

DEPARTMENT OF TRAFFIC

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REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON TRAFFIC CONTROL AND PROTECTION AT URBAN AND RURAL SCHOOL ZONES

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SYNOPSIS

The Committee collected information on the methods in use for school children control and protection in a group of locations well distributed about the country. Sixty replies were received from 175 questionnaires sent out

Significant findings were as follows: the problem is more serious away from the immediate vicinity of the school and outside of school hours; efforts must be directed toward control of both the children and the motor vehicles; in many cases local satisfaction with the system in use would make adoption of a new and uniform plan doubtful, although uniformity would be desirable, uniform devices and standard plans should be used under local methods of control; speed limits of 15 to 20 m.p.h. during crossing periods are suggested, supervisory control by safety patrols and janitors is the most effective means of protection now employed, but school safety patrol members should only regulate movements of children, they should not regulate vehicular traffic, police control is preferred at heavy school traffic intersections or where the ages of the children do not permit use of school patrols, W.P.A. and N.Y.A. personnel are only satisfactory for control work when they have been carefully selected and trained, children should be trained in self reliance rather than to depend upon mechanical obedience to traffic control devices; traffic authorities should participate in selecting school sites.

These findings point to the need for: study and revision of the design and application of signs, signals and markings; local adoption of the "Standard Rules for Operation of School Safety Patrols", conformity of children on bicycles with traffic rules; designation of preferred routes to and from school; traffic engineers to advise with school authorities, adequate adult control where school patrols are not adequate and police are not available.

The protection of children from the hazards of present day, fast moving, automobile traffic is of vital concern to parents, civic groups, educators, enforcement officials, and traffic engineers. On every hand is heard the plea "Safeguard our children." Yet, there is little uniformity in the methods employed nationally to gain the desired results, and in most instances the method in use is strongly supported to the exclusion of other means of protection.

The Committee has attempted, by questionnaire, to ascertain the methods now employed and the success of each and to collect other data relating to the problem. The response to the survey has indicated widespread interest in the problem. A

total of 60 questionnaires were returned from 175 sent to a carefully selected group. Those who responded were classified as follows: 25 educators, 21 traffic engineers, 12 enforcement officials, and 2 state safety directors. The geographical distribution of this group gives a nationwide complexion to the summary, and for this reason may be accepted as a representative cross-section of opinion and experience.

EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM

So little data were furnished relating to school child accidents that the information is of no value in reaching any conclusions. Almost all of those replying, however, indicated that the problem of

protecting children of school age is more serious away from the immediate vicinity of the school and during periods outside of school hours. Furthermore, the majority stated that the protection of children going to and from school did not represent a serious condition, when compared with the local traffic accident record.

Opinion was about equally divided as to whether the pedestrian or bicyclist presented the greatest problem of control and protection. This is of special interest in that the same type of control does not apply to both. Under modern legislation, the bicyclist must be treated as a vehicle operator regardless of his age.

In surveying the national thought on this subject, the Committee endeavored to learn whether the problem was considered to apply more directly to the motorist than to the child or vice versa. Of the 54 replies to the question, 20 indicated the motorist, 23 designated the child, and 11 expressed the opinion that the problem involved both to about equal degree. It is apparent from this cross-section of opinion and experience, that the only solution lies in efforts directed to the control of both.

Almost all of those responding expressed the opinion that a uniform plan of traffic control and protection at urban and rural school zones developed by the Department of Traffic, Highway Research Board, could be placed in effect in their respective communities in spite of the fact that it might conflict with the present system. A further examination of the questionnaire does not bear out this majority opinion, however, since it is indicated in many cases that the success of the present plan precludes the adoption of a different system, the superiority of which might be difficult to prove to the authority concerned.

METHODS OF CONTROL AND RESULTS

In developing a plan of protection, it is necessary first to determine what con-

stitutes the school zone limits. Replies to this question show little uniformity of opinion. Definitions of a school zone range from "the streets and intersections adjoining the school grounds" to the other extreme of "all streets serving children between their homes and the school site."

School zones when limited to contiguous streets and intersections are identified universally by post mounted signs placed in advance of the school grounds, together with such auxiliary marking as crosswalk lane lines and signs painted on the pavement. Portable signs of a stop or cautionary type are also being used to a limited degree, usually in connection with the operations of a school safety patrol.

