EDUCATION FOR FAMILY LIVING THROUGH CO-OPERATIVE PRE-SCHOOL GROUPS

A study of teacher, parent, and child experience;
Greater Vancouver 1962-1963

by

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ABSTRACT

Over the past few decades, there has developed an increasing interest in family life in Canada, by many organizations and individuals. With the greater degree of industrialization, there have been corresponding social changes, some of which are believed to be undermining the stability of the family, making support from outside sources desirable, if not necessary. Programs of education for parents and parents-to-be have arisen as a means of providing more effective support to Canadian urban families.

The family life education programs that have developed are of great variety and of varied sponsorship. Through schools, churches, universities, community agencies and the mass media, attempts are being made to strengthen interpersonal relations in the family unit. Social agencies, particularly child-caring and family agencies, whom one would expect to be active in this field, would appear to be showing little initiative in developing such services. That this is so, remains a puzzle to the writer.

In this study of Co-operative Pre-School Groups in Vancouver, in which the stated purpose is the education of child and parent under the guidance of a trained teacher, attention is focused on expressed reasons for using this facility, and the values believed to derive from its use for both child and parent.

The most significant finding of the study is the importance attached to parental participation in the Co-operative program. The learned relationships of the play group are transferred to the home situation. Through this learning experience, parent-child relationships take on a deeper significance and meaning that makes family living a more relaxed and pleasant experience. The study points out the importance of relating family life education programs to the actual life situations of the families concerned. It also attests to the effectiveness of the Co-operative Pre-School Group involvement as a method of providing family life education.
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CHAPTER I

CONTEMPORARY CANADIAN FAMILIES: SOME OBSERVATIONS

Since the turn of this century, some significant changes have occurred in Canadian society which have had their impact on family life. No attempt will be made to provide an exhaustive list of these changes, nor will there be any detailed discussion of the social implications of such changes. But by identification of some of the factors of change, it is hoped that a more meaningful perspective will be given to the study of family life education as described herein.

To be considered first, is the pattern of population movement. Prominent in this regard, is the gradual move from rural to urban centres, which Nathan Keyfitz points out in the following quotation:

"City-ward migration has characterized our whole history. Thus a hundred years ago the population called urban was a very small part of the total; in 1956 it was 58 per cent on the census definition (including all incorporated places however small). Incorporated places of over 1,000 population contained 50.9 per cent of the total in 1941, 53.6 per cent in 1951, and 54.99 per cent in 1956. Cities are increasing their share of the population of the country by almost 3 per cent per decade. If this pace continues until 1980, some two-thirds of the population will be urban." 1

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Allied to this city migration from rural areas is the decreasing labour need in agriculture, in part due to technological changes in methods of farming. The farm labour force in 1926 was 1,181,000; by 1928 it had risen to 1,225,000. In 1931 it had decreased to 1,140,000, but by 1939 the figure stood at 1,293,000. Since then there has been a steady decline to 725,000 in 1958.  

Greater industrialization in urban centres with a consequent need for a larger labour force has facilitated the rural to urban move, but also the greater mobility from one city to another, within provinces and between provinces. As well, geographic and technologic factors seem to make some impact on population movement. The perceived quantity of natural resources in a given locality may attract large numbers of workers, because of the potential work available. Or, as mechanization in an industry such as lumbering, farming or fishing results in a decrease in the work force, the workers affected by this decrease may decide to locate in centres where the machinery for mechanization is manufactured.  

That economic factors are of considerable importance in population mobility seems evident. The actual and presumed labour need in a given community will attract potential employees from many centres, some from hundreds and perhaps even thousands of miles distant. This phenomenon is perhaps most graphically displayed in the

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1 ibid. p. 6.
2 op. cit. p. 4.
construction industry. The announcement of a major construction project to be undertaken, e.g. St. Lawrence Seaway; Kitimat, B.C. Aluminum Plant; Thompson, Man., International Nickel Co. Mining Development, will result in clearly recognizable shifts in population. The fact that a population of several thousand labourers can converge on a construction site within a few months time is some indication of the mobility possible. B.K. Sandwell, in his article in the book, CANADA'S TOMORROW, suggests there is greater mobility amongst the unskilled labourers than amongst skilled workers or professional men. The unskilled tend to move from one locality to another, where construction projects, widespread natural resources developments, or manufacturing plants create some demands for their abilities. Concern in establishing permanency of residence seems of secondary consideration to the economic gains that are believed to derive from their mobility in employment.

The social implications of our mobility are legion. The effects on parents and children, while somewhat difficult of measurement, can be both positive and negative. Leaving one community to re-establish oneself in another may be seen as but a necessary step in one's personal and family success. Or, conversely, because of failure to achieve the expected successes, one moves to a new community in the hope that the past failures will not become known,
and that here, one will surely be successful. 1

It is unlikely that there will be any immediate change in our pattern of mobility. It appears to be a characteristic of industrial society, not only in Canada but in other countries as well.

Of importance will be the manner of individual and family adaptation to this factor of mobility. Will it be positive or negative, will it be healthy or unhealthy, will it bring the desired personal satisfactions or will it leave a void? It is these aspects that will have their most forceful impact on family life.

A second factor of change to be noted is that of family size. For many years prior to 1951 there had been a decrease in the size of Canadian families. In 1951 it stood at 3.72, its lowest point. Decreasing family size is usually considered a characteristic of industrial society. In relation to Canada the following comment by N. B. Ryder is of interest:

"Canada is now for the most part an urban industrial society and bears all the characteristic marks of such a society with the exception of fertility." 2

The relatively high birthrate in Canada, 28 births per thousand, - in U.S. 25 births per thousand, Britain 17.7 per thousand in 1960 - has been a surprising phenomenon. No doubt the reasonably

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1 The writer has heard repeated references to our mobility and its undesirable aspects, from immigrants from England and Central Europe. The failure to remain in a particular community for more than a few years is viewed by them as an indication of personal instability and as an unwillingness to accept the conditions of life within which one is functioning or attempting to function.

healthy economic condition of the country has been a contributing factor. The greater number of married women in employment has given higher family income, making the support of larger families economically more feasible. It would appear that couples, whether they be French or English, rich or poor, rural or urban, are choosing to have slightly larger families, and that their choices seem to be approaching a standard number of three children per family. \(^1\)

The size of families, seen in the perspective of decline for about half a century, becomes more significant. In 1951, the average number of persons per family was 3.7; by 1956 it was 3.8 and in 1960 had risen to 3.9. \(^2\) Thus, since 1951,

"there has been an increase in the percentage of families having three children or more at home and a decrease in the percentage of families having fewer than three children or no children." \(^3\)

In this study, to be described in more detail later, of the twenty-two families, eleven (50\%) had two children, nine (40.9\%) had three children, one family had four children, and one had five. Statistics for this small selected urban group may be indicative of the more general trend toward slightly larger families.

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1. Clark, S.D. ed: Urbanism and the Changing Canadian Society
   University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1961, p. 3.


4. ibid. p. 169.
Akin to the change in family size is a third, that of earlier age at marriage, a factor identified in Canadians vital statistics.

"The trend toward earlier age at marriage during the war and the post war period was reflected in the sharp rise in the proportion married in the age group 15 - 24 years, where the percentage increased from 8.0 in 1941 to 16.0 in 1959 for males and from 21.5 to 34.2 for females." 1

With a younger age at marriage, there has been a corresponding change in the ages at which women have their children.

In the period from 1931 to 1954, the proportion of children born to mothers in their twenties has shown an increase from 53 per cent to over 57 per cent, while for mothers over forty there has been a decline from 6.2 per cent to 3.9 per cent. The average age of mothers at the time of the birth of their children has declined from 29.2 years to 28.4 years in the above noted period. Statistics for the increase in the number of children in relation to the age of the mothers are of interest. Between 1921-5 and 1957 women aged twenty to twenty-five showed an increase of about 50 per cent, from 150 children per thousand women to 226. In the twenty-five to twenty-nine year age range there was a 25 per cent increase from 176 to 225. For mothers between thirty and thirty-five there was little net change, while for mothers from thirty-five onward, there was a substantial decline in the number of children born to them. These figures seem to reflect a younger age at marriage. For grooms, the fall in age at marriage seems to be about one year of age per decade and for brides, three-quarters of a year per decade. 3

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2 Clark, S.D.ed; Urbanism and the Changing Canadian Society, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1961, p.15,16.
3 ibid. p.16.
One may infer from this trend to earlier age at marriage that there may be a correspondingly greater degree of immaturity in those persons getting married, hence the need to assist these individuals in making a satisfactory marital adjustment, and in rearing their offspring. This assumption appears to underlie the provision of family life education programs in some quarters.

Whether or not the assumption is a valid one, is an interesting question; however no attempt has been made in this material to test its veracity.

To be considered next is a fourth factor of change – an increase in the number of marriages. Even though prevalent opinions suggest that husbands and wives, at the present time, are less successful in surviving the many external and internal strains impinging on their relationship than was true for their forebears, the married state appears to be increasing in popularity. The proportion of the Canadian population that was married in 1956 was considerably greater than in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Between 1886 and 1956 the percentage of married people increased from 51.6 per cent to 65.8 per cent.¹

Reuben Hill, the American Family sociologist, speaking on the subject of the Changing American Family, to the National Conference on Social Welfare in 1957, notes a similar trend in the United States. The percentage of men married between twenty and twenty-four years of

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age rose from 27 per cent to 51 per cent in the period 1940-55; among women there was an increase from 9 per cent to 17 per cent in the number of teen-age marriages. He then refers to the remarriage rate in divorced persons, of which 8% per cent eventually remarry.

"The remarriage rate is good evidence that the high rate of divorce in our society constitutes no repudiation of marriedness as a status. Marriedness as a status has never been more popular; 70 per cent of the population in the marrying ages, fourteen to ninety were married in 1954; 18 per cent were single and will eventually marry; 8 per cent were widowed; 3 per cent were separated; and only 2 per cent were in the divorced status."

Despite the apparently popular conception that married status is less desirable now than it was several decades ago, the number of persons marrying continues to show some increase. Perhaps of more significance is the remarriage of divorced persons. In 1958, 6,279 divorce decrees were granted in Canada; in the same year 4,985 divorcee brides and 4,872 divorcee grooms remarried. Failure in one marriage does not preclude remarriage; it appears to suggest instead, that persons unhappily married are now more ready to dissolve an unhappy union and seek to re-establish one that has promise of more personal satisfactions. As Reuben Hill notes,

"We are in effect, operating a type of trial marriage system in this country in which the first marriage breaks in and domesticates the parties and the second marriage reaps the benefit."

His remarks, while addressed to a United States audience, may have some relevance to the Canadian scene. In a rather direct way, they focus on the interest in married status, in which there is evidence of increasing interest.

A further element of change, the fifth in this discussion, concerns the number of married women in paid employment in Canada. The increase in the proportion of married women in the labour force today reflects, in fact, the increased marriage rate during and since the war, and the lower age of marriage now general. The nation's married population is growing at a faster rate than the single population. In the decade between 1941 and 1951 the former grew more than twice as fast as the latter.¹

The factor of most significant change in recent years is the noticeable increase in the proportion of working women that are married. From 1931 to 1941, there was an increase from 10 per cent to 13 per cent of women in jobs with married status. By 1951 the figure was 30 per cent, and by 1958, over 40 per cent of working women were married. ²

That this creates for them situations different to those with few household or family responsibilities is apparent. In effect, the married woman in gainful employment is required to carry a dual role. She is both an employee and a home maker, with many demands

¹ "Married Women Working for Pay"; In Eight Canadian Cities, Canada, Dept. of Labour, 1958, p. 10.
² ibid. p. 10.
being made on her by each of these responsibilities. For her, the pressures and strains of living are increased considerably and it is to be expected that the public is interested in the effect this is having on Canadian homes. One hears repeated concern expressed about the provisions being made for the care of children when the mother takes on employment outside the home.

