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Parent indicators of quality care in out of school hours care in Western Australia

Vicki Banham

Allison Picton-King

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SCHOOL OF COMMUNITY AND LANGUAGE STUDIES
Centre for the Development of Human Resources

**PARENT INDICATORS OF QUALITY CARE IN OUT OF
SCHOOL HOURS CARE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Vicki Banham
Allison Picton-King
Rod Underwood

November 1991
Technical Report No. 34
ISSN 1036-319X
ISBN 0-7298-0119-5

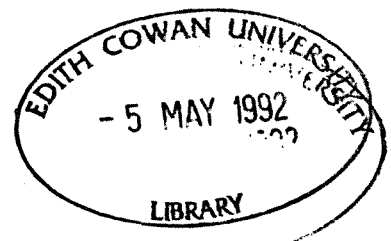
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PERTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA



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OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**VICKI BANHAM
ALLISON PICTON-KING
ROD UNDERWOOD**



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Acknowledgements

The research team gratefully acknowledges the participation of the outside school hours centres in Western Australia for, without their support and assistance, the data would have been difficult to collect.

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Abstract

An Investigation into the identification of indicators of quality care for outside school hours was undertaken.

Data was derived from a survey of 252 parents with children currently attending after school care in W.A., and compared with the indicators of quality developed by the Joint Review of the Commonwealth Department of Community Services and Commonwealth Public Service Board on Outside School Hours Care, Vacation Care and Adventure Playgrounds. Although parents identified specific indicators of quality care, the findings were consistent with those of the Review.

Comparing these findings with the extensive current research on pre-school care indicators of quality, suggested that the identification of indicators of quality care in outside school hours care need not take the long road to recognition and implementation as was taken for pre-school care, as much of the research has already been undertaken.

INTRODUCTION

Meeting the needs of children before and after school hours is becoming a major area of concern for both children's services workers and parents and, with the continuing public debate over the efficacy of various forms of out-of-home care for children, research into the quality of outside school hours care requires investigation.

Running parallel to this debate is the movement towards the development of statutory regulations for outside school hours care, similar to those implemented for children under five in care services. These statutory regulations arose out of the rapid expansion of numbers of children using such services and the need to have consistency and control over the care children under five were receiving.

Similarly the need for the provision of care for school aged children is expanding rapidly. With this growth funding bodies and direct care providers are seeking to gain a better understanding of the needs of parents and the issues that will affect them, in order to continue to provide a quality service and seek recognition in a similar way that child care for under fives have achieved.

Outside school hours care refers to, "Before School Care and After School Care programmes which operate during the school term, and full day Vacation Care Programmes which operate during school vacation periods. These programmes are for primary school aged children" (Guidelines Committee, Out of School Hours Child Care Programmes, 1990:1). In 1989, there were 2,595 children in Western Australia attending 59 outside school hours care centres for an average of 2.59 hours per day. (Census of Child Care Services 1989) In 1990, there were 81 outside school hours care centres in operation (CSSU).

There is limited research available to parents on how to make the appropriate choice which satisfies their needs and perceptions of quality, and in fact what parents needs are. Much research has centered on the "latchkey" or "self care" arrangements (Alexander 1986; Powell 1987; Rodman, Pratto and Nelson, 1988; Steinberg, 1986). Other research has compared service types parents may choose, dependent upon social and economic factors (Powell & Widdows, 1987). Doney (1990), provides some assistance to parents, when she points out that guidelines that ensure quality care in the pre-school period, need to be continued in the school aged period of a child's life.

'This is not just after school care - not only because it involves before/noon/after school hours as well as school holidays but because the care provided must deal with the whole child: his intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development. We must provide the highest quality of care by providing health and safety, emotional security, opportunities to make choices, opportunities to learn through cognitive, emotional, social and physical development. It must be a safe, yet stimulating environment on a daily basis.' (Dooney 1990:22)

The National Association for the Education of Young Children state in their position statement on developmentally appropriate practices for children, that a before and after school programme needs to offer a:

'..wide variety of choices for children (including nutritious snacks) and features private areas, good books, sports, expeditions, clubs and many home activities like cooking and woodworking. Children may do homework for a short period of time if they choose.' (Bredekamp, 1990:78)

Similarly Alexander (1986), provides suggestions for basic programme elements for outside school hours care consistent with this research.

The suggestion of such a relationship between components or indicators of quality in outside school hours care and pre-school child care, allows the use of a range of current research on quality of care (Bredenkamp 1990; Murray 1986; Phillips & Howes 1987; Phillips 1987), to be used to define for parents areas to look for when making that decision about care for their school aged child, in an outside school hours care centre. This relationship can be investigated, even though the majority of research has been focussed on long day care with little attention to outside school hours care.

