



200 Retarded Tots Housed In Hospital Closed by City



Although photographers were not allowed in the hospital, the World-Telegram's Stanley Wolfson got this picture through a window of a locked door. Children are lying on the floor of the dilapidated building.

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More than 200 mentally retarded children are being housed in dilapidated and obsolete Gouverneur Hospital.

The youngsters—including many infants—have quietly been assigned to Gouverneur since 1962—a year after the city abandoned the grim, fortress-like pile as hopelessly inadequate for use as a hospital.

The boys and girls are part of the youngest age group of patients at Willowbrook State School on Staten Island, which

Sen. Robert F. Kennedy yesterday described as intolerably overcrowded, understaffed and depressingly filthy.

The State Department of Mental Hygiene said that the 67-year-old Gouverneur building on the Lower East Side was leased as a branch of Willowbrook because "the facility lent itself to this age group." Gouverneur was obtained by the state to handle overflow patients from the Staten Island institution.

"We had to have a certain area for these children," a

spokesman said. "It's better to keep them all together."

The spokesman said that young children require special care and must be segregated from older mental retardates. She insisted, however, that the children were provided with ample recreation and other facilities within the ancient former hospital.

"They have all types of activities for the children," the spokesman said. "Toys, games, that sort of thing."

A reporter and photographer were denied permission to tour

the wards. But, stealing a glance into one of the wards from the rear window, the newsmen found a dismal scene.

A half-dozen youngsters were sprawled, semi-clothed, on several mattresses placed on the floor in a virtual throw-back to the snake-pit.

There was no sign of any toys, "recreational activities" or anything cheerful.

The general atmosphere is dreary and depressing.

It would be hard for motor-

Continued on Page 3
(over)