

**‘WE EDUCATE WAYWARD GIRLS HERE’: EDUCATIONAL POLICY REGARDING
TEEN MOTHERS IN VANCOUVER, 1959-2019.**

by

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Abstract

Prior to 1973, unwed and pregnant adolescents in British Columbia had few educational options. The shame of out of wedlock pregnancy, to say nothing of school administrators' intolerance of students in such a condition, did not permit mothers to continue their public schooling. Courts placed pregnant adolescents under the juvenile offenses' "incorrigibility" or "unmanageability" at the Willingdon School for Girls, a training facility for rehabilitation of delinquent girls. Some pregnant teens were sent to the United Church Home for Girls, a maternity home in Burnaby. These institutions closed in 1973. In 1982, another approach to the pregnant teen emerged when the Vancouver School Board opened the Tupper Mini School, an alternative program for teen mothers. This program continues to exist under the name Heron's Nest Education Centre for Young Parents.

This thesis uses archival material and the historical method to understand the educational objectives of the various British Columbia educational institutions that dealt with young unwed mothers and how policy reforms affected these objectives between 1959 and 2019. Early institutions focused on what they perceived to be the young mothers' need for rehabilitation and moral education. The Willingdon School for Girls emphasized instruction in proper social behaviour as a means of rehabilitating them to their acceptable place in society. The United Church Home's message reinforced the importance of establishing a nuclear, Christian family and traditional gender roles that kept women at home. As these institutions closed the moral concern of pregnancy lingered into the next decade; however, the social stigma began to be associated as a financial concern. As teen pregnancy became increasingly visible, the public became concerned with the demands on the taxpayer involved in supporting teens on social assistance. This concern resulted in the initiation of the Tupper Mini program. This program

sought to teach teen mothers the skills needed to support themselves independently upon graduation. Although this program continues to exist as Heron's Next Education Centre for Young Parents, it is reminiscent of the past because the policy language continues to address young mothers as 'at-risk' rather than students who happen to have children.

Lay Summary

Schooling administration expectations and public shame left teen mothers out of the public-school system in Vancouver prior to the 1980s, yet teens continued to receive an education at various provincial and church-run institutions. However, the Vancouver School Board provided teens the opportunity to continue their education in 1982 with the creation of the Tupper Mini School, a program specifically for teen mothers. This study examines what the educational objectives were at each institution, how specific policy reforms affected these educational objectives, and what changed over time. This study demonstrates that the educational objective of these institutions changed from those focused on a moral objective to schooling aiming to solve an economic concern. This educational change existed as the societal stigma against teen mothers shifted from delinquent, troubled adolescent to concerns of teen mothers receiving social assistance.

Preface

This thesis is the original, unpublished, and independent work of the author, Mallory Davies.

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List of Abbreviations

BCA British Columbia Archives

BSA Bob Stewart Archives

COV City of Vancouver Archives

IGBD Instructional Policy for Pregnant/Parenting Teens

IGBH Instructional Policy for Alternative Schools

IGBHA Instructional Policy for Alternative Schools, Choice Programs

VSB Vancouver School Board

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Dedication

For my grandmothers: Doris Istead and Carole (Davies) Ostrander.

Two great storytellers who have encouraged higher education with much love.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the Canadian post-World War II period, youth dating culture changed. Postwar youth pushed the boundaries of dating culture by “going steady,” often portrayed by the media and journalists as a pretense for marriage that parents feared led to premarital sex.¹ Although teenage dating culture transformed to permit sexual behaviours such as petting and necking, going too far was unacceptable since unwed pregnancy challenged nuclear family values. Girls who got pregnant were singled out for punishment for premarital sex.

One thing was clear: pregnant girls could not stay in school. The personal shame and loss of their reputations, alongside unsympathetic school staff, kept young women from continuing their academic studies in a public space. The Family and Children’s court judge and parents sent pregnant adolescents to various institutions like the Willingdon School for Girls (a training school) or the United Church Home for Girls (a maternity home) to hide pregnancies and to learn from their deviant behaviour. The education at these institutions was not based on the public-school curriculum. Rather, education at these institutions focused on teaching gendered social values, which society perceived was important to the development of respectable female adults in the postwar period.

The Willingdon School for Girls originally opened as the Vancouver Provincial Industrial School in 1914 after the provincial government passed *The Industrial Home for Girls Act* in 1912. By 1959, the Industrial School had moved to Burnaby and was called the Willingdon School for Girls. Parents and guardians could complain to a judge about their daughter’s

¹ Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 102.

delinquent behaviour. The court would charge young women with theft, public intoxication, and vagrancy; however, the most common charge was “incorrigibility.” The court’s “incorrigibility” charge was for women who did not act within the idealized gender boundaries for women.² Incorrigibility was an indicator of various delinquent transgressions but also included pregnancy among unwed adolescents.³ Willingdon operated in a moral reform system that kept “delinquent” youth hidden from the rest of society until they were able to function in keeping with the prescribed social norms.

By approximately the 1920s, churches had opened maternity homes across Vancouver. Churches often initiated, maintained, and cared for women, in maternity homes. Unwed, pregnant women of any age entered maternity homes to hide an illegitimate pregnancy. These homes, entrenched in moral purity, aimed to help women maintain respectability by hiding their pregnancy and themselves. Three churches in Vancouver operated maternity homes: the Catholic Church (Our Lady of Mercy), the Salvation Army (Maywood Home for Girls), and the United Church (United Church Home for Girls). In 1913, the Presbyterian and Methodist churches opened what would become The United Church Home for Girls as a rescue home for young women. Churches opened rescue homes to “save” fallen women, often from the commercialization of sex.⁴ In 1925, the Presbyterian and Methodist churches merged with each other and the Congregationalists to create the United Church of Canada.

² Mona Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling, and the Family in Postwar Canada* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 77.

³ Case Files, *GR-2897 Willingdon School for Girls fonds*, BC Archives, Victoria, BC.

⁴ For more information on rescue homes: Shelly Ikebuchi, *From Slave Girls to Salvation: Gender, Race, and Victoria's Chinese Rescue Home, 1886-1923* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2015).

For decades, public schools in Canada and the United States excluded unwed pregnant adolescents. School officials feared that pregnant students influenced other students to be sexually active. Although exclusion was common practice, school districts and the province of British Columbia did not seem to have a particular policy that excluded young pregnant women. Despite no specific policy, some school administrators may have asked mothers not to come back to school. Some unwed mothers may also have made the decision to exclude themselves from school because of their pregnancies. Other unwed mothers' parents may have forced them to leave school. Instead of attending public schools and following the academic curriculum there, unwed mothers received informal education through provincial and church-run institutions such as training schools and maternity homes. This had changed by 1982. That year, the Vancouver School Board acknowledged pregnant and parenting students by accommodating these students in the public education system. For the first time, young women accessed academic curricular content to graduate, much like the other students in the school. This thesis is about all of these policies and about the education of adolescent mothers who became pregnant in Vancouver from 1959 to 2019.

A historical analysis of teen motherhood forces a person to read previously used terms that may be uncomfortable to read, such as: "incorrigible," "unmanageable," "deviant," "illegitimate," "welfare dependent." Historical documents often present teen motherhood as a "problem." These words, although harsh, are important to use in historical research as they provide context for how educational institutions and the broader public viewed mothers. To disregard them would negate the past and invalidate the work that has been done since. Therefore, I will use these terms where it is appropriate to describe the attitudes and descriptions of mothers in their respective periods.

Prior to 1940, the public identified youth as “adolescents.” The term “teenager” did not come into Canadians’ common vocabulary until after 1940.⁵ However, despite the “teenager” moniker commonly used by the 1960s, the public continued to refer to teen mothers as “unwed mothers.” The identifier “unwed mother” is vague in its description but encompasses women who had children outside of marriage. Unwed mother is the most common classification among student-mothers in primary and secondary documents prior to 1970. Unwed mother was not specific to teenagers, however; it was more likely that “unwed” was directed towards young women because women over twenty-five were more likely to be married. Wanda Pillow claims in her book, *Unfit Subjects*, that the term “teen pregnancy” was not used in the context of the US until the mid-1970s.⁶ Pillow argues that the public was preoccupied with unwed pregnancies of all ages during the 1960s rather than focusing specifically on teenagers.⁷ For my purposes, I will use the terms, “unwed” and “teen mother” interchangeably as each corresponds to the correct time period in which people used it. Prior to the 1970s, unwed mothers would be distinguished by age in referring to “adolescent or child mothers.” “Teen mothers” were also previously considered “unmarried mothers” and “single mothers.” Vancouver newspapers in the late 1950s and early 1960s also refer to younger teen’s as “child mothers,” these girls were aged eleven, twelve, thirteen, and fourteen. “Teen mothers” refers to those who are aged thirteen to nineteen. Further, the historical documents also tend to describe adolescents as “girls” rather than young women. Staff at these institutions may have used “girls” to articulate that the age of pregnancy

⁵ Cynthia Commachio, *The Dominion of Youth*, Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 204.; G. Stanley Hall’s 1904 book *Adolescence* characterized youth as a separate category from children, and coined the term adolescence.

⁶ Wanda Pillow, *Unfit Subjects: Educational Policy and the Teen Mother*. New York: Routledge, 2004, 17.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 17

was much younger than the expectation of the time, which was primarily reserved for married women.

Rationale

This research contributes to the historiography of teen mothers' education by adding new understanding about how educational objectives for them changed over time. The research appeals to contemporary educational policy analysis by considering the implications of what we can learn from the past about teen mothers' education in the present. I analyze the changes that occurred as policy evolved from young women being educated in training school institutions to them receiving a public education. Despite the relative silence around teen pregnancy presently, this contemporary analysis arrives at a time when teen mothers' programs continue to be categorized as education for "at-risk" youth. This categorization continues to subject mothers to unnecessary stigma. It presents mothers as behaviourally troubled rather than as students who also happen to have children.

Educational policies specific to teen mothers have been discussed to date primarily through a sociological lens to consider the stigma attached to mothers in British Columbia schools. The stigmatization of teen mothers as "in need of saving" and/or as "dependent upon welfare" implicate a system that continues to hold teen mothers in contempt for their pregnancy. What about the type of educational *options* that are currently available for mothers? How can understanding past educational policies directed towards teen mothers tell us more about what teen motherhood means today? I identify how policy reform has historically established education for teen mothers in Vancouver between 1959 to 2019 and how this has changed over time. Young mothers' education has changed significantly from the conditions at the punitive Willingdon School for Girls (1959-1973), to the church-run maternity home, United Church

Home for Girls, and by 1982 to the introduction of the Vancouver School Board's Tupper Mini School, which was enacted alongside the school board's new (in 1982) instructional policy for teen mothers.

1.1 Thesis Objectives

The primary objective of this thesis is to explore what type of education teen mothers received and the policy reforms that changed this education between 1959 and 2019. The guiding questions for this study are:

- (1) What were the educational objectives (i.e., moral rehabilitation, school completion, and employment training to avoid social assistance, etc.) of the various institutions, including Willingdon, maternity homes, Tupper Mini/Heron's Nest, that existed between 1959 and 2019? How and why did they change over time, and what were the significant effects of those changes?
- (2) How did specific policy reforms affect educational objectives for teen mothers?
- (3) What can the history of these educational objectives tell us about teen mothers' education in Vancouver today?

My study divides teen mothers' educational history into two periods. The first period takes place between 1959 and 1982. In this time period, social attitudes suggested that people viewed teen mothers as troubled youth in need of reform. Mothers' education was undertaken within child welfare institutions. Institutional education taught mothers the importance of observing social norms in order to fit in with society. To be clear, institutions valued a moral education over an academic one. A moral education taught traditional gender roles associated with "normal" young women, whereas academic education refers to the schooling consistent

with the public-school curriculum. The Willingdon School for Girls and the United Church Home for Girls in the Vancouver area offered this type of moral education from 1959 until 1973. By the 1970s, second-wave feminists fought for recognition and an end to discrimination against women, especially by making it acceptable for married women to work outside of the home.⁸ This movement assisted in the changing social mores that allowed teen mothers to be visible in public. Although the social mores regarding teen mothers became more progressive, some politicians and the media continued to be concerned over teen mothers' existence.

The second period takes place from 1982 to 2019. In 1982, Vancouver School Board trustees created a policy that provided the opportunity for teen mothers to enter the public school system to receive academic education and complete diploma requirements. In the same year, the VSB opened the Tupper Mini School, an alternative program for teen mothers to continue their education. In 2020, this program continues to exist under the Heron's Nest Education Centre for Young Parents. While these programs offers teen mothers an academic education, the policy language continues to view mothers as "at-risk." The at-risk terminology suggests that all the mothers in this program are troubled rather than requiring support to continue their education.

In this thesis, I argue that programs for teen mothers have never treated these young mothers as students who also happen to be mothers. Teen mothers' education changed from a rehabilitation education that taught moral, gendered, and domestic norms to an alternative public-school education that taught the value of economic independence instead of receiving social assistance. In chapter 2, I examine the literature on the history of teen mothers, starting

⁸ Lynne Marks et al., "'A Job That Should Be Respected': Contested Visions of Motherhood and English Canada's Second Wave Women's Movements, 1970-1990," *Women's History Review* 25, no. 5 (2016): 771-90.

with the eugenic, delinquency, and normalcy eras. Next, I review contemporary literature related to teen mothers' education and the implications of stigma and "at-risk" status in public school and alternative programs.

In chapter 3, I examine the Willingdon School for Girls' institutional education for teen mothers. I argue that the educational objective of this institution was to train young girls to become socially rehabilitated. I examine the daily operations at the school through the Department of Social Welfare's annual reports, as well as through pupil files from the Willingdon School for Girls fonds at the Royal BC Museum's British Columbia Archives in Victoria. Willingdon did offer an academic program; nevertheless, the socialization agenda predominated over the academic through other daily operations. Socialization education was primarily taught through the role modelling efforts of middle-class community organizations, such as the Elizabeth Fry Society. The school's provisional release policy allowed mothers to practise in public what Willingdon had taught them privately. This institution borrowed heavily from the field of corrections, despite the school's effort to take a therapeutic approach to rehabilitating the so-called anti-social girl to social norms.

In chapter 4, I examine The United Church Home for Girls maternity home in Burnaby. The educational objective of this particular maternity home was to ensure that teen mothers learned the importance of a Christian home environment that valued the nuclear family, with a husband who worked outside the home and a wife who did not. I examined the correspondence files in The United Church Home for Girls fonds at the Bob Stewart Archives, the United Church archival repository for British Columbia. The fees the maternity home charged meant that most young women there likely came from middle-class families. Teens received an education that valued religion as a guide to proper family values. The maternity home used role modelling

techniques similar to those of Willingdon through the maternity homes women's auxiliary and staff at the home. Correspondence schooling that followed the public school curriculum was available at the home, but it was limited, even compared to the Willingdon School for Girls. The education mothers received at this home pinpointed what the home's operators saw as the inadequacies of adolescent mothers taking care of children and that prompted the operators to advocate removal of babies for adoption.

In chapter 5, I examine the changes from the closure of Willingdon and the United Church Home in 1973 to the opening of the Vancouver School Board's Tupper Mini alternative program for teen mothers in 1982. I argue that the closure of the institutional education for teen mothers and the women's movement allowed for young pregnant women to be visible in public. This visibility, however, also produced concern over the number of teen mothers. It contributed as well to the assumption that teen mothers were receiving social assistance. This visibility produced tensions between organizations like the Social Planning and Review Council of British Columbia's progressive attitudes, which supported teen mothers in public, and the remaining retrograde attitudes that sought to institutionalize teen pregnancy. Segments of the public, concerned that taxpayer dollars were supporting mothers and their children, worried that the increasing number of teen mothers would increase the taxes of individual citizens. To combat this concern, the Vancouver School Board created the Tupper Mini program to ensure that mothers learned the value of economic independence as opposed to accepting social assistance.

1.2 Sources

I analyze collections found at the BC Archives, City of Vancouver Archives, the UBC Library, and the United Church of Canada's Bob Stewart Archives in Burnaby. These collections include pupil records, correspondence between the schools and the government, course

development plans, newspaper articles, research reports, and annual reports. This information paints a picture of what kind of education teen mothers were supposed to receive (objectives) and I will assess what kind of education they actually did receive and the policies that governed these schools.

The Willingdon School for Girls material in the BC Archives includes pupil records. The nature of the archival material does not isolate programming information specifically for pregnant students at Willingdon from programming for other young women at the institution. I will mostly discuss Willingdon's educational goals and, whenever possible, programming specific to unwed mothers. There were approximately 23 identifiable unwed mothers at the school during the Willingdon years. However, I speculate that there were more cases that were not as easily identifiable.

Four maternity homes operated in British Columbia throughout the twentieth century.⁹ The Salvation Army ran Maywood Home. The Catholic Church ran Our Lady of Peace. The United Church ran the United Church Home for Girls. All of these homes were located in the greater Vancouver area. The Anglican Church operated Marion Hilliard Home in Kamloops. This thesis focuses on The United Church Home for Girls in Burnaby from 1959 to its closure in 1973. The reason why I chose to focus on this Home is that the Bob Stewart Archives of the United Church are the most accessible and available files in Vancouver. The Marion Hilliard Home is outside of the regional scope of this project, and therefore I did not look at it. Likewise, the United Church Home fonds at the Bob Stewart Archives simplified the access process

⁹ British Columbia Legislative Assembly. "Annual Report for the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1967." BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, British Columbia: 1968, 35; the province licensed three maternity homes. There may have been private maternity homes; however, there is no proof this existed in British Columbia.

compared to the Archdiocese of Vancouver for the Our Lady of Mercy files. The Maywood Home files are likely located at Library and Archives Canada. I did not view these files because of the distance and time required to do that.

Although the United Church Home fonds provide material to understand the inner workings of the Home, the records do not include case files as the Willingdon School for Girls materials do. The archival footprint of The United Church Home consists of various annual reports, meeting minutes, correspondence between various stakeholders, and advertising brochures. While this information is valuable, the authority figures' perspective is the only lens provided. I read these official sources with a critical eye based on the emerging stories of women across Canada who have spoken out about their experiences in these homes. Many of these women attended various institutions across the country, and while experiences vary in each home, their collective stories provide a critical lens to home operations.

While a proportion of this study's source material comes from case files and annual reports, other primary source material comes from provincial policy legislation, vital statistics, and community reports. These documents assist me in undertaking the second question guiding this research: how did specific policy reforms affect educational objectives for teen mothers? This material comes from the University of British Columbia's online databases, which have digitized provincial reports, policies, and vital statistics. Many community reports come from the University of British Columbia's extensive libraries.

Lastly, I focus on the Vancouver School Board's Tupper Mini program. The City of Vancouver archives and the Vancouver Public Library were critical to finding information about this program, such as that found in Vancouver School Board annual reports, Tupper Mini's Board of Directors' reports, and other official documents. However, the Board policies were

much more difficult to scout. In particular, the original 1982 Vancouver School Board policy that explicitly opened up the possibility for young mothers to enter the public-school realm was difficult to find. I cite what I believe is the original policy, from the VSB Policy Manual at the Vancouver Public Library. The staff at the Vancouver Public Library explained that the librarians listed all of the available policies together into one manual. While some of the other VSB policies in this manual have amendment dates after 1982, I believe that the instructional policy for teen parents (IGBD) is the correct policy because there were no amendment dates attached to the policy. The changes to this policy are more difficult to track, and my information largely comes from using the *Wayback Machine*, an internet archival system that allows users to retrieve saved data from websites at a particular time.¹⁰

1.3 Research Method

Historical Method

In this study, I use the historical method. The historical method involves the close reading of archival documents to understand changes and continuity over time. I use this method in order to reveal changes and continuity over time and the causes and effects of educational policy.

Some of the historical archival material used in this study includes case files. To prepare to review these files, I consulted the edited collection, *On the Case: Explorations in Social History*. In this collection, Margaret Little refers to the problems when the source of information about a social group is particular to case files.¹¹ For example, Little is clear in her assertion that

¹⁰ For the Wayback Machine, see: <https://archive.org/web/>

¹¹ Margaret Little, "Ontario Mothers' Allowance Case Files as a Site of Construction," in *On the Case: Explorations in Social History*, eds. Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1998) 227

case files on mothers' allowances are rich in detail about the individual mothers' situation but that the mothers' only contributions are a signature at the end of the page. The details in mothers' files were written by and for the investigators.¹² The sources I analyzed rarely contained any input from adolescent mothers. In my analysis, I took into consideration that authority figures wrote these files. While the authority figures did not seem to be overtly malicious, teen pregnancy was widely viewed in the time period as a social problem and a form of delinquency, particularly on the part of young women. I read case files against the grain to understand the narrative of the authority figures in order to interpret institutional educational objectives.

While case file interpretation warrants a careful reading, the biggest obstacle in this research was interpreting the Willingdon School for Girls (in the Department of Social Welfare annual reports) and The United Church Home annual reports. These reports presented the institutional program activities in a positive light, suggesting that the institutions took good care of mothers. For example, volunteers were important to both institutional programs. Women and church organizations often openly engaged with young women at these institutions. The general public often views volunteerism as a positive and supportive interaction. Franca Iacovetta partially addresses this in *On the Case*. She questions the power authority of family and juvenile court case files. She cautions against categorizing girls through case files and recommends instead that researchers use the files to understand the context of their appearance in court.¹³ Although not case files, annual reports are also written from positions of authority and need to be

¹² Ibid, 229

¹³ Franca Iacovetta, "Parents, Daughters, and Family Court Intrusions into Working-Class Life," in *On the Case: Explorations in Social History*, ed. Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 332.

read in the larger context of the program rather than as the individual actions of the institutional program.

In addition, the authoritative narrative of the annual reports described activities that were deemed “normal” for youth, such as swimming and crafting. These activities suggest that the women were treated well and with dignity. However, the positive activities at these institutions and the negative treatment of young women are not mutually exclusive. It is not the individual activities that suggest the inherent goodness of a program; rather, these activities contributed to the overall educational program that the school was trying to inculcate in their students.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The history of teen mothers' education is rooted in two areas of study: juvenile delinquency and training schools, and the contemporary analysis of teen mothers' schooling. Many scholars have studied young women's morality, gendered expectations, such as discouraging premarital sex, and the consequences for delinquent behaviour during the pre- and post-Second World War periods. I focus primarily on the studies located in Canada, save a few relevant studies in the American context. Historians tend to focus prominently on why and how young women (including mothers) were sent to training institutions. In these studies, historians have also indirectly addressed the moral education of teen mothers through the court and training school systems. These systems cover the eugenic practices that were prevalent between the 1910s and the 1940s and adoption expectations in the postwar years. Other scholars have done a more contemporary (1990s-present) analysis of teen mothers' schooling. An example of this is Deirdre Kelly's sociological study of the stigma directed towards teen mothers in British Columbia schools. I address the contemporary studies that focus on the type of education available for teen mothers. However, there seems to be little literature to connect the early period (1900-1960s) characterized by moral education and the more contemporary period (1990s-present) characterized by academic education that would allow people to address and analyze the change in teen mothers' education over time.

These two sets of literature tell us a lot about the attitudes surrounding societal expectations for teen mothers such as the indirect moral training for young women and the stigma towards teen mothers that persists in schools. This review shows the need for a historical study on teen mothers' education precisely to link the historical and sociological work that has been done in order to understand how the past moral training for teen mothers has informed the

current academic teen parent programs in public schools. The past moral education that institutions gave to mothers and the current contemporary academic program policies are rooted in similar stigmatizing language. This research fills the gap to explain how and why this stigma continues to identify teen mothers as “at-risk” rather than students who happen to have children.

2.1 **Morals: Gender Norms and Deviant Behaviour**

Unwed Mothers and Eugenics

Historians of eugenics have examined the history of single mothers in institutions because eugenicists often characterized single mothers as feeble-minded and targeted them for institutionalization. In the early 20th century, some reform institutions (an umbrella term for various historical institutions seeking to incarcerate or “rehabilitate” undesirable people) operated under eugenic policies and often applied these policies to unwed mothers. Carolyn Strange and Jennifer Stephen define eugenics in Canada as when “professionals found solutions to manage ‘problem’ people.”¹ Many eugenicists focused their concerns on young, sexually active women. Eugenicists believed that feeble-mindedness was a hereditary trait and that by controlling these behaviours, institutions limited the procreation of “high grade morons” through incarceration, re-education and/or sterilization.² In 1912, Dr. C. K. Clarke sent young women he deemed “high grade morons” for their sexual behaviour to institutions like the Ontario Provincial Asylum for Idiots in Orillia.³ To curb mental deficiency and encourage procreation in “normal” families, one Ontario doctor even called for a “Ministry of Motherhood” to financially

¹ Carolyn Strange and Jennifer A. Stephen, “Eugenics in Canada: A Checkered History, 1850s-1990s,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, eds. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine, Oxford Handbooks (Oxford University Press, 2010).

² Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Fixing the Poor: Eugenic Sterilization and Child Welfare in the Twentieth Century* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2017), 37.

³ Ibid.

compensate normal women for the expense of their pregnancies.⁴ Molly Ladd-Taylor analyzes eugenic sterilization and the Faribault State School as part of the public welfare system in Minnesota.⁵ Ladd-Taylor's work focuses on the institution's sterilization of single mothers in order to solve the problems of pre- and extramarital sex and poverty. Staff, the courts, and eugenics experts attributed disability to unwed mothers. They were considered feeble-minded, and this justified sterilization and segregation.⁶ She argues that the desire to limit social allowance payments (i.e., Aid to Dependent Children, Social Security, etc.) came from a belief that the moral failings of welfare recipients were more detrimental and costly than mothers passing feeble-mindedness on to their children, especially during the Depression.⁷ In fact, Ladd-Taylor explains that 49 per cent of sterilization at the Faribault State School was to welfare recipients.⁸ It was easier for specific counties in Minnesota to monitor feeble-minded women and social assistance payments because welfare board members were responsible for both files.⁹

Constance Backhouse, a legal historian, provides evidence that the eugenics inspired the 1919 Ontario Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Mentally Defective and Feeble-Minded report that equated extramarital sexual behaviour with female mental deficiency.¹⁰ The commission ultimately called for the incarceration of promiscuous young women. The commission emerged at around the same time as the Ontario Female Refuges Act in 1919.¹¹

⁴ Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada 1885-1945*, (Toronto, ON: McClelland and Stewart, 1990), 72

⁵ Ladd-Taylor, *Fixing the Poor: Eugenic Sterilization and Child Welfare in the Twentieth Century*.

⁶ Ladd-Taylor, 4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 2, 11

⁸ *Ibid.*, 217

⁹ *Ibid.*, 157

¹⁰ Constance Backhouse, *Carnal Crimes: Sexual Assault Law in Canada, 1900-1975* (Toronto, ON: Osgoode Society for Legal History, 2008).

¹¹ Backhouse, *Carnal Crimes*, 116; C. Elizabeth Koester writes of this commission and its lack of discussion around the sterilization of women. C. Elizabeth Koester, "An Evil Hitherto Unchecked: Eugenics and the 1917 Ontario

Approximately half of the women prosecuted under this act had an illegitimate child or were pregnant when appearing in court.¹² Historian Joan Sangster explains that prominent eugenicists Dr. Helen MacMurchy and Dr. C.K. Clarke believed that feeble-mindedness contributed significantly to promiscuity and prostitution.¹³ Velma Demerson was an unwed mother sentenced to Mercer Reformatory. She recounted her experience with Dr. Edna Mary Guest, who performed gynecological experiments (disguised as treatment) on the pregnant Demerson.¹⁴ Dr. Guest, a socially prominent physician, part of the feminist community in Toronto, and a eugenicist, was highly regarded because of her specialization in venereal disease, which most doctors saw as treating victims of an “undesirable class.”¹⁵

Eugenicists viewed unwed mothers as moral imbeciles, a specific classification of feeble-minded. By 1908, Henry Goddard (a psychologist) had studied feeble-mindedness at the New Jersey Training School in Vineland, New Jersey. As a result of his research, Goddard proposed intelligence quotient (IQ) testing be completed on institutionalized feeble-minded women.¹⁶ Goddard created the new category “moron” as an addition to Alfred Binet’s mental age existing development categories. He believed that “morons” were mentally between the ages of eight and twelve.¹⁷ Goddard defined “morons” to include moral imbeciles because these women were not only feeble-minded but were unable to determine moral right and wrong (such as sex outside of marriage). He believed that young women identified as “morons” were the most

Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Mentally Defected and Feeble-Minded,” *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 33, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 59-81.

¹² Backhouse, *Carnal Crimes*, p 116.

¹³ Sangster, *Regulating Girls and Women*.

¹⁴ Velma Demerson, *Incorrigible* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2004), 64.

¹⁵ Backhouse, *Carnal Crimes*, 107.

¹⁶ Wendy Kline, *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 21.

¹⁷ Kline, 22.

dangerous because their “normal” or “average” appearance allowed for these women to supposedly seduce and foster sexual relationships with “normal” men.¹⁸ This was a problem because eugenicists thought that offspring were likely to inherit moronic intelligence. Ladd-Taylor explains that eugenicists believed that out of four children between a feeble-minded woman and a normal man, at least one inherited feeble-mindedness.¹⁹ Professionals’ definitions of morality and moral maturity at this time attributed unwed mothers’ immorality to their feeble-minded and “subnormal” capabilities.²⁰ Wendy Kline, Carolyn Strange, and Molly Ladd-Taylor all suggest that feeble-minded unwed mothers were seen as those who abundantly procreated feeble-minded children.²¹ Professionals also viewed unwed mothers’ offspring as taking on the feeble-minded characteristics of their mother. They believed these children in turn would also irresponsibly procreate because of their presumed mental and moral disabilities. The eugenics movement targeted adolescent and single mothers as an undesirable class. This scholarly work provides significant examples of professionals’ beliefs that institutionalization and sometimes sterilization was the solution to mothers’ immoral actions.

Other historians discuss the 20th-century notion of “race suicide” and the contribution of unwed mothers to it. Race suicide was (and is) a concept used by those who believe that particular races/ethnicities (mostly British and white) would cease to exist because of immigration and increased reproduction in Canada.²² Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren

¹⁸ Kline, 24–25.

¹⁹ Ladd-Taylor, *Fixing the Poor: Eugenic Sterilization and Child Welfare in the Twentieth Century*, 37.

²⁰ Kline, *Building a Better Race*, 25–26.

²¹ Carolyn Strange, *Toronto’s Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880–1930* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 10; Kline, *Building a Better Race*, 28; Ladd-Taylor, *Fixing the Poor*, 38.

²² Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State: The Changing Practices and Politics of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1880–1980* (Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press, 1996), 11, Tamara Myers also refers to race suicide in Montreal where there was fear of the loss of French Canadian culture in *Caught*, 6

take up the historical idea of race suicide when they delineate the changes in the history of contraception in Canada. McLaren and McLaren explain that Helen MacMurchy described birth control or contraception for women as “not normal,” except under “grave reasons of a medical nature.”²³ MacMurchy’s negative approach towards contraception was to ensure that morally healthy women continued to procreate and reproduce the British white race. Contraception complicated professionals’ moral regulations for unwed mothers as women were punished for producing children outside of marriage but also legally barred from using mechanical birth control.

Eugenicists focused on single mothers because of the belief that these mothers’ immoral actions were inherited. Eugenicists thought that these mothers needed to be institutionalized because of their tendency to seduce men, produce feeble-minded children, and contribute to race suicide. The courts institutionalized many unwed mothers in order to stop the production of feeble-minded children.

Indirect Moral Education

Feminist and childhood historians have studied female juvenile delinquency and the courts, social workers, and societal regulation of young women’s actions through training schools. Adolescent motherhood is part of these larger studies on delinquency and training schools because premarital sex was considered immoral and could land girls and women in training institutions. While teen motherhood is not the focus of delinquency studies, just as it is not the focus of historians of education, historians who look at delinquency have demonstrated nonetheless the type of moral expectations the court placed upon pregnant adolescents and

²³ McLaren and Tigar McLaren, 67.

subsequent efforts to reform them. This reformation or training involved moral instruction. Although historians have been reluctant to name this instruction as education, this is what it was. Joan Sangster, Tamara Myers, and Indiana Matters write about delinquency in Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia, respectively. However, it is important to note that both Sangster and Myers' work suggests that these institutions denied access to pregnant girls because they were viewed as "contaminating" the other girls. Their two books and one essay share a common focus on the moral regulation and (re)education of girls and women through training schools in the pre-war, interwar, and postwar years.

Sangster's *Girl Trouble: Female Delinquency in English Canada* describes the past experiences of women charged with "incorrigibility" and "unmanageability" under the *Juvenile Delinquents Act* (JDA) in Ontario for their delinquent transgressions.²⁴ The court's charges intended to re-create the "good" girl through "protection" of the JDA. Sangster further claims that "protection" for these girls was intended to monitor and incarcerate girls in need of a moral education.²⁵ The court charged delinquent women with "incorrigibility." Parents sometimes brought their daughters to court in an attempt to control undesirable behaviours. To prove incorrigibility, court doctors administered gynecological exams to determine whether the hymen was intact.²⁶ If it was not, the courts presumed that the girl had had intercourse. If she had had intercourse, she was incorrigible.

Tamara Myers in *Caught: Montreal's Modern Girls and the Law, 1869-1945*, discusses how various religions in Montreal dealt with rehabilitating and redeeming *jeune filles modernes*

²⁴ Joan Sangster, *Girl Trouble: Female Delinquency in English Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2002).

²⁵ Sangster, *Girl Trouble*, 3.

²⁶ Ibid, 82-3.

(*modern girls*) through a moral education. These women, often working adolescents, participated in cultural activities like dance halls and movie theatres. Further, she argues that this label allowed professionals, social workers, and probation officers to create categories that placed these young women in court. Montreal's 1912-juvenile court would sentence young women to training schools for rehabilitation. Professionals stigmatized these women as dismissing the idealized and prescribed gender norms of the time. However, unique to Quebec was how religion was involved in the rehabilitation of these young women. The francophone Catholic institution École de Réforme provided religious and moral training, which "taught [girls] to appreciate their standing in life."²⁷ The anglophone Protestant institution, the Girls' Cottage Industrial School, was based on rehabilitation through social work. The Jewish community did not have a school, but much of the messaging in this community worked to diminish delinquency in fear that young women would cast a negative shadow on the Jewish community.²⁸ In both Ontario and Quebec, child savers wanted to control the behaviour of young girls through reform, industrial, or training schools. This discussion of girls' activities in public is particularly salient to unwed mothers' educational history because young women received an institutional and moral education that attempted to modify inappropriate behaviour to reflect the gendered norms of this period.

Indiana Matters discusses female delinquency in British Columbia between 1908 and 1940.²⁹ Matters's work is similar to that of Sangster and Myers; however, she focuses on the provincial legislation that allowed the courts to send girls to the Provincial Industrial Home for

²⁷ Tamara Myers, *Caught*, 248.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Indiana Matters, "Sinners or Sinned Against? Historical Aspects of Female Delinquency in British Columbia," in *Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on the History of Women's Work in British Columbia*, eds Barbara Latham and Roberta Jane Pazdo (Victoria, BC: Camosun College, 1984). Indiana Matters was an archivist at the BC Archives in Victoria. She also writes from the author name Diane Matters.

Girls in Vancouver. Matters's work is connected to the educational policies for teen mothers because of the provincial legislation that sent young women to industrial schools for their inappropriate sexual behaviours. This industrial school attempted to "reform" and re-educate young women in order to change delinquent behaviour. The 1912 *Industrial Home for Girls Act* in British Columbia provided grounds for the province to open the Industrial Home in 1914. Matters clarifies that those sent to this school had often been sexually active and that a small number of women in attendance were pregnant.³⁰

Franca Iacovetta claims that gossip from neighbours and the community also played a role in the construction and monitoring of female delinquency when families would believe the rumours that brought their daughters to court.³¹ Sangster, Iacovetta, Myers, and Matters all show that the broader community and institutions, such as neighbours, court officials, social workers, and probation officers, policed young women for their immoral actions, such as becoming pregnant outside of marriage. The public perceived these actions as a threat to acceptable social norms, and these women risked sentencing to training schools.