However, even the concept of quality care in long day care has its problems. Quality in child care is described as a "multi-dimensional and diffuse concept" which comprises an interplay of personal, organisational and physical factors.

The subjectivity of quality of care is also an aspect to be considered as judgements about quality will differ according to an individual's priorities with regard to child care. (Murray, 1986:3)

Phillips (1987:121) in reviewing research on quality in child care states that quality may be looked at as a "blend or configuration of ingredients" and these components have an "interactive effect" on the quality of care. The components of quality that have most comprehensively discussed in two major documents, The Accreditation Criteria & Procedures Handbook of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (1984), and the Watts & Paterson Report (1985) were identified as:

- developmental progress of children - cognitive
- social/emotional, and physical;
- staff ratios;
- group size;

staff qualifications and development
physical environment;
health and safety;
nutrition and food;
staff-parent interaction;
curriculum;
staff-child interaction
administration;
evaluation.

Most of these components are relevant to outside school hours care however measuring children's developmental progress, is not an appropriate method of assessing quality in this area.

Similar, but more precise indicators were identified by the Joint Review of the Commonwealth Department of Community Services and the Commonwealth Public Service Board (1986) on outside school hours care, vacation care and adventure playgrounds when, although they found the terms "quality" and "care" difficult to define satisfactorily, they stated quality indicators relevant to outside school hours care. These indicators were;

staff:child ratio;
staff attitudes, ages, experience, qualifications,
continuity of service;
location, type, tenure or premises and facilities;
state government regulations;
equipment, materials and other resources;
activities;
role of co-ordinating bodies;

continuity of care throughout the year;
commitment and support of sponsor, principal, community.

The indicators identified by the Joint Review show similarity to components identified by NAEYC and Watts & Paterson, and thus provide us with some basis for a relationship between quality in long day care and quality in outside school hours care. The Review Team also saw the major function of outside school hours care as providing a supervised environment for children. This is suggested by both Alexander (1986) and Bredekamp (1990).

In taking a different perspective, child care workers in outside school hours care were surveyed to assess quality in outside school hours care centres in Queensland (Child Watch Australia, 1987). They were asked to comment upon the types of facilities and activities offered in individual programmes, as well as questions relating to their perceptions of their roles in outside school hours care centres. They identified the development of social skills in children and the more traditional activities, like outdoor pursuits and art and craft resources, as important components in an outside school hours care centre. Alexander (1986), adds weight to these comments by suggesting that children, after an academic orientated day needed opportunities for physical skills, socialising with peers and the opportunity to express themselves through art and craft experiences.

It appears that by investigating components/indicators of quality care for long day care and those identified by research in outside school hours care, there begins some development of a groundwork for indicators of quality, specifically for outside school hours care, that parents can use to select care for their school age child.

The proposition that quality can be affected by a combination of components (Phillips 1987) and the suggestion that these components are subjectively perceived

(Murray 1986), raises another area of concern for quality in outside school hours care. It also appears there is some relationship, however tenuous, between quality indicators and the age of the child in outside school hours care.

The Joint Review of 1986, stated that the "perception of quality" is influenced by the ages of the children. They found that children over nine years of age generally stopped attending the outside school hours programmes due to the fact the programmes focussed more on the needs of the younger child. The A.C.T. study (A.C.T. Consultative Committee on Social Welfare 1982), reported that parents felt that children over 10 years of age had outgrown outside school hours programmes as the programmes were not meeting their particular needs.

Powell (1987:64), cites an instance of a ten year old child withdrawing from an outside school care centre because he was ridiculed by his peers for "going to a place for babies". Children in the ten to fourteen year old age group possess needs that are not necessarily met in current outside school hours programmes. This group being neither children nor adults have different needs (A.C.T. Consultative Committee on Social Welfare, 1982; Farel, 1984), so require particular programmes to meet their needs.

Indeed the Joint Review (1986), recommended separate suitable programmes for nine to twelve year olds as they felt this age group needed supervision to develop physical, recreational, mechanical and sporting skills rather than "care".

Although there may be an awareness, by direct care providers of components that ensure they deliver a quality service, there is no mechanism in Western Australia that ensures consistency across all outside school hours care services. It was this concern that a public consultation in outside school hours care (Children's Advisory Council, 1988), identified as a major issue in maintaining quality in outside school hours care.

In 1990, a Guidelines Committee consisting of representatives from the field of out of school hours care, compiled a document that set Guidelines for Standards of Operation, for all services. Although this document was endorsed by the Federal Department of Community Services, there still remains no statutory regulations pertaining to the operation of outside school hours services to ensure a base line of quality. Although this study gathered data from one service type of outside school hours care - the after school hours care centre, it may be recognised that parents using after school care during the school term also use vacation care, during school vacation.