While there is some variation in the design of signs and markings, the indications are that there is sufficient uniformity in the identification of school zones to eliminate the possibility of indecision or confusion. The opinion that national uniformity of design is desirable was unanimous.

The methods of control reported by those replying to the questions relating to this phase are quite varied. Many different plans are in operation throughout the country, all of which seem to be producing the desired results. The questionnaires fail to reveal serious dissatisfaction with methods employed in the respective communities represented.

The widest variation in method of control is in the application of temporary stop or cautionary control at intersections serving school children. All agree, however, that prompt placement and removal of either type is essential, and that some enforcement is necessary if the control preserves its effectiveness. The majority of those replying expressed the opinion that stop control is more effective than the caution type. Those who favor the latter, however, do so on the premise that unnecessary restrictive measures should not be employed and are able to support their contention with an equally good

safety record as that shown where stop control is used.

A majority vote was cast against the use of non-standard signs, such as those which simulate in silhouette the figure of a school boy patrolman or police officer. The logical conclusion from this vote, which amounted to 2 to 1 against such signs, is that the standard signs are equally effective and contribute to uniform practice.

A question as to whether or not special speed limits are effective drew a majority opinion in the affirmative. Many of these expressed the belief that the effectiveness of speed limits is in proportion to the degree of enforcement. Perhaps this accounts for the substantial negative vote, the inference being that enforcement had not been adequate.

The majority of those favoring special speed limits suggested a value of 15-20 miles per hour to be in effect only during periods in which children crossed the street. Several indicated that limits now employed are unreasonably low, hence little attempt has been made to enforce them.

The application of traffic control signals for the purpose of school child protection constitutes a problem that would not be solved by the opinions expressed in the questionnaire. The majority recommended against the use of both pre-timed and actuated signals where intended solely as protective devices for school children. A considerable number favored the use of each type, however, but only on the basis of the minimum volume warrants established in the national Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices being satisfied. It is noteworthy that some of those who opposed the use of traffic signals reasoned that if vehicular volume is high enough to justify such control, a police officer should be assigned to the intersection rather than to depend upon mechanical regulation. A large majority were of the opinion that where signals

are installed at an intersection serving school children, special "Walk" lenses should be used in the signal faces affecting the movements of pedestrians.

On the question of the use of subways or overpasses, 65 per cent favored their use and were of the belief that children could be trained to use them even though they were located one or more blocks from the school. A few offered suggested warrants justifying the cost of such facility. These covered such a wide range and were so largely opinionative as to be of little value in the study.

The most conclusive data received by the Committee is contained in a report, dated June 10, 1941, of a comprehensive study of traffic control methods affecting school children conducted by the Traffic Engineering Bureau of the City of Detroit. The investigation included studies of the effectiveness of four types of control; namely:

- A. No control (except school safety patrol).
- B. Janitor control.
- C. Police officer.
- D. Traffic signal control.

The conclusions reached by this Committee following its survey are substantiated by the exhaustive study of the problem in Detroit. Because of the reference value of the data, the Committee has included a copy of the report as an appendix to this report.

SUPERVISORY CONTROL

Supervisory control is generally recognized to be a more effective means of protecting and directing school children than any other method. Almost all of those responding are familiar with the standard plan governing the operation of school safety patrols. The patrol system is used by 83 per cent of the communities represented, and of these 68 per cent use the standard plan. The majority of responses stated that patrolmen in their re-

spective communities were stationed at distances as far as three blocks from the school with successful results. All of those who had such experience favored patrol escort of children walking along rural highways.

There is little doubt as to the wisdom of restricting the authority of school safety patrol boys to the control of the children if the testimony offered can be accepted as conclusive. Only two responses recommended that the patrol boy be permitted to regulate vehicular traffic. Police officers are being used extensively to control both school child and vehicular traffic at heavily travelled intersections, however, it is admitted that the coverage is low because of inadequate police staff in most communities.

School janitors as crossing guards are being used with success, particularly at elementary school zones where the age of the children or the traffic conditions make adult control desirable.

In most instances, the use of juvenile or adult employees of N.Y.A. or W.P.A. on crossing guard projects have proved ineffective. This condition is probably due to lack of proper training, since those who had obtained satisfactory results specified that training of the guards is essential. It is interesting to note that the majority complaint came almost entirely from those in the educational field, while the minority, favoring the use of this plan of protection, were almost all traffic engineers or police officials.