The life of working women is affected by age, marriage, and the presence of children. They are in and out of the work force depending on the nature of their home responsibilities. Their presence in the labour force has induced many repercussions, from charges of taking scores of jobs from men to those more serious ones relating to their inability to be both employee and housewife. That it makes heavy demands on the woman, and increases the strain under which she functions is obvious; what may not be so obvious is her sense of satisfaction from her employment. In the 1958 Department of Labour survey just referred to, an attempt was made to ascertain why married women were working. The results obtained place emphasis on economic motivation, particularly in the lower income groups. In more than three-quarters of the replies, in income groups where the husbands earned under $4,000, the economic motive dominated. Once the husband's income was $5,000 or above, a greater number of wives - slightly more than half - placed greater emphasis on other reasons for holding gainful employment outside their homes.

That reasons for working, other than economic, are operative is
to be expected. Non-economic motives mentioned were: interest in job or organization, personal fulfilment, not enough to do. The increased standard of family living possible because of the greater income appears, however, to the major single reason motivating married women to hold gainful employment. "Studies of married women working in Great Britain and the United States show the same general situation," prevailing as in this country.

Being able to maintain an adequate standard of living is an important social goal in an industrial society. Through receipt of a higher income or better occupational status, upward social mobility may be possible. Lipset and Bendix' study of social mobility in industrial societies is an interesting and substantial contribution to this subject. In their opinion widespread social mobility is "a basic characteristic of modern industrial society." The economic reasons for working stated by married women in the above noted Canadian survey would seem to contain elements of strivings for social mobility, expressed in the desire for a higher standard of living for the families.

In our discussion of married women in gainful employment, reference should be made to the commonly heard allegation that their absence from home produces increasing disturbance in their children which leads in turn to an increase in juvenile delinquency. The kind

1 op cit. p. 46.
2 ibid. p. 48.
of provision made for the care of children in the mother's absence is of vital importance, but there seems to be no direct relationship between her absence from home due to employment and the apparent evidence of increase in delinquency. A recent Canadian study corroborates the view stated above. Its findings were expressed thus:

1. Employment of the mother is not a cause of juvenile delinquency; delinquency would not be curbed and prevented to any effective degree, if work by mothers were eliminated from our socio-economic patterns.

2. Mothers who work are largely motivated by economic reasons. This situation has two aspects: (a) work because of real need; (b) work to "raise the family standard of living."

(a) In the first instance, the solution here lies not in stopping their work but in removing the cause for work.

(b) Regarding the second factor, the Committee suggests that work by the mother is not causal in nature, but merely symptomatic. Therefore, the answer in all probability lies much deeper."

A study undertaken in Glasgow by T. Ferguson entitled, The Young Delinquent in His Social Setting, revealed similar findings. The mother's employment was not found to be of any great importance in relation to delinquency.

Despite some evidence to the contrary, popular opinion still perceives a relationship between delinquency and working mothers. Persistence of this opinion may be indicative of an unwillingness to accept the fact of their presence in the labour force in increasing

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proportions. More significant is the value discrepancy that arises through her employment. Which value is more important? To raise the family living standard through gainful employment, or to be a full-time home maker. In the writer's opinion, it is this value difficulty that is the crucial one to be resolved for both women and men in our society. Culturally, there is still considerable resistance to acceptance of the "need" for married women with young children to be employed. The disadvantages are deemed to be greater than the advantages. This account, in part, for the prevailing notion of a direct relation between delinquency and working mothers.

The presence of more married women with children in employment has created its problems, among them the need for day care facilities for young children. These facilities are apparently in short supply in our urban centres. As well, the question of adequate supervision for school age children is an important one. The standard of child care of working mothers would also appear to need attention. It is these three major areas of need that have been identified in the study just completed by the Community Welfare Planning Council in Winnipeg. The study Committee's report notes there is a need for:

"(a) the provision of before and after school and lunch time supervision of school aged children—i.e. services for "latch-key children."

(b) the provision of all day care for pre-school children."
The five factors of change that have been considered (1) the pattern of population movement (2) the trend toward increased family size (3), the trend to earlier age at marriage (4) an increase in the popularity of married status (5) an increase in the proportion of married women in the labour force, may appear to be unrelated to the subject matter of this study. It will now be our task to attempt to show their relevance to family living. It should be pointed out that our comments will be focused on family living in large urban centres, where industrialization is extensive. By thus limiting the discussion, a two-fold purpose will be served; (1) it will make treatment of the section on well-being simpler (more selective, also one has more available resource material) (2), it will have a more direct relation to the ensuing study material.

A Search For Well-Being

In a careful consideration of the factors of change listed earlier, one finds in them an expression of individual and family group striving, whether motivated by urgency, necessity or desirability. The mobility of population from one urban centre to another may be due to

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economic necessity, but frequently it is for economic and social gain. A transfer in employment for a young managerial novice may mean a promotion, which will give, not only added income, but also added prestige. The latter may be a greater motivating force than the former. A professional person may decide to move to a distant urban centre to broaden his work experience, which is again viewed as a personally desirable objective. The economic factor may or may not be relevant. Whatever the varied reasons for mobility, an element of a search for well-being seems evident.

Economic factors appear to have some relevance to family size. It has been suggested that the employment of married women has raised family incomes, making the support of larger families economically more feasible. Lower birth rates in periods of economic depression would seem to support the premise that raised family incomes, in part, explain the trend to slightly larger families. There is, however, another important factor in operation, namely the desirability of children in a home. A sense of personal fulfilment is deemed to be achieved through the process of parenthood. Adoption agencies are constantly approached by couples who feel very keenly their lack of fulfilment by not being able to procreate.

What is considered a desirable number of children, appears to be largely a matter of individual decision, now controlled more by personal choice than by the vagaries of nature. Cultural norms appear to play some part in the actual number of children a family
may have, and seem also to emphasize the desirability of parenthood as a means of achieving well-being.

Marriage at an earlier age is partly determined by economic factors, particularly in those situations where the wife continues her employment after marriage. Greater employment possibilities for married women have encouraged young people to undertake marriage, even though the husband's income is insufficient to provide an adequate livelihood for two people. The desire to legalize sexual relations in wedlock may also facilitate earlier marriage.

Considering the adjustments that are necessary by both husband and wife to make a marriage succeed, there may be an assumption that being married at an early age will make this adjustment easier. This ignores the element of immaturity present in young persons, hence early marriage may be an inhibiting factor in a search for well-being.

The popularity of married status can be assumed to involve the conception that personal fulfilment is aided by being married. In a compatible, heterosexual relationship, legalized by society, individual self-fulfilment can be achieved. Related to this is the desire for parenthood and its attendant satisfactions. In marriage the cohabitive and procreative drives find their deeper expression. For the individual it is movement toward a higher state of well-being.

For the married woman in paid employment there can, likewise, be greater personal satisfaction than she may find in being a full-time homemaker. In their shift from producer to consumer units, families in present day urban society have assumed vastly different meanings for
their individual members. This is particularly so for wives. Their contribution to the economic well-being of the family may be sharply reduced, unless they are in paid employment and participate directly in contributions to the family financial needs. How is this loss of personal satisfaction met? Will these wives not feel unduly dependent on their husbands, a dependence not present in the producing type of family unit, where the wives were heavy contributors in both time and effort. Is it then, so unusual to find so many married women in employment? Their drives for personal satisfaction will be thus expressed by a goodly number. They are searching for individual well-being, for a sense of meaningful identity with a way of life that places them in such a difficult position.

In his excellent volume, THE UNDIRECTED SOCIETY, Sir Geoffrey Vickers treats, at some length, the criteria of well-being used in matters relating to humans. He indicates three kinds which he calls "standards of behaviour, standards of need and standards of 'want'." 1 Relating to criteria of behaviour, he suggests the criteria of breakdown are the ones revealing most clearly to other members of society, the inability of the individual to function adequately. Among criteria of need, the clearest are physiological, the need for food, clothing, shelter, however, these are also psychological, social and spiritual needs of men. Experience, tradition, the insight of teachers, and scientific findings all aid in our understanding of these needs.

In his discussion, Vickers limits the criteria of want to those relating to desire only. He notes that the criteria of want are the most cogent of our criteria in that our most obvious motivation is the urge to bring the actual into line with what is wanted or to prevent its converging with the not wanted. Conversely our wants "are notoriously superficial, unstable and misleading criteria of well-and ill-being." Clearly, well-being is a term virtually impossible to define: What is considered well or ill is socially determined and will show marked variation in significance depending on the social context. At this point one may well ask - is it important to define well-being? What purpose will be achieved by providing a definition? Will its meaning not become apparent as one examines some specific aspect of human life in a given cultural setting? This is the view of the writer, and this particular study seeks to substantiate this claim.

Scope and Method of the Study

Primarily, this study is concerned with urban parents, who display, as one of their characteristics, child-focused behaviour. Essentially it deals with families who may be viewed as "healthy", or in a state of well-being, but with evident motivation toward a higher state of well-being. Translated into the language of the

1 op cit. p.43.
2 op cit. p.43.
3 op cit. p.43.
study, the major proposition being considered is - What are the motivating factors underlying enrolment of children in a pre-school program where parent participation is a requirement of enrolment, and where parent education is a stated goal? As expressed in the title, this study is an attempt to ascertain what family life education is achieved through involvement in Co-operative Pre-School groups.

Commencing with discussions with staff at the University of British Columbia Extension Department, and with members of the Executive of the Association of Co-operative Pre-School groups for the Greater Vancouver area, attention was focused on the seven Co-operative Pre-School groups in the city of Vancouver having membership in the above Association. For practical reasons, this limitation was agreed upon; subsequent developments confirmed the wisdom of this selection.

The writer spent one full morning or afternoon session observing, but refraining from participating in, the activities of the children under the guidance of a trained pre-school teacher and her assistants, at each of the seven Co-operatives used as a basis for this study. The observation sessions were carried out between December 18, 1962 and February 27, 1963. Following the observation sessions an interview was arranged with each teacher to obtain enrolment statistics and her impressions, about the value of the Co-operative experience to the child and to parent, and about the potential use of the Co-operative as a community resource.

In co-operation with the teacher and executive of each group, the names of twenty-two parents were made available to the writer, so that interviews could be arranged in their homes. Both parents were
encouraged to be present for the interviews, however, in only four instances did the fathers participate in the discussion. In all cases, the mother was present. The interviews lasted from sixty to ninety minutes each, and were patterned to follow the interview guide (Appendix A). The interviews took place during the month of February, 1963. The questions in sections A and B of the guide were discussed in each interview. However in only two-thirds of them was it possible to cover section C. In part, this reflected the limitation of the interview guide.

Selection of the parents to be interviewed was made on the following basis:

1. the parents must have a child enrolled in one of the seven Co-operative Pre-School Groups, at the time of the study.

2. the parents must be experienced with Co-operative Pre-School Groups (have had a minimum of one full year experience with a group or groups.

The latter stipulation seemed a reasonable one to use in view of the study focus on the process of family life education in a Co-operative. By talking to only those parents who were familiar with the details of Co-operative involvement, it was believed the study focus would be more adequately treated, than it would be if parents who had only had three or four months experience, were interviewed. The preliminary
interviews with both experienced and inexperienced "Co-operative" parents pointed in this direction. In the writer's opinion, this decision was validated by the results obtained.

As a further aid in the study procedure, the writer attended one parents meeting early January, 1963. Attendance at other meetings would have been desirable, but the time limitations for the study prevented this.

To obtain more precise results on the significance of Co-operative play group experience for the child, one would need to weigh the parent's impressions with those identified by the teacher, or those that might be obtained on a rating scale, used at the time of the child's enrolment, and again at a later date (six to ten months later). In the attempted assessment of the significance of the Co-operative experience for the parents, and for the total family unit, one is faced with formidable problems. Interviewing parents at the time of their Co-operative enrolment and again, after a full year's involvement, would seem to be a potentially more satisfactory way of gaining more precise data on the value of the Co-operative to the parents and to the total family unit. In this study no objective criteria were available to use as a standard of measuring actual growth. The data obtained are essentially the impression of both the writer and the parents. What was seen and what was expressed may have been, in part, distorted by individual need mechanisms. However it is not entirely divorced from reality. Until more factual data are available
through records of individual children and parents using Co-operative
capabilities, the possibility of more accurate measurement of the
process of family education remains problematic.
CHAPTER II

APPROACHES TO FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

What is known as family life education comes under various guises, which when examined in some detail, has as its focus the development of personal abilities that will enhance daily living. In general there are three broad areas in which education for family life is given: (1) in marriage preparation programs, (2) in parent education, (3) in adult education. Woven into the fabric of these aspects of education, one finds the component known as family life education. Hence, if one is to arrive at a satisfactory conception of the term, family life education, it will be helpful to consider, briefly, the aims of the three educational programs noted above.

