

Paris, 8th November, 1974

Directorate for Social Affairs
Manpower and Education

Or. Engl.

WORKING DOCUMENT

Social Affairs and Industrial
Relations Division

MS/S/74.9



WORKING PARTY ON "THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY"

26th-29th November, 1974

Point 6 of the Agenda: Care of Children of Working Parents

(Note by the Secretariat)

1. The present draft report was prepared on the basis of information gathered during a brief survey in the following Member countries: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, Norway and Sweden. Preliminary background documentation was circulated to members of the Working Party as document MS/S/74.8. The summary of this survey has been prepared by Miss Martha Darling. It should also be added that a steering group of the CERI for a programme of National projects in early childhood education took place last October at OECD, experts were present from 13 Member countries, including four of those covered by the "child care survey" (Denmark, France, Norway and Sweden), and cooperation has been established within the Secretariat to ensure a unified approach.

2. The present draft report summarises policies and programmes regarding children in the seven European countries named above. It will help identify the major issues raised by the different approaches to taking care of children while their parents are working and will clarify the lines which may be followed in formulating new policies on the matter.

3. Various changes have contributed to bringing child-care problems to the foreground, such as a greater degree of participation in the labour force by married women, more particularly those with young children, and also an increase in the participation of single-parent families. These changes need to be measured with greater precision to enable the extent and evolution of the problems to be determined; statistics could be improved so as to assess the real requirements and the result of the new provisions made to cope with them.

4. It has become increasingly obvious from a variety of sources that it is no longer desirable, at a policy level, to maintain any degree of separation between planning for full day care and planning for pre-primary education. The existence in most OECD Member countries of administratively separate traditions - ministries of health or social welfare on the one hand, and of education on the other, - will render difficult the necessary process of integration, but there are already signs of progress.

5. The evidence for 'positive benefit' from participation in nursery school has not so far been forthcoming, and the capacity of special pre-school programmes to "compensate" for assumed "social inequality" remains to be demonstrated convincingly. But there is an increasing awareness of the negative possibilities for normal child development in the provision of child-minding facilities, from birth onwards, that are non based firmly on trained staff, appropriate staff/child ratios, suitable physical facilities - and an integrated approach to development.

6. The immediate need is for a general recognition of the fact that an opportunity exists for a fresh approach: the abandonment of ad hoc "social assistance" provision on an ever increasing scale, and the substitution of coordinated and planned provision which takes full account of the total needs of children and of their parents.

7. The lack of adequate child-care facilities also has its effect on the working parents and especially on working women who are the ones normally deprived of an equal opportunity freely to choose a job, occupation or profession, if adequate arrangements to relieve them of the task of looking after their children during working hours do not exist. This reinforces the need for such complementary programmes as: flexible working-time, part-time job opportunities, financial compensation for loss of income while taking care of young and/or sick children etc.

8. The survey carried out in the seven countries mentioned above shows that there is still a long way to go before a desirable degree of coherence in policy making is reached. This will require more co-ordination as between pre-primary and primary school systems, especially in regard to pre-school child development and care; a prolongation of specific care after school hours and a clear definition of responsibilities as between the various authorities involved is also needed. Educational, health and social services are all concerned here, and options will have to be reviewed with regard to the integration of pre-school and after-school programmes within the school or other child-care systems.

9. After certain general options have been considered, the developmental and educational objectives and the different pedagogical methods required to reach these objectives must be reviewed carefully. Consequently, the availability of competent and well-trained child-care staff will vary according to the special national situations and also according to the various concepts regarding the care of pre-school and school age children. Educational plans must be adjusted to cover the shortage of qualified pre-primary teachers.

10. But the care of children cannot be entrusted alone to the school, day-nurseries and competent teachers; the positive involvement of parents must also be taken into account. Arrangements will therefore be necessary not only to facilitate the participation of parents in the decision making process and in the management of such practices as flexibility of working hours, time-off for meetings or training sessions, but also to improve the education of young adults (in secondary schools) in the skills and responsibilities of parenthood.

11. Finally, the present comparative survey highlights certain modalities concerning the financing of child care (public and/or private) and the proportion of such costs to be borne by parents.

12. It is hoped that the foregoing paragraphs will help the Working Party focus their discussions on the issues upon which it is appropriate to formulate conclusions. The present draft report is submitted to the Working Party as a basis for it to:

- (a) propose additional issues and provide additional information;
- (b) advise the Manpower and Social Affairs Committee on the desirability of its derestriction and possible publication ; and
- (c) formulate policy conclusions for improving the availability and quality of child-care facilities for children of pre-school and primary school age in close cooperation with the work as CERI of the care and education of pre-primary schoolchildren.





"The time has come", the Walrus said,
"to talk of many things:
Of shoes -- and ships -- and sealing-wax --
Of cabbages -- and kings --"

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro
Lewis Carroll
Through the Looking-Glass
1971

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION : WHY CHILD CARE?	6
II. TOWARD A POLICY OF CHILD CARE	8
A. THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE FAMILY	8
B. THE SOURCES OF "DEMAND"	9
(1) The developmental needs of children	9
(2) Equal life chances	10
(3) Labour market demand and working women	12
(4) Equal opportunities for women	13
C. COPING WITH DEMAND: THE IMPORTANCE OF PLANNING	14
D. THE QUESTION OF VALUES	16
III. PROGRAMMING TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE DEVELOPING CHILD	18
A. DISCONTINUITIES IN CARE AND CARE INSTITUTIONS	18
(1) The preprimary years	18
(2) From preprimary to primary school	22
(3) The preschool year in Scandinavia	25
B. LEARNING EXPERIENCES: PLANNED OR UNPLANNED?	28
(4) Relevance and curriculum content	29
C. PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL TRAINING	31
(5) Staff/child ratios	34
D. PARENT INVOLVEMENT	35
(6) Obstacles to parent participation	37
(7) Parent education	39
IV. ISSUES IN THE DELIVERY OF CHILD CARE	40
A. THE QUANTITATIVE PROVISION OF CHILD CARE	40
B. HOURS OF OPERATION	42
C. WHO ATTENDS? ACCESS AND USE	43
	.../...

