

B.M.R. COMMENT



BUREAU OF
MUNICIPAL
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BETTER GOVERNMENT THROUGH RESEARCH

Suite 406, 4 Richmond St. E., Toronto 1, phone 363-9265

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DAY CARE - A GROWING PROBLEM

The government of Ontario, through the Minister of Social and Family Services, has recently announced its intention to make significant changes in provincial policies regarding day care. In addition to the subsidies already available for the operation of municipal day nurseries and for municipal purchase-of-services from private nurseries, the province plans to make available: (1) limited capital grants for the construction of municipal nurseries; and (2) subsidies for the operation of limited forms of family day care.

It is therefore a good time to review the present day care situation in Ontario and to set out what seem to be some of the major trends in day care needs and approaches. The basic argument presented in this COMMENT is that there is a need for expanded day care services and, in order to fill that need, there is a need for greater public involvement in many kinds of day care services. In this COMMENT we are primarily concerned with publicly supported facilities. As a result of our research, we feel that the public sector will have to become more extensively involved with day care if help is to be given where the need is greatest (for instance, to the low-income, single-parent families) and if day care is to be expanded beyond its present narrow association with welfare.

We are directing our comments particularly at local decision-makers who, as we point out below, have not yet taken full advantage of available day care subsidies. Our comments are also directed at provincial policy-makers, who have the power to expand and redirect day care policies. We hope however, that the comments will also be of value to those other people directly involved in the day care field.

WHAT IS DAY CARE?

Day care is a general term referring to the care of children during the hours when they are not being cared for by one or both parents. It is care that supplements parental care; not care that substitutes for it.

There are many kinds of day care. (See Appendix A). But in this COMMENT we are primarily concerned with various types of group day care i.e., the care of children in a group, in a non-family setting -- because it is group care that is most likely to be supervised and subsidized by the public sector. There are several kinds of group care. A "day nursery" is defined by the Ontario Day Nurseries Act, 1966, as "a place that receives for temporary custody for a continuous period not exceeding twenty-four hours more than three children under ten years of age not of common parentage." There are several types of day nurseries commonly referred to in

Ontario: day care centre, which is operated for full-day care and nursery school which is operated only for half-day sessions. There are day nurseries (of both types) for three basic age groups: infant (under 2), pre-school (2-5) and school age (5-10). And there are private-commercial (operated for a profit); private-non-profit (operated by non-profit agencies or parent groups); and municipal (generally operated by the local welfare or social services department).

THE NEED FOR DAY CARE

The Province of Ontario probably has the most extensive organized and supervised day care system in Canada. But, as has been argued many times by many groups, it still falls far short of the present and potential need. Since there is no "definitive" study of need for day care and since we have no new data to add to that already available¹, suffice it to say (a) that in 1967 in Ontario there were some 230,000 working mothers with children under 14--of whom 120,000 mothers had one or more pre-school children (under 6 years) and 110,000 had only school age children (6-13 years). Of these 400,000 children, we can estimate that about 270,000 (84%) require some form of day care arrangement (about 43,000 under 3 years 54,000 3-5 years; and 175,000, 6-13 years).² Not all of these children require day nurseries, although we might point out that an American study of day care showed that while only 3% of the working mothers interviewed presently use group care facilities, 47% said that they probably would use day care facilities if they were available.³

While not all of these children would need day nurseries, we should add that there are other potential users who were not covered by this survey of "working mothers". The above figures do not include, for example, non-working mothers who need day care (such as mothers who are mentally or physically unable to cope with their children or who simply need a break from them for a day); nor do they include mothers who would like to work if they could find day care facilities; and they don't

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1. Committee on Day Care of Children of the Metropolitan Toronto Social Planning Council, Day Care for Children in Metropolitan Toronto, 1968. Women's Bureau, Ontario Department of Labour, Women in Ontario's Economy 1966. Women's Bureau, Canada Department of Labour, Working Mothers and Their Child Care Arrangements, 1970.
 2. Figures derived from Working Mothers. Statistics in this report are based on a survey conducted in April 1967. "Working mother" is defined as (1) having ever been married; (2) having worked some time during the survey week; and (3) being mother of 1 or more children under age 14 living in the same dwelling. It does not include women in the labour force who were unemployed or not at work in the reference week; nor does it include 40,000 mothers working without pay in family businesses.
 3. Florence Ruderman, Child Care and Working Mothers: A Study of Arrangements Made for Daytime Care of Children. (New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc., 1968), p.307.

