Number	Per cent of cohort	Number	Per cent of cohort	Number	Per cent of cohort	Number	Per cent of cohort
<u>Total</u>	<u>6788</u>	<u>1037</u>	<u>15.3</u>	<u>231</u>	<u>3.4</u>	<u>284</u>	<u>4.2</u>	<u>522</u>	<u>7.7</u>
2nd grade	3491	489	14.0	130	3.7	138	4.0	221	6.3
4th grade	3297	548	16.6	101	3.1	146	4.4	301	9.1
<u>Boys</u>	<u>3423</u>	<u>729</u>	<u>21.3</u>	<u>155</u>	<u>4.5</u>	<u>202</u>	<u>5.9</u>	<u>372</u>	<u>10.9</u>
2nd grade	1779	351	19.7	92	5.2	99	5.6	160	9.0
4th grade	1644	378	23.0	63	3.8	103	6.3	212	12.9
<u>Girls</u>	<u>3365</u>	<u>308</u>	<u>9.2</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>2.3</u>	<u>82</u>	<u>2.4</u>	<u>150</u>	<u>4.5</u>
2nd grade	1712	138	8.1	38	2.2	39	2.3	61	3.6
4th grade	1653	170	10.3	38	2.3	43	2.6	89	5.4

1/ Children in the second and fourth grades in 1961 who received regular promotions between 1961 and 1963 and were found in the public schools of the County, exclusive of Syracuse and the Indian Reservation, in 1963.

2/ Problems with characteristics identical to those most commonly associated with emotional disturbances, but not so labeled.

problem descriptions include identical items. The only difference seems to be that the label "emotionally disturbed" is lacking. Recognition of the possibility that the same behavior may receive different labels from different teachers suggests the need for classifying children according to the content of their problem descriptions rather than their "diagnostic" labels. Failure to recognize the possibility that the label "emotionally disturbed" may disappear without a significant change in behavior only because of differences in the use of labels could lead to a sizeable error in overestimating the number of short-term temporary emotional disturbances and underestimating the number of prolonged emotional disturbances. For this reason, the two groups of children (those labeled "emotionally disturbed" and those with identical items of behavior, but not so labeled) have been combined to form a single group for the purposes of this report. The combined group has a total of 515, or 7.6 per cent of all children in the cohort of 6,788 children (10.4 per cent of boys and 4.7 per cent of girls).

#### Children reported "emotionally disturbed" again in 1963

There were 160 (117 boys and 43 girls) in the combined group of 515 children reported as "emotionally disturbed" or similarly described in 1961 who were so designated again in the second survey in 1963. As shown in Table 3, they comprise 31.1 per cent of the original group of 515 children described or labeled as "emotionally disturbed" in 1961. In other words, one out of three emotional disturbances persisted to the end of the two-year interval between the 1961 and 1963 surveys.

- Table 3 -

Persistence of emotional disturbances <sup>1/</sup>  
from 1961 to 1963

Second and fourth-grade children in 1961  
promoted to fourth and sixth grades,  
respectively, in 1963

Grade in 1961	Total number emotionally disturbed in 1961 <sup>1/</sup>	Persisted to 1963	
		Number of children	Per cent of 1961 total
<u>Total</u>	<u>515</u>	<u>160</u>	<u>31.1</u>
2nd grade	268	88	32.8
4th grade	247	72	29.1
<u>Boys</u>	<u>357</u>	<u>117</u>	<u>32.8</u>
2nd grade	191	62	32.5
4th grade	166	55	33.1
<u>Girls</u>	<u>158</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>27.2</u>
2nd grade	77	26	33.8
4th grade	81	17	21.0

<sup>1/</sup> Includes problems with characteristics identical to those most commonly associated with emotional disturbances, but not so labeled.

This finding does not vary significantly by grade or sex <sup>4/</sup>.