D. URBAN/RURAL DIFFERENCES IN CARE PROVISION	44
E. THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR	45
F. FINANCING CHILD CARE	47
(1) The public role	47
(2) Costs to parents	51
G. ALTERNATE MODELS FOR THE DELIVERY OF CHILD CARE	53
(1) Institutional provision	53
(2) Family day care	54
(3) Direct income transfers and individual choice	58
H. THE IMPORTANCE OF PLANNING	60
V. WHO IS GOING TO CHANGE? THE FUTURE ORGANISATION OF WORK AND FAMILY LIFE	62

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro



GLOSSARY

For the purposes of this paper, the following terms will be employed with reference to the types of child care provision and the issues surrounding child care policy:

- CRECHES - institutions for children in the age range 0-3 years old
- KINDERGARTENS- institutions for children in the age range 2½-school age
- DAY NURSERIES- institutions for all children 0-school age, comprising both differentiated age groups, mixed "sibling" groups and integrated age groups (e.g. children 3-7)
- FAMILY DAY CARE (FDC) - publicly supported and supervised care for small groups of children (general five or less) by "family day care mothers" in their own homes
- PRESCHOOL CLASS - the programs found in the Scandinavian countries for all six-years-olds in the year prior to school entry at age seven
- PREPRIMARY - those years from the child's birth to the age of school entry
- PRESCHOOL CHILDREN - generally children between the ages of primary school entry and eleven or twelve.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

I. INTRODUCTION: Why Child Care?

1. Perhaps the most important reason for a paper on child care at this time is the recent legislative activity in this area in almost every industrial country. In some cases the governmental response to the social demand for child care has included sweeping legislative action - such as the child care laws of Finland and Sweden both passed in 1973, and the Norwegian legislation which will be before Parliament in late 1974 and early 1975 - that will vastly increase the availability of the programs and services for young children. In some countries this legislative activity represents the first creation of a national program or system. In other countries Parliaments have already passed legislation and will be considering additional, extensive legislation which will dramatically expand their child care systems. In recognition of the social issues involved and the potential impact of this parliamentary activity on the development of young children, it is both timely and important to analyze the issues related to the provision of child care and to establish their inter-relationships and interdependencies as elements of a comprehensive policy on child care

2. The actual origins of this paper lie in the OECD meeting of experts on "The Role of Women in the Economy" which took place on 3-6 December 1973 in Washington D.C. One of the major issue areas recommended by that group for far greater study and analysis by individual countries and by the OECD was child care. To quote from the conclusions of that meeting:

"The child care area is one that will particularly benefit from the exchange of international data of all kinds on national experiences and experiments. Better information is needed on a range of topics and it should be centralised so that it may be shared by all countries. Among the specific topics experts identified for further study were: data on developmental standards and mental health of children, especially infants, in different kinds of child care arrangements; different national attitudes and experiments about small family care arrangements compared with larger care centers; what conditions which have led - or forced - countries into the kinds of child care systems they have and what was the nature of the debate on the issue; costs, standards, training of personnel and quality of care in child care systems; direct income transfers (allowances, subsidies) compared with tax deductions as a means of funding child care; cost-benefit analysis of different types of care; and the problem of mothers' "guilt" when their children are in different types of child care arrangements".

3. Because this listing of topics is so extensive, even global in scope, a necessary starting point in introducing the present paper is to clarify what the paper is and what it is not. It is not a finished, definitive work. Nor is it comprehensive in its international coverage. It is a preliminary report based on preliminary studies of child care provision in seven countries only. It is an attempt to identify, on the basis of experiences and experiments of these countries, the major issues in child care and to relate them to each other as elements of a comprehensive child care policy.

4. The countries selected for inclusion in this initial work were Belgium, France, Italy, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Their selection was not random. For in selecting them we wanted to focus on two major approaches to public child care provision: the creche/kindergarten ("crèche"/"école maternelle") system originally developed in France, and the recently developed comprehensive integrated day nursery system associated with the Scandinavian countries. Several countries with each approach were studied for the purposes of making comparisons and clarifying differences within each approach as well as between the two approaches. Obviously, several other important approaches to child care have not been dealt with, most significantly the voluntaristic approach generally associated with the United Kingdom, the United States and other countries of Anglo-Saxon heritage. The absence of these approaches constitutes a serious limitation of the present paper which, it is hoped, might be remedied in the later work of the Working Party.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro



5. Not all forms of child care arrangements, even in the countries studied, are treated in this paper. The focus has been on public policies on child care provision and therefore attention has been devoted exclusively to that care organised, supervised, regulated and/or subsidised by the public authorities in the different countries. But even in its treatment of these public care systems the paper cannot be described as comprehensive. It draws very selectively on the wealth of programs, policies, laws, experiences, and experiments available, using this details to illustrate, to highlight and to clarify the policy issues.