Adult education is a widespread practice, not only in Canada, but in many other countries of the world. Based on the philosophy "that there is a point of curiosity in every human being", it aims to establish a well-informed and thinking citizenry, who will assume responsibilities in accordance with their interests and abilities. Not only does it help people to earn a living, it also helps them to live a fuller and happier life. It is designed to

increase the individual's capacity for living in the real conditions of life.

In parent education the focus is more particularly on the development of attitudes, aimed at providing more satisfying relationships among parents and children. The parents are considered vital influences in the mental development of their children and their attitudes toward their offspring are of crucial importance.

In his volume on PARENT EDUCATION, Stern gives some attention to the above factor. He points out that increasing emphasis is being placed on the importance of parents in the mental development of their children, and that this emphasis has in fact, stemmed from converging trends of thought in child psychology, social psychology, social anthropology, psycho-analysis, and psychopathology. The ability to distinguish between the "natural" development of the child and the social influences impinging on him, is becoming increasingly more difficult. For the natural development is essentially a social process in which the parents or parent substitutes play a vital part in providing for the child's physical survival, as well as his mental growth. Consequently, in the planning for child care and the education of children, it is essential to take note of the significant social relations that the child experiences.

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The increasing interest in parent education in Canada is, in the writer's opinion, not unrelated to the developing knowledge about the impact of human relationship on personality development. For the young child, totally dependent on his parents, the quality of this relationship is a vital factor in his process of development.

There appears to be no singly or all-inclusive concept of parent education. It may be viewed broadly and take in its purview general topics of interest to adults, without specific reference to parenthood. Or, conversely, it may be concerned with only the essential elements of relationship between parents and children - the mental well-being of the child in his developmental stages, facilitated by increasing the parent's knowledge of child development and social behaviour. It is this latter conception that has the more important relation to our discussion.

Marriage preparation programs cover a very wide range of activities from individual observation and instruction in the family setting, to more formal causes offered by schools, colleges, universities, social agencies and churches. As well, there is considerable individual instruction given to young persons contemplating marriage by doctors and clergymen. This latter point was dealt with at some length in Dr. Best's report to the Canadian Conference on children. In marriage preparation programs, the emphasis would appear to be on

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preparation for family life, the nature and importance of family life, and on child-rearing.

Focusing our attention on family life education, the question arises—what is the meaning of this term, what does it involve? That there can be many definitions and conceptions will be apparent, and to attempt a review of these would be a formidable task. Further, the conceptions of such a term are bound to be influenced by the individual and social situations of their exponents, so that, in a sense, they may be individualistic, and local rather than universal in focus. For our purposes, it will suffice to give, what are considered the essential ingredients in family life education as applied to this particular study.

In his book on Marriage Analysis, Christensen has given some attention to family life education, and has identified what he considers to be the vital elements in it:

"Family life education is broad in field but narrow in focus. In a sense it includes everything that happens to the individual, whether through formal instruction or informal learning, which helps prepare him for the adjustments of courtship, marriage, and family living. But central in all of this are the understandings, attitudes, and habits of harmonious marital relationships." 1

He considered the crux of family life education to be relationships, which require understanding,

"Concerning oneself, society, the opposite sex and the interactional processes. But even this is insufficient; factual information must be accompanied by proper

attitudes, both of which need to be transformed into adjustable habits of life."

The self-understanding gained through the exposure to new vistas of knowledge would be reflected in relationships, and if accompanied by proper attitudes, would be transformed into adjustable habits of life. As the writer understands it, this is the essence of family life education. Applied to the Co-operative Pre-School Groups, the enrolment of the child in a play group where the parent has an opportunity to participate and to observe, introduces child and parent to hitherto unknown areas of knowledge which facilitate the development of more meaningful relationships between them. This, in turn, results in habits of life characterized by a more relaxed approach to the daily business of family living.

The Role of the Professions in Family Life Education

The question of, who is going to do the job, becomes a vital one to consider. Many professional groups are presently engaged in giving advice, and information, and guidance to parents on behalf of their offspring. On an individual basis, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, clergymen, general practitioners, nurses, teachers, disseminate information for the guidance of mothers and fathers. By virtue of their training in the use of relationship, in an interview situation, social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists may perhaps be best qualified to undertake counselling and personal guidance. But one cannot minimize the vast amount of work performed

\*ibid. p.9.
by the other professional groups mentioned. That it cannot be or become the prerogative of any one profession is obvious.

Referring particularly to parent educators, Stern recommended the consideration of three categories:

1. All persons in regular professional contact with families and children should have, in their initial training, some sociological and psychological teaching with special emphasis on family living and parenthood. In this group one might include nurses, social workers, medical practitioners, psychologists, youth leaders, the clergy and the police.

2. Specialists in parent education, who might be recruited from such occupations as medicine, psychology, education, psychotherapy and social work. Aside from their practical experience it would be assumed that, additional training at a post-graduate level would be undertaken.

3. Certain categories of parents with adequate training could be used to lead parent groups.

It was important, he felt, to relate any program of parent education to the existing framework of education, social and health services, and pay particular attention to the needs of parents in the community.

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The recommendations made by Stern are well worth considering by individuals and groups desirous of providing family life education. Through such a plan as he proposes, the many professional groups, interested in promoting family well-being, could be used in a constructive way.

While the professions may be viewed as giving leadership in impetus to family life education, unless they succeed in relating their programs to the daily life situations and concerns of parents, they will have minimal value. Formal lectures as a method in family life education, have been found to have limited success. Too frequently the material presented by the speaker was emulated to the needs of the group. Furthermore, the parental feelings that are so readily aroused when parent-child relations are being considered, have little opportunity for expression due to the formality attendant to public lectures or speeches. Use of group discussions appear to be a more effective method.

The task of providing family life education cannot be the sole prerogative of any one profession. When one considers the great variety of devices through which education for family living is made available in our communities, one realises more clearly that

1 As used here, "lectures" refers more specifically to direct teaching of parents. Lectures at schools, colleges, universities to the unmarried are excluded.

2 This fact was emphasized by Dr. David Mace in his keynote address to the Conference on Marriage Guidance, Saskatchewan House, Regina, Sept. 14-15, 1959, at which the writer was present. See Conference report, mimeographed, p.6. The comments of the majority of parents interviewed in this study corroborates this view.
it is the task of many professions. The following list of programs, facilities, and devices available in a number of large urban centres in Canada will help to illustrate our point:

1. Courses in schools. These are very limited in Canada and where given are usually for senior high school students only.  

2. Courses after school leaving for young people and adults. In large urban centres, some school boards have adult education programs that include lectures on Family Life, Human Relations, Marriage and Parenthood. Some University Extension Departments have similar courses.

3. University credit courses. Where given they are usually in the course sequence for students in the faculties of Home Economics and Education.

4. Programs provided by Churches. This includes individual counselling, group discussions, lectures, married couple's retreats.

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For some examples of courses in United States Schools see:
5. Courses and discussion groups sponsored by community organizations e.g. Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, Canadian Mental Health Association.

6. Public health nursing services to families - pre-natal clinics, well-baby clinics and related services.

7. Individual and group counselling by physicians in private practice.

8. Programs included in the activities of Home and School and Parent-Teacher Associations.

9. Dissemination of information through mass media - radio, television, newspapers, magazines.  

10. Literature - books and periodicals.  

11. Special Community Services — e.g. Family Life Education Council of Montreal, Institute of Child Study, University of Toronto.


Through such mediums as have been listed, as well as others not included, the special abilities of a great number of professional persons - teachers, clergymen, medical practitioners, nurses, psychologists, social workers - are utilized in the business of educating for family living today.

See: "Parent Education In Canada", Canadian Mental Health Association, 11½ Spadina Road, Toronto, undated report, p.p. 28-33.

Structure and Functions of Co-operative Pre-School Groups

Co-operative pre-schools or nursery schools have been described as "our newest kind of organization which is providing an effective means of education for family living." ¹ Formed on the initiative of from 10 to 30 families, these schools succeed in involving not just the child, but also his parents, and in some cases, grandparents and other relatives. Through observation of the children, through discussions with the teacher, and through the practical and administrative help the parents give in operating these schools, "all members of the family learn." ²

In both the literature and in practice, a variety of descriptive terminology is used to designate those centres where pre-school education is provided. Parent co-operatives, that is, schools or educational groups organized by parents for their pre-school children, are described as "Co-operatives, nurseries, play groups, schools, pre-schools or centres, depending upon the preferences of the parents and factors involved in their structure and operation.

In view of the spontaneity with which the Co-operatives have arisen, and the numbers coming into existence in the past twenty five to thirty years, "they may be considered a new folk movement." ³

² ibid p. 200.
For the most part, they appear to have been formed by young parents interested in providing their children with guided play and social education and "from their own needs both for more guidance in their job as parents and from a little time free from ceaseless child care." ¹

The major functions of Co-operatives, as outlined by Dr. Taylor, ² are thus seen to be social education for the children, and parent education for the mothers and fathers. The values of nursery school are made available to a greater number of families of moderate income through their co-operative endeavour, than would be possible if only private nursery schools were utilized. In the latter, the relatively high cost makes their use prohibitive to many parents who otherwise might use them.

In the following quotation, further elaboration and detail is given about the structure and purposes of Co-operatives:

¹ ibid p. 1.
² Dr. Taylor served as Consultant in Family Life Education for the Seattle Public Schools during World War II. She organized and developed Seattle's extensive program of parent co-operative play groups. Co-operative play groups in the Vancouver area are modelled along the plans outlined by Dr. Taylor. Her book, Parent Co-operative Nursery Schools, is used extensively as a resource guide by Vancouver Groups. During the early days of Co-operatives in the Vancouver area, representatives from the local Association of Co-operative Pre-School Groups and interested parents, visited Seattle Co-operatives to obtain ideas for local adaptation.

There appears to be a very similar structural pattern in the Co-operatives, wherever they are located. In some communities financial assistance is provided by school boards.
"A Co-operative nursery school, in our sense, is one organized and administered by the parents, and operated by them under the direction of trained teachers. The parents form a non-profit Co-operative Association, employ the teachers, equip the school, maintain maximum membership, and meet the monthly budget. The teachers direct the school, and are assisted by the mothers in the schoolroom. Upon the parents rests the financial and administrative welfare of the school; upon the teachers, its professional standing.

While it offers all the advantages of the usual nursery school, the special value of the co-operative is that it provides a developmental experience for both the child and the mother. The child makes the step out of his sheltered home together with his mother; he grows in independence, she in understanding. The mother finds in the school a workshop where she knows she is welcome and where she can see the educational process going on. Through regular participation under skilled teachers, she observes the behaviour not only of her own child but of young children in general. Sensitivities and insights are born, often new attitudes acquired, which are valuable to the mother both at home and at school. The too aggressive child, who might be labelled a trouble maker on the neighbourhood playground, is now recognized as a child who needs help in acceptable ways to express his budding social awareness. The mother also becomes familiar with equipment and creative materials at school which can be used to advantage at home."

