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## A Descriptive Analysis of a College Day Care Center

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/A Descriptive Analysis of  
a College Day Care Center/

by

Rena N. Rice

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the  
degree of Master of Science in Education  
October 1977

## ABSTRACT

This paper is a descriptive analysis of a college day care center, situated on the campus of one of the community colleges of the City University of New York, which services the pre-school children of full-time matriculated day students. The Center is administered by the student-parents, under the supervision and guidance of the Faculty Coordinator, who is a professor in the Department of Student Services. The teaching staff consists of a New York State certified Teacher-Director and Group Teacher, and an Assistant Teacher, all full-time, and numerous part-time work-study student aides.

Chapter I contains a review of the literature on college day care. Chapter II describes the efforts of the original founding student-parents to establish a day care center, the problems they encountered, and the steps they took to resolve them. Chapter III deals with the structure and organization of the Center, and the evolution of the role of each of its three components: the college administration, the teaching staff, and the student-parents. Chapter IV describes the educational philosophy and program of the Center, and Chapter V is a discussion of future goals and directions for the Center.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	i
DEDICATION	iii
I. A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON COLLEGE DAY CARE	1
II. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DAY CARE CENTER	9
A. Sociological Background	9
B. The Need for Day Care	10
C. Early Efforts	12
D. The Search for a Space	13
E. Day Care vs. Laboratory School	16
F. Hiring the Teachers	17
G. Early Crisis: The Teachers	19
H. Early Crisis: The Parents	21
J. Hiring a New Staff	22
III. THE STRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE DAY CARE CENTER	27
A. The College Administration	27
1. The Contract	27
2. Supportive Services	29
3. The Faculty Coordinator	33
4. Safety and Security on a College Campus	37
B. The Student-Parents	42
1. The Chairperson	43
2. The Board of Directors	44

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	Page
C. The Teaching Staff	51
1. The Teacher-Director	52
2. Team Teaching	53
3. The Student Aides	55
4. Parent Conferences	60
D. Interaction Among the Teachers, Parents and Faculty Coordinator	63
IV. THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM	
A. Educational Philosophy	69
B. Room Arrangement	73
C. Daily Routine	74
D. Admitting New Children: The Interview Procedure	77
E. Understanding and Dealing with Separation Anxiety: The Orientation Procedure	81
F. Programming the Children's Hours: "The Grid"	87
G. The Multi-Age Room	91
H. The Kindergarten Reading Readiness Program	93
J. Holidays and Special Events	97
K. Sexual Equality in the Classroom	105
L. Integrating Emotionally Disturbed Children into the Program	108
M. The Summer Session	113
V. FUTURE GOALS AND DIRECTIONS OF THE DAY CARE CENTER	115
FOOTNOTES	121
BIBLIOGRAPHY	123
APPENDIX	125

## INTRODUCTION

With increasing numbers of women with children returning to college in order to gain the education and technical skills needed to pursue careers and upgrade their standard of living, we see a growing need in this country for a relatively new concept in day care: the college day care center. This is the story of one such center\*, situated on the campus of a community college in the City University of New York (C. U. N. Y.) system, which is now in its sixth year of operation. I held the position of Teacher-Director of the Center from September 1972 to January 1976 and was among those who helped it develop from an uncertain beginning to its present successful form. Besides providing a place for pre-school children to learn and grow, the Center also extends and enriches the college experience of their parents, who are all students.

In describing and evaluating the Center, I intend to show the need for such a service, how this particular Center evolved to its present form, the ways in which it differs from traditional day care, and the various components which are necessary for its successful functioning. I see college day care as a vital new trend in early childhood education today, and hope that the story of this Center may give practical assistance and moral support to those com-

mitted to establishing one of their own.

\*Note: For purposes of expediency and clarity, the day care center which is the subject of this paper will be referred to in capital letters, as "the Day Care Center," or simply, "the Center."

## DEDICATION

The Faculty Coordinator of the Day Care Center, Professor L., who plays a large role in this paper, died on August 3, 1977, after this paper was completed but before it was submitted. Her inspiration, guidance and concern for the children, parents and teachers of the Center will be sorely missed.

I would like to dedicate this paper to her memory.

I would also like to note that a new Faculty Coordinator has been appointed by the college. She is also a professor in the Department of Student Services and was a very close personal friend of Professor L. I believe that the principles and high standards which Professor L. espoused will be continued under the direction of the new Faculty Coordinator.



## CHAPTER I

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON COLLEGE DAY CARE

The literature on college day care is extremely sparse. In a thorough search of articles from the last ten years, I was able to find only two articles and three pamphlets on the subject. I believe the reason for this is that college day care is a very new development: most of the centers were established in 1970 or later. Also, while the trend is growing, campus day care centers are still found in relatively few colleges and universities around the country.

The information contained in the literature is either sketchy or theoretical. The two articles very briefly describe the particular programs and structure of two centers. One pamphlet is a statistical survey of centers around the country, and the other two are theoretical proposals for setting up centers.

McCord, Ivalee. "Child Care Centers: A Boon for Campus Mothers." Journal of Home Economics, No. 65, April 1973, pp. 26-28.

This article describes the day care center at Kansas State University. Interestingly, the center was set up to enable the wives of student-fathers to continue their education. Unlike our Center, this one services only the children of part-time students,

and both parents must be students. The age range is six months to five years, with sleeping quarters for infants, and the center serves as a laboratory school for students in the home economics department. Comparing this program to our Center, we see the wide diversity in campus day care, each center being structured to meet the needs of its particular population.

Major, Janemarie. "Day Care on a University Campus; George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia." Children Today, No. 4, September, 1975, pp. 25-26.

This article deals primarily with the efforts to establish a center for the students of the university. As with our Center, the students here set up a committee (in 1971) to research licensing regulations, educational standards, and available facilities. Their center, however, services children from the surrounding community besides children of students, and their Board comprises faculty and community representatives besides student-parents. They receive some funds from the Student Government, the remainder coming from fund-raising events and tuition from parents who are working members of the community. As with our Center, the George Mason University center began servicing greater numbers of children and parents each year, and hired additional staff, as more parents became aware of the existence of the program and its good reputation.

Greenblatt, Bernard and Lois Eberhard. Children on Campus: A Survey of Pre-Kindergarten Programs at Institutions of Higher Education in the United States. Washington, D. C.: United States Department of Labor, 1973.

This is a comprehensive statistical survey of child care programs at colleges and universities across the country. Included are laboratory schools,\* which were established much earlier than the day care centers and follow a more traditional nursery school pattern. The pamphlet contains many interesting findings about college day care centers. First of all, it confirms the fact that campus day care is a new phenomenon. Ninety-six percent of the centers were started after 1964, among which two-thirds were established in 1970 or 1971.

In some ways our Center is similar to the majority of centers around the nation. Student-parents were the largest group who initiated day care programs, and student-parents administer almost half of them with hiring authority in 30%. Student-parents have no hiring authority in any of the laboratory or nursery schools connected with the colleges. Thus, we see that campus day care has grown out of the "student power" movement that began in the late nineteen-sixties. Forty-two percent of the day care centers limit enrollment to the children of students, but unlike our Center, most of them are used by the academic departments for research and training. Our Center, which exists as a service to student-parents and their children only, is unique in this respect. The survey also finds

\*"Laboratory schools" are discussed on page 16 below.

that most student-parents using day care are mothers, and many of these mothers are heads of families.

In many important areas, the Center differs widely from the majority of its counterparts across the nation. For example, only 25% receive the majority of their funding from the university. But the major difference lies in the quality of the day care programs. One can infer from the statistics that many of the centers are more concerned with serving the needs of the parents or university than with creating an optimal educational setting for their children. One-quarter of the programs consider themselves a "drop-in" or "baby-sitting" service, and adapt themselves totally to the parents' programs. Only 44% are licensed, and most depend on volunteers for staffing. Furthermore, only 52% of the day care directors have some graduate work or a graduate degree, as opposed to 88% to 100% in the other university child care programs.

It strikes me that an effort must be made by the universities and parents to upgrade the standards of the majority of college day care centers, by educating the student-parents as to the necessity for qualified personnel and a developmentally sound program for their children.

Child Welfare League of America. Campus Day Care: Issues and Resources... New York, 1971.

The first and major part of this pamphlet is an article by Paula Page, "The Campus and the Day Care Movement." Ms. Page writes

of the political and sociological implications of college day care. She believes that it must "provide healthy and educational opportunities to (sic) our children," (cf. p. 2) rather than exist solely for the benefit of parents or employers. She also advocates "cooperation with non-campus people," (cf. p. 3) and views university day care centers as a force in improving the quality of child care service in the larger community around the university. Thus, while "admission priorities should be given to students, employees, and faculty members," (cf. p. 5) she believes the centers should admit children from the community whose parents have no university affiliation. Another reason given for admitting children from the community is to prevent under-utilization of the center. This would not apply to our Center, which has a large waiting list.

Ms. Page advocates using the campus centers as training programs for professionals and paraprofessionals, but states, "A special consideration with on-campus care is that the university administration, the psychology and education departments, and others should be prevented from turning the day care program into a 'laboratory' where children or their parents become specimens and compulsory subjects of experiments and tests." (cf. p. 5) This is the very reason why our Center is not used at all by the academic college departments, but, as noted above, this is not the case with the majority of centers. With regard to control, Ms. Page states that "parents and staff should determine the policies and program for each day care service offered," (cf. p. 5) and warns against

accepting funding from sources that would influence or control the program, such as governmental agencies or corporations. On the whole, this article offers some useful ideas on the broader issues of campus day care.

The second part of the pamphlet is a "Day Care Survey" prepared by the Women's Center, United States National Student Association, in cooperation with the Child Welfare League of America, Inc. It consists of a questionnaire to be sent to colleges and universities regarding information about currently existing or planned day care centers. The survey covers such areas as funding, type of program, admissions criteria, backgrounds of user families, hours of operation, age range, and staffing.

The third section of the pamphlet is an annotated bibliography of books and articles on day care in particular and child development and early childhood education in general.

Los Angeles Community College District, California Division of Educational Planning and Development. Campus Children's Centers: Sample Proposal... Los Angeles, January, 1974.

This pamphlet offers specific guidelines and suggests standards for setting up centers at all of Los Angeles' community colleges and other community colleges. The findings are based on a survey of the need for day care among 2000 students in November, 1971. The authors of the pamphlet propose the following model:

- Philosophy: to provide a rich educational experience based on the "whole child."
- Planning: advisory committee consisting of administration, students, faculty, parent-users, student government members, to recommend and propose program, staff, and budgetary needs.
- Physical Plant: factory-build modular units when no space is available.
- Staffing: director, assistant director/teacher, three full-time teachers, work-study student aides. (Note: The criteria proposed for hiring these students are: must enjoy working with children, must participate in orientation and training programs).
- Adult/Child Ratio: one-to-ten. (Note: I believe this is too high).
- Hours: 7:30 a.m. to 10 p.m., with older children accommodated in the evening.
- Number of Children: 30 (at any one time).
- Age Range: two through five years old.
- Admission Priority: children of full-time day students, with others allowed if there is room.
- Admission Criterion: financial need.
- Fees: \$ .50 per hour, \$ .25 per hour for second child, \$ .15 per hour for third child.
- Scheduling: predetermined blocks of time with two hours minimum per day.

In summarizing the literature, it is interesting to note that the authors recommend that campus day care provide quality educational programs, and yet the national survey indicates that this is not the case in the majority of centers. The literature also makes clear the

fact that the term "campus day care" encompasses a broad range of different types of programs, funding, administration, user populations, staffing, age ranges, hours of operation, admission criteria, physical plants, etc., and that no two are ever alike. Each center must evolve its own program and policies according to the needs and realities of its affiliate university and user populations. I strongly agree, however, that every campus day care center should provide a quality educational experience for its children.



## CHAPTER II

## THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DAY CARE CENTER

A. Sociological Background

With the beginning of open admissions at the City University in the fall of 1969, the populations of the colleges in the system underwent a change. This was especially true of the community colleges since a minimum grade average was still required to enter a four-year college, while every high school graduate was guaranteed admission to one of the University's two-year colleges. Thousands of minority group students took advantage of this opportunity, many of them the first in their families to pursue a higher education. While tuition was free, there were many other costs that these new students from poor families or on welfare could not afford: transportation, books, clothing, registration fees, etc. Several "poverty programs," such as Work Incentive Program (W.I.N.), Regional Opportunity Centers (R.O.C.), and College Discovery (C.D.), subsidized needy students who qualified for them. Other students took out government loans or participated in work-study programs to finance their educations.

The burgeoning women's movement of the late nineteen-sixties and early seventies, and the increasing divorce rate created another trend in the changing population at the community colleges. Women

with children found themselves the sole support of their families, yet lacking the education or skills needed to make any real financial contribution. These women took advantage of open admissions to enter career-oriented programs, most of which were offered at C.U.N.Y.'s community colleges. The women's movement helped women in general to acknowledge feelings of dissatisfaction with the traditional role of wife and mother, and this too led them back to college.

From this population at one of the community colleges emerged a group of parents who initiated the quest for a day care center.

#### B. The Need for Day Care

In October of 1970 a small group of students with young children began working toward establishing a day care center at the college. Most of these women had been attending evening school and were frustrated by the many years it would take to graduate with an Associate's degree. Moreover, most were interested in the career preparation programs such as secretarial, nursing, child care, accounting, etc., which required day-time field work for graduation. As the leaders of the group wrote in a memorandum to the President of the college in the summer of 1971, "Since many women have been away from school for some time, many of them now have children and open enrollment cannot be truly open until it provides a facility to care for these children while their mothers (and fathers) are in class."<sup>1</sup>

In this memorandum the students, calling themselves the Day Care Collective, stated that their "goal is to provide a safe, stimulating and educational environment for the pre-school (ages two to six) children of students attending classes at the college." It was decided that the minimum age would be two years old, since infant day care with its many specialized requirements, was considered unfeasible. Children of kindergarten age (five to six years old) were to be included because public school kindergarten was only one-half day and therefore would not meet the needs of a student with a full day of classes.

A day care center on or very near the campus was considered a necessity by these mothers because the existing centers in their communities could not meet their special needs as students. In the first place, since they were not working (and most had poverty level incomes), they could not afford the fees. Secondly, the centers in their communities were open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and since classes at the college or field work started at 8 and ended at 6, it would be impossible to drop their children off early enough or pick them up on time. Thirdly, most centers did not accept children as young as two. Babysitting was not a viable alternative. The parents could not afford to hire a sitter for such long hours, and strongly desired an educational experience for their children rather than custodial care.<sup>2</sup> They were also experiencing a great deal of pressure in trying to combine the roles of student and parent, and having their children close by was psychologically very reassuring.

C. Early Efforts

During the 1970-1971 school year the Day Care Collective was busily involved in research on costs, acquisition of funds, legal problems, and securing an appropriate space. They contacted the insurance broker for the college who could provide comprehensive liability insurance for twenty children in the Center for \$1650 per year. The college administration was concerned about the possibility of accidents befalling such young children and insisted on liability insurance. Along with students from other city colleges they met with the Dean of Student Services of C.U.N.Y., requesting a favorable policy towards day care. In July of 1971 the Dean forwarded a memorandum to the deans of each C.U.N.Y. branch in which he expressed his general support for the concept of day care but made it clear that this did not mean the promise of any money or space. Thus, while C.U.N.Y. offered theoretical approval it did not promise any practical assistance but rather left that up to the individual colleges.

In May 1971 the Collective worked out a budget for 24 children as follows:

Furniture, consumable and non-consumable equipment and supplies	\$2285.00
Teacher salary	8000.00
Liability insurance	1650.00
Rental cost	<u>5000.00</u>
Total	\$16935.00

This figure did not include snacks, which were to be covered by a small weekly fee of one dollar paid by the parent. The children were to bring their own lunches.

The budget was submitted to the Student Association which is chaired by the President of the College and consists of representatives of the administration, faculty and student body. The Association disburses the student activity fees paid by all C.U.N.Y. students, to the various clubs, athletic programs and social events of the College. The Board of Directors voted unanimous approval of the budget, which was followed by its acceptance by the entire Association with the condition that the Center become incorporated. This condition was set to relieve the College of the burden of liability. The Day Care Collective immediately contacted the Bank Street College Day Care Consultation Service for information on incorporation and was referred to a lawyer who started working on the procedure.