6. Finally, the paper does not conclude with proposals for any single method, approach or universal form of preprimary education which it urges on policy-makers. Such is not the purpose of the paper. Moreover, since policy necessarily varies according to different cultural and historical influences, different politico-administrative principles and practices,

local conditions and different societal values, this would be an impossible and futile task. The intent instead has been to try to provide a framework which identifies what appears to be the critical issues and outstanding problem points in policy formulation on child care. In discussing these issues, the paper suggests some of the alternatives and trade-offs open to policy makers, indicates what different countries have done and with what results and ventures opinions and speculations on policy implications and on new directions for policy. The actual organisation of the paper follows the issue framework. The issue areas identified are not always precise and often overlap into other sections. In this lack of tidiness they mirror the conceptual difficulties encountered in structuring the child care topic. Such is the work of pioneering. Suggestions, criticisms, and recommendations on how the framework might be improved will be highly valued by the author.

II. TOWARD A POLICY OF CHILD CARE

A. THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE FAMILY

7. Child care has only recently and quite suddenly become an important public policy issue in a growing number of industrial countries. Although the specific character of the policy debate differs from country to country, certain changes in family structure and living conditions, occurring in all societies and arising out of the economic and social impacts of industrialisation, provide a common backdrop for the discussion of the "demand" for child care provision.

8. What are these changes? First, size. The average family today is far smaller than its counterpart of 50 or 100 years ago. The falling birth rate, reflected in parental decisions to have fewer children is one answer. Urbanisation and the shift of the population from the land to the cities, have also contributed to the demise of the earlier "extended" family household of grandparents, parents and children. The modern family finds itself reduced to a "nuclear" family situation of only two generations.

9. Urbanisation - the move from rural to urban environments - has brought another important change in family living conditions. Earlier in the century, when parents lived and worked in the same place - often the family farm or shop - the care of children was not as great a problem as today because children could often be tended by the parents even as they both worked. With the shift from work in agriculture to paid employment in factories and firms, the division between home and work place was established, taking the working parent away from the home. In addition, the changing patterns of urban accommodation - more and more, self-contained urban apartments in large urban blocks and suburban single home tracts of women and children -



have further contributed to the nuclearisation and isolation of the modern family and contributed to the disappearance of informal family and community support systems which can respond to family needs.

10. In addition to its reduction in size, the modern family has undergone considerable change in the roles played by its constituent members. Grandparents and older brothers and sisters are less frequently available to share in the care of younger children. More importantly, in an increasing number of families both mother and father now work, often on a full time basis. The increasing proportion of married women who are leaving their homes for paid employment in the labour market includes growing numbers of mothers with young children. Whether their labour force participation is motivated by reasons of economic necessity or reflects a free personal choice of labour market work over work in the home, it means that these women are less often present full-time in the home to care for their children. The trend toward families with two working parents - and the growing numbers of single-parent families - is on the increase in most countries. The trend for married women, including those with young children, to join or return to the labour force is likely to continue irrespective of fluctuating demand for labour.

11. All of these changes in family structure and living conditions have seriously eroded the family's ability to provide all the physical care and developmental stimulus their children require. Parents have for that reason brought increasing pressure to bear "demand" in every country for public measures designed to assist them with the care and upbringing of their children.

B. THE SOURCES OF "DEMAND"

12. The "demand" for child care is not a simple thing, but a complex of different interests and needs, partly economic in origin and partly based on values. These differences on the source of demand translated in terms into facilities demanded.

(1) The Developmental Needs of Children

13. One of the major areas of demand for child care provision derives from a concern with the developmental and/or educational needs of children. Broadly, this refers to social, emotional, intellectual and physical needs and may or may not include instructional learning of language and mathematics skills.

14. This developmental demand flows from the recognition of the determining influence exerted by the early years in a child's life on the whole of his or her future. According to scientific research, 80 percent of the intellectual development of a child occurs before the child has reached its seventh year. A richly stimulating environment in the

child's early years is required for the optimal development of each individual. Although formal schooling begins at age 6 or 7, it is clear that the important learning years for children begin at a much younger age than that of school entry. Further, while it has always been recognised that families from some socio-economic groups have been less able to provide the complete developmental stimulus for their children (hence the origins of "compensatory" schemes for special "deprived" groups of children), this is now recognised as increasingly true for all children, given the isolating effects of modern urban family situations and housing. For young preschool aged children who are beginning to develop socially, group experience can be important for individual social and emotional development and for widening the child's personal contacts. Thus many believe that providing preprimary opportunities for stimulating active involvement and personal interaction between children and adults and among children are major contributions organised child care has to make.

15. This developmental demand does not, however, generally include all children of preprimary age. For the most part, the age break comes at $2\frac{1}{2}$ or 3 years. Once children have reached this age, the educational and socialisation purposes of the preschool experience are seen to benefit them. Care provision for children under three has not, by and large, had the sanction of this "developmental" value. (1).

16. Thus the type of child care provision generated by the developmental demand is the universal part-day care system, generally for children who have reached the age of $2\frac{1}{2}$ or 3. Considerable attention is devoted to "quality" issues in this care: the number and training of personnel, staff-child ratios, physical facilities, comprehensive medical and social services, parent education and parent involvement among them. This demand would also be likely to favor the provision of part-time preprimary programs where none existed over the introduction of less than universal full-time care whose use of limited resources would entail the total absence of preschool education in some areas.

(2) Equal life chances

17. Another source of demand for preprimary care provision is the concern for equalising life chances through greater equality of educational opportunity for all children. The social aim behind the expansion of school systems and extension of compulsory schooling in the last decades has especially been to create such equal opportunities for children, without regard to parents' socio-economic and cultural background,

(1) This issue is discussed at length in paragraphs 40-48.



place of residence and other home conditions. Yet there is an established linkage between school attainment and achievement levels, on the one hand, and non-school living situation and experiences, on the other. And the fact is that families have unequal possibilities in providing an atmosphere that is conducive to the child's development, intellectual growth and socialisation. Parents with little education do not have the same possibilities as highly educated parent to assist and support their children in learning situations. They may also be less able financially or less motivated to send their children to preprimary care programs. These differences in environmental situation and in parental attitudes toward learning make their influence felt even before children begin attending school.