The primary purpose of this exploratory study was to identify those components/indicators of quality, in after-school hours care centres, which were perceived as important, by parents of children attending those centres.

In order to identify these components/indicators of quality, the study focussed upon identifying users of the centres, asking why : 1. parents used the centres, 2. what parents perceived as important in the delivery of the centres programmes 3. and the level of involvement of parents in the centre.

The aim of the study was to generate discussion on the need for recognition of identifiable quality components, from a parent's perspective, that can be considered in the debate for the development of statutory regulations for outside school hours care.

The investigators postulated that there may be a difference in the perceptions by parents of quality components, and those of researchers and specialists involved in development of components of quality care for children. If this occurs, then parent identifications of quality components need to be taken into account when developing regulations for outside school hours care.

METHOD

Sample

The sample consisted of 252 parents of children enrolled in outside school hours centres in Western Australia. A current list of 76 outside school hours care centres was obtained from the Children's Services Support Unit of W.A. For distributional ease the centres were divided into the three types of sponsor categories. A random sample of one third of the centres under these categories was selected to participate. Thus eight Council sponsored centres, eleven community management sponsored centres and six agency sponsored centres participated. Within these 25 centres, of which four were country centres and 21 were metropolitan centres, 650 questionnaires were distributed to parents of children in the referenced week. Questionnaires were distributed to the participating centres and one parent from each family was requested to complete the questionnaire and return it to the centre by the due date. The final sample of 252 parents represented 38% of the total population of parents whose participation was sought.

Procedure

The questionnaire was piloted on four outside school hours centres and modifications were made before being distributed to the major sample. All Co-ordinators of the 25 Centres selected were contacted by telephone: to be introduced to the study; to obtain the number of families that attended in that referenced week; and to arrange a suitable delivery time for the questionnaires. Personal delivery of the questionnaires, to the centres was considered the most effective way of ensuring support for the study. Questions raised by Co-ordinators concerning the study could also be answered at the time of delivery. Each questionnaire had its own envelope, marked "please return to your outside school hours centre" so parents could seal their

return for confidentiality. Each centre was supplied with a large envelope for returned parent questionnaires.

One week was allocated as the time period between the issue of the questionnaires and the return of the questionnaires. Each centre was visited in the following week to collect the returned questionnaire forms.

Questionnaire

A 16 item questionnaire (See Appendix 1) was used to obtain the data from the parents. Neither the outside school hours centre nor the parent's name was required, to ensure confidentiality. The questionnaire was self-administered and consisted of a composition of structured questions; open ended questions; and a Likert scale consisting of "very important", "somewhat important" and "not very important". A letter introducing the study to the parent was attached to the questionnaire.

FINDINGS

The results of the survey of parents using after-school care facilities are analysed in terms of:

characteristics of the service users, such as the number of children in the family attending a centre;

how the after-school centres are used by parents, e.g., the number of days per week parents use centres;

the perceptions of parents on the different activities frequently provided in centres, such as games and outings;

characteristics of centres perceived as important by parents, including staff attributes and management procedures;

attitudes of parents towards involvement in the management of the centres.

Characteristics of Service Users

Not surprisingly, the reason most commonly given by respondents for using after-school centres is because of employment commitments. However, it is worth noting that whilst employment accounts for 85 per cent of responses, there are other reasons such as study requirements which mean that parents are obliged to use the centres.

Table 1. Reasons for choosing and using after-school centres.

Why does the child use after school care?		What made you choose this centre?	
Work	216	Close to home	144
Study	20	Close to work	14
Personal	7	Only one available	29
Other	7	Other	63

Sixty per cent of respondents indicated that the reason that they placed their child in the present facility was because it was close to home. Other reasons for selection of the centre included being close to work (6%), while other parents felt they had no

other choice (11%). Twenty-five per cent of respondents had other reasons for selecting the particular facility.

Parents who commented on this item indicated that the prime consideration in choosing the after school centre was the proximity of the centre to the school attended by their children. Since parents cannot get the children to the after-school centre themselves, they chose a centre which was either on the grounds or nearby to the school, or had a bus service to collect the children from the school.

Typical of the comments made by respondents to this item was that they saw the centre as a service that the children would enjoy, provide company and stimulation in a safe place.

How many children in your family use the centre?

One child	169
Two children	70
Three children	13

It is interesting to note that nearly 70 per cent of respondents had only one child attending the after-school centre. Of course, it may be that this figure is simply a function of the fact that parents with two or more children have less time available to attend to the requests of social scientists and so the response rate for the questionnaire is lower. Another interpretation of this data suggests that the development out-of-school facilities has been a timely response to community needs. That is, the centres have been established in locations where there are significant numbers of young families. It is also possible that mothers with two or more children are less likely to work and need the services provided by the centre, than mothers with only one child. Again, it may be that parents with more than one child may feel more comfortable

knowing that there are two children at home, or perhaps they are less likely to be able to afford to send their children to the centre.