It is important to the purposes of this study to continue to "follow" the 160 children in this group through the third survey in 1965 to determine whether their behavior or any damaging effects seem to continue to persist for another two years.

Many of the statistical analyses now in progress and planned through 1965 will consider ways in which emotional disturbances that persist may be identified and helped early in order to prevent the development and accumulation of serious impairments.

#### Characteristics of "problem" behavior

Teachers' descriptions of "problem" behavior suggest ways in which a child may become a problem in the classroom. An individual child, of course, may create problems in all three ways.

The first way is to make excessive demands upon the classroom time and/or interfere with the goal-directed activities of the teacher and class members. A child may perform adequately in his school work, but his behavior may bother the teacher because it interferes with and retards work that she is trying to accomplish with the class as a whole. Learning problems that make excessive demands upon the classroom time, excessive talking, clowning, attention seeking, and restlessness are

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<sup>4/</sup> In Table 3, the proportion of emotionally disturbed girls whose disorders persisted from the fourth to the sixth grade (21.0 per cent) appears smaller than the proportion that persisted from the second to the fourth grade (33.8 per cent). The difference in these proportions, however, is not considered conclusive evidence of a difference in the two groups of girls because it is not statistically significant at the .05 level.



good examples of the sorts of things that may become problems in this way. Some are activities which might be considered desirable on the playground, at home, or in another social setting but are inappropriate to the goal-directed activities of the classroom.

The second way in which a child may become a problem is to be so negligent, deficient or deviant in some personal or work habit or in interpersonal relations that the teacher worries about the child's future welfare and the cumulative effects of his failure to develop optimal levels of social and intellectual functioning. Specific complaints of teachers that might be included in this category are: poor study habits, sloppiness, laziness, bossiness, aggressiveness, lack of self-discipline, inadequate personal hygiene, rest, or eating habits, preoccupation with outside interests, and insufficient interest in academic work.

A third kind of problem comes from a recognition on the part of the teacher that something about a child or his behavior causes her to have a feeling of anxiety, restraint, or frustration in her personal relationship with the child. Included in this category might be a teacher's inability to overcome a feeling of personal dislike for a child, "odd" behavior on the part of the child, frustration because of inability of a child to receive help at home, or anxiety over the activities of a child who has, for example, a diagnosed heart condition.

All classes of problem behavior include varieties that are sometimes attributed to family traits and sometimes to other factors, such as individual differences in personality, social background, levels of maturity, and levels of ability.

### Characteristics of emotionally disturbed behavior

The specific items of behavior most commonly associated with emotional disturbances seem to imply a quality usually superimposed upon one or more of the three kinds of problem-forming behavior described above <sup>5/</sup>. These superimposed qualities, as a whole, suggest that the emotionally disturbed child has a feeling of personal discomfort in being present in the class group. This discomfort is something felt by the child in contrast with the types of problem behavior which may be bothersome to the child's peers and/or teacher but do not seem to worry or disturb the child himself. In many instances, the discomfort of the emotionally disturbed child is such that he might be expected to withdraw and perhaps drop out of the group completely if he had his own choice. As he has no choice, he must remain until he is expelled from the group because of offensive behavior or for failure to make significant social or intellectual contributions to the group.

Teachers and other school personnel use many techniques to help children who are school problems and children who are considered emotionally disturbed. Throughout much of the interview material, there are accounts of watching for signs of discomfort in the classroom, attempts to acquire an understanding

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<sup>5/</sup> The words used by teachers in describing the characteristics of emotionally disturbed behavior are purposely withheld from this report. It is implicit in the objectives of the study that the researchers should try to avoid every possibility of restricting or suggesting definitions of emotional disturbances. To publicize definitions at this point might jeopardize the total study by reducing the validity of comparisons of the 1965 and earlier surveys.

of children's problems through consultation with parents as well as other school personnel, and attempts to do something to help. Among the techniques teachers reported that they used to help are: changes in seating arrangements, class groupings, and grade placements; adjustments in work assignments; adjustments in pressures; and applications of supportive measures to meet the changing needs of the individual child. It is reasonable to think that the children who seemed to recover from their emotional disturbances in the two-year interval between 1961 and 1963 were helped, at least in part, by measures such as these. The same reasoning implies that the remaining one out of three (117 boys and 43 girls), whose emotional disturbances did not disappear during the two-year follow-up period, must have had kinds of disturbances and/or complications which were not amenable to manipulations of these kinds.