#### D. The Search for a Space

At this point the parents had an operating budget but no physical space in which to house the center. This was the most difficult aspect of their struggle since space on the campus was limited. One of the first acts of the Collective in the fall of 1970 was to write a request for space and funds to the President of the College. In December of 1970 they were told by the Dean of Administration that there would be no space available until two new buildings under construction were completed. When the new buildings opened in the spring of 1971 the Collective requested that a student lounge area in

one of them be reassigned for use by the day care center. The administration was very reluctant to relinquish this space since it feared student reaction to the loss of their lounge area.

In the spring of 1971 a faculty member in the Department of Student Services who served as a counselor, and who was enthusiastic about the need for a day care center, was approached by the parents to help them find a suitable space. Together they contacted a YMHA about two miles from campus which offered them a small room able to accomodate only 12 children, far fewer than the number needing to be serviced, for an excessively high rent. Besides these factors, the location was considered unfeasible because most of the parents could not afford the two extra fares per day that dropping off and picking up their children would entail. Other possible sites in the community, such as a storefront near the entrance to the campus or a room in a nearby synagogue, were rejected because of outrageous rents or untenable restrictions, such as not being able to move the furniture or having to vacate by 3 p.m.

During the search for a space the parents met with representatives of the aforementioned "Y," a city hospital in the area, and other community organizations to explore the possibility of establishing a day care center for the whole community with permanent funding from the Human Resources Administration (H.R.A.), which had just started funding community day care centers on a large scale. The Agency for Child Development and its Special Office on Day Care had just been constituted and guidelines were being established. This meant a time-consuming process of dealing with bureaucratic red tape before

funding could be granted, and the Day Care Collective was in desperate need of a Center to open in September 1971 when classes started. They also felt that certain demands imposed by H.R.A. funding were too rigid and since the Student Association had readily approved their budget, they dropped further efforts to obtain H.R.A. funding. In the light of the recent budget cuts which forced the closing of so many centers, this was certainly a wise decision in retrospect.

Among the parents' extensive efforts was researching the status of day care at the other branches of C.U.N.Y. They found that while seven colleges, both four-year and two-year, had centers, they were marginally funded and/or inadequately housed and were looking for more substantial funding and better locations. Three other colleges were also working toward opening a center in September 1971.

The Collective still had no space as of July 1971, when the President of the college resigned and a new President took office. The parents immediately sent him a memorandum outlining their efforts and met with him to discuss the details of their research. The new administration was very impressed with the thorough and painstaking job the parents had done and with their determination. At the end of August 1971 the College granted them the use of the aforementioned lounge area in one of the new buildings on campus for their Center.

The decision to go ahead with the parent-run day care center was also due in great part to the President's trust in and respect for the faculty member who had been working with the parents and who from now on was to play a large and vital role as "Faculty Coordinator" of the

Center. Since there were no guidelines for a student-controlled college day care center, one may well imagine that a college administration might hesitate in granting its approval for such an experiment. It was agreed by all parties that a governing parent Board of Directors would administer the Center, formulate admission procedures, hire the teachers, etc., under the guidance and supervision of the Faculty Coordinator, who would be directly responsible to the President through his Special Assistant, acting as liaison. As I intend to demonstrate later in this paper, the support and cooperation of the college administration and the active participation of a faculty member are essential factors in its successful operation. It is also true, however, that the day care center would probably never have been established if the demand for it had not come from the students themselves. A united front of determined students carries great weight with college officials.<sup>3</sup>

#### E. Day Care vs. Laboratory School

It must be noted that the presence of young children on a college campus was not in itself a new situation. Many colleges and universities, including some in the C.U.N.Y. system, operate "laboratory" nursery schools which serve as training and research facilities for faculty and students in the departments of education, psychology and related disciplines. These are usually under the direction of a member of the faculty. The day care center that our student-parents envisioned, however, would be governed by them and would accept children of students only, on a "first come, first served" basis with special



consideration given to cases of extreme need. The parents planned to hire a certified Teacher-Director who would be responsible for developing and implementing the educational program. It was therefore more in keeping with their aims to have as Faculty Coordinator a member of the Department of Early Childhood Education. The parents did not want the Center to serve as a laboratory school, which meant that it would ultimately fall under the control of the various college departments using it.

It was also decided that the Center would not service the children of faculty members. It was felt that faculty parents, who could afford the existing facilities in their communities, would be taking the place of a student whose need for an education was great and whose finances were sorely limited. The student-parents also felt that realistically, they could not fully exercise control of the Center with faculty members among their ranks. It would seem naive to assume that students and faculty could work together as equals. The faculty member possesses greater sophistication and experience in leadership and the student-parents would tend to feel intimidated and unsure of themselves. The College and the parents saw the day care center as an excellent opportunity for the student-parents to gain expertise in leadership and administration, and the presence of faculty members as parents would tend to lessen the students' role.

#### F. Hiring the Teachers

By August 30, 1971 the parents had a working budget, equipment borrowed from various college departments, a space, and the determina-

tion to open by the first day of classes, September 16, 1971. All they lacked was a teaching staff. Since the Center would have to be open from 7:15 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. to accommodate the parents' class and field work schedules, it was necessary to hire two full-time New York State certified teachers in order to provide adequate coverage and meet licensing standards. The Student Association granted additional funds for a second teacher's salary. One of the teachers would serve as Educational Director of the Center. Since the Center would service twenty children at any one time, additional assistance was to be provided by ten college work-study students who would work up to fifteen hours each per week and be paid by the federal work-study program, thereby creating no additional financial burden for the Center. The college Department of Personnel agreed to refer work-study students to the Faculty Coordinator, Professor L., who would interview them before sending them on to the classroom where they would be trained and supervised by the teachers.

The parents placed an advertisement for certified teachers in the Sunday New York Times over Labor Day week-end, and on the following Tuesday the college was deluged with phone calls. This was a most hectic period for all involved: the parents were exhausted from all their efforts to establish the Center, Professor L. was occupied with counseling students during college registration, and yet they all had to summon up the energy to interview the numerous applicants. They were determined to hire a teaching staff and open the doors of the Center on September 16.

Professor L. participated in the interviews, offering her advice

and opinions, but the ultimate decision was left to the parents. They felt uncomfortable with some older, more experienced applicants whom they feared would condescend to them, and finally hired two young women just out of college, with no teaching experience other than student teaching. They were certified in early childhood education and highly recommended by their college advisors, but as we shall see, they were not equal to the large and difficult task of developing and implementing the program, functioning within the framework of a parent cooperative, and dealing with the special requirements of a college day care center.

Soon after opening, the parents met with a representative of the Department of Health, Division of Day Care, who assigned an Early Childhood Consultant to the Center. The Consultant was knowledgeable and experienced in the field of early childhood education, and offered supervision and concrete suggestions besides observing the program to determine if it met the educational standards for licensing. A health inspector was also dispatched to the Center, and a license was issued in March, 1972.

G. Early Crisis: The Teachers

Soon after the Center opened it became apparent that things were not running smoothly in the classroom. Because of their lack of experience the teachers were unable to develop a curriculum and structure the day so that the children were involved in meaningful activities. The Teacher-Director was more interested in carrying out the administrative duties of the Center, which further under-

mined the program. The teachers also lacked the insight into child behavior and the techniques necessary to exercise effective and appropriate control and discipline, and tried to accomplish this by raising their voices frequently. The parents were unhappy about this, and felt also that the teachers spoke to them condescendingly and were not sensitive to their feelings.

Although twenty-two children were enrolled from the beginning, there were usually far fewer at any one time since they came and went according to their parents' programs, and this also contributed to the teachers' growing apathy and low morale. Furthermore, the teachers could not cope with training and supervising the student aides, who were young and inexperienced and greatly needed guidance. Instead of utilizing their abilities with the children, the teachers sent them on errands or had them clean up the room. Those students who were eager for the experience of working productively with young children found themselves frustrated and discouraged, and those who were less dedicated spent much of their time reading newspapers or socializing with one another. During this period some of the student aides also had children in the Center. This arrangement proved quite unsatisfactory for their children, who could not tolerate their mothers' attention to the other children, and for the parents, who found it impossible to treat their own children impartially, as members of the group.

Professor L. was aware of the unfortunate situation in the classroom from her own observations and from the parents' complaints. She scheduled semi-monthly meetings with the teachers to discuss ways of improving the program and relations with the parents, but the teachers

were unreceptive to her suggestions and communication between them began to deteriorate. The teachers also resisted the professional advice of the Early Childhood Consultant who visited the Center often and had taken a personal interest in its well-being.

#### H. Early Crisis: The Parents

During the first troubled semester, a serious conflict was raging among the parents that threatened to destroy what they had worked so hard to create. In order to exist as an autonomous body within the college the Center needed a governing Board of Directors to be voted upon by the entire parent body. Two of the original parent leaders, one white and one black, who were also close personal friends, were vying for the position of Chairperson of the Board. In her attempt to gain power, the black parent secretly influenced the other black parents to vote for her, arguing that they had to unite to keep the white parents from seizing power and ultimately pushing out the black parents.

This conflict mirrored a larger one in the city at the time, when minority groups were struggling for community control of schools. While one may agree with the concept of community control, it was often the case that the politics and emotions involved often worked to defeat the goal, which was quality education for the children. As for the Center, this power struggle created a bitter divisiveness between the black and white parents. The black parent finally did win a majority vote and was elected Chairperson, but relations between

the races continued to be hostile and confused. Fortunately, the racial tension was not evident among the children in the classroom, although they and the Center as a whole did suffer from the parents' turmoil.

As the semester progressed it became evident that the Chairperson lacked the leadership and administrative capabilities needed for her important role. Because of the parents' disorganization the administrative duties were being taken over by the Teacher-Director. Professor L. saw this turn of events as a threat to the Center's future. In order to maintain a compatible relationship with the college, the parents had to exercise competent and efficient control of the Center. Professor L. called numerous meetings with the disgruntled parents to discuss the need for a change. At the beginning of the Spring 1972 semester the parent body elected a new Chairperson, a black parent who had been disturbed by the former Chairperson's efforts to turn the leadership of the Center into a racial issue. She also possessed fine administrative skills and was accepted by both the black and the white parents.

#### J. Hiring a New Staff

Now that the Board of Directors was functioning smoothly under its new Chairperson, Professor L. and the parents turned their attention to the deteriorating classroom situation. The parents had grown increasingly dissatisfied with the teachers and complained to Professor L. about their condescending attitude and their methods of discipline. Perhaps because they were unfamiliar with a good early

childhood program, they did not complain about the lack of structure, stimulation, and direction in the classroom. Professor L., however, could see that the teachers were unable to improve the program and feared that the college would not tolerate so unprofessional an operation for long. She felt that her active intervention was needed to forestall the demise of the Center, and urged the parents to dismiss the two teachers.

Despite their dissatisfaction, they were reluctant to do this. They were resistant to changing the status-quo, fearing that a change might turn out for the worse. Many of these women lacked self-esteem and felt grateful to have anything, even if it was not up to par. Also, the parents had no experience with a good program against which to judge their own. After many discussions with Professor L., the parents finally overcame their reluctance and fired the two teachers.

On May 2 the Board of Directors requested funding from the Association to enable the Center to remain open during the summer session. The parents of currently enrolled children expressed great enthusiasm about using the Center during the summer, since they were eager to finish their studies as quickly as possible so they could find jobs and support their families. Since the summer session was only four days per week and the school day was shorter, funds for only one teacher were granted. Again, work-study students would provide further assistance. Professor L. knew of an excellent, older woman who had been teaching at a nearby private progressive parent-cooperative school for several years. The parents visited her school and ob-

served her in the classroom, and were impressed by what they saw. They hired her as Teacher-Director for the summer session. Although offered the position for the forthcoming school year, she could not accept because of her commitments to her present school. The new Teacher-Director created a room arrangement which was conducive to independent learning and exploration, and involved the children in numerous activities. When the parents began grumbling to Professor L. about certain characteristics of their Teacher-Director that they did not like, Professor L. called the parents and the teacher together so that their concerns could be dealt with in the open. Unlike the former teachers, the present one was able to accept the parents' feelings and work on improving her relations with them.

The parents had started looking for a new Teacher-Director in the spring of 1972. They had three months to conduct a careful and thorough search. Again they placed an ad in the New York Times and notified the placement offices of various colleges. Groups of parents visited the classrooms of those applicants currently teaching, and observed them work. They were exposed to various teaching styles and methods and gained more certainty about their own preferences. After the summer session began they could compare teachers and programs they had observed with the Center's. After visiting and interviewing many applicants they still had not found one acceptable to a majority of the parents. They were being exceedingly cautious to avoid repeating their previous mistake.

At the beginning of July 1972 I found out about the job opening



through the Bank Street College placement office. Since my previous teaching job had ended in June, the parents asked me to work with the children in the Center and then stay for an interview. The parents observed me one morning during their free periods or when they brought in or picked up their children. That afternoon the Chairperson, some other officers and those parents who were available, along with Professor L., interviewed me in her office. During a long and intense session, they put forth many pertinent and specific questions. Many of the parents and Professor L. felt positively about my answers and about my work with the children, but were hesitant about hiring someone relatively young and with only one year of teaching experience other than student teaching. They asked me to return to the Center a few more times so that more of the parents, the Early Childhood Consultant, and Professor L. could observe me further. After many observation sessions and a long phone conversation with my Bank Street advisor, the parents hired me at the end of July, 1972.

A male assistant teacher, certified in early childhood education and recommended by the Early Childhood Consultant, was hired soon after. The parents were pleased to have a male on the teaching staff since many of the children were from fatherless homes. Because most of the children attended the Center from 7:15 a. m. to 2:15 p.m., it was decided that the Teacher-Director and Assistant Teacher should be present during those hours. A young woman friend of one of the parents, certified in elementary education, was hired on an hourly

basis to cover the Center from 2:15 to 6:30 p.m. except on Fridays, when fewer classes were held and therefore attendance was lower, and all classes ended at 4 p.m.

The Day Care Center had survived its first tumultuous year. The parents, united under their new, competent Chairperson, had hired a dedicated and committed teaching staff. Professor L. would continue her vital role as liaison between the college, the parents, and the teachers. And yet, there were no established guidelines for operating a college day care center. The task of picking up the pieces and creating a professional, high quality program would be a difficult one.

## CHAPTER III

## STRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE DAY CARE CENTER

A. The College Administration1. The Contract

The Day Care Center is administered by the parents, who are all students. And yet, it could not survive and flourish without the active support of the college administration. While the everyday operation of the Center and major policy decisions are left in the hands of the parents and teachers, the college, through the Faculty Coordinator of the Center, Professor L., plays a vital role. While the college officials keep a watchful eye on the Center, they also insist that it remain a separate entity because of the question of liability. The relationship between the Center and the college is described in detail in a legal contract that was drawn up between the college, the Student Association (the funding body), and the Center in September 1971 when the Center first opened.

According to the terms of the contract, the Association or the college grants the Center a license to operate a day care center on campus for the nominal sum of one dollar per year. The college may change the location of the Center only if it gives reasonable notice beforehand and provides another space. Furthermore, the contract stipulates that the college and/or the Association will provide, at

its own expense, all heat, light, power and structural maintenance, and will also provide emergency medical care for any child injured or taken ill while at the Center. These and other supportive services will be described below. In turn, the Center agrees to provide all necessary equipment, pay for general liability and workman's compensation insurance, and for any licenses or permits, and to furnish all medical, legal, or other forms necessary to its operation.

The contract clearly establishes the Center as a separate entity apart from the college. It states that the Association or college is not responsible for the Center's debts or losses or any claims against it, that employees of the Center shall not be considered employees of the college (the teaching staff has a category all to itself, "Day Care Instructional Staff"), and that the Center shall not use the name of the college or Association except to identify itself.

The following provisions in the contract ensure that the college and Association maintain a measure of control over the Center: 1) The Center agrees to comply with the rules and regulations of the college, the City University, the State University, and the City of New York, and to cooperate with the administrative offices of the college in enforcing same; 2) the Center must submit a schedule of its activities, the number of children using it, a list of the teachers and assistant teachers, and the hours and times of its operation; 3) the Center shall furnish the college with the

names, addresses, and phone numbers of all its directors and officers, and advise the college of any change of officers or directors; 4) the Center shall consult with members of the college and/or Association with respect to any problems or policies; 5) the Center shall consult with the college accountant and provide a statement of expenses and income, and submit to an audit at the request of the Association; 6) no child shall be permitted to attend whose parent is not available for any reason whatsoever, and the exact whereabouts and location of the parent shall be known by the day care personnel. In addition, the Center agrees to employ only licensed and qualified help as required by law or the licensing agency, and the director or teacher bears the responsibility of summoning a parent in an emergency.