include the parents who, regardless of whether the mother is employed or not, would use a day nursery as a positive educational experience for their children. Thus there may well be a large group of potential users that the figures do not include. But even if we disregard these three groups of potential users, the maternal employment statistics do graphically point out the gap between likely working-population users and present facilities (158,000 pre-school children having working mothers and 27,150 full or half-day places in licensed day nurseries).

The Provincial and Municipal Roles

Under the Day Nurseries Act, the Province (through the Day Nurseries Branch of the Department of Social and Family Services): (1) supervises and regulates both private and public group care (i.e. every "day nursery" must be licensed by the Province); and (2) grants subsidies to municipalities for the construction and operation of various municipal day care services. (For details, see Appendix B).

The municipalities: (1) set the zoning, fire building and health regulations for all day nurseries; (2) may set up and operate municipal day nurseries; and (3) may purchase day care services from private nurseries. They receive grants for the last two activities. (For details, see Appendix B).

The provincial day care legislation, therefore, is permissive with regard to the establishment of municipal nurseries (i.e., municipalities do not have to set-up day care facilities); and is financially open-ended with regard to municipal operating and purchase-of-service expenses (i.e., every municipality that sets up a day nursery according to the regulations, will receive the specified funds).

PRESENT FACILITIES

As of December 31, 1970, there were 775 licensed day nurseries in Ontario, with a total capacity of 27,150. Of that 27,150 however, only 10,700 places were available for full day care -- and therefore of help to families with parents who work full time -- and the remaining 16,450 were for half day care.

As stated at the outset, we are primarily concerned with publicly supported day nurseries. How well, therefore, have municipalities responded to the provincial incentives to set-up day care facilities?

Although 199 nurseries in Ontario receive public subsidies, about 150 of these involve purchase-of-service agreements between municipalities and private nurseries (covering 6,380 children -- 4,700 full day and 1,680 half day), rather than the creation of new nurseries. With regard to the creation of municipally-operated day nurseries -- which could add to the sum total of day care facilities -- the municipal response has been very limited. As of December 31, 1971, only 34 municipalities (including townships or counties) had set up their own day nurseries. They had set up only 42 full-day nurseries (day care centres), with room for 2,155 children, and only 24 half-day nurseries (nursery schools), with

room for 1,050 children. And, of the 42 day care centres, only 23 had been set-up outside of Metro Toronto. These 23 had room for only about 1,000 children. Therefore, there was room for only about 1,000 children in municipally-operated day care centres outside of Toronto.

Furthermore, when we look more closely we find that many of those municipalities which had set up such nurseries were small (as small as 5,000 people) while many of those which had not set up such nurseries were among the largest cities in the province. In fact, as of April, 1971, 13 cities with a population of over 50,000 have no municipally operated day care centre;⁴ 10 of these have neither a municipally operated day care centre nor a nursery school; and 4 cities of over 100,000 (Hamilton, Kitchener, London, and Ottawa-Carlton) have no full-day municipal nursery. This lack of municipal nurseries cannot reflect a lack of need for day care facilities in these municipalities. Even a decade ago (1961), in Hamilton, Kitchener, London and Ottawa alone, there were already about 65,000 children under 15 whose mothers were in the labour force; about 14,100 children under 15 years in families with a female head; and, of these, about 4,200 children under 6 in families with a female head. A family with a female head is obviously dependent solely on her income. And, furthermore, about 50% of the wives in the labour force of these cities had children under 15.⁵ Obviously, these figures would have increased considerably since 1961. But there are still no day care centres to serve them.

There have been sharp increases both in provincial expenditures on day care (from \$250,000 in 1960 to \$4,744,000 as tabled for 1970-71) and on number and capacity of day care facilities supervised by the province (from 360 in 1960 to 775; having a capacity of 27,150, in 1970 and including an increase of subsidized nurseries from 31 in 1960 to 199 in 1970). But on the whole, the facilities fall far below the need. There is a heavy concentration of publicly supported facilities (particularly of full day care centres) in Metro Toronto while there is a severe shortage of facilities outside Toronto. Given the generous grants made available by the provincial government, it is surprising that so few municipalities have set-up adequate day care facilities.