As for the actual moral training that these scholars indirectly address, Sangster and Myers discuss the type of training activities at the Ontario and Quebec institutions. At the Ontario Training School for Girls, later named Grandview Training School for Girls, the school provided young women with classroom instruction, vocational training, and occupational activities (i.e., cooking and sewing) as part of their rehabilitation education.³² Similarly, in Quebec, the Catholic training school offered religious education, domestic work, and to a lesser extent academic

³⁰ Matters, "Sinners or Sinned Against," 268-70.

³¹ Franca Iacovetta, "Gossip, Contest and Power in the Making of Suburban Bad Girls: Toronto, 1945-60," *The Canadian Historical Review* 80, no. 4 (1999): 585-623.

³² Sangster, *Girl Trouble*, 114.

instruction that coincided with public school curriculum. The Girls Industrial Cottage (Protestant) in Montreal prepared women for expectations associated with marriage and motherhood and academic classes, like Canadian history.³³

Boys' Juvenile Delinquency

While the boys' institutions had similar moral education expectations in "training," boys did not go to training schools for sexual behaviours like premarital sex. These histories show how the court and child welfare system held differing moral expectations of boys and girls. Bryan Hogeveen focuses on the types of crimes that landed boys at the Victoria Industrial School in Mimico, Ontario."³⁴ Although his work chiefly focuses on training schools for boys, Hogeveen illuminates societal expectations that regulated and rehabilitated boys' behaviour through training. Boys' sexuality was not policed the same as girls' sexuality, except when homosexual sex was suspected or proven.³⁵ Although Myers does not explicitly concentrate on boys' delinquency, she validates that boys' sexuality was never viewed as sexually deviant except when it came to homosexual relations.³⁶ Girls' sexuality was easier to see and police, especially when it resulted in pregnancy. These histories are important in the context of unwed pregnancy and largely female delinquency because boys' delinquency demonstrates the disparity between the moral expectations of young women and young men.

³³ Myers, *Caught*, 119

³⁴ Bryan Hogeveen, "Accounting for Violence at the Victoria Industrial School," *Social History* 42, no. 83 (2009): 147-74.

³⁵ Ibid., 155-6. See also Tamara Myers, "Embodying Delinquency: Boys' Bodies, Sexuality, and Juvenile Justice History in Early-Twentieth-Century Quebec," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 14 (2005): 383-414.

³⁶ Tamara Myers, "Sex, Gender and the History of the Adolescent Body: 30 Years after 'The Crimes of Precocious Sexuality,'" *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 2, no. 1 (2009): 97. Also mentioned in Myers, *Caught*.

Boys' moral education at training schools reflected activities particular to the masculine ideals of obedience, Christian morality, and respectability. Hogeveen writes of the Victoria Industrial School in Ontario where these ideals were upheld through industrial training, religion, education, farming, and athletics with the objective of forming obedient, respectful, and disciplined men.³⁷ Although the ideas of masculinity are similar to what was expected of all citizens, the context in which they were prescribed was not based on their life as fathers or husbands but as working citizens.

Intersectionality

Sangster's work also takes into account the *intersections* of race, class, and gender as part of the laws that sent these girls away. It is important to understand these intersections because they explain which girls were sent away and how and why they may have been treated differently. For example, Sangster maintains that many of the girls sent to the Ontario Training School for Girls were working class and/or were Indigenous. The court sent middle-class girls to reform schools on occasion, but these women were less likely to come into conflict with the law even if they participated in similar sexual activities as working-class young women.³⁸ Velma Demerson's 2004 memoir, *Incorrigible*, provides an oral history account of her experience when she was detained at the Mercer Reformatory in Toronto for her pregnancy, fathered by Harry Yip, her Chinese fiancé, in 1939.³⁹ Velma's father sent her to Mercer in an attempt to curb her relationship with Yip and to punish Velma for her pregnancy. If not for Velma's unwed

³⁷ Hogeveen, "Accounting for Violence," 152; Bryan Hogeveen, "'Can't You Be a Man?' Rebuilding Wayward Masculinities and Regulating Juvenile Deviance in Ontario, 1860-1930," PhD Diss., University of Toronto, 2003, p. 49.

³⁸ Sangster, *Regulating Girls*, 139.

³⁹ Velma Demerson, *Incorrigible* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2004).

pregnancy, her relationship with Yip alone was enough for the court to charge her with incorrigibility. According to the courts, Demerson crossed two social boundaries: she was pregnant and unwed and was engaged to a Chinese man.

Sangster's work provides a discussion of female juvenile delinquency as a result of three indicators of immorality: (1) venereal disease, (2) prostitution, and (3) unwed pregnancy.⁴⁰ Sangster also questions the role of racism in admissions to the institution. In particular, she acknowledges the racial assumptions through Canada's colonial project to assimilate Indigenous children, girls in particular, to conform to the "female purity and domesticity" through reform institutions, more specifically the Ontario Training School for Girls. In her analysis, Sangster finds that admissions were initially billed as an inclusionary method to ensure that Indigenous girls and communities were being treated fairly.⁴¹ However, Sangster concludes by explaining that this intervention resulted in close observations to "protect" these girls from the influence of Indigenous culture(s) through their family members and ultimately transferring them to the "safety" of training school.⁴² The government sent Indigenous women to training schools throughout Canada.⁴³ The medical, judicial, and social work fields' concerns over venereal disease, unwed pregnancy, and "prostitution" influenced the regulation of these young women.

Mothers' Allowances

⁴⁰ See Sangster's work: Sangster, *Regulating Girls*; Joan Sangster, "Girls in Conflict with the Law: Exploring the Construction of Female Juvenile Delinquency in Ontario, 1940-1960," *Canadian Journal of Women and Law* 12, no. 1 (2000): 1-31.

⁴¹ Joan Sangster, "'She is Hostile to Our Ways': First Nations Girls Sentenced to the Ontario Training School for Girls, 1933-1960," *American Society for Legal History* 20, no. 1 (2002): 67-8.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 95

⁴³ Matters, "Sinners or Sinned Against?"; Tamara Myers, *Caught*.

While many scholars discuss the eugenic and delinquency underpinnings of unwed pregnancy, other scholars have written on the legislation that governed unwed mothers' eligibility for mothers' pensions. The provincial government provided mothers' pensions (later called mothers' allowances) to widowed mothers or mothers with ill husbands as a means of ensuring that these women did not have to work for wages. While mothers' pensions/allowances were not specifically tied to the pregnant adolescent's education, what the history of the allowances does show is government's moral attitudes towards single motherhood in the first half of the 20th century. Megan Davies and Veronica Strong-Boag explain that the mothers' pensions had two purposes.⁴⁴ First, as social legislation to compensate women for their work as mothers; and second, as a way to impose middle class values on the working class.⁴⁵ Mothers' allowance legislation differed across provinces. Margaret Little, in line with Davies's work, claimed that British Columbia legislation allowed for unwed mothers to qualify for pensions (after trying and failing to find the father), whereas many other provinces refused to support unwed mothers.⁴⁶

The *Mothers Allowance Act* in Ontario worked in tandem with the *Children of Unmarried Parents Act* as provincial legislation that provided funding to raise illegitimate children. However, the *Mothers Allowance Act* exempted unwed mothers from receiving

⁴⁴ Megan Davies, "Services Rendered, Rearing Children for the State: Mothers' Pensions in British Columbia, 1919-1931," in *Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on the History of Women's Work in British Columbia*, eds Barbara Latham and Roberta Jane Pazdo (Victoria, BC: Camosun College, 1984), 249; Veronica Strong-Boag, "'Wages for Housework': Mothers' Allowances and the Beginnings of Social Security in Canada," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 14, no. 1 (1979).

⁴⁵ Davies, "Services Rendered," 249; and Strong-Boag, "Wages for Housework," 25.

⁴⁶ Margaret Little, "Claiming a Unique Space: The Introduction of Mothers' Pensions in British Columbia," *BC Studies* 105-6 (1995), 80-102.

government assistance until 1956.⁴⁷ Instead, the government compelled mothers to obtain assistance from the father before applying. After 1956, the government set conditions for unwed mothers' applications, such as a two-year waiting period to ensure that the mother was fit to care for her child. Even afterwards, the province refused mothers; the province likely saw these women as an "unfit" mother. After 1956, of the 607 non-cohabitating single mothers who applied for assistance, only four collected mothers' allowance.⁴⁸ Chambers explains that the legislation was especially irrelevant to unwed mothers living alone.⁴⁹

Lori Chambers explores the provincial *Children of Unmarried Parents Act* (1921) as an early form of welfare policy. She focuses on the legal, social, and monetary entitlements related to "illegitimacy."⁵⁰ Chambers argues that unwed mothers faced scrutiny in their applications for social assistance. This act compelled unwed mothers to obtain financial support from their illegitimate child's father. The provincial reluctance to support single mothers reveals the attitude that single mothers were immoral and undeserving of financial support.

Susan Boyd and Jennifer Flood unpack the legal connotations of "illegitimate" children as those who had no inheritance rights and includes parents who had no guardianship rights over their illegitimate children.⁵¹ British Columbia also had a *Children of Unmarried Parents Act* (1922); however, Boyd and Flood explain that this act was governed by an appointed "Superintendent of Neglected Children" whose duty was to obtain all information on illegitimate

⁴⁷ Lori Chambers, *Misconceptions: Unmarried Motherhood and the Ontario Children of Unmarried Parents Act, 1921-1969* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 131.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 131

⁴⁹ Ibid., 131

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Susan Boyd and Jennifer Flood, "Illegitimacy in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Nova Scotia: A Legislative History," *Allard Research Commons: Emeritus Publications*, 1

children and, in many cases, to appoint himself as a guardian of the child with the unmarried mother.⁵² The provincial legislation valued father figures as creating the moral family.

“Deserving mothers” had husbands, most of them sick or deceased. These conditions display the moral undertones that supported particular “deserving” mothers. Mothers’ pensions (and allowances) are important to the history of teen mothers’ education because of the moral implications of what type of mothers the government supported.

Postwar Youth

The postwar-period studies of youth, psychology, and sexuality are important to the historical study of teen mothers’ education because the professionals’ idea of ‘normalcy’ excluded teen pregnancy. They demonstrate that society considered pregnant youth abnormal and unwilling or unable to conform to idealized sexual norms of the postwar period. However, youth challenged dating-culture norms of the pre-war period to the postwar to include a ‘going steady’ culture that often meant premarital sex. This is important because the going steady culture is what made young women vulnerable to exclusion from society because of their pregnancies. In the postwar period, as Mona Gleason argues, the professionalization of psychology constructed ‘normal’ indicators based on “full-time mothers, attentive fathers, and bright children.” Gleason further explains that psychologists deemed “immigrants, working-class, or Indigenous families” as abnormal.⁵³ Psychologists expected parents and teachers to teach youth and children to adopt socially acceptable roles linked to gender norms of the time.

⁵² Ibid., 16-17

⁵³ Mona Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling, and the Family in Postwar Canada* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 5.

Like Gleason, Mary Louise Adams argues that psychology experts expected adolescents to engage in heterosexual relationships as a sign of normal sexuality.⁵⁴

Adoption Expectations

Adoption historians have focused on the coercive nature of adoption in maternity homes and hospitals in the 1960s. Adoption within these institutions reflected social workers' expectation that a mother surrendering a child meant that she was ready to live a respectable life. In postwar Canada, families, social workers, and institutions often encouraged pregnant teens to give their children up for adoption. The adoption policies are intimately connected to the educational policies because adoption allowed teen mothers to continue their education in public schools after giving birth as if nothing had happened. Anne Petrie's 1998 book, *Gone to an Aunt's*, explains the public shame unwed mothers felt encouraged their stay at maternity homes.⁵⁵ Or, as the title suggests, who were said to have "gone to an aunt's" in an effort to hide a pregnancy. Valerie Andrews's book, *White, Unwed Mother*, claims maternity homes were the vessel of adoptions.⁵⁶ Adopters preferred white, female babies, often referred to as "blue-ribbon babies, which often meant that white women were highly represented in most homes."⁵⁷ By approximately the 1960s, maternity homes were full.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 166-7.

⁵⁵ Anne Petrie, *Gone to an Aunt's: Remembering Canada's Homes for Unwed Mothers* (Toronto, ON: McClelland and Stewart, 1998).

⁵⁶ Valerie Andrews, *White, Unwed Mothers: The Adoption Mandate in Postwar Canada* (Bradford, ON: Demeter Press, 2018).

⁵⁷ Veronica Strong-Boag, *Finding Ourselves, Finding Families: English Canada Encounters Adoption from the 19th Century to the 1990s* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2006), ix.

⁵⁸ Strong-Boag, *Finding Ourselves, Finding Families*, 7

By the 1960s, the “illegitimacy problem” was prevalent yet remained taboo. Andrews and Strong-Boag contend that the policy to separate (likely through coercion) children from unwed mothers was particular to white women in order to sustain the construction of “good” mothers who were white and married.⁵⁹ The 1960s was unique in terms of the move to encourage adoption of babies of unwed mothers. In the pre-war period, social workers often encouraged unwed mothers to keep their children.⁶⁰ However, the postwar values of a nuclear family caused social workers to strongly encourage adoption.⁶¹ Strong-Boag further clarifies that the public viewed mothers who gave their children up for adoption as emotionally healthy. Indigenous mothers often retained support from their communities whereas Black mothers kept their children because experts identified their children as inferior.⁶² However, while Indigenous mothers were thought to retain their babies, the Sixties Scoop era removed many Indigenous children from their mothers.

Strong-Boag, Andrews, and Solinger all discuss race in maternity homes.⁶³ The discussion of race amidst adoption policies is important to this literature review since race had and has an impact on how the public, social workers, and institutions treat young women and what kind of education young women may or may not have received. In the United States, white people often assumed that Black mothers belonged to a “culture of community” that did not believe in relinquishing its children.⁶⁴ Solinger indicates that racist assumptions excluded black

⁵⁹ Ibid., 8; Andrews “White, Unwed Mothers,” 3

⁶⁰ Veronica Strong-Boag, “Interrupted Relations: The Adoption of Children in 20th Century British Columbia,” *BC Studies* 1, no. 144:14-15

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Strong-Boag, *Finding Families, Finding Ourselves*, 8–9.

⁶³ Rickie Solinger, *Wake up Little Susie: Single Pregnancy and Race before Roe v. Wade*, (New York: Routledge, 1992), 6.

⁶⁴ Solinger, *Wake Up Little Susie*, 197.

women from the option of surrendering their illegitimate children.⁶⁵ While some American maternity homes operated solely for Black women at the turn of the 20th century, it is unclear whether these homes existed into the 1960s.⁶⁶

Strong-Boag and Andrews both take into account Indigenous mothers' adoption policy in Canada as it is rooted in a history of the forced relinquishment of the Sixties Scoop. Welfare workers during this period prided themselves on "non-differentiation" between Indigenous and white children.⁶⁷ Although they prided themselves on non-differentiation, in reality more Indigenous children were taken into care. Andrews contends that the Sixties Scoop policy was developed as part of the government's cultural assimilation policies rather than as part of the respectability policies aimed at white women.⁶⁸ Although women from different races were coerced into giving up their children, the reasoning for these policies were applied differently among white women, women of colour, and Indigenous women.

Much of the history of the content of adolescent mothers' education is rooted in the circumstances that landed young women in training schools. These histories are important because they identify the courts, eugenicists, institutions, and professionals' attitudes towards teen mothers and the appropriate way to educate them. Early 20th century professionals' moral concerns regarding unwed pregnancy meant that mothers were initially thought feeble-minded and in need of institutionalization and often sterilization. In Canada, provincial and federal acts policed young women's immoral, namely sexual, actions. The courts, concerned with the

⁶⁵ Ibid., 156.

⁶⁶ Kristin Luker, *Dubious Conceptions: The Politics of Teenage Pregnancy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 20.

⁶⁷ Strong-Boag, *Finding Ourselves, Finding Families*, 150.

⁶⁸ Andrews, *White Unwed Mothers*, 3.

“incorrigibility” of youth and the harm of their deviant transgressions sent young women to training schools in order to reform, re-educate, and ensure young women understood societal expectations. However, Indigenous adolescents were overly represented in the population at training schools. At first, this was because social workers believed that the settler society had left Indigenous adolescents out of child welfare services. Social workers believed that Indigenous adolescents were entitled to the same opportunities as their white counterparts. Later, this training became part of the larger scheme to assimilate Indigenous women to white, middle-class expectations. In addition, the courts also sent boys to training institutions; however, their “charges” were not sexualized except in cases of homosexuality. The moral concern with women as compared to men was more evident through the provision, or not, of mothers’ pensions. The government chose who was a “proper” single mother deserving of financial support. The government valued widowed mothers or mothers with sick husbands because of the perceived morality of marriage as opposed to the immorality of unwed motherhood.

In the postwar period, youth culture changed to reflect the importance of dating culture in keeping with traditional gender norms for men and women within the bounds of heterosexuality. However, psychologists and social workers continued to monitor the (im)moral actions of youth, especially young women. Some young women went to maternity homes to hide a pregnancy. These maternity homes encouraged adoption to save the mother’s reputation; however, these homes accepted a higher majority of white mothers because it was easier to find an adopting family for white babies. Pregnant adolescents and their education are largely associated with this literature because of the moral education that comes with training schools and the postwar gendered expectations. If they stepped outside of these expectations, adolescents faced societal scrutiny and shame and often left the school system.

In the next section of this literature review, I will mostly review sociological studies about teen mothers education, save for Vinovskis's historical study. While much of the historical literature is rooted in the moral education, sociological studies of teen mothers are based in the stigma mothers face in public schooling. These studies demonstrate what teen mothers' academic education looks like; however, they do not link how the previous moral education for teen mothers changed to academic education.

2.2 Contemporary Education for Teen Mothers

Some scholars have studied contemporary education for teen mothers from a sociological perspective. This work is significant because the policies they have looked at allowed for the continued stigmatizations mothers face in the education system. Wanda Pillow writes about education rights in the United States, providing a feminist and critical analysis of the national educational laws and policy that impact teen mothers.⁶⁹ She specifically writes about teen pregnancy and the intersections of class and race with respect to access, equality, and equity after the Title IX ruling.⁷⁰ Title IX of the Education Amendments Act in 1972 (and enacted in 1975) prohibited discrimination against women and girls in educational institutions, which included preventing their expulsion because of pregnancy. This was enforced by pulling federal funds from schools that continued to expel teen mothers.⁷¹

While federal laws attempt to prevent discrimination against mothers, Pillow and others argues that educational equity for teen mothers has not been achieved. She suggests that there should be a focus on the connection between access to the academic stream courses and pregnant

⁶⁹ Wanda S. Pillow, *Unfit Subjects : Education Policy and the Teen Mother, 1972-2002* (Routledge, 2004), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203465608>.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Solinger, *Wake Up Little Susie*; Luker, *Dubious Conceptions*, 121.

students drop-out rate in efforts to achieve educational equity.⁷² However, she cautions against attributing an “at risk” label to teen girls because of the stigmatizing behavioural implications associated with this phrase.⁷³ Students stigmatized by these behavioural implications face further stigmatizations if they cannot meet the educational standards for an independent life. Luker argues that Americans view schooling as a way to access upward mobility and failure to graduate is the first step into poverty and dependency.⁷⁴ Melanie Guldi’s econometric article compliments Luker’s study by identifying whether the Title IX policy has actually increased educational attainment among teen mothers.⁷⁵ Her results indicate that educational attainment in teen mothers since the 1972 decision has improved, especially for Black teen mothers.⁷⁶ While attainment has improved in the United States, it has not yet been achieved.

Teen Education in British Columbia

While contemporary American studies of teen mothers’s education have largely focused on the policies that aimed to allow pregnant teens to attend school, scholars in Canada have also focused on the relationship between the stigma mothers face and educational attainment. These studies are relevant to mine because they show educators’ and administrators’ preconceived notions and the stigma about teen pregnancy in schools. In the British Columbia context, sociologists have written on the various stigmatizations teen mothers face. Kelly’s study shows that the stigma that exists, not only through societal discourse but that is embedded within the attitudes of educators and other students.

⁷² Pillow, *Unfit Subjects*, 221–2.

⁷³ Pillow, 222.

⁷⁴ Luker, *Dubious Conceptions*, 119

⁷⁵ Melanie Guldi, “Title IX and the Education of Teen Mothers,” *Economics of Education Review* 55, no. 1 (2016): 113–14.

⁷⁶ Guldi, Title IX and the Education of Teen Mothers,” 113–14.

Deirdre Kelly's ethnographic study of teen mothers' education in British Columbia identifies the stigma attached to young women who attend *city school* and *town school*, two distinct teen mothers' education programs. Kelly tackles the stigma by detailing four discourses the general public uses to explain mothers, welfare, and poverty: "the bureaucratic expert, the reprivatization groups, oppositional movements, and teen mothers' self-interpretations."⁷⁷

The *bureaucratic expert* discourse identifies young women as coming from broken or abusive homes. In this discourse, her child fills the void of love in the mother's life. In order to solve this, the bureaucratic experts perceive that teen mothers need constant monitoring and therapy.⁷⁸ *Reprivatization groups* believe that teen mothers symbolize the "wrong-family" model, which means that teen mothers idolize a non-nuclear family. This discourse tends to oppose "welfare support" and special programming for young women as well as access to abortion and birth control because of the assumption that teen mothers want a non-traditional family and will go to any lengths to be outside the norm.⁷⁹ *Oppositional movements* discourse argues that society needs to accept teen motherhood. This also includes supporting a woman's right to choose and respect for diverse family types.⁸⁰ Lastly, Kelly describes the *teen mothers' self-interpretations* discourse, which is noted as a rare discourse. This discourse draws on the teen mothers' right to decision-making, especially around discussions of adoption. It is these decisions that should not be stigmatized.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Deirdre Kelly, *Pregnant with Meaning: Teen Mothers and the Politics of Inclusive Schooling* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2000).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 81; see also Deirdre Kelly, "Stigma Stories: Four Discourses about Teen Mothers, Welfare and Poverty," *Youth and Society* 27, no. 4 (1996): 421-49

While Kelly discusses the particular educational programs for teen mothers at both *town* and *city* schools, Nicole Holman (Tupper Mini School teacher) and Margaret Arcus (a UBC professor in the Family Studies Department) write about a very particular teen education program in Vancouver. Holman and Arcus's article provides the context for how the educational programs for teen mothers operated in Vancouver. Tupper Mini was an alternative education program that opened in Vancouver in 1982. Their paper is not based upon a research study but rather the process of developing the program in Vancouver. The article describes the development of Tupper Mini's comprehensive, integrated, and multi-agency program for adolescent mothers and their children.⁸² Tupper Mini, they write, was built upon four pillars of support: "cooperative/interactive support, on-site services, mechanisms for integration, and flexibility."⁸³

Scholars have investigated other teen mother education program in the province, including Christine Kullman-Taylor in her social work thesis. She examines the Teen Mothers Alternative Program in Prince George, British Columbia (School District 57), established in 1997. This study matters because she explains how social workers in the schools worked with students, especially Indigenous students. Kullman-Taylor takes an autobiographical approach to how to work in partnership with students rather than oppressively with these students as objects of study. This program works in tandem with the Elizabeth Fry Society (an organization whose current mandate is to support women who have been involved in the justice system) to address

⁸² Nicole Holman and Margaret Arcus, "Helping Adolescent Mothers and Their Children: An Integrated Multi-Agency Approach," *Family Relations* 36, no. 2 (1987): 119.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 123

the “educational, social, emotional, and behavioural needs of students.”⁸⁴ Kullman-Taylor found that Indigenous women are highly overrepresented in this program. This thesis is informed by the learning goals of the author’s social work practicum at the school.

Alternative Education

Much of the current teen mother education programs in British Columbia are founded in alternative programs in public schools. An alternative program provides students with additional educational support separate from the mainstream schooling. Rothstein’s study of British Columbian alternative education identifies the early 1970s alternative education objectives as rehabilitative or therapeutic.⁸⁵ The Vancouver School Board took over “therapeutic schooling” for the purpose of attracting students who were struggling in mainstream education in order to support their educational goals in a personalized manner.⁸⁶ Ellis and Yoon’s work analyzes historical alternative education policy. They argue that the school choice that presently exists in Vancouver is built upon earlier rehabilitative policies tracing back to the 1960s, with choice emerging between the 1970s and mid-1980s in the Vancouver School Board.⁸⁷ The historical analysis of educational policy is significant because rehabilitative alternative programs and policies help us to understand how teen mother programs develop.

An “Epidemic” of Adolescent Pregnancy?

⁸⁴ Christine Kullman-Taylor, *Teen Mother Alternative Education Program*, Masters Thesis, UBC, 2015, 10; for more on the history of Elizabeth Fry refer to Joan Sangster, “Reforming Women’s Reformatories: Elizabeth Fry, Penal Reform, and the State, 1950-1970,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 85, no. 2 (June 10, 2004): 227–52.

⁸⁵ Harley Steven Rothstein, *Alternative Schools in British Columbia, 1960-1975*, PhD diss., UBC, 1999, 2.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, ii.

⁸⁷ Jason Ellis and Ee-Seul Yoon, “From Alternative Schools to School Choice in the Vancouver School District, 1960s to the Neoliberal Present,” *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy* 188, no. 1 (2019): 86-103.

Maris Vinovskis' work is important to consider because it establishes the American government's sex education policy in schools as an attempt to lower the rate of teen pregnancy during the 1970s and 1980s. Vinovskis is a historian and his study, *An "Epidemic" of Adolescent Pregnancy? Some Historical and Policy Considerations*, researched teen pregnancy and education at length in the United States. He argues that the rise of teen pregnancy was not new but that politicians' concern was. Vinovskis explains that the "unprecedented" rate of teen pregnancy in the 1970s was a myth. Rather, this was the decade when policy-makers became increasingly attuned to the number of young pregnancies. Policy-makers were learning that more and more teenagers were having unprotected sex and tried to find ways to manage this "crisis" using the education system. In the 1970s, policy-makers rushed to solve this problem by providing contraception to teenagers. In the 1980s, the policy-makers focused on abstinence education.⁸⁸ In another article, Vinovskis argues that education was increasingly directed towards curbing unintended pregnancies rather than how to "alleviate the negative consequences of early childbearing." By the 1970s, Americans believed mothers should receive a high school education to ensure the well-being of the mother and to assuage the public concern over growing "welfare" costs.⁸⁹ The American context of teen education shows that policy-makers differed over what sort of sex education would decrease the "epidemic" of teen pregnancy. In Vinovskis's conclusion, he encourages the federal government to divert its funds towards research into the delivery of family planning services in order to understand teen pregnancy

⁸⁸ Ibid.; see also Maris Vinovskis, "Historical Perspectives on Adolescent Pregnancy and Education in the United States," *The History of the Family* 8 (2003): 404.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 416.

further.⁹⁰ Vinovskis's work is important because he studies the educational policies that guide teen mothers' education; however, my study will provide a Canadian context.

2.3 Conclusion

History is vital to understanding why the institutional and political trends changed to address teen mothers' education. As the stigmatizing language continues to exist in academic policy, mothers continue to be referred to as "at-risk" rather than as students who happen to have children. The first type of historical literature on teen mothers' education addresses the social norms that set the conditions whereby young women were sent to training institutions. This period is characterized by the moral education that institutions provided to young women. Historians have focused on the various acts that landed women in these institutions, including for having an unwed pregnancy. These institutions sought to "reform" young women to follow society's moral expectations. Adoption historians have also touched on the history of teen mothers' education through the coercive adoption practices at maternity homes.

The second set of literature studies the contemporary period of teen mothers' academic education and often the stigma teen mothers face in school. Sociologists dominate the literature on the contemporary period of teen mothers' education, with the exception of Vinovskis. The sociological literature provides important discussion of the various academic educational programs that the school boards made available to teen mothers, not to mention the change in sex education policies to address teen pregnancy.

What all the literature on this topic does not do is link the period of teen mother's moral education that historians have studied to the period of their academic education that sociologists

⁹⁰ Ibid., 214.

have studied. It omits the important linkages between them to address the shift from moral education to the academic education. The moral education of the earlier time period (1900-1960's) share many similarities with the stigma in academic education in the contemporary period (1990s-present) because they both judge mothers for their pregnancies. In presenting an understanding of this education in the past, my historical study will make the linkages that are needed to the contemporary sociological studies because both sets of literature are connected through the ongoing stigma teen mothers face in public schooling and policy.

Chapter 3: Willingdon School for Girls

In 1914, the province of British Columbia opened the Vancouver Provincial Industrial School on 800 Cassiar Street in Vancouver under the 1912 *Industrial Home for Girls Act*. In 1959, the Industrial Home moved to 3655 Willingdon Avenue in Burnaby and was renamed the Willingdon School for Girls. In order for girls to be placed at Willingdon, parents, probation officers, and Indian agents brought them before the Family and Children's court judge. The *Industrial Home for Girls Act* and the federal *Juvenile Delinquency Act* (1908/1929) authorized judges to commit girls and young women under the age of 21 (most often between 12 and 19) to Willingdon for a variety of offenses. These included criminal acts like breaching probation, breaking and entering, drug use, and vandalism. However, the most common offenses were "incorrigibility," "unmanageability," and sexual immorality; these terms often indicated inappropriate expressions of sexuality. Some young women charged with incorrigibility and unmanageability were pregnant, in the parlance of the day, "out of wedlock." Willingdon, as a training school, aimed to reform young women to prepare them to better meet appropriate societal expectations. Willingdon operated for 14 years. In April 1973, the province closed Willingdon amid changing perceptions about delinquency and how to rehabilitate "delinquent" girls.

In 1970, the superintendent of Willingdon School for Girls wrote in her annual report, "today is the first day of the rest of your life."¹ This remark captures Willingdon's expectations for behavioural change for the girls placed there. The purpose of the school, as defined by its

¹ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, "Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1970," BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1971.

administrators, was to morally rehabilitate girls who had transgressed social and behavioural expectations of them, which included being pregnant out of wedlock. Society recognized unwed pregnant adolescent girls as delinquent. Some even perceived young women to be “socially ill.” In its first year of operation, Dr. Barnett Savery of the University of British Columbia’s Philosophy Department commented on delinquency at Willingdon in this way: “just as the mentally and physically ill people received treatment, so must the criminal—a socially ill person—receive help.”² The school staff taught proper social behaviour to adolescents based on the 1960s social norms. In annual reports, Willingdon’s superintendent wrote of successful reform stories from former girls’ letters that detailed their nuptials and legitimate children.³

The first section of this chapter explores what being educated in social normality meant for young women at Willingdon. The training school staff made assumptions of the girls’ pregnant condition based on parenting, especially in regards to parents’ girls’ parents’ married status, class, and race. Staff considered girls to be unwilling or incapable of functioning appropriately until they learned proper social behavior. Socialization of pregnant girls at the institution changed over time, beginning with the opening of Willingdon in 1959. I argue that the education of these girls gradually moved from a punitive approach to a rehabilitative approach as professionals and the public changed attitudes and methods for rehabilitating delinquent girls. Despite the changing attitudes, Willingdon had an image problem. The school continued to be associated with the provincial industrial school of the past, which was dubbed the “house of

² “Convict-Training Programs Blasted,” *The Vancouver Sun*, April 22 1959, 56; Unwed girls was the phrase used at this time to describe teenagers who had children outside of wedlock. Mothers, even if they were 19, were often referred to as girls rather than women or teenagers.

³ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Rehabilitation and Social Improvement for the Year Ended March 31st 1972,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1973, 77.

horrors.”⁴ Experts, staff, and the general public’s changing opinion on how to rehabilitate delinquent adolescents combined with changes in legislation to develop a therapeutic approach to education through increased social work and community organization involvement. Willingdon offered academic classes as well as hairdressing, waitressing, and “baby-sitting.” The academic classes followed public schooling. Willingdon seemed to convince mothers to give up their babies in order for these young women to give them a fresh start. Despite the school moving towards a rehabilitative/therapeutic approach, the school continued to be associated with corrections precisely because the young women were incarcerated for being pregnant.

Lastly, I argue that the move to shut down Willingdon started long before the institution was closed in 1973. When Dave Barrett was an opposition MLA in the 1960s, he opposed the school as part of the wider deinstitutionalization movement and on the grounds that it was wrong to keep children and youth in institutions. He eventually closed the school after he became premier after the 1972 election. By the 1970s, the amendment to the *Protection of Children’s Act* challenged previous ideas about female delinquency. The *Protection of Children’s Act* no longer identified young women as delinquent but as children in need of protection.⁵ This chapter examines pregnant students’ education through Willingdon’s educational objectives, governing policy legislation, and, ultimately, the institution’s closure.

3.1 The (Anti)Social Girl

The court charged both boys and girls with various kinds of delinquency. The public often associated delinquent boys with crimes related to destruction of property or theft, whereas

⁴ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1959,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC:1960, p. 82.

⁵ Note: The federal *Juvenile Delinquency Act* was still in place. Some students could still be sent there for “delinquency.”

girls were heavily policed for sexual infractions or behaviour. In fact, the public attributed delinquency to pregnant adolescents because they engaged in premarital sex, a forbidden activity.⁶ Perhaps ironically, prescribed behaviour for youth in the late 1950s involved compulsory heterosexual courtship, but girls were meant to stop sexual relations before they went too far.⁷ Gleason addresses the psychological prescriptions of gendered normalcy. Girls were meant to be obedient, modest, and demure through their teenage years.⁸ These postwar prescriptions for gender norms drew distinct moral boundaries around girls' sexual encounters. Heterosexuality was vital to normality; professionals encouraged girls to have appropriate relationships, such as dating boys. Others believed that sex was inevitable in "going steady", acceptable as long it did not result in an unwed pregnancy.⁹ The lack of acceptance of unwed pregnancy, despite the prescriptions to girls to 'go steady' as a practice for heterosexual marriage, left those who found themselves pregnant, ostracized. Also, despite the fact that the baby boom was in full swing, those who deigned to get pregnant before marriage were labelled anti-social.

The court committed "anti-social" young women to Willingdon School for Girls under various charges.¹⁰ The most common were "incorrigibility" and "unmanageability" (sometimes known as unmanageable conduct). Since the introduction of the *Industrial Homes Act*, the incorrigibility and subsequent unmanageability charge was used to restrain premarital sex among

⁶ Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality*, 66–7.

⁷ Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal*, 72; Adams, *The Trouble with Normal*, 100.

⁸ Ibid., 77.

⁹ Adams, *The Trouble with Normal*, 101.

¹⁰ Training schools existed outside of Vancouver: for example, the Ontario Training School for Girls, the Girls Cottage Industrial School in Quebec. There were often a few schools in each province. See Sangster, *Girl Trouble*; Myers, *Caught*.

young women.¹¹ Incurability and unmanageability charges were sometimes indicators of an unwed pregnancy. These sentences were used to rehabilitate young women into socially “normal” citizens.

Prior to the 1980s, society and the court system felt it best to remove pregnant and mothering students from the public school system because of the belief that pregnant girls and unwed mothers would corrupt other students. Girls’ previous friendships were also questioned, as was the case for Janice.¹² Her charge in the late 1960s came with information from her previous school who identified Janice as hanging out with boys deemed both too old and too young for her age. Hanging out with these boys was a bad influence, and assumptions about what she was doing with these boys likely worked against her, especially since she was later sent to Willingdon for breaking and entering. School officials brought her back from her provisional release because of her pregnancy less than a year after she was first admitted.¹³ The public justified training schools for girls as a way of exerting control over girls to protect society and themselves.

As part of the system implemented to provide them with a new start, upon entering the training school the girls were given tests for venereal disease. Venereal disease examinations on young women lingered from the First and Second World Wars as war officials deemed venereal disease (VD) and its female vectors, “the internal enemies of any nation” as syphilis had spread in male soldiers.¹⁴ The commercialization of sex was prevalent during the war years (both the

¹¹ Myers, *Caught*, 178. In *Caught*, Myers discusses how the incurability and unmanageability charges were a “quest to prevent, punish, and restrain premarital sex” prior to the post-war period.

¹² The names of students in this chapter are pseudonyms to maintain the privacy of these women.

¹³ Janice Case Files, *GR-2897 Willingdon School for Girls fonds*, Box 1-14, BCA, Victoria, BC.