In the experience of those who had tried them, bicycle clubs have been highly successful as a means of educating young people in bicycle safety. This practice of obtaining obedience to rules governing safe riding practices through self-enforcement by the Bicycle Club Safety Court, together with the licensing and inspection of bicycles, is apparently effective in all sections of the country.

EDUCATION

More than 80 per cent of the responses supported the theory that self-reliance should be taught children rather than dependence upon traffic control devices. It is acknowledged by all that obedience to the indication of such devices and to supervisory control by both pedestrians and vehicle operators is essential. That traffic safety should be taught in elementary and secondary schools met with unanimous approval.

Only one reply to the question, "Should schools be located on important thoroughfares?" was in the affirmative. Forty-nine others who answered stated in effect that schools should not be so located. Many suggested that selection of school sites be made jointly by school and traffic authorities.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The problem of protecting children of school age is much less serious near schools and when they are in session than under other conditions.
2. Due to the constant effort of all agencies concerned, the traffic accident record involving children going to and returning from school does not represent a condition of major importance in many localities.
3. Efforts to prevent school-child accidents should be directed toward both the pedestrian and the vehicle operator.
4. Plans of protection now in effect in the various communities appear to meet with local approval.
5. A school zone may be defined as including the streets and intersections which adjoin the school grounds.
6. Uniformity of design and application of traffic control devices to identify school zones and to regulate traffic is desirable.

7. Present national standards are in need of redesign to produce higher attention-getting values.
8. Methods of control should be left to the judgment of the local authority, but uniform devices and standard plans of supervision should always be employed.
9. Speed limits for school zones are beneficial if placed in effect only during crossing periods. Suggested values are 15 or 20 miles per hour.
10. Traffic control signals, especially those of the pre-timed type, should not be used solely for the purpose of providing crossing intervals for pedestrians, but may be used advantageously if traffic volume warrants are satisfied.
11. Subways or overpasses are favored if the cost can be justified on an exposure basis. The degree of exposure warranting such cost is somewhat problematical.
12. Supervisory control, as exercised by school safety patrols and school janitors, is the most effective means now employed in the protection of school children both in urban and rural areas.
13. The authority of school safety patrol members should be limited to regulating the movements of children. They should not be permitted to regulate vehicular traffic.
14. Police officer control is preferred where groups of children use heavily travelled intersections, or where the age of the children does not permit use of the school safety patrol.
15. The use of personnel obtained on W.P.A. or N.Y.A. work relief projects has proven satisfactory only where they have been carefully selected and properly trained in their duties.
16. Training of children should be directed toward self-reliance rather than to dependence for their safety on mechanical obedience to traffic control devices.
17. The selection of school sites should become the joint responsibility of school and traffic authorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends that:

1. The Joint Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices be urged to review the design and application of signs, signals, and markings for urban and rural school zones and revise standards in accordance with the conclusions of this report.
2. The Standard Rules for Operation of School Safety Patrols, prepared by a committee of representatives of the American Automobile Association, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, National Education Association, National Safety Council, and United States Office of Education be adopted by all school jurisdictions using school safety patrols.
3. Pupils riding bicycles to schools be required to conform with all traffic signs, signals, and control measures that apply within the school zones and urged to do so at all other points, through instruction, bicycle clubs, and other measures for promoting bicycle safety.
4. Preferred routes to and from school be determined for each urban school jurisdiction and copies be furnished to all pupils.
5. The Institute of Traffic Engineers urge all member city and state traffic engineers to seek oppor-

tunity to serve in an advisory capacity with school authorities in the protection of children, in school zones.

6. When police are not available for school crossings where personal protection of children is necessary and school safety patrols are not adequate, arrangements should be made for adult control by carefully selected personnel, properly trained and with their responsibility clearly defined.