18. Recognition of the unequal circumstances some children bring with them to school has already received attention in the form of preprimary programs designed to "compensate" for educational deprivation due to poor home conditions. While this limited "compensatory education" approach has been more common in some countries than others, it is now becoming more universally accepted, given the increasing emphasis many societies are placing on equal life chances and given the recognition that the determinants of these chances begin very early in the child's life. In order, therefore, to give children a more equal start in life, many favor providing young children with opportunities for acquiring basic social and intellectual skills under the supervision of qualified teachers in enriched preprimary programs. They argue that the public provision of such programs on a universal basis presents real possibilities for evening out the great differences in opportunity which often exist between children as a result of family background. Moreover, failure to provide all children with the opportunities to benefit from preschool experience at this crucial stage in their development reduces the likelihood of equality of opportunity and later life chances.

19. The "demand" for child care provision deriving from the social concern with equality calls, consequently, for a mix of educational and social services. Its basic developmental component would dictate a universal public system, operating on a part-day basis, principally for children beyond 2½ or 3 years of age. The inclusion of younger children in this care and longer daily stays for older children may be indicated for those with special needs for compensatory care which preprimary education can in part provide: among them, children living in isolation in tall apartment buildings; children of working and single parents; culturally deprived children; children from overcrowded homes, from low socio-economic status and low education homes; from immigrant families; as well as children with mental and physical handicaps. Thus, while preprimary provision will serve a purely complementary purpose for some children in the form of part-day programs, for others it will represent opportunities for guidance, supervision, and support their families are largely or wholly unable to provide.

20. But early exposure to group learning experiences in organised child care is not alone sufficient to secure equal life chances for children. Available evidence in the field of preprimary education as well as at later stages suggests that if the educational system is to make a positive contribution to the development of the child as well as to eliminating some of the environmentally-related inequalities between children, non-educational policies must be combined with policies of a more strictly "educational" nature. That is, policies for preprimary care and early primary education should be conceptually linked and coordinated with a spectrum of broader social, housing, and health policies which treat the child and the family as a unit. The comprehensive, integrated neighborhood child center might be the most appropriate focal point for this socio-educational policy approach to care provision.

(3) Labour market demand and working women

21. Labour market demand is that form of economically-derived pressure from industry, the trade unions and/or ministries of labour in times of labour shortages which supports child care provision as a necessary measure to attract women into the labour force. In the absence of sufficient numbers of child care spaces, female labour force participation is likely to rise to a certain plateau level, from which it is unlikely to move until other social measures - child care provision foremost among them - intervene to make labour market work both economically worthwhile and logistically feasible to women still at home. This type of demand appears to be the most politically potent and influential of all the demands for child care provision - the one political decision makers are least likely to ignore.

22. The demand originating from the economic situation is more a demand for quantity than quality provision. In its purist form, children and their needs are not the central concern of this demand; freeing both parents for work is. Labour market demand is likely to regard public expenditures on upgrading quality in existing institutions as of much lower priority than the creation of new places for greater capacity. It is likely to favour institutions with long hours of opening, conceivably up to 24 hours a day to accommodate shift workers, and all-year care provision. The main purpose of such care facilities is to ensure that the child will be taken care of during periods when both parents are at work, at a minimum level of cost but with a certain basic level of standards so parents will be willing to entrust their children to the care system. Pure labour market demand is little concerned with care content: if care has a developmental component, its inclusion results from other sources of demand. Finally, this demand is not stable and the "support" for child care emanating from the labour market is likely to be as cyclical as is the economy: When the marginal demand for extra workers (the women) falls off, so most likely will the demand for child care.



(4) Equal opportunities for women

23. The phenomenon of women's increasing labour force participation is part of a more general social issue relating to changes in the traditional sex roles of men and women. The movement toward securing equality in rights and opportunities for women has also generated pressure on child care policies. For the position of women in society and particularly in the labour market still depends to a very great extent on the care arrangements for young children the family - more usually the mother - can make. Although the burdens of housework have been eased by a variety of low cost labour saving devices, the problem of finding a substitute for the mother to care for young children is less readily solved. While husbands could assume, or at least share the responsibility, the cultural bias that has given women the primary responsibility for child care often means that such arrangements are socially difficult at best.

24. In the end all discussions of equality for women come down to the question of who is to care for the young children. It is for these reasons that many today view the problem of child care as the most important social issue related to the changing attitudes of women toward work and of society toward women working. If women are to be free to work on an equal basis with men, exercising their right to choice in occupations, with full time work in the home being only one among many possibilities, then the provision of widespread publicly subsidized child care will be required.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

25. Thus in contrast to labour market demand, which seeks only to draw women into the labour force, this equality demand is most concerned with choice. Its aim is not simply to release women for labour market activity but to create the conditions which equalize to some degree the external considerations in women's choice between work at home and work in the labour market. This means the possibility for certain women to stay at home full-time with their children, the possibility for others to work full-time and finally the possibility for still others to spend part-time in both activities. Choice in the matter of the care and upbringing of children is, in fact, increasingly recognised as important not only for creating equal opportunities for women in the job market, education and society more generally, but also for improving the quality of life for parents and for the family as a whole. Choice also implies greater flexibility in men's roles as well as women's, with the possibility for men and women to share both work and family roles.