¹⁴ Cynthia R. Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth: Adolescence and the Making of Modern Canada 1920-1950* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006), 40.

First and Second World Wars); officials viewed female sex workers as the site of infection.¹⁵ The courts that dealt with juvenile delinquent girls tested for venereal disease as part of the investigation. For example, after 1912, female probation officers of Montreal's juvenile courts took detailed histories of girls' sexuality, including the name, place, and "date of first seduction."¹⁶ By the First World War, the courts ordered gynecological exams to investigate girls' background. While many of the girls were charged with incorrigibility or vagrancy, even the probation officers investigating girls for offences unrelated to their sexual history sent them for a gynecological test.¹⁷ The gynecological exam that found that the hymen was not intact meant that the courts condemned girls for their behaviour and many times sent them to training schools.

Willingdon continued this method of inspection through a weekly venereal disease clinic at the school for new admissions and returning runaway girls.¹⁸ In 1961, there were 94 new admissions and 535 VD examinations, and the clinic treated 42 girls for venereal disease. The clinic examined girls on average five times a year.¹⁹ The clinic's exams were particularly

¹⁵ Ruth Roach Pierson, *They're Still Women after All: The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood* (Toronto, ON: McClelland & Stewart, 1986), 192, 209; Constance Backhouse, *Carnal Crimes: Sexual Assault Law in Canada, 1900-1975* (Toronto, ON: Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History by Irwin Law, 2009), 107; Myers, *Caught*, 73; Sangster, *Regulating Girls and Women*, Canadian Social History Series (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2001), 88–9.

¹⁶ Tamara Myers, "Qui T'a Débauchée?: Family Adolescent Sexuality And the Juvenile Delinquent's Court in Early Twentieth-Century Montreal in *Family Matters: Papers in Post-Confederation Canadian Family History*, eds. Edgar-André Montigny and Lorene Anne Chambers (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 1998), 379

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 379

¹⁸ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, "Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1961," BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1962, 77. For year end 1962 it was: 408 girls examined with an average of 4 tests a year, 22 for treatment British Columbia Legislative Assembly, "Annual Report for the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1962," BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1963, 80. For 1963, 457 tests, average of four and a half tests a year and 28 treatments, British Columbia Legislative Assembly, "Annual Report for the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1963," BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1964, 83.

¹⁹ Girls already living here were not included in this average. Annual reports do not list what type of infection girls had.

important on girls readmitted to Willingdon because of the school's assumption that girls were sexually active in their absence due to their anti-social behaviour. Girls entering the institution as "virgins" could have been monitored for pregnancy after readmission through the VD examinations based on the widely held belief at that time that a broken hymen meant sexual activity.²⁰ Tests were invasive. These clinics shamed girls for engaging in sex while also reinforcing a stigma about the type of delinquent girls who were sent to Willingdon and thus ideas about proper socialization.

Single Mothers

Staff at the Provincial Industrial Home in Vancouver, Willingdon's predecessor, believed that the state had a responsibility to "remedy the social defects" of girls' earlier social environments.²¹ In the 1960s, professionals blamed adolescents' unwed pregnancies on their families. This meant that young women were capable of reform towards a social ideal of refraining from sex. In the 1959 annual report, Willingdon's superintendent categorized delinquent girls according to their capacity for reform or rehabilitation. First, there was the "true delinquent" who was "capable of being helped" in a training school. This category included seven Indigenous girls "who would not have come to School if they had the same laws as the white."²² The idea that if the laws were the same signified the belief on the part of white professionals that Indigenous adolescents' parents did not hold their daughters to the same moral accountability that settler society did. (In 1959, there were 54 Indigenous girls at Willingdon).

²⁰ Note: The clinics tracing of further sexual activity in previously pregnant girls would have been impossible because the hymen was already broken.

²¹ Matters, "Sinners or Sinned Against?" 266.

²² British Columbia Legislative Assembly, "Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1959," BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1960, 82.

Second, there were girls whose delinquent behaviour was so ingrained into their “being” that they lacked the ability and willingness to change. The staff indicated that these girls were beyond the help of the school. In 1959, there were approximately 11 of them at Willingdon. This category seemed to be for girls who used drugs or who had repeated criminal activity. Lastly, there was the “seriously disturbed girl” who required psychiatric treatment. (Treatment such as that given at Woodlands School for Retarded Children in New Westminster, British Columbia and likely viewed as incapable of reform.)²³

It is likely that Willingdon staff listed unwed mothers in the first category, as the eventuality of adopting out their babies and the school’s moral training provided young women with the appropriate education towards social normality. This could take place as long as they did not become pregnant a second time out of wedlock. Staff considered the majority of adolescents at Willingdon capable of reform through training and rehabilitation to the appropriate social norms. Girls could not reverse their pregnancy and the associated shame; however, Willingdon attempted to reform these adolescents to re-enter society with “proper” values.

“Parents Need the Birch”²⁴

Willingdon staff who participated in the training of adolescent pregnant mothers with “social problems” accused parents of negatively influencing their daughters’ environments. In

²³ Ibid. Woodlands was a psychiatric facility, later an institution for children with behavioural difficulties. In later years it was identified as inflicting physical, emotional, and sexual abuse on its patients. Dulcie McCallum. *The Need To Know: Administrative Review of Woodlands School*. Victoria: Government of British Columbia, Ministry of Child and Family Development, 2001, 18.

²⁴ Frank Rasky, “Detention Means New Hope: Wayward Girls Trained, Not Jailed,” *The Vancouver Sun*, February 19th, 1959, 1

1959, the superintendent expressed disapproval of parents when she said, “is it any wonder they [the girls] get sent here for sexual immorality, or incorrigibility...85% of inmates come from cracked up homes, parents separated, divorced, or just ignorant in how to raise children.”²⁵ In 1957, the superintendent wrote of 10 girls at the Industrial school who were themselves born out of wedlock. The superintendent explained that the “status of their parents” at the time of admission contributed to girls’ “emotional trauma.”²⁶ This “status” likely referred to parents who were divorced, unwed, or cohabitating with various men or women. In the same year, it was reported that mothers of three girls at the school had spent a period of time at the provincial industrial school in their teens, with at least one of the Willingdon girls having spent the first three months of her life in the industrial school nursery. Further, the superintendent clarified that these girls were unaware of their mothers’ time in the institution and, in the latter case, of her own time there as an infant.²⁷

While professionals perceived parents as affecting their daughters, they certainly believed single mothers were the cause of their daughters’ delinquent unwed pregnancy. The BC Department of Social Welfare’s Year End Report for 1960 suggested that the “tragedies” of unwed pregnancies were symptomatic of other social problems in the home. Staff felt that early identification and treatment of social, medical, and economic “problems” were crucial to ensure family stability.²⁸ In Charlotte’s case in the mid-1960s, her mother left her in charge of her

²⁵ Ibid., 1

²⁶ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Social Welfare Branch of the Department of Health and Welfare,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1958, 74

²⁷ Ibid., 74. There is no evidence after 1959 that girls kept their children at the institutions during the Willingdon years)

²⁸ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1960,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1961, 45.

siblings in order for the mother to move in with her boyfriend.²⁹ Case workers probably blamed Charlotte's unwed pregnancy on her assumption of adult responsibilities and lack of parental supervision in the home environment. Staff, and particularly social workers, monitored girls and their families. Officials criticized the parenting of delinquent youth's mothers and fathers as lacking proper discipline. Or as the superintendent of Willingdon suggested, "parents more often really need the school birch."³⁰

As much as the professionals within the institution determined parents as the cause of their daughters' delinquency, these assumptions may have targeted working-class parents in particular. The Juvenile Delinquency Inquiry Board's 1960 report suggests that parents' lack of supervision and overall interest in their children was responsible for their children's delinquency.³¹ This "lack of interest" may have been interpreted as a lack of love for their children. Public officials perceived that parental neglect of their daughters may have been a factor in unwed pregnancy. But what public officials interpreted as neglect could also be interpreted as working parents who could not fully supervise their children. Some public figures, like Simma Holt, an investigative journalist for *The Vancouver Sun* (and later an MLA for Vancouver-Kingsway) often wrote about "emotional fulfilment" as a sought-out reason for why young girls became pregnant.³² Further still, the board criticized mothers for having and wanting a job. Although the board recognized that mothers needed to work in the event of the death or

²⁹ Charlotte Case File, *GR-2897 Willingdon School for Girls*, Box 1-14, British Columbia Archives (hereafter BCA), Victoria, BC.

³⁰ Rasky, "Detention Means New Hope," 1

³¹ Province of British Columbia Juvenile Delinquency Inquiry Board, "Report of the Juvenile Delinquency Inquiry Board Constituted under the Provisions of the Juvenile Delinquency Act, 1958" (Victoria, BC: British Columbia Legislative Library, 1960), 7.

³² *Ibid.*; Simma Holt, "Sex and the Teen-age Revolution" (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart 1967), 93.

absence of a father, the report suggests that mothers should stay home to prevent delinquency.³³ However, the board's report leaves out single working mothers and their children. It is unclear who the Board was attempting to prevent delinquency in, mother or daughter, and whether the board saw working single mothers as creating delinquent children by proxy by their absence.

Since the case files do not list the professions of their parents, Willingdon girls' class cannot be confirmed. Case files do list the parent's marital status, especially whether girls came from divorced or single-parent households. This is important, as Willingdon staff probably perceived employed single parents as working-class, whether or not they were employed in working-class jobs. Further, working single mothers received poor wages compared to men. For example, in Ontario one unwed mother worked in a candy factory and received half the wage of the putative father, who refused to pay child support because of his own poverty.³⁴ At Willingdon, eight out of 23 pregnancy cases described the parents of the young woman as single, separated, or absent. The majority of these cases identified single mothers as the pregnant girl's guardian.³⁵ This does not necessarily mean that their parents were working-class; however, it suggests it. Strong-Boag explains that female-headed families were often living in poverty.³⁶ Female-headed households on a single-parent income were probably working class, not to mention the limited amount of time they had to devote to their children and their activities.

In her book on female delinquency, Joan Sangster found that poor and working-class girls in Ontario were highly represented at institutions like the Ontario Training School for Girls in

³³ Province of British Columbia Juvenile Delinquency Inquiry Board, "Report of the Juvenile Delinquency Inquiry Board Constituted under the Provisions of the Juvenile Delinquency Act, 1958," 7.

³⁴ Chambers, *Misconceptions*, 113.

³⁵ Case Files, *GR-2897 Willingdon School for Girls fonds*, Box 1-14, BCA, Victoria, BC.

³⁶ Strong-Boag, "'Wages for Housework,'" 24.

Galt.³⁷ The high representation was partially because of social workers' and the court's assumption that delinquency was prevalent in working-class youth. Further, social workers and probation officers encouraged working-class families to use the police in order to control their children, which led to more court involvement and more training school sentences.³⁸ Given the similarity of this Ontario institution to Willingdon, it may be inferred that Willingdon women and girls were disproportionately working-class.

I suspect that this was the same for the subset of unwed adolescents at Willingdon. Adams suggests that while the middle class expressed more concern about juvenile delinquency, the majority of youth labelled as delinquents in Ontario during the postwar period were working-class.³⁹ It is possible that some middle-class and elite families sent their daughters to training schools, it seems more likely that they found other options to save their daughters' reputations. For example, these families may have sent pregnant girls to private homes or relatives. While I refrain from suggesting that all pregnant girls at Willingdon were from working-class families or believe that all mothers who came from bad "home environments" were working class it is reasonable to speculate that in some cases what the Willingdon staff called "bad home environments" constituted single parents and in particular single mothers. It is reasonable to speculate that single working mothers could not supervise their daughter's heterosexual relationships to the extent that may have been possible for a dual-parent middle-class family.

Indigenous Mothers and Training School

³⁷ Sangster, *Regulating Girls and Women*, 140.

³⁸ Ibid., 139–40.

³⁹ Adams, *The Trouble with Normal*, 56.

Willingdon School for Girls saw an increase in Indigenous adolescents sentenced to the school during the early 1960s, with numbers growing into the late decade. The Willingdon School 1960 annual report shows that one-third of its total student population was Indigenous, whereas by 1965, 44 percent of the school's population was Indigenous women.⁴⁰ The 1961 Canadian Census reported the First Nation population in British Columbia at approximately 2.4 per cent.⁴¹ Willingdon School had a high number of Indigenous adolescents given the total population in British Columbia. Taking these numbers into account, my own case studies indicate that Willingdon identified eight out of 23 unwed mothers as "Indian" or "Half-Breed" (the term used by the government to describe people of "mixed" heritage in annual reports). This number represents 34 per cent of my total sample, which is consistent with statistics that represent the vast increase of Indigenous children in care during this period. Between 1955 and 1964, the rate of Indigenous children in care in all facilities in the province went from 1 per cent to 34.2 per cent.⁴² The figures were the result of the Sixties Scoop, when government regulation removed Indigenous children from their families and put them to the child welfare system.⁴³ Many people know the Sixties Scoop for taking young children into care, these women were not young children, however it was a criminalization of Indigenous girls' behaviour which reflects the representation of Indigenous girls at Willingdon.

⁴⁰ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, "Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1965," BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1966, 84.

⁴¹ Note: ethnicity is determined through the father's lineage. The Canadian government also identifies the population by "Indian" and "Eskimo." I use First Nation here to include all Indigenous peoples except Métis and Inuit. Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *1961 Census of Canada: Population, Ethnic Groups. Table 35: Population by Ethnic Groups and Sex, for Provinces and Territories, 1961*. Catalogue Number: 92-545 (Volume I-Part 2), Ottawa, ON, 1962, Available from: <https://archive.org/details/1961925451962engfra/page/n3/mode/2up>

⁴² Christopher Walmsley, *Protecting Aboriginal Children* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2005), 2.

⁴³ Patrick Johnson, *Native Children and the Child Welfare System* (Toronto, ON: James Lorimer and Company Publishers, 1983), 23; Sarah Carneiro, "Policy, Poverty, and Indigenous Child Welfare: Revision the Sixties Scoop" (Kingston, ON, Queen's University, 2018), 1; Walmsley, *Protecting Aboriginal Children*, 21.

In the post–World War II era, the Canadian Welfare Council and social work community urged the government to include Indigenous girls in the services (such as industrial and training schools) the government provided in order to prevent further “discrimination.”⁴⁴ Helen Raptis describes this era as reflecting “ethical liberalism.” Ethical liberalism calls for equal social services among all citizens in society.⁴⁵ It was at this time that the government began to integrate Indigenous children into provincial public schools. In 1949, the province of British Columbia allowed for the integration of Indigenous students in schools, two years before the federal government changed its legislation to allow this.⁴⁶ The racial integration of various social services, like child welfare and public schooling, saw young Indigenous women coming to places like Willingdon; however, “integration” racially discriminated against Indigenous youth. The integration efforts led to Indigenous youth’s overrepresentation in training schools in order to provide “training” consistent with settler values.

Although the public concern about illegitimacy was certainly brewing in the 1960s, illegitimacy in Indigenous communities in particular bothered professionals in BC. The *Victoria Daily Times* wrote of the failure to provide services necessary for the Indigenous population, when 20 per cent of all illegitimate births were “Indian.”⁴⁷ At a time when illegitimacy provided fodder for reformation and the Sixties Scoop removed children from Indigenous communities, the government targeted Indigenous adolescents for becoming pregnant.

⁴⁴ Sangster, *Girl Trouble*, 148.

⁴⁵ Helen Raptis, “Actors, Ideas, and Institutions: The Forces Driving Integrated Education Policy in British Columbia, 1947-1951,” *History of Education Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (November 2018): 540.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 548, 556.

⁴⁷ Nancy Brown, “New Commandment Needed for Today’s New Morality,” *The Victoria Daily Colonist*, April 10th 1968, 37

As governmental policies removed Indigenous children from their families for schooling, legislation changed how the federal government handled Indigenous K-12 education. The federal government contracted the provincial governments rather than the churches to provide education to Indigenous students. In 1951, federal government amendments to the *Indian Act* permitted legal authority to expand child welfare services to include Indigenous children in the province.⁴⁸ By 1952, the Provincial Welfare Branch began providing services related to Indigenous delinquent children, unmarried mothers, and adoption cases.⁴⁹ The Provincial Child Welfare Branch allowed for Indigenous unmarried mothers to be designated wards of the state, as white mothers could, through the Superintendent of Child Welfare, the Children's Aid Society or Catholic Children's Aid Society, or at least until their final release from Willingdon. Five mothers at Willingdon were wards of the state date.⁵⁰ This change in legislation ensured that unwed Indigenous mothers were monitored by the norms that the provincial authorities subscribed to, especially when it came to the reproduction of "illegitimate" children.

Ultimately, the growing number of Indigenous adolescents in training schools inspired preconceived racist notions of Indigenous women on the part of those who were working within the system.⁵¹ Even the superintendent did not believe that Indigenous girls should be reformed at Willingdon, largely because they were a separate "Indian problem."⁵² In an annual report, the superintendent added, "the majority of Indians soon revert to their former life when they are

⁴⁸ Walmsley, *Protecting Aboriginal Children*, 20.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁵⁰ Case Files, GR-2897 Willingdon School for Girls fonds, Box 1-14 BCA, Victoria, BC

⁵¹ Joan Sangster, "'She Is Hostile to Our Way': First Nations Girls Sentenced to the Ontario Training School for Girls, 1933-1960," *Law and History Review* 20, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 66. Mary Twigg Wynn Woodward, "Juvenile Delinquency among Indian Girls; an Examination of the Causes and Treatment of a Sample Group, and the Resulting Social Implications." (University of British Columbia, 1949), 12, through Sangster, "'She Is Hostile to Our Way,'" 68, Woodward described girls as antisocial is caused by not having the ideals from Christianity.

⁵² Tom Ardies, "Willingdon School—Does it Work?" *Vancouver Sun*, December 7, 1960, 3.

released.”⁵³ She claimed Indigenous women reoffended in order to be sent to Willingdon, “their only stable home,” and further, that Indigenous women could not be rehabilitated through a job.⁵⁴ It is clear that the superintendent harboured prejudice against these young women. The superintendent did not really believe that Indigenous women were trainable, or if they were, that they should be in a different institution.

3.2 Educational Programs for Pregnant Girls at Willingdon

Pregnancy in young women was associated with shame and social stigma. The Willingdon School for Girls’ educational objective was to cure the anti-social behaviour in pregnant girls by teaching them the appropriate social behaviours of “normal” girls. The field of social work was involved in defining the social normalcy objective. Various women’s organizations and church organizations characterized these notions of normality in the “training programme” through their visits. Willingdon staff also supported socialization through academic and vocational schooling. The province’s changing policies and legislation helped to change the image of pregnant girls and their reform at this institution. The school’s objective was to homogenize young women into the social status quo.⁵⁵ In her discussion of Indian residential and industrial schools in the twentieth century, Sherry Farrell Racette argues that residential schools borrowed from the field of corrections rather than “educational pedagogy.”⁵⁶ While Indian residential schools have their own history of sinister assimilation that is distinct from the

⁵³ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1960,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1961, p. 79.

⁵⁴ Ardies, “Willingdon School—Does it Work?”

⁵⁵ Joan Sangster, “Reforming Women’s Reformatories: Elizabeth Fry, Penal Reform, and the State, 1950-1970,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 85, no. 2 (June 10, 2004): 240. Sangster makes the point that Mercer Reformatories’ objective was to assimilate the inmate back into society.

⁵⁶ Sherry Farrell Racette, “Haunted: First Nations Children in Residential School Photography,” in *Depicting Canada’s Children*, ed. Loren Lerner (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2009), 63.

Willingdon School, Willingdon also borrowed from the correctional field far more than from educational pedagogy.

Despite the correctional attitudes, across the 1960s, Willingdon attempted to increasingly define its objective as a therapeutic view of “training.” Therapeutic training was increasingly informed by social workers, the use of community organizations and provisional release. The superintendents and professionals associated with the school expressed that they were moving towards a model that was less correctional.⁵⁷ Make no mistake, the school continued to be identified as a correctional institution until at least 1970, but staff attempted to justify Willingdon’s existence despite its problematic image in public.⁵⁸ Adolescents did not have a choice when sentenced there; the court sentenced these girls. The legislation that sent these girls to Willingdon is important for understanding the concern over their welfare. Major legislative changes to institutional detention had occurred twice over the course of Willingdon’s operation, first in 1963 and again in 1970.⁵⁹ These modifications in legislation also happened to aid in the institution’s changing image.

1963 Policy Legislation: From Industrial Home to Training School

Prior to 1963, the 1912 *Industrial Home for Girls Act* governed Willingdon. The language of this act explained the Industrial Home’s purpose as a place for the “custody and detention with a view for education and moral reclamation” in “due regard for material and

⁵⁷ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report for the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1964,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1965, 83-4.

⁵⁸ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report for the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1962,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 80.

⁵⁹ Statutes of the Province of British Columbia, *An Act Respecting Training-schools for Children*, c. 50, 1963, 203-5; Statute of the Province of British Columbia, *An Act to Amend the Protection of Children Act*, c. 27, RSBC 1969, 257-8.

moral welfare” of the girl.⁶⁰ The law even denoted a “good marks” system whereby girls could be given an early release if they demonstrated they were reformed. By the Willingdon years, the court continued to send girls to the school under the act; however, girls’ reformation was viewed as increasingly rehabilitative. Rehabilitation was meant to be therapeutic and increasingly used casework services from social workers and provisional release rather than punitive activities such as isolation and longer sentences. When politicians expressed concern that the expenditure of a “glamorous” new school would result in an atmosphere of leniency, newspaper readers wrote letters to the editor favouring the rehabilitative treatment at the school.⁶¹

In 1963, the British Columbia government repealed the *Industrial Home for Girls Act* and the *Industrial Home for Boys Act* in favour of the *Training School Act*.⁶² This act consolidated the individual acts concerning child welfare and delinquency into one. The name of the *Training School Act* is of particular significance. Whereas the government previously categorized both the girls’ and boys’ schools as “industrial homes,” they were now considered training schools. The training school name indicated some form of education versus the correctional association with the industrial homes. This name change marked a shift in how the provincial government, training institutions, and the court perceived rehabilitation for youth. The *Training School Act* considered boys and girls under the same legislation, and now adolescent youth could be charged with “unmanageability” rather than “incurability.”⁶³ While the specific language of the law

⁶⁰ Statutes of the Province of British Columbia, *An Act for Establishing an Industrial Home for Girls*, c. 11, 1912, 39-42.

⁶¹ Gordon McCallum, “At Girls School: Discipline, not ‘Glamour’ Urged,” *Vancouver Province*, February 19, 1959, 1; “Girls Need Help—Letters from Readers,” *Vancouver Province*, March 9, 1959, 4.

⁶² Statutes of the Province of British Columbia, *An Act Respecting Training-schools for Children*, c. 50, 1963, 203-5.

⁶³ Statutes of the Province of British Columbia, *An Act Respecting Training-schools for Children*, c. 50, 1963, 203-5; Simma Holt, *Sex and the Teen-Age Revolution* (Toronto, ON: McClelland & Stewart, 1967), 23.

changed within this act, the reasoning behind each incarceration continued to be the same. However, young women were much more likely to be charged with unmanageability. In 1966, the court charged 60 out of 115 girls present at Willingdon with unmanageability.⁶⁴ Pregnant students in particular were now categorized under unmanageable conduct or unmanageability.⁶⁵ The court could also charge boys with “incorrigibility” or “unmanageability,” but this was much less likely. Instead, boys were often charged with “crimes against property.” In 1966, the court charged 301 out of 404 boys with crimes against property and 90 with incorrigibility.⁶⁶ Brannan Lake Training School for Boys and Willingdon School for Girls educated their students differently. Brannan Lake seemed to educate boys through manual labour rather than the socialization that girls received.⁶⁷ In addition, Brannan Lake School for Boys kept students for a shorter length of time. Boys tended to be at the school for approximately five months as opposed to girls at nine months.⁶⁸ However, like the earlier sentence of “incorrigibility,” the new “unmanageability” charge continued to be predominantly applied to young women rather than young men.

Social work became an increasingly important aspect of the training and treatment of youth at Willingdon. Willingdon seemed to have three permanent social workers but often welcomed practicum students from UBC to provide additional services and form appropriate

⁶⁴ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report for the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1966,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1967, 86

⁶⁵ Brannan Lake School for Boys continued to identify boys as incorrigible rather than unmanageable in their reports. Despite this, the law would have charged them as unmanageable. British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1966,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1967, 82.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report for the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1963,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1964, 81.

⁶⁸ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report for the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1964,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1965, 80.

social relationships with the girls.⁶⁹ The staff viewed social interactions between students and social workers as positive because of the possibility that proper socialization would occur. In 1969, Dr. D. Susan Butt, an assistant professor at UBC in social work and an employee of the Canadian Welfare Council, conducted group personality testing of the students for her “Study in Socialization.” She later provided the results to the school social workers.⁷⁰ This work was evidence that the primary educational objective of this school was to properly socialize the anti-social girl.

“Casework services” started to define the treatment approach at Willingdon.⁷¹ “Casework services” is a social work treatment that utilizes mediation between the girl, her family, the institution, and other service agencies.⁷² Social workers used casework in an attempt to provide a source of therapy for the girls, while also monitoring young women on release. Social workers interviewed girls, met with their families, and formed close and consistent relationships to understand and treat the girl.⁷³ School social workers documented students’ behaviours and

⁶⁹ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1965,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1966, 87; British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report for the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1966,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1967, 87; British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report for the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1967,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1968, 31; British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report for the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1970,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1971, 36; British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report for the Department of Rehabilitation and Social Improvement for the Year Ended March 31st 1971,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1972, 38; British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report for the Department of Rehabilitation and Social Improvement for the Year Ended March 31st 1972,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1973, 76.

⁷⁰ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1969,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1970, 31

⁷¹ While Myers’s study ends in 1945, this continued to be prominent into the Willingdon years. Myers, *Caught*, 127.

⁷² British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1963,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1964, 84; British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1965,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1966, 87; British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report for the Year Ended March 31st 1968,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1969, 31.

⁷³ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1968,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1969, 31.

activities to ensure that girls were not participating in undesirable activities.⁷⁴ Despite the punitive nature of monitoring undesirable behaviours, staff viewed casework as one program feature contributing to rehabilitation rather than punishment, possibly because of the inherent rehabilitation disposition of social workers rather than correctional ideology.

The provincial authorization of provisional release was important to monitoring young women. As part of the *Training School Act*, Willingdon was now able to provide provincial provisional release services as part of the rehabilitation and socialization of girls. Much like probation, provisional release allowed girls to test out their training in public, whether girls enrolled back into the public education system or found employment. Social workers were responsible for ensuring that girls maintained the terms of their release—socially normal behaviour. The details of the 1966 annual report suggest that more than one trial period might be needed as a disciplinary measure or to “prevent another breakdown.”⁷⁵ A successful provisional release could procure a girl’s final release or enable her to be surrendered for further education. The superintendent explained, “...the use of the school by agencies as a deterrent in providing short return periods for the girls who require one or two sharp reminders of controls to help them in their full rehabilitation.”⁷⁶ Provisional release granted a high turnover at Willingdon in efforts to “serve” the other girls in the community. Although confinement fluctuated throughout the years, the average length of stay was nine months. However, some girls were intermittently incarcerated for a total time of approximately four years because of provincial release, re-

⁷⁴ The running documents that I read did not necessarily pertain to unwed mothers at this institution; it is likely that there was a similar document for each girl. Case Files, *GR-2897 Willingdon School for Girls fonds*, Box 1-14, BCA, Victoria, BC.

⁷⁵ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1966,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1967, 85

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 84.

admissions, and being re-institutionalized after running away. Officials brought girls back to Willingdon for more training, especially if girls had become pregnant on provisional release.

And it did happen. Between 1964 and 1968, the courts brought back 15 girls who were pregnant from their provisional release.⁷⁷ Whereas the court committed some girls for their pregnancies, the court also committed girls for sexual encounters because of the threat of pregnancy. Ultimately, government officials and staff viewed pregnancies on provisional release as unacceptable. In the eyes of staff, pregnancies that occurred while on provisional release meant that girls did not adhere to their training school education and continued to be identified as unmanageable or incorrigible. In the eyes of the institution, the courts, and those who worked in this realm, girls who continued to associate with the wrong people, including sexual partners, were anti-social.

“[They] Do Much to Improve the Girls’ Outlook...”⁷⁸

While social workers played a large role in treating girls at this school, community volunteer groups played a role in socialization at Willingdon as well. Community groups were able to provide social experiences to girls that modelled appropriate behaviour they felt delinquent girls lacked. Girls became familiar with volunteers. School officials expected that girls’ exposure to adults at the training school increased their ability to trust adults upon their return to the community.⁷⁹ Middle-class reformers were most often represented in community groups that assisted at Willingdon, like the Elizabeth Fry Society or the Pentecostal Foursquare.

⁷⁷ Case files, *GR-2897 Willingdon School for Girls fonds*, Box 1-14, BCA, Victoria, BC.

⁷⁸ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report for the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1966,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1967, 87

⁷⁹ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Social Welfare Branch of the Department of Health and Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1958,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1959, 87.

Women's volunteerism helped to shape Canadian female penal reform.⁸⁰ Willingdon was not the first to integrate volunteer organization services. Its predecessor, the Provincial Industrial Home, also used volunteer organizations, as did other institutions in Canada, like Mercer Reformatory in Toronto.⁸¹ Willingdon harnessed the use of community organizations because of the improved image that they provided, as well as the education the organizations imparted to the girls. The superintendent explained that the exposure of organizations to the school provided "valuable media for interpreting the School programme" and "a warmer attitude for girls when they leave the security of the School."⁸²

In 1939, the Elizabeth Fry Society was established in Vancouver as a prison reform organization for women and girls.⁸³ Members of the Elizabeth Fry Society were white and often middle-class.⁸⁴ The Society was heavily involved with the Willingdon School for Girls. Members of the society visited to socialize with the "lonely girls" and kept in touch with girls upon their release.⁸⁵ The benevolent intention of maintaining contact perpetuated continuous observation of adolescents upon release, especially in 1966 when the Elizabeth Fry Society opened a group home for "reformed female delinquents."⁸⁶ The Elizabeth Fry Society and Willingdon's partnership provided the perceived appropriate home for girls, away from the

⁸⁰ Kelly Hannah-Moffat, *Punishment in Disguise: Penal Governance and Federal Imprisonment of Women in Canada* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 93.

⁸¹ For more information on women's reform organizations, see Sangster, "Reforming Women's Reformatories"; Hannah-Moffat, *Punishment in Disguise*.

⁸² British Columbia Legislative Assembly, "Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1962," BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1963, 80

⁸³ Sangster, "Reforming Women's Reformatories," 1.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁸⁵ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, "Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1963," BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1964, 84.

⁸⁶ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, "Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1966," BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1967, 87; Hannah-Moffat, *Punishment in Disguise*, 59–60.

temptations of their previous life. More important, the involvement of the Elizabeth Fry Society displayed to girls the appropriate social etiquette of middle-class women.

Elizabeth Fry Society women were not just role models; they provided an opportunity for girls to practise their training. In 1964, the Society held a board meeting at the institution. To prepare, Willingdon staff taught young women sandwich-making. After the meeting, the students prepared and served a light luncheon of fancy sandwiches.⁸⁷ This was a marker of success for adolescents; the participation in domestic duties and sandwich-making, otherwise the duties of mothers and housewives, was important social behaviour to learn for their futures.

Pentecostal Foursquare was another key community organization at Willingdon. The Pentecostal Foursquare church began as an evangelical mission church. The church was important to Willingdon because of its support in socializing the girls. Whereas other religious denominations provided religious instruction, some members of the Foursquare Church volunteered their time to bond with the young women.⁸⁸ They even opened the first foster home next door to Willingdon for newly released girls without a home.⁸⁹ While the Elizabeth Fry Society's mandate was and is to work with incarcerated women, members of the Pentecostal Foursquare church also provided an opportunity for girls to practise socializing with other youth. Foursquare arranged for teams of young adults to come to the school to play games with the girls

⁸⁷ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, "Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1964," BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1965, 85.

⁸⁸ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, "Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1965," BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1966, 87; a Catholic priest and Anglican priest held instruction classes once a week for their girls as part of the regular school program.

⁸⁹ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, "Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1962," BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1963, 80. This home only operated for 10 months until the actual building was sold.

and establish friendships.⁹⁰ This was important for rehabilitation because the church introduced the young women to presumably “good” young adults and monitored their activities, such as playing games. Introducing adolescent girls to adolescent boys was a form of what Adrienne Rich terms compulsory heterosexuality, which assumes and enforces heterosexuality on women.⁹¹ This was done when groups of youth included young men who likely modelled the right choice of husband for young women, especially since officials judged young women for their previous relationships with inappropriate men.

Community organizations were arguably most significant to Willingdon’s educational objectives and subsequent training program. Willingdon needed community organization members, not only to role model proper social behaviour but because organizations did so without charging extra fees and offered an improved image at no cost to the training school. Many organizations (such as the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire, the Canadian Daughters League, and the University Women’s Club) requested to tour the school, and the superintendent believed that accommodating the request was “good media for establishing a sympathetic and warmer attitude in the community.”⁹² The provincial Department of Social Welfare’s budget for institutions was small; Willingdon needed community organizations to assist with training at a low cost. The Department of Social Welfare’s slated 2.2 per cent of the budget (\$771,800 value) for all institutions under its direction at Willingdon’s opening. By 1971, the budget provided 1.1 per cent (\$1,583,874 value) to these institutions. All institutions within

⁹⁰ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1965,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1966, 87

⁹¹ Adrienne Rich, “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence (1980),” *Journal of Women’s History* 15, no. 3 (2003): 11-48.

⁹² British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1962,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1963, 80

the purview of the departments shared the budget. This included Brannan Lake School for Boys, the Kamloops Provincial Home, and eventually New Denver Youth Centre for emotionally disturbed boys.⁹³ Although there was a decline in the percentage of the budget, the actual monetary value continued to increase as the budget expanded. While inflation possibly affected the rise, the budget did seem to slowly expand. However, splitting the budget, even in 1971, between four institutions required Willingdon staff to rely on other means to assist in educating adolescents. Volunteer organizations filled that gap to provide additional training.

Informal Coursework and Employment

Although the community groups provided informal social training, Willingdon offered both classes and courses geared towards bettering girls' "social condition." Hairdressing, "baby-sitting," and first aid courses, along with swimming lessons, resulted in a credential.⁹⁴ Staff offered classes in waitressing, sewing, and modelling and self-improvement to teach and support girls rehabilitation. In fact, in 1959 the school's beauty parlour operated at capacity. Students prepared for their government examinations to become qualified hairdressers, especially women who had reached school-leaving age (15).⁹⁵ School-age adolescents enrolled in specialized

⁹³ New Denver Youth Centre opened in 1965 for emotionally disturbed boys. Previously, New Denver was the site of Japanese internment camps during the Second World War. In the postwar period, New Denver Dormitory was a residence for the Sons of Freedom children, a Doukhobor faction. Doukhobor children were removed from homes to attend the home when their parents refused to send them to public school. The parents went to jail while the children were sent to the institution and made wards of the Department of Welfare. Children were restricted from speaking Russian and went to school in the town. The New Denver Dormitory closed in 1959; John McLaren, "The State, Child Snatching, and the Law: The Seizure and Indoctrination of Sons of Freedom Children in British Columbia, 1950–1960," in John McLaren, Robert Menzies, and Dorothy E. Chunn, eds., *Regulating Lives: Historical Essays on the State, Society, the Individual and the Law*, 259–93, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 270–1.

⁹⁴ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, "Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1964," BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1965, 84.

⁹⁵ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, "Annual Report of the Social Welfare Branch of the Department of Health and Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1958," BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1959, 87. School leaving age seemed to be 15 years of age in British Columbia, the 1961 amendment for Public School Act explained that the province did not have to provide schooling to students above the age of 15 unless students present

classes (like waitressing, and sewing) and along with academic training, these classes ensured that the girls were receiving a full education. Cottage supervisors, the staff living among the young women, provided voluntary courses such as babysitting, home nursing, and first aid.⁹⁶ Hairdressing certainly prepared girls to engage in the workforce upon their release, despite the middle-class expectation that placed married women in the domestic sphere.⁹⁷ These courses probably prepared adolescents for proper feminine work outside of the institution before their eventual and expected marriage, especially for youth no longer re-entering the public school system upon release.