The major function of the Co-operative Nursery School is, thus, seen to be education for family living by providing developmental experiences to parents and children. It is not intended to supplant the home; rather, it serves to supplement it,

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"The Nursery School at its best exists not to replace the home but to supplement it; for there comes a time in the young child's life when the family - at any rate as it exists in urban life - cannot provide all that is needed to stimulate and the development of the child's potentialities. Many mothers become aware of this as their children develop. More and more they recognize that the nursery school can act as a bridge to help the child to pass from an intimate and exclusive relationship to the mother to the wider relationship between the individual and society." 1

The nursery or co-operative play school is designed to assist the modern urban parent in the discharge of parental responsibilities, and in the development of child and parent. It aids in the process of achieving those goals that parents have set for themselves and for their children. It facilitates a growth in well-being.

Functions of the Association of Co-operative Pre-School Groups of Greater Vancouver.

In the early 1940's, a small band of parents in Vancouver, interested in providing a group learning experience for their pre-school children, commenced a Co-operative play program for them, in their private homes. By 1945, with five groups in operation, they decided to form The Co-operative Play Group Association, 2 for their mutual benefit. In 1953, with thirty-three groups active in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland, the Association made arrangements with the University of British Columbia Extension


2 The name was later changed to The Association of Co-operative Pre-School Groups.
Department to have a pre-school consultant available to the Co-operative, on a part-time basis. Additional consultative staff was made available in 1957, and later, with a focus on higher standards, better trained teachers, and more informed parents. In 1960 the Association had fifty member groups, involving approximately fifteen hundred parents. With a view to provision of better education services, the Association set up Area branches (districts) - Vancouver District, North Shore District, Burnaby and New Westminster District.

As of January, 1963 the Association had 7 member groups in: the Vancouver District, 14 in the North Shore District and 12 in the Burnaby and New Westminster District, making a total of 33 member groups, all of whom have representation on the Association Board of Administration.

The purpose of the Association is:

"(a) to unite and to assist the member groups in providing a high standard of pre-school education, supported by the co-operative efforts of teachers and parents in a planned adult education program.

1 With reference to the drop in member groups, from 50 in 1960 to 33 in January, 1963, it is important to relate this to the establishment of public kindergartens in the City of Vancouver. In September 1960, 25 kindergartens, with 1,823 pupils in attendance, were being operated by the Vancouver School Board. By September, 1961, the figures had risen to 60 kindergartens and 4,429 pupils; one year later, 74 kindergartens, with 5,141 pupils, were in operation. The latter figure on number of kindergartens (74) represents facilities throughout the entire city. Attendance at kindergarten is voluntary for pre-grade I pupils (5 year olds).

Statistics: Courtesy Dr. E.N. Ellis, Research Department, School District 39 (Vancouver).
(b) to co-operate with other organizations concerned with the pre-school child.

The Association endorses the following concept:

(a) That the purpose of the Co-operative Pre-School groups is to provide a program of education for children and parents together.

(b) That the program for the child will be planned to help each individual child achieve and enjoy the fullest mental, social, and physical growth for him at his particular stage of development; and that this will be accomplished through the medium of guided play under the direction of a full-qualified pre-school teacher."

Stemming from these purposes, the Association serves its member groups, (1) in their childrens programs — consultative services, information on, and loans of equipment, (2) with their teaching staff — orientation programs for new teachers, workshops, information on available supplies material, (3) with their individual parents — newsletters, planned observation sessions, Area (district) workshops, (4) with their executive responsibilities — making resource material available, in formation of new groups, in finding teaching staff.

The member groups pay an annual fee based on a set figure per child. This makes possible the Association services outlined above, in addition to others not mentioned. Through the Association

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1 This quotation is from the Members Information Guide, published by the Association of Co-operative Pre-School Groups, June, 1962.

2 These services are available from the University of British Columbia, Extension Department, and from staff at the Child Study Centre, which is operated by the College of Education.

3 Present fee is $2 per annum per child. Fees are established annually by a vote by the Association Board of Administration.
Board and its various committees, there is a link with community groups concerned with the pre-school child—Welfare Institutions Licensing Board, University of British Columbia, School Boards, Park Boards, and Parent-Teacher groups.

The Co-operative Pre-School Groups Forming the basis for This Study

In its Statement of Standards and Objectives, 1962 (see Appendix B.) the Association of Co-operative Pre-School Groups notes that "the purpose of the Co-operative Pre-School Groups is to provide a program of education for children and parents together under the guidance of a teacher" ————. This purpose becomes translated into the programs of the individual Co-operative Play Groups, "where home meets school." The following seven groups with their respective locations, all members of the Association of Co-operative Pre-School Groups, formed the basis for the study.

1. Alma Co-operative Play Group, West Point Grey Baptist Church, 2685, Sasamat Street.

2. Canadian Memorial Co-operative Play School Group, Canadian Memorial United Church, 1811, West 16th. Avenue.

3. Dunbar Memorial Co-operative Play Group, Dunbar Community Centre, 4747, Dunbar Street.


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1 This latter phrase is the slogan of the Association of Co-operative Pre-School Groups and appears on their letterhead.
5. Knox Co-operative Play Group, Knox United Church, 5800, Balaclava Street.


7. Westrock Co-operative Pre-School Group, St. Helen's Anglican Church, 2395, Trimble Street.

These are all located in the City of Vancouver west of Ontario Street; this street divides the city street numbering system into east and west sections. Before public kindergarten facilities were available throughout the entire city, some co-operatives were in operation in the east section of the city. For a variety of reasons, these have all ceased to operate.

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1 The writer was given a list of nine, which was believed to be the total number in the east section of Vancouver.

2 This section is considered to be of lower socio-economic status than the area west of Ontario Street.

3 Reasons given to the writer verbally were: (1) lack of interest in pre-school education for 4 year old children, (2) lack of finances due to increased unemployment. The former appears to have been the major reason. Parents were interested in having their five year old children attend nursery school or kindergarten; when public facilities were available, these were used. Consequently there was a sharp drop in enrolment and a loss in income which made continued activity for the Co-operatives impossible.
Enrolment in the seven groups listed above is given in Table 1.

### Table 1. Co-operative Pre-School Group Enrolment (a) for
Groups in Vancouver Having Membership in the
Association of Co-operative Pre-School Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Co-operative</th>
<th>4 year old group</th>
<th>3 year old group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Alma</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Canadian Memorial</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Dunbar</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Kitsilano</td>
<td>21 (c)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Knox</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. St. Giles</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Wesbrook</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Figures given indicates actual enrolment at the time of the writer's observation session. These sessions were spread out over the period December 18, 1962 to February 27, 1963.

(b) For convenience, the Co-operative groups will be identified by the abbreviated name as given for the balance of the discussion.

(c) This figure includes 3-3 year old children who were included in the activities with the 4 year olds. There is no separate 3 year old group at this Co-operative.

It should be pointed out that the statistics given do not completely represent the actual age for each child. In a few instances some 5 year old children were included in the 4 year old group, and some young 4 year old children were in the 3 year old
group. For administrative convenience, the two broad groupings are used, with the teacher and the co-operative executive deciding policy for the individual children concerned.

The program for 3 year olds is relatively recent - within the last 1-3 years. Of the 5 Co-operatives having a separate 3 year old group, the children attended sessions as follows:

2 groups attended one half-day a week; 2 groups attended 2 half-days per week; one group was in attendance 5 half-days per week.

The 4 year old groups met thus: 4 groups were present 5 half-days per week; 2 groups were present 4 half-days per week; one group met 3 half-days per week. The actual daily program time ranged from 2 hours for the younger group to $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours for the older group.

Each Co-operative is organized and administered by the parents, who assume responsibility for: (a) finding suitable accommodation (b) purchasing and repairing equipment, (c) employing the teacher, (d) maintaining as full an enrolment as possible, (e) attending to other duties as required. Through their respective executive members and working committees (see Appendix C for example), an attempt is made to involve each parent in some specific administrative duty, thereby providing a further learning experience, along with continued interest in the operation of the particular co-operative.

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1 The administration of the Co-operatives is almost exclusively handled by the mothers. The fathers do provide invaluable assistance, but it appears to be more indirect.

2 See note 1.
Funds for the monthly budget of the Co-operatives are derived entirely from the fees, which vary from group to group. For children in full-time attendance (5 half-days per week) fees ranged from 8 dollars per month to 12 dollars per month. Appropriate adjustments are made for partial attendance of the 3 year old groups.

The major expenses are teachers salaries, rent, and equipment purchases. To maintain operations at a satisfactory level, relatively full enrolment is required. This has not been easy to achieve for some of the Co-operatives, whereas others have waiting lists. The type of accommodation available, quantity and quality of play equipment used, type of daily program, personality of the teacher, program of the parents meetings, are some of the factors operative in relation to enrolment.

Parents with children enrolled in the particular Co-operative form the membership of that group. This will mean there is considerable annual turnover in the membership (in some instances it has been 100 per cent). The membership decides on matter of policy, in co-operation with the teacher. If desired, a constitution relating to policy matters, is drawn up by the group (see Appendix D for an example).

Each Co-operative is an autonomous unit, but uses the services of the Association of Co-operative Pre-School Groups to assist in the improvement of their particular program of activities and to facilitate co-operation with similar groups in other parts of the community. Under the guidance of trained teachers, the parents and children learn together the art of living to-day in the family group.
CHAPTER III

FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION IN THE CO-OPERATIVE PRE-SCHOOL GROUP

The daily program at the Co-operative has a variety of activities, (see Appendix C.) in which the children can engage, under the guidance of a teacher and her assistants. These activities are designed to increase the individual and social skills of the children, and the understanding of the mother through her direct participation and observation. In each group there is at least one duty mother in attendance daily; depending on the size of the group a second one is present. The mothers (assistants) help the teacher in the general supervision of the children, and in stimulating them to engage in creative and co-operative play. Opportunities for individual and group play are intertwined to enhance development of personal and social skills. To achieve the latter, extensive equipment is available to the children – slides, rocking toys, monkey bars, tricycles, wagons, small wheel toys, building blocks, dolls equipment, paints, play dough, moulding clay, puzzles, records, books, rhythm instruments – to name but some, one sees in the play rooms.

1 This term describes the function of the mother in the pre-school group. It is used in each Co-operative.
A conscious effort is made to create a congenial atmosphere where the children will feel free to pursue those activities that are of interest to them. Development of group consciousness is achieved, in part, by frequent use of the collective "we", by emphasis on sharing toys and other play equipment, and by asking the children to take their turn at activities requiring this. In the observation sessions, the writer heard repeated comments by the children about sharing, taking turns, and doing things together. To achieve some conception of differentiation in the amount of noise permissible at given activities, the children were, at one Co-operative, told to "keep their big voices way inside and use their little voices", when doing handwork. The "big voices" were for use in outdoor play or in their free play sessions with the larger equipment. To achieve silence while reading to the group, one teacher asked one of the group members to tell the others what was expected. She replied, "Story time is listening time". In the rest period, in this same Co-operative the children were reminded to "rest their voices" as well as their arms, legs, and body.

Sensitivity to the needs of the individual child is maintained, within the limits possible in a group. One teacher asked a little boy to leave the circle of children listening to her read a story; she was aware that he was unable, at his age, to remain quiet and an alternate activity was provided, suited to his level of maturity. In another group, the teacher permitted a child to finish his project even
though it was "clean up" time. She sensed his need to complete what he was doing, thereby avoiding frustration and possible hostility. The writer was impressed by the apparent ease with which the various teachers achieved this balance of individual and group activity, suited to the demands of the situation.

The level and extent of interaction between the duty mothers, the teacher and the children, is of crucial importance in the operation of a Co-operative. It is in this area that the skills of the teacher are most in demand, and her personality is also a vital factor in enhancing or inhibiting interaction. The demands on her are many, for not only does she assume leadership in providing stimulating and varied activities for the children to participate in, but she also endeavours to involve the duty mothers in a meaningful way. From the observation sessions, it was apparent that the degree of duty mother involvement in the program varied considerably. Several factors seemed to operative: (1) the amount of experience the particular duty mother had had in the Co-operative, (2), the physical arrangement of the play area.