How the provisions of the contract are carried out by the college, the Faculty Coordinator, the parents, and the teachers will be discussed in this chapter.

## 2. Supportive Services

The many supportive services provided by the college enable the Center to function efficiently and economically. All the people involved with the Center have always tried to maintain friendly and positive relations with the various departments and offices of the college, and have always received their cooperation. While some services are specified in the contract (e.g., maintenance, emergency medical care), others have evolved as the Center has become an established part of life at the college. The following are the supportive services provided by the college:

a. Maintenance

Indoors: supplies, regulates and repairs lighting, heating and air conditioning, paints room, makes necessary repairs, constructs shelves when needed.

Outdoors: plants and mows grass, provides hoses and gardening tools, constructed large sand box, built fence enclosing play area.

b. Housekeeping

Provides janitorial services, including sweeping and washing floor, emptying garbage, cleaning windows, cleaning children's bathroom, supplying paper towels and toilet paper.

c. Health Office

The college nurses administer first aid for minor injuries, and are available to provide emergency treatment for serious accidents or illness. They supply and replenish first aid kit kept in the Center, and are consulted for information on medical matters.

d. Registrar

This department supplies a most important service, enabling the Center to accomodate about forty-five children per semester while only twenty may attend at any one time. The registrar makes the listing of classes and hours available to the Faculty Coordinator before any one else in the college. Professor L. then meets with the entire Day Care parent body, and each parent's program is planned so that there are never more than twenty children scheduled at any one hour. (This procedure is called "the Grid" because it is mapped out on a large chart.) The computerized course cards for each parent are then "pulled" before registration, insuring each parent

a place in their selected courses. Because of the strong likelihood of being "closed out" of a class of limited size, and the subsequent necessity of rearranging one's program, the pre-scheduling of the Day Care Center would be impossible if the parents did not receive priority in registration.

e. Personnel Office

This department cooperates with the Center in providing the work-study student aides. One of the secretaries in the office screens potential student aides before sending them on to the Faculty Coordinator for an interview.

f. Business Manager

The business manager of the college, who is also the Treasurer of the Student Association, helps develop the annual budget and helps the parents keep the books. His office handles the payroll of the teaching staff.

g. Legal Department

The college lawyer assists the Center in legal matters.

h. Business Office

The Purchasing Department processes and forwards all purchase orders for Day Care supplies and equipment.

i. Security Department

The security force makes periodic checks on the Center, provides electric torches during power failures, and cooperates with the Center in protecting the children during emergency situations.

j. College Hostess (Dean of Administration's Office)

She provides supplies for Day Care parties and functions, such

as tablecloths, paper goods, plastic utensils, coffee urns, punch bowls, etc.

k. Student Constituencies

Various clubs of the Student Government buy and distribute toys to the children at Christmas, donate money for decorations and party expenses, and provide students to appear as Santa and his helpers.

l. Student Newspaper

Reporters and photographers cover Day Care events such as Halloween Trick-or-Treat on campus, holiday parties, and children's graduation.

m. Physical Education Department

The gymnasium is reserved for the use of the Day Care children several hours per week. Gym equipment is provided for the children's use.

n. Chemistry and Biology Departments

Arrange tours of the laboratories for the Day Care children, and demonstrate simple experiments.

Besides the cooperation of the heads of these departments, the Center also benefits from the individual good-will of various people on campus. A professor of theater arranges for films shown in his puppetry class to be shown in the Day Care Center also, and he reserves choice seats for the children at puppet shows performed by his students. Another professor in the Department of Student Services, a distinguished older gentleman with a doctorate in clinical psychology, collects, at home, spools, orange juice cans, shirt cardboards,



etc., which he regularly carries to the Center in bulging shopping bags.

Maintaining good public relations with the college is an ongoing concern of the Day Care personnel, and Professor L. often stresses its importance to parents and teachers alike. In this way, the Center's image has been enhanced over the years, and a friendly working relationship with the college has ensued. The Board of Directors always sends notes of appreciation for all donations of goods and services, and the people who contribute them are invited to Day Care functions. The children themselves once drew a "thank-you" poster for the maintenance men who worked on the outdoor play yard. The poster hangs proudly in the office of the Chief of Maintenance. The children benefit by learning how maintenance men, janitors, and other members of the college community contribute directly to their Center.

### 3. The Faculty Coordinator

Professor L., the Faculty Coordinator of the Center, is a dynamic and forceful woman who acts as liaison between the Center and the college, and between the parents and teachers, supervises the parents and teachers, acts as consultant to the teachers for children with emotional disturbance or learning disabilities, and is directly responsible for Day Care matters to the President of the college. She performs this Herculean task of dealing with a myriad of problems and personalities involved with the Center, while also performing her regular duties as counselor to hundreds of students, and coordinator

of a program for older women returning to college.

Professor L. deals directly with all the college departments and offices listed above. The teachers inform her of any problem or request, such as too little heat or the need for extra tables during a party, and she calls the appropriate office. This makes for greater efficiency and less confusion, since the college personnel deals with only one person instead of many. Moreover, her status as professor in the college carries more weight than that of the Day Care staff in getting things done.

But Professor L.'s role goes far beyond the purely mechanical one of communicating the Center's needs to the various offices responsible for them. As advisor to and supervisor of both parents and teachers, she must be supportive of both sides in working toward a resolution of any conflict that might arise.

When the new teaching staff was hired after the first year, one of the first orders of business was building a good working relationship between the teachers and Professor L. As Teacher-Director, in the beginning I sometimes felt overwhelmed by my newly acquired responsibility and dealing with so many different personalities in a parent cooperative. Based on her previous difficulties with the Center's staff, Professor L. was dubious about my youth and relative lack of experience. Staff meetings were fraught with criticism and defensiveness on both sides. However, after a few months, when it became evident that the classroom program was working well and the children were happy, Professor L. and the teachers gained mutual trust in each other and were able to build a good working

relationship.

Over the years, staff meetings have evolved from purely administrative concerns to serious discussions, in depth, about the problems of individual children or ways in which to improve the program. In these conferences, both the Faculty Coordinator and the teachers examine their own feelings in order to gain a better understanding of their interaction with the children and therefore be in a better position to help them. Professor L. and the teachers explore the dynamics involved in the behavior of the child, his/her interaction with the other children, and decide what techniques to use to help the child in the classroom. Many times the teachers are successful and the particular problem subsides. In cases where the problem is not resolved after much effort, or where the teachers feel some pathology exists with which they cannot cope, they refer the parent to Professor L., who offers advice and guidance, and makes referrals to outside agencies when necessary. When the teachers interview new children for admission, Professor L. is consulted about those who manifest some pathology or who may be too young for this particular setting, in the case of two-year-olds. The final decision in admitting new children rests with the Teacher-Director, but Professor L.'s advice and suggestions are sought.

In her work with the parents, Professor L. serves two distinct functions: first, as described above, she acts as consultant to parents whose children have problems or who are experiencing difficulties themselves with regard to their children, and second, she works along with the parents in administering the Center. Professor L.

sees her administrative role with regard to the parents as that of a "watchdog." In speaking of a college day care center, we must always keep in mind that we are dealing with an institution within an institution. Many parent cooperatives, indeed many institutions, have foundered due to incompetent or unstable personalities in leadership positions. If such an undertaking dies, only that particular organization suffers. But because the Center is a part of the college, and because she bears the responsibility for it, Professor L. takes pains to insure that the leadership is in competent hands, and that the parents administer the Center sensibly and wisely. While only the parents vote for a new Board of Directors each semester, Professor L., through discussions with the previous officers, has some say in choosing the new Chairperson and other Board members. Because of the crisis during the first year when the wrong leadership almost destroyed the Center, Professor L. carefully monitors the selection of officers, who, indeed, must work closely with her.

However, Professor L. is committed to the concept of parent leadership and does not merely pay lip service to it. The parents make all decisions on hiring and firing teachers, and on admitting new parents to the Center. Professor L. attends Board meetings only when invited, or when she requests to do so because of some information she must convey to them. When a parent who is not on the waiting list asks for special priority in being admitted to the Center, Professor L. does not attend the interview by the parent screening committee in charge. She has often disagreed with their decision on

whether to grant or deny admission, but has never influenced the parents' thinking on this matter.

The officers of the Board conduct the administrative business of the Center from Professor L.'s office. She meets regularly with the Chairperson and Treasurer, and has many short, informal conferences with Board members on administrative matters. Professor L. encourages parent involvement, and as the Center has grown, has delegated more and more responsibility to the parents.

In establishing a college day care center, we cannot over-emphasize the importance of having a strong Faculty Coordinator. Many staff members of struggling day care centers from other colleges within the City University and from colleges outside the system have come to Professor L. for assistance and advice. These day care staff members have no influence with a college administration because they themselves are not committed to the larger institution. Professor L. advises them to enlist the active aid and support of a faculty person, along with pressure from the students. As she says, "One strong faculty member committed to the operation of a day care center, who provides continuity of service and who holds the respect of the institution, is most vital. Things are permitted because of that person. The institution responds to student pressure but gives the power and responsibility to the faculty member. This is not often understood and creates serious problems for many college day care centers."

#### 4. Safety and Security on a College Campus

Because the Center is part of a larger institution, with many

people constantly coming and going on campus, the staff must be especially careful of the safety and security of the young children in its care. Strict precautionary measures are taken to prevent any serious accident or incident which could jeopardize the existence of the Center on campus.

Heavy construction has been going on at the college since the second year of the Center's operation, creating hazardous conditions due to broken ground, holes, construction equipment and machinery, etc. The parents are instructed to keep their children close to them when entering or leaving the Center, to avoid accidents. Children in the Center are not permitted to leave the room unaccompanied by a teacher or parent, so that they do not get "lost," and also to avoid noise and commotion in the halls when college classes are being conducted. A teacher or work-study student must always accompany the children, in groups of three at the most, to the bathroom, which is located down the hall from the Center.

Many of the mothers are separated from their husbands, and often embroiled in bitter disputes over the children. It is not inconceivable that an estranged father in such a situation might try to kidnap his child from the Center. To protect the children from such occurrences, no child is ever released to anyone other than the parent who is the registered student, unless the parent gives permission, in writing, on the day in question, for the child to be released to someone else. This regulation is very strictly adhered to, and one of the most important in terms of the children's security.

In one such instance, when an estranged father attempted to see his daughter at the Center against the mother's wishes, the security force of the college assisted the Center by refusing to permit the father on campus.

In case of serious accident or illness, one of the teachers must accompany the child to the nurse's office if s/he can be moved, another teacher or student aide summons the parent from class, and the remaining staff members stay in the Center with the other children. Fortunately, in the almost six years of the Center's operation, a child has never been seriously hurt or become seriously ill while in attendance.

The staff is able to summon the parents immediately because of another safety measure, one stipulated by the original contract with the college. The class program of each parent is on file in the Center, so that the staff knows where the parent is at all times. If the parent has a "free" period, s/he would be sought in the library or cafeteria in case of emergency. If not found there, the college radio station would be requested to page the parent. A parent is permitted off-campus only for a field work assignment, and the parent's program must contain the agency, address, phone number, and location, so that a parent may be located quickly. A parent may also be permitted to leave campus on other college- or Center-related business, such as a job interview or to do shopping for the Center. The staff also has "emergency" phone numbers of parents' relatives or friends, but as it may be difficult to reach these people, the whereabouts of the parents are always known.

Although most of the people on campus are there legitimately, it is impossible for the security force to check everyone entering the college, and therefore some undesirable or unstable people may be wandering around at any given time. If anyone unfamiliar to the teachers asks to visit the Center, they are politely requested to obtain permission from Professor L. first, who then notifies the teachers. Faculty or students, it must be remembered, may not observe the children for their research or course work, and casual visits by outsiders are also discouraged. This does not apply to the parents, of course, who may visit with their child in the Center as long as the child is not adversely affected by the parent's presence, or parents' friends or relatives, or children's siblings, who may visit at the parents' request if the teachers feel they will not interfere with the classroom activities.

Although very infrequent, there have been some incidents where the Center's security measures were put to a test. One, the angry father, was mentioned above. Another occurred when a student shot and killed another student on campus, and was at large with a gun for a period of time. The security office immediately informed Professor L., who phoned the Center and instructed the teachers to lock all doors until further notice. The teachers remained calm and the children continued with their activities. When the student was apprehended, Professor L. notified the Center and normal operation was resumed. Frantic parents who heard about the incident and telephoned the Center or Professor L. were relieved to hear that their children were being protected from any potential



danger.

College officials who are hesitant about allowing a day care center on campus because of concern for the safety of very young children and the college's liability must feel confident that every effort is made by those in charge to insure their safety. Because Professor L., the teaching staff and the parents are constantly aware of this problem and take great pains to protect the children from any foreseeable danger, the college administration has developed trust in the Center, which enables it to function smoothly. Professor L. feels that this is an important element in the successful, long-running operation of the Center and its continuing good relationship with the college.

In discussing the relationship of the Center to the college so far, we have seen how the Center benefits from the college's support. Conversely, the college benefits from the presence of the Day Care Center. The President of the college proudly displays the Center to distinguished visitors and others, and can point to its successful operation as an asset to the college that other campuses lack. In February 1976, an evaluation team of the Middle States Association, examining all aspects of instruction and student activities for accreditation purposes, was invited to visit the Center and attend a parent Board meeting. They were quite impressed with the program, and with the intelligence and ability of the parents. In their final report, they included a paragraph commending the Center. The presence of happy, involved young children on campus adds a special dimension to college life.

## B. The Student-Parents

One difficulty of a parent cooperative is enlisting adequate parent participation. Ms. M., the Chairperson who took over in the middle of the first year, continued in that role throughout the following year. She was an intelligent, capable administrator who worked closely with Professor L. in establishing policies for the Center. The officers of the Board of Directors at the time, however, were less committed. They were lax in their duties, didn't attend meetings, etc. This may have been due in part to the Chairperson's reluctance to delegate authority, feeling more secure in undertaking all the work herself. This situation led to a confusing state of affairs when Ms. M. graduated in June, 1973, since there were no written descriptions of the duties of the various officers, and no one parent was able to pull all the loose ends together.

Fortunately, a new Chairperson was elected in the Spring 1974 semester who proved to be the Center's most able Chairperson to date. While also a strong leader with fine administrative ability, Ms. K. also possessed an intelligent, probing mind, the ability to relate well to all types of people, keen insight into human behavior, and sensitivity to feelings. She understood that a large part of her job had to consist of delegating authority and encouraging greater parent participation. During her two years in office, from Spring 1974 to Spring 1976, the duties and responsibilities of the Board of Directors were defined and expanded.

### 1. The Chairperson

As head of the Board of Directors, the Chairperson is responsible for coordinating the administrative activities of the Center. Her/his duties include organizing committees and formulating policies on such matters as new admissions, hiring teachers, planning the budget, amount of fees, and social events. In order not to have to assume all these responsibilities single-handedly, Ms. K., the Chairperson whom we will be describing since she was most influential in the office, had to devise a means of involving greater numbers of parents and making certain that the Board would carry out their respective share of the labor.

This is a large problem in any parent cooperative, but especially in this case, where the parents are full-time students and in many cases single parents. In the beginning, because of conflicting class schedules, it was practically impossible to designate an hour when the entire Board of Directors could meet regularly. Ms. K. finally made it mandatory that each Board member be available during the one hour a week set aside for club activities, and also on Friday afternoons when classes ended early. Only parents who could find time in their schedules to do the required work for the Center, and who would be available during those hours, could be elected to the Board. In appointing committees, Ms. K. would choose one member of the Board as its head, and that parent would recruit volunteers from among the entire parent body. In this way, the Board member, and not the Chairperson, would be responsible, and a larger number of parents would become involved.

## 2. The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is elected by the entire parent body each semester, as vacancies occur due to the parent's or child's graduation, the latter occurring when the child reaches six years of age. Besides the Chairperson, the Board consists of the following:

Assistant, or Co-Chairperson - helps the Chairperson with her/his duties and is usually in training to become the next Chairperson.

Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer - process purchase orders for supplies requested by the teachers; keep the books; obtain petty cash for grocery shopping (including snacks and classroom supplies such as flour and food color); pay the phone, milk, and postage bills, prepare payment vouchers for the teachers' salaries.

Secretary - keeps the minutes of Board meetings, types forms and letters.