Staff may have viewed employment for young women as a method of discipline and obedience outside of the institution. If girls secured and maintained a job, then they learned to respect authority and became properly socialized. If employers fired young women, or if these women could not find work, social workers brought them back to Willingdon. For example, Violet was employed on provisional release; however, she was readmitted upon revelation of her pregnancy.⁹⁸ Indeed, school social workers released adolescents (and not just pregnant students) to employment positions to test and maintain training and respectability.

Girls put their training in modelling and self-improvement to use through their participation in various fashion shows in Vancouver. The first fashion show, put on by the BC Corrections Association, was for the entertainment at a meeting of British Columbia's correctional facility representatives and likely organizations that worked with people once

themselves for education at the beginning of the school year. Statutes of the Province of British Columbia, *An Act to Amend the Public Schools Act*, c. 53, 1961, 297

⁹⁶ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, "Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1964," BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1965, 85.

⁹⁷ Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal*, 53.

⁹⁸ Violet K. Case File, *GR-2897 Willingdon School for Girls fonds*, Box 1-14, BCA, Victoria, BC.

released (like the Elizabeth Fry Society).⁹⁹ This experience allowed the other correctional representatives to view adolescents outside the institution positively as “in-training.” In addition, girls’ sewing training was put to good use when they participated in the Kitsilano Boat Show’s Festival of Flowers. Willingdon’s adolescents designed dresses and modelled them for this show.¹⁰⁰ The public were able to see the apparent training benefits to the girls at Willingdon. These experiences taught girls the importance of their appearance, not to mention the perception of their image.

The anti-social cure included mastering the art of “feminine appearance” to ensure that young girls learned to be confident in their appearance. Willingdon offered classes in modelling and self-improvement classes were important to keep up these appearances. The superintendent explained that these classes built up the girls’ self-esteem and “overcome self-consciousness.”¹⁰¹ Even the beauty parlour enabled girls to seek proper care of their hair, skin, and nails by spending time in the parlour after their school day.¹⁰² Joan Sangster explains that the superintendent of the Galt Training School in Ontario in the 1950s viewed the beauty salon as a problem because it did not provide girls with “real apprenticeships.”¹⁰³ The staff at Willingdon, however, applauded adolescents for partaking in these activities.¹⁰⁴ This was especially important for pregnant girls as these courses prepared young women for life after giving birth.

⁹⁹ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1963,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1964, 84.

¹⁰⁰ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the year Ended March 31st 1968,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1969, 31.

¹⁰¹ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1963,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1964, 84.

¹⁰² British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Social Welfare Branch of the Department of Health and Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1958,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1959, 87.

¹⁰³ Sangster, *Girl Trouble*, 114–15.

¹⁰⁴ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1963,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1964, 84.

The superintendent felt that “the responsibility of the School is to provide a programme of training and treatment which will stimulate in the girls a desire to learn and form good work habits, and pursue healthy activities in a socially acceptable manner.”¹⁰⁵ The institution’s academic schooling, remedial instruction, and domestic coursework assisted in the training and construction of the ideal social girl.

“An Industrious and Dependable Pupil”: Schooling at Willingdon¹⁰⁶

Willingdon included an academic program in its training that focused on continuing the girls’ schooling. Willingdon’s predecessor institution, the Provincial Industrial Home for Girls, offered correspondence courses, and in 1958 the Industrial Home opened a rural ungraded classroom.¹⁰⁷ Approximately two-thirds of the adolescents attended the academic classes offered in the new classroom.¹⁰⁸ It seems that once the Provincial Industrial School moved to the Willingdon location, schooling became graded and included teachers. It is unclear whether the teachers were certified given that the school was not the typical formal classroom. However, given that Willingdon initially transitioned to a rural ungraded classroom (which would have received provincial funds) and in the later years, student teacher practicums took place at Willingdon, the school likely hired certified teachers. As for the school classes, case files of pregnant girls contain report cards indicating the courses each girl took. The academic program

¹⁰⁵ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1967,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1968, 30.

¹⁰⁶ Audrey Case File, *GR-2897 Willingdon School for Girls fonds*, Box 1-14, BCA, Victoria, BC.

¹⁰⁷ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Public Schools of the Province of British Columbia Eighty-Seventh Annual Report 1957/58,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1959, 60; British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Social Welfare Branch of the Department of Health and Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1956,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1957, 92.

¹⁰⁸ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Social Welfare Branch of the Department of Health and Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1958,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1959, 87.

supported multiple grades and the appropriate curriculum for each. Courses ranged from English, math, and social studies to home economics and French.¹⁰⁹ Coursework aimed to put adolescents on a par with their peers in the public school system. However, it is unlikely that Willingdon students caught up with their peers in the public school system, as many repeated grades and were involved in other activities as part of their rehabilitation.

Formal schooling was part of growing up for “normal” children and youth. The school’s attempt to create a consistent academic record for girls was key; especially for girls with a record of truancy from their previous school. However, a truancy record meant that Willingdon staff often placed young women in classrooms below their age-grade. For example, Beverly, a pregnant student, was truant from her previous school and was placed several age-grades behind. Willingdon placed some girls in lower age-grades depending on their previous public school record. However, what mattered most in Willingdon’s academic program was the level of effort girls put in to their schooling. Another pregnant student, Greta, demonstrated good effort and attentiveness to the schooling program.¹¹⁰ It was these instances that young women displayed an ability to handle schooling in the public education system. Young women’s efforts to succeed in school through regular attendance, a keen attitude, and a positive effort signaled that they were able enter society.

To be clear, the marks at this school did not fully matter to girls’ rehabilitation. Report cards displayed abysmal grades in particular courses, yet the school teacher applauded the student for her effort. This was the case for one pregnant student, Edith; her teacher had

¹⁰⁹ Case Files, *GR-2897 Willingdon School for Girls fonds*, Box 1-14, BCA, Victoria, BC.

¹¹⁰ Beverly Case File, *GR-2897 Willingdon School for Girls fonds*, Box 1-14, BCA, Victoria, BC; Greta Case File, *GR-2897 Willingdon School for Girls fonds*, Box 1-14, BCA, Victoria, BC.

remarked, "...[her] work has improved throughout the year. She has made a good effort to catch up with the rest of the grade."¹¹¹ Edith was behind three years in age-graded classrooms, and the teacher moved her ahead because of her age rather than her class marks (which mostly showed "S" for slow progression, or "U" for failing).¹¹² Rather than focusing solely on assigning grades, teachers commented on the overall attitude and social behaviour on report cards as well as students' aptitude for advancing into the next course.¹¹³ The ability to thrive in academics based on effort and attitude. One teacher described Audrey as an "industrious and dependable" student.¹¹⁴ While grades did not matter as much, socialization in the classroom may have indicated normalcy or at least a willingness to learn on the part of adolescents.

Although formal schooling seemed to function as a normality test for unwed mothers, Willingdon administration and teachers often assumed that adolescents needed remedial assistance. In 1958, the school hired a teacher experienced in remedial teaching.¹¹⁵ The superintendent hoped the new teacher would support girls to overcome their "social problems" through the academic program. However, this thinking seemed to pinpoint girls as needing a remedial education. In the beginning, ever since the school program transitioned from correspondence, Willingdon did not have the resources to cater to students with "remedial" needs. The teacher was responsible for approximately 47 students across grades 8 to 10, plus remedial grades.

¹¹¹ Edith Case File, *GR-2897 Willingdon School for Girls fonds*, Box 1-14, BCA, Victoria, BC.

¹¹² Case Files, *GR-2897 Willingdon School for Girls fonds*, Box 1-14, BCA, Victoria, BC; "S" is similar to a D in present time and "U" would be equivalent to a failing grade.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Audrey Case File, *GR-2897 Willingdon School for Girls fonds*, Box 1-14, BCA, Victoria, BC.

¹¹⁵ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, "Annual Report of the Social Welfare Branch of the Department of Health and Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1958," BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1959, 87.

By 1965, academic schooling had expanded at Willingdon. Willingdon was not part of the Burnaby School District, despite labelling report cards as District 41. However, the Burnaby School District provided “direction and encouragement” to Willingdon teachers for schooling their girls, especially in the case of occupational schooling. Occupational schooling was a form of special education. Occupational classes seemed to differ between Willingdon and schools in the Burnaby School District.¹¹⁶ Willingdon teachers moved two pregnant students at Willingdon to occupational class as an alternative to academic education. Teachers identified Audrey as a “special” student; she was promoted into occupational class one during her pregnancy.¹¹⁷ Once promoted, teachers no longer seemed to file report cards for these students. Attendance records show staff moved some girls to the kitchen when they were unable to maintain schooling.¹¹⁸ At the Ontario Training School for Girls, Joan Sangster explains that occupational schooling was based on part-time work, hairdressing, and sewing, among other domestic duties.¹¹⁹ Willingdon did provide coursework in sewing and hairdressing, but these seemed to be separate from the occupational classrooms. It is possible that occupational classes included a mix of domestic duties *and* domestic coursework, especially since attendance records showed some young women working in the kitchen. Given Audrey’s experience, Willingdon’s occupational classes were for adolescents graduating from “special” classes or consistently repeating age-grades.¹²⁰

Remedial education was separate from occupational classes. In 1967, Willingdon added a third teacher to their expanding school program. This new teacher was responsible for remedial

¹¹⁶ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1965,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1966, 86

¹¹⁷ Audrey Case File, *GR-2897 Willingdon School for Girls fond*, Box 1-14, BCA, Victoria, BC

¹¹⁸ Miscellaneous Records, *GR-2897 Willingdon School for Girls fond*, Box 15, BCA, Victoria, BC

¹¹⁹ Sangster, *Girl Trouble: Female Delinquency in English Canada*, 115.

¹²⁰ Audrey Case File, *GR-2897 Willingdon School for Girls fond*, Box 1-14, BCA, Victoria, BC

work with younger students, while the remaining two teachers allocated more time to the advanced grades and “underachievers” in the “regular” schooling program.¹²¹

Willingdon allowed practicum students, and specifically special education students from the Faculty of Education at UBC, to support schooling. By 1970, the superintendent stated that if “25 per cent of the public school population had a learning disability, one could suppose that at least 50 per cent of the girls at Willingdon had a learning disability in some area.”¹²² Here, the superintendent assumed that since these adolescents were troubled, they were learning-disabled and needed remedial education. Whereas two of the students in my sample of 23 were labelled as special or occupational, 10 students were behind in the grades for their age or had repeated a grade and likely received remedial instruction.¹²³

The majority of pregnant girls receiving remedial instruction or special education were Indigenous. While it is unclear from case files whether Willingdon subjected pregnant Indigenous students to IQ (intelligence quotient) tests, school administrators across Canada administered IQ tests to non-white students, including Indigenous students, to justify special education.¹²⁴ Educators identified Indigenous adolescents as requiring remedial or special education, a category in which Indigenous adolescents were overrepresented. The superintendent and teachers designating Indigenous students as remedial or special could have been defined through intelligence testing or previous school reports. However, it was not unlikely that racial

¹²¹ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1967,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1968, 30.

¹²² British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1970,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1971, 36.

¹²³ Case Files, *GR-2897 Willingdon School for Girls fonds*, Box 1-14, BCA, Victoria, BC.

¹²⁴ Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal*, 130; Jason Ellis, *A Class By Themselves? The Origins of Special Education in Toronto and Beyond* (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2019), 171–2.

prejudices that characterized Indigenous students as underachievers were at play among Willingdon's administrators.

Remedial instruction was important to the training program at Willingdon. It was the institution's job, the superintendent explained, to "awaken a desire for further education" and to help the girl overcome difficulties in her studies in the past.¹²⁵ Since the school seemed to associate remedial instruction with learning disabilities and, as such, girl's anti-social behaviour, this assumption allowed the school to continue its mandate of curing deviancy through academic schooling.

"Their Babies are Planned For"¹²⁶

Rehabilitation for unwed pregnancy included mothers surrendering their babies for adoption. Although in the pre-war era social workers attempted to keep families together and did not recommend adoption, social workers in the post-World War II era believed that adoption was the best option for unmarried mothers.¹²⁷ Social welfare agencies in Vancouver and its surrounding area, such as the adoption division of the Child Welfare Office, Vancouver Children's Aid Society, Burnaby Social Welfare, and Catholic Children's Aid Society, were all involved in finding suitable parents for adolescents' "illegitimate" babies. Further, it seemed likely that the staff had more say over the babies than the young women did, especially, as Willingdon's superintendent writes in the annual report, "their babies are planned for."¹²⁸

¹²⁵ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, "Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1965," BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1966, 86.

¹²⁶ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, "Annual Report for the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1962," BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1963, 80.

¹²⁷ Veronica Strong-Boag, "Interrupted Relations: The Adoption of Children in Twentieth-Century British Columbia," *BC Studies*, no. 144 (December 1, 2004): 9–14.

¹²⁸ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, "Annual Report for the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1962," BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1963, 80.

It is possible that school social workers coerced pregnant adolescents into choosing adoption for their babies. Delinquent mothers would be assumed to be unable to afford the proper care of their babies, not to mention the fact that part of their rehabilitation towards social normalcy did not involve unwed motherhood. However, a 1961 internal policy at Willingdon shows that mothers or their family had the option of keeping the children through the Vancouver Children's Aid Society (CAS).¹²⁹ It is unclear whether other agencies like Catholic Children's Aid, the Victoria Children's Aid, or the Burnaby Department of Social Welfare had similar policies. This is important because each agency held jurisdiction over a specific group of mothers; for example, Vancouver CAS was responsible for Protestant mothers and mothers without jurisdiction, whereas the Catholic CAS was responsible for Catholic mothers.¹³⁰ This meant that only certain mothers may have had the opportunity to keep their children, if the policy was enforced.

Case files from Willingdon suggest that most girls did not keep their babies. Social workers and society frowned on mothers keeping illegitimate children. For those who did keep their babies, such as Donna, the expectation was that mothers stay in a foster home in order to distance themselves from their previous delinquent behaviour. These girls were monitored, and the threat of apprehension was ever-present. While Donna kept her child, it was likely that her baby was put into foster care upon her readmission to Willingdon.¹³¹ The "delinquent" label of unwed mothers certainly limited their opportunity to keep their children.

¹²⁹ Correspondence with Superintendent of Child Welfare Office, 1961, *GR-0888 Administrative Records*, Box 11.

¹³⁰ Correspondence with Social Service Department, 1961, *GR-0888 Administrative Records*, Box 11.

¹³¹ Donna Case File, *GR-2897 Willingdon School for Girls fonds*, Box 1-14, BCA, Victoria BC.

Officials often told mothers choosing adoption that they gained self-respect. Once adolescents had given birth, Willingdon often sent them on provisional release shortly afterwards.¹³² Clearly, society viewed adolescent pregnancy as the ultimate dishonour, transgressing the boundary of sexual encounters for adolescents. However, for Indigenous mothers, the reasoning for adoption was likely viewed according to preconceived racist notions of parenting skills on the part of Indigenous mothers, especially during the Sixties Scoop era. Indigenous parenting provided opportunities for their children to learn Indigenous culture(s). Even so, welfare officials and psychologists felt that Indigenous parenting regarding discipline and supervision was incorrect and dangerous.¹³³ According to the superintendent, most of the “Indians” sentenced to Willingdon faced alcohol-related charges.¹³⁴ These charges came from Indian agents’ and court officials’ prejudice regarding Indigenous people. The court’s charge of alcohol-related incidents meant that mothers likely had even less opportunity to keep their children, probably out of a desire to protect children from assumed neglect. The removal of children ensured that they could be assimilated into “proper” societal norms, including a nuclear family. Although the internal policy of 1961 seems to reflect that *some* mothers had a choice, the nature of the institution raises questions regarding which mothers truly had the choice of keeping their children and under what circumstances they could leave with their children, especially during the Sixties Scoop.

If unwed pregnancy was the ultimate social breakdown for girls, then Willingdon’s social training to reform an adolescent’s morality, her academic training to re-enter the public

¹³² Case Files, *GR-2897 Willingdon School for Girls fonds*, Box 1-14, BCA, Victoria, BC.

¹³³ Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal*, 113; Walmsley, *Protecting Aboriginal Children*, 92.

¹³⁴ Ardies, “Willingdon School—Does it Work?”

education system, and adoption were thought to be enough to rehabilitate the girl. Although school officials discharged adolescents on provisional release within a few months after birth, a final release often took longer. The release board approved of final releases at least a year after official provisional release. The board had to be convinced that the young women had made a “satisfactory adjustment in the community.”¹³⁵ The length of time ensured that adolescents did not have another social breakdown, one that included a second pregnancy or another offence. Willingdon’s educational objective of inculcating socially normal behaviour included provisional releases and the scrutiny of social workers who policed their behaviour.

From Delinquency to Child Care: 1969 Amendment Legislation

Major legislation enacted in 1969 changed the course of operations at Willingdon School for Girls. Politicians repealed the *Training School Act* in favour of an amendment to the *Protection of Children Act*.¹³⁶ Under this amendment, youth charged under the *Juvenile Delinquency Act* were put into the care of the Superintendent of Child Welfare. Further, the court viewed youth as “acting out” and needing help rather than punishment.¹³⁷ The court no longer identified adolescents as delinquents in need of reformation but as children in need of protection and guidance from their surroundings. While these two are often conflated, and Willingdon staff viewed some young women as in need of protection from their anti-social selves, students were now not just sentenced to Willingdon under particular offences but were placed stationed there to

¹³⁵ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1967,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1968, 30.

¹³⁶ Statute of the Province of British Columbia, *An Act to Amend the Protection of Children Act*, c. 27, RSBC 1969, 257-8.

¹³⁷ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1970,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1971, 22.

“sort out their mixed-up thoughts” and “take responsibility for their actions.”¹³⁸ In fact, Willingdon was no longer designated as a training school but as a “child care resource” that focused on the treatment, training, and rehabilitation of children.¹³⁹

This legislation did not necessarily change the educational objective of the training program. Willingdon continued to offer academic coursework and casework, and organizations continued to volunteer their time. In 1969, girls were even submitting their art and writing work to the Congress of Corrections Competition, with their work being hung in the Vancouver Art Gallery.¹⁴⁰ However, the method and services provided at Willingdon had changed over the years, whereby increasing support from local universities, religious groups, and organizations had begun to provide services in an attempt to socialize these girls. Willingdon had changed its method of education towards an increasingly rehabilitative approach; as the 1969 legislation came into effect, the province viewed young women as needing protection rather than punishment, which contributed to the ultimate demise of this school.

3.3 The Closure of Willingdon School for Girls

The Government of British Columbia officially closed the Willingdon School for Girls in April 1973. While the stigma and shame of an unwed pregnancy continued to exist, I argue that the provincial government challenged the previous government’s viewpoint on how to rehabilitate unwed pregnant adolescents. There were some developments leading up to its closure prior to 1973, such as the repeal of the *Training School Act* for the *Protection for Children’s Act* in 1969, with the final blow stemming from Dave Barrett’s NDP’s election in

¹³⁸ Ibid., 35; states that children no longer had to be labelled as a delinquent to receive treatment in training school.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 35

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 37.

1972. Although Willingdon was still in operation at this time, the repeal of the *Training School Act* propelled Willingdon closer to its closure with the oncoming pressures from the provincial election and the second wave of feminism.

Dave Barrett, the first NDP premier of the province of British Columbia, was a social worker prior to entering politics. Barrett had a history of disagreement with both British Columbia's institutional schools (Willingdon and Brannen School for Boys in Nanaimo) because they did not "adequately meet the needs of the people."¹⁴¹ Barrett did not seem to agree with the methods of rehabilitation nor the idea of incarcerating youth in institutions. When Barrett served as an MLA in 1962, he opposed Willingdon, mostly for their mixture of rural girls with the "incorrigibles" of the city.¹⁴² Barrett believed that rural girls needed support in their own communities rather than in the city. Despite this concern, he called for improved welfare services from the Social Credit (SoCred) government. Barrett also reprimanded Bert Price, a SoCred MLA famous for decrying that Willingdon adolescents were "not worth the nickel."¹⁴³ Prior to his election and while sitting on the opposition bench to W.A.C. Bennett's Social Credit Party, Barrett pressured the government to investigate the abuses that went on in these schools.¹⁴⁴ Even though social workers were central to the operation and objective of Willingdon's training, Barrett's past as a social worker may have made him aware of the way the school operated and treated its students.

¹⁴¹ "School Supplies Prostitutes," *Vancouver Sun*, February 21 1962, 10.

¹⁴² Ibid

¹⁴³ Ibid

¹⁴⁴ Geoff Meggs and Rod Mickleburgh, *The Art of the Impossible: Dave Barrett and the NDP in Power, 1972-1975* (Madeira: Harbour Publishing, 2012): 32. Specifically to Willingdon, he discussed how much of a waste the institution was when some of the women cited for incorrigibility were guilty of only liquor offences.

After his election win in 1972, Barrett assigned Norman Levi (also a former social worker) to take the position of Minister of Rehabilitation and Social Improvement and later Minister for Human Resources. In his first week as a cabinet minister, Levi gave notice in the fall of 1972 of the closure of Willingdon School.¹⁴⁵ In a *Vancouver Province* article, Levi explains, “The period is over of sending children out of their own communities for an indefinite period of time because they are apparently sexually immoral or cannot be handled by their parents.”¹⁴⁶ He further explained that the closure of Willingdon marked the “end of an era in this field philosophically.”¹⁴⁷ The combination of social workers as premier and cabinet minister, respectively, an NDP government that was aiming to make their policies “for the people.”¹⁴⁸ This was evident through welfare reform (such as Mincome and Pharmacare)¹⁴⁹ that was introduced and which continues to have an impact on the province today. When asked in 2010 what his biggest accomplishment was as premier, Barrett said the closure of both Willingdon and Brannen.¹⁵⁰ Barrett’s NDP government made radical changes to the province of British Columbia in many ways, but his call for closure of the Willingdon School for Girls demonstrates the change in perception surrounding institutions and delinquency among professionals and the government towards a more supportive and integrative approach for young pregnant women into more mainstream educational settings. This concern with young women as people rather than

¹⁴⁵ Lorne J. Kavic and Garry Brian Nixon, *The 1200 Days: A Shattered Dream: Dave Barrett and the NDP in BC, 1972-1975* (Coquitlam, BC: Kaen Publishers, 1978): 199.

¹⁴⁶ Dan Mullen, “Willingdon School Gets Axe”, *Vancouver Province*, October 17, 1972, 23.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Meggs and Mickleburgh, *The Art of the Impossible*, 32.

¹⁴⁹ Mincome provided a guaranteed minimum income to those over the age of 60 at \$200 a month, <https://thetyee.ca/Opinion/2017/07/26/BC-First-NDP-Premier/>; pharmacare was a prescription drug program which provided free prescription drugs to seniors over 65 in British Columbia; Government of British Columbia, “New Pharmacare Program Advertisement,” *Vancouver Province*, December 15 1973, 27.

¹⁵⁰ Dave Obee, “From the Archives: Reflections on Dave Barrett,” accessed November 24th 2018, <https://www.vancourier.com/news/from-the-archives-reflections-on-dave-barrett-1.23163848>.

delinquents was evidence of his larger concern for the humanization and well-being of his constituents.

3.4 Conclusion

The Willingdon School for Girls' educational objective was to rehabilitate adolescents, including pregnant adolescents. At first, the provincial government's *Industrial Home for Girls Act* governed who the court could send to the school and how the school operated. In 1963, the provincial government repealed the *Industrial Home for Girls Act* in favour of the *Training Schools Act*. The *Training School Act* caused a turn in how the staff attempted to rehabilitate young girls. Instead of the perceived punitive approach, the staff were transitioning to a therapeutic approach based on increasing casework services from social workers and the introduction of provisional release. Much like probation, provisional release allowed the staff to release girls on a trial basis to allow them to practise their socialization training. If girls did not adhere to their socialization training, social workers brought them back to the school for more training. In fact, a large proportion of the pregnant girls in my sample were brought back to Willingdon because of their pregnancy.

Willingdon's socialization agenda was also met through the introduction of community organizations like the Elizabeth Fry Society and the Pentecostal Foursquare Church, which sought to display the appropriate social behaviour of young women. In addition, Willingdon offered informal coursework like hairdressing courses to prepare young women for the workforce, especially if these women were over school-leaving age. Staff also offered courses in modelling and self-improvement to teach the how girls should self-present as marriageable and heterosexually alluring. Young women put this training to use in local fashion shows in Vancouver. The institution also offered a formal schooling program for the students. Formal

schooling was part of growing up for BC children, and this school ensured that young women could continue their education upon leaving the school. However, report card grades were not as important as the effort girls put in. If girls failed their classes, and were released at a similar time, the public education system may have also enrolled girls into classes that they had yet to complete. While their success in the academic program of their rehabilitation did not cement their release from the institution, girl's effort showed that some young women could re-enter the public education system. Teachers often praised the efforts of young women rather than the marks they achieved. This effort demonstrated to teachers and staff that adolescents were able to re-enter society.

For pregnant students, socialization was also based upon what happened to pregnant students' babies. Social workers in this era often thought that adoption was the best option for unmarried mothers. It is possible that social workers coerced mothers into giving up their children, especially since their socialization rehabilitation did not include motherhood. However, the Vancouver Children's Aid Society had a policy, which if enforced allowed mothers to keep their babies. After the birth of their babies, the school often sent mothers on provisional release shortly afterwards.

Willingdon changed again in 1969 when the province of British Columbia repealed the *Training School Act* in place of an amendment to the *Protection of Children's Act*. This legislation did not change the educational objective at Willingdon; however, the court and school now viewed adolescents as needing protection and guidance rather than punitive reformation. With this amendment, Willingdon was no longer identified as a training school; rather, the provincial government now described the school as a child care resource. This amendment

displayed the government's emerging shift on how to rehabilitate adolescents, especially pregnant adolescents.

In 1972, Dave Barrett won the provincial election in British Columbia as the first NDP premier. Barrett, a former social worker and an opposition MLA in the 1960s, had a history of disagreeing with using training schools as a way to rehabilitate adolescents. In the fall of 1972, Norm Levi, Barrett's Minister of Rehabilitation and Social Improvement (formerly named the Minister of Social Welfare) provided notice that the training schools in British Columbia would be closing. Barrett and Levi's closure of Willingdon and Brannan Lake demonstrates the change in how the government viewed "delinquent" adolescents from a punitive training to integrating adolescents into the community.

Willingdon School for Girls had closed on the progressive perception that it was morally wrong to keep girls in training facilities for reasons such as an unwed pregnancy. However, Willingdon was not the only institution that housed pregnant adolescents. In the next chapter, I will analyze the United Church Home for Girls, a maternity home for unwed mothers in Burnaby, British Columbia. This home operated with a similar educational objective to Willingdon; however, the maternity home also operated on the premise of what makes a good Christian family home.

Chapter 4: The United Church Home for Girls, Burnaby

In 1913, the Presbyterian Social Service Council, mainly comprising female church representatives in Vancouver, established the Redemptive Home for women at 2831 Cambie Street in Vancouver.¹ In 1923, the Home had moved to Burnaby. It moved to an adjacent lot in 1966 and remained there until its closure in 1973. In 1925, when the Methodist Church of Canada, the Congregationalist Church, and most of the Presbyterian Church of Canada merged to form the United Church of Canada,² its newly created Board of Evangelism and Social Services took control and renamed the institution the United Church Home for Girls. The Home initially opened because of the “problem of the unfortunate girl.”³ These were women pregnant outside of marriage. By the 1960s, girls and women between the ages of 13 and 39 went to maternity homes to hide their pregnancies.⁴ The United Church Home for Girls served as a space for women to live out their pregnancies away from their communities. Maternity homes in Canada operated at the same time as training schools like the Willingdon School. Yet maternity homes were vastly different than training schools in their admission procedures. Unlike the courts that sent girls to Willingdon, the court did not compel young women to attend the home.

The United Church’s Board of Evangelism and Social Service was responsible for at least three of the maternity homes in Canada: the Victor Home in Toronto, the Church Home for

¹ Correspondence from Superintendent to Board of Control Re: Historical Sketch, Box 1477, File 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, Bob Stewart Archives (hereafter BSA), Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

² Ian McKay Manson, “‘Fighting the Good Fight’: Salvation, Social Reform, and Service in the United Church of Canada’s Board of Evangelism and Social Service, 1925-1945.” Th.D., Canada, Emmanuel College of Victoria University, 1999, 55.

³ Correspondence from Superintendent to Board of Control Re: Historical Sketch, Box 1477, File 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA.

⁴ These homes were also often called redemptive homes.

Girls in Winnipeg, and the United Church Home for Girls in Vancouver.⁵ A separate Executive Board of Directors was responsible for the management of individual homes in each province. The Executive Board of Directors, the Metropolitan Council of Burnaby, and representatives from the Department of Human Resources closed Vancouver's United Church Home on August 31, 1973 (four months after the Willingdon School for Girls closed). The chairman stated that increasing access to abortions and birth control by 1969 decreased the number of women requiring the services of a maternity home.⁶

The first section of this chapter explores what kind of choice girls actually had in attending maternity homes compared to compulsion at Willingdon as a result of court rulings. Young women seemingly had a choice whether or not to stay at maternity homes. However, parents wishing to maintain a level of respectability often played a large role in girls attending maternity homes, limiting true choice.

The home operated as a mixed social economy, receiving monetary grants from the provincial government, and funds the Home's Women's Auxiliary fundraised in the community. The differing governing structures of the maternity homes created an educational objective different from Willingdon's. The United Church Home "fostered" a "home" environment. In the second section of this chapter, I argue that the aspiration to replicate a Christian home was aimed at teaching girls the norms of a "functional" environment that supported a middle-class, white, Protestant, and gendered family value system. To impart the values of the family home, the Board of Directors, Programme Committee, and matron offered various activities and support,

⁵ A Comparative Statement of Numbers, Wages and Hours of Staff of United Church Homes for Unmarried Mothers as of December 31st 1965, Box 1477, File 23, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA.

⁶ United Church Home Letter from Chairman of the Board: June 8th 1973, Box 1477, File 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA.

such as crafting, Chaplain's hour, casework services, and correspondence courses. These activities represented the expected gendered norms in the family home. This was certainly a form of rehabilitation for young women much like at Willingdon. However, the objective aimed at formulating respectability was rationalized through a Christian familial ideal, whereas Willingdon focused on the importance of rehabilitation and respectability through a therapeutic approach. Staff at the United Church Home role-modelled an appropriate Christian home that emphasized the importance of particular family values.

As part of the ideal Christian home environment, social workers and staff likely pressured adolescents to surrender their babies for adoption. While there was no official policy at the Home indicating that mothers needed to give up their babies for adoption, mothers at the United Church Home for Girls overwhelmingly "chose" adoption until 1970. It may have been the true choice of some mothers to give up their children for adoption; however, recent oral testimony across Canada indicates that coercion was a common practice.⁷ The home's expectation to replicate Christian family values displayed to young mothers their inadequacies as mothers. However, some women kept their children. Maternity homes were not exclusive to adolescents. Adult women staying at the home worked as teachers, nurses, office workers, and domestic workers.⁸ It seems likely that working women at the maternity home had more choice in keeping their children because of their financial ability to raise a child.

⁷ Art Eggleton, Chantal Petitcherc, and Judith Seidman, "The Shame Is Ours: Forced Adoptions of the Babies of Unmarried Mothers in Postwar Canada" (Ottawa, ON: Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science, and Technology, July 2018), <https://sencanada.ca/en/info-page/parl-42-1/soci-adoption-mandate/>. For more information on adoption during the post-war era see: Valerie Andrews, *White Unwed Mother*; Strong-Boag, *Finding Families, Finding Ourselves*; Strong-Boag, "Interrupted Relations."

⁸ Superintendent's Annual Report for 1960 Presented to the Board of Control, January 20, 1961. Box 1477, File 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA.

In 1969, the objectives of the home shifted because of a rapidly changing societal viewpoints on unwed mothers. Applicant numbers began to drop for the home. Funding was in decline, and the Children's Aid Society and Catholic Children's Aid Society pulled their casework support from the home.⁹ In 1967, the United Community Services released the *Report on the Problems of Illegitimacy*, which recommended increased efforts to support single mothers living on their own in the community—not to mention that adolescents increasingly kept their children. In efforts to maintain the home, the objectives shifted with the social attitudes. The Home's objectives transformed from hiding young pregnant women to providing supportive services. As part of these services, the home perceived a need to expand intensive therapies, like psychiatric consultation and group therapy for expecting and single mothers. The home's revised services ranged from finding group housing for mothers with children to offering recovery stays for therapeutic abortions. In Canadian law, a therapeutic abortion was an abortion deemed medically necessary by a therapeutic abortion council (TAC) made up of three doctors. This drastic shift caused the environment to be seen less as a *home* and more as a service delivery institution based on resource services.

4.1 Maternity Home: Who and Why

Families in the post-World War II years often pushed their daughters to attend maternity homes in order to hide a pregnancy.¹⁰ Parents were ashamed of their daughter's premarital sex,

⁹ Letter Re: Proposed Plan for Casework Services, February 23 1970, Box 1477, File 23, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, British Columbia

¹⁰ "Taken," W5 (Toronto, ON: CTV, March 22, 2019), <https://www.ctvnews.ca/w5/mothers-forced-to-surrender-their-babies-demand-an-apology-1.4347536>. This documentary provides oral testimony regarding the way parents treated pregnant daughters in Canada. Sharon's story shows that not all teens went to maternity homes, but the shame was still there. Charlotte's story shows the common attitude towards maternity homes. Both of these stories are important to the shame associated with pregnancy.

not to mention that they feared the stigma and loss of respectability if society discovered their daughter's pregnancy. In 1969, Bernadette, pregnant at nineteen, moved from Australia to Burnaby under the guise of a "vacation" to stay at the United Church Home for Girls.

Bernadette's parents gave her an ultimatum: cut off all ties with everyone in Australia and start a new life with her baby or leave the decision-making to her parents.¹¹ As with Bernadette, parents commonly provided little choice for teens. Adolescents faced losing their families and enrolled at maternity homes upon their parents' wishes. Of course, there are cases of young women making their own choice to enter maternity homes, such as Anne Petrie, who at age 19 admitted herself to Maywood Home for Girls in Vancouver.¹² While women were not sent to these homes on court orders like those at Willingdon, these girls faced the impossible situation of losing family and their reputations if they did not enter the maternity home.

Despite parents' and young women's fears of stigmatization, maternity home policies admitted a particular type of pregnant young woman. At the Burnaby Home, the Board of Directors reviewed Home policy every three to four years.¹³ Board policy set the operations of the home, including admission procedures. The basic policy in all four years was primarily to "serve unmarried mothers."¹⁴ The policy stated that any exceptions were to be considered on

¹¹ Chelsea Temple Jones, "Bernadette Dumas's Parents Needed a Place to Hide Her. Decades Later, She's Still Haunted by What She Lost," *Broadview Magazine*, December 1, 2012, <https://broadview.org/bernadette-dumas-parents-needed-a-place-to-hide-her-decades-later-shes-still-haunted-by-what-she-lost/>.

¹² Petrie, *Gone to an Aunt's*.

¹³ United Church Home policies were reviewed, mandated, and passed in 1961, 1965, 1968, and 1971.

¹⁴ United Church Home for Girls Board of Control: Statement of Policy in Minutes, November 10 1961, Box 1476, File 7, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C. Canada, p. 2; Meeting of Policy Committee, February 5th 1965, Box 1476, File 7, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C. Canada; The Constitution Under the Societies Act and Statement of Policy, January 1968, Box 1476, File 8, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C. Canada; Statement of Policy and Home Management, May 1971, Box 1476, File 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

their own “merits.”¹⁵ The board required pregnant women to complete an application for admittance. In 1966, the matron explained that the recent increase in applications meant that the home was at capacity.¹⁶ The high number of applications indicate that the matron was able to choose which girls would be accepted into the home.