DAY CARE: SOME MYTHS AND REALITIES

In January of this year the Toronto Daily Star held a public "Forum" on Day Care. The next day the Star's editorial stated that "At last night's Star Forum, the need for more day care and public subsidies

⁴ The following cities have over 50,000 people, but no municipally-operated day care centre: Brantford, Burlington, Guelph, Hamilton, Kitchener, Kingston, London, Oakville, Oshawa, Ottawa-Carlton, Peterborough, Sault Ste. Marie, and Sudbury. Hamilton, Ottawa, and Peterborough have one or more municipally operated nursery school.

⁵ Derived from Women's Bureau, Ontario Department of Labour, Women in Ontario's Economy, (Toronto: 1966); based on 1961 census.

was not even questioned." (January 12, 1971) Although the need for more day care and more subsidies may not have been questioned by the participant in this forum -- people who are interested and involved in day care -- their assumptions are not necessarily shared by other people who are less involved with day care but who nevertheless influence or make decisions about day care at the local and provincial levels. These include local mayors and councillors, provincial members of parliament, influential businessmen and labour leaders. If these people really shared these basic assumptions about day care, there would be more extensive day care facilities across the province. There would not be 13 urban areas with more than 50,000 people, but with no municipal day care centres.

It has been pointed out that while large subsidies are available for the operation of municipal day nurseries, the building and operation of such nurseries depends on local demand and initiative. Former Family and Social Services Minister John Yaremko once said that he would welcome pressure from municipalities with day care plans, remarking "Get after your mayors and your aldermen. The legislation is here." (Toronto Daily Star, January 12, 1971).

Obviously, while the money may be available, local initiative has not been forthcoming. Why not? The lack of support for (and perhaps even local resistance to) day care, may well be largely the result of both a lack of information and actual misinformation about such things as who needs day care and what day care can do. The following are responses to some of the more commonly held "myths":

(1) That parents are always the best people to bring up children. Day care centres do not substitute for parental care -- they supplement it. Therefore they should not be regarded as "substitute parents".

Beyond that, it is still not true that parents are always the best people to bring up children. The very existence of "battered babies" provides horrifying evidence against this belief.

This is an extreme case, of course. But more generally applicable evidence has been given by a number of groups, including the Ontario Committee, Commission on Emotional and Learning Disorders in Children (CELDIC) which argued for extended neighbourhood day care services on the following basis:

For a long time day care programs were hotly resisted on the basis of the false philosophy that all children are better with their own mothers until they reach school age. This is a highly dubious belief and in fact studies of day care show children functioning at levels higher than those that have not had this experience. (pp.73,74)

Day care in a variety of forms has strong possibilities for prevention. It can add to the socialization of the child. It can introduce him to diverse groups. It can enrich his fund of knowledge and curiosity, and it complements and often supplements what the family can provide

directly. In general, it can prepare the child both intellectually and socially for entrance to school. (p.117)⁶.

Other groups and individuals have also pointed out that high-density apartment living, makes it even more difficult for the modern family to provide all that a child needs. Many studies of early learning have shown that environmental variety is essential for healthy physical, emotional and intellectual growth. And studies of high-rise living have shown that children living in apartments get less exercise, make fewer friends and have fewer contacts with people and things outside their own home. All of this is harmful to optimum physical, emotional and intellectual growth.

What we see therefore, is that space, the opportunity for imaginative play, the intelligent provision of suitable toys, the facilities for movement and stimulus, are not merely desirable at the pre-school stage; they are essential. But the environment needed for such development is almost exactly the opposite of what we are providing in our communities today. The increased use of tower blocks to house higher densities in urban areas is creating a growing isolation for children at the very time when they need maximum space, companionship, exploration, and adventure.⁷

Consequently, parents living in high density areas who use day care should not be regarded as "deficient parents". It is perhaps the environment that should be regarded as "deficient". Nevertheless, the trend toward high density, apartment living in cities is liable to continue and increase. Day care facilities, which can provide "space, companionship, exploration and adventure", may become not only a pleasant addition, but a necessary supplement, to parental care.