The Board of Directors as a whole meets with the special assistant to the President of the college at the beginning of each semester. The Faculty Coordinator is also present at this meeting, which is held to keep the President informed on Day Care matters, and enables the parents to question the special assistant on matters relating to the college. Towards the end of the school year, the Board and Faculty Coordinator also meet with the business manager of the college, who is also treasurer of the Student Association, to discuss the upcoming year's budget. The Board presents its budgetary needs, such as increases in the teachers' salaries, besides regular expenses. The business manager helps the Board plan a workable budget that would

stand a good chance of being accepted by the Association, and advises the parents on how to increase fees or lower expenses toward this end.

Although the Association has always been very generous to the Center, because of salary increases and generally rising costs, the parents have found it necessary to raise the fee for the Center about five to ten dollars per semester, from one dollar per week during the first year to the present seventy-five dollars per semester. The Department of Social Services pays the fee for mothers on welfare, enabling the Center to continue servicing low-income parents.

One important committee of the Board is the screening committee, which consists of three or four Board members who interview each new applicant, describe the program, and answer the parent's questions. Since admission is on a "first-come, first-served" basis, and there is a waiting list, the committee also advises the parent as to when her/his child might be considered for admission. Chairperson K. found it necessary to limit the number of applications accepted each semester, because the waiting list was growing to unmanageable proportions. The screening committee also interviews parents who request priority in admission. If a parent is low on the waiting list or not on it at all, and has an urgent need for immediate acceptance, s/he may bring her/his request to the screening committee, which then determines whether or not to accept the parent. If the committee cannot reach a decision, the matter is discussed with the Chairperson who brings it before the entire Board for a vote.

It must be noted that in all cases, after an applicant is accepted by the Board, the final decision on admitting the child is made by the teaching staff. This interview procedure will be described later.

Before the parent screening committee was set up by Chairperson K., the application procedure was quite haphazard. Scores of applications piled up, and the Chairperson single-handedly notified the parents when their name was reached on the waiting list. The prospective parents were not interviewed, and came to the Center with virtually no idea of its functioning.

Another vital duty of the Board of Directors is hiring teachers. At the very beginning of the Center's third year, the male teacher left and a new teacher had to be found. At this point, Chairperson M. had graduated and the Board was left in a state of confusion. The new Chairperson was graduating at the end of that semester, and was not a strong leader. The need for a new teacher was urgent, and the search and interviews were conducted for the most part by Professor L. and the remaining teachers. The parents voted to hire the new teacher, Ms. G., based mostly on the recommendation of the teachers and Faculty Coordinator, although as many parents as were available had observed all the candidates work with the children in the Center.

The situation was different, however, when I left as Teacher-Director in January 1967 to have a baby. The Board, under Chairperson K., was very well-organized and involved in the search for a new teacher. They voted to appoint Ms. G., then Group Teacher, as Teacher-Director, and to hire another certified teacher to take Ms. G.'s

place. As many parents as possible (both Board members and non-members) met every week for two months to interview prospective teachers. Professor L. and Chairperson K. had worked on a list of questions for the parents to ask, although Professor L. did not participate in the Board's meetings. If the parents were interested in a candidate, they, the teachers, and Professor L. would observe that person in a planned activity with a group of the children. The teachers then interviewed the candidate, and finally everyone would discuss their respective opinions of the applicant. Though the parents had the final decision, they relied greatly on the teachers' preference, since they realized that a good working relationship between the three teachers was necessary to continue the high quality of the program. Finally, a young woman with whom everyone was pleased was hired.

Another procedure that began chaotically and developed structure as the Center evolved was "The Grid." This is the meeting at the beginning of each semester where the entire parent body is pre-programmed so that the Center may service forty-five to fifty children with only twenty present at any one time. A chart of every class hour is drawn on the blackboard, and a mark is made for each child scheduled, until twenty is reached. Those hours are then "closed," and the remaining parents must then change their program to suit the hours that still have less than twenty children scheduled.

"Grid Day" at first was an enervating experience, with parents

arriving uninformed and ill-prepared, and no procedure for giving priority in scheduling to those with special requirements. Consequently, a parent who was "closed out" of an hour had to plan a new program, which could take hours. Parents who needed certain required courses to graduate became angry at other parents who were using those hours for electives. Also, many people were entering programs on the grid chart at one time. The result was a long, exhausting ordeal, and in the confusion, many hours were over-scheduled. The parents who were then told to change their programs or make other arrangements for their children were understandably upset.

Chairperson K. completely reorganized the Grid procedure. She established a compulsory "pre-Grid" meeting, where members of the Grid committee help each parent plan three alternate programs. In this way, if a parent is closed out of an hour, s/he has another schedule on hand with alternate hours. Only the Chairperson enters the program of one parent at a time on the chart, eliminating over-scheduling. The parents are given numbers as they arrive, so that they are programmed on a first come, first served basis. However, "old" parents (those with children already in the Center) are scheduled before "new" parents, whose children are just entering for the first time. Also, graduating parents who must take certain required courses and those in specialized programs, such as nursing, have priority over those with more flexible programs, such as liberal arts. On Grid Day, the Grid committee, headed by the Chairperson, spends



many long hours helping the parents until the Center is completely and satisfactorily scheduled.

Another function of the Board is arranging the Day Care parties, held for all the children and parents. The most elaborate is the Christmas party, but others are held on Chanukah, Easter, Passover, and Graduation. The party chairperson appoints committees for food (each parent cooks or bakes), decorating, shopping, etc., and coordinates their activities. The teachers plan the actual classroom events and discuss the plans with the party chairperson. Besides being exciting occasions for the children, these parties, held in the classroom, enable the parents to meet each other socially. Parents and children with widely varying schedules may meet here for the first time. Besides daytime parties for the children, the parents and teachers also organize evening parties each semester, honoring the graduating parents. These gatherings are for adults only, and the entire parent body, teachers, student aides and Faculty Coordinator and their escorts are invited. These evenings offer everyone a chance to "let their hair down," and the parents have an opportunity to see the teachers as they are, outside the classroom environment. The teachers, in turn, get to know the parents better.

Through their involvement with the Center, many of the parents become close personal friends while at school, and continue their relationships after graduation. They help each other with babysitting, and confide in each other about problems around school and child manage-

ment. Besides being a place where the parents gain leadership skill, enhance their self-image, and learn more about their children, the Center is a place where close and lasting friendships are formed.

Parents who qualify for financial assistance are encouraged to participate in the work-study program, where they are assigned to the Day Care office. They work ten to fifteen hours a week on Day Care administrative business. There are usually two such work-study parents in the office per semester. Since the first year, when it was apparent that a parent in the classroom was injurious to both parent and child, parents on work-study are not permitted to work in the Center itself. Exceptions to this rule have been made only a few times, when the staff considered the parent in question to be an asset to the program, and when the child was able to function well with the parent in the room. This is rarely the case, however, and no parent has worked in the classroom for the past three years.

As the parents have gained experience in administering the Center, their confidence and competence have increased. At first they were reluctant to assert their authority over their peers, the other parents of the Center. Their uncertainty was detrimental to the Center as a whole. For instance, the Board formulated a policy that parents who did not pay the fee by a certain time would not be permitted to use the Center. At first, this policy was not enforced, and numerous fees remained uncollected while the children still

attended the Center. The parents who paid objected to carrying the burden for those who did not. As a result, the Board began enforcing this regulation by setting a firm deadline for payment and refusing to admit to the Center any child whose parent did not meet it. The parent then had to go personally to the Treasurer and either pay the entire amount or work out an arrangement for paying in installments. Rather than objecting to this policy, the parents in general respect the Board for exercising its authority for the benefit of the Center.

C. The Teaching Staff

The teaching staff consists of the Teacher-Director, Group Teacher, and Assistant Teacher. The Teacher-Director and Group Teacher are both certified by New York State for early childhood education. The Assistant Teacher has an Associate in Arts degree in early childhood. After the Center's first year, the part-time Assistant Teacher left, and was replaced by a full-time Assistant Teacher, Ms. K.-B., who still holds that position. Ms. K.-B. was one of the original founding parents of the Center, and worked in the classroom as a student aide until she was hired to her present position in the fall of 1973. After the original male Group Teacher left in the fall of 1973, Ms. G. was hired to replace him. The parents promoted her to Teacher-Director when I left because of pregnancy, and she currently holds that title. A new Group Teacher, Ms. S., was hired to replace Ms. G. when she took over as Teacher-Director. Ms. S. had served as a substitute teacher in the Center prior to her hiring. Over the years, there has

been much continuity of staff.

The three full-time staff members share three different shifts: 7:15 a.m. to 2:15 p.m., 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and 11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., with an hour for lunch. They rotate these shifts every two weeks. This enables each teacher to get to know every child in the Center, since some children attend only in the mornings and some only in the late afternoon. Because of the long day and lunch hours, the "early" and "late" shift teachers hardly see one another, and rotating the shifts enables all the teachers to work together equally. In terms of morale, the teachers also prefer this arrangement, since no one of them must work the early or late shift exclusively.

#### 1. The Teacher-Director

The Teacher-Director is responsible for the development and implementation of the classroom program, innovation of curriculum ideas, room arrangement, and supervision of the other two teachers and all the student aides. In short, she is responsible for realizing the broad educational goals of the program, and for the day to day management of the classroom. The Teacher-Director establishes screening and orientation procedures (and has the final say in whether or not to admit a child), arranges parent conferences and student aide conferences, holds meetings with the Group Teacher and Assistant Teacher, communicates with the parents about curriculum, program, and other classroom matters, schedules the working hours of all the student aides and develops their training program, secures

a substitute teacher when any of the teachers is ill, coordinates all the classroom activities for special events and parties, maintains up-to-date parent programs and health records for each child, orders supplies and equipment, and notifies the Faculty Coordinator of any maintenance or janitorial problem in the room.

## 2. Team-teaching

Although the Teacher-Director holds the position of authority in the classroom, she and the Group Teacher and Assistant Teacher actually function as a team. I have always believed that a person will realize her/his full potential as a teacher only if s/he feels free to develop and express her/his own particular personality and style of teaching. Since the other two teachers shared my basic philosophy and attitudes toward children, and were compatible in terms of personality, true team-teaching was possible. (This basic compatibility was not an accident, however. Both parents and teachers are aware of its importance, and a good working relationship among the teachers is the most important criterion in hiring new staff members).

As with any other innovation, real team-teaching was accomplished gradually. It was difficult for me at first to part with some of my control, and Ms. G. and Ms. K.-B. were relatively inexperienced and just beginning to acquire confidence and a personal style of teaching. In our first year together, only I would hold conferences with the parents of children who were having problems, and only I would discuss the program initially with all the new

parents. But as Ms. G. and Ms. K.-B. grew increasingly dissatisfied with this arrangement, and as I grew increasingly trusting of their abilities, I was able to delegate these and other responsibilities. Now, under the close supervision of the Teacher-Director, each teacher sees an equal number of parents with problems in conferences, and each one interviews an equal number of new parents.

All major decisions, such as whether or not to admit a certain child, how to institute a reading-readiness program, what new supplies and equipment to order, what activities should take place and when, are all discussed by the three teachers, and in practically every case a mutually acceptable solution is reached. As Teacher-Director, I found that I could learn from my staff, and many times I sought their advice and opinions. They in turn felt respected as professionals and gained more proficiency and assurance in their teaching, and were eager for my counsel and supervision.

In the classroom, each teacher is equally authoritative in the eyes of the children and student aides. If one of the teachers disagrees with the way another deals with a particular situation, all three will discuss it afterward, when not in the presence of the children or student aides. While the Teacher-Director does hold more authority in the eyes of the parents, they also get to know and respect the other teachers. If they have a problem, they approach whomever they feel most comfortable with, and not necessarily the Teacher-Director.

The Teacher-Director must retain and exercise her authority while also promoting equality among the staff members. This is a difficult but important aspect of her role, and requires much sensitivity and self-assurance. Ultimately, the children benefit by receiving the very best performance from each teacher.

### 3. The Student Aides

The work-study student aides provide additional staffing for the Center. All students working in the Center are paid through the federal work-study financial aid program. As you may recall, the college students are not allowed to work in the Center for course credit, and the parents and teachers decided to exclude volunteers on the grounds that they might prove unreliable. The students who qualify obtain a meaningful work experience, and the Center benefits from additional staff with no additional salary expenditures.

Every semester, approximately ten students are employed at the Center, and each works twelve to fifteen hours per week. We have found that fewer than ten usually does not provide adequate coverage, while more than that number makes for too many adults for the children to interact with. Each student is scheduled for specific hours each semester, according to their free hours and the staffing needs of the Center. They must work a minimum of two hours at any one time, to discourage the discontinuity that results from the students' too frequent coming and going.

The teachers rely on the student aides to provide much needed assistance in a Center where the children enter and leave each hour according to their parents' schedules, and to provide a high adult-child ratio. Usually, there are four or five adults in the room with twenty children, i.e., one or two teachers and two to four student aides. The student aides supervise the various activity areas of the room where a teacher is not present. They set up the materials for an activity, talk to the children, offer assistance when needed, and mediate disputes between children. They assist the teachers in activities requiring more than one adult, and sit with the children at group time, helping to keep them involved. They also supervise the children in putting away materials, and help the teachers clean the room at the end of the day. The student aides take small groups of children to the bathroom located down the hall, and work on a one-to-one basis with two-year olds and older children who need special attention. They also participate in the Day Care parties and adult social events.

The selection and training of the student aides have improved over the years. In the first two years of the Center's existence, virtually any student in the work-study program could choose to work in the Center. Training and supervision during the first year, as you will remember, were practically non-existent. The result was a group of unreliable, immature student aides, many with psychological problems that prevented them from relating ap-



appropriately to the children. The teaching staff found that instead of assisting them, the student aides were creating additional problems. During the second year, one particularly troubled young student aide arrived at the Center under the influence of drugs. From then on, the Faculty Coordinator and teachers realized that a much more careful and selective screening process had to be initiated, along with a compulsory training program.

The current procedure is as follows: First, the secretary in the personnel office refers only those students whom she considers stable and mature. Next, Professor L., the Faculty Coordinator, interviews each student in her office, stressing the fact that the work is difficult, and that if they are looking for an easy job where they can do their homework, the Center is not the place for them. By almost trying to discourage them, Professor L. insures that only the truly motivated will continue to seek the job. Finally, the student is sent to the Center, where one of the teachers emphasizes the need for punctuality and reliability in filling their scheduled work hours. They are told that frequent absences will be cause for dismissal, and that they must telephone as far in advance as possible if they will be absent, so that substitute students may be found for their hours.

The teacher then shows the student around the room and briefly describes the activity areas. Next, the teacher observes the student work with a small group of children at a simple table activity, usually play dough. In order to alleviate some of the student's

nervousness, the teacher explains that she is not interested at this point in the student's teaching abilities, but rather in how s/he seems to get along with the children. The teacher observes the student's basic mode of interaction with the children. Does s/he speak to them or sit there silently? Does s/he smile and seem animated or look bored or depressed? Does s/he let the children explore the material themselves, or does s/he tell them what to do, or make things for them? In this way, the teacher judges whether the student's personality is suited to working with young children.

The teachers explain to each student aide that they are not expected to know a great deal about teaching, but that they are expected to observe the three teachers and learn from what they do, and to show steady growth and improvement in their work with the children. Besides guidance and supervision in the classroom, the training of the student aides consists of meetings held every other week, at which attendance is mandatory. The student aides are told that if they don't agree with a technique or method used by one of the teachers, they may question the teacher outside the classroom or at one of the meetings. If, after the teacher explains the philosophy behind the method, the student still disagrees, s/he is still expected to follow the methods and philosophy of the teachers. Thus, the children are not subjected to conflicting messages, which is often the case in centers with many adult personnel.

The student aide meetings are held on Friday afternoons when very

few children are present, and one or two parents look after those children, so that all the teachers and student aides may attend. The students are encouraged to bring up questions and problems that have arisen during their work in the Center, and the discussions are on a concrete, rather than a theoretical level. The other students are encouraged to offer their advice and opinions, so that they learn from each other. The teachers, while guiding and leading the discussion, try not to lecture or dominate the conversation, as the students are more involved and consequently learn more when lively participation by all is encouraged.