Characteristics of children in the survey

As shown in Table 2 the characteristics of the children attending an after-school centre are consistent with the expectations of the investigators. Two points are worth noting here. First, the age range extends from four through to twelve years of age. Second, there are no apparent gender differences in terms of numbers or age distribution.

Table 2. Characteristics of the respondents' children.

	Male	Female	Total
Number	174	170	344
Mean Age(yrs)	7.68	7.94	7.83
S.D.	1.72	1.78	1.76
Age Range	4 - 12	5 - 12	4 - 12

Use of After-School Centres

As Table 3 indicates there was no real difference in the days of the week that respondents used after-school care facilities.

Table 3. No. of respondents using after school hours care according to days of the week

Monday	200
Tuesday	202
Wednesday	208
Thursday	210
Friday	197

As Figure 1 shows just over sixty per cent of respondents use after school hours care facilities on five days each week, approximately ten per cent of respondents using the facilities either four, three or two days each week, and only three per cent using the facilities one day a week.

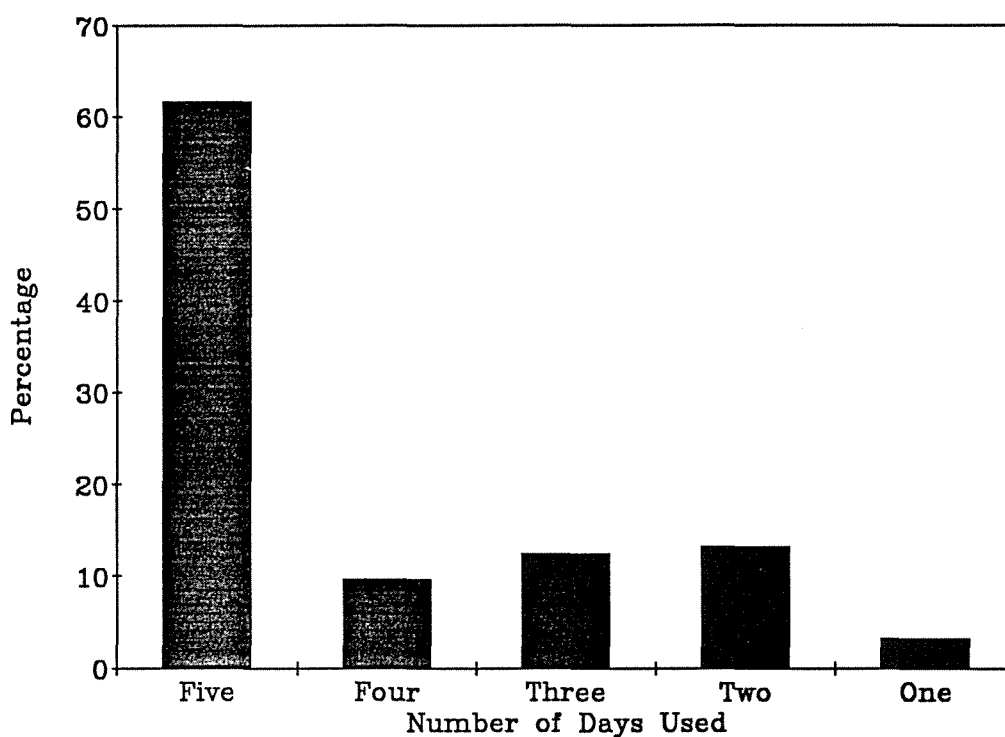


Figure 1. The number of days per week that the centre is used respondents.

Would you use the centre more?

Slightly more than ten per cent of respondents indicated that they would like to use the centre more often. This data indicates that the overwhelming majority of respondents are able to use the services of the centre as required. The survey did not establish the reasons why some parents were not able to use the centres as much as they would wish. Obviously, there may several explanations - such as inability to afford the associated costs, or lack of places available at the centre. Further research is required to address this issue.

Availability of a place

The investigators were interested to note that 248 of the 252 respondents were able to place their child immediately in an after-school centre. It appears that the provision of after-school centres is matching the demands of the community.

Does the centre's operating hours suit your needs?

The majority of parents (92%) indicated that the operating hours of the centre met their needs. A number of parents expressed interest in having access to early morning care. A more comprehensive needs assessment study is required to determine the extent of the demand for this type of service. Further research is also required to address the question of whether parents are obtaining care outside centre hours from other sources such as friends or neighbours.