The matron was also able to choose when it came to repeated pregnancies. Until 1968, the Home’s policy stated that the “basic consideration of receiving repeaters into the home shall be the need of the unmarried mother.”¹⁷ This ambiguous policy allowed the matron to choose whether repeating adolescents could be admitted to the home. However, in 1968 the policy changed: “that there be no discrimination in receiving repeaters into the home, only the basis of consideration being the girl’s need.”¹⁸ The change in policy made clear that discrimination regarding enrolling girls with repeat pregnancies was no longer allowed. It is possible that policy came into place as the home’s services started to change.

The 1968 policy also changed *who* was given admission to the Home. The Board of Directors also included the new policy line: “neither creed, nor colour, nor place of residence shall be a bar to admission.”¹⁹ The United Church Home’s religious representation often favoured United Church women; however, in this period, the maternity home included women of other faiths. Apart from the United Church, the home largely selected young women associated

¹⁵ Meeting of Policy Committee, February 5th 1965, Box 1476, File 7, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

¹⁶ Board of Control Meeting Minutes, March 11 1966, Box 1476, File 8, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, p. 2.

¹⁷ United Church Home for Girls Board of Control: Statement of Policy in Minutes, November 10 1961, Box 1476, File 7, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C. Canada, p. 2; Meeting of Policy Committee, February 5th 1965, Box 1476, File 7, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C. Canada

¹⁸ The Constitution Under the Societies Act and Statement of Policy, January 1968, Box 1476, File 8, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C. Canada

¹⁹ The Constitution Under the Societies Act and Statement of Policy, January 1968, Box 1476, File 8, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

with different denominations of Protestantism, such as Presbyterians, Anglicans, Baptists, and Lutherans. Some families chose opposing faith maternity homes for increased anonymity; Bernadette was Catholic, and her parents felt a United Church home would provide better security and concealment of her pregnancy from those of the same faith.²⁰ The church even accepted young women with no identified church faith. In 1965, 18 out of 135 girls (approximately 13 per cent) identified as belonging to “no church.”²¹ Non-Christian religions were rarely included, although the home did sporadically admit Jewish women. The Home admitted women of various religious backgrounds long before 1968. It is likely that the growing Catholic population in the United Church Home led to the creation of this policy.

At least as far back as 1958, the United Church Home admitted Catholic women to the maternity home. The admission rate was small; however, the Catholic Church operated its own maternity home, Our Lady of Mercy in the Vancouver area. In the mid 1960s, the Catholic maternity home closed, and the number of Catholic admissions at the United Church Home rose steadily between 1967 and 1971. In fact, the Board of Directors was in the process of changing the name of the United Church Home in the early 1970s as Catholic girls made up one-third of the population and because other faiths made financial contributions to the home.²² In 1968, the United Church Home’s Board of Directors membership included members from various Protestant denominations in the Lower Mainland (Presbyterian, United, and Anglican). Roman Catholic membership was not explicitly stated; however, the maternity home’s closure notice

²⁰ Jones, “Bernadette Dumas’s Parents Needed a Place to Hide Her.”

²¹ Matron’s Annual Report, January 1966, Box 1477, File 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

²² Board of Control Meeting Minutes, Box 1476, File 8, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, p. 2. Note: No date on this document.

explains that a representative from the Roman Catholic church was on the board.²³ It seems plausible that the Roman Catholic Church obtained membership on the board sometime around 1968. The Roman Catholic Church (as well as the Anglican Church) provided funding for the operation of the home.²⁴ With the increase in Catholic girls at the maternity home as well as the Roman Catholic Church's participation and funding, the United Church likely included this policy line to create a welcoming attitude to Catholic girls.

Maternity homes in Canada had a reputation for serving white young women. As part of the maternity homes' mandate to hide young pregnant women from society, the homes strongly encouraged adoption. Society perceived young white women as having "social value" because of the race of the baby.²⁵ Potential adopting parents desired white, and preferably female, babies, otherwise known as "blue-ribbon babies."²⁶ Maternity homes increasingly accepted white women because of their ability to find homes for their babies. The United Church Home for Girls did not detail the racial origins of young mothers from 1961 to 1973. In 1960, the board described the various racial origins, which included Scandinavian, European, Black, Indigenous, and Asian.²⁷ Although the home seemed to accommodate women of various races, white women likely dominated the population because of their children's adoptability, as long as their children were also white and not mixed-race. Strong-Boag notes the decision of Black single mothers in

²³ Letter from Chairman of Board of Directors to the Board of Evangelism and Social Services, May 7, 1970, Box 1477, Fil 13, United Church Home for Girl fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

²⁴ Letter from the Chairman of the Board of Directors, June 8th 1973, Box 1477, File 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

²⁵ Andrews, *White Unwed Mother*, 22.

²⁶ Strong-Boag, *Finding Families, Finding Ourselves*, 8.

²⁷ The report depicts Asians as "Oriental," black as "Negro", and Indigenous as "Native Indian"; 1960 Report; After this report, the board no longer gave information on the racial origins of their "guests." Superintendent's Annual Report for 1960, January 20 1961, Box 1477, File 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

Nova Scotia to keep their children because some experts identified these babies as inferior which limited their adoptability. Meanwhile, Indigenous mothers may have received support from their communities with minimal social repercussions because families might not have shamed them for their pregnancies.²⁸ Although the board policy stated that there was to be no discrimination among class, colour, or religion, the girls in the home were likely predominately white.

In 1970, the United Church's Executive Board indicated that the majority of admissions were middle-class adolescents.²⁹ Mary Louise Adams suggests that young women's "social value" was contingent on an unwed pregnancy; pregnant teens were delinquent.³⁰ Middle-class women were able to hide their pregnancies at maternity homes to save their "value." Middle-class teens could afford to attend the maternity home. It was not free. The cost of stay at a maternity home changed from \$50 a month in 1965 to \$60 prior to 1968, \$75 after, and by 1971 \$4/day or approximately \$120 a month.³¹ This was a lot of money, and girls often stayed in these homes for three months on average and sometimes longer. This could put a financial strain on some families. While the Home's brochure proclaims that a "lack of means" was not a barrier to admission, the home operated as a non-profit on grants and donations.³²

Establishing a "Home"

²⁸ Strong-Boag, *Finding Families, Finding Ourselves*, 8–9.

²⁹ Letter from United Church Home Social Worker to Coordinator of Field Instruction, UBC School of Social Work, June 29th 1970, Box 1476, File 14, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, BC, Canada.

³⁰ Adams, *The Trouble with Normal*, 105.

³¹ Minutes of Regular Meeting of the Board of Control, November 13th 1964, Box 1476, File 7, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C. Canada; Regular Meeting of Board of Directors, January 26th 1968, Box 1476, File 8, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C. Canada; Board of Directors-United Church Home for Girls, September 17th 1971, Box 1476, File 8, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

³² United Church Home for Girls Brochure, Box 1476, File 10, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

The United Church Home for Girls staff and board strove to establish a “home” for pregnant single young women. The church cast itself as an important feature of the welfare state.³³ Tracy Trothen explains that the United Church’s 1946 *Report of the Commission on Christian Marriage and the Christian Home* spoke to the breakdown of traditional gender roles as a threat of the “Christian Home” and subsequently the nation.³⁴ Further, Christie and Gauvreau depict the shift in the Protestant churches away from typically male support systems (such as unemployment insurance) to family-centered supports like mothers’ allowance and children’s welfare laws to “protect the integrity of the family.”³⁵ It was based on this kind of social concern that welfare homes like the United Church Home for Girls in Burnaby operated.

The 1946 report defined the Christian Home as having *two parents* “who are interested in happiness and welfare of the family, emotional security for all members, a place where friends are welcome, human personality as the basis of values, discipline, and a set of values to create the *tone* of family life.”³⁶ Maternity homes attempted to instill these values through recreating their own family in the Home. In one example, Karen Van Dieren wrote of the Oriental Home for Girls in Victoria during the first half of the 20th century that the home was designed as a “surrogate family” to teach girls the “Christian meaning of womanhood.”³⁷

The United Church Home for Girls established the “Christian Home” atmosphere among the young women. The educational objective was to impart these Christian home values to

³³ Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *A Full Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare State in Canada, 1900-1940* (Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996), 115.

³⁴ Tracy J. Trothen, *Linking Sexuality and Gender: Naming Violence against Women in the United Church of Canada*, vol. 9 (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2003), 32–3.

³⁵ Christie and Gauvreau, *A Full Orbed Christianity*, 114.

³⁶ Trothen, *Linking Sexuality and Gender*, 9:32–3.

³⁷ Karen Van Dieren, “The Response of the WMS to the Immigration of Asian Women 1888-1942,” in *Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on the History of Women’s Work in British Columbia*, ed. Barbara K. Latham and Roberta J. Pazdro (Victoria, BC: Camosun College, 1984), 82.

adolescent mothers. In 1958, the matron reported that “though lonely at first, the girls soon adjust to their new surroundings. Hence life within the Home is as that of a large family, with everyone sharing work, pleasure—and even trouble. So, the lives of all are enriched!”³⁸ The Christian home reflected the appropriate family based on the gender norms of women in the domestic sphere. Ian McKay Manson explains that the church often hoped home staff would be positive role models.³⁹ This was true at the United Church Home; the board commented on hiring staff by their ability to make a good home.⁴⁰ While the board and staff of the home claimed the atmosphere of family and home life, Valerie Andrews, an adoption scholar, calls homes like these “quasi-incarceral institutions.”⁴¹ These were places where women went to hide their pregnancies and where young women were often pressured into releasing their children to be adopted. Despite the objective to create a home atmosphere, teens were still sent there to hide as punishment for their pregnancies. Bernadette Dumas, once an adolescent who attended the home, explains that there was no talk about pregnancy at the United Church Home for Girls, except during doctor and social worker appointments.⁴² She also explains that young women were made to wear fake rings in public so to appear married.⁴³ The home wanted young women to ignore the very situation that they were sent to the home for. The Christian home atmosphere entailed that girls continued life as normal while subscribing to traditional gender norms.

³⁸ Superintendent’s Annual Report to the Board of Control of the United Church Home for Girls, 1958, Box 1477, File 12, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

³⁹ Manson, *Fighting the Good Fight*, 155.

⁴⁰ Matron’s Annual Report, 1963, Box 1477, file 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

⁴¹ Andrews, *White Unwed Mother*, 82.

⁴² Jones, “Bernadette Dumas’s Parents Needed a Place to Hide Her.”

⁴³ Ibid.

The Women's Social Service Council, later the Women's Auxiliary to the United Church Home for Girls assisted in establishing a "Christian Home." The Board of Evangelism and Social Service Council also managed the Women's Auxiliary. The auxiliary's purpose was to fundraise in the community for the home and to update the home's appearance.⁴⁴ Since the maternity home operated under the *Welfare Institutions Act* and the *Societies Act*, which provided provincial oversight to independent services in British Columbia, the home was legally registered with the provincial government but received most of its funding from donation sources. The Women's Auxiliary attempted to replicate the "Christian home" by providing modern furniture (new refrigerators, chesterfields, etc.), technology such as typewriters, and other "comforts" to the home. One report stated, "for girls coming to us, the comfort and beauty of the accommodation, plus the generous gifts of food and other donations from concerned church people, are an inspiration and a revelation of the nature of God's love."⁴⁵ The church's home-like atmosphere was supposed to comfort young women. Sharon Wall argues that the consistent redecorations and improvements to the United Church Home contributed to the domestic vision at the home.⁴⁶ It also displayed the middle-class comforts of the postwar era such as a TV, "recreation rooms," which were spaces dedicated to youth, and a "modern kitchen" with a stove, deep freezer, and counter space.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Constitution of the Women's Auxiliary to the United Church Home for Girls, June 15, 1967, Box 1477, file 20, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

⁴⁵ The Matron's Annual Report, 1968, Box 1477, file 12, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

⁴⁶ Sharon Wall, "Making Room(s) for Teenagers: Space and Place at Early Postwar Maternity Homes in Ontario and British Columbia," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 7, no. 3 (October 15, 2014): 515.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 515–16.

The Women's Auxiliary sent out Thanksgiving and Easter food donation requests to church communities. For example, in 1969 the United Church Home received Thanksgiving donations from 75 United Church and 12 Anglican congregations. Congregations donated so many apples that the girls made 99 quarts of applesauce!⁴⁸ The auxiliary also hosted annual tea parties to fundraise for the operating costs of the home.⁴⁹ The work of the Women's Auxiliary pushed the gendered ideals of what a good "Christian home" looked like, especially amidst the postwar consumerism era. Joy Parr explains that in the postwar years, "having things appeared to matter more."⁵⁰ The home atmosphere taught women about domesticity and preparing food in the middle-class home. These ideas relate to the 1946 United Church report because it set the standard for what a "happy" family looked like: women at the domestic helm. Men were at the home, but largely as the Chaplains. Middle-class womanhood accepted domesticity within the home, despite studies that suggest that women worked outside of the home so that their families could afford to display the middle-class ideal of domesticity.⁵¹ The Women's Auxiliary mattered as an object lesson in this home. The women normalized a comforting lifestyle in the short time that young women attended these homes. Whether intentional or not, the auxiliary showcased the

⁴⁸ United Church Home for Girls Board of Directors, November 14th 1969, Box 1476, file 8, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

⁴⁹ Board of Directors—United Church Home for Girls, May 25th 1971, Box 1476, file 8, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada; Minutes United Church Home for Girls Board of Directors, September 12th 1969, Box 1476, file 8, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada; Minutes of Regular Meeting, September 10, 1965, Box 1476, file 7, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada; Executive Meeting—Board of Control, June 26, 1962, Box 1476, file 7, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada; Board of Control—Minutes, May 1959, Box 1476, file 7, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

⁵⁰ Joy Parr, *Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral, and the Economic in the Postwar Years* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 5.

⁵¹ Veronica Strong-Boag, "Canada's Wage-Earning Wives and the Construction of the Middle Class, 1945-60," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 29, no. 3 (August 1994): 8.; Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal*, 54.

proposition that the proper home had clear expectations, ones that single mothers likely could not satisfy.

Chaplain's Work

In 1960, the United Church Home for Girls provided chaplain services to the girls. Prior to this, Sunday services were offered by multiple denominations throughout the day.⁵² The chaplain provided multiple services to the home, anchored by spiritual guidance.⁵³ Some of the services offered included voluntary Sunday services, Thursday counselling, and Bible studies. In 1960, the chaplain taught courses on the Ten Commandments, "as the basic principles of good living in all ages and in modern life."⁵⁴ He also taught a series titled Lessons in the Operation of Spiritual Laws as Taught by Jesus.⁵⁵ It is unclear what exactly was taught in these courses, but judging by the titles and descriptions, each course taught how to live a good Christian lifestyle. The chaplain explained that the biggest difficulty was that many of the women claimed to be agnostic.⁵⁶ These young women likely did not subscribe to these courses. For those who did, it was likely that the courses opposed single motherhood, especially since the sixth commandment forbids adultery or sexual activity labelled as immoral. These courses helped to solidify the primacy of the Christian home and family lifestyle, not to mention re-establishing acceptable sexual norms in young women.

⁵² Superintendent's Annual Report to the Board of Control of the United Church Home for Girls, 1958, Box 1477, file 12, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

⁵³ The Chaplain's Report, 1960, Box 1477, file 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Young women of faith contributed to the United Church Home's domestic vision. Christian values implied that young women respected the importance of family. However, the United Church Home and chaplain made clear that the religious services were voluntary, except for incoming interviews. The chaplain's interview was to establish a "friendly relationship."⁵⁷ Despite the voluntary services, the religious tone of the home persisted.⁵⁸ In the absence of the chaplain, young women could pick out hymns, sing, or even lead worship services.⁵⁹ The chaplain downplayed his service: "The spiritual life of the home depends on the day by day contact of the girls with members of the staff rather than the brief occasions with the Chaplain. It is the impact of a Christian life experience that we need to provide day by day."⁶⁰ The chaplain even explained that it was important to respect young women with differing faiths.⁶¹ His attitude shows the perceived importance of spiritual guidance in the home. Women absorbed the importance of Christian life through these services, which in turn taught young women the importance of the Christian family.

These services expanded in the 1970s. By then, the chaplain had started to provide discussion groups, seemingly similar to a bible study or youth group with the young women at the Home. The chaplain's groups at that time emphasized "marriage, family relations, education, communication, and the Christian faith" in an effort to show Christian values.⁶² It is unclear

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Petrie, *Gone to an Aunt's*, 89. Petrie explains that the religious tone was evident in maternity homes across the country.

⁵⁹ The Chaplain's Report, 1960, Box 1477, file 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada; Matron's Annual Report, 1966, Box 1477, file 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

⁶⁰ The Chaplain's Report, 1960, Box 1477, file 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

⁶¹ Letter from the Chaplain to the Board of Directors Re: Chaplain's Report to the Annual Meeting of the Board, March 11th 1970, Box 1477, file 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

⁶² Ibid.

whether these services were voluntary. As part of the United Church Home policy, the chaplain and house matron facilitated exit interviews with each woman “concerning her rehabilitation to her home and community.”⁶³ Further, the chaplain, with the mother’s consent, reached out to her home church minister to assist in rehabilitation once the young mother had left.⁶⁴ The home’s devotion to teaching family values contributed to the rehabilitation, not to mention monitoring, of young women and ensured that appropriate nuclear family life continued because of their positive attitude towards spiritual guidance.

Correspondence Education

The Executive Board gave young women at the Home the option of participating in public school courses by correspondence. Correspondence education was not a feature at the Home until 1961 when the home decided to expand services to young women. Correspondence education was traditionally offered to rural children outside school district zones or where physical barriers to attend school existed.⁶⁵ School lessons arrived by mail, were returned that way, marked, and sent by mail back again. However, the United Church Home was in suburban Burnaby, making location hardly a barrier to schooling. Instead, the barrier was the physical “problems” of teen pregnancy.⁶⁶ The Board of Evangelism and Social Services hired a qualified teacher at \$6 an hour (this had changed to \$8 an hour by 1970) to supervise adolescents in the correspondence program for three hours a week, thanks to the BC government’s \$2,000 grant to

⁶³ United Church Home for Girls Statement of Policy and Home Management, May 1971, Box 1476, file 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Mona Gleason, “Families without Schools: Rurality, Correspondence Education, and the Promise of Schooling in Interwar Western Canada,” *History of Education Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (2017): 308; British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Public Schools of the Province of British Columbia Ninety-Second Annual Report 1962/63, BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1964, p. 37.

⁶⁶ Home officials often referred to the physical problem as the growing belly in teen pregnancy.

finance programs at the Home.⁶⁷ The Home often hired the chaplain's wife to supervise the students' academic work.⁶⁸ The married duo provided an example of marriage and the type of family that was appropriate in the church, especially since the chaplain's wife only seemed to spend three hours a week in the classroom. Marriage was reflected as a requirement for a "Christian home." The teacher's short period of time in the classroom displayed her goodwill to serve the church, while also restricting the amount of time she spent out of her family unit. This teacher did not seem to teach subjects, rather to supervise and provide support when needed since each girl was taking different subjects at different levels. The girls rented textbooks much like the rural correspondence program, but the home supplied typewriters.⁶⁹

By 1967, formal education expanded to include a Burnaby School Board visiting teacher who assisted teens who were from Burnaby. These students were able to engage with their school work locally rather than through the provincial correspondence program. Still, the education program offered limited educational support because adolescents were isolated to the home.

Indeed, the United Church Home's educational objective featured inculcating middle-class nuclear family values, which scarcely included academics. In 1961 when planning for the correspondence program, the Board of Evangelism and Social Service declared, "the ability of

⁶⁷ Letter from the Board of Evangelism and Social Services to the Deputy Provincial Secretary, December 14th 1961, Box 1476, file 7, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada; Board of Control Meeting Minutes, March 9th 1962, Box 1476, file 7, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

⁶⁸ It is unclear if the chaplain's wife was also a certified teacher. The board wanted to hire a "qualified" teacher, which does not necessarily mean she was certified. Letter from the Board of Evangelism and Social Services to the Deputy Provincial Secretary, December 14th 1961, Box 1476, file 7, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

⁶⁹ Superintendent's Annual Report for 1960 Presented to the Board of Control, January 20th 1961, Box 1477, file 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada; Executive Meeting of the Board of Control, June 26th 1962, Box 1476, file 7, United Church Home for Girl fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

our local Board of Control to accomplish these objectives within the coming year will depend in large part on its ability to finance the same.”⁷⁰ The estimated cost of running the education program for a year was \$1,000.⁷¹ The Home needed support in order to run these programs, and academics were not a priority in the Home’s operations. Instead, young women’s capacity to learn how to run a household and engage in hobbies like crafting was more important. The Board of Directors even asked the Special Education Division of the Burnaby School District to employ a visiting teacher to teach crafts, piano, and singing to the girls in the home.⁷² While hiring a teacher for these activities did not seem to materialize, the order of priorities shows the priorities of the church Home to engage girls in crafting and homemaking activities rather than to strengthen the academic program.

Crafting and Upkeep

As part of the educational objective to promote the Christian home environment to young women, the Home included a handicrafting and personal upkeep program. Handicrafting and personal upkeep reflected a gendered domesticity that valued women working to make a “welcoming” home environment. Volunteers from the women’s auxiliary taught young women flower-making, driftwood arrangements, needlework, candle-making, macramé, sewing, paper flower making, and jewelry design.⁷³ The house matron even mentioned flower-making as a

⁷⁰ Letter from the Board of Evangelism and Social Services to the Deputy Provincial Secretary, December 14th 1961, Box 1476, file 7, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Matron’s Report for November-December 1967, Box 1477, file 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

⁷³ Program and Medical Committee, 1962, Box 1477, file 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C.; Annual Report of the Executive Director, 1972, Box 1477, file 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C.; Matron’s Report, 1969, Box 1477, file 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C.; Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1959, Box 1477, file 12, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C.

possible future vocation for these adolescents. Crafts were traditionally done in family homes, and staff ensured that all of these activities were appropriate and completed in the maternity home as well. Further, the matron of the home explained that these activities were important to the lonely or bored girl. “A bored girl, we find, will sit down with one staff person and knit, crochet, or make paper flowers when she will not join a group activity. This frequently leads to a blossoming of interest and to group participation.”⁷⁴ Staff perceived the development of “human personality” to define the Christian Home and improve the lives of young women. Young women with appropriate social abilities meant that they were developing a “human personality” for home life. Traditionally, mothers and other female family members taught young women, especially their married, pregnant daughters these skills. The Home acted as a surrogate to instill these skills in the unwed adolescent mother. Teen participation in the program contributed to the desired replication of appropriate family lifestyle in their future homes.

The home emphasized adolescent mothers’ personal upkeep. Much like Willingdon, staff at the home instructed young women on their personal appearances. However, at Willingdon personal upkeep was important to the development of “socialization” in public, whereas at the United Church Home for Girls, personal upkeep like make-up, hairstyling, and manicuring modelled the gendered expectations of respectability in the home. Domesticity required women to appear appropriate, especially for their families and neighbours. The objective of the two institutions are closely related; however, the justification for these educational objectives varied between identifying the importance of traditional family roles versus the socialization to participate widely in the public.

⁷⁴ Matron’s Report, 1969, Box 1477, file 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, BC.

While the home set expectations around crafting and personal appearances, it restricted other activities. One program committee proposed baking and “fancy sandwich” making to the girls. While this activity was important to home life, others on the committee considered it an inappropriate activity because the girls “need to keep a careful diet.”⁷⁵ This need for a proper diet seemed to be apparent across other maternity homes. Anne Petrie explained that homes strictly fed mothers three meals a day.⁷⁶ Although baking and sandwich making was not done in the home, the decision speaks to the importance of women’s, not to mention pregnant women’s, personal upkeep. Appearances mattered, and staff expected a particular type of femininity in the home that was congruent to expectations forming middle-class, white, Protestant women.

House Government

In 1965, the matron introduced a house government among the girls in order to share “responsibilities in the group living experience.”⁷⁷ It is not clear what the responsibilities entailed; however, the “group living experience” suggests that the home may have been establishing the government to instill a familial experience that modelled traditional family structures. In one instance, the young women put together a publication, and everyone was required to contribute some form of writing at least once during their stay.⁷⁸ Girls also planned tea socials for staff at the house and contributed to household chores. The matron explained in her annual report for 1966 that during a staff shortage, the girls stepped up to take on roles in the

⁷⁵ Program and Medical Committee, 1962, Box 1477, file 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C.

⁷⁶ Petrie, *Gone to an Aunt’s*, 83.

⁷⁷ Minutes of Regular Meeting, May 14th 1965, Box 1477, file 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C.

⁷⁸ Matron’s Annual Report, 1965, January 1966, file 13, Box 1477, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C.

house.⁷⁹ It is possible that these activities included chores and cooking within the home. The home taught young women the proper method of cleaning and household chores for their future lives. Household chores were consistent across maternity homes.⁸⁰ Petrie observes that staff at some homes were very particular about housework.⁸¹ The young women's contributions to the home conveyed a household atmosphere and one that resembled siblings taking turns at chores.

Adoption and Casework

The administration and staff at the United Church Home ensured that the home operated according to domestic values. The Home aimed to train the girls to understand the importance of a Christian home and family life. This educational objective taught young women the moral importance of familial life. The staff at the homes taught young women what they assumed their parents had failed to teach them. For example, staff taught that the girls should not engage in premarital sex. To pick up where families failed, the home assisted in hiding an unwed pregnancy from the outside world. In order to successfully hide the birth of an illegitimate child, maternity homes strongly encouraged young women to place their babies up for adoption. The provincial government and child welfare agencies were only able to apprehend children through the *Protection of Children Act*. The grounds for apprehension was based on evidence of neglect or cruelty. It would have presumably been easier for social workers to convince or coerce adolescents to surrender their children for adoption than for authorities to apprehend them.

⁷⁹ Ibid.; Matron's Annual Report, 1966, file 13, Box 1477, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C.

⁸⁰ Petrie, *Gone to an Aunt's*, 87.

⁸¹ Ibid., 83, 87.

Caseworkers were involved with the young women at the maternity home, much like they were at the Willingdon School for Girls. However, caseworkers at the maternity home seemed to be involved explicitly in planning for the arrival of babies. In the 1960 annual report, the superintendent explained, “the social worker from the Children’s Aid Society contacts each girl to assist in plans for adoption as each one is faced with the problem of the baby’s future.”⁸² While the social worker visited each week, staff “offered counsel in a more informal manner—much as good parents do in a normal home setting.”⁸³ The maternity home even brought in prospective adoptive parents to reassure young women of their baby’s future well-being.⁸⁴ Formal social worker counselling and the informal staff counselling demonstrates the Home’s presumption that young women came from homes that lacked the Christian environment the maternity home provided.

According to all four iterations of the United Church Home policy, maternity home staff did not accompany young women to the hospital at the onset of labour.⁸⁵ Once the baby was born, staff and social workers at maternity homes generally believed in mothers placing their

⁸² Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1960 Presented to the Board of Control, January 20th 1961, Box 1477, file 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA; Annual Report Board of Control of the United Church Home for Girls, January 1958, Box 1477, file 12, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA. Some babies were placed for private adoptions by physicians.

⁸³ Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1959, Box 1477, file 12, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C.

⁸⁴ Annual Report of the Executive Director, 1972, Box 1477, file 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C.

⁸⁵ United Church Home for Girls Board of Control: Statement of Policy in Minutes, November 10 1961, Box 1476, file 7, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA; Meeting of Policy Committee, February 5th 1965, Box 1476, file 7, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA; The Constitution Under the Societies Act and Statement of Policy, January 1968, Box 1476, file 8, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA; Statement of Policy and Home Management, May 1971, Box 1476, file 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA. In one instance, staff delivered a baby when the labour was quick. Report for February, 1964, Box 1477, file 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA.

babies for adoption as a respectable, good, and “emotionally healthy” response.⁸⁶ If mothers kept their babies, the various children’s aid societies monitored both mother and baby. Encouraged adoption was present across maternity homes in Canada. Recently, women’s oral testimony revealed the coercive adoption practices in Canada’s past.⁸⁷ “Coercive” often meant that mothers were strongly encouraged to surrender for adoption and to think what was “best for the child.”⁸⁸ Lori Chambers explains that the Children’s Aid Society in Ontario convinced young women to place babies for adoption by teaching the challenges of single motherhood and the difficulty in finding a marriage partner.⁸⁹ Social workers’ depictions of an unstable household for a baby was exemplified through the maternity home experience. A letter from the Children’s Aid Society explained, “A case worker from the CAS counsels almost every girl in helping her to reach the best decision for herself and for her child’s future. The fact that not one girl has criticized the Home, nor asked to be moved elsewhere speaks for itself.”⁹⁰ Staff believed that because girls did not complain, they appreciated the services. The public’s persistent stigmatizing of pregnant adolescents challenged young women’s ability to criticize the maternity home. The aim of the home to provide an “understanding and compassionate home” undermined the ability of young women to provide for their children, as did the pressure by case workers.⁹¹ As part of the educational objective, the United Church Home for Girls taught young women their own

⁸⁶ Strong-Boag, *Finding Families, Finding Ourselves*, 8; Eggleton, Petitcherc, and Seidman, “The Shame Is Ours,” 8; Petrie, *Gone to an Aunt’s*, 143–4.

⁸⁷ Eggleton, Petitcherc, and Seidman, “The Shame Is Ours”; Andrews, *White Unwed Mother*.

⁸⁸ Eggleton, Petitcherc, and Seidman, “The Shame Is Ours,” 4.

⁸⁹ Chambers, *Misconceptions*, 96.

⁹⁰ Annual Report Board of Control of the United Church Home for Girls, January 1958, Box 1477, file 12, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA.

⁹¹ Terry French, “House of Compassion Needs Concrete Aid,” *Vancouver Province*, May 20, 1965, p. 35

inadequacy in “appropriate” family and home life through the prescribed family life that the home exemplified.

Social worker services were changing in the maternity homes. In 1967, Burnaby’s Department of Social Welfare served pregnant women at the home from Burnaby.⁹² By 1969, the Children’s Aid Society and the Catholic Children’s Aid Society had pulled their services from the United Church Home for Girls.⁹³ Because of budget constraints, children’s aid societies were forced to draw back their services only to the district that they served. This left most girls without casework because many women came from afar, even from a different province or country. As a result, by 1970 the home hired its own social worker.⁹⁴ Hiring a social work for the home meant that each woman was receiving counsel not only on what they should do with their babies, but also to expand group therapy services.

Although social workers and staff strongly encouraged young women to give their babies up for adoption, some women did keep them. It is unclear who in particular, but working women with steady jobs were more likely able to keep their babies. It was likely that social workers let older women keep their babies because of perceived financial stability and these women’s perceived skill set to support a child. It also would have been difficult to force these women to give up their children because of their rights as adults. In other instances, some mothers-to-be married prior to giving birth, which enabled them to keep their babies.⁹⁵ However, by the 1970s a growing number of unmarried adolescents kept their children. In fact, the 1972 annual report

⁹² Matron’s Annual Report, 1968, Box 1477, file 12, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA.

⁹³ Matron’s Report, 1969, Box 1477, file 13, United Church Home for Girls, BSA.

⁹⁴ Special Meeting re: A Social Worker for the United Church Home for Girls, February 3rd 1970, Box 1476, file 8, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA.

⁹⁵ Superintendent Report for October 1959, November 13th 1959, Box 1477, file 12, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA.

noted that there was a 22 per cent drop in adoptions and a subsequent 20 per cent increase in women keeping their children.⁹⁶ While the Home indicated that more women were keeping their children, the statistics show that there is a slight discrepancy in the calculations. In figure 4.1, the grey bar shows the number of babies surrendered for adoption, and the black bar shows how many mothers kept their babies. However, by the 1970s, the number of adoptions had decreased while the number of kept babies remained fairly constant. This meant that the number of mothers keeping their children was higher than previous years because less babies were being adopted.

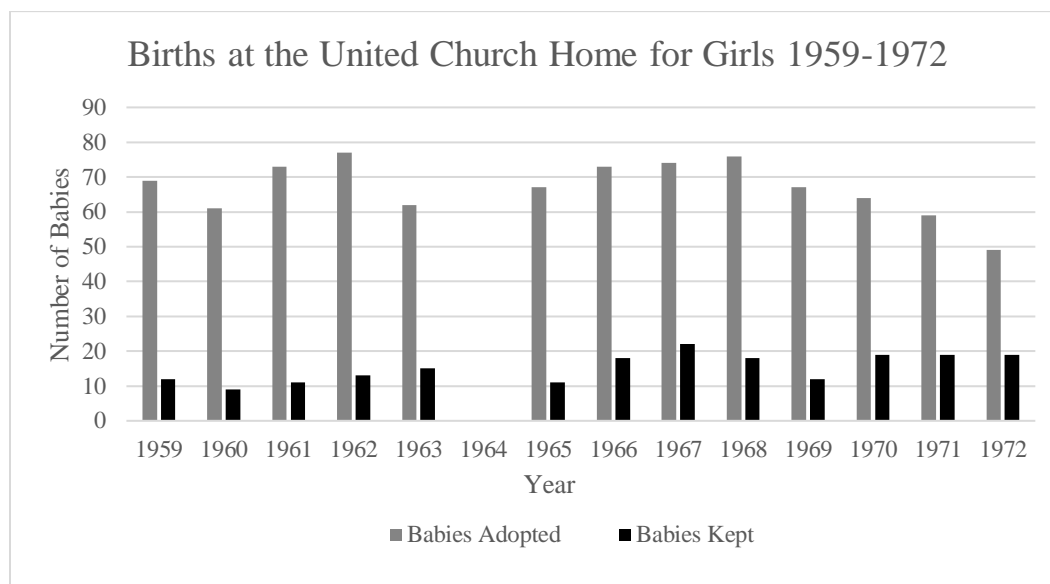


Figure 4.1 Outcome of births at the United Church Home for Girls in Burnaby, British Columbia, 1959-1972.

Note: No data available for 1964. Source: United Church Home for Girls, Bob Stewart Archives, box 1476-1477.

Changing Social Moers: The Second Wave of Feminism

⁹⁶ Letter from Social Worker to Chairman of the Board Re: Semi-Annual Report, October 1971-March 1972, file 17, Box 1476, United Church Home for Girls fond, BSA.

This increase in the number of mothers keeping their babies demonstrated a shift in societal expectations and social mores for women. As figure 4.1 shows, it seemed that there were fewer babies born to mothers at the maternity home after 1968. Changing social mores can be attributed to the various women's organizations lobbying during the second wave of feminism as they demanded a royal commission into women's rights and equality, not to mention the decriminalization of the birth control pill and therapeutic abortions. Women's organizations hoped, among other things, that a royal commission would create a shift that would no longer value women for their moral actions.

In 1966, 32 English-Canadian women's groups came together to form the Committee for the Equality of Women (CEW). In May, the CEW pushed the government to create the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. The Fédération des femmes du Québec, formed by Quebec women in April 1966, joined together with the CEW in September 1966.⁹⁷ These organizations felt that the royal commission was necessary in order to identify the discrimination that women faced, namely the freedom to choose to participate in the workforce, the shared responsibility of child care, maternity benefits, and the need for structures that assisted women in overcoming the discrimination they faced.⁹⁸ In 1967, after the push from these organizations, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson's federal government agreed to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women.

⁹⁷ Monique Bégin, "The Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada: Twenty Years Later," in *Challenging Times: The Women's Movement in Canada and the United States*, ed. Constance Backhouse and David H. Flaherty (Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 23.

⁹⁸ Freda L. Paltiel, "State Initiatives: Impetus and Effect," in *Women and the Canadian State*, ed. Caroline Andrew and Sandra Rodgers (Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 29.

Commissioners travelled throughout Canada to gather stories from women in order to understand their experiences in Canada. Shannon Stettner analyzed the letters women wrote to the commission. She explains that many women wrote about their experiences as mothers, especially in regard to lobbying for birth control and abortions. In particular, women wrote regarding their experiences with an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy.⁹⁹ Many women argued that women should have the right to decide whether or not to have an abortion.¹⁰⁰ This forum was important. The royal commission provided a space where women were able to freely talk about their concerns. The era was shifting, and the voices of women to the commission was important in establishing the recommendations on how women should be treated.