Each student aide is seen periodically by one of the teachers for individual evaluations. If their work is unsatisfactory because of poor attendance, inappropriate interaction with the children, inability to accept and use supervision, etc., one of the teachers will inform the student that her/his performance is unacceptable, and will offer to meet with the student frequently for supervision and progressive evaluations. The student is told that if the problem is not resolved by a certain time, s/he will have to leave the Center. Though infrequent, this has happened a few times. One student, overly harsh and abusive with the children, was not able to change her behavior, and so was asked to leave. The teachers and Faculty Coordinator, however, are very careful to insure that the student's termination does not adversely affect her/his school record in any way, and a different on-campus job is found for the

student by the personnel office. Since the safety and well-being of many children are at stake, this is considered a necessary but fair procedure.

It is interesting to note that some of the best student aides have been accounting, business, or science majors at the college. As a result of their experience at the Center, many have changed their career goals to early childhood education. On the other hand, while some of the students in the early childhood program have been outstanding, others were less than satisfactory. After one or two basic education courses, they consider themselves experts, while in actuality they have much to learn, but are critical of the teachers and unamenable to supervision. One is reminded of Pope's admonition, "A little learning is a dangerous thing." On the whole, however, the work-study students are a valuable asset to the program, and gain much in the way of on-the-job training.

#### 4. Parent Conferences

In the next chapter, I shall examine the educational philosophy of the Center and describe the teacher-child interaction. But first I would like to discuss an important part of the teacher's role, parent-teacher conferences. Each parent is seen by one of the teachers twice per semester and once during summer session. In addition, since the teachers see each parent when they bring their children to the Center and pick them up, there is an opportunity

for many short, informal "curbside conferences." If a particular child is having a problem in school, the teacher will schedule more frequent formal conferences with the parent in order to work jointly toward a solution.

The relationship between parents and teachers is traditionally one of adversaries rather than two concerned parties working toward a single goal. Teachers tend to view parents as the "villains," guilty of mismanaging their children and responsible for all their problems. Parents, on the other hand, are usually intimidated by the teacher's professional authority, and are reluctant to speak openly for fear of being criticized. Such a mutually distrustful relationship is ultimately destructive to the child. A teacher is only with the child for part of the day; the parent spends the greater amount of time with her/him. Therefore, to be most helpful to the child, the teacher must establish a positive relationship with the parent, so that they both may work together for the child's benefit. This has always been a goal of the Center's teachers and Faculty Coordinator.

Since the teachers see the parents every day, it is easier to get to know them as people, and understand the many problems they face as parents and students, struggling through separations and divorces, marital problems, economic difficulties, and the demands of childrearing. The parents, moreover, sense the teachers' sincere concern for their children, and are therefore able and

willing to speak openly and honestly about their problems. The teachers' attitude toward parents is thus basically supportive. Each conference begins with the teacher describing the positive characteristics and accomplishments of the child. The teacher encourages the parent to speak about the child, since the conference also serves as a means of obtaining feed-back about the child's life away from the Center. The teacher will then gently raise any problem the child may be having. For instance, if a child wanders around the room and resists getting involved in activities, the teacher might say, "Cindy seems a bit unhappy here. I wonder how we can help her enjoy herself more?," rather than, "Cindy refuses to do anything in school. She's very unmotivated!" The former statement would elicit the parent's concerns and suggestions, while the latter would probably cause the parent to become defensive and withdrawn.

Very frequently the parents ask for help in child management problems at home, even when the child is doing well in school. The teachers explore with the parent the reasons for the child's behavior and try to offer concrete suggestions. Lately, many of the parents have been pouring out their own personal problems to the teachers during conferences. The teachers are very aware that they are not therapists, and do not attempt to undertake such a role. They will discuss the parent's problem if it is adversely affecting the child, but will suggest that the parent see Professor L.

for counseling if the problem seems overwhelming.

D. Interaction among Teachers, Parents, and Faculty Coordinator

I have tried to give as detailed and accurate a picture as possible of the many diverse elements that contribute to the Center's continuing growth over the years. Perhaps the one factor that sums it all up is the cohesiveness of those various elements, from the support of the President of the college down through the cooperative efforts of the Faculty Coordinator, parents, and teachers. The common goal of providing a quality educational experience for the children unites all those involved, but the goal could not be realized without direct and open communication among the parties.

Since the first unsuccessful year, the Center has faced many major and minor crises, all of which have been resolved because of the Faculty Coordinator's commitment to bringing problems into the open as soon as they arise, and encouraging the parents and teachers to express their feelings honestly. This is not an easy thing to do. As the teachers and Faculty Coordinator have gained trust in each other and established a good working relationship, and as they have seen the positive results of such an approach, they have realized how important it is in dealing with conflict. It is more difficult for the parents to express their feelings in front of the teachers and Faculty Coordinator, since they fear reprisals against their children if they criticize

a teacher. But Professor L. motivates each new group of parents to express their concerns, and they are always elated at the outcome. They see that the teachers and Faculty Coordinator take them seriously and try to work out mutually agreeable solutions, and do not resent them or their children as a result. As Professor L. points out, "They see that the educative process always works."

Ms. K., the former Chairperson of the Board, was also sensitive to this issue. Parents would bring their complaints to her, and she would speak to the teachers or encourage the parents themselves to do so. She also realized that unless brought out into the open, the parents' dissatisfaction with even minor things could grow into larger problems and cause an underlying hostility between parents and teachers that would prove ultimately destructive to the Center.

As an example, one issue that caused friction between the parents and teachers was "nap time." Some parents, especially those of very young children and children who arrived at the Center at 7:15 a.m., wanted them to nap at the Center. Since we only had the use of the one room, it was necessary for all the children to lie quietly on mats so that those who needed to sleep were able to. After those children fell asleep, the ones who remained awake went outdoors. However, some of the parents told the Chairperson, Ms. K., that when their children napped in the Center, it was impossible to put them to sleep at a reasonable hour,



and the parents' valuable evening studying hours were ruined. Some parents also objected to the fact that their children had to go directly to a mat upon arriving at the Center during nap time. Ms. K. arranged a meeting between Professor L., a few concerned parents, and the teachers. After the parents expressed their unhappiness with nap time, the teachers admitted that they too were dissatisfied with having to enforce complete quiet, and that many of the children were uncomfortable. They conceded that nap time was perhaps too rigid, and together everyone discussed possible alternatives. It was finally decided that children who were upset by nap time, or just arriving, or whose parents wished them not to sleep, would sit at a table in the corner of the room, engaging in a quiet activity. The children who needed to sleep would be able to. The teachers did insist, however, that if a child whose parent did not want her/him to sleep was very tired, they would not prevent that child from napping.

Perhaps this seems like a minor issue, but it could have escalated into a major one if the parents' dissatisfaction had remained unexpressed. As it happened, they felt pleased that the teachers appreciated their feelings, and were more willing to bring their concerns to them directly in the future.

A more serious divisiveness occurred during the aforementioned hiring of the new group teacher in the months before my scheduled departure from the Center. The other two teachers

and myself were in favor of hiring a young woman who had worked in the Center for two years as a substitute teacher, and we made our preference known to the parents. The woman in question, Ms. Y., was a pleasant person, but rather quiet and unassertive. The parents felt that she did not possess a strong enough personality to undertake the rigorous duties of group teacher. They lacked confidence in her ability to manage the classroom alone, as would frequently be the case. The teachers, in turn, felt that the parents were objecting to Ms. Y. in order to assert their own authority over the teachers. A meeting was held in which the parents voiced their concerns, and said they wanted to interview more applicants. The teachers began to feel threatened, and requested to be present during the interviews. The parents expressed uneasiness about this, saying they would feel intimidated about asking questions if the teachers were present. Professor L. said that she felt the parents and teachers should remain separate in this matter. The teachers admitted that they could understand the parents' point of view, and it was finally agreed that the parents would interview each applicant first, and decide whether to consider that person further. If so, everyone would then observe the person in the classroom, and the teachers would meet with her/him, and finally the teachers, parents, and Professor L. would discuss the applicant together.

Upon examining their feelings more closely, the teachers realized that they too had doubts about Ms. Y's ability, but felt

safe with her because of her compliant, unassertive nature. Everyone concerned was very enthusiastic about the capability and personality of Ms. S., who was finally hired. If the parents had meekly gone along with the teachers' original choice, the Center would have suffered with a weak staff member. This incident stands out as one in which the teachers learned from the parents.

It is not only the parents, however, who openly air their grievances. Very recently, the teachers were troubled over the attitudes of certain Board members, whom they felt were taking advantage of them and belittling their role in the Center. It must be noted that although the parents administer the Center, the teachers exercise authority in their own sphere, and are a stable, continuous force in a setting where the turn-over of parents is constant. The teachers felt, through subtle interchanges that were difficult to define but becoming increasingly frequent, that these parents were overstepping their own authority and engaging in a power play. Consequently, the teachers' morale was affected and their usual enthusiasm in their work decreased.

Finally, when they had enough concrete evidence on which to base their feelings, the teachers discussed the problem first with Professor L., and then with the Board. When the teachers expressed their feelings, the parents were quite surprised: they had not realized that the teachers were so upset. After further discussion, it became apparent that the parents' actions were

based on misconceptions of their actual role in the Center. The present parents on the Board took office during another period of upheaval in the Center, when the former Chairperson precipitously resigned after only one month in office. As a result, the new Chairperson was not adequately trained in her duties. Furthermore, Professor L. had less input with this Board than usual because of the many demands of her other duties as a counselor in the College, and also because of her desire to entrust more of the responsibility to the parents. Unfortunately, however, this Board was unaware of many aspects of that responsibility. As a result of this meeting, the parents became more sensitive to the teachers' valued position in the Center, and also agreed to work more closely with Professor L. in the future. As of this writing, relations between the Board and the teachers have greatly improved.

The parents, teachers, and Faculty Coordinator all have faith in their ability to work through any crisis that may arise by honestly communicating their feelings to one another. This direct, open approach to problem-solving is the basis of the Center's success.

CHAPTER IV  
THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

So far, I have discussed the structure and development of the Day Care Center since its inception in 1971. We come now to the most important element: the children themselves. In this chapter I will describe the educational philosophy behind the program, the daily routine of activities, and those aspects of the program which are unique and/or worthy of special interest.

A. Educational Philosophy

As Teacher-Director I was responsible for formulating the basic philosophy of the Center, which is still implemented by the present teaching staff. The fundamental approach is a developmental one. Simply stated, this means that the structure of the program and interaction between the teachers and children and among the children themselves, are based on an understanding of the particular developmental stages of the children, and are geared toward fostering the maximum intellectual, social, and emotional growth for that stage. Since the Day Care Center is a multi-age setting, with children two to six years old in one classroom, there are different expectations and goals for the different ages. For instance, an important goal for a two-year-old would be a successful, gradual separation from the parent,

while a goal for a five-year-old would be to attain some skills in reading readiness.

The developmental approach recognizes the need to understand and work with the "whole child," which brings us to the concept of individualization. This term is used very frequently with regard to early childhood education, but true individualization is not often found in actual practice. In the Center, an attempt is made to understand the developmental level of each child in every sphere - intellectual, social, and emotional - and to work with the child accordingly.

Another important aspect of the philosophy of the Center is encouraging autonomy. To this end, and within certain limits, the children have easy access to all the materials in the room, decide which activities they would like to participate in, and are responsible for putting away their own work. Of course, the teachers help them when necessary, enabling them to become more independent by means of the appropriate assistance. In this way, the children gain confidence in their abilities, thereby developing a positive self-image.

These goals can be realized only within a framework of structure and limits, which brings us to the question of "discipline." Young children need the security of clearly defined, reasonable, and appropriate limits. In the Center, such limits are explained to the children from the beginning and are firmly but gently enforced. Again, limits are set according to the reality of

the situation and the ability of the child to understand and effect them. This approach fosters the development of self-control in the child.

While adhering to these basic principles, it is also essential to maintain a good measure of flexibility. This was made clear to me during my first semester at the Center, when the parents began discussing plans for a Christmas party. My professional training had underemphasized holiday celebrations, and the parents were very disappointed with the simple party I had in mind. When I saw their reaction, I understood that the Christmas celebration was very important to the parents and the children, and I decided to enter into the holiday spirit! The elaborate, joyous Christmas parties at the Center have since become a campus tradition.

Another area where flexibility is important is "reading readiness." When I was hired, the black parents especially were concerned that their children attain the basic skills necessary for future success in the public schools. While I believe that a child does not have to read at the arbitrary age of six, and that an overemphasis on skills attainment can be harmful, I also realized that the parents had a valid point. Telling them that their attitude was "pushy" or "middle-class" would have been irresponsible and insensitive on my part. In response to their concern, I implemented a more formal reading readiness program that was consistent with my overall philosophy. The children

were chosen on the basis of their own readiness, and the work, using mostly teacher-created materials, was geared to their particular style of learning. Games and activities were introduced that made reading fun. While some parents may have at first desired a more traditional method, they were very pleased when they saw that their children were eager to learn, enjoying school, and gaining skills at the same time.

It is true that because the Center is a parent cooperative, the teaching staff is particularly responsive to the concerns of the parents. But this is not the only reason. Were it not for the Center, most of the parents currently enrolled could not continue their education.<sup>4</sup> Because they have no choice in where to send their children, it is essential that the teaching staff respond to their needs.<sup>5</sup> But while the Center was established as a service for the student-parents, when a conflict arises between the needs of the parent and the needs of the child, then the well-being of the child always takes precedence. The Faculty Coordinator and teachers are firmly committed to this principle, which accounts for the high professional standards of the Center.

As an example, this conflict frequently arises during program scheduling time. The teachers usually find it necessary to limit the hours that many of the children may attend in any one day. They have found that a shorter school day makes it easier for certain children - two-year-olds, those having difficulty separating, overly active children, etc. - to adjust to



the setting. This may make it impossible for the parent to take as many credits<sup>3</sup> as desired. The teachers explain to the parent that once the child settles in happily, the number of hours may be expanded for the next semester, and they counsel the parent to start with fewer courses. Approached in this way, the parents are usually willing to sacrifice a few courses for the benefit of their children.

B. Room Arrangement (See Appendix)

The philosophy of education outlined above is implemented by the "open classroom" setting. The room is arranged in various "activity areas" among which, during most of the day, the children are free to choose where to work. Each area offers the child a variety of meaningful learning experiences for different stages of development. For example, the block area<sup>4</sup> offers the older child an opportunity to exercise creativity, conceive a plan and carry it out with other children, engage in dramatic play, learn mathematical concepts such as balance, proportion, and geometric relationships, and geographical concepts such as tunnels, bridges, islands, etc. The younger child gains skill in coordination and may enjoy putting the blocks away by matching them with their like shapes on the shelves.

The other activity areas of the Center are as follows:

Art area: Contains easels and paints, and shelves with paper, crayons, chalk, collage materials, molding materials, etc.

Water table: Includes measuring cups, tubes, syphons, funnels, sponges, etc. for water play.

House area: Contains play sink, refrigerator, stove, phones, dishes and utensils. Also, dress-up clothes, dolls, and cradle.

Library: Contains books and a rug.

Math and Science corner: Contains scales, Cuisinaire rods, number games, and exhibits of shells, plants, leaves, etc.

Workbench: Contains wood, corrugated paper, knobs, wheels, dowls, and tools for woodworking.

Manipulative materials: Shelves containing puzzles, shape games, small construction materials, etc.

Besides these areas, the room contains cubbies for the children's belongings, a "teachers' corner" with supply closet, file cabinet, refrigerator and phone, and a sink. Music and movement activities during "group time" take place in the large block area. Trapezoid-shaped tables which can be arranged in various ways occupy the center of the room.

### C. Daily Routine

7:15 to 8:00 - Breakfast of cold cereal and milk for earliest arrivals, and early morning activity, such as play-dough, finger painting, or special projects.

8:00 to 10:00 - Free work period, special projects, outdoor play.

10:00 to 10:15 - Group time.

10:15 to 10:30 - Morning snack.

10:30 to 12 noon - Work period and outdoor play.  
12 noon to 12:15 - Group time.  
12:15 to 12:45 - Lunch.  
12:45 to 1:15 - Rest.  
1:15 to 2:45 - Outdoor play.  
2:45 to 3:00 - Group time.  
3:00 to 3:15 - Afternoon snack.  
3:15 to 5:30 - Work period, special projects, outdoor play  
(weather permitting).  
5:30 to 5:45 - Late afternoon snack.  
5:45 to 6:30 - Individual work with remaining children,  
general room clean-up.