26. The equality-associated demand for child care calls for a variety of public policies which are not strictly or even primarily "educational" in nature. Some of these are more broadly social and economic and most directly affect the working conditions and environment of the parents. In principle,

the equality demand favors 24-hour institutions which operate on a full-year basis, as in the case of labour market demand. But the value of parenting also asserts itself here in the form of direct and indirect subsidies allowing for a parent (either mother or father) to be occupied in child care activities full-time, part-time or when needed (as in the case of a sick child). Social insurance policies and child allowances designed to compensate for the loss of income at such times; full child care cost deductions; extended parental or maternity leave policies; flexible working hours; shorter working days for parents with small children; portable pension and seniority rights; and the increase or creation of more non-marginal part-time jobs are among the most important policies coupled with child care provision in the equality demand.

C. COPING WITH DEMAND: THE IMPORTANCE OF PLANNING

27. From the preceding discussion "demand" for child care provision can be seen to have two dimensions - quantity and quality - which are not uniformly or equally present at any point in time. First, quantity. Defined most simply, quantity concerns the numbers of child care places available and planned, the hours of opening, the distribution of place between urban and rural areas, and so on. Labour market demand is frequently demand for quantity. The second dimension of demand is quality. Quality is the major thrust of the demand for developmentally-oriented child care and is concerned with questions of content, methods, teacher training and staff/child ratios.

28. Virtually every country's decision and policies on child care provision are a combination of quantity and quality demand elements. Whether the emphasis is more on quantity care provision or more on quality is a question of timing, depending as it does upon which sources of demand are most pressing, receive the greatest attention, win the widest favor, cause the greatest concern and exert the most powerful influence on the political decision making. The challenge and test for government policy in this situation of fluctuating demands is how well policy makers manage these demands, how well they can strike a balance among competing demands in a way which maximises both quantity and quality considerations within cost limitations. Achieving this balance is not an automatic process, however, for policy formulation most often takes place in an environment of diverse and fluctuating pressures of the moment which can easily lead to abandonment of a coordinated and comprehensive policy approach in favor of ad hoc decisions or policies which seem likely to satisfy immediate demand and thereby alternate the political pressure generated.

29. The dangers in such an ad hoc approach to child care provision are several. First, if either the quantity or the quality elements of demand is allowed to dominate public policy making on child care, the "need" for care provision may be defined in a uni-dimensional manner which ignores or obscures other requirements. This danger is most acute in the case where



the dominant demand is that arising from the conditions of the labour-market. Economic growth has long exerted a compelling influence over government policies, and the highly potent demand deriving from a labour shortage is likely to create an almost irresistible pressure on the political system to respond with the most rapid quantity "solution" possible in order to alleviate the political pressure and help the economy. In the absence of countervailing pressures favouring quality provision, the needs of children are likely to remain secondary and/or unacknowledged. The potential developmental benefits which can be built into a child care system may be sacrificed to the expeditious creation of new places at the lowest cost and in the shortest time possible. To paraphrase a close observer in France, "when demand rises quickly and the political system suddenly discovers the issue of child care, then the pressure to build facilities quickly, without a real strategy of long-term educational planning for the needs of children, results in long-term sacrifices by the children. The "battle of quality" in securing educational, child-oriented programs almost always lags behind quantity expansion to meet labour market needs for women workers. The result may be extensive provision in terms of numbers of children attending, but groups of 35 or 40 young children per teacher.

30. Another danger in ad hoc policy responses to the quantitative dimension of demand is that an over-rapid expansion of child care facilities may overburden the supportive capacity of a care system's infrastructure. New physical plan and qualified personnel cannot be created overnight, however persistent the demand. Thus there is a natural temptation and a natural tendency, where physical expansion of capacity is the priority policy goal, to lower standards in general, to accept personnel trained for "exceptional" short periods, to tolerate high child-staff ratios and to neglect the young child's developmental needs for space, materials and individual attention. This is a danger which confronts any system where the demand for child care has arisen quickly or has become suddenly politicised.

31. Beyond these very real infrastructure-overload problems, there is yet another danger in responding to quantitative demand alone, and especially under pressure: the tendency to expand capacity through straight-forward replication of existing institutions and funding formulae. The appeal of this approach for political decision-makers is that whatever exists probably already enjoys some legitimacy and some public acceptance simply by virtue of its being. Creation of more of the same is therefore less likely to cause serious public debate or objections. Nor must a policy of replication-expansion be preceded by a lengthy planning process or by experimentation to determine what form child care provision will take. But these very advantages are also this policy's major faults and drawbacks. It is not always the case that the replication of existing institutions is the best approach, either in terms of the most effective deployment of limited resources or in terms of the long-term

requirements of children, parents and society in general. "More" of a substantively inadequate preprimary program is not usually "better." Particularly at the present, when so much experimentation and discussion of child care methods and approaches is underway, it is important that all expansion plans be made only after a thorough evaluation of the existing system and of all alternatives, drawing as much as possible from the full range of international experience and ideas.

32. To point out these dangers in ad hoc policy responses to quantitative demand is not to deny the importance of quantity care provision at as low a cost as possible. Clearly quantity and cost must be major considerations in any policy of child care. For child care provision which takes place under the dominant influence of quality also poses problems. A high quality child-oriented system with very low child/adult ratios and with enriched developmental programs which is able to serve only a small proportion of the children who need care services, cannot be considered as socially responsive policy already in care provision.

33. The point to be made here is that to have a real policy on child care provision, government response to demand must balance quantity and quality considerations. Quality and quantity are not necessarily conflicting parties in a zero-sum game: Policy need not compromise one in an exclusive pursuit of the other. Instead, public authorities should seek to develop a comprehensive policy which places child care in its broad social, economic and educational context, incorporating quality and quantity elements into policy in a way which satisfies the needs of both children and parents.