In sum, most groups involved with day care agree (a) that not every parent is a good parent and (b) that group day care can be a positive supplement to parental care.

(2) That a woman's place is in the home. Some people believe that since a woman's place is in the home, taking care of children, society shouldn't provide day care centres to encourage her departure.

Whether or not one approves of it, one must recognize the fact that women just are not staying in the home. More and more women are working and even more are likely to start working. They make up a third

6. Ontario Committee, Commission on Emotional and Learning Disorders in Children. Report. September, 1970, pp.73-74; 117.

7. Willem van der Eyken, The Pre-School Years, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1967), p.51.

of the labour force (compared with 23% in 1950) and well over half of the women in the labour force are or have been married. In Ontario alone there are employed more than 230,000 mothers of over 400,000 children under age 14. The question, therefore, is not really whether or not women should stay in the home -- the women themselves have already decided that questions -- but what is going to happen to their children. By not providing adequate day care we are clearly not keeping women in the home. But we may be denying adequate care to a lot of children.

We should perhaps add an historical note. Contrary to popular opinion, mothers have not always been solely responsible for the care of children. Wealthy mothers have always hired nannies or governesses to help bring up their children, and low-income mothers have always gone to work to supplement family income, although, in the past, these families frequently had an aunt or grandmother living with them who was able to look after the children. Now, however, fewer people are rich enough to hire nannies and fewer people have a grandmother or an aunt living with them; so other supplementary care must be found.

There are many arguments that go beyond mere recognition of the fact that women are leaving the home. These say that since employment is good for the economy and for society as a whole (as is evidenced, for example, by the high percentage of women in the labour force; the active recruitment of female labour by business and industry; and the high proportion of females in certain jobs, such as clerical and in certain professions, such as teaching and nursing), society must make adequate provision for the supplementary care of children.

(3) That women who work do so from choice rather than from necessity. Some people feel that women who work don't "need" to and therefore that the community should not provide day care facilities. This might be called the "colour T.V. syndrome": i.e., "I'm not going to pay taxes to subsidize the children of a mother who's just working to buy a colour T.V." This, however, is a false image of the working mother.

This attitude, of course, completely over-looks the families where the mother is the sole bread-winner (some 1 in 10 in Canada). Furthermore it ignores the statistics which show that the lower the husband's income, the more likely the wife is to work; that the median annual income of working mothers and husbands (where present) is \$7,032; and that the median weekly earnings of full-time working mothers are about \$65.

This attitude also overlooks the fact that private day care (the proposed alternative to public day care) is generally so expensive (ranging from \$15 to \$25 a week per child in Toronto) that only relatively wealthy people can afford it. Most working mothers, whose median weekly earnings are about \$50 for full and part time workers, and \$65 for only full time workers, simply cannot afford to pay \$15-\$25 a week for one child or \$30 to \$50 a week for two children, and so on.

And finally, the validity of this attitude depends as well on how one defines "necessity". Is the desire to try to pull oneself up from subsistence living or up from welfare living, "necessity" or "choice"? Is the desire to save for a small home "necessity" or "choice"? Is the desire to save for a child's education "necessity" or "choice"? As one eminent authority on day care, Dr. Florence Ruderman has wisely observed:

in a society in which all of the goods money brings are expected to be the goals of all, few, except perhaps the poorest and most alienated, will resign themselves to deprivation, as they might in a more tradition-bound society. In an open society, whenever the husband's earnings seem inadequate to achieve the desired share of these goods, the family may try to redress the imbalance by placing additional members in the labour force; i.e., the wife as well as the husband may work. A high rate of maternal employment may represent social and economic mobility, in a largely egalitarian society.⁸

(4) That day care leads to family breakdown. This is a corollary of the above discussed "a woman's place is in the home". The reasoning is that if women leave the home, the family will break up.