A daily routine schedule is important because young children in a school setting need the security of knowing what to expect next, and that particular events follow each other. However, the schedule is flexible enough to accomodate special campus activities such as movies, puppet shows, tours and exhibits which the Day Care children regularly attend. "Special projects" include making Christmas decorations and gifts, Chanukah menorahs, puppets, etc. The children may participate in outdoor play during work times, since there are usually enough adults present to supervise both indoor and outdoor activities. The children are able to move freely from one to the other.

As is evident from the above schedule, the long school day is

broken up by snacks, lunch, and rest periods. The teachers are very aware of the difficulty that many young children experience during these "transition" times, and have planned them carefully. Before each snack or lunch, the teacher signals on the piano for "quiet," (using the first four notes of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony), and tells the children to finish and put away their work. As the children finish, they come to the block area for "group time," which consists of music and movement activities or the reading of a story. Meanwhile, two or three children who are the "helpers" for that day set the tables for snack, which another group of children had prepared earlier. At the end of group time, one of the teachers or a child will "call" the children one by one to wash their hands and then sit down at the table. The "calling" is an enjoyable learning experience in itself, and is done in a number of ways. The teacher may call out words or sounds that rhyme with the children's names, and they leave the circle when they hear their rhyme; or a child may call out colors, and anyone wearing that color goes up; or the teacher may call out the months of the year, and the children leave the circle when they hear their birthday month. (The older children and teachers help the younger ones with the more difficult exercises). When the children finish their snacks they clean up their place at the table and return to the circle where they choose the area in which they would like to begin working next. In this way, transition times, rather than stressful and chaotic,

where the child may take a puzzle or other manipulative material. Talking with the child as s/he works, the teacher makes note of the child's small motor coordination, and determines if her/his play is age-appropriate, and then helps the child return the toy to the shelf, also noting her/his ability to follow simple directions. Only a few materials are placed on the shelves so that the child is not faced with too many choices. The kinds of activity during the initial interview are limited also; water play, for example, would be considered too stimulating at this point.

The teacher stays with the child as s/he chooses another activity, and again helps the child "clean up" when through. The staff has found it helpful to have a few "old" children (current students) in the room at the time so that the new child feels less intimidated by being the only one, and so that the atmosphere approximates more closely what school will be like. It also gives the teachers an opportunity to observe how the child interacts with children who are already at ease in the setting. The new child is then led to a table where the "old" children are working with play-dough. The teachers have found this to be the best material with which to begin group activity; it is relaxing, and lends itself to comfortable interaction.

During the interview the parent provides a "secure base"<sup>6</sup> from which the child ventures forth. Most of the children will glance at the mother occasionally or run to show her a puzzle or toy, or talk to her a bit while playing. At some point in the inter-

view, if the child seems comfortable and involved, the teacher will ask the mother to tell the child that she has to go to the bathroom and that she will be back in five minutes. When she returns, the teacher points out to the child that mother always comes back. If the child continues to play contentedly, one of the other teachers goes with the parent into another room for a short interview, to get some background information and answer any questions that the parent may have. When it is time to go home, the child is given a book or toy to "borrow" and bring back the next time, so that a connection can be made between school and home. The child is told that s/he will be coming back to school again.

Of course, the above description is of a "model" interview, and there is great flexibility depending on the individual child. The staff tries to follow the child's cues as to what s/he would like to do, and will not force a child to sit with the group, for instance. The responses to the mother's leaving the room also vary. Most of the time, children aged three and one-half to six will look up at her, watch her leave, interrupt their play to ask the teacher where she is, and then return to their play when reassured. Two- and three-year-olds usually start to cry and run to prevent the mother from leaving. In this case, the mother is asked to remain in the room. Some children refuse to go with the teacher and insist on staying with their mother. In this case, mother, teacher, and child will work together at a table. If the child is intensely upset and/or refuses to take a material, that

parent is asked to come back for a second or more interviews, since the strangeness of the surroundings and people could be a strong component of the child's fear, or s/he might just be having a "bad day." If after a few sessions the child is still intensely upset and clinging, the teachers suggest that other arrangements be made, such as family day care or a babysitter in the child's familiar home environment, or if this is impossible, that the parent put off going to college until the child is a little older, at which time s/he would be re-interviewed. In the case of an older child who exhibits this behavior, one might suspect that some emotional or family problem is present, but since the teachers have not yet established a relationship with the parent, they do not suggest counseling unless the parent admits to a problem and asks for assistance. In that case she is referred to the Faculty Coordinator who encourages her to discuss the problem and may eventually make a referral to an outside agency for treatment.

When a child exhibits behavior other than separation anxiety that might be indicative of an emotional problem, such as hyperactivity, withdrawal, lack of focus, etc., the teachers observe the child for three or four sessions in order to evaluate the nature of the problem and determine if they feel that they can work with the child in the Day Care setting. If the child is not overly destructive to her/himself or others and the teachers feel that they can help her/him within the scope of their abilities, then the child will be accepted into the Center and given special

attention. More will be said later about this aspect of the program.

E. Understanding and Dealing with Separation Anxiety: The Orientation Procedure

According to John Bowlby, separation anxiety means that a child becomes upset and distressed when s/he does not have access to the person to whom s/he is most attached.<sup>7</sup> This is a normal, healthy response in young children, and it is incumbent upon early childhood educators to understand it and mitigate the intensity of the response by providing a gentle and gradual "easing-in" for the young child. The transition from the home to the first school setting has far-reaching effects on the child's future adjustment to and attitudes toward school.

When I first came to the Center, parents were asked to bring their children for an orientation period before the college classes began, but few cooperated. As a result, there was much crying for mother among many of the children once school started, and many were unhappy and unable to get involved for the entire semester. At first we were hesitant about asking the parents to spend the car-fare and the time to come to school for the orientation, but as we came to realize its importance in helping the children adjust, we became more certain of the need for such an orientation and firmer in our demands. As of now, not only the interview, but participation in an orientation program of two to three weeks is a



requirement for acceptance into the Center. It is interesting and gratifying to note that the parents approve of this policy one hundred percent. They have responded positively to the teachers' own certainty, and are relieved and happy to find that they care so much about the well-being of their children from the very beginning.

According to Bowlby, models of "attachment figures" are built up during the early formative years.<sup>8</sup> A child's first teacher is an important attachment figure, being in effect a substitute parent for part of the day. The early childhood teacher must serve as a model of a warm, responsive, helping and trust-inspiring figure. A child who develops a positive relationship with such a teacher will gain self-esteem and confidence, and positive expectations about future school experiences. The purpose of an orientation period, therefore, is to help the child separate gradually from the parent and become trusting of her/his new surroundings through the support of the teacher, making the separation as untraumatic as possible.

Once the child is accepted to the Center s/he comes to school three days a week for about three weeks before the college classes start. The Center is fortunate in that the parents are full-time day students and therefore available when classes are not in session. During the first week the groups are limited to no more than six children and no longer than one-and-one-half hours. Only the three staff members interact with the children; the student aides are not yet present. The parents sit in the back of the room. When the teachers feel that the child is ready, the parent sits in a

room right next door and the child is shown where the parent is. Only gradually are the hours increased (to about three), and when the teachers feel the child is ready, the parent may go elsewhere on campus.

The teachers give the new children one-to-one attention, establishing a connection that enables the child to get involved with the materials and the other children. During the second week, the group may be increased to 10 or 12 children, including some "old" ones who help the new children by acting as models for them. This also helps the "old" children, as they feel very important and have a chance to get readjusted after being away from school for the summer or during intersession. During orientation children will sometimes cry for mother, but since she can be instantly brought back into the room, the child is quickly reassured. "Group time" is also started gradually, usually not until the second week, and then for a few minutes only, with a song or two. If a child is reluctant to join the group, s/he may work quietly with a teacher instead. Since eating with the group may also be a stressful time for some children, they do not bring their lunch to school until the end of the second week, at which time they are usually ready to have a relaxed lunch with pleasant conversation. By the time the parents' classes have started, most of the children are quite well-adjusted to the school situation, have made friends and are relaxed and happy about being in school.

Very often some children who make a good initial adjustment will begin to show signs of separation anxiety after a few weeks or even months. The child will be reluctant to come to school with the mother, protest when she leaves the room and cry for her during the day, unable to get involved with work. Most of the time this is the normal, healthy reaction to separation that is to be expected. This reaction shows that the child has made a successful attachment to the parent figure. The staff deals with it by having a teacher stay with the child while s/he is upset, acknowledging the child's feeling of loneliness for mother, and helping the child get involved in an activity, perhaps reading her/him a book about the first day of school or involving her/him with a group of children if this seems helpful. Sometimes it is also beneficial to have the mother stay with the child for a while before leaving for class or upon returning from class, before taking the child home.

The parent of a child experiencing such a "delayed reaction" to separation may become very exasperated and confused, convinced that the child is just "acting up" on purpose, since s/he was so happy until now! The mother may get angry at the child, put pressure on her/him to like school, and at the same time feel guilty for making the child go to school. Such conflicting messages tend to exacerbate the child's unhappiness in school and make it more difficult for the child to separate. Parents also experience their own anxiety about separating from their child.

The teachers at the Center respect and understand this normal parental response. They reassure the parent that their child's behavior is natural and not of conscious, malicious intent, and they help the parent understand and acknowledge the child's feelings about separation. It is of great help to the child if the parents are able to talk freely and openly to the teachers about their own ambivalent feelings.

The staff has found that certain conditions are extremely important in reducing intense separation anxiety. They are:

1. Providing a suitable material at the very beginning. Play-dough seems to be such a material. It is very popular during orientation, and the new children spend a great deal of time manipulating the dough and engaging in relaxed conversation and dramatic play.

2. Familiar possessions. Bowlby mentions "familiar possessions" as a condition "mitigating the intensity of responses of young children separated from mother."<sup>9</sup> A favorite toy from home or a cherished "security blanket" (transitional object)<sup>10</sup> are extremely helpful, especially during periods of increased tension, such as rest time.

3. Limited hours. The length of time a child spends away from the parent coping with the demands of the school environment (i.e., being one of twenty children, accepting limits, exercising self-control, etc.), is a major factor in helping the child make a successful separation. Too long a period heightens the anxiety that

a child may feel, putting too much stress on her/him. Starting with a shorter day enables the child gradually to tolerate longer periods in school, away from mother. The Center never accepts two-year-olds for more than three hours per day, and sometimes only two. All new children, regardless of age, are given some limitation in hours, usually a maximum of four to five for a four-year-old or six for a five-year-old, depending on the child. If s/he appears to have some special difficulty in separating or with aggressive behavior, wandering, lack of focus, etc., the teachers will reduce the number of hours regardless of the child's age.

#### Dealing with intense separation anxiety

Occasionally a child in the Center will manifest extreme separation anxiety, usually of the "delayed reaction" type. The child, who seemed to have made a good adjustment to school, will begin crying when brought into the room and throughout the school day, unable to become involved in any activity. The child also protests coming to school, and cries on the ride over. It is the policy of the Center, once a child has been admitted and has been in attendance for some time, to try with all the resources available to the staff to work with the child who is suffering from increased separation anxiety. Besides the commitment to the parents' education, the staff has an emotional investment in the child, and often the Center is the only therapeutic facility that the family will ever encounter. The staff believes that helping

the child is a better alternative to the child staying home or attending another school with little or no sensitivity to the problem.

Usually, a child who is experiencing intense separation anxiety is spending a great many hours in the Center. The first step toward alleviating the anxiety is shortening the hours away from the parent, usually to no more than three per day, and helping the parent find ways to provide satisfactory substitute care for the rest of the day. While this creates hardships for the parents in terms of finding alternative arrangements, the staff has found that it is the most important factor in helping the child, and thus is beneficial to the parents in the long run. The teachers spend a great deal of time with the child in a one-to-one relationship, and assign student aides to provide this when one of the teachers is unavailable. The teachers also try to find some activity at which the child excels, and encourage her/him in it. This helps build the child's self-confidence and enjoyment of school. The child's parents are referred to the Faculty Coordinator who encourages them to discuss their own feelings and events at home that may be contributing to their problems and helps them understand the situation and support the child. Using these methods, the Day Care staff has been successful in nipping many school phobias in the bud.

F. Programming the Children's Hours: "The Grid"

One of the more unusual aspects of the Center is the scheduling,

which entails children arriving and leaving every hour, between the college classes, with each child attending a minimum of two hours on any day. This arrangement is unique even for college day care centers, where children are usually scheduled for a specific block of time - either morning, afternoon, or a full day - depending on their parents' schedules. People in the field of early childhood education who hear of our system often wonder how the staff and the children can cope with the constant interruptions. But once they visit the Center they are impressed by its calm, relaxed atmosphere despite the constant comings and goings. Accepting this as a fact of Center life, the staff has managed to integrate it smoothly into a daily flow of classroom activities.

Of great help is the "Grid Chart," a huge cardboard chart that hangs high on one wall, visible from every part of the room. This chart, devised by myself and my colleague during our first year at the Center, allows the teachers to see at a glance exactly which, and how many, children are scheduled to arrive, remain, or leave at any given hour. The chart consists of boxes representing each class hour for the five school days. In each box, written large and thick, are the first names of every child scheduled to be present during that hour. Each name is color-coded to show whether the child is arriving, leaving, or remaining for that hour. For example, let us consider a hypothetical class hour, Thursday from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. In that box, the first six names will be written in green ink, meaning these children are due to arrive at 1 p.m. The next

ten names are in black, meaning that these children were present during the previous class period, (noon to 1 p.m.), and will remain during the following period (2 p.m. to 3 p.m.). The next four names are in red, which means that these children are due to leave the center at 2 p.m. Thus, the twenty children scheduled for that hour are all listed in such a way that the teachers know exactly who is coming and going.

The "Grid Chart" is an invaluable aid to the teachers. If a child becomes anxious and asks when her/his mother is coming back, the teacher can answer the child by glancing up at the chart, instead of dropping everything to consult the parent's files. A few minutes before the end of each class period, the teacher glances at the chart and reminds the children who are leaving that their parents will be coming to pick them up soon. This gives the children time to finish up their work before the parent arrives. If the teacher notices that a large group of children will be arriving at a certain hour, she will avoid scheduling a difficult or complicated project for that time. In general, the "transition times" described above are planned so that they never coincide with class changes.

The teachers have greatly reduced the disorganizing effects of such a system by acknowledging the children as they arrive and leave, so that they do not feel like detached spirits drifting in and out! As each child and parent comes through the door, the teacher or student aide who is closest cheerfully greets them and



accompanies the child to the cubbies where the jackets are hung. The teacher then asks the child what s/he would like to do, and helps her/him get started in that activity. The other teachers and student aides glance up from their work to say "hello" to each new arrival, as do the other children working nearby. In this way, the child feels a comfortable part of the room, where activities are already in progress.

Similarly, when the parent returns to the Center to take the child home, the teacher greets the parent and exchanges a few words with her/him about the child's day in school. A teacher or student aide helps the child finish up work and put things away, and then teachers and children alike bid her/him "good-bye." Very often a child will protest vigorously when s/he has to leave. This is understandable, considering that the remaining children are all involved and enjoying themselves. If the child is especially involved in a project, the teacher sometimes asks the parent to wait for a few minutes until s/he finishes. If the child has finished working but still refuses to leave, the teacher gives her/him a book to borrow and bring back the next day, or asks the child what s/he would like to do the next day, and then writes a note saying, "I want to paint today. Lisa." The child hands the note back to the teacher upon arriving the next morning. If the children are all at "group time" when a child must leave, the teacher leads the children in singing "so long," and the child usually departs cheerfully.

Another problem with this type of scheduling is that the children must "clean up" their work immediately after finishing it. In nursery schools and day care centers where all the children arrive and depart at the same time, it is possible to have one "clean up time" at the end of the day. But the children in the Center readily accept the ground rule of, "Don't start another activity until you've finished and put away the one you're working on," since they know it is based on the reality that the few children left at the end of the day would have to clean up the entire room if the rule were not in effect. Again, there is flexibility here also. If three children have worked long and hard on a block structure and two must leave, the teachers give the remaining child the option of keeping the building up, in which case s/he must put it away by her/himself, or putting the blocks away together before the two children leave. Also, if a child is not scheduled to leave for quite a while and has done some block building or other work which s/he wants to keep intact, and which is not in the way of others, s/he may put it away before leaving rather than upon completing the work.