The duty mothers who were just beginning their Co-operative experience tended to busy themselves in cleaning up after the children, indooing things for the children, instead of with them, in arranging equipment. Mothers who had attended for numerous duty days were more involved in the children's activities; they worked with the children in their respective projects, helping them as needed, but using discretion not to assume the position of imposing their interests on the boys and girls.
Convenience of storage areas to play areas eased the amount of effort and time required by the duty mothers in arranging the equipment, thereby allowing more free time to observe or to participate directly in what the children were doing. In two groups, rental terms require all equipment to be stored daily, which means the duty mothers are expending much of their energy in arranging and storing equipment. As one might expect, the mothers in these groups, when interviewed, referred to the lack of opportunity to participate with the children in the daily program. The potential value of the Co-operative experience was lessened as a result.

The most significant factors for the mothers in the Co-operative involvement were the opportunity: (a) observe their own children in a group, (b) to work with other children, (c) to observe an experienced and trained teacher in operation. Of the twenty-two mothers interviewed, seventeen referred to one or a combination of these three factors as being the most meaningful in their Co-operative experience; four stressed the social implications (the opportunity to mix with other mothers who had children the same age) and only one mother felt her involvement in a Co-operative did not do her any good. Expressed in different terms, it was the duty days that had the most meaning for 75 per cent of the mothers.

Several illustrative examples are of interest. One mother said "I just love my duty days." Another one remarked, "I enjoy being with children and watching a teacher who knows how to handle parents." A third commented, "I have enjoyed the children most, the stories they
tell me and the questions they ask". Even though there was, for some mothers, much equipment to move, and little opportunity to observe, many duties to discharge and little time to work with the children, participation in the Co-operative program still remained the dominant value. In the playroom, the mothers encountered a new experience which was value-laden but purposeful. Here they could see their offspring interacting with other children, with other mothers and with the teacher. In this setting they were able to see that their children were not as "bad" or "abnormal" as they may have felt. As one mother expressed it, "you realize there is no such thing as normal anymore; the thirty children in our Co-operative are all different and develop in their own way." Here was an opportunity to share their concerns, their worries, their fears, with other mothers and the teacher. One mother referred to the reassurance she received "in knowing she was not alone with her problems". Her sentiments were shared by at least six other mothers, though expressed in slightly different terms.

The children's response to so many different mothers was specifically commented upon by two mothers. To them it was interesting to see the children's acceptance of these various adults. One may argue that three and four year old children are hardly able to identify meaningfully with a number of adults, and should not be expected to. Yet, it would appear that, to a degree, this is possible, and is viewed as desirable by some of the mothers. It is
believed to widen the child's social horizons and make him more accepting of adults. Comments from the mothers and teachers would tend to support this view.

As a learning experience for the children, a variety of values were identified by the mothers. Prominent in the list was the opportunity for group play or, learning to share play with other children. (10). Socialization, and stimulation of creative ability were next in order of importance, each being mentioned the same number of times. (7). Growth in self-confidence (decrease in shyness) was next (4); learning discipline (putting away toys, co-operating with parents in their requests) received mention by (3) mothers. Each mentioned (2) times were the following: learning to accept other mothers, separation from home, preparation for school, self-understanding, self-control, ideas for constructive play.

One mother indicated the Co-operative experience helped her daughter accept the arrival of a new baby in their home. Through discussion about the event at play school, she accepted the baby as another member of their family group, just as they accepted new children in the Co-operative, the assumption being that the new member had a contribution to give to the group and that the other children would benefit thereby. Full attention to the children by the teacher and by the duty mother was felt to be of significance by one mother. In her opinion this helped to satisfy the children's

The numbers in brackets indicate the number of mothers mentioning this particular factor. Most mothers referred to several items, hence the total number of items exceeds the number of mothers.
needs for attention. In the Co-operative, the teacher and her assistant could give the boys and girls undivided attention: they were not being interrupted in their activities by 'phone calls, ringing door-bells, and household duties.

Weighed against the reasons given for enrolment, the values believed to have accrued from the Co-operative experience show definite similarity. Eleven mothers referred to the child's need for play companionship and socialization experience, 6 expressed interest in organized activity for their children, 3 mothers wanted temporary relief from their offspring and 2 indicated their children had specific problems that they felt were in need of attention (shyness, aggression). The number of mothers expressing a desire to be relieved of the care of their children for several hours a day, from one to five days per week, was surprisingly low. Other reasons given for enrolment may include elements of this desire, but it was not so stated.

One mother said some of her friends tell her she sends her child to play school "to get rid of her". A second mother said her own mother was "horrified" when she learned about her granddaughter being enrolled in a pre-school group. A third mother felt many of the mothers were basically interested in getting temporary respite from the care of their pre-school sons and daughters, but that they
would not openly state this as a reason for enrolling their children. She had formed this impression from her many conversations with mothers involved in Co-operatives.

It is the writer's opinion that her comments are valid, that it is reasonable to assume such feelings do exist, and that they are expressed only with difficulty, because of the cultural emphasis on parents caring for their own children, particularly pre-schoolers.\footnote{This is well illustrated for upper class urban families in Seeley, John et al. Crestwood Heights, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1956, See: "The Family: Primary Socialization", p p 159–223.}

The decline in the number of Co-operatives in the east section of Vancouver (east of Ontario Street) may be related to such cultural factors as mentioned above. If one accepts the stated reason for closure given to the Association by four Co-operatives now non-existent, namely: lack of interest by the parents in a pre-school program for four year old children, then it may be reasonable to assume that cultured determinants are operative in the non-use of pre-school facilities. The fact that there were nine Co-operatives in existence in east Vancouver, when five year old children had no general public kindergarten facilities available to them, seems to corroborate the view expressed here. A decision to use or not to use pre-school facilities by the individual family seems to have cultural significance. If then, a decision is made to use such facilities, the reason given by the parents for such use would appear to be culturally weighted.
What, then are some of the values that the parents find through their Co-operatives experience? It would appear there are a number, and that they are relatively more individualistic than values for the children, as expressed by the parents. As stated before, the factor of most significance to most mothers was the actual involvement in the play room - the interactional process between child, parent and teacher. But what, specifically, do the mothers consider so important? Stated simply, it is the exposure to a way of working with children that operates so effectively. It is a learning process that broadens the horizons of the mothers. Instead of having to depend completely on their own sense of judgement and methods of child rearing, they are confronted with other methods, other ideas, other kinds of play equipment. Their seeming lack of confidence in their own way of dealing with their children, which was vividly expressed by one mother in her comment "as parents", we grope our way along", was given a boost, making the parental role less stressful, and the parent more comfortable in that role. This appeared to be the import of the following remark by one mother, when talking about the value of the Co-operative experience to her, "It gave me assurance that I was right, and it helped to convince my husband." Effective support to modern urban parents
in methods of child-rearing would seem to be lacking, hence the individual support possible through a Co-operative becomes a significant voice for the member parents.

Being able to learn about their children and about other children was one way of achieving some support. Through their increased understanding of their own and of other children, the mothers were better able to meet the many demands of parenthood. Taken as a group, these mothers placed considerable emphasis on the need for assistance in fulfilling their parental responsibilities. Their sense of inadequacy as parents seemed to be one of the motivating forces in the use of the Co-operative.

In addition to those values discussed above, there were others that were individually meaningful to parents. Two mothers had been helped to accept expressions of hate from their children; they said they were now able to realize that, sometimes, a child "had" to say he hated his parents, and if he did so express himself, it was unwise to punish him. Other mothers talked about being more relaxed with their children in the day routines; they had achieved new insight into the word "patience". They were able to see more

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1 This lack of support to modern parents was referred to by members of the University Extension Department, who were consulted in relation to this study. Three of the Co-operative teachers also made reference to this factor, in the discussions the writer had with them. For further references, see, Youth, Marriage and The Family, Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1948, p.164; "Parent Education", Canadian Home and School and Parent Teacher Federation, Oct.1962, p.1. "Family Life and Parent Education", Montreal Council of Social Agencies, 1959, p. 1; "Parent Education in Canada", Canadian Mental Health Association, undated report, p. 1,2.
clearly, the relation between their lack of patience and expressions of hostility and frustration in the children. Accepting the individuality of children, treating them as children instead of as adults (setting realistic expectations of behaviour appropriate to their age and level of maturity) was another learned feature, stemming from duty day activities. The ability to use reason more extensively as a means of discipline with young children, thereby reducing the need to spank so frequently, was another way in which the horizons of understanding had been widened.

Providing children with more scope in their play activities was seen as a constructive way of channelling the children's energies by three mothers. Instead of seeing her child damage toys in periods of aggression, one mother substituted play dough. "He can't break the dough" was her comment. While they recognized that it was impossible to provide materials in a private home to the extent possible in a Co-operative, greater use of inexpensive materials was possible. One mother commented on how inexpensive powder paints and paper were; she had never realized before what potential use could be made of these relatively simple items. Being exposed to a greater variety of play equipment gave a number of mothers the incentive to be more creative in their use of play activities with their children. Not only were they able to give some suggestions to their children; they were sufficiently motivated to become involved more frequently and more extensively in the
children's activities. Through a planned use of play materials, they were able to enjoy themselves in children's play. Their increased understanding of their children assisted in developing a stronger affectional tie that made mutual association purposeful and enjoyable.

In the interviews there was very little reference to one value that the writer anticipated would receive greater attention, namely, the mother's sense of feeling needed. This may very well be the case, however this is conjecture only, and needs verification if it is to be used as a basis on which to form conclusions about values of Co-operatives to mothers.

It is to be expected that few mothers would readily express their felt need sentiments; the depth of feeling involved would tend to inhibit such expression. It may also be considered unwise to do so for other reasons - that it would be a breach of family trust, that it is socially in bad taste, that a mother should not have such feelings, that it is the children who need her not she the children. One cannot ignore the possibility that mothers have personal needs, which may not be satisfied in their daily homemaking routines. The shift from gainful employment where peer group stimulation and social exchange, can be a very difficult one. As well, the mother's loss of income and need for economic dependence on her husband can
accentuate the dependence-independence ambivalence, further compounded by the incessant demands of young children. Seen in this context, one would have anticipated more frequent reference to personal need satisfactions through the Co-operative involvement. That there were some mothers who did refer to the satisfactions obtained from feeling needed by the children, and, that there were other mothers who welcomed the social opportunities which the Co-operative provided, lends support to the view that some mothers recognize their drive to find some need satisfaction through their Co-operative experience.

With such heavy investment by the mothers in the Co-operative program, one may well ask what direct benefits are derived from the fathers. The possibility of their assisting regularly in the play room is remote in view of their employment demands during the hours the play school is in operation. Of the seven Co-operatives visited by the writer, in only one did the teacher have fathers assisting her with the children's program, on a regular basis. Because of their particular hours of work, these two fathers were free to help in the play room. In another group, one father has entertained the children with his musical instruments. Those fathers with handcraft skills are used extensively in making and repairing equipment. Much of the large equipment — slides, monkey bars, teeter-totters, rocking toys, tables, chairs, storage cupboards, dolls equipment, also building blocks, small wheel toys, book racks, to name but some — has all been built by the fathers.
Some very ingenious items were in evidence in the play rooms; the comments by the teachers indicated there were some keenly interested fathers connected with these Co-operatives. One father assisted in his group by providing the required duplicating services for printed material needing distribution. For those mothers holding executive offices, the support of their husbands was of considerable value; it helped to ease the strain and to make their task lighter.

Attendance at parents meetings by fathers varied considerably. In his first year with the Co-operative, one father attended every meeting; subsequently his attendance decreased to the point where he seldom attended. It would appear that this pattern is evident to a considerable degree in the Co-operatives. Of the 21 fathers in the study group (in one family the father was absent) only 6 had ever attended parents meetings. A greater number had been present for special functions e.g. Christmas parties, father's night parties, thereby gaining some direct knowledge of the Co-operative program. Their major sources of information appear to be the children themselves, and their wives. The 4 fathers participating in interviews conducted by the writer, were conversant with details of the Co-operatives. Of the 4, only 2 had ever attended parents meetings; for the other 2 there would appear to have been an effective process of indoctrination caused by their children and their wives. Undoubtedly, the enthusiasm of the children in wanting to attend, plus the extent of the mother's involvement, does make some impact on the
father. Without exception, the mothers said the children enjoyed going to the Co-operative. There were, with some children, days when they didn't want to go but this is to be expected with 3 and 4 year olds. Having such an enthusiastic response from the children toward the Co-operative would make some impression on the fathers, albeit their direct involvement is limited. It may be of interest to note that, in the establishment of new Co-operatives, the fathers seem to assume considerable leadership and responsibility. This was commented upon by one father in relation to the Alma Co-operative, which is now in its third year of operation. His statement about the more extensive involvement of fathers in the developmental stages of a Co-operative were confirmed by 2 mothers in the same group, and by 3 mothers of other groups.