In 1970, the commission released the Report on the Royal Commission of the Status of Women. The report contained 167 recommendations across various topics—for example, highlighting the need to change textbooks so that they did not reflect gender stereotyping and discrimination, incorporating the single and/or teen mother into broader society, and the need to implement subsidized daycare.¹⁰¹ The report also dedicated part of Chapter 4 Women and Family, to the unmarried mother. The commissioners acknowledged that there was a trend of unmarried mothers starting to keep their children. The commissioners suggested this was because there was less of a demand for adoption; however, at least for teen mothers, adoption was more about retaining respectability.¹⁰² The report was important as the final 167

⁹⁹ Shannon Stettner, “He Is Still Unwanted: Women’s Assertions of Authority over Abortion in Letters to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada,” in *Abortion: History, Politics, and Reproductive Justice after Morgentaler*, ed. Shannon Stettner, Kristin Burnett, and Travis Hay (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2017), 103.

¹⁰⁰ Stettner, 105–7.

¹⁰¹ The Royal Commission of the Status of Women, “Report of the Royal Commission of the Status of Women in Canada” (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1970).

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 288.

recommendations based in Canadian economy, education, women and their families, child care, poverty, immigration, criminal law, and participation in the public sphere reflected a multi-faceted changing social landscape for women. The women's movement, and subsequently the Report on the Royal Commission of the Status of Women, acknowledged the difficulties and differences that women faced and no longer made it acceptable to judge mothers based on traditional gender roles.

4.2 Expansion of Services

As more women kept their babies, the United Church Home expanded its services to meet the needs of young women. From 1959 to 1969, the United Church Home made small changes, like the inclusion of new crafting activities in the program and the move to a new building in 1966. By 1969, major changes had confronted the original program and forced the Home to expand its services. The societal perception of unwed mothers was starting to change. The matron of the United Church Home participated in the United Community Service's *Report on the Problems of Illegitimacy*. This report identified the problems associated with unwed pregnancy, dispelled myths, listed current community resources, and made recommendations on how to better support mothers who kept their children. Recommendations included: family planning and birth control clinics, group homes with daycare for unmarried mothers, licensed daycare for young children, counselling, legal and financial aid to unmarried mothers, information pamphlets, the development of family life education, and vocational training.¹⁰³ This

¹⁰³ United Community Services of the Greater Vancouver Area, "A Report on the Problem of Illegitimacy" (Vancouver: United Community Services of the Greater Vancouver Area, November 1967), 14–16.

report came out in 1967, and community organizations and governments began to implement its recommendations, like group homes for single mothers, by 1969.

As community and government organizations prepared to expand services to unmarried mothers in an attempt to “solve the illegitimacy problem,” the United Church Home was not receiving the same number of admissions that it had in the past. The black line in figure 4.2 shows the total number of girls at the United Church Home each year. In the peak year, 1968, there were 139 girls in the home. Afterwards, the number of girls continually decreased until the Home’s closure.

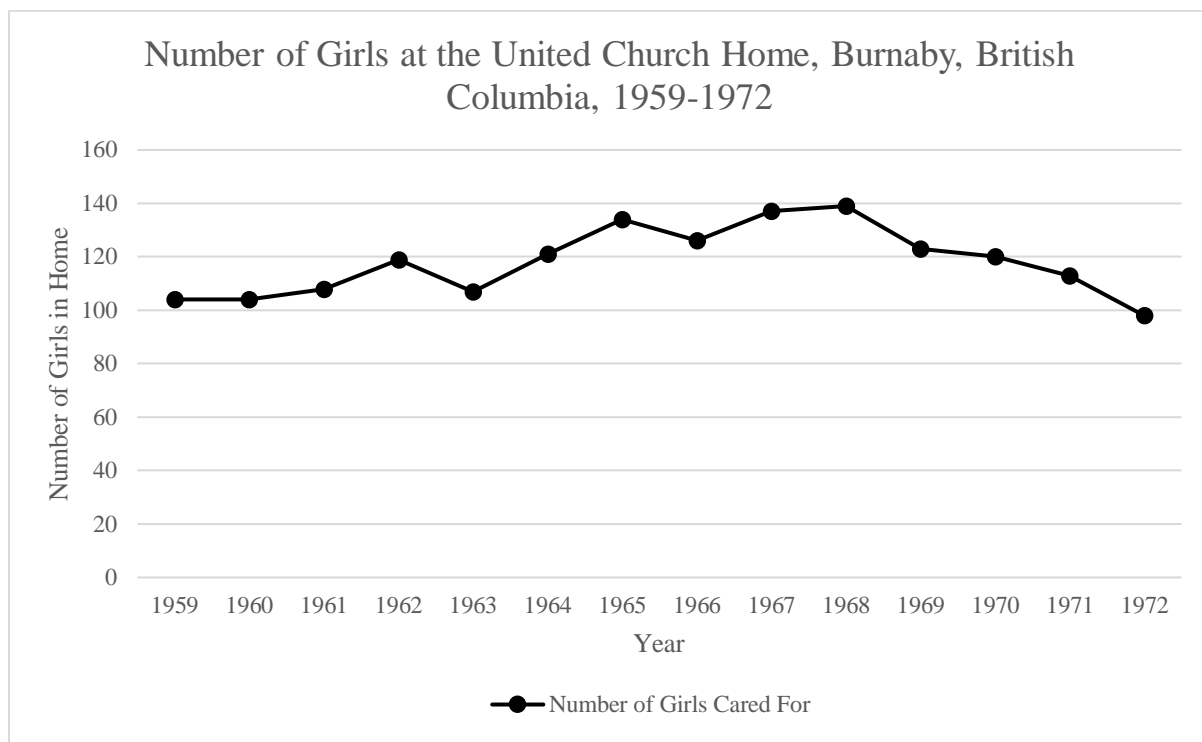


Figure 4.2 The number of girls in the United Church Home for Girls each year in Burnaby, British Columbia. Source: United Church Home for Girls fonds, Bob Stewart Archives, box 1476-1477.

In 1970, even the matron commented on the low number of applications.¹⁰⁴ This decrease came as societal attitudes shifted in regard to unwed pregnancy. At a reception held for staff at the Home with the attendance of board members, the women's auxiliary, and other social agency colleagues in Vancouver, the matron remarked: "[t]his was the first time that the girls had taken part in such functions [reception] and it proved to be most enjoyable. Changing attitudes of society made it possible for the girls to take part. A short time ago they would not have joined in for fear of recognition."¹⁰⁵ This shift in social attitudes, especially with the recommendations from the *Report of the Problem of Illegitimacy*, allowed unmarried women, including young unmarried women, to keep their children.

As the community made changes, the United Church Home expanded its services to offer a service provider model. However, the expansion of services also challenged how staff described the young women in their care. Previously, staff described unwed pregnant women as needing a good home to stay in. After 1969, staff increasingly described younger women keeping their children as having "social problems."¹⁰⁶ Staff may not have believed in young women keeping their babies; however, shifting perspectives allowed adolescents to keep their children. The Home needed to change their services or else be left behind by the community organizations that were willing to provide services to single mothers. Staff's changing perspectives assisted in the type of services that the home offered. As one staff member noted "more intense needs of the girls required a therapeutic milieu, in which all aspects of the program could be used to help the

¹⁰⁴ Executive Director's Annual Report, 1970, Box 1477, file 14, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA.

¹⁰⁵ Annual Report of the Executive Director, 1971, Box 1477, file 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA.

¹⁰⁶ Annual Report of the Executive Director of the United Church Home for Girls, 1971, Box 1477, file 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA; Letter from the Board of Director's Chairman Re: Semi-Annual Report April-September 1971, January 12, 1973, Box 1476, file 17, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA.

girls raise their level of social functioning.”¹⁰⁷ The home started to offer sessions with the Family Planning Clinic in Vancouver. Social workers also arranged group home living for single mothers leaving the home as part of the recommendations in the 1967 report.¹⁰⁸ Lastly, the home invited previously resident young women and their children to dinner to understand how the home could provide better assistance to single mothers once they left the maternity home.¹⁰⁹

The church added other services to women in an attempt to increase applications. The federal government decriminalized therapeutic abortions in 1969. In 1960, the United Church only permitted abortion if the mother’s health was at risk. The church did not believe in abortion for the purposes of family planning or to “provide relief” for unwed mothers.¹¹⁰ However, by 1966, the United Church of Canada’s Board of Evangelism and Social Service called on the government to amend the Criminal Code to permit abortions when a mother’s health was at risk.¹¹¹ By 1971, the United Church was supporting women’s right to choose.¹¹² The change in positions on abortion was evident, and as part of the expansion of services, the home offered admission and casework services for young women recovering after a therapeutic abortion.¹¹³

For young women in the home, the board hired a part-time occupational therapist (OT) from the University of British Columbia. The OT designed courses for single mothers that covered finance, housing, child care, and nutrition in order to “prepare girls to become good

¹⁰⁷ Letter from the Board of Director’s Chairman Re: Semi-Annual Report April- September 1971, January 12, 1973, Box 1476, file 17, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA.

¹⁰⁸ Executive Director’s Annual Report, 1970, Box 1477, file 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA.

¹⁰⁹ Report of Executive Director to the United Church Home for Girls, November 1971, Box 1477, file 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA.

¹¹⁰ Shannon Stettner and Bruce Douville, “‘In the Image and Likeness of God’: Christianity and Public Opinion on Abortion in The Globe and Mail during the 1960s,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 50, no. 1 (Winter 2016): 187.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Trothen, *Linking Sexuality and Gender*, 9:23.

¹¹³ United Church Home for Girls Condensed Semi-Annual Report April-September 1972, Box 1476, file 17, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA.

parents.”¹¹⁴ Canada Manpower (a federal government department devoted to employment assistance) was even invited to the home to discuss the employment and training.¹¹⁵ By the early 1970s, the home life seemed to become much more institutional, and staff described girls in a similar fashion as the Willingdon School. Even the staff had changed their titles from “matron” to “executive director” and “teacher” to “educational supervisor.” Maternity home staff acknowledged that the expansion of services brought a loss of the “family atmosphere.”¹¹⁶ The United Church Home for Girls became focused on offering services to support mother’s success as single parents rather than to hide illegitimate pregnancies from the public.

In June 1973, a memo indicated that the United Church Home for Girls was closing at the end of August 1973. The board explained that the legalization of therapeutic abortions and the birth control pill had decreased the number of women at the home. Prior to the 1968 federal election, Pierre Trudeau introduced omnibus bill C-150 to amend the Criminal Code of Canada. This bill decriminalized therapeutic abortions, birth control, divorce, and homosexuality. After Trudeau’s federal election win in 1969, the House of Commons passed the bill.¹¹⁷ However, despite decriminalization of both therapeutic abortions and birth control, access was restricted because a therapeutic abortion was contingent upon three doctors deciding a pregnancy was a health risk. Therapeutic abortion committees were often limited to urban hospitals, and some

¹¹⁴ Letter from the Board of Director’s Chairman Re: Semi-Annual Report April- September 1971, January 12th 1973, Box 1476, file 17, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA.

¹¹⁵ United Church Home for Girls Board of Directors, May 30th 1969, Box 1476, file 8, United Church Home for Girls, BSA.

¹¹⁶ Letter from the Executive Director to the Chairman of the Metropolitan Council of the United Church Committee, October 25th 1973, Box 1476, file 18, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA. Note: The date on this letter is a typographical error. The letter states that the home had operated in the new building for three years. This would place the letter closer to 1970.

¹¹⁷ The Canadian Press, Posted: May 07, 2010 2:31 PM ET | Last Updated: May 10, and 2010, “Birth-Control Pill Turns 50 | CBC News,” CBC, May 7, 2010, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/birth-control-pill-turns-50-1.908892>.

hospitals refused to allow for therapeutic abortion committees. Some provinces did not even open clinics, such as Prince Edward Island.¹¹⁸ The law also did not require medical schools to teach abortion services in its curricula.¹¹⁹ Keeping this in mind, young women likely continued to struggle accessing these services.

Pierre Trudeau's famous line, "the state has no business in the bedrooms of the nation," challenged government control over the sexual lives of people, especially gay men and lesbians.¹²⁰ Despite these words, women continued to face barriers to reproductive decision-making. Doctors performed therapeutic abortions for women whose pregnancy caused health risks—except for Henry Morgentaler, who believed that women had a right to an unconditional abortion.¹²¹ Morgentaler was a Polish physician who immigrated to Canada after surviving the Holocaust. He championed the right of women to take control of their reproductive choices. In 1967, Morgentaler testified his support for women's access to abortion in the House of Commons.¹²² After Morgentaler testified, he closed his general practice and opened an abortion clinic in Montreal (and later numerous clinics across Canada). These clinics were illegal but Morgentaler supported women's right to choose. Most important, Morgentaler did not require a

¹¹⁸ Katrina Ackerman, "A Region at Odds: Abortion Politics in the Maritime Provinces, 1969-1988" (University of Waterloo, 2015), 9, <https://uwspace.uwaterloo.ca/handle/10012/9777>.

¹¹⁹ Frances E Chapman and Tracy Penny Light, "Functionally Inaccessible: Historical Conflicts in Legal and Medical Access to Abortion" in *Abortion: History, Politics and Reproductive Justice after Morgentaler*, eds Shannon Stettner, Kristin Burnett, and Travis Hay (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2017): 190-1.

¹²⁰ McLaren and McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State*, 9.; It is important to note that four private members tabled four separate bills to the House of Commons asking for revisions to birth control laws. One of these bills also included revisions to abortion. See Katrina Ackerman and Shannon Stettner, "The Public Is Not Ready for This': 1969 and the Long Road to Abortion Access," *The Canadian Historical Review* 100, no. 2 (June 2, 2019): 239–56.

¹²¹ Katrina Ackerman, "The Dark, Well-Kept, Secret: Abortion Experiences in the Maritime Provinces," in *Abortion: History, Politics, and Reproductive Justice after Morgentaler* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2017), 134.

¹²² Shannon Stettner, Kristin Burnett, and Travis Hay, eds., "Introduction," in *Abortion: History, Politics, and Reproductive Justice after Morgentaler* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2017), 9.

therapeutic abortion committee approval to provide an abortion. This landed Morgentaler in court three times in the 1970s, and each time the jury acquitted him.¹²³

Despite Morgentaler disregarding the abortion laws of the 1970s, the government required women to apply for an abortion by submitting a request to the TAC, a group of three physicians at an accredited hospital. These doctors determined whether or not the women's health risks qualified as therapeutic. If they did, doctors performed the procedure. The legal, medical, and institutional barriers allowed often male practitioners to ultimately decide if women were eligible for a therapeutic abortion.

However, these were not the only barriers women faced. The few hospitals that did institute a TAC were busy. Some women applied at the beginning of a pregnancy, and by the time their request was approved, it was too late to abort.¹²⁴ Prior to the decriminalization, women sought illegal abortions through natural remedies or by inducing abortion through the use of sharp instruments such as needles and coat hangers.¹²⁵ These were incredibly dangerous and in many cases caused serious infection, hemorrhaging, and ultimately death. Other women opted to travel abroad for an abortion.¹²⁶ Even after partial decriminalization, some women, especially those who were financially privileged (and often white) continued to travel abroad for abortions because it was faster than waiting for TAC results.¹²⁷

This change and the restrictions opened the doors for pro-choice activists, especially on the University of British Columbia campus. In 1973, the same year as *Roe v Wade* in the United

¹²³ Ibid., 10.

¹²⁴ Sethna et al., "Choice, Interrupted," 34.

¹²⁵ Sethna, "All Aboard?" 91.

¹²⁶ Ibid.; Sethna et al., "Choice, Interrupted," 30–3.

¹²⁷ Sethna, "All Aboard?" 92, 99; Ackerman and Stettner, "'The Public Is Not Ready for This,'" 245.

States, activists at UBC launched an event called the Women's Tribunal on Abortion, Contraception and Sterilization as part of Women's Studies Week.¹²⁸ One of the "charges" that the tribunal made against society was that laws against abortion and contraception resulted in unwanted children.¹²⁹ It was not until 1988 in *Regina v. Morgentaler* that abortion was decriminalized and declared unconstitutional. This decision stemmed from the arrest of Morgentaler along with Dr. Robert Scott and Dr. Leslie Frank Smoling at their Toronto abortion clinic. The doctors were retried on appeal, and Morgentaler brought the case to the Supreme Court of Canada.¹³⁰ In 1988, the Supreme Court, according to the Criminal Code 251, declared criminalized abortions unconstitutional because the law violated a woman's right under section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as to the security of person.¹³¹ To be sure, in 1988 it was ruled that abortions requiring certified approval from the TAC violated a woman's security to make her own decision about an abortion. This meant that women no longer needed the approval of a TAC.

The omnibus bill of 1969 also decriminalized contraception. Various forms of birth control existed in the past (condoms, douching, and pessaries), but the 1960s innovation, the birth control pill, allowed young women to control their ovulation.¹³² Prior to 1969, the birth control pill could be prescribed by physicians but not (ironically) for contraception purposes.

¹²⁸ Beth Palmer, "Abortion on Trial: Abortion Tribunals in the 1970s and 1980s," in *Abortion: History, Politics and Reproductive Justice after Morgentaler*, ed. Shannon Stettner, Kristin Burnett, and Travis Hay (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2017), 114.; The U.S. Supreme Court decision to respect the privacy of women in the decision to have an abortion; Jen Rinaldi, "Morgentaler and the Technological Production of Embodiment," in *Abortion: History, Politics and Reproductive Justice after Morgentaler*, ed. Shannon Stettner, Kristin Burnett, and Travis Hay (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2017), 199.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 124.

¹³⁰ Stettner, Burnett, and Hay, "Introduction," 7.

¹³¹ Rinaldi, "Morgentaler and the Technological Production of Embodiment," 198.

¹³² McLaren and McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State*, 21.

Despite its legality after 1969, some women, especially teenagers, found it difficult to access the pill because of social taboo and doctors' assertions that only married women should have access to it. According to one newspaper, teens did not want to admit that they were sexually active and taking the pill implied they were.¹³³ Besides, a few doctors suggested that some teens were too young for contraceptives or, if under sixteen, would require parental consent.¹³⁴ Even then, a minority of Canadian medical schools taught that birth control was for all women, not just married women and women with menstrual problems.¹³⁵ Even though the discussion of birth control had become widely public, there continued to be a barrier to information on contraception.¹³⁶

Women's widespread and equitable access to therapeutic abortions and the birth control pill remained obscure. Some teenagers did receive a therapeutic abortion. Erika Dyck writes of Jane Doe in Calgary; the TAC perceived Jane as a "young girl struggling to find her way in the world and battling with issues of self-esteem and stability."¹³⁷ The doctor's concern for young women's self-esteem as a medical issue could result in the approval of therapeutic abortions. Dyck explains that this was fairly typical for teenage abortion cases in Calgary in the 1970s.¹³⁸ It is possible that some young women had access to abortions and the pill; however, given the barriers to access, the legalization of the birth control pill and therapeutic abortions is unlikely to

¹³³ Karenn Krangle, *Vancouver Sun*: "Pregnant teenagers believe they'll finally have someone to love," March 1st 1980, file: AM1486-S4--, Box 576-D-05 fld 25, Teenage Pregnancy 1979-1990, City of Vancouver Archives, A12

¹³⁴ Ibid, A12.

¹³⁵ Heather Molyneaux, "Controlling Conception: Images of Women, Safety, Sexuality, and the Pill in the Sixties," in *Gender, Health, and Popular Culture*, ed. Charyl Krasnick Warsh (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011), 78.

¹³⁶ *Vancouver Sun*, Newspaper: "More sex education advocated as doctors discuss moral issues," September 15th 1980, file: AM1486-S4--, Box 576-D-05 fld 25, Teenage Pregnancy 1979-1990, City of Vancouver Archives.

¹³⁷ Erika Dyck, *Facing Eugenics: Reproduction, Sterilization, and the Politics of Choice* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 201.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

be the primary cause of the closure of the United Church Home for Girls, especially as unwed pregnancies continued to rise.

While there were legal changes to therapeutic abortions and the pill, the more significant change was in the public attitudes toward the treatment of teen pregnancy. The 1967 United Community Service's *Report on the Problem of Illegitimacy* was pivotal in creating new services for single mothers and their children. Despite the maternity home's change to include some of these services in the new program, the home continued to "hide" the mother from society.

4.3 Conclusion

The United Church Home for Girls' educational objective was initially to ingrain Christian family life values into the young women who attended. Young women were meant to understand the value of family life for when they were married. This moral education took place through the role modelling by the staff and Women's Auxiliary. The program in the home also exemplified the Christian home environment through the chaplain's program, the small correspondence educational program, crafting and personal upkeep, and the house government. This type of education reflected girls' perceived inadequacy to provide a Christian home as single mothers.

By 1967, the United Community Service's *Report on the Problems of Illegitimacy* represented a shift in perception of the teen mother. To combat the increasing problem of illegitimacy, the report recommended increased services to support mothers who kept their children. This caused the United Church Home to follow suit; however, the staff represented younger women who wanted to keep their babies as those with social problems. This shift in the homes which sequestered young women to openly provide services to single mothers shows that the educational objective of a moral education based on traditional gender roles was changing.

The United Church Home for Girls closed on August 31, 1973. The Board of Directors and the Metropolitan Council of Burnaby sent memoranda to various stakeholders indicating that the decriminalization of birth control and approved therapeutic abortions reduced the number of applicants to the home. While the legalization likely had an effect on the number of applicants, I argue that the shifting attitudes about women's reproduction combined with the number of girls keeping their children and the ability to apply for supportive assistance rendered the United Church's services counterproductive. Or at least irrelevant.

The United Church Home's closure was different from that of the Willingdon School for Girls despite the emerging women's movement. Willingdon was operated by the provincial government and was closed by the NDP government, which did not believe that youth should be rehabilitated at training schools. The shift in public attitudes and governments saw that young women should not be incarcerated, including pregnant teens. The maternity home closed because the community was providing new services as teens were keeping their babies. The United Church Home for Girls was a community institution rather than a provincial institution. Nevertheless, the closure of both institutions came within the same year.

However, as more and more adolescents started to keep their children, as evidenced between 1960 when nine out of 70 babies were kept versus 1972 when 19 out of 68 babies were, community concern shifted.¹³⁹ In 1972, United Church Home staff sent out two questionnaires to mothers. The first was to single mothers known as "the keepers," mothers who kept their children. The questionnaire results indicated that most of these mothers faced financial

¹³⁹ Superintendent's Annual Report for 1960, January 20 1961, Box 1477, File 13, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada; The United Home for Girls: Report to the Metropolitan Council—1973, file 17, box 1476, United Church Home for Girls fonds, BSA, Vancouver, B.C., Canada

difficulties and many were “on welfare.”¹⁴⁰ The other questionnaire went to adolescents in the home. Its report indicated that the average woman had only completed Grade 9 and that many expected to keep their babies, planned to apply for social assistance, and “did not know how to run a house.”¹⁴¹ These numbers confirmed the social fear that mothers were “living off of welfare” rather than being supported by institutions. This emerging concern by the United Church Home and other organizations in Vancouver caused a shift in thinking about what type of services and education was needed for the teen mother.

¹⁴⁰ Letter from Social Worker to Chairman of the Board Re: Semi-Annual Report, October 1971-March 1972, file 17, Box 1476, United Church Home for Girls fond, BSA.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

Chapter 5: Tupper Mini School

In October 1982, nine years after the closure of the Willingdon School for Girls and the United Church Home for Girls, the Vancouver School Board created the Tupper Mini Program. Tupper Mini, a “rehabilitative alternative” education program, enabled pregnant and mothering teens to finish their secondary education. The alternative education program was located onsite at Sir Charles Tupper Secondary School in East Vancouver. Tupper Mini was the first program of its kind in Metro Vancouver. The Tupper Mini teen parenting program partnered with multiple community stakeholders (such as the YWCA, the Vancouver School Board, the Vancouver Health Department, the Ministry of Human Resources and TRACY: Taking Responsible Action for Children and Youth).¹ Tupper Mini supported adolescent mothers through self-paced, educational programming as well as health care, daycare, and counselling services.² Granting pregnant and mothering teens the opportunity to come into the public schools marked a significant departure from the past. Previous social institutions tried to hide pregnant women from the public. Despite the improvement over previous practice, the Tupper Mini program responded to an uneasiness that these young women became “welfare-dependent.” This uneasiness reflected the concerns of the past, as the courts and professionals felt pregnant adolescents had “social problems.”

The first section of this chapter explores what led to the opening of the Tupper Mini School in Vancouver. The nine years between the closure of the Willingdon School for Girls and

¹ Memorandum from A. Taylor to Dr. J Blatherwick, Dr. S Peck and T. Marshall on July 4th 1984, Re: Report on Tupper Mini-school Program for Teenage Mothers, 1984, COV-S132-5--, Box: 242-E-07, Folder 07, Vancouver School Board Services-Tupper Mini School Program, City of Vancouver Archives (hereafter CVA), Vancouver, Canada.

² Memorandum from A. Taylor to Dr. J Blatherwick, Dr. S Peck and T. Marshall on July 4th 1984, Re: Report on Tupper Mini-school Program for Teenage Mothers, 1984, CVA, 1

United Church Home for Girls and the opening of Tupper Mini was a relatively short time period for drastic changes in educational programming. The women's movement of the 1970s and the Royal Commission on the Status of Women challenged how the public viewed women and girls and sexuality, including pregnancy. The status of women was changing. The closure of Willingdon and the United Church Home for Girls reflected these changing mores and saw more visibility of pregnant and mothering teens in society, especially since teen mothers were increasingly keeping their children.³ As the federal government decriminalized therapeutic abortions and pharmaceutical birth control in 1969, many parents stoked concerns that these changes and the subsequent push to educate students about sex education in schools further increased unwanted pregnancies. The changing social mores allowed for young mothers to be visibly present in the community, yet community organizations were also concerned with who supported teens and their children. The "welfare queen" rhetoric of the United States crept into the Canadian context, and organizations like the Social Planning and Review Council of British Columbia were concerned that the taxpayer would become financially responsible for the teen mothers "condemned to a life of poverty."⁴ Indeed, in 1975 the newly elected Social Credit government in British Columbia cut welfare spending to encourage applicants to find work instead.⁵

³ Susan Crawford, "Public Attitudes in Canada toward Unmarried Mothers, 1950-1996," *Past Imperfect* 6, no. 1 (1997): 117. Note: The Salvation Army's maternity home, Maywood Home for Girls, continued to operate at this time in Vancouver. The date of the closure of this maternity home is unknown, although it was likely sometime in the mid-1980s.

⁴ Cathy Adler, Shirley Congdon, and Nancy Scambler, "An Overview of Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood in British Columbia: A Paper Released to Promote Public Discussion," Social Planning and Review Council of British Columbia, 1980," 2.

⁵ Lisa Pasolli, *Working Mothers and the Child Care Dilemma* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2015), 159.

In 1980, the Social Planning and Review Council of British Columbia (SPARC), a volunteer organization that focuses on health and social services for BC residents, commissioned with support from Health and Welfare Canada the report *An Overview of Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood in British Columbia*.⁶ The report suggested that 75 to 80 per cent of teen mothers were keeping their children, with most of the mothers leaving school to care for them.⁷ The report further highlighted the need for educational programs in order to “keep a girl and her family off of the social assistance rolls.”⁸ The teen pregnancy numbers had spiked in the late 1960s; however, the high rate remained consistent throughout the 1970s. For example, the total number of unwed births to women aged 19 and under in 1965 was 1,310, whereas a decade later in 1975 there were 1,948 unwed births and 2,012 by 1979.⁹ Tupper Mini was ultimately created because of community organizations like SPARC’s concern over who would support the high number of teen mothers and to encourage teen mothers to become financially independent.¹⁰ The institutional era defined unwed adolescent mothers as delinquent and confined them for these transgressions. By the 1980s, the press, community organizations, and professionals were stigmatizing teen mothers as “welfare fraudsters.”

The second half of this chapter will explore the educational objectives of the Tupper Mini School. While I argue that the board created Tupper Mini out of concern for dependent teen

⁶ Adler et al., “An Overview of Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood in British Columbia,” i.

⁷ Ibid., 1, 6.

⁸ Ibid., 24.

⁹ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Vital Statistics of the Province of British Columbia Ninety Fourth for the Year 1965,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, British Columbia, 1967; British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Vital Statistics of the Province of British Columbia One Hundredth Report for the Year 1971,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, British Columbia: 1973; British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Vital Statistics of the Province of British Columbia One Hundred and Eighth For the Year 1979,” BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, British Columbia: 1982.

¹⁰ Board of School Trustees, *No Better Place to Learn*, 1983-1984, PUB-: PDS 19, Vancouver School Board: Annual Reports, CVA, Vancouver, BC, 7.

mothers, I also contend that the educational objectives of the program were to equip mothers with skills so that they would not require social assistance. Tupper Mini offered two streams. Each allowed for other students to see students who were mothering on-site at the high school. The first, an integration approach, allowed students to continue with their education in the regular high school program. The second was an equivalency approach that provided students with the opportunity to continue their education at their own pace. In the equivalency program, mothers learned from modified adult basic education courses that taught practical skills such as budgeting and food preparation rather than academic skills.¹¹ The equivalency program also included a health component in which a community health nurse provided medical care to children and taught sex education courses (which was also mandatory for integration students). Sex education classes did not seem to be part of the mandated curriculum, rather they were offered as schools intermittently introduced them. Lastly, the school and YWCA partnered to provide daycare for students in the Tupper Mini program. This was revolutionary, since daycare allowed students to be close to their children, ask daycare providers questions, and spend two shifts a month at the daycare. Tupper's program ensured upon graduation that mothers theoretically had the skills to live independently of social assistance.

5.1 Educational Change: The Women's Movement, Illegitimacy, and "Dependency"

The progression of the women's movement challenged the way politicians and community members viewed women. The Barrett government closed Willingdon School for Girls on the view that it was the "end of an era," and the board at the United Church Home for

¹¹ Memorandum from A. Taylor to Dr. J. Blatherwick, Dr. S. Peck and T. Marshall on July 4th 1984, Re: Report on Tupper Mini-school Program for Teenage Mothers, 1984, CVA, 3.

Girls claimed it was closed because of the decriminalization of the birth control pill and therapeutic abortions.¹² In 1970, the Government of Canada released the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. The commission provided recommendations to change in how women and single mothers were regarded. In particular, section 254 in Chapter 4, Women and the Family, recommends that “every effort should be made to integrate unmarried mothers with children into the mainstream of the life of the community,” with section 249 acknowledging that unmarried mothers were judged harshly yet recognizing that some regressive social attitudes were changing. In this section, the commission describes attitude changes through the schools which encouraged unmarried pregnant girls to continue their education.¹³ The commissioners recognized that single mothers were treated unfairly and provided recommendations that suggested their integration into the community without social repercussions.

In 1971, with the help of the YWCA, the federal government, and various organizations, the Vancouver Status of Women formed to ensure that the recommendations of the federal government’s royal commission report were implemented.¹⁴ The Vancouver Status of Women held conferences and developed steering committees to hold the government accountable for various women’s issues such as employment, child care, opportunities for equal education, and single motherhood.¹⁵ In the same year, the Status of Women organization influenced the

¹² Mullen, “Willingdon School Gets Axe.”

¹³ The Royal Commission on the Status of Women, *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1970): 288-9.

¹⁴ “Our Herstory,” Vancouver Status of Women, accessed November 28th 2018, <http://www.vsw.ca/aboutvsw.htm>; Jane Gaskell, “Learning from the Women’s Movement about Educational Change,” *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 29, no. 4 (2008): 443. Note that the Council of Women and a church group were also involved in the formation of the Vancouver Status of Women.

¹⁵ Benita Bunjun, “The (Un)Making of Home, Entitlement, and Nation: An Intersectional Organizational Study of Power Relations in Vancouver Status of Women, 1971-2008” (Vancouver, BC, UBC Press, 2011), 107, <https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/ubctheses/24/items/1.0072302>.

formation of the “Women in Teaching” group to create a task force on women’s issues.¹⁶ The British Columbia Teacher Federation (BCTF) was also sympathetic to the women’s movement and created a task force on the status of women.¹⁷ Eileen Dailly, Barrett’s Minister of Education from 1972 until 1975, appointed Julia Goulden as an advisor on sex discrimination in education.¹⁸ However, once the Social Credit party returned to power in 1975, the government fired the advisor on sex discrimination in education.¹⁹ The political pendulum swing to the Social Credit party caused many of these progressive attitudes toward women’s rights to be buried; however, pressure from the BCTF Status of Women kept women’s issues alive into the next decade.²⁰ Further, by 1980 the British Columbia Teachers’ Federation Status of Women lobbied for sex education on behalf of teens because it brought increased opportunities for teens. The Status of Women asked the Ministry of Education to develop and implement family life and sex education at all levels of the public-school system with the BCTF.²¹ The persistence of feminists within women’s organizations in Vancouver attempted to make changes for women’s independence and equality. However, despite the women’s movement, society was becoming increasingly concerned with the rising visibility of unwed teen births.

In the Public: The Rise of Teen Motherhood

¹⁶ Jane Gaskell and Sandra Taylor, “The Women’s Movement in Canadian and Australian Education: From Liberation and Sexism to Boys and Social Justice,” *Gender and Education* 15, no. 2 (2003), 155.

¹⁷ Gaskell, “Learning from the Women’s Movement about Educational Change,” 444.

¹⁸ Ibid. BCTF Newsletter, November 13, 1975, vol. 15, no. 5, p. 7.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Gaskell and Taylor, “The Women’s Movement”, 155-6. Note: the BCTF was not the first union to establish a feminist organization. In 1918, the Federation of Women’s Teachers Associations of Ontario (FWTAO) was established by women teachers and represented working female, public school, elementary teachers. Rebecca Priegert Coulter, “Looking after Ourselves: Women Elementary Teachers and Their Federation,” *Oral History Forum* 24, no. 1 (2004): 67.

²¹ Status of Women, “Women Make Policy Not Coffee” (British Columbia Teachers’ Federation, February 1984), 2–3.

These changing social mores propelled the increased visibility of pregnant young women in the community. As much as these changing attitudes towards teen mothers allowed for them to be seen in public, there continued to be tension around how governments and organizations addressed the social problem of illegitimacy. Dr. George Szarsz, assistant professor in the Department of Health Care and Epidemiology at UBC, proclaimed that “an illegitimate pregnancy is like a car accident—it can happen to anyone.”²² This quote reflects the 1970s sentiment that teen pregnancy was frequent and not limited to working-class girls. Illegitimacy, as reported by some newspapers, seemingly represented a rapidly increasing social problem.²³ In reality, the illegitimacy rate in BC for teenagers (nineteen and under) peaked in 1967 and stayed steady until 1979 (see figure 5.1). Illegitimacy was not new, but what was new was teenagers being visible and keeping their children.²⁴

²² Kay Alsop, “Unwanted Pregnancy: Suppose it Happened to You, Part 2,” *Vancouver Province*, April 7, 1969, p.25

²³ “B.C.’s Illegitimate Births at an All-Time High,” *Vancouver Province*, July 27th 1980, A8; Martha Robinson, “But What Future Awaits Them? Luxury in Home for Unborn Babies,” *Vancouver Sun*, February 10 1968, p 1; Ann Barling, “More Birth Control Aid Asked: Unwanted Children Increase,” *Vancouver Sun*, April 17th 1968, p 1; Donna Anderson, “Less Inhibited Today: More Unwed Mothers Keep Their Babies,” *Vancouver Sun*, May 27, 1969, p. 30; Al Forrest, “213 Unwed Mothers in Victoria Last Year,” *Victoria Daily Times*, May 3, 1967, p. 24; “Out of Wedlock Birth Rate: ‘Demands Change in Law,’” *Victoria Daily Times*, January 26, 1968, p. 15; “Illegitimate Births,” *Victoria Daily Times*, February 12, 1972, p 16; “Illegitimate Births up 17%,” *Victoria Daily Times*, July 28, 1980, p.9; Ann Dunsmuir, “More Unmarried Mothers Than Ever Before,” *Victoria Daily Times*, April 26, 1972, p. 31.

²⁴ Crawford, “Public Attitudes in Canada,” 117.