#### Geographic variations

The children reported as "emotionally disturbed" in the lower grades in 1961 were spread throughout the 60 schools in the study area. One of the important features of this study is its wide coverage of a diversified area. Approximately 60 per cent of the total population of 200,000 lives in urban areas contiguous to Syracuse City. The remaining 40 per cent is spread throughout villages and towns classified as rural in the Federal Census. Within the study area, there are 17 public school districts in which there are some 60 elementary schools and approximately 300 second and fourth-grade classes. It is of some interest, therefore, that current statistical analyses suggest a geographic clustering of the school districts

that rank consistently high in the proportions reported "emotionally disturbed." They are shown in the dark-shaded area of the map presented in Figure 1. As shown in Table 4, the average prevalence rate of the seven districts in this area in 1961 was 9.4 per cent, as compared to an average of 6.4 per cent in the ten remaining districts considered as a group. Although this small difference cannot be explained at this time, it may be important to note that the distribution of the 160 children with "persistent" emotional disorders (designated or similarly described in 1963 as well as in 1961) has the same geographic clustering with an average of 2.9 per cent in the "high rate" area and an average of 2.0 per cent in the ten remaining districts (Table 4).

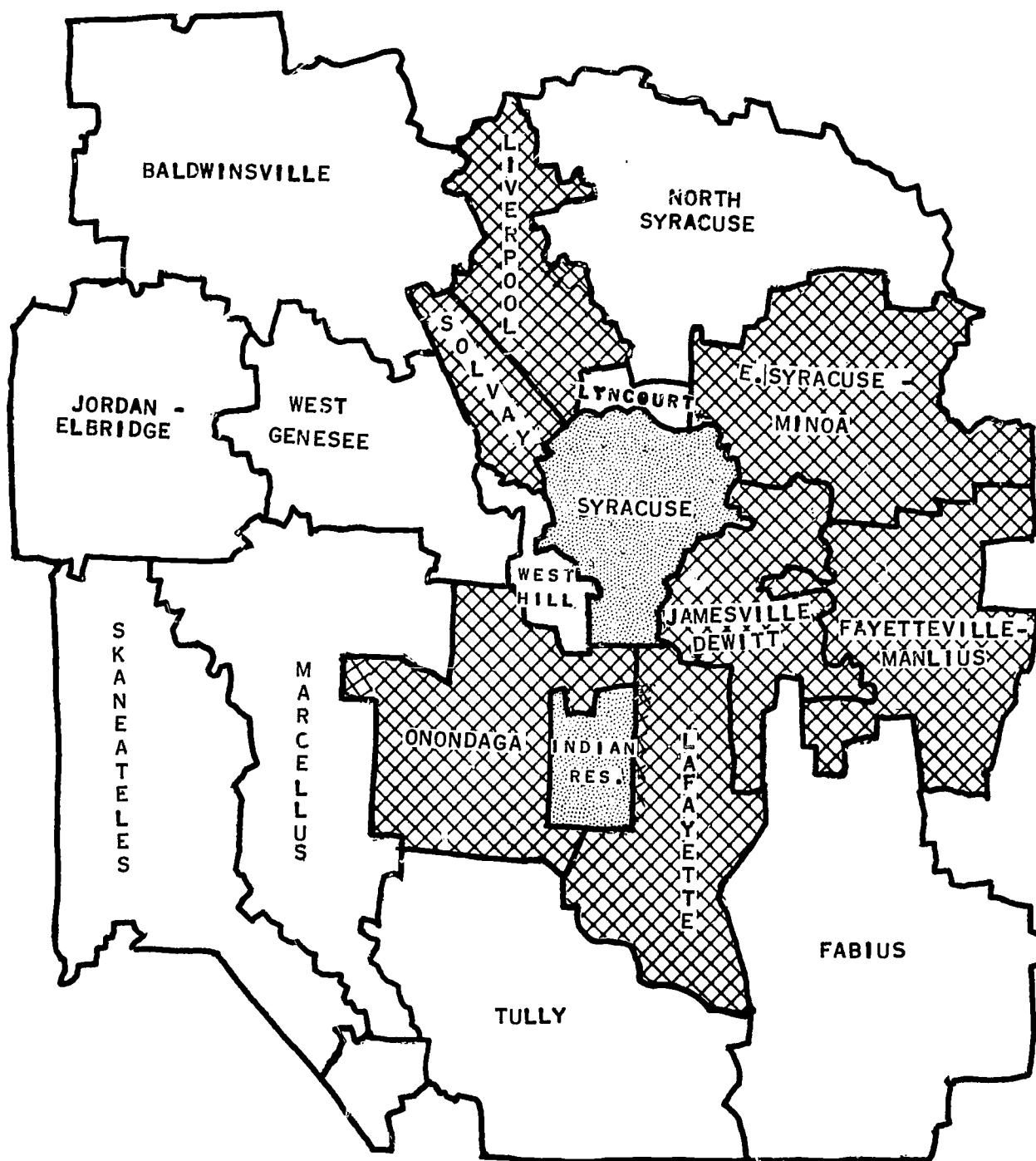
#### Early signs of "persistent" emotional disturbances