In the direct observation of and participation in the learning process that takes place in the Co-operatives, the fathers do not share. Their learning is more direct - through their children and their wives. In an attempt to provide a more direct learning experience for fathers, the Dunbar Co-operative group was planning Saturday morning sessions, where the fathers would attend with their children for 1½ to 2 hours, participating in a planned program. At the time of the writer's observation session at this Co-operative, no Saturday programs had been held, hence it was not possible to give any comments on this experiment. It would appear to have merit.
However, it will need demonstration and this is what is being planned.

What can be the most problematic aspect of a Co-operative's function, and is the most delicately balanced, i.e. the interaction of child, parent, and teacher, is precisely the one of most significance to the parents. That maintenance of this balance requires a high degree of skill and diplomacy on the part of the teacher, and tactfulness on the part of the Co-operative executive is evident. The significance of the interactional process corroborates the view, expressed in Chapter II, that the crux of family life education is relationship. The relationship between child, parent and teacher becomes the significant learned relationship for the family unit. The experiences in the play room are re-lived in the home setting and utilized for the well-being of children and parents. Because of these experiences, the interaction within the family group assume a different character - it becomes more personally meaningful to the participants. Self enhancement is fostered in both parent and child; there is a growth in the parents understanding of the child and an increased acceptance of other people by the child.

As an educational device, the programs at the parents meetings are not popular. Of the 19 mothers responding to the question about the least significant aspect of their Co-operative experience, 9 referred to the parents meetings. Only 2 mothers said they enjoyed the mothers meetings, a further 3 commented on the value of the discussions with other mothers after the meetings. The
social outlet possible through this medium appears to be as important, if not more so, than the parent education program. In the suggested improvements, parent education was mentioned most frequently, and more use of the duty mother in the play room came next.

Regarding the parent education programs, there was reference to "the fuzzy discussions" the "talk-down-to-the-parents", attitude of some of the discussion leaders and speakers, the lack of program planning, and the over-use of programs. Well-planned programs spaced at about two to three month intervals were a suggested solution to the latter problems. There appeared to be general agreement that the mothers meetings were valuable, and essential to the effective operation of a Co-operative, but that improvements could be made in the manner in which they were planned and conducted. If the business sessions were reduced in length, and social exchange lessened, it was thought more fathers might attend the monthly parents meetings.

That the Co-operatives have their difficulties is to be expected, particularly if one keeps in mind the interactions involved. One mother described the Co-operative as a "touchy" organization. She was referring to child-parent teacher relations, but also included the renting organization. There was no recommendation by any parent for a structural change in the Co-operative, though this may have been implied in one mother's comment that the Co-operative was a "benevolent dictatorship". The suggested changes
in the program or administration included the following: more outdoor play, better enrolment procedures, less routine (e.g. toilet routine), better distribution of executive duties, modification in the teacher training program to assist the teachers in making better use of duty mothers, less "furniture moving", more effort to have about the same number of boys and girls in the play group, more involvement of fathers.

The wisdom of having so many mothers assisting in the play room was questioned by 2 mothers. To them, a private kindergarten where the mother could observe, was preferable but these were apparently almost non-existent in this community. The Co-operative was thus deemed preferable to a potentially poor kindergarten where the parent was ignorant of the daily proceedings. Of significance in this connection is the comment of one mother that "the parents presence prevents the development of a bad kindergarten." Here was again a re-iteration of the oft-expressed theme, that the opportunity to participate in the program was the key factor in the continual use of the Co-operative by the parents.

Of the 7 mothers who had younger children, eligible for future Co-operative enrolment, 4 were definitely planning to enrol
them, another one would if she was satisfied with the teacher, and the other 2 were undecided. For a majority of those parents with experience in a Co-operative it appears to have continued value. Whether it is a first, second, third, or later child, it is still important, it seems, for the mother to spend as much time as she can with her son or daughter, and to facilitate the child's development and her own understanding of him or her as an individual, by sharing the pre-school experience in a Co-operative.

Sharing experiences with their children, and achieving wider horizons of understanding about their children are, thus, perceived as the more important values gained through the Co-operative experience, by a majority of the mothers. The deepened relationship achieved through the child-parent-teacher interaction in the playroom, and the increased knowledge acquired, are translated into the life situation within the family unit. The process of living in the family unit is enhanced, a growth in well-being is promoted, life takes on a fuller and richer meaning.

In the preliminary stages of the study, the writer interviewed one mother of five children, in a Co-operative with her fifth child. Her enthusiasm for the Co-operatives was impressive. She would now appreciate some help in raising her teen-age children. In her opinion "parents are desperately in need of education for family living."
CHAPTER IV

THE CO-OPERATIVE AND THE COMMUNITY

The most vocal proponents for the Co-operatives would appear to be their present and former members, and friends of these members who have been given many details about their functions and values. In the study group, 13 parents had learned about Co-operatives through the above medium, and had become sufficiently interested to enrol their children. Of the remaining 9, 6 first heard about Co-operatives through public announcements—posters in strategically located areas, radio advertising, announcements given in Churches, and the other three, through self-enquiries about kindergarten facilities. The enthusiasm of the majority of parents interviewed was impressive; if they spoke with the same fervor to their friends as they did to the writer, it is readily understood that their advertising for the Co-operatives will have some positive effects. In their comments relating to this question, several mothers made reference to the enthusiastic proponents of Co-operatives they had encountered prior to enrolling their own children. This contagious enthusiasm had been an influential factor in their decision to use the Co-operative for their pre-school children.

It is difficult to estimate to what extent there is public
awareness of the Co-operatives. Because of limited finances they are not able to do extensive advertising, though there have been feature articles, at various times, in the local daily newspapers. The Vancouver Sun of March 26th, 1962 carried an article entitled "Imaginations Run Wild in Pre-School Group," which gave a descriptive account of Co-operatives activities. It would appear that within the extent of influence possible by the individual member parents, both present and past, the work of the Co-operatives is publicized.

With reference to the question of the Co-operative as a community resource, the most helpful comments were received from the teachers. The general consensus of opinion among them was that the Co-operative had limited value as a resource for doctors, public health nurses, or social agencies, who might be interested in referring families to them for help with their pre-school children. In isolated instances, referrals had been made by physicians who were personally familiar with the Co-operative and the teacher. In these cases, it was felt that the child and the parents could be helped in the resolution of relatively mild, but persistent behaviour problems. Unless, however, the parents were willing to participate actively in the program, referrals were not accepted. Co-operatives operate on a philosophy of participating parents, and their direct involvement is a requirement for enrolment, along with their attendance at parents meetings, and payment of the stipulated fees.
Comments made by the teachers suggested that in families with persistent behaviour difficulties with their pre-school children, parental interest in a program such as the Co-operative had to offer, tended to be limited. With its emphasis on the development of more satisfying parent-child relations through the increased understanding of children by the parents, the Co-operative would have limited appeal to these parents. They would not be prepared to accept the need for their own personal development. They would be "unavailable" psychologically, to the educational process. In reasons given to the teachers for discontinuing Co-operative use, one sees similar factors in operation. One teacher commented that "some parents are simply not able to use the Co-operative". Their rigidity of opinion and ideas, and their unwillingness to accept the methodology of the Co-operative program necessitates their leaving. Another teacher could not see how she would direct situations in the play room with a problem parent present. In her opinion, such a parent, would be a definite hindrance to the learning process for child and parent. This kind of parent, she said, tends to do things for the children, instead of with them, and usually displays a generally controlling attitude, which can add considerable strain to the parent-teacher relationship.

If the Co-operative is to become a referral resource for both health services and social agencies, as has been indicated by some members of the present Association Board, some program and administrative modification would appear to be necessary. As presently
operated, the writer does not believe the Co-operative should be viewed as a referral resource, other than for very specifically selected cases, and then only if the problem involved is amenable to modification through a group experience without jeopardizing the well-being of the group. The function of the Co-operative is essentially education and should remain so; if it is to become a treatment service, then it will need to assume a different character. In the writer's opinion, the functions of education and treatment are incompatible in a single program, except within very narrow limits. As functions of separate programs, they can, however, be validly provided by one organization, but not as one single service.

In individual situations, the Co-operatives do attempt to accommodate children with various disabling conditions, but only on the condition that the parents are prepared to give additional help in the play room. For the mother, this will mean extra duty days. In one group: a deaf child was in attendance and appeared to be well accepted by the children. The socialization experience in a group was felt necessary for this child, and both the teacher and the executive were prepared to accommodate this youngster. In another Co-operative a mildly retarded child had attended for socializing reasons, and was also well accepted. The needs of the group, the needs of the child, the willingness of the teacher to accept a child with a disabling condition, plus the ability of the parent to give extra time in the play room, are all factors needing consideration in cases where the Co-operative may be a potential referral resource.
One of the mothers who has been very active in the Co-operatives in Vancouver, gave suggested situations in which the Co-operative could be used for referral purposes but only for one, or at the most two children at a given time. She recognized the need to preserve group objectives, hence the limitation to a few special cases. The following possibilities were listed: (a) for children with normal intelligence but with a physically disabling condition, who were in need of group association, (b) for culturally alien children as a means of facilitating adjustment to local cultural values (c) for parents with a first child or only child, who were expecting either too little or too much in behavioural standards, (d) for mother who tended to be over-possessive and over-anxious about their offspring, (e) for lonely mothers, particularly those new to their district of residence (f) for mothers harassed by the care of several pre-school and who needed some time to give more individual attention to their offspring and, thus, to reduce sibling rivalry, (g) for parents with children in treatment at a guidance clinic needing help in the transition from extensive therapy to no therapy.

In this listing it will be seen there is a blending of education and treatment aspects. Unless these functions of a Co-operative are kept distinct, there will be unnecessary complications in the daily program. Of the items noted, the writer suggests the latter one should not be included, in view of its definite treatment implications.
That a transitional facility may be needed in the situation outlined, is not being questioned but to consider the Co-operative in this context seems unwarranted.

That the Co-operative assumes a supportive role to parents is evident from the data. A majority of parents spoke of the need for parent education, from which one can infer that there was uncertainty about the effectiveness with which parental roles were being fulfilled, and that the support of the teacher was welcomed in view of its reassuring features. In some respects the Co-operative fills a gap in service between the well-baby clinics and the school. In the care of their infants the mothers could call on their family doctor or the public health nurse, but few felt free to contact these resources about the worrisome minor health or behaviour problems with their three and four year old children. Having the Co-operative teacher available for consultation about the many daily concerns that arise in child-rearing, and the other mothers with children of the same age with whom discussion can take place, has a reassuring effect for worried mothers. Once the child reaches school age, the school teacher would appear to assume, for the parents, the role of a respected advisor, able to give helpful guidance to them.


2 ibid p. 120,121.
For the pre-school child, the play group experience would appear to be a helpful preparation for public school, by introducing him to a wider circle of peers, and to adults other than his parents, from whom he learns to accept direction. With the introduction of public kindergarten facilities in Vancouver for all five year old children, the value of Co-operative training would seem to be in aiding the transition from home to public kindergartens, where the routines are considerably more extensive than in a Co-operative. Some concern was expressed by mothers about these routines.