How long has the child attended the centre?

Less than one year	125
One to two years	75
More than two years	52

It is clear that the after-school program is about to go through a period of some considerable expansion. At the time the survey was conducted half of the respondents had been using the facility for less than twelve months, while twenty per cent of parents had children attending centres for more than two years. The investigators predict that the centres will be placed under some strains in attempting to meet the demands in the immediate future.

At what age will your children stop using the centre?

The majority of parents responded that when their child reached high school age they would no longer need after school hours care, although nearly twenty per cent of respondents stipulated an earlier age. Apparently, some parents understood that the after-school program was not available to children over the age of ten. It is not clear how those parents came to this understanding. It should be noted that after-school centres are funded federally for all children attending primary school.

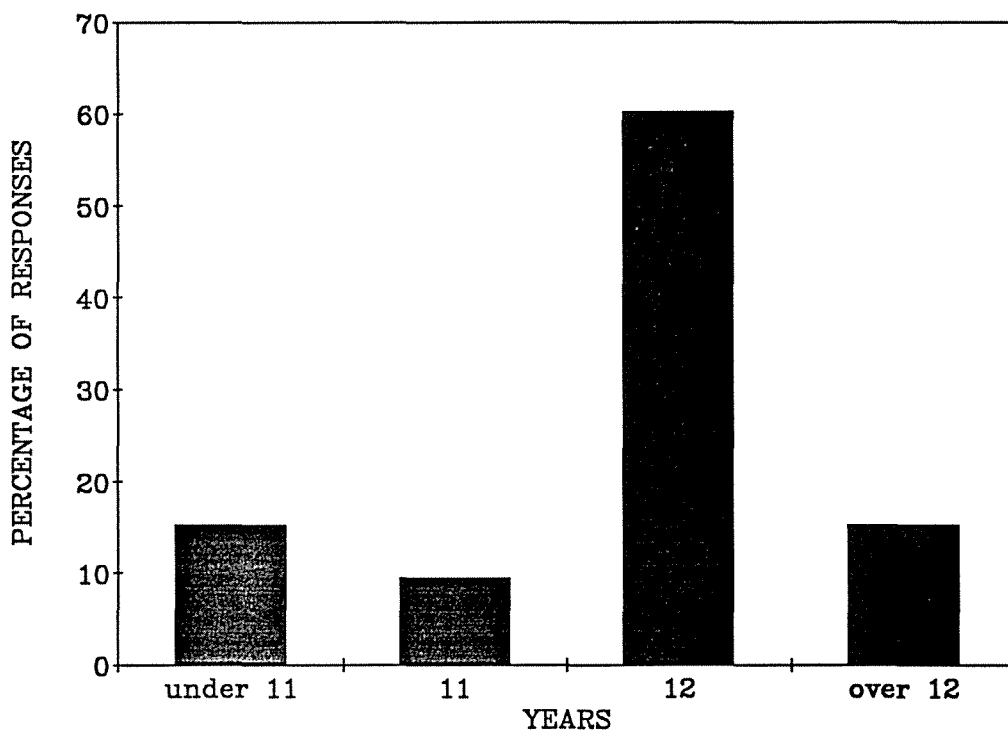


Figure 2. The age at which children will stop using the after School centre.

Parental perceptions of programs

It is assumed to be important to the parents of children using centres that the activities are regarded as appropriate. It is interesting to note that the most highly rated activity by respondents was the provision of afternoon tea (see Table 4). Parents have a clear understanding of what is important to their children. Free play and organised games rated highly, while television and video games were not seen to be really desirable activities in an after-school centre.

Other activities suggested by parents included music and drama activities. Other respondents suggested that activities which centred around interaction with the community, and the development of clubs. Many parents felt that provisions for homework, or getting children to do their homework was very important.

Table 4. Importance of after-school activities

The following ranking is based on the number of respondents who rated the activity as 'very important'.

Activity	No. Responses
Afternoon tea	164
Free play	159
Organised games	128
Handicrafts	117
Homework	97
Sport	72
Cooking	67
Outings	62
Television	11
Videos	11

Attributes of After-School Centres

In this section of the questionnaire the researchers were interested in identifying those attributes of the centre, such as resources, attitudes of staff, which are deemed

important by parents. Other issues included the suitability of the activities provided for the children, the staff-child ratio, and the preferred location of the centre.

While the comments focussed largely on the need for after-school care to be a safe place for children until the parents could get home from work to pick them up, it is clear that parents have other concerns. For example, the parents obviously believe that it is very important for the supervisors to have an interest in children and that the child enjoys attending the centre. Of less importance to the respondents are the qualifications of the staff, and involvement of parents in the management of the centre (see Table 5).