Many argue, however, that just the opposite is frequently true -- i.e., that day care can prevent family breakdown, by relieving certain physical and mental strains on family life. "Day care can also be tremendously supportive of families through periods of emotional and physical health crisis."⁹ For example, there are husbands and wives who virtually never see one another. Because no day care facilities are available, they are forced to alternate work shifts -- one working during the day, the other during the night -- so that one or the other is always at home to care for the children. If day care facilities were available, they could work at the same time and be able to spend time with each other and their children. There is also a growing number of people who feel that it is unhealthy for the family if a woman who wishes to start working is forced to stay at home. "There is also good indication that for the mother who wishes to work, it is preferable that she do so rather than feel compelled unhappily and resentfully to remain at home."¹⁰

(5) That institutions are bad for children. In the minds of many, the word "institutions" conjures up visions of the underfed waifs of Charles Dickens' orphanages or assembly line babies in dull, sterile hospitals. Neither of these pictures accurately describes a good day care centre,

⁸ Ruderman, Child Care and Working Mothers, p.6.

⁹ CELDIC Report, p.76.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.74.

which seeks to combine love and warmth with an intellectually stimulating environment. Furthermore, as mentioned so often before, day care is supplementary care not substitute care -- a child is not denied family-life, as Dickens' unhappy orphans were.

Not only are day care centres not necessarily damaging to young children; they may also be positively good for them. Many psychologists have pointed out that the early years are the most important years in the intellectual growth of a child. Recognition of two crucial facts is essential: (1) that the child achieves about half of its adult level of intelligence by age four¹¹. and (2) that the environment has a marked effect on the level of intelligence reached -- with a rich environment having a positive effect and a dull environment having a negative effect. Studies have shown, for example, that four year old children from "disadvantaged", lower socio-economic class homes are one to three years less developed in language skills than middle class four year olds.¹² This lag, of course, tends to increase because language is generally regarded as the key to future learning. Although the effects of environment are most frequently and easily seen among "disadvantaged" children, negative environmental effects, of course, are not limited to lower-income homes. Homes where the mother is too busy washing and cleaning to talk to her child; or where the parents find T.V. more interesting than their off-spring or where the child is left in the care of a well-paid, nice-but-not-stimulating nurse; or where there is a clean apartment but limited social and physical contact with the outside world; all of these middle-to-upper income homes may turn out "deprived" children.

But, if the child has the opportunity to be in a stimulating environment for all or part of the day, the negative effects may well be partially or completely off-set.

Some people agree that group care experience is good for young children (aged 2-5); but maintain that group care experience is not good for infants (under 2). This belief is mistaken. It is generally based on results of tests on children who had been brought up exclusively in "institutions" -- such as those mentioned at the beginning of this section -- where the children had been kept clean, neat and well-fed; but had been denied any love or cuddling and any sort of environmental variety. It's not surprising that they showed negative effects.

There is a growing body of evidence, however, that very young children can indeed benefit from group-care. In Toronto, for example, the Mothercraft Society -- in conjunction with Dr. William Fowler of Ontario Institute for Studies in Education -- has been operating a day care centre for infants from about age 2 months to about 30 months. The children have come from both "advantaged" and "disadvantaged" homes. The Mothercraft program combines physical care, free play and structured learning periods. The teachers are instructed to hug children as well as

11. Benjamin S. Bloom, cited in van der Willem, p.16-17 and in Muriel Beadle, A Child's Mind, (Garden City, Doubleday and Co.Inc., 1970)p.xx, xxi.

12. Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Psychology and Early Childhood Education, 1968.

to talk to them and "teach" them. The results - though the number of children involved is limited - have been impressive: one group of 7 infants, for example, increased its mean IQ from 114.0 to 143.57 (+29.57) after 12 mos. in the program; and another group of 5 "disadvantaged" children showed a gain from 92.0 to 115.4 (+23.4) after 9 months in the program. Not only did both advantaged and disadvantaged infants show significant gains - they also seemed to be happy and healthy babies! Therefore, while it is true that group care is not good for some infants who are unusually susceptible to infection, group care does seem to be good for most.

Thus we can see that far from being harmful, day care centres may be positively beneficial to infants and young children alike. Many people seem to believe that the physical needs of young children (food, drink, warmth, cleanliness) are the only ones that must be tended, and that "education" or "intellectual stimulation" can wait until the child goes to school at age 5 or 6. As shown above, however, these beliefs are not well founded: waiting until school to start for education to begin is often too late - irreparable damage may already have been done, and irretrievable opportunities missed.