The section on Kindergartens, in the report of the Royal Commission on Education, Province of British Columbia, 1960, p.118 - 128, indicates the value that kindergarten and nursery school can have for the child, not only in preparation for school, but also in subsequent achievement, particularly in the first three grades. The brief submitted to the above Commission by the Board of School Trustees School District 39 (Vancouver) in February, 1959, was extensively documented with references to studies that revealed the value of Kindergartens in contributing to the child's physical development, social adjustment, emotional stability, creative abilities, and his or her subsequent progress in school. See "Kindergarten Classes", p. 63 - 71 of the brief.

It should, however, be pointed out that the terms "kindergarten" or "nursery school" as used in the above references include many facilities, some of which do not have any specific interest in parent education. The Co-operative pre-schools as described herein, are vitally interested in the education of the parents, as well as in the socialization of the child. This distinction should be kept in mind in reference to this study.

In the extensive literature on nursery schools and kindergartens, there is heavy emphasis on the facilities and programs for children, and on the psychological implications of the nursery school experience for the child, but there is limited reference to the implications that this experience has for the family unit. The child is the central focus, and the parents are accorded a somewhat incidental role in the development of the child. In the volume on Parent Education by H.H. Stern, referred to in Chapter II of this material, this factor is identified as one needing attention in future planning for child and the education of children.
However, it was recognized that, with a much higher pupil-teacher ratio 30:1 as opposed to 8:1, the public kindergarten teacher needed to use them to maintain order and control.

The availability of public kindergarten facilities for all five year old children has had a noticeable impact on Co-operatives in Vancouver. In September, 1960, there were 18 member Co-operatives in the Vancouver Branch of the Association of Co-operative Pre-School Groups. Two years later, with public kindergarten facilities available on a city wide basis, the number had dropped to seven. (In September, 1960, 25 kindergartens with 1,823 pupils were in operation in Vancouver; by September, 1962 the Vancouver School Board had 74 kindergartens with a total attendance of 5,141). 1

As was noted in Chapter II, the Co-operative in Vancouver have programs for 3 and 4 year old children only. Before the Vancouver School Board made public kindergartens available, the Co-operatives had an extensive program for 5 year old children, directed toward preparation for Grade I. With its disappearance, the Co-operatives have had to direct their forces toward younger children, if they hoped to continue operations. The sharp drop in the number of Co-operatives in the Association suggests public acceptance of the need for or value of pre-school education for 3 and 4 year old children is considerably less than for 5 year olds. Relating this to the closure of all Co-operatives in the east section of Vancouver between 1960 and

1 Statistics: Courtesy Dr. E.N. Ellis, Research Department, School District 39 (Vancouver).
1962 (the 1960 figure was 9 Co-operatives in East Vancouver), there is a suggestion that cultural factors impinge on the acceptance of Co-operatives for 3 and 4 year old children. This assumes that one accepts the widely held view of Vancouver residents that city-dwellers living east of Ontario Street have lower socio-economic status than those living west of Ontario Street.

Both the North Shore and Burnaby branches of the Association are operating in areas where no public kindergarten facilities are available for 5 year old children. Thus, they can continue to concentrate on their programs for 5 year olds, and provide only those facilities for younger children as funds and staff will permit.

If the Co-operative in Vancouver are to receive wider public acceptance, the formidable obstacles noted above will need to be reckoned with. As well, the financial outlay involved would, undoubtedly, prohibit some families from using them that might otherwise do so. In the closure of 2 and probably more, of the Co-operatives in east Vancouver, the reasons given were financial ones; the parents felt they could not afford the expense. The likelihood of obtaining public support to assist in their operation appears remote, though this is reported to be the case in some urban centres (e.g. Seattle).

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1 The social characteristics of the local population is cited as a determining factor in the type of establishment provided for pre-school education. See. "Organization of Pre-Primary Education", Unesco, Paris, 1961, p.5.
The provision of pre-school education, where both child and parent can learn together, is an expensive venture. Its value appears, to the writer, quite clear on the basis of data obtained through this study. The Co-operatives are achieving their purpose of educating children and parents, thereby developing greater self-awareness and an increased understanding of each other. Because of the experiences in the Co-operative, the family relationships take on a deeper meaning and become more personally satisfying. The individual family members are assisted in their search for a fuller and happier life, for a growth in well-being.

It is not unreasonable to assume that, in future years, family life education will become an even more important part of our community services. With increasing population mobility, increasing

3 This may be viewed as a promotion of mental health, i.e. "Mental Hygiene In The Nursery School", Unesco, p. 12.
4 The Social Work Year Book of 1954, p. 200, indicates family service agencies are moving more and more into family life education. In a subsequent issue (1960), p. 248 of the Year Book, reference is made to a marked increase in the supply of information on family life through a variety of channels including that of the mass media—television, radio, newspapers, magazines— but that there was an apparent need for greater co-ordination of effort and planning.
family size, earlier age at marriage, an increasing number of marriages, and an increasing proportion of working women who are married entering the labour force, the probability of achieving, what one may consider as reasonably adequate preparation for marriage and family living, seems unlikely. For this reason, more extensive provision of educational facilities, such as have been described here, as well as other forms, would seem desirable, if parents are to achieve a greater sense of satisfaction and security from their parental roles.

1 The Canadian Youth Commission publication, Youth Speaks Its Mind, by B. Davies, Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1948, refers to the lack of essential knowledge about family relationships among young people. In fact, he suggests this is due to the relatively rapid social change this country is experiencing, and to the uncertainties about traditional methods of child rearing, created by current research and experiment in child development. See p.46–56.
A. Introduction to Co-operative Pre-School Group and Extent of Involvement

1. How did you first learn about the Co-operatives - friend, relative, public announcement, other (specify)?

2. What was of particular appeal to you in the Co-operative pre-school group program?

3. At enrolment, were you asked why you wished to enrol your child; what reason did you give?

4. What information was given to you about the particular Co-operative in which you enrolled your child; how was it given?

5. How extensively were you involved:
   Mother: How frequent were your duty days; did you attend the monthly meetings, workshops; did you serve on any committees; did you assist in a transportation pool?

   Father: Were you present for any observation sessions; did you attend monthly meetings; did you help making or repairing play equipment; did you assist in any field trips?

6. Were there any other ways in which you were involved in the Co-operative pre-school program (specify)?

B. Impressions about the Pre-School Group Experience

7. Did your children enjoy going to the Co-operative pre-school group; what did they particularly like; were there any expressed dislikes about the activities?

8. Of what benefit has the experience been to them?

9. Was the teacher's method of handling children new to you; did you think it was a good method; if different from your own, in what way did it differ?

10. Because of the Co-operative experience, did you make any change in your method of handling your children; if yes, please explain.
11. What aspect of the Co-operative pre-school group experience did you feel was most useful to you; what did you enjoy most?

12. What aspect of the Co-operative pre-school group involvement was most difficult to discharge (what appeared to be the least useful and had the least significance)?

13. What changes would you like to see made in the Co-operative pre-school program and/or administrative structure and functions.

14. Do you plan to send your younger children to the Co-operative?

C. Implications of the Co-operative Pre-School Group Experience

15. Do you think parents need more help in raising their families? If yes, how should this help be given?

16. Do you think there is a need for parent education in this urban centre; if yes, do you have any suggestions?

17. Do you think mothers need more adult social stimulation (more social activity with peer groups)?

18. Do you think the community should provide more facilities to assist parents in child-rearing; if yes, do you have any suggestions?

D. Interviewer's Comments

19. Impression of parental attitude toward the Co-operative pre-school group.

20. How were these parents helped most (short, verbatim comments where possible).

21. Impression of the significance of the Co-operative pre-school group experience for the family.
APPENDIX B

"Where Home meets School"

THE ASSOCIATION OF CO-OPERATIVE PRE-SCHOOL GROUPS

STATEMENT OF STANDARDS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE CO-OPERATIVE PRE-SCHOOL GROUP

INTRODUCTION

For several years there have been many requests from co-operative pre-schools and from related organizations concerning the philosophy and standards of this Association. During the year 1961-62, all member groups and the co-operative teachers organization have co-ordinated the results of their experience and thinking and the following Statement is the Summation of this work. IT IS NOT SET FORTH AS REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THIS ASSOCIATION - but rather as desirable standards and objectives that all groups should strive to achieve. The Association will provide every possible assistance in helping groups achieve these standards.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of the co-operative pre-school group is to provide a program of education for children and parents together under the guidance of a teacher who is:

(a) fully qualified according to the standards of the Provincial Welfare Institutions Board of Inspection.
(b) knowledgeable in the philosophy and program of the co-operative pre-school.

Where a group employs an assistant teacher she should be expected to:

(a) strive to increase her knowledge of pre-school education by taking advantage of available night courses offered for parents and teachers.
(b) strive to increase her knowledge of the co-operative group through attendance at workshops and meetings offered by the Association.

EDUCATION OF THE CHILDREN

The program for the child will be planned to help each individual child achieve and enjoy the fullest mental, social, and physical growth for him at his particular stage of development. This will be accomplished through the medium of guided play conducted both indoors and outdoors. Appendix 1 attached gives daily and yearly objectives of the children's program.
The planning of this program will be the responsibility of the teacher; however, parents will have freedom to discuss the program and make suggestions.

The groups will have adequate equipment for the number and age of the children enrolled. Groups should continue to add purposeful equipment over and above minimum requirements. A very complete listing of suitable equipment is to be found in the booklet "Play Equipment for the Pre-school Program" issued to all member groups in 1961.

Evaluation of the program should be done consistently by both parents and the teacher and may be achieved by:

(a) having the group's program observed and evaluated by a pre-school consultant.
(b) observation in other groups by parents and the teacher.

Groups of 5 year old children should not exceed 25 with 20 being an ideal number.
Groups of 4 year old children should not exceed 20 with 18 being an ideal number.
Groups of 3 year old children should not exceed 15 with 13 being an ideal number.

It is most desirable to have separate groups for 3, 4, and 5, year-old children.
Children aged three and four should not be mixed in the same group.
Children aged four and five may be mixed in the same group, but should not exceed a total of twenty children.
With each group of the above-mentioned numbers of children there should be not less than two parent assistants.

EDUCATION OF THE PARENTS

Regular parent education through participation is necessary on the following basis:

(a) Assisting or observing in the playroom by not less than two parent assistants at each session.
(b) Regular attendance at parents meetings which will be for the joint purpose of conducting the business of the school and providing an educational program for the parents in the group.

Adequate preparation for parents is essential before they participate in the organization and should include the following:

(a) observation of a full children's session before becoming a member of the group.
(b) attendance at a Practical Workshop on Group Procedures under the teacher's leadership.
(c) attendance at a Workshop on the Philosophy of the Co-operative Pre-school presented by the Area Branch of the Association.
(d) For parents entering the group after the beginning of the school year the group will provide a planned program of orientation.

The entire responsibility for parent education should be under the guidance of a Parent Education Committee which should include a chairman, the group president, the teacher, the Association delegate, and other parents from the group as required.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARENTS

The parents are responsible for the entire business operation of the group including financing, housing, purchase and maintenance of equipment, employment of the teacher, and membership of the group.

They will operate under and enforce the clauses of a constitution and by-laws.

They will engage a teacher with an annual contract and keep the terms of such contract.

They will keep proper minutes of all business meetings and correct books of account for all finances which should be audited annually.

They will see that adequate provision is made for insurance, covering the following risks:

- Liability and property damage
- Non-owned automobile (where car pools are used)
- Fire and Theft (a complete and up-to-date inventory of equipment and supplies is required for this purpose)

They will work closely with the teacher at all times to achieve the best possible program and atmosphere for the growth of the children.

APPENDIX

THE CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

Each Playroom Session should offer opportunities for growth of each individual child - physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually. There will be an individual relationship between teacher and child and these needs will be met in different ways on different days. However, attention should be given each day to each phase of the child's development.

Physical Growth - will be accomplished through active play outdoors whenever possible otherwise indoors. Small muscle development through use of puzzles, or other table toys or creative materials; hand and eye co-ordination through block play, crafts, etc.
Social Growth - will be achieved through group activities for short periods - snack time, story time, conversation time, music time, etc.; informal group activities in sand box, floor play, water play, making murals, etc.