APPENDIX

A STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF VARIOUS TYPES OF TRAFFIC CONTROL AT SCHOOL CROSSINGS

TRAFFIC ENGINEERING BUREAU

City of Detroit

The public has generally accepted control of vehicle and pedestrian crossings by automatic traffic signals as productive of greater safety particularly for pedestrians than any other types of control short of tunnels and overpasses. Contrary to this acceptance, traffic authorities including the National Conference on Street and Highway Safety has consistently placed the matter of safety in a subordinate position among warrants for the installation of new traffic signal units. The national guide, consolidating the findings of leading national authorities is the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways. Quoting from this Manual, approved as an American standard by the American Standards Association, "Traffic control signals cannot be expected to reduce the following types of accidents: (a) Rear-end collisions, which often increase after signalization; (b) Collisions between vehicles proceeding in the same or opposite directions, one of which makes a turn to cross the path of the other; (c) Accidents involving pedestrians and turning vehicles BOTH MOVING ON THE SAME GO interval; (d) Other types of pedestrian accidents, if pedestrians do not obey the signals.

"If none of the warrants, except the hazard warrant, is fulfilled, the initial presumption should be against signalization. It is preferable to institute (with proper education and enforcement) other remedial measures which delay and inconvenience traffic less and cost less such as caution, slow, stated speed and stop signs or

signals, leading or otherwise organizing traffic movements; safety zones and traffic islands."

The policy of the Traffic Engineering Bureau in the past has been to investigate all of the possibilities, at locations where school child crossings are regularly established, of controlling movements which will inconvenience traffic the least and which will be the most productive of school child safety as well as the safety of older pedestrians and traffic in general. In view of the consistency with which requests for traffic signals are associated with the probabilities of accidents and injuries to school children, indicating that conditions in Detroit may be exceptional to those which prompted the National Conference on Street and Highway Safety to adopt their conclusions, the Bureau has undertaken a number of studies to determine locally the relationship between automatic signal control and accident productivity.

For a number of years the type of control at several locations in the city has not been changed. These controls may be classified as follows: (A) Patrol boys only, (B) Janitor, (C) Police officer, (D) Automatic traffic signals

Since the Police Department keeps a record of the accidents which occur within the limits of the City of Detroit, and since the conditions surrounding each of these accidents are listed on report forms, their records furnish a splendid opportunity to determine the accident experience under each of these types of control. The Public Safety Bureau of the Police Department was asked to furnish this Bureau, without partiality as to selection, a list of test intersections representing regularly established school child crossings, 10 under classification A, namely, with no control (except school boy patrol), 10 with janitor control, 10 with officer control, and 10 with signal control. Since the selection of forty intersections was made without partiality, comparison of the accident history at these locations should guide us in the appraisal of the degree of safety afforded by each of the various types.

The ten intersections having no control were as follows:

St. Antoine—Palmer
 Brooklyn—Temple
 McKinley—Buchanan
 Roosevelt—Buchanan
 Brooklyn—Henry
 Magnolia—Lawton
 Kenilworth—Brush
 Riopelle—Maple
 Chene—Macomb
 Ellery—Pulford

At each of these locations the average number of school children crossing daily numbered 301.

The intersections at which janitors only were in control are as follows:

Sixteenth—Myrtle
 Stanley—Hamilton
 Seldon—Hamilton
 Wildemere—West Grand Boulevard
 Vermont—Myrtle
 Alexandrine—St. Aubin
 Chene—Clinton
 Caniff—Cameron
 Beaubien—Horton
 Charlevoix—Ellery

The average daily crossings of school children at these intersections numbered 402.

The intersections listed at which police officers were in control were

Peterboro—Woodward
 Myrtle—Lawton
 Boulevard—Ash
 Brooklyn—Vernor
 Trumbull—Pine
 Caniff—Oakland
 Russell—Eliot
 Chene—Medbury
 Milwaukee—St. Aubin
 Oakland—Horton

The average number of school children crossing at these intersections was 350.

The locations at which traffic lights have been in operation to control the crossing of school children were:

St. Antoine—Ferry
 E. Grand Boulevard—Jos. Campau
 E Grand Boulevard—Milwaukee
 Canfield—Russell
 Canfield—Hastings
 Grand River—Vinewood
 Vinewood—West Grand Boulevard
 Peterboro—Second
 Seldon—Third
 Boulevard—Buchanan

The average number of school child crossings at these intersections was 315.