(6) That day care is - and should remain - a welfare service. Publicly supported - as opposed to private - day care is, at present, operated as a welfare service. Large parts of the provincial grants are limited to "persons in need"; the programs are operated by welfare departments; top priority is given to low-income families; and the vast majority of the users at least in Toronto, are low-income, single-parent families.

Although it is certainly reasonable to first provide public services to those most in need, the welfare-orientation definitely limits the potential expansion of day care facilities to cover other needy families, middle-income families who cannot afford private day, and families of all income groups who recognize the value of early education for their children. Furthermore, it may well discourage some very needy families, who are repelled by the "welfare" stigma.

But day care itself is not, of necessity, a "welfare" service. The fact that many upper-income families send their children to expensive nursery schools disproves this. As more and more people recognize the value of good day care to all types of children and families, the welfare connotation will we hope diminish. A major point that many groups are trying to make is that day care is not just needed by "problem" families; but by great numbers of "normal", middle-class families as well.

and (7) That if there is a need, the private market will fill it. Finally, many people feel that if there really is a need for day care, the private market can be trusted to fill it. Therefore, except perhaps for cases of extreme hardship, the community has no responsibility to support day care.

Unfortunately this isn't true. Provision of good day care simply is not a large profit-making operation -- just as good schools or good hospitals do not make large profits. Daycare provision can only be profitable (1) if it is very expensive (and therefore limited to the wealthy people who can afford \$15 to \$25 per week per child); or (2) if it reduces costs (for example, by offering low salaries -- \$50 to \$75 a week --

for staff who, consequently, are often not qualified to provide the best, most intellectually-stimulating care), and thereby reduces quality. The private market alone simply cannot provide enough day care, at a high enough standard, to provide for the needs of the lower and middle income families.

TRENDS

The present day care system, as shown earlier, is obviously not adequate. The following is a brief discussion of some of the major trends that seem to be emerging.

(1) Infant Day Care:

Increased group care for infants seems necessary and inevitable. There is growing evidence of need: for example, during a two week period in April the Metro Toronto Social Planning Council recorded about 60 requests for infant day care; and the Mothercraft Society, in addition to maintaining a waiting list of 75 for its program, receives calls daily from people whom it must discourage from even placing their names on the list. Furthermore, there is growing awareness of the value and acceptance of the idea of early education (for example in recent months both CTV and Chatelaine Magazine have publicized the idea by devoting time and space to the value of early education). Combined with the trend toward increased maternal employment, it is easy to predict that vastly increased infant day care will be required.

Many problems, of course, remain. For example, at what age should infants begin group care? At 6 months, as in the Toronto municipal infant nursery? Or 2-3 months, as in the Mothercraft program? Or from birth, as in Denmark? Whatever the age, it would seem reasonable to coordinate it with legislation for maternity leaves. At present, in Ontario there is legislation which requires all employers of 25 or more to provide for at least a 12 week maternity leave, of which 6 weeks must be post-natal (Woman's Equal Employment Opportunity Act, 1970).

Other problems include money and staffing. Infant day care is particularly expensive because of the large staffs required (Mothercraft, for example, has 2 teachers for every baby; 3 for every "Jr. Toddler" and 4 for every "Sr. Toddler"). Not only is this expensive, but it is also difficult to find many people trained in infant care and education. So, in addition to the money required for building and operating facilities for infants, money is also needed for hiring of adequately trained staff; and for developing and operating training programs in infant care. This money is needed by private as well as by public nurseries.

(2) Family Day Care

The era of supervised family day care is about to dawn. (Family day care is the care of children in a home other than their own.) The province has now decided to finance supervised day care. Initially, at least, this financing will be on a limited basis; the province will probably only subsidize family day care that operates in conjunction with

municipally operated day nurseries. Further expansion of aid to supervised private family day care (to include, for example, the financing of those non-profit agencies involved in operating and supervising such programs), is a good idea. Family day care can offer certain real benefits -- such as lower costs (because no large scale building or operating expenses are involved), provision for babies and children unable to adapt to group care, location in the child's own neighbourhood, and greater flexibility (in hours or days used).