D. THE QUESTION OF VALUES

34. Policy formulation in the child care field is not simply a matter of making obviously correct decisions at the appropriate time or of balancing known qualitative conclusions about "good" care for children against quantitative needs and cost limitations. The central questions of child care - what are the developmental needs of young children? and, where, how and by whom can they best be met? - concern fundamental societal values. The specific answers will reflect a society's attitudes about the position and functions of the family, the division of responsibilities between families and society with respect to the raising and well being of children, the roles of women and men and the importance of the individual and the collectivity. It is consequently not surprising that international agreement on the importance of the early years of a child's life and international concern for the "good" development of children do not translate into international consensus on the policy implications to be derived.



35. Although societal values underlie almost every aspect of child care provision, exercising a determining influence on the concept, content and organisation of care, these values are not always made explicit in a country's decisions on policy. Even the objectives of child care policy - which are a function of values - are unclear in many countries, not only to the general citizenry but also to teachers and policy makers. Policy formulated in this kind of blindness is more than likely to produce discontinuities in the care provided, uncoordinated services and uneven institutional growth.

36. In an effort to clarify this relationship between values and coherence of policy, it will be useful to look briefly at child care provision and policy in the socialist countries (1). In principle, socialism as an ideology should provide a clear common value framework for the mutual roles and obligations of citizen and state. And the public responsibility for a wide range of social and educational services to citizen is both evident and long established in practice. Child care provision has particularly benefitted from the socialist conception of the state's interest and role in the upbringing and education of children.

37. But in this institutional mix of "solutions" lies the danger. Only if the objectives of child care provision are clear, the different institutions can be related to each other in a way that constitutes unified policy. The temptation and tendency in pluralistic societies however, is to avoid value questions in policy. Instead policy-making often veers in the direction of ad hoc response to the plurality of demands in the name of "pragmatism". This blindness to the crucial importance of values and objectives rarely serves the long-term interests of the children, the parents or the society itself. And many opportunities are lost to promote the individual and social values which even pluralistic societies hold in common: creativity, spontaneity and independence; cooperation, group work, social responsibility and the equality of different classes and groups in society.

(1) Socialist municipalities should also be mentioned here, for it has been pointed out that the extent of child care provision varies as greatly between municipalities as between countries, according to the prevailing political and socio-economic ideology or value system. Thus socialist-controlled municipalities in Germany, France and Italy generally provide better equipped, more numerous and longer-operating child care centers than do non-socialist municipalities.

III. PROGRAMME TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE DEVELOPING CHILD

A. DISCONTINUITIES IN CARE AND CARE INSTITUTIONS

38. Perhaps the most fundamental issue affecting the developmental needs of children in child care is whether and how the age of the child determines the kind of care provided. On the general question of what is good for children, virtually everyone agrees that, whatever the system of child care, the aim should be to allow the child to develop naturally through its preprimary and early primary years without too many changes of place or of care-takers. The younger the child, the greater is this need for continuity.

39. Child care is not, however, always organized on a continuous basis. In analyzing care provision in different countries, a number of questions must therefore be posed: What are the major institutional breaks in the care of children 0 to 12 years of age? At what ages do they typically occur? What changes of orientation or purposes, personnel, content, physical place, teaching methods, and auxiliary health and social services do they entail? Finally, what kind of co-ordination exists between different care institutions to ease the child's transition from one to another?

(1) The Preliminary Years

40. Among the countries included in this survey, there appear to be two major approaches to the age break question, with the characteristic difference being whether the preprimary years are divided between two types of care institutions organized into two separate systems of care or whether children 0 to 6 are treated as a single group insofar as institutional provision and organization are concerned.

41. The more traditional approach to preprimary care divides the child's preprimary years, typically at age 2½ or 3, between two systems of care, the crèche for children under the age break and the kindergarten for those over it. This is the approach found in France, Belgium and Italy, and until relatively recently, also in the countries of Scandinavia. Children above the age break are generally taken to be at a developmental stage where they can benefit from and, in fact, need some group experience in a stimulating environment outside the home. The kindergarten, an institution which grew out of this positive impulse to enrich the child's experience, continues to provide such opportunities to children. Even the longer hours which full-day care in kindergartens may entail are seen as less harmful, if not totally desirable, for children of this age. Finally, these institutions win



considerable acceptance from the general citizenry in that they are frequently looked upon as a natural downward extension of the state, role and responsibility in the education of young children. Indeed, in Belgium, France, and Italy it is the Ministries of Education that are responsible for the administration and regulation of the kindergarten systems which, in many instances, occupy the same premises as the primary schools.

42. The crèches, on the other hand, are far less favored institutions. While there is a general consensus in most countries which supports widespread care programs for children over three for developmental reasons, there is considerably less agreement about the worth, need or state responsibility in providing care for children at an earlier age. Not surprisingly, this lack of agreement is reflected in the distinctly lesser status and priority accorded the crèche systems which provide care for children under three. This status difference finds expression in the division of responsibilities for the two systems: Provision for children below three falls largely under the administrative competence of Ministries of Health and/or Social Service, whereas the kindergartens are joined with the primary schools under the Ministries of Education. Again not surprisingly, the unequal status of the two types of care, compounded by administrative separation, does not facilitate easy communications between the crèches and kindergartens.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

43. But difficulty in coordination is not the only problem arising from this dualism. These differences in administrative lines of responsibility also translate into important differences in concept between the two systems. In these countries children under three have been neglected both in terms of quantitative care provision and especially in terms of the content of that care. By and large the negative image of assuring minimum health standards and protection against disease has been taken as the objective of the institutions which cater to this age group, a purpose closely associated with the charity origins of the crèche. Notably absent from the self-conception of these institutions are the children's needs, already at this age, for developmental stimulation and social contact with other children and with adults. The very limited function of the crèche is reflected in the predominantly hygiene-oriented training of the care personnel and in the content of the care provided. In Italy, for example, the older creches are almost exclusively concerned with considerations of hygiene and are even located on the premises of maternal and child clinics. Although the country's 1971 child care law has given a broader interpretation of the role of creches and in particular gives more emphasis to educational elements in the care to be provided, the training of care personnel is neither conceptually nor physically integrated with training for the kindergartens

and school system. Similarly, the public body responsible for the organization of creches in Belgium (the Oeuvre Nationale de l'Enfance) strenuously denies the need for any educational program for children before the age of three. Although it sees the creche as providing a stimulating affective ambiance, criticism has been voiced of the predominantly medical, hygiene-oriented approach that is actually in operation.