At the current stage of statistical analyses, there is a suggestion that one of the early signs of a "persistent" emotional disorder may be either (1) a child's persistence in working below the level of his capacity, or (2) a decrease in work performance in relation to capacity. As shown in Table 5, boys and girls described as "emotionally disturbed" in 1961 had an almost even chance (47.1 per cent) of being so described again in 1963 if they continued to function below the level of ability attributed to them by their teachers (or changed to this category between 1961 and 1963). This is more than two times the risk of the child whose work performance is thought to be commensurate with his ability (or changing in this direction). Conversely, emotionally disturbed children working up to capacity moved into the "no problem" category between 1961 and 1963 almost twice as often as those thought capable of doing better work than they were doing.

- Figure 1 -

Geographic clustering of public school districts according to proportions of children with emotional disturbances

Second and fourth-grade children in 1961 promoted to fourth and sixth grades, respectively, in 1963



School districts with relatively high proportions of emotionally disturbed children.



All other school districts, except Syracuse City and the Indian Reservation which are not included in the study area.



Not included in study area.



- Table 4 -

Proportions of children described as emotionally disturbed in "high rate" school districts and all other districts combined

Second and fourth-grade children in 1961 promoted to fourth and sixth grades, respectively, in 1963

Area	Total number in cohort <sup>1/</sup>	Emotionally disturbed in 1961 <sup>2/</sup>		Emotionally disturbed in 1961 and 1963	
		Number	Per cent of total cohort	Number	Per cent of total cohort
<u>Total</u>	<u>6788</u>	<u>515</u>	<u>7.6</u>	<u>160</u>	<u>2.4</u>
"High" area <sup>3/</sup>	2725	255	9.4	78	2.9
Other districts	4063	260	6.4	82	2.0
<u>Boys</u>	<u>3423</u>	<u>357</u>	<u>10.4</u>	<u>117</u>	<u>3.4</u>
"High" area	1385	175	12.6	61	4.4
Other districts	2038	182	8.9	56	2.7
<u>Girls</u>	<u>3365</u>	<u>158</u>	<u>4.7</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>1.3</u>
"High" area	1340	80	6.0	21	1.6
Other districts	2025	78	3.9	22	1.1

<sup>1/</sup> Children in the second and fourth grades in 1961 who received regular promotions between 1961 and 1963 and were found in the public schools of the County, exclusive of Syracuse and the Indian Reservation, in 1963.