Table 5. Important Characteristics of After-School Centres

The following rankings are based on the number of respondents who rated each characteristic as being 'very important'

Characteristic	No Responses
Interest in children	247
Clean, safe environment	243
Children enjoy attending	241
Ample indoor space	213
Ample outdoor space	208
Resource materials	203
Staff experience	160
Staff qualifications	144
Involvement of children in rule-setting	117
Views of staff	113
Parent involvement encouraged	89
Parent involvement in the centre	44

Are the activities at your centre suitable for the age/stage of development of your child?

The overwhelming majority of respondents (97 per cent) were satisfied with the activity program provided by the centre. A small number of parents commented that children over the age of ten were not well catered for. As the demand for after-school programs increases in the next few years it may be that the program managers will need to give further consideration to the needs of children over the age of ten.

Adequacy of staff:child ratio

A significant number of parents (50 per cent of respondents) felt that a staff:child ratio of 1:15 was not adequate. The point was made frequently by respondents that a ratio of 1:10 would be more appropriate. It was generally felt that because of the wide spread of ages, from six to thirteen, that a lower ratio would be better. Of all the issues raised in the survey the staff:child ratio was clearly the one with which respondents were least satisfied.

Preferred location of the centre?

The majority of parents clearly preferred to have the after-school centre located in the grounds of the school which the child attended. The reasons given included the fact that the child did not have to leave the grounds, the child remained in a familiar environment, and it meant a greater use of existing resources.

A significant number of respondents, however, had a preference for locating the after-school centre outside of the school. Reasons cited for favouring a community centre included a change of environment for the child, gives the child a wider social network, and it is not always feasible to have a centre at every school.

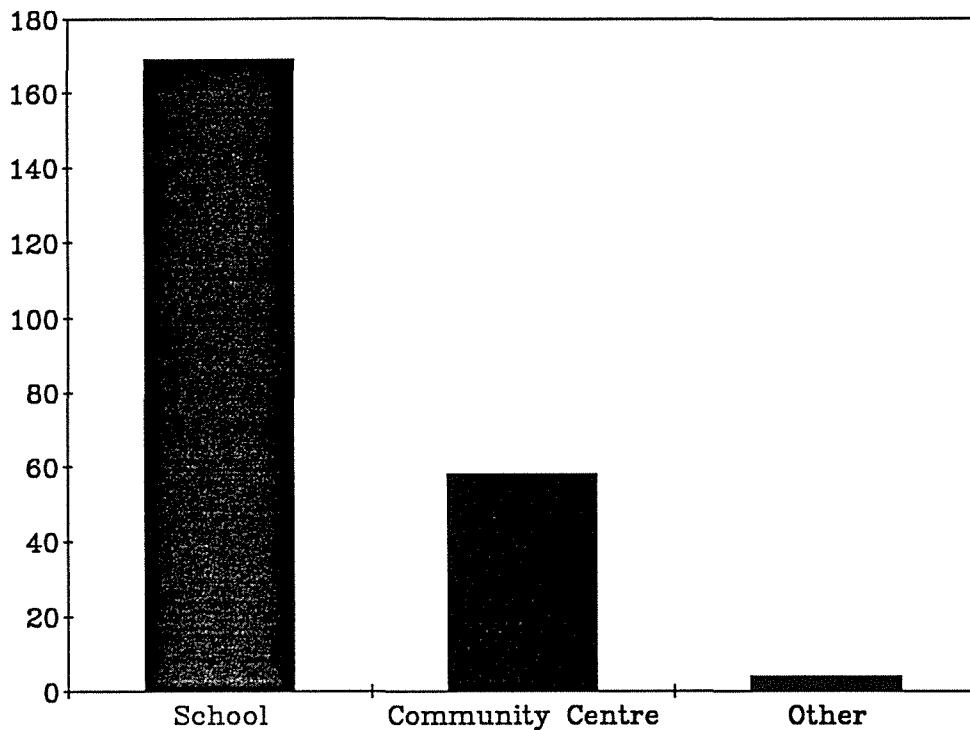


Figure 3. The preferred location of after school centres according to respondents.

Parental Involvement in Management

Thirteen per cent of respondents indicated that they currently had some involvement in the management of the after-school centre which their child attended. A further thirty three per cent of participants expressed a willingness to become involved in centre management. However, the investigators cannot conclude from this data that approximately half of all parents using after-school facilities are prepared to become involved in management activities. Very likely the response for the items relating to this issue are inflated by the fact that the response rate for parents interested in the management of the centre is likely to be higher than for parents who do not have such interests.

Many of the comments made on the issue of involvement in the management of the centre clearly indicated that the parents simply did not have the time to become

involved, and that if they did have the time it would be used to look after their children.