#### G. The Multi-Age Room

Fein and Clarke-Stewart state, "Although there is no research regarding the influence of older peer models on play behavior, older children who do play effectively may enhance the play behavior of younger children. Day care and early education specialists

have tended to advise homogeneous age groupings. Perhaps play is one area in which mature behavior would be enhanced by mixed age groups."<sup>11</sup> The staff of the Center has found this to be very true. The multi-age grouping (at the Center, children aged two to six are in one room) is stimulating for children and teachers alike. Because of the "older peer models" and the accessibility of more complex materials than would be found in a group exclusively for two- or three-year olds, the two's and young three's have proven capable of executing more difficult tasks and showing greater skills than one would expect from such a young child. This also holds true for areas outside the realm of play. Very young children who arrive at the Center only partially bladder-trained usually become totally trained after a few weeks of going to the bathroom with the older children.

Furthermore, the younger children are not the only ones who benefit from a multi-age setting. The staff of the Center has found that the older children gain more assurance in their own skills and achievements by helping the younger ones. Socially, the older children are quite protective of and helpful toward the younger ones, buttoning and zipping their jackets, for instance. The multi-age grouping provides an opportunity for these nurturing instincts to flourish.

The benefits of this type of grouping derive from the fact that the younger children are encouraged to participate, at their

own level and pace, in the regular activities of the Center. There is no separation of the different ages in the classroom, except for the kindergarten program, and even here children younger than kindergarten age participate if the teachers feel they are ready. True individualization, therefore, is essential in a multi-age room.

#### H. The Kindergarten Reading Readiness Program

The kindergarten program was instituted as a result of the parents' desire that their children gain the skills necessary for success in first grade, as well as the staff's conviction that the older children would benefit from a more formal readiness program geared to each individual child's interest and ability. Children five years of age and older participate in the program, and if a younger child is eager to join and is considered ready by the teachers, s/he is included. On the other hand, some five-year-olds show no interest in learning to read, while others are not yet ready for a more formalized, structured program. The former child will usually show increased interest gradually, as s/he observes the other children engaged in their work; the latter will usually gain more of the basic reading-preparation skills through the learning experiences (small motor coordination, ability to discriminate, symbolic representation of ideas, etc.) provided by the various activity areas of the room.

Frequently, however, a parent who is aware that the Center

offers a kindergarten program becomes quite upset if her/his five-year-old child is not included. In this case, one of the teachers confers with the parent and stresses the positive accomplishments of the child in other areas, and describes how the child develops the skills necessary for reading through working and playing with the materials in the room. If the parent remains unsatisfied, and still feels that there is "something wrong" with the child despite the teacher's explanation, the teachers will design short and simple reading games and experiences for that child, so that s/he feels part of the older group yet does not become frustrated by being unable to do the work.

The kindergarten group meets together twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon, and each group consists of whichever kindergarten children are present at the time. Although the group works together, each child does her/his own particular task. Thus, the teacher may be writing a new word for one child's "word bank" while two other children read their words to one another and another child draws a picture of her/his family while waiting for the teacher to work with her/him. When one of the teachers is available to work with a kindergarten child individually, s/he may do her/his kindergarten work at other times of the day, and the children often request this.

The kindergarten program is basically a language experience approach to reading readiness, where reading is made enjoyable and meaningful for the individual child by deriving the content from

the child's own experiences and inner fantasy life. The children have their own notebooks where they draw pictures and dictate stories to the teacher about each member of their immediate and extended families, and then go on to write about "My Friends," "My House," "My Street," "My School," etc. The teacher reads the story back to the child, who begins to recognize certain key words and phrases in it. Besides these individual books, the children contribute stories and drawings to class books with specific themes, such as "The Dream Book," "A Walk around the College," and "The Easter Party." These books are read to the entire class at group time.

Another component of the language experience method is "Word Banks," a system adapted from Sylvia Ashton-Warner's book, Teacher.<sup>12</sup> Each child decorates a large manila envelope, which becomes her/his "bank." Each day, the teacher asks the child to tell her something very important, something that s/he really likes very much. The teacher then writes this word on a strip of shirt cardboard and the child "reads" it back and places it in the envelope. In this way, the child accumulates an extensive "sight vocabulary" of words s/he recognizes by their configuration. The child reads her/his words to the teacher or a classmate each day, and words that s/he cannot identify are discarded, the teacher saying, "Well, that one must not really be too important. Let's think of another one." The experience is extended by the children drawing pictures of the things in their word banks, and then dictating

stories about them to the teachers.

Word bank words are also used to introduce phonics, another component of the eclectic reading readiness program. The children are encouraged to "sound out" the beginning consonants of their words, and some can identify the beginning sound and letter for the teacher who is writing the word. Phonics are also taught with word families, which the children list in the "Rhyme Book" section of their notebooks. The child chooses a word (usually her/his name, a word bank word, a part of the room, etc.) and then thinks of words that rhyme with the first one. The teacher writes the words in a list, pointing out how the first sound changes while the last sound remains the same. Eventually, the child learns to sound and spell out new words by using the former rhyming words as a guide. Although phonics may be a more traditional approach, the words and sounds that the children learn are derived from their own ideas, rather than arbitrarily chosen by the teachers.

Teacher-created materials also play a large role in the reading readiness program, in the form of games and exercises. The games consist of matching shapes, colors, numbers, etc., or matching pictures with their initial sounds, for the children to do individually, and group games such as "Letter Lotto." The teachers also devise exercises for each child to do in her/his notebook, such as cutting out magazine pictures of particular colors.

When a child displays good small motor and hand-eye coordination, the teachers begin to work on writing, starting with the child's name, which is also used to teach phonics. The child goes on to write her/his word bank words, and may also write the rhyming words, as s/he sounds them out, instead of the teacher writing them. Older children who are eager to write keep a diary in which they record simple events, e.g., "Tuesday, May 2. I played with the blocks today." Since the children will be using primers and workbooks in first grade, the staff has incorporated these into the kindergarten program, using the Bank Street pre-primers and beginning workbooks. Again, they are used in a very relaxed way, with each child reading and doing the exercises at her/his own pace. The children derive satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment from these materials.

The children in the kindergarten group look forward to their reading work each day and make steady progress. Parents of children who have gone on to first grade frequently report back to the Day Care staff that their children are doing very well in school and that their new teachers often comment on the fine preparation they have received.

#### J. Holidays and Special Events

Holidays and other important occasions are celebrated at the Center by children, parents, teachers, student aides, and members of the college community. The children and their parents look for-



ward with great excitement to each party or event, and the Center acknowledges the generosity of college personnel by inviting them to the festivities.

Christmas and Chanukah. The largest and most eagerly-awaited event of the year is the Christmas party. The children start preparing for the party a few weeks in advance, by making Christmas presents for their parents, decorations for the tree and the room, and creating and rehearsing a puppet show or play which they perform at the party. The parents are involved with shopping for the party supplies and helping the children and teachers decorate the room and the tree. On the day of the party, each parent contributes a special dish, and the result is a truly international feast, representing the ethnic backgrounds of all the parents: Italian, West Indian, Latin American, Southern, Jewish, and Chinese. Besides the Day Care personnel, many members of the larger college community are invited: the President of the college, his Special Assistant, the Deans, other administration and faculty members, secretaries, maintenance and janitorial workers, and others who have donated time, services, or materials to the Center. The highlight of the party is the arrival of Santa Claus, who distributes gifts to the children. Santa and the gifts are provided by one of the student government constituencies. The teachers give them a list of each child's name and age in advance, and they buy appropriate gifts.

The holiday celebrations focus on the cultural and traditional aspects, rather than the religious. Therefore, the Jewish children

can and do enjoy the Christmas celebration. By the same token, the non-Jewish children enjoy being introduced to two new holidays, Chanukah and Passover. In preparation for the Chanukah party, all the children make their own versions of the Menorah in clay. At the party, a group of children from a nearby Yeshiva and a group of secretaries from the college perform Israeli folk dances. The parents and children join in the easier ones. The children light their Menorahs and then bring them home, where they continue to light a candle each night of Chanukah. The non-Jewish parents are delighted to learn, with their children, about a culture different from their own.

Easter and Passover. For Easter, the children dye eggs, and then hunt for them in the yard, where the teachers have hidden them. Parents and children have a luncheon party, with baskets of Easter candy for dessert. At Passover, the children prepare "charoses," one of the Seder dishes, which consists of walnuts and apples. They smash the nuts with hammers and slice the apples with plastic knives, then mix them with grape juice (instead of wine). Again, the parents join the children for lunch, where the charoses and other Passover treats (chocolate matzohs, maccaroons) are served.

Halloween. Perhaps the most popular holiday among the children is Halloween, when the entire Center goes "trick or treating" on campus. To avoid competition over expensive store-bought costumes,

the children design their own at the Center. The parents buy material and sew poncho-style costumes (to be worn over coats and jackets) which the children paint and decorate. They decide which Halloween character they wish to be, and the teachers make a chart with each child's name under a picture of her/his character, e.g., "witch," "ghost," "jack-o-lantern," etc. Before the big day, the children draw a face on a large pumpkin, which the teachers cut out for a jack-o-lantern, and then they remove all the seeds and roast and eat them.

"Trick or Treat" on Halloween day itself is the culmination of much planning. There are two expeditions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, and each child participates in only one. The entire Center gets together for lunch and a small party in between the two. The children put on their costumes and make-up and the teachers assign two parents to each group of four or five children. Each parent is given a list of the offices on campus which her/his group must visit. In this way, all the offices are covered. A notice is sent beforehand informing each office of the impending visit, and the secretaries and administrative personnel prepare treats for the anticipated troops! The parents are advised to accept candy only from the people on the list, who have been asked to prepare individually wrapped items only, and to politely refuse offerings from students or others on campus. The children return exhausted but happy, weighed down by plastic shopping bags bulging with treats.

In recent years, the children have donated part of their Halloween loot to the pediatrics ward of a nearby hospital. Before Halloween, the teachers and children talk about those children in the hospital who are ill and cannot go "trick or treating" themselves. The Center children put some of their candy into little bags and draw pictures for the youngsters in the hospital. All the bags are then placed in a large cardboard box decorated by the children, and a group of parents brings it to the hospital. In return, the Center receives a letter of thanks from the social worker on the ward, and pictures drawn by the young patients.

Graduation. Besides the holidays, there are other special occasions observed at the Center, one of which is the children's graduation exercises. During my first year, many of the parents wanted an elaborate ceremony complete with caps and gowns. I felt that this would be meaningless for the children and solely for the parents' benefit. However, I understood the parents desire to commemorate this important event. The parents and I discussed our feelings, and decided upon a short, simple ceremony and party which is still popular at the Center today.

The teachers present each graduating child with a "diploma" bearing the inscription, "For excellence in being you!" The Board of Directors, parents of the graduating children, and several college dignitaries are invited. After the ceremony, refreshments are served and the graduates and other children present a short

program of songs. Graduation is held twice a year, after the winter and spring semesters, the latter usually taking place outdoors. At one spring graduation in the play yard, the entire Center prepared a "circus" show with climbing, jumping, and balancing acts.

During the two or three weeks prior to the graduation ceremony, the teachers prepare the children for this important transition. It is an upsetting experience for them, having made such strong connections to the teachers and the other children. For most of them, and their parents also, the Center is like a second family. In the weeks preceding graduation, the children who are leaving usually exhibit aggressive or troubled behavior. The teachers deal individually with each child's feelings of sadness and anxiety, and also discuss the imminent departures at "group time." They acknowledge that it is difficult to leave one's friends and teachers, and that they will miss the graduates. They also encourage the children to talk about the new schools they will be attending, and assure them that they will make new friends there. Of course, all the graduates are encouraged to visit the Center, and many do return, proudly displaying their books from their new schools.

Open-Center Week. The parents bring their children to the Center and pick them up each day, but that does not afford them sufficient opportunity to observe the program and discover what their children actually do in school. They are aware that their children are eager to come to school and enjoy themselves, but most

of the parents are unaware of the specific attributes of an early childhood program. While they may be curious, many of the parents prefer to use their valuable free time on campus to socialize with their peers (for some their only social contacts), grab a quick lunch, or catch up on their studying. To encourage parents to spend some time in the Center, the teachers hold an "Open-Center Week" once during each semester. A letter is sent to the parents announcing the event, and describing its importance in terms of learning more about the kinds of experiences their children have in school. A chart is posted in the Center, and each parent signs up for one to two hours of observation. No more than three parents are scheduled for any one period, to avoid overcrowding and disrupting the class. The parents find "Open-Center Week" very enlightening, and many return for occasional visits during the semester, which is encouraged by the teachers.

Grandparents' Day. "Grandparents' Day," initiated a few years ago, provides an opportunity to bridge the generation gap by bringing young and old together at the Center. The idea occurred to me when a parent asked if her mother could visit the Center. When I suggested a special day for grandparents, all the parents were very enthusiastic. Children without grandparents, or whose grandparents were unavailable, are asked to invite a great aunt or great uncle, or an older neighbor or friend of the family.

The children proudly introduce their grandparents to the teachers, and then eagerly show them around the room. The teachers

prepare projects for children and grandparents to do together. Weaving paper place mats is very popular, the grandparents cutting out and decorating the paper "loom," the children coloring and cutting out the paper strips, and both cooperating on the weaving.

After the first Grandparents' Day, the feedback from the parents revealed an unexpected and fortuitous result of the event. Many of the grandparents are opposed to their children attending college, and their children being placed in a day care center. They believe that young children should be at home with their mothers, and mistakenly assume that a day care center is at best spartan and at worst punitive. Consequently, the grandparents frequently criticize the student-parents for leaving their children. Most of the parents have very close relationships with their own parents, many sharing two-family homes. Such criticism engenders guilt feelings in the student parents, which in turn adversely affects the child. However, after the first Grandparents' Day, many parents reported to the teachers that the grandparents had a wonderful time, and were amazed and delighted at the varied and stimulating activities provided for the children, and the competent care and sincere concern shown by the teachers. As a result, their attitudes toward college and day care changed, and the relationship between them and the student-parents improved.

In conclusion, I would like to note that the staff uses holidays and special occasions to provide meaningful learning experiences for the children, as is evident from the above descriptions.

### K. Sexual Equality in the Classroom

A child's sexual identity is formed very early in life. In order for very young children to be free of restrictive stereotypes, their teachers must consciously provide an atmosphere where they are free to express their full human potential. I say consciously because even with the best liberated intentions, it is very easy to fall into the old stereotypes.

One way to accomplish this is through "teacher intervention"<sup>13</sup> when one sex excludes the other in their play. While not exactly an instance of exclusion, an incident occurred at the Center which I felt called for such intervention. A group of girls and boys were playing "hospital" in the house area. All the boys were "doctors" and all the girls were "nurses." When I noticed this, I asked the girls if any of them wanted to be doctors. They replied that they would rather be nurses, and some of the boys said, "Girls can't be doctors." Since it was soon time for a group meeting, I decided to discuss this with the entire class. A few of the children said that they had women doctors, which enlightened the boys. But the girls still said they would rather be nurses. I asked them, "Do you know what a nurse does?," and they answered, "She helps the doctors." It was now evident that their idea of nursing was limited to a kind of servants' role. We then discussed the many real duties of a nurse, and the fact that nurses can be men also: s/he gives injections, takes temperatures, gives medicine, delivers babies, etc.



At the end of the meeting, the children realized that they had a choice in playing "doctors" or "nurses," and that if they chose to be a nurse, they could perform vital services in their own right. I felt that it was very important for the children to regard nurses as a positive role model, since many of their mothers were studying for a Registered Nurse degree at the college.

The teachers should encourage both sexes to take part in activities that have traditionally been considered exclusively male or female. In the Center, the boys enthusiastically participate in dramatic play in the house area, washing dishes, setting the table, feeding the babies, etc. Very often a young boy will be the "Mommy." The teachers feel that this is a natural identification with the person to whom he is closest. They have also found that boys and girls are equally proficient in such areas as sewing and woodworking.

However, one area which the girls usually avoid is the blocks. Since I believe that block building provides numerous learning experiences which the girls should not be denied, I initiated a practice in the Center which I learned as a student teacher in Ms. Gloria Williams' class of four- and five-year-olds at the Walden School. Whenever the teachers notice that some days have gone by with few or no girls in the block area, they hold a "block meeting." All the children present at the time sit in a circle, and one by one choose one or two children with whom to work, and decide what they would like to build. Each small group is

assigned a space in the area for their structure. They are free to change their plans as they work, which often happens; asking them to state what they will build in advance is a means of organizing the activity and encouraging the children to do some planning. It is interesting to note that after a block meeting, the girls work enthusiastically and intensely, building quite intricate structures, although they usually avoid the area at other times.

