

New York State. Also, more and more parents are taking advantage of these facilities.

Oldtimers believed it was a waste of time to try to teach retarded children anything. Even if they were taught to walk or dress or feed themselves, it was argued, they quickly forgot everything and regressed to immobility.

Berman and his staff have blasted that misconception. Not only has he got the children out of bed and away from their only world, the ceiling, but he has them playing together, working together and even has a 40-piece band, all of its members once regarded as hopelessly retarded.

One of the greatest miracles at Willowbrook is the fact that for the first time in New York State, mentally retarded children who are also blind and deaf are being rehabilitated. The program began only last fall.

Dr. Berman refuses to regard any case as hopeless. "You never know," he says, "when some glimmering of intelligence may be shown. One such child who had not shown any consciousness of his surroundings was one day startled into a mild display of intelligent interest in another child who was beating a toy drum. We have been able to bring that child along quite a bit."

Berman says that everything is suspect, even a slight sniffle. The pregnant mother, in his opinion, should follow a routine of mild exercise and keep in very close touch with her doctor.

In view of the lack of any definite knowledge, Berman needs funds for research.

"I can get all the equipment I want," he says. "There are many kind-hearted, interested people who will give of their money, or work in projects to raise funds to purchase any promising piece of equipment, even an electronic microscope.

"But research requires a person with an idea he wants to pursue to its ultimate solution. It is a special type of person, with a burning desire and the ability to correlate even the most minute fact into the full picture. He should be permitted to work at his own time and pace, without outside pressures and duties. He must be paid and the pay must be commensurate with his position.

"This means a lot of money. If we get that money the researchers will become available."

Among the stupendous tasks facing the researchers are children born with deformed head structures, accompanied by body crippling. One might suppose that an autopsy would reveal that the brain damage in this particular form of deficiency would be the same in all cases. But it's not so.

In cases examined after death, one child had a brain upside down; another had part of the brain missing, and another had only half a brain. In other words, there seemed to be no pattern from which the researchers can get started.

ous, you know."

Regardless of the money problem, however, Berman insists that at Willowbrook the present program will be developed more and more so that these "secret children" will find they have a place in the world.

"Above all," Berman says, "they will be made aware that they are surrounded by persons who are trying their best to aid them."

February 6, 1955