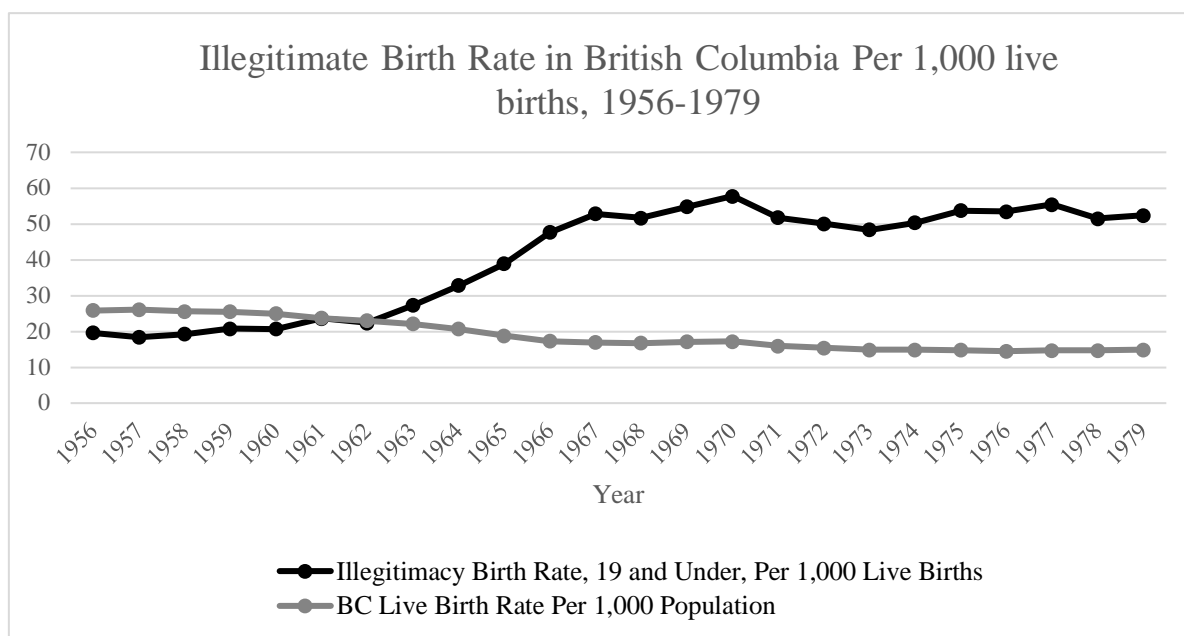


Figure 5.1 Illegitimacy birth rate among teenagers 19 and under in British Columbia per 1,000 live births. Source: Vital Statistics.

In the 1970s, more mothers were keeping their babies rather than giving them up for adoption. One study suggested that 80 to 90 per cent of pregnant teens were keeping their babies.²⁵ Cathy Adler’s report proposed it was 75 to 80 per cent.²⁶ The rising black line in figure 5.1 demonstrates the rise in teen mothers keeping their babies as compared to the grey line, which shows the total British Columbia live birth rate.²⁷ In 1957, section 10 of the Province of British Columbia’s *Adoption Act* considered “illegitimate” children “legitimate” upon adoption;

²⁵ Herold, *Sexual Behaviour of Canadian Young People* (Markham, ON: Fitzhenry and Whiteside), 124.

²⁶ Adler, Congdon, and Scambler. “An Overview of Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood in British Columbia, 1.

²⁷ The total live birth rate is used in this graph to show the decline of the baby boom in British Columbia. The baby boom may have played a factor in some of the rise in illegitimate births, however the declining birth rate of the baby boom shows that this did not necessarily play a large role in the rise of illegitimate births for teens 19 and under.

thus they added to the grey line, not the black.²⁸ Adopted infants at birth were probably considered legitimate. Adopted infants at birth counted as legitimate helps to explain the rise of the teen “illegitimate” birth line because more teens kept their children over time. In addition, in 1975 the British Columbia Royal Commission on Family and Children’s Law reviewed the status of children born to unmarried parents. The commission recommended abolition of the status of “illegitimacy” and repeal of the *Children of Unmarried Parents Act* and the *Legitimacy Act*.²⁹ However, it was not until 1985 when the Charter of Rights and Freedoms was enacted completely that the province repealed the *Legitimacy Act*, effectively ending the term “illegitimate” to describe children in British Columbia.³⁰ This meant that the province (and vital statistics) continued to identify babies kept by single mothers as illegitimate until 1985.

The 1973 annual report of BC’s Department of Rehabilitation and Social Improvement discussed the significant drop in the number of unmarried mothers requesting adoption for their children.³¹ The press’ increasing concern was evident through Vancouver and Victoria’s main newspapers at the time, including the *Vancouver Sun*, the *Vancouver Province*, and the *Victoria Daily Times*. These newspapers all published articles through the late 1960s to the 1980s about

²⁸ Statutes of the Province of British Columbia, *An Act Respecting the Adoption of Children*, c.1, 1957; Strong-Boag, ““Wages for Housework,”” 8. Important note: Although illegitimacy is the term used to describe unmarried births, “illegitimacy” also has legal implications regarding inheritance. By 1953, the adoption act allowed for adopted children to gain inheritance rights from their adopted parents. *Vancouver Sun*, “Illegitimate Child Term Dropped,” March 22, 1972, p. 19.

²⁹ Royal Commission on Family and Children’s Law, “Supplementary Report of the Royal Commission on Family and Children’s Law: Summary of Recommendations” (Vancouver, BC: British Columbia Legislative Library, 1976), 9, http://www.llbc.leg.bc.ca/public/pubdocs/bcdocs_rc/239703/239703_suppl_report_rc_family_children.pdf.

³⁰ Susan Boyd and Jennifer Flood, “Illegitimacy in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Nova Scotia: A Legislative History,” *Allard Research Commons: Emeritus Publications*, n.d., 50.

³¹ British Columbia Legislative Assembly, “Annual Report of the Department of Rehabilitation and Social Improvement for the Year Ended March 31, 1972,” accessed June 25, 2019, <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcsessional/items/1.0375923>, 9.

unwed mothers keeping their children.³² This perceived problem was not only a British Columbia concern but a Canadian one. *Homemaker's Magazine* in June 1979 described teenage pregnancy as reaching “epidemic” proportions in Canada, with twice as many babies born to unwed mothers as in the decade prior and the majority to teen mothers.³³ One news source from 1970 claimed that the rising number of pregnant school girls was a field where British Columbia led the country.³⁴ Although figure 5.1 reflects a rising “illegitimacy” line for teens 19 and under, it is important to consider that the press may have also stoked the concern for the rising teen mother rate in British Columbia.

As a result of the steady teen birth rates and the perceived media concern, professionals and community organizations called for educational programming in public schools to assist teenagers in making responsible decisions. Although there was emerging information about birth control and therapeutic abortions, doctors often required parental consent to prescribe the pill to girls under the age of 16. Despite professionals and students calling for sex education in public schools, many parents felt that this education should be reserved for the home, likely because such knowledge was seen as encouraging premarital sex and further increasing unwanted pregnancies among teenagers.³⁵ It did not help that people such as Simma Holt, a reporter in

³² “B.C.’s Illegitimate Births at an All-Time High,” *Vancouver Province*, July 27, 1980, p. A8; Martha Robinson, “But What Future Awaits Them? Luxury in Home for Unborn Babies,” *Vancouver Sun*, February 10, 1968, p. 1; Ann Barling, “More Birth Control Aid Asked: Unwanted Children Increase,” *Vancouver Sun*, April 17, 1968, p. 1; Donna Anderson, “Less Inhibited Today: More Unwed Mothers Keep Their Babies,” *Vancouver Sun*, May 27, 1969, p. 30; Al Forrest, “213 Unwed Mothers in Victoria Last Year,” *Victoria Daily Times*, May 3, 1967, p. 24; “Out of Wedlock Birth Rate: ‘Demands Change in Law,’” *Victoria Daily Times*, January 26, 1968, p. 15; “Illegitimate Births,” *Victoria Daily Times*, February 12, 1972, p. 16; “Illegitimate Births up 17%,” *Victoria Daily Times*, July 28, 1980, p. 9; Ann Dunsmuir, “More Unmarried Mothers Than Ever Before,” *Victoria Daily Times*, April 26, 1972, 31

³³ Judy Dobbie, *Homemaker's Magazine*: “Babies Having Babies,” June 1979, File AM1486-S4--., Box 576-D-05 fld 25, Teenage Pregnancy, 1979-1990, CVA, 43

³⁴ Nikki Moir, “The Alarming Problem of Schoolgirl Mothers,” *Vancouver Province*, May 15, 1970, p. 34. Note: It is unclear whether the province was attracting girls from other provinces to drive up this rate.

³⁵ John Griffiths, “S-E-X Spells Controversy in Education,” *Vancouver Province*, February 3, 1975, p. 8.

Vancouver, wrote about teen pregnancy as a “contagion” in schools.³⁶ During the late 1960s, a student society at McGill University, led by Donna Cherniak and Allan Feingold, accommodated student requests to learn about sexual health through the creation of the *Birth Control Handbook*.³⁷ This book was widely popular after the omnibus bill because of its highly accurate, non-stigmatizing, and relevant information.³⁸ The Vancouver School Board did not allow for the distribution of the *Birth Control Handbook*.³⁹ However, in the summer of 1971, high school students from the Birth Control Rights Committee petitioned Vancouver-area school districts to distribute birth control information. The Birth Control Rights Committee distributed copies of the handbook to high schools. The group had put in a 9,000-copy order of the *Birth Control Handbook* with financial support from the UBC Alma Mater Society and Simon Fraser’s Student Society.⁴⁰

By the fall of 1971, the Vancouver School Board established a policy that when requested, schools could distribute birth control information to students.⁴¹ Students and professionals made strides to include birth control information in the curriculum; however, the provincial government left a formal sex education curriculum up to individual school boards.⁴² The control of parents over what their children were exposed to continue to trump the sexual health curriculum into the early 1980s because parents claimed the right to provide sex education

³⁶ Simma Holt, *Sex and the Teen-Age Revolution* (Toronto, ON: McClelland & Stewart, 1967), 33.

³⁷ Christabelle Sethna, “The Evolution of the Birth Control Handbook: From Student Peer-Education Manual to Feminist Self-Empowerment Text, 1968–1975,” *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 23, no. 1 (April 1, 2006): 89–117, <https://doi.org/10.3138/cbmh.23.1.89.k>.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ John Sawatsky, “Petitioners Hit the Beach,” *Vancouver Sun*, July 22, 1971, p. 19.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Vancouver Board of School Trustees, “IGAI: Sex Education Policy,” 1971, *Policy Manual* (1981-1996).

⁴² Kay Alsop, “Is Sex a Dirty Word?” *Vancouver Province*, July 3, 1975, p. 32; “Smith Goes to Surrey: Sex Takes Forum Spotlight,” *Vancouver Sun*, November 28, 1980, p.3.

to their children. These small changes to educational programming within the school board demonstrated the changing atmosphere towards pregnant students in Vancouver. Students lobbied for information to be available in the school rather than learning sporadically from their parents, friends, or magazines.

Social Assistance “Dependency”

The press’s primary concern over the rise of illegitimate children was *why* mothers were keeping their children. Newspapers’ and public figures’ explanations varied. Many suggested that mothers needed someone to love and “need” them.⁴³ Others believed that the change in society’s general attitude towards unwed mothers permitted an increase in retaining children.⁴⁴ A 1975 *Vancouver Sun* article implied that some mothers came from uncaring homes and/or foster homes.⁴⁵ It was these claims that suggested that it was the economically poorest mother who kept her baby.⁴⁶ Further, Benjamin Schlesinger, a social work professor at the University of Toronto, claimed in 1980 that it was teenage mothers from “broken homes” who were deciding to keep their babies.⁴⁷ However, others suggested that mothers from various class backgrounds were now keeping their children.⁴⁸ One thing was sure: the media could not decide what “type” of mother was keeping her child and retaining social assistance.

⁴³ Karenn Krangle, “Schools Take Timid Approach to Taboo Subject,” March 1, 1980, File: AM1486-S4-- , Box 576-D-05 fld 25, Teenage Pregnancy 1979-1990, CVA, A12.

⁴⁴ June Callwood, “Jessie’s: Young Moms and Thriving Babies,” *Canadian Woman Studies* 4, no. 1 (1982): 37

⁴⁵ Martha Robinson, “14-Year-Old Mothers Get Help at Sally Ann,” *Vancouver Sun*, December 4, 1975, p. 1-2.

⁴⁶ Strong-Boag, *Finding Families, Finding Ourselves*, 85.

⁴⁷ “Wrong Girls Keep Their Babies, Professor Says,” *Vancouver Sun*, April 8, 1980, p. A17.

⁴⁸ Moir, “The Alarming Problem of Schoolgirl Mothers,” 34; Kay Alsop, “Some Hard, Cold Facts about Illegitimacy, Part One,” *Vancouver Province*, April 5, 1969, p. 44; 1969, Kay Alsop, “It Happened to Her: Anguished Cry: ‘Why Didn’t They Tell Me’ Part Three,” *Vancouver Province*, April 10, 1969, p. 43.

Social assistance for single mothers was not new in the 1970s. In the aftermath of World War I, the British Columbia provincial government established the *Mother's Pension Act* in 1920 (later replaced by the *Mother's Allowance Act* in 1938). Mother's pensions were a stipend given to mothers and wives after the death or injury of their husbands (while labouring or during the war) or if they were in prison.⁴⁹ In turn, the government expected women to stay home and raise their children. Unique to British Columbia, mothers with one child, divorced mothers, and unwed mothers were eligible.⁵⁰ However, unwed mothers needed to apply for assistance from the "putative" father under the *Children for Unmarried Parents Act* before applying for mother's pensions. Davies argues that mother's pensions served two purposes: first, as legislation that paid women for work as mothers and second, that imposed family value systems upon the working class.⁵¹ The government considered mother's allowances as endorsing the right of mothers to support their children.⁵² In 1958, the provincial government consolidated mother's allowances with the *Social Assistance Act*, and in 1981, the government repealed the *Mother's Allowance Act*.⁵³ The Department of Social Welfare made this change because the mothers' allowance caseload was consistently in decline. The department called mothers' allowance redundant

⁴⁹ Margaret Little, "Claiming a Unique Place: The Introduction of Mother's Pensions in British Columbia," 84, 93; Megan Davies, "Services Rendered, Rearing Children for the State: Mothers' Pensions in British Columbia 1919-1931," in *Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on the History of Women's Work in British Columbia*, ed. Barbara Latham and Roberta Jane Pazdo (Victoria, BC: Camosun College, 1984), 256.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 93. Lori Chambers explains that unwed and divorced mothers in Ontario were eligible for social assistance starting in 1956. Chambers, 131.

⁵¹ Davies, "Services Rendered," 249.

⁵² *Ibid.* Note: These rights extended to white mothers rather than mothers of ethnic minorities. Little, "Claiming a Unique Place."

⁵³ British Columbia. Legislative Assembly, "Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ended March 31st 1959," BC Sessional Papers, Victoria, BC: 1960, p. 34.

compared to the “broader coverage” of social allowance. In this same year, the province and municipalities agreed to a cost-sharing program for social allowance.⁵⁴

Mothers, and most often single mothers, lost mothers’ allowance entitlement to welfare and were looped into general social assistance programs. The general concern over “welfare bums” seemed to be about people who worked but also received social assistance.⁵⁵ Although single mothers were also monitored around these concerns, the social assistance concerns about them seemed to predominately focus on “dependency.” The social workers involved in monitoring social assistance viewed mothers the same as men on social assistance—that they should be working in order to curb their need for assistance.

The second wave of feminism was largely associated with women’s empowerment and employability outside of the home, including financial independence.⁵⁶ The National Action Committee on the Status of Women focused more broadly on the right for women to work and be independent from their husbands.⁵⁷ However, as Marks, Little, Gaucher, and Noddings argue, women of the second wave, like the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, left out women’s welfare activists. Various women’s welfare activist groups argued against the movement’s push of women into the workforce, especially on the principle that work was good for poor mothers.⁵⁸ Welfare activists also argued that the government urged mothers on social assistance into low-paying jobs as a form of financial independence.⁵⁹ The “welfare dependency” narrative, partly co-created by the second wave’s push for employment and financial freedom,

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Frances Russell, “Welfare Bum Now An Unstoppable Myth,” *Vancouver Sun*, April 29, 1976, p. 26.

⁵⁶ Marks et al., “A Job That Should Be Respected,” 773.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 774-5

⁵⁸ Ibid., 776.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 785.

left poor (and often single) mothers open to the public's social assistance criticisms. Welfare activists pushed for social services to support their lives as mothers, not just working women. While proponents of the second wave pushed to delete the moral judgement of mothers' independence, the wave left out single, low-income, and minority mothers in their fight for social services. These mothers did not want the public to judge them based on their moral lives as mothers, but neither did they want to be judged on their claim for social services.⁶⁰

However, the government monitored and judged mothers for their social assistance claims based on the moral principle of motherhood.⁶¹ The social workers responsible for providing assistance relief judged mothers for social assistance and monitored mothers' private lives for signs of social assistance fraud. Margaret Little, a welfare historian, argues that poor single mothers needed to prove themselves worthy of assistance against social worker's financial scrutiny—scrutiny often inherited from a previous generations moral concerns.⁶² For example, in the 1990s some social workers examined single mothers' bank books and gifts from friends and family like groceries and clothing and monitored them at bingo halls.⁶³ Social workers deducted gifts and bingo winnings from government assistance.⁶⁴

As the province moved mothers off mother's allowances and onto social assistance and the mainstream second wave of feminism supported financial independence, social assistance

⁶⁰ Note: Janine Brodie explains that there was a larger social shift in Canadian citizenship identity which initially valued providing social services to all Canadians equally until the mid-1970s. By the mid-1970s, the government valued social supports for those who were "most deserving" rather than for all. Janine Brodie, "Three Stories of Canadian Citizenship," in *Contesting Canadian Citizenship: Historical Readings*, ed. Dorothy Chunn, Robert J. Menzies, and Robert L. Adamoski (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2002), 61.

⁶¹ Margaret Hillyard Little, "'Manhunts and Bingo Blabs': The Moral Regulation of Ontario Single Mothers," *The Canadian Journal of Sociology* 19, no. 2 (Spring 1994): 240.

⁶² Ibid., 240.

⁶³ Ibid., 237–8.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

became synonymous with the unwed teenage mother. Community organizations working to support teen mothers believed teen mothers dropped out of school and applied for social assistance. Some people viewed teen mothers as at risk of social assistance dependency; others believed mothers would neglect their financial responsibilities. For example, landlords and employers were reluctant to rent to or hire teen mothers in fear that they would abandon their responsibilities.⁶⁵ One statistic suggests that “80% of adolescent mothers never complete their education, become welfare dependent and endure lives of desperate poverty and futility.”⁶⁶ Further, teen mothers and their children may require support “for many years,” which included financial, medical, and social service support, all of which increased the “burden on the taxpayer.”⁶⁷ Lastly, 77 per cent of adolescent mothers in a Vancouver study were drawing from social assistance.⁶⁸ The myriad of sources that discuss the concern of teen mothers as a risk to social assistance dependency shows the stigma of dependency that authority figures like employers, academics, and community organizations aimed towards teen mothers.

As organizations like SPARC became interested in how to support mothers, the Barrett NDP government lost the provincial election to Bill Bennett’s Social Credit party. Bill Bennett was the Social Credit premier of British Columbia between 1975 and 1986. His political agenda cut social welfare spending to encourage recipients to find work.⁶⁹ Bill Vander Zalm, the Human Resources Minister for the SoCred government, primarily focused on promoting a good work

⁶⁵ Crawford, “Public Attitudes in Canada,” 120.

⁶⁶ Jo Billung-Meyer, “Forsaken Children,” *Canadian Woman Studies* 4, no. 1 (1982): 28. Note: Deirdre Kelly states that this statistic is faulty as it does not account for other variables, Deirdre Kelly, “Stigma Stories: Four Discourses about Teen Mothers, Welfare and Poverty,” *Youth and Society* 27, no. 4 (1996): 426

⁶⁷ Billung-Meyer, “Forsaken Children,” 29.

⁶⁸ Adler, Congdon, and Scambler, “An Overview of Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood in British Columbia,” 7.

⁶⁹ Pasolli, *Working Mothers and the Child Care Dilemma*, 159.

ethic among social assistance applicants. The previous *Social Assistance Act* was repealed in favour of the SoCred's 1976 *Guaranteed Available Income for Need Act*. Under this act, the human resources minister provided support to "adults, minors, or families."⁷⁰ However, applicants had to apply through the Provincial Rehabilitation and Employment Program (PREP), an employment service program, in order to receive assistance.⁷¹ The Social Credit government seemed focused on ensuring that income assistance applicants worked towards ceasing their need for social assistance support.

Parallels can be drawn with the United States. Ronald Reagan popularized the term "welfare queens" during the 1970s. During a 1976 presidential campaign speech, Reagan referenced Linda Taylor, an African American woman from Chicago who, he claimed, was a mother committing welfare fraud.⁷² These supposed "welfare queens" in the United States were stereotyped as low-income Black women based on Reagan's depiction.⁷³ Although this panic over "welfare queens" began in the 1970s, it had lasting effects well into the 1980s and 1990s.⁷⁴ Throughout Reagan's (1981-89) presidency, he promoted the message of socially deviant women, in particular teenage mothers, dependent upon public handouts.⁷⁵ The term, "welfare queens" did not seem to be used in Canada; however, exposure to the term through British Columbia newspapers, such as the *Vancouver Province*, the *Vancouver Sun*, and the *Victoria*

⁷⁰ Statutes of the Province of British Columbia, *Guaranteed Available Income for Need Act*, c. 19, 1976, 106.

⁷¹ Alex Young, "Let them cut cord wood if they can't find work," *Vancouver Province*, July 4, 1977, p. 4.

⁷² Sylvia Bashevkin, *Welfare Hot Buttons: Women, Work and Social Policy Reform*, (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2002): 23.

⁷³ Rickie Solinger corroborates that the representative black unwed mother was often perceived as poor and aid-dependent and kept her children pre-1970s; Rickie Solinger, *Wake Up Little Susie: Single Pregnancy and Race before Roe v. Wade* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1992): 57.

⁷⁴ Julilly Kohler-Hausmann, "Welfare Crisis, Penal Solutions, and the Origins of the 'Welfare Queen,'" *Journal of Urban History* 41, no. 5 (2015): 757.

⁷⁵ Bashevkin, *Welfare Hot Buttons*, 23-4.

Times Colonist all included articles from the United States that reported on various “welfare queens,” especially Taylor.⁷⁶

Even consultants for unmarried mothers such as Betty Schwartz, an American social worker who worked closely with teen mothers, were concerned about unmarried mothers in poverty. She wrote, “poverty colours life grey for most single parents and this is especially true for the young unmarried mother.”⁷⁷ Even community organizations’ concern persisted for mothers “doomed to life of poverty” whether receiving social assistance or not.⁷⁸ This apprehension about poverty further propelled the community organizations’ and the wider public’s attitudes towards monitoring these mothers, which, it seems likely was based on growing financial expenditures and suspicions that mothers would become dependent.⁷⁹

Researchers also delved into studies of single parents and poverty. A 1983 statistic from a Calgary Health Services study on teen mothers in Alberta explained that 49 per cent of female single parents lived “below the poverty line.”⁸⁰ This, of course, contributed to the social problem that labelled adolescent mothers as problems for a healthy economy, especially teen mothers dropping out of school with few credentials, as the press assumed these young women must be

⁷⁶ United Press International, “Welfare Mother Drove a Rolls,” *Vancouver Province*, June 24, 1983, p. 44; “Welfare Queen in Court,” *The Times Colonist*, July 26, 1978, p. 40; “Rolls Owner Accused of Welfare Scam,” *Vancouver Sun*, December 19, 1980, p. 80; “Welfare Big Business,” *The Times Colonist*, October 1, 1974, p. 29.

⁷⁷ Betty Schwartz, “Adolescent Parents: The Demographic Disaster of the 1970s,” *Canadian Women’s Studies* 2, no. 2 (1980), 89; Betty’s biography comes from: Betty A. Schwartz, “Rock and Bye, Baby,” *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic, & Neonatal Nursing* 4, no. 5 (1975): 30.

⁷⁸ Adler, Congdon, and Scambler, “An Overview of Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood in British Columbia,” 6.

⁷⁹ Kelly, “Stigma Stories,” 430; Crawford, “Public Attitudes,” 114.

⁸⁰ Crawford, “Public Attitudes in Canada”, 121. Note that this is all female single parents, not just adolescent single mothers.

receiving social assistance.⁸¹ These changes and the resulting perceived social problem allowed for the societal viewpoint of the adolescent mother as a social assistance liability.⁸²

The moral judgements of mothers continued throughout this decade; however, this judgement was accompanied by the shift towards teen mothers as applying for social assistance. Social workers policed mothers for their social assistance claims. As the public began to view single and teen mothers as social assistance liabilities, social workers monitored single mothers' spending habits. The moral concern of teen pregnancy continued to linger, despite a shift towards financial claims and the ethics of social assistance for mothers. These ethical concerns raised considerable community efforts to support mothers towards financial independence

1980 Public Discussion Paper: Coordinating Services

In 1980, the Social Planning and Review Council of British Columbia sponsored Cathy Adler (a PhD student) and two other researchers to conduct research on teen pregnancy in British Columbia. The resulting report, titled *An Overview of Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood: A Public Discussion Paper*, provided discussion on how to combat the implications of teen motherhood in British Columbia. It stated that "society must ultimately shoulder many of the costs of teenage parenthood, paying for financial assistance..."⁸³ The rise of teen mothers as a public issue of social assistance dependency led to this report. In particular, the researchers cited multiple concerns about teen pregnancy, such as health risks and postpartum birth control use. The report also described ways to curb the increasing trend of unwed mothers. (Illegitimacy was

⁸¹ "Teen Moms 'Must Stay in School,'" *Vancouver Sun*, October 18, 1980, File AM1486-S4--, Box 576-D-05 fld 25, Teenage Pregnancy, 1979-1990, CVA.

⁸² Crawford, "Public Attitudes in Canada", 120.

⁸³ Adler, Congdon, and Scambler, "An Overview of Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood in British Columbia," 2.

a defunct term by the late 1970s). Of particular note, the researchers wrote how much teen mothers cost the government each month. The report debated whether society could coordinate services to solve this problem.

An Overview of Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood stated that “teenage motherhood is costing the government \$415 030 a month.”⁸⁴ This high figure provided fodder for the claim that mothers were taking taxpayer dollars while seemingly “living off social assistance.” The report went further, claiming that the number was only an estimate and was “undoubtedly” higher, since many teen mothers have multiple children.⁸⁵ This figure provided proof that the community as a whole needed to work together. Adler et al. maintained that “programs to prevent teenage pregnancy, and to educate and train teenage mothers so that they can support their families would cut such costs.”⁸⁶ The report was widely disseminated through the *Vancouver Sun*, and the *Status of Women in the BCTF* newsletter reprinted the article.⁸⁷ Shirley Congdon, one of the researchers for the Adler report, explained that some of the public unwillingness to provide teen mothers with social assistance was because the public felt monetary support rewarded mothers for their poor choices.⁸⁸ Congdon, however, explained that as a result of public unwillingness, mothers lived in poverty and isolation.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ Ibid., 8. This figure is high and compared to 2019 cost inflation would equate to approximately \$1,306,292.58; “Inflation Calculator.” n.d. Statistics Canada, Consumer Price Indexes for Canada, Monthly (V4169-973 series), accessed June 26, 2019, <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/>.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 8

⁸⁶ Ibid., 8.

⁸⁷ Ros Oberlyn, “Alarming Jump in Pregnancies Seen Among Girls under Age 14,” *Vancouver Sun*, October 14, 1980, p. 1; BCTF Status of Women, “Report from the Status of Women Committee,” October/November 1980 Newsletter, p. 11.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

This 1980 public discussion of the report identified that existing services to support mothers and their children lacked educational programming for the mothers. The report listed recommendations to close the gaps in education. Daycare was missing from educational programs and proved to be its own contentious debate between working mothers, welfare activists, and day-care advocates and the provincial government. In the 1970s, the welfare and women's movements protested that the lack of subsidized daycare was tied to inadequate job opportunities and welfare services, further limiting mothers' opportunities.⁹⁰ In much the same vein, Jo Billung-Meyer (a "child-birth" teacher in Victoria, British Columbia) suggested that the lack of daycare prevented mothers from completing their education or any type of on-the-job-training and encouraged applications for social assistance.⁹¹ The lack of support ensured that mothers may have struggled to continue their education.

To complicate matters, by the 1970s there was concern that the children of teen mothers often suffered from various health issues—below average IQs, behavioural problems, and higher rates of school failure.⁹² Researchers initially attributed these issues to the fact that the mother was a teenager. However, the University of Toronto's Centre for Urban and Community Studies report *Consequences of Teenage Motherhood* blamed factors associated with the stress of poverty and early childbearing.⁹³ Some professionals believed that adolescent mothers were immature, lacked life experience, and lived in poor socio-economic situations, which implied that teen mothers were unable to provide the full attention to a child that a married mother

⁹⁰ Pasolli, *Working Mothers and the Child Care Dilemma*.

⁹¹ Billung-Meyer, "Forsaken Children," 29; Jo Billung-Meyers work position stated here: BCTF Status of Women, *Status of Women Newsletter*, January/February 1983, <https://bctf.ca/WorkArea/getAsset.aspx?id=46021>, p.9.

⁹² Ibid.; Judy Dobbie, *Homemaker's Magazine*: "Babies Having Babies," June 1979, CVA, 45

⁹³ Sandra Finkelman, "Consequences of Teenage Motherhood," *The Child in the City* (University of Toronto, 1982): 33.

could.⁹⁴ Even Adler et al. suggested that there was higher incidence of “mental retardation” in children born to teenage mothers.⁹⁵ Children with these “problems” meant that mothers may have needed more money to support their children. Once community programs were established, the report felt that the mother’s education was an investment in her to support herself and her child and reduce the burden both placed on taxpayers.

Adler’s 1980 report repeatedly called for British Columbia to implement coordinated programs to give assistance to the adolescent for her transition into motherhood. The first page of the report suggested that the increase in the number of pregnancies and teen mothers throughout the 1970s could have ominous social implications unless there was “considerable community intervention.”⁹⁶ In addition, the report asked for a long-term coordinated program to ensure that a mother would be able to plan for economic independence.⁹⁷

The main goal of the report was to coordinate local community services. Once the researchers established the gaps in programming, Adler recommended two areas of educational action: (1) effective education in human sexuality and (2) the development of effective services and programs for pregnant and parenting teens.⁹⁸ The call for human sexuality education was not new; an interview with a teen mother in a 1969 *Vancouver Province* article recommended the need to improve sexual education and open discussions with students on these topics. Not much seemed to have changed since this teen’s call for improvement; the Vancouver School Board did not implement a formal sex education policy until 1976.

⁹⁴ Billung-Meyer, “Forsaken Children,” 29; Finkelman, “Consequences of Teenage Motherhood,” 33.

⁹⁵ Adler, Congdon, and Scambler, 4.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 1.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 31.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 61.

In 1976, the provincial government placed family life education under the jurisdiction of the boards of school trustees, who often delegated it to principals, who further passed it on to the teachers.⁹⁹ A weekend *Vancouver Sun* exposé was explicit, explaining that “family life education” encompassed human sexuality education.¹⁰⁰ The Vancouver School Board implemented its family life education policy in 1976 but left individual schools responsible for their own programs.¹⁰¹ The improvement of human sexuality education was key in Adler’s report. The report followed the discussion of earlier professionals (as opposed to parents). The professionals’s assumption was that if teachers taught sex education, then students learned appropriate contraception and responsible decision-making. Professionals thought that the introduction of sex education would produce a decline in teen mothers, not an increase. Presumably, there was less threat of teens applying for social assistance as a result of sex education.

Adler’s report cited the Superintendent of Policy Development for the Ministry of Education, John Welshe. In 1976, Welshe provided options for a pregnant teen to complete her education. He proposed that teens continue education through regular classes or through correspondence if there were at least four mothers in the school board area.¹⁰² His suggestions demonstrated the choice of the private or the public route of education regarding teen mothers. The report also quoted that the Ministry of Human Resources had access to an educational

⁹⁹ Adler, Congdon, and Scambler, 8-49. Further corroborated by an article in the *Vancouver Sun*, March 1, 1980; Karen Krangle, “Schools Take Timid Approach to Taboo Subject,” March 1, 1980, CVA, A12.

¹⁰⁰ Krangle, “Schools Take Timid Approach,” A12.

¹⁰¹ Wayback Machine, *Vancouver School Board: IGAH: Sexual Health Education*, archived December 1, 2010, accessed June 21, 2019, <https://web.archive.org/web/20101201152316/http://vsb.bc.ca/district-policy/igah-personal-planningcareer-and-personal-planning-curriculum-0>; Krangle, “Schools Take Timid Approach,” A12.

¹⁰² Adler, Congdon, and Scambler, 22

budget which could be used to support individual educational plans—a teen mother could conceivably continue in the regular or alternative school system.¹⁰³ It seemed that Adler knew the possibilities of a community-coordinated education program for pregnant and parenting teens as she described the cooperative effort of the Vancouver School Board, the Vancouver Health Department, and the Ministry of Human Resources and sponsored by TRACY (Taking Responsible Action for Children and Youth). However, this cooperative program was still waiting to be implemented because it needed daycare that was not yet available.¹⁰⁴ Adler justified an educational problem when she explained, “education will keep a girl and her family off of the social assistance rolls; obviously anything that enables a girl to finish her education is a social benefit as well as benefit to the girl herself.”¹⁰⁵

5.2 Tupper Mini School

In 1982, the Vancouver School Board implemented a new policy that stated that pregnant and parenting teens had all the same “rights, obligations, and privileges” as other school-attending teens.¹⁰⁶ The policy permitted mothers to re-enter the regular high school program or, where available, attend specialized programs “especially for pregnant students.”¹⁰⁷ The 1982 version of the policy is very similar to the informal policy of 1976 that John Welshe expressed and what Adler et al. of the 1980 public discussion paper wished for. As it turned out, the

¹⁰³ Ibid., 23.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 25.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 24.

¹⁰⁶ Vancouver School Board Trustees, “IGBD: Program for Pregnant Students,” 1982, *Policy Manual*. The publication date of the policy manual is unclear. It is available at the Vancouver Public Library. The IGBD policy was next amended in 1994; the IGBD policy in this manual does not indicate an amendment date (as it does when amendments are made). Therefore, it is likely that this document is the original policy.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. Note: 2003 version of IGBD policy notes that alternative education may be in cooperation with community agencies to support in ways of academic upgrading, personal development, career exploration, work experience, ongoing support, and daycare; Wayback Machine, *IGBD Programs for Teen Parents*, 2003, accessed May 21, 2019, <https://web.archive.org/web/20030101162952/http://www.vsb.bc.ca/board/policies/i/igbdprogramsteenparents.htm>.

program that Adler detailed in 1980 had, by 1982, become the Tupper Mini program in the Vancouver School Board. The Tupper Mini program revolved around four components: education, daycare, health, and counselling. The policy publicly accepted pregnant and mothering teens, yet the Tupper Mini program criteria continued to delineate teen mothers as a social problem.

The Vancouver School Board developed Tupper Mini out of concern for teen mothers were social assistance-dependent. The educational objective of the program reflected this concern, and some women enrolled in the program received income assistance.¹⁰⁸ Tupper Mini School's educational objective was to ensure that pregnant and parenting mothers gained the necessary skills to independently support themselves and their children. This objective was reflected in the Vancouver School Board's 1983-1984 annual report: *No Better Place to Learn*. It stated that the Tupper Mini program aimed to help these adolescent women "break the welfare cycle," thus eliminating the perceived social problem.¹⁰⁹

While the school board's IGBD policy afforded teen mothers the opportunity to attend school, IGBH: Alternative School Programs policy governed Tupper Mini School.¹¹⁰ There were two types of alternative school programs at this time within the VSB, regular alternative programs and rehabilitative alternative programs.¹¹¹ The regular alternative program was for students and families who wanted a unique learning experience, with a budget coming from the

¹⁰⁸ Memorandum from A. Taylor to Dr. J Blatherwick, Dr. S Peck and T. Marshall on July 4th 1984, Re: Report on Tupper Mini-school Program for Teenage Mothers, 1984, CVA, 9.