But family day care is not the solution to all day care needs. For example, inner city neighbourhoods where the need for care may be greatest (since there is a high percentage of low-income single parent families) may also be the areas where suitable homes for family day care which meet provincial standards, will be least likely to be located. Furthermore, it may be very difficult to ensure that family day care operators provide adequate early education. Despite these problems, there certainly must be a large reservoir of homes and people who, given proper supervision and training, can be tapped to provide an additional supply of good care.

(3) Parent Co-operatives:

Municipal nurseries -- at least as they are presently operated -- cannot fill all day care needs. Some people need facilities at times other than the normal operating times of 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. (According to the report on Working Mothers, in 1967, 186,000 mothers in Canada worked on week-ends, p.28; and about 141,000 or 26% worked evening shifts, p.29.) Some people only need day care one or two days a week (municipal nurseries will not accept children on a part time basis). Some people don't have a facility near them. Some can't afford the transportation costs. Some people don't want to leave their neighbourhoods. Some people don't speak English and don't want to leave their children with people with whom they can't communicate. Some people don't want to use a "welfare" facility. Some people don't qualify for municipal care and can't afford private care. And some people want to have more to say about how their children are cared for and what they learn. As a result of these -- and probably many other -- feelings, parent co-operatives have burgeoned over the last few years.

A parent co-operative is a day nursery (full or half day) which is organized and run by parents. Parents' participation ranges from setting general policies (e.g., curricula, hours of operation) and helping with the book-keeping to building furniture, caring for the children and cleaning the nursery. The parent co-operatives can have all the advantages of low operating costs, participation, flexibility, and familiarity that other nurseries lack. But they can also run into some major problems -- particularly in downtown areas where good, reasonably-priced facilities are hard to find. The problems range from lack of money, and lack of familiarity with provincial and municipal regulations, to violent disagreements with provincial and local authorities about staffing, and general building standards. Lack of money and disagreements about staffing have been the major problems.

Licensed nurseries must satisfy local building, fire and health standards. Not only have some parents had trouble threading their way through the maze of regulations, but they have also -- particularly in inner-city areas -- found it nearly impossible to locate a suitable building that can be brought up to standards -- both local and provincial -- without tremendous cost (\$20,000 is not an unusual figure). They therefore have wondered (a) if all these standards are really necessary (e.g., fire-doors or great numbers of toilets or a number of separate playrooms); and (b) if, since the authorities insist upon their meeting these standards, there shouldn't be public funds available. There is no way an inner city group can realistically expect to raise \$20,000 by itself.

Once the hurdle of finding and renovating a suitable building has been passed, another one frequently appears -- disagreements about staff. Some groups have felt that the parents should be responsible for hiring staff (i.e., should set their own requirements for "qualified" staff, rather than abide by provincial definitions). The argument -- for both more flexible physical standards and more flexible staffing standards -- boils down to this: the Day Nursery Branch set up its standards before the era of parent co-ops. Its basic aim was to "control" private nurseries, which might otherwise abuse children; but these standards are not appropriate for parent co-operatives, because parents, in general, don't want to abuse their children, but to give them the very best that they can -- they naturally want what is clean, safe and educational. We suggest, therefore, that the standards for parent co-ops should reflect trust in parents and be made more flexible. The parents should be given help in deciding what is clean, healthy and educational and should be given money to implement the advice -- but the parents should make the final decision.

Most people involved in day care seem to agree that parent co-operatives are a very good idea and can serve needs that aren't being met elsewhere. But they tend to differ on the above issues.

At present, parent co-ops are not treated separately under provincial legislation. A good case can be made for reviewing the applicability of present standards to these co-ops. And an excellent case can be made for providing grants -- particularly capital or renovating grants -- to parent co-operatives.