<sup>2/</sup> Includes problems with characteristics identical to those most commonly associated with emotional disturbances, but not so labeled.

<sup>3/</sup> Seven districts most consistently found in the upper half of the range of per cent emotionally disturbed when boys and girls in each grade in 1961 and 1963 are considered separately.

Second and fourth-grade children in 1961 promoted to fourth and sixth grades, respectively, in 1963

**1/ Includes problems with characteristics identical to those most commonly associated with emotional disturbances, but not so labeled.**

**1/ Includes problems with characteristics identical to those most commonly associated with emotional disturbances, but not so labeled.**

Other early indicators of persistent emotional disturbances are suggested in some of the varieties of home conditions and circumstances reported by teachers as factors that contribute to academic performance and classroom behavior. It is reasonable to think that some part of the school problems reported by teachers may be associated with differences between the expectations of parents and teachers. Attempts will be made to describe the specific kinds of home conditions reported in conjunction with "persistent" emotional disturbances.

It is believed that information about all the conditions associated with persistent emotional disturbance will suggest the ways in which a child might need help if he is to overcome his emotional disturbance and its residual effects. Supplements to this report will be issued as additional information becomes available, unless it is the kind of information that might affect comparisons with the next survey in 1965.

### Summary and discussion

It is outside the scope of this study to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of help now provided to emotionally disturbed children. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to think that the characteristics of the children persistently described as "emotionally disturbed" may suggest the kinds of disturbances and other complicating conditions for which existing services have proved somewhat less than adequate.

The interim findings of this study suggest, however, that the majority of emotional disturbances among young school children do not persist more than two years and that the estimates of prevalence derived from single surveys probably are

too high to be used as indices of needs for additional treatment facilities. It seems obvious, therefore, that the findings of follow-up studies such as this are important to taxpayers as well as schools and other community agencies in order to prevent wasteful expenditures of efforts and money that may never meet the needs of the one out of three children who have emotional disturbances that persist year after year.

This study has found persistent disturbances in as many as 2.9 per cent of the regularly promoted children in the lower grades in some of the school districts (Table 4). It seems reasonable to think that this is the neglected group which is in need of additional efforts to prevent an accumulation of problems resulting from prolonged functioning at less than optimal levels.

The interest and importance of this study, however, transcends any findings that can be reported at this time. Many important questions cannot be answered without an additional follow-up survey which will make it possible to trace emotionally disturbed children from second grade to senior high school. Further follow-up also is necessary to determine (1) what happens to children with emotional disturbances identified by teachers for the first time in the upper grades of the elementary schools, (2) the outcome of emotional disturbances among children who are required to repeat one or more grades, and (3) what part of the 160 children now described as emotionally disturbed in two successive surveys in 1961 and 1963 will continue to persist for another two years and comprise a group of "permanently" disturbed children.

Equally important is the need to determine the effects of prolonged disturbances after the manifestations of acute disturbances have disappeared. In this respect, emotional disturbances

among children may not be unlike poliomyelitis in which the difficulties are not so much in the treatment of the disease itself as in the treatment and rehabilitation of its residual life-long handicaps. It has been tentatively suggested earlier in this report that emotional disturbances are characterized by an alienation and withdrawal from the school system. This hypothesis may be supported in the next survey if it is found that children who have experienced prolonged emotional disturbances leave school as soon as it is legally possible for them to do so. Additional follow-up to test this and other hypotheses is important to an understanding of means of early identification, service needs, and ways in which emotional disturbances may lead to permanent impairments.

There are some who may become impatient while waiting for results from longitudinal follow-up studies of this type, but there is no other way to obtain answers to important questions such as those suggested above.

Sept. 1964