

Child Guidance Clinic

1930s –

Details

Child guidance clinics were first established in Australia in the 1930s. Such clinics had been developed in the United States in the 1920s, for the diagnosis and treatment of mild behaviour and emotional problems in school-aged children (Wright, 2012). An important motive in the development of child guidance clinics was to counteract 'juvenile delinquency', but the clinics did try to take a wholistic approach to the child's condition and tried to avoid placing children in care. Child guidance clinics used psychology and medicine to deal with difficult behaviour and help children adjust to challenging issues in their lives. Family members were frequently involved.

The Victorian Vocational and Child Guidance Centre was established by the Mental Hygiene Council in 1932. It had ceased its child guidance work by 1934 and became the Victorian Vocational Guidance Centre.

In New South Wales, child guidance clinics were formalised by the 1935 Child Welfare Act. By the 1950s there were five Child Guidance Clinics in NSW, each consisting of a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a social worker and a clerical assistant. They were controlled by the Department of Health, but worked closely with the Child Welfare Department. All children passing through the Children's Court were assessed by Child Guidance Clinics.

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Child Guidance Clinic

Description: This is a digital copy of a photograph from an album collected by Child Welfare Department officers in the late 1940s. From the collection of Leonie Knapman.

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Related Glossary Terms

- [Juvenile Delinquency \(1850s - 1990s\)](#)

Related Legislation

- [Child Welfare Act 1939, New South Wales \(1939 - 1987\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Child Welfare Department, State Government of New South Wales \(1923 - 1970\)](#)

- [Minda \(1966 - 1991\)](#)

Resources

- McLean, Donald, *Children In Need: An account of the administration and functions of the Child Welfare Department, New South Wales, Australia: with an examination of the principles involved in helping deprived and wayward children*, 1955
 - Curthoys, Patricia, ["problem" children of this community': Christ Church St Laurence and the Children's Court, Sydney, 1936-41](#), Sydney Journal, 2013
 - A special correspondent, [How the Treatment of Child Delinquents Fails: No Proper Scheme To Cure Warped Mentalities](#), Australian Women's Weekly, 10 December 1939
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