DISCUSSION

Parents, it appears seek after school care for their children mainly because of work commitments (85%). Availability and accessibility of after school care appeared to be meeting parents demands, at this point in time, however additional arrangements that may be made by parents were not identified.

The findings of this exploratory study suggest that parents see safety as a major component of quality care, with staff qualifications and parent involvement in the operation of the service, as having less importance. There does appear to be a relationship between components of quality in pre-school care and outside school hours care. Some components of quality determined by NAEYC (1984) and Watts & Patterson (1985) were indicated by the parents. Health and safety (with a high response on safety), and nutrition were identified.

It is interesting to note that both NAEYC/Watts & Paterson and The Joint Review Committee identified staff qualifications and development, as important components of quality care. These were given a low ranking by the parents. Indeed the parents believed that an interest in working with children was a greater requirement, an issue the Joint Review Committee (staff attitude) also identified. Perhaps there is some relationship between the parents' views on what "very important" after school activities are (afternoon tea, free play and organised games), and the need for staff to be trained to implement those activities. The physical environment, both indoor and outdoor also held a high ranking.

It is the components, identified by the Joint Review Committee (1986), that parallel parents perceptions more closely. The staff - child ratio (1:15) was of most

concern for parents, with 50% responding that it was inadequate to cater for the broad age span in after school care. A more appropriate ratio of 1:10 was suggested. This suggestion however, is not compatible with the current 1990 guidelines as set by the Guidelines Committee of 1:15. The issue of safety also permeated the parents' decision on where the after school centre needs to be located. Within the school grounds was seen as the most appropriate by 73% of the parents. This is interesting, as the 1989 Census of Child Care services, indicated that in Western Australia only 25% of centres are in school grounds, which is considerably lower than all the other states. Whether it is not feasible to have centres in school grounds, or schools are not receptive to accepting after school centres, or whether the relevant government departments do not see after school care as their responsibility, obviously needs further investigation, if parent needs are to be accommodated.

Parent involvement in the management of the centre, is seen as an important development in the Joint Review Committee's findings. It is to ensure that parents needs are met and parents have a say in the operation of the service. In our study, it is difficult to conclude whether or not parents wished to be part of the management process. Comments from parents indicated that they did not have time to be involved, and if they did they would not need after school care.

The issue of age of the child attending the after school centre, seemed to be relevant to parent needs also. Although parents' indicated that the most appropriate age to cease attending care would be at the end of primary school (12 years of age), many were still unclear about the ability for their child to keep attending to that time. Parents may be linking child dissatisfaction with attendance, after ten years of age.

As has been indicated, (Joint Review Committee 1984, A.C.T. Consultative Committee on Social Welfare 1982, Farel 1984) children over ten years of age stopped attending after school centres because their particular needs were not being met in the

programming of the centre. Comments from parents also suggested that children over ten years of age were not fully catered for. Indeed, the 1989 Census of Child Care Services, indicates that in Western Australia, the number of children attending peaked at 8 years of age. Whether there is any relationship between these two factors, would need further investigation.

This study has raised several issues in regard to components of quality care in outside school hours care. Firstly, with the number of Centres already in operation and with those being implemented, there is a need for consistency of care across centres. The Guidelines Committee has commenced this task with the issue of 'Standards of Operation Guidelines'. Secondly, in developing criteria for quality in outside school hours care, the extensive research into pre-school quality care can be taken into account. Thirdly, parents play an important role in developing criteria for quality. Relying upon those parents already involved in management tasks in the Centre does not give a clear indication of the general needs of parents, or what parents see as components of quality care for their children.

The development of quality care criteria for pre-school child care has taken a long road in its development. We hope that learning has taken place and pitfalls have been recognised, so quality care criteria for outside school hours care does have to travel the same long road.

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APPENDIX 1

After School Care Survey Questionnaire

4. WHICH DAYS OF THE WEEK DOES YOUR CHILD/CHILDREN ATTEND THE CENTRE?

- 4.1 Monday
- 4.2 Tuesday
- 4.3 Wednesday
- 4.4 Thursday
- 4.5 Friday

5. WOULD YOUR CHILD/CHILDREN USE THE CENTRE MORE IF PLACES WERE AVAILABLE ON OTHER DAYS?

- 5.1 Yes
- No

5.2 WAS A PLACE AVAILABLE AT THE CENTRE FOR YOUR CHILD/CHILDREN:-

- Immediately
- Less than 1 month
- Less than 3 months
- Less than 6 months
- More than 6 months

6. DOES THE CENTRE'S OPERATING HOURS SUIT YOUR NEEDS?

- 6.1 Yes
- 6.2 No

If you answered NO what hours would suit your needs?

.....

.....

.....