¹⁰⁹ Canadian Education Association, *Especially for Women*, 26; Board of School Trustees, *No Better Place to Learn*, 1983-1984, PUB-: PDS 19, Vancouver School Board: Annual Reports, CVA, Vancouver, Canada, 7.

¹¹⁰ The Vancouver School Board used policy codes to distinguish between policies. These codes, like IGBD and IGBH, do not seem to represent any sort of acronym. They are specifically a file code.

¹¹¹ The original policy was adopted in 1979. An original copy of this policy could not be located. This thesis uses the amended policy from approximately 1989.

school board.¹¹² The funds for these programs were allocated by the board. In contrast, the rehabilitative programs were for struggling students, and at least by 1989, rehabilitation alternative programs policy stated that programs needed to be partially funded by another provincial department.¹¹³ The board listed Tupper as a rehabilitative alternative program, and the Ministry of Human Resources provided shared funding. There were five criteria to enter any VSB rehabilitative program, including Tupper Mini: “1) risk of drop-out, 2) poorly developed basic skills in language and computation, 3) display anti-social behaviour, 4) have personal or social problems, and 5) judged to benefit from the program.”¹¹⁴ The board’s criteria for acceptance into the Tupper program shared similar foundations as to how Willingdon and United Church staff perceived pregnant teens two or more decades before.

Education Program

The Tupper Mini program provided education, daycare, health care, and counselling to pregnant and parenting teens enrolled in the program. The directors of the program required mothers be motivated and supported a zero alcohol and drug use policy.¹¹⁵ The program offered two streams of learning: (1) allowing students to integrate into the regular high school program and (2) an equivalency program that was self-paced.¹¹⁶ Nicole Holman, a teacher at Tupper Mini, and Margaret Arcus, a professor of Family and Nutritional Sciences at the University of British

¹¹² Ellis and Yoon, “From Alternative Schools to School Choice in the Vancouver School District”, 88; Vancouver Board of School Trustees, “IGBH: Alternative School Programs,” 1989, *Policy Manual*, (n.d).

¹¹³ Rothstein, “Alternative Schools in British Columbia, 1960-1975” (1999), 515.; Vancouver Board of School Trustees, “IGBH: Alternative School Programs,” 1989, *Policy Manual*, (n.d).

¹¹⁴ Vancouver Board of School Trustees, “IGBH: Alternative School Programs,” 1989, *Policy Manual*, (n.d).

¹¹⁵ Nicole Holman and Margaret Arcus, “Helping Adolescent Mothers and Their Children: An Integrated Multi-Agency Approach,” *Family Relations* 36, no. 2 (April 1987): 120.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 121.

Columbia, noted that many chose the equivalency program, which offered the aforementioned services, and that teens in the integrated program tended to have family support.¹¹⁷

Tupper Mini's equivalency program taught adult basic education courses. The provincial government adapted regular high school courses to fit the needs of adult students, in this case teen mothers. Colleges often taught adult basic education courses for students to attain a diploma remote from the high school. At Tupper Mini, staff required incoming students to take a pre-test to determine their "assigned topics."¹¹⁸ These courses meant that staff identified the equivalency program as "self-paced." It seemed that teachers assigned particular course topics depending on the mother's educational level. The adult basic education equivalency courses included grade 10 and 12 classes, while grade 11 used the standard high school curriculum that staff adapted. School staff expected students to be in class for at least 12 hours per week. The program director aimed to increase class hours to 15 to 17 hours in subsequent years.¹¹⁹ The equivalency coursework eased teen mothers' pressures to finish high school, work, and care for their child.

Tupper's equivalency program supports my claim that the school board policy and the Tupper Mini program were based on reducing teen mothers' reliance on social assistance. The adult basic education courses altered the Grade 12 math course to a consumer math program focusing on "credit, banking, taxes and budgeting" and a science course adjusted to units on food and nutrition, fitness, health, and drugs.¹²⁰ The Tupper Mini program also introduced "mini courses," such as "food and nutrition, textiles, human development, leisure activities, and family

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Memorandum from A. Taylor to Dr. J Blatherwick, Dr. S Peck and T. Marshall on July 4th 1984, Re: Report on Tupper Mini-school Program for Teenage Mothers, 1984, CVA, 3.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Holman and Arcus, "Helping Adolescent Mothers and Their Children, 121.

studies.”¹²¹ School officials expected students to maintain an 80 per cent grade. (This expectation was probably based on the student’s average rather than a requirement of at least 80 per cent in each course; however, the exact details are unclear.) In any case, these modifications promoted mothers towards an independent style of living rather than towards social assistance.

School officials added a vocational experience to the equivalency program, providing work placements for mothers enrolled in the program. In the classroom, the program prepared mothers to learn workplace skills, such as writing letters and resumes, communications, and experience with job interviews.¹²² Mothers also had the chance to participate in career days in the regular high school. Tupper Mini directors wanted to increase the vocational content in the coming years of the program. This part of the program highlighted the hope that mothers would gain workplace skills to support themselves by providing specific skills to enable an existence characterized by economic freedom.

Health Component

Although the Tupper Mini program revolved around the education of the mother to enable her to “break the welfare cycle,”¹²³ the Tupper Mini programs’ collaborative effort had community health nurses support mothers in child care practices and to meet one-on-one with mothers for counselling.¹²⁴ This appeared to reflect earlier concerns in the 1970s that teen mothers’ children had low IQs or poor cognitive development. The 1980 Adler et al. report

¹²¹ Memorandum from A. Taylor to Dr. J Blatherwick, Dr. S Peck and T. Marshall on July 4th 1984, Re: Report on Tupper Mini-school Program for Teenage Mothers, 1984, CVA, 4.

¹²² Ibid.; Holman and Arcus, “Helping Adolescent Mothers and Their Children, 121.

¹²³ Board of School Trustees, *No Better Place to Learn*, 1983-1984, PUB-: PDS 19, Vancouver School Board: Annual Reports, CVA, 7

¹²⁴ Memorandum from A. Taylor to Dr. J Blatherwick, Dr. S Peck and T. Marshall on July 4th 1984, Re: Report on Tupper Mini-school Program for Teenage Mothers, 1984, CVA, 5.

suggested that teen mothers' babies were at higher risk of a low birth weight, which could lead to "physical impairments, spinal injury, epilepsy, and higher incidence of mental retardation."¹²⁵ One newspaper article quoted the Planned Parenthood executive director, who assumed that mothers could not and would not take care of their babies when she said, "the unwanted baby of today is the battered child of tomorrow."¹²⁶ The community worried that if teen mothers' babies required extra care, young mothers were at risk of stress and further financial strain. The health component of the Tupper Mini program promoted the "emotional and physical health of the mother and child through health education."¹²⁷ The nurse spent approximately four hours a week providing "health counselling" to ensure that children and mothers were taken care of, which included immunization clinics.¹²⁸ The Tupper Mini program was efficient in ensuring that the community health nurse saw children without putting demand on other resources.

In addition to providing health services, the community health nurse gave classes in life skills. Holman developed the life skills (later termed family life education) course because of her background in home economics. This class was a requirement for all mothers, regardless of entry into the integration or equivalency stream and included sex education. Sex education included topics of "sexuality, abortion issues and sexually transmitted diseases."¹²⁹ To be sure, schools taught various forms of sex education before 1976 (when the first Vancouver School Board policy came into effect). These courses were often called "health and personal development" and

¹²⁵ Adler, Congdon, and Scambler, "An Overview of Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood in British Columbia," 4

¹²⁶ Helen Bateson, "Teenage Pregnancy Rate Spirals", *Vancouver Province*, June 1, 1978, p. 11.

¹²⁷ Holman and Arcus, "Helping Adolescent Mothers and Their Children, 122.

¹²⁸ Memorandum from A. Taylor to Dr. J Blatherwick, Dr. S Peck and T. Marshall on July 4th 1984, Re: Report on Tupper Mini-school Program for Teenage Mothers, 1984, CVA, 5.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

later the “guidance” formal school course.¹³⁰ Filling the void, magazine articles, films, and pamphlets often provided informal and often incorrect sex advice to youth.¹³¹ Although the VSB created its own policy regarding sex education, the topic was contentious in the Lower Mainland. Some Vancouver schools established pilot programs (Eric Hamber, Windermere, John Oliver, and David Thompson Secondary Schools), but the VSB policy left family life education up to individual school principals. Teaching abortion was a big deal, especially since prior to the mid-1970s, parents disapproved. However, the possibility of a mother’s second pregnancy was enough motivation to teach this subject, especially since therapeutic abortions could be granted to teen mothers for the “medical, psychological, or social health” of the mother.¹³² Life skills provided resources for mothers to make responsible decisions regarding their futures, in the hope that mothers would be independent of social assistance.

Daycare Component

The Tupper Mini School program offered daycare as part of the program. The YWCA ran Emma’s Daycare onsite at Sir Charles Tupper Secondary School. It was primarily for the mothers at Tupper Mini with some spaces for community members. While daycare was part of the program, daycare was not free. Mothers obtained provincial daycare coupons at their Ministry of Human Resources social worker appointments.

Despite the cost to government, daycare was a significant component of the Tupper Mini program because with it mothers were able to continue their education. Only nine years prior, social workers expected young women to give their “illegitimate” children for adoption. As the

¹³⁰ John Griffiths, “S-E-X Spells Controversy in Education,” *Vancouver Province*, February 3, 1975, p 8.

¹³¹ Adams, *The Trouble with Normal*, 88–89.

¹³² Adler, Congdon, and Scambler, “An Overview of Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood in British Columbia,” 38.

daycare supervisor stated, now mothers “grew with their infants.”¹³³ Young women visited their babies on lunch breaks. Teen mothers’ enrollment in the equivalency program required mothers to work two morning shifts a month at the daycare; however, Emma’s Daycare was not co-operative.¹³⁴ The daycare staff at Emma’s were all trained in early childhood education.¹³⁵ Mothers’ daycare shifts provided a space for mothers to ask the daycare providers questions and gain parenting skills. The director’s report called this “modelling” an “essential ingredient in the overall success of the program.”¹³⁶ In the past, both Willingdon School for Girls and especially the United Church Home for Girls used modelling, yet they used it to construct a socially acceptable teen rather than as skill-building. Daycare was important to the Tupper program, not only because the program imparted the appropriate skills to support the health and welfare of teens’ children but also because it allowed women to continue their education.

Income Assistance

The 1984 director’s report suggests that some teens were eligible for income assistance through the Tupper Mini program. The Ministry of Human Resources liaison with Tupper Mini explained that income assistance was available for teens, albeit challenging to obtain. However, once graduated, mothers may have had an even harder time accessing social assistance. By 1981,

¹³³ Memorandum from A. Taylor to Dr. J Blatherwick, Dr. S Peck and T. Marshall on July 4th 1984, Re: Report on Tupper Mini-school Program for Teenage Mothers, 1984, CVA, 7

¹³⁴ Pasolli, *Working Mothers and the Child Care Dilemma*, 133–4. Co-operative daycares, like the ones at Simon Fraser University, had parents of the children at the daycare take shifts minding the children. Each parent had rotating shifts to ensure that the daycare could continue.

¹³⁵ YWCA of Vancouver, *YWCA Emma’s Child Care Centre: General Information* (Vancouver, BC: YWCA). Note: The date of this brochure is unclear, but it was attached to Symposium proceedings from 1985. The brochure says there is training in ECE. BC did not include an ECE certificate program until 1988. See Donna Varga, “A History of Childhood-Teacher Education,” in *Early Childhood Care and Education in Canada*, ed. Constance Nina Howe and Laurence Wayne Prochner (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2000), 83–4.

¹³⁶ Memorandum from A. Taylor to Dr. J Blatherwick, Dr. S Peck and T. Marshall on July 4th 1984, Re: Report on Tupper Mini-school Program for Teenage Mothers, 1984, CVA, 7.

welfare reforms insisted that single mothers with one child over six months (or two children over 12 years old) were “able” to work.¹³⁷ Mothers’ income assistance was reduced by up to fifty-five dollars over four months.¹³⁸ Theoretically, Tupper Mini prepared mothers to enter the workforce or to continue in schooling. With that, the director’s report for 1984 stated a mother “becomes a contributing member of our community, no longer limited to dependence.”¹³⁹

5.3 Conclusion

The perception of adolescent mothers had certainly changed between the closure of Willingdon School for Girls and the United Church Home for Girls and the opening of Tupper Mini. Young single mothers emerged from the private sphere into the public domain thanks to the institutional closures and the work of the women’s movement to challenge public spaces. However, the emergence of young pregnant women and high illegitimacy birth rates in public spawned unease about mothers as potential sources of social assistance dependency. As well, the newly elected Social Credit government produced welfare reforms that sought to limit the assistance given to applicants. In 1982, the VSB created the IGBD instructional policy, programs for teen parents, which can be attributed to a decade of public concern around the rise of teens keeping their illegitimate children. This policy was hugely important because in the past, mothers were often asked to leave their high school once their pregnancy became visible.¹⁴⁰ But under the new policy, school officials provided mothers with the opportunity to continue their public-school education. The date varies as to when this practice was complete, but the 1982

¹³⁷ Pasolli, *Working Mothers and the Child Care Dilemma*, 160. See Pasolli for more on the history of daycare reform in B.C.; Shelley Fralic, “Welfare Moms Speak Out,” *Vancouver Sun*, November 24, 1981, p.10

¹³⁸ Shelley Fralic, “Welfare Moms Speak Out,” *Vancouver Sun*, November 24, 1981, p.10

¹³⁹ Memorandum from A. Taylor to Dr. J Blatherwick, Dr. S Peck and T. Marshall on July 4th 1984, Re: Report on Tupper Mini-school Program for Teenage Mothers, 1984, CVA, 2.

¹⁴⁰ Andrews, *White Unwed Mother*, 128.

policy was a welcome invitation for mothers to be seen publicly, as this was the cost of keeping mothers off social assistance. In fact, the changes to teen mother visibility was so drastic that Tupper mothers were even able to show themselves publicly by participating in a volunteer program for visiting other mothers in the maternity ward.¹⁴¹ Ultimately, the policy was implemented in an effort to transform mothers the public perceived to be in poverty and “living off of welfare” to mothers living independently of social assistance. Both the policy’s overall intent and the Tupper Mini program’s curriculum reflected this effort.

¹⁴¹ Memorandum from A. Taylor to Dr. J Blatherwick, Dr. S Peck and T. Marshall on July 4th 1984, Re: Report on Tupper Mini-school Program for Teenage Mothers, 1984, CVA, 4.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Teen mothers' education changed significantly between 1959 and 1982. During the early period, educators, parents, and the courts ensured a moral education for adolescent mothers' so-called immoral transgressions. Provincial training schools and church maternity homes provided the moral education to reform young women. As the 1970s began, government officials and community organizations worried that teen mothers dropped out of school, applied for social assistance and became "dependent." These government officials, community organizations, and educators increasingly valued an academic education over a moral one. The objectives of academic education for teen mothers were to ensure that teen mothers and their children could live independently from social assistance.

The first half of this conclusion reviews the institutional changes in teen mothers' education in this period. The institutional development of teen mothers' education has significantly shifted from a punitive approach that sought to teach adolescents "normal" social behaviour. This "normal" behaviour reflected postwar Canadians' expectation that young women remain obedient, domestic, and modest. Society deemed pregnant adolescents anti-social and in need of training.

The second section of this conclusion analyzes the current policies that govern programs for teen mothers. Today, the Vancouver School Board's Heron's Nest Education Centre for Parents supports and values young mothers achieving an education. Heron's Nest signifies the educational changes over time as the institutional space and curriculum have improved for pregnant teens. However, current policies continue to use language that stigmatizes young mothers as troubled youth. It is terms written in policy, such as "at-risk," which devalue young mothers as behaviourally troubled rather than as students who happen to have children and need

an individualized program. Despite the changes over time, teen mothers continued to face stigma in educational policy during each time period.

6.1 **Institutional Change: From a Moral Focus to an Academic Focus**

Historically, society pushed teen mothers from public spaces. Despite young mothers' seclusion in the private sphere, these women received an education. Albeit, that education in its early form tried to change teen mothers' "behaviours" to fit societal norms. Adolescent pregnancies landed young women in training schools, such as the Willingdon School for Girls, or in maternity homes, such as the United Church Home for Girls. Youth pregnancies clearly displayed the immoral act of premarital sex, and this was deemed disgraceful according to prevailing social mores. Society attributed unwed pregnancies in adolescent women to delinquent behaviour needing correction. Young women did not have many options. While some women attempted to marry quickly or moved to another community, others faced correction for their reprehensible behaviour by being moved into institutional settings. The educational objective of each of these institutions was to correct and redeem the behaviour of adolescent, pregnant women.

The provincial and federal government's *Training School Act* and the *Juvenile Delinquents Act* governed the Willingdon School for Girls. These acts viewed unwed pregnancy as a crime. Willingdon attempted to educate young women towards gendered, "normal" societal behaviour to ensure that young women learned from their anti-social behaviours. The therapeutic approach to socialization used middle-class women's and church organizations as role models of respectable femininity for young women. This therapeutic approach also valued classes in the feminine arts to encourage respectability and socialization. Adolescents accessed an academic program, but their effort and attitude, rather than their grades, measured their success. As part of

the therapeutic approach, staff and social workers convinced pregnant adolescents to surrender babies for adoption. Oral histories show that parents also convinced some pregnant adolescents to surrender their babies.¹ Young unmarried women were not supposed to have children, and adolescents' respectability often dictated the removal of children from the care of the unwed mother. By 1963, legislation changed to value provisional release from Willingdon as a form of rehabilitation instead of continued incarceration. Provisional release, much like probation, allowed social workers to monitor young women in public to measure their success in the program that the institution mandated them. Some women failed, and social workers sent women who became pregnant on provisional release back for more training.

In 1969, further policy changes impacted how provincial institutions, social workers, and training school staff viewed unwed mothers. The government repealed the *Training School Act* in favour of an amendment to the *Protection of Children Act*. The provincial acts no longer considered unwed mothers delinquents. Rather, the new legislation viewed unwed mothers as children in need of guidance and protection from their surroundings. Deemed a "child care resource," Willingdon operated on the same educational objective as the training school— to socialize young women. In the eyes of the government, young women needed to be protected from themselves and guided towards a sense of social normalcy.

Willingdon School for Girls' taught young, unwed women the proper social and gendered norms. The United Church Home for Girls in Burnaby operated with a similar educational objective. It taught unwed mothers the Christian "home" values based on the gendered ideal. Both institutions based their educational objectives on a gendered expectation; however, the

¹ Jones, "Bernadette Dumas's Parents Needed a Place to Hide Her."

Church justified its moral education through the importance of the Christian family. The Willingdon School for Girls' moral education was focused on the importance of the therapeutic rehabilitation, which attempted to re-categorize pregnant adolescents as normal and "social."

The United Church Home for Girls' educational program prioritized crafting and homemaking over the small correspondence program in the academic school subjects (adolescents chose academic subjects according to what they needed). Crafting and homemaking were prioritized in order to inculcate the domestic life that girls and women were supposed to uphold. The chaplain's program ensured that young women followed a Christian lifestyle through weekly instructional sessions and Sunday services. Much like at Willingdon, the staff and the Home's own Women's Auxiliary were significant role models, as they often personified the ideal Christian home environment, especially with married couples teaching at the home. Surrendering babies for adoption was also strongly encouraged. Social workers tried to convince mothers that adoption meant that mothers were respectable, emotionally stable, and selfless towards their babies. In fact, teaching young women about the proper Christian home environment made clear that the Home felt they were inadequate in raising their own children. But United Church Home records indicate that a select few did keep their children. These women were likely the older unmarried women with jobs to support their children. This changed by the early 1970s, as adolescents were increasingly keeping their children as well.

In 1967, the house matron of the United Church Home for Girls served on the United Community Services committee for its *Report on Illegitimacy*. Report recommendations referred to providing better community support for single mothers. As other community services expanded in an attempt to curb illegitimacy and support women with children, the United Church Home changed to a service provider model because of its own drop in admissions numbers. The

service provider model meant that the Home was gearing its program to providing supportive services, such as finding group housing for mothers and children after birth rather than hiding women in the home. Previously, the staff viewed unwed mothers as troubled and needing a good home. However, as mothers were deciding to keep their children and the expansion of services at the Home, staff began to regard single mothers with children as a social problem. These views demonstrate the progressive attitudes of teens keeping their babies, mixed with retrograde beliefs about what characterized a social problem. It is unclear whether during the 1959-1973 time period school boards implemented policies that restricted pregnant youth from accessing academic education. It is plausible that school administration asked young women to leave or social shame forced young women to leave school.

By 1973, the era of moral education as the primary purpose of teen mothers' education was coming to a close. The NDP government closed Willingdon. The premier, Dave Barrett and the Minister of Social Welfare, Norman Levi, both social workers, believed that closing the training schools was necessary. In their words, this was the "end of an era."² Amidst these governmental changes, second-wave feminists challenged societal views that forced women into domestic and housekeeping categories.

During feminism's second wave, Pierre Trudeau's federal Liberal government passed the omnibus bill C-150 on June 27, 1969, which decriminalized the birth control pill and therapeutic abortions. The United Church Home's Board of Directors attributed the drop in the number of admissions to the Home that followed to women's increased access to these services. However,

² Mullen, "Willingdon School Gets Axe."

young women struggled to access these services. Doctors required parental consent to prescribe birth control to women sixteen years of age and under. Further, therapeutic abortion committees were scarce and received many applications. Some women received an approval after they were too far along in their pregnancy to terminate it. Institutional barriers to birth control and abortion challenged young women. Rather, the United Church Home's decline in numbers occurred as community organizations expanded services for single mothers who kept their children. Teen mothers no longer needed the United Church Home.

Thanks to the provincial government's closure of Willingdon, the women's movement, which assisted in the changing social mores, and the *Report on Illegitimacy*, single and pregnant mothers emerged into public view. Society no longer defined young women by the familial boundaries of a shameful pregnancy that warranted hiding. However, the emergence of young pregnant women in public established a visibility of pregnant bodies and a steady "illegitimacy" rate. Young women's new public visibility heightened social concerns about teen mothers as potential sources of "social assistance dependency." Society now perceived teen mothers as being "at-risk." Society viewed mothers as inadequate and too immature to support themselves, never mind their children.

In 1975, Barrett's government lost re-election, and the provincial government turned over to Bill Bennett's Social Credit party. Bennett sought to limit social assistance applicants by establishing work-to-welfare reforms. Single mothers with children over the age of six months were expected to work. Mothers were no longer judged by their inability to provide a "good" home environment; rather, many in society judged them for their ability to provide financially for their children.

In 1980, the Social Planning and Review Council of British Columbia (SPARC) wrote a ground-breaking report reviewing the public's teen pregnancy concerns. The overall goal of the report was to unify community services. However, specific report recommendations included family life planning in schools and "effective programming and services" for teen parents. The report's analysis of their public cost confirmed societal fears of teen mothers as social assistance recipients.

Public anxiety over increased spending of taxpayer dollars and repeated calls to support mothers through education caused the Vancouver School Board to implement the instructional policy IGBD: Programs for Teen Parents in 1982. This policy accommodated pregnant and parenting mothers in regular public schools. It provided teen mothers with the opportunity to continue in the public academic school system in Vancouver.

Also, in 1982 the Vancouver School Board established the Tupper Mini program, a "rehabilitative alternative" program that the district modified to accommodate mothers' educational needs while providing a licensed daycare. Tupper Mini's educational objective added to the stigma of teen mothers as social assistance applicants. The Vancouver School Board's annual report for 1983-1984 touted Tupper Mini's ability to "break the welfare cycle."³ The alternative school's equivalency program tackled academics, daycare, health, and counselling. The academic program modified math and sciences courses to teach food and nutrition, budgeting, banking, and physical fitness. The community nurse provided medical care to children and advice and sex education classes to mothers. Teen mothers spent time at the

³ Canadian Education Association, *Especially for Women*, 26; Board of School Trustees, *No Better Place to Learn*, 1983-1984, PUB-: PDS 19, Vancouver School Board: Annual Reports, CVA, 7.

YWCA's onsite daycare to enhance parenting skills, and the Ministry of Human Resources provided social workers for counselling and daycare subsidies.

Since the 1980s, the school board has changed Tupper Mini's name. The board re-titled the program Tupper Young Parents in the early 2000s to avoid confusion with the Tupper Mini choice program. By 2018, the school board changed the name to the Heron's Nest Education Centre for Young Parents. The program structure of Heron's Nest remains similar to the original Tupper Mini program. Daycare continues to be offered onsite at Emma's Early Learning and Care Centre. The program is "self-paced" and students take courses on parenting and child development, a healthy nutrition and lifestyle course as well as a food safe certification.⁴ However, today students' programs are achieved through individual education plans (IEP) rather than Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses. Heron's Nest included IEPs as part of the program by 2009. Individual education plans are most often associated with special education to modify curriculum delivery for students. This is an important change because modifications are tailored more specifically to student needs rather than pre-modified ABE courses. Mothers do require educational modifications to succeed alongside their parental responsibilities. In this respect, students' educational needs are at the forefront of their education program at Heron's Nest.

6.2 Stigma in Place

Young women who attended Heron's Nest are students who happen to be pregnant or happen to be mothers. Yet, the Vancouver School Board policy language stigmatizes mothers as troubled students. Past policy stigmatized teen mothers as troubled for their premarital sex and

⁴ Vancouver School Board, "Vancouver School District Alternate and Alternative Secondary Education Program: 2019/2020 Resource Guide" (Vancouver School Board, 2019), 20, https://www.vsb.bc.ca/Student_Support/Alternative_Programs/Documents/sbfile/191125/District%20Alt%20Programs%20Resource%202019-20%2020FINAL.pdf.

subsequent pregnancy and, later, as a threat to the taxpayer dollar. Current policies produce the same stigma through the differing alternative school policies and the “at-risk” label.

Since the 1980s, the Tupper Mini program policies have shifted between various alternative schooling policies. The Vancouver School Board adopted various independent alternative schools, incorporating them into the district by 1971 as public schools.⁵ The school board subsequently created two different formats of alternative schools: “rehabilitative schools” for students who struggled in the mainstream educational program and “district specified alternatives” for students and families wanting a unique and enriching educational experience outside of the mainstream program.⁶ The latter, later by the early 2000s identified as choice programs, became increasingly popular in the Vancouver School Board to serve academically achieving students. Rehabilitation programs were different because they were for struggling “at-risk” students. This divide between alternative schooling results in stigma against students engaged in “rehabilitative alternative schooling,” such as teen parents.

In 1998, the Vancouver School Board commissioned Bob Pearmain to review the VSB’s alternative schooling programs. Pearmain noted the rehabilitative and choice alternative program divide and its perceived connotations. Pearmain’s first recommendation prompted the elimination of the word “rehabilitation” because of the term’s negative associations.⁷ Pearmain noted that while the term was needed for funding purposes, it was important to relay a positive term to the public instead.⁸ “Rehabilitation” continued to be used across school board policies

⁵ Rothstein, “Alternative Schools in British Columbia, 1960-1975,” 372; Ellis and Yoon, “From Alternative Schools to School Choice in the Vancouver School District.”

⁶ Ellis and Yoon, “From Alternative Schools to School Choice in the Vancouver School District,” 87.

⁷ Bob Pearmain, “Secondary District Program Review” (Vancouver, BC: Vancouver School Board, 1998), 10; Ellis and Yoon, “From Alternative Schools to School Choice in the Vancouver School District,” 93.

⁸ Pearmain, “Secondary District Program Review,” 10.

into the new millennium; however, to the public, schools were displayed as junior/senior district alternative programs or as inter-agency programs. Both senior district alternative programs and inter-agency programs addressed students struggling in the school system. In 2009, Tupper Young Parents was listed as a senior district alternative program.⁹ Senior district alternative programs provided support for students to “address their social, behavioural, emotional, and mental health needs.”¹⁰ The criteria for senior district alternative programs indicate the Ministry of Education’s special education classification of “R” or “H.” The “R” classification refer to “students requiring behaviour interventions” and “H” to “students with mental health concerns.”¹¹ Board policy language and program descriptions reinforced the notion that young mothers at Tupper Young Parents engaged in troubling behaviour. The school policy and description seem to perceive young mothers as troubled students because they have children rather than as students who happen to have children.

Tupper Young Parents program was referenced in policy until 2017; in 2018, the program changed to the Heron’s Nest Education Centre for Young Parents. In the same year, the Vancouver School Board reconsolidated board policies into two separate handbooks, the *Board Policy Handbook* and the *Administrative Procedure Handbook*. The reconsolidation of policy was part of the VSB’s strategic plan to “provide effective leadership, governance and stewardship.”¹² The IGBH: District Alternative Programs policy (for rehabilitative programs)

⁹ The name of the Tupper Mini Program changed because choice programs started to call their programs “mini schools.” The change in name was presumably so that the two programs would not be confused.

¹⁰ Vancouver Board of Education, “Alternative Resources Programs: District Programs” (Vancouver Board of Education, September 2009), ii.

¹¹ Vancouver Board of Education, ii.

¹² Suzanne Hoffman and David Green to Committee I: Memorandum, Vancouver School Board: Re: Board Policy Handbook, 2018, p 1. Accessed June 1, 2019. https://www.vsb.bc.ca/District/Board-of-Education/Meeting_Minutes/Documents/agendas-files/18_09Sept19_op_commI_item%2020Cover%20Memo.pdf.

and the IGBHA: District Alternative Programs policy (for choice programs), also situated under the school boards instructional policy, moved to Administrative Procedure 220 (AP220).¹³ The board profiled alternative programs into four new categories: (1) special education programs, (2) alternative resource programs, (3) alternate programs (inter-agency), and (4) choice programs.¹⁴ For a brief period of time, the VSB consolidated the alternative programming policies. However, in 2019 the board changed the policy to reflect AP 220: District Services as the choice program policy and AP 221: Learning Services as the alternative school policy, including special education programs, alternative resource programs, and alternate programs (inter-agency).¹⁵ This change reflects the language used to categorize these programs. But it continues to list pregnant and parenting students as troubled or “at-risk” rather than students who happen to be mothers.

In 2018, the Vancouver School Board made other changes to the teen mother policy. As part of the board’s policy reconsolidation efforts in 2018, the board deleted the original instructional policy, IGBD: Programs for Teen Parents from policy.¹⁶ Given the formation of non-discrimination policies (originally AC and now the AP 170 policy), it seems plausible that

¹³ The two policies had the same name but different policy codes; Vancouver School Board, “Disposition of Current Policies and Regulations,” September 14th 2018, 9, https://www.vsb.bc.ca/District/Board-of-Education/Meeting_Minutes/Documents/agendas-files/18_09Sept19_op%20Comm%201_Disposition%20Document.pdf.

¹⁴ Vancouver School Board Trustees, “AP 220: District Programs,” September 24, 2018, *Administrative Procedures Manual*, 2018.

¹⁵ Vancouver School Board Trustees, “AP 220: District Programs (choice),” June 5, 2019, *Administrative Procedures Manual*, 2019, https://www.vsb.bc.ca/District/Departments/Office_of_the_Superintendent/Administrative-Procedures-Manual/Administrative%20Procedures%20Manual%20Library/Section%20200/AP_220_District_Programs_Choice.pdf; Vancouver School Board Trustees, “AP 221: Learning Services Student Support Programs,” June 5, 2019, *Administrative Procedures Manual*, 2019, https://www.vsb.bc.ca/District/Departments/Office_of_the_Superintendent/Administrative-Procedures-Manual/Administrative%20Procedures%20Manual%20Library/Section%20200/AP_221_Learning_Services_Student_Programs.pdf.

¹⁶ Vancouver School Board, “Disposition of Current Policies and Regulations,” September 14, 2018, p. 9, https://www.vsb.bc.ca/District/Board-of-Education/Meeting_Minutes/Documents/agendas-files/18_09Sept19_op%20Comm%201_Disposition%20Document.pdf.

the IGBD: Programs for Teen Parents policy seemed unnecessary. In the past, unwed mothers seemed to be asked to leave schools or left on their own. By 2018, the IGBD teen parents' policy singled out teen mothers rather than including them, especially since teens presently have the opportunity for an education under the AP 170 policy. The deletion of the IGBD policy does not erase teen mothers' education; rather, the alternative school policies guide the specialized pregnant and parenting programs.

The newer Heron's Nest Education Centre for Young Parents is currently listed as an inter-agency program.¹⁷ Inter-agency, or presently known as Vancouver Alternate Secondary School, works in partnership with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), and/or the Vancouver Community Child and Youth Health Service.¹⁸ The VSB defines inter-agency programs for "students who demonstrate behavioural difficulties and 'at-risk' behaviours, which may affect their learning, interpersonal relationships and/or personal adjustment over a prolonged period of time."¹⁹ Whereas the district alternate programs are defined as *programs*, district principals supervise all inter-agency schools despite their location on-site public high schools.²⁰ Vancouver Alternate Secondary Schools "deliver intensive support" and seem to fit students unable to join alternate programs.²¹

Heron's Nest's multi-stakeholder program encourages the program to be categorized as inter-agency. However, the labelling language the new program uses, namely "move students

¹⁷ Vancouver School Board, *Heron's Nest Education Centre for Young Parents*, January 14, 2019. Accessed May 15, 2019. https://www.vsb.bc.ca/Student_Support/Alternative_Programs/alt-inter-agency/HeronsNestEducationCentreforYoungParents/Pages/default.aspx.

¹⁸ Vancouver School Board, "Vancouver School District Alternate and Alternative Secondary Education Program: 2019/2020 Resource Guide," 3, 14.

¹⁹ Ibid., 14.

²⁰ Ibid., 14.

²¹ Ibid., 3

away from an at-risk track,” still stigmatizes mothers in the Heron’s Nest program.²² The term “at risk” in schools historically referred to schooling children with learning disabilities.²³ The “at-risk” moniker elicits concerns for struggling students and reflects back on the stigmatizations of teen mothers as troubled youth and possible recipients of income assistance. Even the most recent VSB policy from 2019 continues to judge young mothers as troubled students rather than as students with children.

Not only is this judging of young mothers present in the policy, but the evidence of the past educational objective lingers in the present-day goals of Heron’s Nest. The resource guide continues to describe the program goals as being to “assist young mothers to achieve self-reliance and independence” by combining the features of the program.²⁴ It could be argued that all educational programs are meant to achieve self-reliance. The *School Act* describes the school system as “to enable all learners to become literate, to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy, democratic and pluralistic society and a prosperous and sustainable economy.”²⁵ However, there is a difference between the public school system aiming to produce citizens who contribute to a sustainable economy and the Heron’s Nest program’s specific objective to achieve “self-reliance and independence” in young mothers. The provincial *School Act* does not relay that individuals need to be independent and self-reliant like Heron’s Nest, moreover that public school students realize

²² Ibid., 3

²³ Barry Franklin, *From “Backwardness” to “At-Risk”: Childhood Learning Difficulties and the Contradictions of School Reform* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 139, 152.

²⁴ Vancouver School Board, “Vancouver School District Alternate and Alternative Secondary Education Program: 2019/2020 Resource Guide,” 20.

²⁵ Statutes of the Province of British Columbia, *School Act*, c. 412, RSBC 1996, Victoria, British Columbia, accessed May 14, 2020, http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96412_01#section1.

their potential to the nation. The pregnant and parenting program ensures that mothers are self-reliant upon graduation so as not to need further support. Given Tupper Mini's past approach to ensure that mothers "break the welfare cycle," the language used in the academic goals for Heron's Nest continue to assume that without this schooling, these young women will not contribute and will be welfare-dependent.

Teen mothers' education has changed dramatically over time, and specific policy reforms have allowed for institutional change. Stigma for teen mothers has persisted throughout and to this day. The past stigma and belief that unwed mothers needed a moral education in order to become normal and socialized members of society, to the teen who was "living off of welfare," and costing the taxpayer continues Heron's Nest guiding policies still in 2020 portray mothers as troubled students rather than as students with children.

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