44. These differences in conception between the creches and kindergartens reinforced by great differences in staff training and content, inevitably and adversely affect the possibilities for coordination and cooperation between the institutions which provide care for the young child. Continuity - of place, of people, of developmental activity - so important for the natural development of the young child, is a frequent loser when systems are so fragmented along institutional lines.

45. In the Scandinavian countries the logic of the age break division of the preprimary years between two different institutions has been challenged as artificial and inconsistent with the developmental needs of children. If development is conceived as a continuous unfolding process from birth, then the "good" development of the child will be ill-served by a series of institutional phases poorly linked with one another. In recognition of this view of the child's development as a continuum the dual institutional system with the traditional age break at three has been or is being replaced in the Scandinavian countries by comprehensive centers for preprimary activities, the daynurseries. Now both creches and kindergarten activities take place within the framework of the day nursery, where pedagogic aims for all children 0 to 7 in both full-day and part-time care are identical. While it is recognized that young children continue to have different needs for physical and developmental care at different ages, shuttling them among separate institutions, each with its own concept of the kind of care called for at the given age, has been eliminated as contrary to the idea of continuous development, unnecessarily, perhaps harmfully, disrupting the young child's need for security and continuity of care experience.

46. The Scandinavian move to the unified, single-institution child care system is of fairly recent origin. Sweden's system is the oldest, growing out of the work of the country's Commission on Child Centers which was established in 1968. Extensive experimentation with integrated age or "sibling" groups of children 0-7 and 3-7 and with day nursery design has accompanied Sweden's pioneering in this field. Before Finland's child-care act of April 1973, care was divided, as in France or Belgium, into kindergartens and creches, though both institutions were under the same state ministry. Following the law, this division has been abandoned in favor of day



nurseries which provide developmentally oriented care for children from 0 to 7 years of age. In addition, experiments in integrated age groups such as those in Sweden are now being planned. Norway already has in operation a number of unified, integrated day nurseries. Under the terms of child care legislation whose passage is expected in late 1974 or early 1975, the comprehensive day nursery will become the basic element of the care system. As elsewhere, experiments are already underway with integrated age groups for children 0-7 and 3-7. In Oslo, moreover, several new centers are being built for children 0-10 years which conceptually will be day nurseries whose offerings include formal primary education for children 7 to 10. This experiment has just begun. Finally, in Denmark unified care institutions for preprimary children are increasing in number although they are not as numerous as elsewhere. Experiments with integrated age groups and with centers such as those in Oslo for children 0-10 and 0-12 are also in progress.

47. Planning for comprehensive institutions which would span the preprimary and early primary years is not absent from policy discussions in France, Belgium and Italy, although their realization on any but a limited experimental basis is unlikely for the foreseeable future. In Belgium plans have taken the form of proposals for the creation of "centers for early childhood". These centers would group and coordinate the different services for children and their families at one location, providing family planning consultations, pre- and post-natal examinations and care, creche and kindergarten facilities and out-of-school activities for young school-children. Such centers would be located in neighbourhoods to assure easy access. In France similar proposals have been made for the regrouping of institutions serving young children into centers which would include a creche, a kindergarten, a primary school, an after-school activities facility, an infirmary to care for children with light illnesses and pre- and post-natal consultation services. Plans call for such early childhood centers to be constructed in the French "new towns" of Marne-la-Vallée and Fosse-sur-Mer.

48. But a simple regrouping of institutions, if it involves no change in the relations among institutions and their personnel, is interesting only from a geographic point of view. While it would ease parents' logistical problems of leaving off and collecting their children and provide a certain physical continuity for the child, more extensive measures will be necessary if these centers are to offer coordinated, comprehensive and continuous care and services. What is called for is the integration of management and the equalization of status of the different institutions and the personnel staffing them (i.e. all teachers receiving the same education in terms

of both length and level of studies). The Scandinavian countries have had an easier time with this organizational concertation by virtue of the single ministerial responsibility for the preprimary years and the more obvious common developmental emphasis which the late preprimary and early primary years show in spite of the shift of ministries. The situation is more difficult for France, Belgium and Italy, however, since the two preprimary systems differ so greatly from each other and the division of ministerial responsibility tends to reinforce the differences. But although the obstacles to such integration of early childhood services and care are substantial, developments in this direction in a number of countries may help resolve the transition problems arising from discontinuities in care provision.

(2) From Preprimary to Primary School

49. The onset of formal and compulsory schooling, which comes variously in the child's sixth or seventh year, constitutes a major break in the young child's life. This break frequently involves the move to a new physical location, whether across the street or some distance away. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, as in Belgium, where an unusual degree of closeness in relations between the kindergartens and primary schools includes the fact that a majority of the former are on the same grounds as the latter. This is also the case for many preschool year programs, such as the one in Denmark, and the one planned for Finland, which are organized within existing primary schools. In both of these instances, it should be pointed out that the kindergarten or preschool year programs are the responsibility of the same public authority, the national Ministry of Education.