7. HOW LONG HAVE YOUR CHILD/CHILDREN ATTENDED THE CENTRE?

- 7.1 Less than 1 year
- 7.2 1 - 2 years
- 7.3 More than 2 years

8. AT WHAT AGE WILL YOUR CHILD/CHILDREN STOP USING THE CENTRE?

.....

WHY?

.....
.....
.....

9. ARE THE ACTIVITIES AT YOUR CENTRE SUITABLE FOR THE AGE/STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR CHILD/CHILDREN?

- 9.1 Yes
- 9.2 No

If you answered NO what suggestions do you have to rectify this

.....
.....
.....

10. PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES AND PUT AN X ON THE NUMBER WHICH IS CLOSEST TO YOUR ANSWER. Example: Put an X on number 1 if you think your answer to the statement is "very important" from your point of view.

HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES IN AFTER SCHOOL CARE?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not very Important
10.1 A place to do homework	1	2	3
10.2 Sport	1	2	3
10.3 Organised Games	1	2	3
10.4 Handicrafts	1	2	3
10.5 Outings	1	2	3
10.6 Free play by themselves or with other children	1	2	3
10.7 Television	1	2	3
10.8 Afternoon tea	1	2	3
10.9 Videos	1	2	3
10.10 Cooking	1	2	3

What other activities not listed here do you consider important to be offered at your Centre?

.....

11. WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE MAIN AIM OF THE AFTER SCHOOL CENTRE?

.....

12. THE PRESENT STAFF:CHILD RATIO IN W.A. IS ONE ADULT TO 15 CHILDREN. DO YOU THINK THIS IS ADEQUATE?

12.1 Yes

12.2 No

If you answered NO please state your preferred adult:child ratio and say why.

.....

13. PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS AND PUT AN X ON THE NUMBER WHICH IS CLOSEST TO YOUR ANSWER.
 Example: Put an X on number 3 if you think your answer to the statement is "not very important" from your point of view.

HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES IN OUT OF SCHOOL CARE?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not very Important
13.1 Staff have recognised qualifications in child care	1	2	3
13.2 Staff have previous experience in working with children this age	1	2	3
13.3 Staff have similar views and ideas on child care to yourself	1	2	3
13.4 Staff display an interest in children	1	2	3
13.5 Children are involved in the setting of rules and regulations	1	2	3

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not very Important
13.6 Parents are involved in the daily running of the Centre (eg transport assisting with activities...)	1	2	3
13.7 Parents are encouraged to be involved in their Centre	1	2	3
13.8 The Centre offers a clean safe environment	1	2	3
13.9 The Centre has ample outdoor space	1	2	3
13.10 The Centre has ample indoor space	1	2	3
13.11 There is plenty of resource material for activities	1	2	3
13.12 The children enjoy attending the school	1	2	3
14. ARE YOU INVOLVED IN THE MANAGEMENT OF YOUR CENTRE?			
14.1 Yes		
No		
14.2 If you answered NO would you like to be?			
Yes		
No		
14.2 If you answered NO could you give your reason?			
.....			
.....			
.....			

15. WHERE WOULD YOU PREFER YOUR AFTER SCHOOL CENTRE TO BE LOCATED?

15.1 Within your child/children's school grounds

15.2 Within a local Community Centre

15.3 Other - please state
.....
.....
.....

16. LIST YOUR REASONS FOR SELECTING YOUR ANSWER TO QUESTION 15

.....
.....
.....

17. HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR AFTER SCHOOL CARE TO BE AVAILABLE TO YOU?

17.1 Very important

17.2 Somewhat important

17.3 Not very important

Why?
.....
.....
.....

18. HAVE YOU ANY COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS THAT MAY HELP TO IMPROVE EITHER YOUR AFTER SCHOOL CENTRE OR OUT OF SCHOOL CENTRES IN GENERAL?

.....
.....
.....
.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN ANSWERING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX 2

After-School Care Survey

Analysis of Questionnaire Data

Availability of a place

Immediately	248
Less than one month	2

Does the centre's operating hours suit your needs?

YES	230
NO	21

At what age will your children stop using the centre?

Under 10 years	14
10 years	15
11 years	18
12 years	115
Over 12 years	29

Are the activities at your centre suitable for the age/stage of development of your child?

YES	239
NO	9

Adequacy of staff:child ratio

Adequate	121
Not adequate	120

Preferred location of the centre?

School	169
Community Centre	58
Other	4

Are you involved in management?

YES	34
NO	215

Would you like to be involved in management?

YES	70
NO	141

Agency Category

Management Committees	98
Council	100
Other Agencies	54

How important is the After School Centre?

Very important	243
Somewhat important	8

Would you use the centre more?

YES	32
NO	212

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