(4) Universal Day Care:

More and more people and groups are beginning to say that there should be universal day care; that is, enough day care facilities so that everyone, regardless of economic or employment status, who wants to use a day care centre can do so. For example, CELDIC has recommended the creation of extensive neighbourhood day care centres as a "preventive" measure (preventive of future emotional and learning problems); the Metro Toronto Social Planning Council has said that "a change in attitude and community concern away from only the 'disadvantaged' child to 'all' children who need supplementary day care" is needed (pamphlet, "Who Needs Day Care"); and the Royal Commission on the Status of Women recommended the creation of an extensive day care system. Some emphasize the benefit to society of women working; others emphasize the right of women to choose whether or

not they wish to work; and others emphasize the benefit to children and to society as a whole of providing good, educationally stimulating day care.

If public day care is to be vastly expanded, many questions must be answered. For example, who should administer it? (If it is no longer to be exclusively a "welfare" service, can the Social and Family Services still administer it? or should Education or Health or an entirely new Child Welfare Department administer it?) And who should pay for it? (Should there be a sliding scale based on a means test, or should it be tax supported, like the public education system?)

Is universal day care a thing of the distant future? A very recent Gallup Poll showed that 61% of Canadians (and 63% of Ontarians) approved of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women recommendation that a network of day care nurseries be established and that parents pay fees on a sliding scale and both federal and provincial governments contribute to the cost. Perhaps universal day care is not so far away; but it largely depends on how responsive decision-makers at all levels are to the increased and increasing public demands for day care.

Appendix A

What Is Day Care?

As pointed out in the body of this report, there are many kinds of Day Care--all-day and part-day, regular and irregular, pre-school and school-age, in-home and out-of-home. The following is a glossary of some of the most frequently used terms.

Day Care: the care of children during the hours when they are not being cared for by one or both parents.

In-Home Day Care: arrangements for the care of children in their own home - ranging from care by a relative or friend to care by a hired child-minder.

Out-of-Home Day Care: arrangements for the care of children outside of their own home - ranging from care by a neighbor to care in a nursery school.

Family Day Care: a type of out-of-home care which provides care for one or more children in a home other than their own - ranging from full day care for pre-school children whose parents work full-time to part-time care for pre-schoolers whose parents work part time or during lunch, before and after school for "latch key" school age children whose parents work full time.

Group Day Care: the care of children in a group, in a non-family setting - such as a day nursery.

Day Nursery: group day care that is defined by the Day Nurseries Act as "a place that receives for temporary custody for a continuous period not exceeding twenty-four hours more than three children under ten years of age not of common parentage".

Day Care Centre: a day nursery that provides full-day care.

Nursery School: a day nursery that provides half-day care.

Infant Day Care: group care for children under about 2 years old.

Parent Co-operative: group day care that is organized and operated by parents, whose participation ranges from purely administrative work to caring for the children and cleaning the nursery.

Appendix B

The Provincial and Municipal Roles

Under the Day Nurseries Act, the Province:

- (1) has the over-all responsibility to regulate and supervise both private and public group care (every "day nursery", as defined in the Act, must be licensed by the province and must attain and maintain provincially set minimum standards for building and premises, staff, equipment and furnishing, and health supervision);
- (2) has the authority to grant to every municipality:
 - (a) 80% of the costs of renovation, maintenance and operation of day nurseries established by the municipality (of which 50% comes from the Federal government under the Canada Assistance Act Plan);
 - (b) 80% of any day care services purchased by the municipality from private nurseries for such children as are agreed upon;
- (3) in addition to the above subsidies to municipalities, the Province has plans:
 - (a) to start subsidizing, on a limited basis, 50% of the capital cost of building new municipal day nurseries (no further details were available about how much money will be available);
 - (b) to start subsidizing supervised family day care, probably only that which will operate in conjunction with municipal group facilities (no further details were available).

The municipalities have the following responsibilities and powers:

- (1) to set zoning, fire, building and health regulations for all day nurseries;
- (2) to set-up and operate municipal day nurseries;
- (3) to pay (until the implementation of the recently-announced policy changes) all new capital construction costs of municipal nurseries; (soon limited capital grants should become available);
- (4) to pay 20% of the renovating and operating costs of municipal day nurseries;
- (5) to pay 20% of day care services purchased by the municipality;
- (6) to set staff, program and other standards (above minimum provincial standards, if desired) for municipal nurseries;
- (7) to operate and receive some presently unknown subsidy for limited supervised day care.

Municipalities do not have to set up their own day nurseries, but if they do, they receive the above listed subsidies.