Emotional Growth - will be accomplished through dramatic and imaginative play; sharing of equipment; encouragement of independence (not frustration); the completion of projects started; freedom of choice of activity - e.g. choice of table toys, creative material, books, records, instruments, etc.

Intellectual Growth - will be achieved by confronting the children continually with learning situations through science and nature study; through conversation; story time; book time; films and records; problem solving; opportunity to experiment and discover.

During each session it is important to keep a balance in the program between:

- Active and quiet play
- Individual and group play
- Free and planned play
- Listening and conversing

During the School Year the following areas of play should be available frequently:

1. Large Muscle Activity - climbing, motion & action
2. Sand Play
3. Water Play
4. Home and Community Play
5. Floor Play
6. Table Play
7. Arts & Crafts
8. Woodwork
9. Science and Social Studies
10. Music and Rhythms
11. Audio-Visual Aids - Library, film strips, pictures

In addition to the above types of play, EXCURSIONS outside the playroom should be planned to stimulate the regular program.

Aids for Planning and Evaluating the Children's Program

Formulas For Fun - Tufts University, Medford, Mass.
Play for Pre-schoolers - Dept. of National Health & Welfare, Ottawa.
Play Equipment for the Pre-School Program - Department of Extension University of B.C.

Note: A questionnaire for evaluating your group's program objectively is available from the Association Publications Office - LAl-7881

Monthly Workshops for Teachers sponsored by the Department of Extension, University of B.C. will keep your teacher up to date on program.
APPENDIX C

ST. GILES CO-OPERATIVE

Membership Offices as of February, 1963

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Vice-President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Past President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Enrolment Chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Delegate to Area Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Program Chairman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above list constitutes the Executive of this group. The Executive meets once a month usually one week before the monthly parents' meeting. Other officers in this Co-operative are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Telephone Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Duty Mother scheduling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Excursions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Handicrafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Music Convenor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Representative to Co-operative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>New Equipment and repair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Children's snacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Social Convenor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Party Convenor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Swimming lesson Convenor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ways and Means</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only one parent did not hold some office. It was anticipated she would be enlisted to help the enrolment convenor.
APPENDIX D

CONSTITUTION OF THE WESBROOK CO-OPERATIVE
PRE-SCHOOL GROUP

PURPOSE: The purpose of the Wesbrook Co-operative Pre-School group shall be to provide supervised play for children of pre-school age, and to help their parents better understand the pre-school child.

AMENDMENT: This constitution and its by-laws may be amended by an affirmative vote of 3/4 of the total membership. Notice of proposed amendment shall be given at a previous general meeting.

BY-LAWS

1. Memberships:
   (a) Membership in the group shall be restricted only by numbers and shall not be limited to any class, race, religion, nationality or creed.
   (b) The school shall be limited to 31 children divided into
      (1) A morning group limited to 17 in number, and consisting of older fours, preferably with pre-school experience, and of five-year olds; and
      (2) an afternoon group limited to 14 in number, and consisting of children who have passed their third Birthday with preference given to those who will be four by December 31.
   (c) The school shall normally operate five days a week, Monday through Friday, with the morning group meeting from 9:15 to 11:45 and the afternoon group meeting from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
   (d) In the event that there should be insufficient numbers to form two groups, the fours and fives may be combined in one group which shall not exceed 17 in number.

2. FEES:
   (a) Members shall pay a monthly fee of $12 in advance of the first General Meeting of each month. If this fee is not paid within 7 days, the member may be asked to withdraw. June fees shall be paid in September or at the rate of $2 per month, Oct. to March inclusive.
   (b) Members shall pay a $5 deposit toward the Sept. fee by June 1.
   (c) Members shall pay a registration fee of $5 for the family on first joining the group.
(d) Members shall pay at the same time as the September fee not more than $2 per family as an annual registration fee for the Association of Co-operative Pre-School Groups.

3. Duties:
   (a) Each member shall be on duty at the school as requested by the schedule committee. In case of an emergency the member shall arrange to exchange duty days with another member. When on duty, members shall be responsible to the supervisor and shall co-operate with her in every way.
   
   (b) At least one parent from each family shall attend the monthly meetings. If more than two meetings in a year are missed, the matter shall be considered by the executive, and if parents are not proving to be co-operative, they may be asked to withdraw.
   
   (c) Fathers are not expected to be as active as mothers in the work of the group, but must be prepared to co-operate in the program. The executive reserves the right to determine whether both parents are sufficiently active.

4. Health:
   (a) A sick child or a child under suspicion of a communicable disease may be excluded by the supervisor. The period of exclusion shall be laid down by the Metropolitan Quarantine Dept. as amended by the group.
   
   (b) When the first case of a communicable disease is reported by a family to the telephone chairman, she shall notify the parents of each child in the group.

5. Liabilities: Where the group is insured for public liability arising in respect to any injury, accident, or loss occasioned by the said pre-school group, or on its premises, or in its operations, any member of the said pre-school group who would otherwise have a claim for damages against the said pre-school group or any member thereof, hereby covenants and agrees to save harmless the said pre-school group or its members, or any of them, from any and all claims he or she may have in law for damages in excess of the said public liability insurance.

6. Meetings: General Meetings shall be held once a month from Sept. to June. At General Meetings an affirmative of a majority of the total membership shall be required to pass a motion and each family shall be entitled to 1 vote. An Annual General Meeting for the election of officers shall be held in October.
7. Officers:
(a) President. It shall be the duty of the president to support the supervisor chosen by the group, and to see that she receives the maximum co-operation from the group. The president shall be responsible for interpreting the wishes of the group to the supervisor. After Executive and General Meetings the President shall report to the supervisor any business of interest to her.

(b) Vice-President. It shall be the duty of the vice-president to assist the president, to take the chair in her absence, to receive applications for membership, and to chair the membership committee.

(c) Secretary. It shall be the duty of the secretary to record the minutes, to deal with correspondence, and to remind members of responsibilities undertaken by them at meetings.

(d) Treasurer. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to keep accounts and to pay bills. She shall be responsible to the executive for the disbursement of all funds. She shall report to each general meeting receipts, expenditures, and balance for the previous month. When a new treasurer takes office, the books shall be audited by a committee consisting of the president and the secretary with whom the treasurer who is retiring served and of one father appointed by a general meeting.

8. Committees:
(a) Schedule. It shall be the duty of the schedule committee to arrange a schedule of mothers, including a reserve list for emergencies.

(b) Equipment and Supplies. It shall be the duty of the equipment and supplies committee to buy and to maintain equipment and supplies.

(c) Telephone. It shall be the duty of the telephone committee to advise members of meetings and any other matter concerning the operation of the group.

(d) Study. It shall be the duty of the study committee to arrange for study groups, speakers at general meetings, etc.

(e) Association of Co-operative Pre-School Groups Representative. It shall be the duty of the representative to attend and report on meetings of the Association of Co-operative Pre-School Groups.

Each Committee is to consist of one member duly elected at a General Meeting; the member shall have power to add. The President shall be an ex officio member of all committees.
9. Elections:
   (a) All officers and committee chairmen shall be elected for one year; but if necessary, a temporary Executive may be elected in May to carry on from June until the Annual General Meeting in October, when the next Executive shall be elected.
   (b) Nominations for a slate of officers and chairmen shall be put forward by a Committee at each Annual General Meeting; the Committee Chairman shall be appointed by the President at the September meeting.

10. The Executive:
   (a) The Executive shall consist of the Officers, the Study and Equipment Chairmen, and the Delegate to the Association.
   (b) A quorum of the Executive shall be four and a majority vote of those present shall be required to pass a motion.
   (c) The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the general management of the pre-school group. They shall have the power to investigate complaints and to recommend appropriate action to the General Meetings. Any criticism or suggestions shall be directed to the Secretary in writing.
   (d) The Executive shall be empowered to transact any business and handle receipt and disbursement of funds.
   (e) The Executive shall report its minutes to each General Meeting.

11. New Members:
   (a) All applications shall be considered by the Membership Committee who shall consult with the Supervisor and the Executive and present a recommendation to the General Meeting, which shall then decide on the applications.
   (b) The Vice-President shall keep a waiting list, if necessary, on which former members in good standing shall be given priority, subject to considerations of the balance of age and sex and of the time of application.
   (c) Present members shall notify the Membership Committee by April 15 whether their child will be returning the following September. After April 15 those members who have not definitely stated their intentions shall be placed on a waiting list with new applicants.
   (d) The Supervisor and the Membership Committee shall have the right to assign the child to the morning or afternoon group.
11. New Members (cont.)

(e) Under exceptional circumstances and in consultation with the parent, the supervisor and the Executive may transfer the child from one group to the other when this is thought best for the child and the group.

12. Supervisor:

(a) The Supervisor shall be responsible to the Executive for the general conduct of the pre-school group. Members' criticism or suggestions regarding the operation of the group shall be made to the President.

(b) The supervisor shall be appointed and her salary determined by a General Meeting on the recommendation of the Executive. The supervisor shall be employed on a monthly basis. Employment may be terminated by either party on a month's written notice.

(c) In addition to the usual school holidays, the supervisor shall be entitled to 10 days' sick leave annually, and one day per month to attend teachers' workshops, and 2 days per year to observe other pre-schools.

(d) An outside consultant chosen by the Executive shall be asked to observe the school and to prepare an evaluation before the April General Meeting. This evaluation shall be read at the April General Meeting.

(e) Since membership in the group is restricted only by numbers and is not limited to any class, race, religion, colour or creed, the supervisor shall not institute or practice any ceremony of teaching that might be offensive to the faith or belief of any member. When in doubt about the acceptability of any matter concerning the function of the school, she shall consult the Executive.

13. Withdrawal: Members who wish to withdraw shall be required to give one month's notice in advance or to pay one month's fees in lieu of notice. June fees paid in advance will not be refunded.
APPENDIX E

KNOX CO-OPERATIVE PLAY GROUP

Program – February 13th, 1963 (Four year old group)

The following program is set down as an example only, of one day's activities. It is not intended to be viewed as the only program at this Co-operative; there is variation from day to day. The crafts activities were, for instance, centered on Valentine's Day. As well, because of the wet weather, outside play was not possible and the gymnasium was used instead. Field trips to local centres, e.g. Stanley Park, cookie factory, dairy, are also arranged on occasion. In one of the other Co-operatives swimming lessons are part of the program.

As the children arrived they were greeted by the teacher or by one of the two duty mothers, who helped them remove their outdoor clothing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time (a.m.)</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 - 9.45</td>
<td>As the children came in, they went to their respective interest activity - blocks, wheel toys, puzzles, slide, dolls' corner, making Valentine ornaments, painting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.45</td>
<td>Tidy-up time. The children all helped to put the toys away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.50 - 10</td>
<td>Games - guessing what was in the bag, chickadee game which included singing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 10.20</td>
<td>Quiet time. Children lying on the floor with their blankets, with one small toy or one book. Children's records of music and stories were played during this time. The duty mothers supervised the toilet routine in this twenty-minute period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.20 - 10.25</td>
<td>Children getting up, putting blankets and toys away, selecting a book, and sitting at the table with their books. (This Co-operative has some of its own children's books, but also uses the local libraries as a resource.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.25 - 10.40</td>
<td>Lunch time: the children were given apple slices and drinking water was available, if desired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.40 - 11</td>
<td>Story time: a small room adjacent to the main play area was used. The children sat on the floor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time (a.m.)</td>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 11.20</td>
<td>Free play in the gymnasium. Equipment included: wooden monkey bar, slide, trestles spanned by a board at about 24&quot; height, fire reel, balls about 8&quot; in diameter. About one half the group had toy firemen’s hats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.20 - 11.25</td>
<td>Group games at the centre of the gymnasium floor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.25</td>
<td>Children lining up to leave. If their mothers had arrived, the mothers would assist their children in dressing; for the children having to wait, the teacher or the duty mothers would help them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A comment is in order in relation to the timing. As set down, it appears rigid and inflexible; in practice there was free movement from one activity to the other. The program was child-focused and adaptations were made to suit the needs of the children.
APPENDIX F

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