It is conceded that with respect to each type of control variations may exist between different days and between different locations. The variations are due to the fact that traffic officers sometimes are called away from the intersections due to the pressure of other duties. They are also due to the fact that visibility of one signal installation may be inferior to the visibility of the installation at one of the other intersections. It must be assumed, however, that variations one way or another in the various types of control cancel each other and that the sum total of the accidents occurring

at each of the intersections is a good criterion of the effectiveness of the control prevailing.

With but few exceptions, signals operating at those locations to control school child crossing, attribute very little of their functioning to the purpose of alternately assigning the right of way to motor vehicle traffic. It appears, therefore, that in practically all cases, the installation of the signals now operating was to insure safe crossings of children of the traffic ways. This fact should emphasize the value of child-accident considerations in determining the relative value of traffic signals as safety devices.

The records of the Police Department were searched to obtain information for a period of twenty-eight months beginning January 1, 1939. In that period there was no fatal accident at any of the forty intersections. Injury accidents occurred, however, causing injury to 24 children between the ages of 5 and 14. The 24 injuries were distributed among the various types of control as follows:

No patrol (except school boy patrol)	3
Janitor control	4
Officer control	5
Traffic signal control	12

There were as many injuries resulting from accidents at locations controlled by automatic signals as at all of the remaining 30 intersections combined.

Analysis of the accidents occurring at signalized intersections gives the answer to the question why signals compare so poorly as safety devices. It corroborates the findings of the National Conference, namely that signals have no influence on accidents involving movements allowed on the green period nor on any movements when the signals are not observed. Accidents studied involved too frequently a school child crossing against the red indication, run down by a motorist proceeding with the green and consequently not exercising the same degree of caution that he would if he had not the assurance of a safe right of way which he believes the green gives him. Others show the condition too frequently existing wherein the child crosses with the green in the justifiable belief that he is assured a safe crossing only to be run down by a motorist who suddenly observes a signal, not to him obviously warranted for traffic reasons, too late to stop for the red indication.

Also an accident too often occurs in which a child has started across near the end of the green period and is trapped, confused, and struck when the signal changes.

A further explanation of the higher accident rate at signalized intersections is that signals

direct children to cross at arbitrary intervals which often occur when motorists are rapidly approaching, as contrasted with the other methods in which gaps in traffic with less exposure to hazard are utilized for crossing intervals.

It must be remembered, however, that while all of these injuries were suffered by children of school age, they did not necessarily occur at those times when children are on their way to or from school. Five, for example, occurred during the morning between 11 a. m. to 2 p. m. and five occurred between 3 p. m. and 4 p. m. while at all other times of the day injuries amounted to nine. In other words, fifteen of the injuries resulted during those times when it may be expected that children are on their way to and from school, and nine during the other hours of the day when school child movements have nothing to do whatever with their movements to and from school. This fact, however, should not depreciate the value of these accident figures as indicative of the effectiveness of the various types of control. If it is to be conceded that education of school children with regard to traffic safety should have its effectiveness at any location it certainly should have the greatest amount of such effectiveness at those locations habitually crossed by the school children under the conditions existing during the time educational impressions are received. To further determine the various effects on child behavior and therefore their aptitude, under various types of control of becoming involved in accidents, another study was undertaken.

Since walking is more or less the result of secondary mental activity, safety education among children should be a process in which good habit formation will result in less accidents involving them. A study of walking habits will indicate the aptitude of accident involvement. A survey was therefore conducted to determine whether or not school child walking habits were influenced by various conditions in the street and by a variation of the time of day.

Survey research has demonstrated that the behavior of children of school age is different at different times of the day. After the usual closing hours of school at 3:30 p. m., the influence of the school in matters of traffic and safety gradually wears off so that the evening play hours show the children at their worst habits.

As was to be expected the various types of intersection control likewise have various influences on youth performance. In almost every element of behavior the police officer type of control at the intersection results in best performance.

Location also has its influence. Research in the matter of proper observance shows a better performance in the vicinity of the schools than

elsewhere. The same child will perhaps refrain from doing near the schoolhouse what he will not hesitate to do when away from the windows of his classrooms. In the conduct of the survey many thousands of subjects were observed. Various elements of behavior were classified and each classification observed and analyzed separately. The first element of behavior was whether or not children remained in the crosswalk disregarding other actions. The percentages given in the tabulation indicate the number of children crossing within the crosswalk of the total sample observed.

