PUTTING FAMILIES FIRST

PREVENTION AND CHILD CARE

Also by Bob Holman

Trading in Children

Poverty: Explanations of Social Deprivation

Kids at the Door

Resourceful Friends

PUTTING FAMILIES FIRST

Prevention and Child Care
A study of prevention by statutory and
voluntary agencies

BOB HOLMAN

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To the memory of Donald Bowie
deputy director and director of the Church of England
Children's Society 1964 to 1982.

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Preface

I have spent my working life as a child-care officer with a local authority, as an academic, and as a member of a community project belonging to a voluntary society. In all these occupations preventing children from being unnecessarily removed from their natural parents and preventing them from having to endure social disadvantages within their families have been major concerns of my life. I am therefore grateful that my former employers, the Children's Society, allowed me the time and facilities to make a study of prevention in child care. Its director, Ian Sparks, gave me much encouragement both to start and complete the task.

My thanks are due to a number of colleagues and friends who took the time and effort to read and make suggestions about parts of the book. In particular, I make mention of Winifred Stone, Mary Joynson, Jane Rowe, Robin Chapman, Jo Tunnard and Jo Campling. The study entailed visiting and staying at over twenty voluntary and statutory projects and centres and within them interviewing many staff, volunteers and local residents. I am grateful to them all for their patience and kindness. I am especially indebted to Audrey Browne, who typed much of this book and who, for nearly a decade, put up with my idiosyncrasies. Lastly, as ever, my thanks go to Annette, Ruth and David for their continuing interest and support.

In writing this study I received great help from three child-care studies, which I read in draft forms. They have now been published and I take this opportunity to list them: J. Packman with J. Randall and N. Jacques, *Who Needs Care?*, Blackwell, 1986; M. Fisher, P. Marsh, D. Phillips with E. Sainsbury, *In and out of Care*, Batsford, 1986; and S. Millham, R. Bullock, K. Hosie and M. Haak, *Lost In Care*, Gower, 1986.

Also, since the chapters were completed, the government has published a white paper, *The Law on Child Care and Family Services* (HMSO, 1987) in which it accepts that the state should be ready to help parents to bring up their children and to lessen the

risk of family breakdown. It then proposes legislation based on some of the recommendations of the *Review of Child Care Law* (HMSO, 1985). If enacted, the legislation would facilitate prevention in child care, though the government does not give a date by which it will make resources available to local authorities to implement such new responsibilities.

This book is published in conjunction with the Children's Society, which is a firm advocate of prevention. However, I wish to make it clear that the views expressed in the book and any errors made are attributable to the author. My hope is that this volume will stimulate more extensive and more effective practice of prevention in child care.

Glasgow

BOB HOLMAN