Another area where sexism often runs rampant is the library. A few years ago, when I was reviewing picture books for a feminist bibliography of children's books, I found very few that were entirely free of damaging stereotypes. Most books for pre-school children have boys as the central character, with girls usually portrayed as weak followers. Fortunately, though, as a result of the Women's Movement, this trend is now beginning to change. The teachers in the Center carefully select books which depict women as capable, intelligent beings, and conversely, which depict boys as capable of showing emotions such as fear and tenderness. Often a book appears which is positive or neutral in content, except for one or two objectionable statements. In this case, when reading such a book to the class, the teacher comments on the offending passage and asks the children what they think about it. Such a discussion leads to a greater awareness of the injustices of sexual stereotyping.

The most crucial element in forming a positive self-image for

both girls and boys is their identification with adult role models. In the Center, the female teachers do woodworking, carry heavy loads, get dirty, etc. An effort is made to hire male work-study students, and there are usually two each semester. The male student aides are warm and gentle, and share in cleaning up the room, sweeping the floor, washing things out in the sink, rubbing children's backs at rest time, and helping the two-year-olds with their jackets. The personalities and actions of the adults in the room provide a model of sexual equality for the children to emulate.

L. Integrating Emotionally Disturbed Children into the Program

The interview procedure, discussed earlier, enables the staff to screen out children with serious pathology. However, once the Center's program began running smoothly and effectively, the staff began accepting children who show signs of varying degrees of emotional disturbance, providing that all three teachers feel, after several observation sessions, that they can work with the child without endangering the safety and well-being of the other children in the Center or that particular child her/himself. The staff, including Professor L., believes that the Center provides a therapeutic environment that indeed benefits such children. The teachers realize that they are not qualified to diagnose emotional illness, but they are able to recognize disturbances, based on their experience with children, formal training in early childhood educa-

tion, and insight into child behavior. While none of the children in question were in treatment upon entering the Center, some of them began seeing a therapist as a result of our referrals after working with the child and parent.

Very often it is impossible to detect any disturbance in the initial interviews and orientation sessions, and the problem behavior does not surface until the child is comfortable enough in the school setting to allow her/his true feelings to appear. This was the case with Barry, a tall boy of five who entered the Center for his initial interview tense, frowning, and biting his nails. This demeanor remained throughout the session, but he was able to work competently and creatively with the materials, and was articulate and mature in his conversation with the teachers. The teachers accepted him into the Center, attributing his tension to uneasiness in a new situation. In a short time, however, it became apparent that Barry was a very troubled child. He invariably gravitated toward the two-year-olds, arousing them with loud, nonsensical, and scatological baby-talk. The younger children quickly followed his lead, and soon the group would be screaming and running around the room after Barry, who had a gleeful, demonic smile on his face. He also acted out aggressively toward the other children, and always blamed them when confronted with his acts by one of the teachers. In addition, Barry began to wet his pants in school and at home every day. On the positive side, however, Barry was

extremely intelligent and eager to learn, besides being an extremely talented artist. He loved to draw all the Sesame Street characters, which he did quite skillfully and imaginatively.

Fortunately, Barry's mother was very receptive to our suggestion that she seek outside help for him. She appreciated our informing her of Barry's behavior in school, realizing that our motive was one of concern and the desire to help, rather than condemnation. Barry was referred to a child guidance clinic where, after extensive testing, he was diagnosed as "borderline psychotic." He began play therapy once a week with a social worker, who also saw the mother periodically. The teachers had frequent contacts with the social worker in order to coordinate our efforts.

Basically, the teachers were very firm with Barry when he began to lose control, removing him from the stimulating situation. At the same time, one of the three teachers spent some time each day in a one-to-one situation with Barry, working on reading and drawing, both of which he enjoyed. Barry could only concentrate on such work when seated alone at a table with a teacher; if there were other children at the table, even engaging in their own work, he would become over-stimulated and begin provoking them and regressing to infantile behavior. With regard to his enuresis, a teacher cheerfully but matter-of-factly brought him to the bathroom when he arrived at the Center, and a few times during the day. At home, toileting was an explosive conflict between Barry and his mother, and he continued to wet, but began to remain dry at school.

Barry developed a close attachment to his teachers, and while he continued to have periods of infantile regression and aggressive behavior, he was able to control himself and work productively for longer periods of time as the semester progressed. When Barry turned six, he was accepted at a special school for emotionally disturbed children, run by the agency where he received his therapy, and which he currently attends.

Although Barry is still a troubled child, he was fortunate in obtaining help at a very young age. Many parents, unlike Barry's mother, deny that there is anything "wrong" with their child, the thought being so frightening to them, and consequently the child is denied much needed guidance and treatment. Such was the case with Chester, who entered the Center at three years of age. On his first day, he immediately went toward a box of wooden letters and began taking them out one by one and identifying them. He seemed unaware of the presence of the teachers or other children, repeating the names of the letters over and over: "C,C,C,C,Y,Y,Y,Y, A,A,A,..." etc. He also talked aloud to himself, using sophisticated vocabulary but not making any sense. Chester walked around the room pointing to the letters on charts and posters. When a teacher spoke to him, his eyes did not focus on her face. Besides perseverating, he sometimes sat rocking with a pained expression, emitting a sound like "Ooooo, Ooooo..." He did not really communicate with the teachers and the other children, was not toilet trained, and could not do simple things for himself, like take his

jacket off or pull down his pants when brought to the bathroom. His musculature, especially in his hands, seemed weak and ineffectual.

The staff tried to help Chester by encouraging him to paint, use play-dough, build with blocks, in short, to experience the non-academic areas of the room. At first this was unsuccessful; he became very anxious, and sought refuge with his numbers and letters. Gradually, he made a connection to one of the teachers, was able to communicate his desires to her, and eventually made some connection to the materials and other children through this teacher.

Chester's mother became extremely defensive when one of the teachers described his behavior in school and voiced the staff's concern. Mrs. M., a tense, nervous woman, considered her son a "brilliant" child, who knew so much more than other children his age, and denied that he had any problems at home or in school. She was unable to see that this "knowledge" was purely mechanical, with no meaning attached to it. She became quite angry at any suggestion of referral, and blamed the teachers for undervaluing the importance of knowing letters and numbers. It was obvious that continuing to discuss Chester's problem would only make his mother more defensive and hostile, and therefore work against our efforts to help the child. Gradually, Chester became more interested in the blocks and art activities, and even smiled and joked occasionally, but continued to show bizarre behavior. The teachers reported only the

positive, improved behavior to Mrs. M., and she became somewhat more relaxed and cooperative. When a parent is so anxious and frightened by the possibility of something being amiss with her child, as in this case, the Center staff can only use their own resources and the classroom materials to help the child, which usually makes for some improvement.

#### M. Summer Session

In the beginning of the Center's existence, the parents urged the Student Association to allocate funds to allow the program to continue during the college's summer session. For most of the parents, it takes three years, rather than two, to complete their studies, since they must limit the number of courses they take, due to the demands of child rearing as well as the great number of courses and field work assignments required for the professional programs. With the Center functioning during summer session, the parents can accelerate their progress toward graduation and subsequent employment and/or further studies to obtain a bachelor's degree.

Summer session is a pleasant feature of the Center. The children spend most of the day outdoors in the play yard, where a sprinkler is set up in addition to the regular equipment, i.e., sandbox, climbing apparatus, tricycles, etc. The teachers also bring tables and chairs outside, so that most activities can take place there in good weather, such as kindergarten work, sewing, art



projects, etc. The children also have music and movement activities and snacks in the yard.

College classes during summer session meet for two hours each, Monday through Thursday, for a total of six weeks. Therefore, the summer session offers an excellent opportunity for an extended orientation period for children who will be entering the Center full-time in the fall. In fact, mothers of very young children are encouraged to enroll in one course over the summer, even if they had not planned to do so. Because of the short hours and relaxed, informal nature of the program, new children who attend summer session are better able to cope with longer hours in the Center in the fall than those who do not.

The end of summer session is celebrated with a big barbecue and outdoor art show for Day Care children, parents, staff, and members of the college community. All the parents pitch in at the grill, and the creative efforts of the children over the summer are displayed in the yard. These include easel paintings, sponge paintings, collages, embroidery, wood constructions, clay sculpture, and tie-dyed T-shirts.

## CHAPTER V

## FUTURE GOALS AND DIRECTIONS OF THE DAY CARE CENTER

The greatest single development to affect the direction of the Center in the future, albeit indirectly, is the recent budget cuts suffered by every branch of the City University system. Fortunately, the cutbacks did not drastically alter the Center's funding. The Student Association continues to allocate a budget sufficient for the Center's needs. The Board of Directors of the Center was able to maintain parents' fees at the current rate for the coming semester, and while the allowance for classroom supplies is less than in previous years, it still adequately provides materials of good quality for the program.

The main effects of the budget cuts are indirect, yet substantial. Due to the firings of numerous counselors in the Department of Student Services, the work load of the Faculty Coordinator has increased enormously, leaving her less time for her involvement with the Center. However, it was always the goal of Professor L. to delegate more responsibility to the parents and the teachers; the present reality adds immediacy to this goal. But keeping in mind the difficulty the Center has faced when unsuitable people have assumed positions of leadership, I believe it behooves the Faculty Coordinator and teachers to keep a watchful eye on possible new candidates for office, and to encourage those with

leadership ability and genuine concern for their children and the Center to become involved with the Center's administration. Once competent people have been elected to the Board, the outgoing Chairperson, Faculty Coordinator, and Teacher-Director, who are most familiar with the operation of the Center, must educate them as to their duties and responsibilities, and then allow the new Board to assume its role in the Center. Another important goal is the formulation of written guidelines for the duties and responsibilities of the various officers and the Board as a whole. The present Board is now working toward this goal, which will provide valuable assistance for future parent Boards.

Another result of the cutbacks has been the reduction in the number of courses available to the student-parents. They no longer have flexibility in adjusting their programs according to the needs of their children, since they have little or no choice as to which classes and what hours they may attend. Adding to this problem, and also a result of the budget cuts, is the imposition of tuition. Most of the parents are now receiving governmental tuition assistance, requiring them to carry a minimum of twelve credits and/or three hours per day, which is often too long a duration for most two-year-olds. Furthermore, the school day has been reduced from ten class periods to nine, causing the early morning and late afternoon hours, which used to have very few children, to be filled to capacity. Consequently, the teachers are not able to give as much one-to-one attention to the two-year-olds

as before.

However, a concurrent development has arisen which mitigates this situation. The Educational Consultant from the Department of Health, in reviewing the Center's license, noticed that the age span as indicated, two through six years old, was greater than allowed by law. She has informed the Center that henceforth, children admitted to the program must be a minimum of two years and nine months of age. While the staff regrets the loss of this delightful age group, they will now have more time to give one-to-one attention to children with problems.

Yet another effect of the budget cuts has been the institution, within the past year, of a new and different college calendar. Instead of the fall, spring, and summer semesters, the school year is now broken up into a twelve-week semester, followed by a six-week semester of classes four days a week, followed by another twelve-week semester, and finally another six-week semester. The two short semesters are optional, but most of the Day Care parents attend at least one of them. This new calendar has created a great deal of pressure for the teaching staff. Besides adding an additional interview and orientation session to the year, the teachers must crowd all the preparations for special activities and events into a shorter time span. The long-range planning of elaborate productions for holidays and other occasions had to be eliminated, with more emphasis on the day-to-day classroom activities. However, the addition of another six-week semester

provides an opportunity for more children to get adjusted to the Center, as discussed earlier with regard to the summer session.

The parents are also busier than ever before. They must complete their course work in a shorter time span, and find that they are constantly studying for mid-term and final exams. Thus, they have less free time to give to the administration of the Center. Besides this, they have fewer or no free periods to work in the Day Care office, and even when they do, it is sometimes impossible to schedule their child in the Center for that hour because it is filled to capacity. Considering the fact that greater parent involvement is an important goal of the Center, the Faculty Coordinator, parents and teachers are currently working on this problem.

One fortuitous change for the Center is the move to larger and better-equipped quarters on campus, scheduled for the spring of 1978. Construction of new campus buildings has been going on for six years now, and the Center is moving to a suite of rooms formerly occupied by the health services, which has been relocated in one of the new buildings. The new space consists of a classroom larger than the present one, a staff office, a conference room, a separate cubby room, two bathrooms, and an enclosed play yard. The Center is hoping to acquire another room in the same building to serve as an indoor gym during the winter and in inclement weather at other times. The Center will now be able to

economize by shopping for its grocery supplies in large quantities, which has been impossible in its present quarters due to lack of storage space.

With regard to the future of the educational program, the teaching staff is attempting to develop and expand the math and science part of the curriculum, areas which have been somewhat neglected in the past. All three teachers are more knowledgeable and interested in the creative arts and reading readiness aspects of the program, and realize the need to improve the math and science in order to provide the children with an adequate background in these areas. In the past year they have begun an indoor and outdoor gardening project, and have explored some new ways to use cuisinaire rods and logic blocks. However, they feel that they would benefit from participating in educational workshops in math and science, and by visiting schools with innovative programs in these and other areas. They are planning to schedule some time for these workshops and visits during college intersessions.

In the past, the teachers have held occasional group meetings with the parents to discuss educational and general child-rearing concerns, but never on a regularly scheduled basis. They feel there is a need for such group meetings, since parents often feel that they are the only ones with certain questions and problems, and feel freer to air them when they realize other parents share their concerns. Also, the parents provide each other with suggestions and support at such discussions. The teachers feel

that curriculum workshops, in which the parents, without their children present, experience the various materials and activities in the room, would lead to a greater understanding of the significance and goals of a pre-school education. Arranging such meetings and workshops is another priority for the future.

The entire city of New York, along with its public institutions of higher learning, is constantly facing crisis after crisis. It is impossible now to envision what form the future of the City University will take. However, I believe that as long as this particular community college exists, the Day Care Center will flourish, and continue to serve as a model for future college day care centers. If and when the current Faculty Coordinator and teaching staff leave, it is inevitable that the Center will also undergo changes in policy and program. However, the present staff is committed to certain fundamental principles that they hope will continue into the future, and indeed insure that there will be a future. These principles are: to maintain the concern for the growth and well-being of young children that is evident in the high professional standards of the Center, and to maintain the honesty and openness of communication among the various people involved with the Center, as a means of dealing with conflict and change.

## FOOTNOTES

1. The information contained in this chapter relating to the establishment of the Center is based on the unpublished correspondence, memoranda, and documents of the parties involved.
2. In a study of mothers using family day care, "...80% said they would switch to group care if given the opportunity," Greta G. Fein and Alison Clarke-Stewart, Day Care in Context, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1973), p. 42.
3. Bernard Greenblatt and Lois Eberhard, in Children on Campus: A Survey of Pre-Kindergarten Programs at Institutions of Higher Education in the United States, (Washington, D. C.: United States Department of Labor, 1973), p. 16, find that 52% of the day care centers surveyed were initiated by student-parents.
4. Joan Gallagher, "A Study of Women College Students Whose Children Attend the College Day Care Center," (Unpublished paper, Brooklyn College, January, 1977), p. 7.
5. Patricia Eggleston and Suzanne McFarland, "Home-School Interface Patterns: Parent Involvement in Day Care Centers and Pre-schools," in Viewpoints, No. 51 (January, 1975), p. 24.
6. John Bowlby, Separation: Anxiety and Anger, (New York, Basic Books, 1973), p. 183. Also, Irving Sigel et al., "Social and Emotional Development of Young Children," in Day Care: Resources for Decisions, ed. Edith Grotberg, (Washington D. C.: Office of Economic Opportunity; Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, 1971), p. 111.
7. Bowlby, op. cit., pp. 22-23.
8. Ibid., p. 202.
9. Ibid., p. 16.
10. E. Kuno Beller, "Adult-Child Interaction and Personalized Day Care," in Day Care: Resources for Decisions, op. cit., p. 231.
11. Fein and Clarke-Stewart, op. cit., p. 118.
12. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963), pp. 33-36.
13. Phyllis Taube Greenleaf, "Liberating Young Children from Sex Roles," in Vicki Breitbart, The Day Care Book, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), pp. 149-153.



14. Feminists on Children's Media, Little Miss Muffet Fights Back: Recommended Non-Sexist Books About Girls for Young Readers, (New York: 1971).

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McCord, Ivalee. "Child Care Centers: A Boon for Campus Mothers." Journal of Home Economics, No. 65, April, 1973, pp. 26-28.

APPENDIX

ROOM ARRANGEMENT