Class A—No control (except school patrol)	66
Class B—Janitor control	91.6
Class C—Officer control	87.7
Class D—Signal control	83.7

The next element of behavior was of children crossing intersections only when permission is given. By this is meant children crossing when directed to do so by a patrol, janitor, police officer or the green indication of the traffic signal. The results of this investigation indicated that under Class A, with no control (except school boy patrol), 80.2 per cent of the children crossed when directed by the school patrol to do so. With police officer control the per cent was 85.9. With traffic light control the observance of the green indication was by only 65.5 per cent.

The next item of behavior was the manner in which the crossing of the intersections was accomplished. The per cent indicates the number of children crossing intersections carefully. The results of the survey showed that in Class A with only school boy patrol that 75.2 per cent of the children crossed carefully. At those intersections with police officer control the per cent of proper and cautious crossings was 83.2 and with traffic signal control only the per cent dropped to 51.2.

The next item of behavior was the effect of location upon observance. It was found that with all types of control within one block of the school proper use of the crosswalk was indulged in by 86.2 per cent of the children. Also with all types of control more than one block away from the school but at regularly established school crossings the percentage dropped from 86.2 to 83.2.

Training of children should create proper actions resulting from subconscious impulses. Whether the officer type is more effective in habit formation is still an open question. Repetition of performance is the most effective way of creating habits. Any type of control at an intersection, therefore, should increase in value

as a training factor directly in proportion to the continuity with which it functions. The results of the research show that insufficient emphasis is being placed on the importance of creating good practices. The prevailing idea is to cross the intersection without being run down by oncoming vehicular traffic. The latter idea of course is the ultimate aim of all efforts to bring about the proper relationship between pedestrian and rolling traffic but it is too complicated a process to expect from the school child without first causing him to acquire the fundamental intuitive elements which together comprise safety in the streets. The careful inculcation of safety habits in the child from five to eight years of age will provide an adult more receptive to safety education and a member of a generation whose accident record should show a great improvement.

In conclusion, both of the investigations above described show quite conclusively that the findings of the American Association of State Highway Officials and the National Conference on State and Highway Safety and the policy of the Traffic Engineering Bureau in connection with the installation of traffic signals as a safety measure are well founded. It appears from these investigations consistent with the findings of authorities in other parts of the country, that a general expansion of the school crossing signal system is not warranted and also that when investigations of the conditions at isolated intersections indicate that signals are detrimental to the formation of good habits among children

and not conducive to a better safety record that such signal should be removed. From the investigations it is indicated that manual control of the intersections is the most desirable type. An investigation of the scheduled distribution of police power in the fifteen precincts will show that many of the police activities are concerned with the safety of crossing of the school children of the city streets.

In those situations where unwarranted demand for traffic signals exists and where availability of police power is not inconsistent with the most efficient use of that personnel, then a police officer should be assigned to those locations. Where, however, police officers are not available every effort should be made to supply manual control in one of the remaining classifications.

In conjunction with both police officers and adult control, the Bureau has instituted the use of portable school signs. While the use of the portable school signs has not been generally applied, the system is being perfected, new designs are being made for the construction of the sign, and it is hoped that with the cooperation of business people located near school child crossings, of janitors and other school personnel, as well as of the police, a more widely spread use of the portable signs in conjunction with manual supervisors will eventually satisfactorily control school child crossings throughout the city with greater accomplishment of safety.

June 10, 1941

DISCUSSION ON TRAFFIC CONTROL AND PROTECTION AT SCHOOL ZONES

MR. BURTON W. MARSH, *American Automobile Association*: We do face in the period immediately ahead a problem which I think deserves thought. Increasing traffic problems and public demands are going to demand police for purposes other than school crossings, so that at the very least communities will not be increasing police protection at school crossings. Because of increased traffic in many areas the need for protection of school children at school crossings is becoming greater, and some remedy must be found. In many places it will involve an increase in school patrols and better supervision of

them. In other places warning signals can be erected at cross walks and there will be places where adult protection will be necessary. I think it is very important that this phase of Mr. Harrison's report dealing with the adult part be carefully considered by those who face the problem. It is of vital importance that there be careful selection and the proper training of these people and the question of their responsibility and their status as regards traffic, and whose responsibility it is in cases of accidents, should be very carefully considered.