50. Even more important than the physical change of place occasioned by the start of primary school are the changes in content, teacher and teaching methods which mark the introduction of formal instruction in mathematics, reading and writing. For many children, whether coming from home or from organized child care, these changes can be abrupt. In fact, the difficulties many children experience have provided an extra impetus for the creation of special preschool years for six-year-olds in some Scandinavian countries and for the "school readiness" emphasis in the last preschool year of the French and Belgium kindergartens. A principal purpose of these preschool classes is to provide children with earlier exposure and introduction to the primary school routine so their later transition will be an easier one. Again, it is noteworthy that this preschool transition emphasis exists between institutions which are administratively part of the educational system. Systems where the child's last preschool year is spent in institutions under the responsibility



of a separate ministry (usually Social Affairs or Health) do not appear to be as oriented toward such explicit "school readiness" tasks, and coordination between institutions is more uneven.

51. But despite the potential for coordination arising out of the administrative linkage of institutions, easing the problems of transition still seems to depend very largely on the initiative of individual teachers and staffs in forging informal communications and coordination links between institutions. The inadequacy of coordination between preprimary and primary school is admitted in every country. To remedy this situation, many advocate the creation of coordinating groups on both the national and local levels which would bring together those within the different ministries and agencies concerned with the delivery of services to children on both sides of the preprimary/primary divide. Further, they warn that coordinating efforts established at only one level are likely to break down on the other level if institutional divisions are not bridged by parallel efforts.

52. As already noted, the interest in preschool year programs designed to give all children the experience of "school-going" under less stressful conditions derives in part from the transition concern. But increasing attention is also being focused on the adaptation of the primary schools to take into account the growing provisions of preschool experience and its more developmental approach to the child's learning. Greater flexibility in the early years of the primary school, more curricular continuity and less narrow, less exclusive training of both primary and preprimary school personnel are among the changes called for by the recognition of the child's need for a continuum of growth experiences through the two institutions(1).

53. Another compelling reason for greater coordination is that there is increasing evidence that suggests the advantages children have gained in innovative and enriched preprimary programs may be lost in primary school if its content and methods do not maintain the motivation for further learning and development. Closer cooperation between these institutions is essential in the opinion of many, if unequal home environments are not to reassert their dominant role in determining the child's educational opportunities and future.

(1) These issues are treated in later sections of this paper.

54. A final specific aspect of the discontinuities between preprimary care provision and primary school experience is the severe shortage of care places to serve young schoolchildren during their out-of-school hours. This problem has two dimensions: first, after-school hours and, second, school holidays and the longer summer vacation. Because many children encounter considerable difficulties during their first years at school, it is important that a secure out-of-school environment be created for them. When both parents work, however, the child's position may be materially worsened if it moves from a full-day preprimary care facility to a part-day primary school. The absence of after-school care centers for young schoolchildren appears to be most acute in the Scandinavian countries, where the school day lasts only three to five hours during the first several years of compulsory schooling, and in Italy, where the shortage of primary school buildings has led to double sessions whereby children attend either morning or afternoon and are free for the rest of the day.

55. The need, which is poorly provided in every country, is for the organized after-school care. Currently in all countries most arrangements for after-school care are made individually within the family, with near neighbours or in private paid care. The very limited number of places for young schoolchildren in existing care institutions in Norway and Sweden are of high quality but fall far short of need in terms of quantity. An extensive system of supervised playgrounds meets some of this need in Finland. But for the most part many young of these children go without specific care after school, giving rise to the problem of the "latch-key children" whose own responsibility for themselves after school hours is symbolized by the key to the family home which often dangles from a cord around their necks.

56. The second dimension of this problem of care for young schoolchildren when school is not in session concerns the generally inadequate provision of care during school holidays and the more extended summer vacations. In France, Belgium and Italy, where the kindergartens also run on the same school calendar as the primary schools, this problem extends to children, younger children as well. This is one of the greatest problems for working parents of young school-age children.

57. The kinds of publicity - subsidized and organized provision for vacation care - vary widely between countries. In France and Belgium, residential vacation camps operate during the summer for children of school age and other care centers are available for full-day supervised activities in or on the outskirts of towns for children from the age of



four, or so, on. The Belgian system of vacation centers is quite extensive, providing hot meals and communal transport for the children. In the Scandinavian countries, vacation care needs of young schoolchildren are met in varying degrees by supervised playgrounds and similar institutions. The day nurseries, which include some places for schoolchildren, are open year-round, though some are closed as care is centralized in fewer institutions.

58. One of the reasons that after-school and holiday care for young schoolchildren has been relatively neglected in most countries is that systems of child care themselves have been so underdeveloped. In these circumstances, the problem of care for these "older" children may be a luxury which most countries have not had the resources to provide. Recently, however, there has been an awakening of interest in this area. For example, authorities in Finland report that before municipalities began assessing the "need" for care provision as specified under the child care legislation of April 1975, nobody realized how many "latch-key" children there were. Now considerable interest in the problems of care for young schoolchildren has been generated in many communities, and it is estimated that approximately 20 per cent of all new care places will be built for these children. Swedish authorities also expect an increase in provision for after-school care as a result of recommendations from their Commission on Child Centres, although legislation requiring municipalities to plan for and provide such care may be several years off. Further, while they admit the problem is very important, the costs of creating places which will be used only part-time (after-school and during holidays) are quite high - perhaps too high. An alternative is now being experimented with in the form of after-school centers organized inside the schools. The provision of after-school care at the primary school seems to be, for reasons of continuity, the manner of arranging this care that is preferred by child care authorities in many countries. But, whatever programs are developed, coordination will be required between the different ministries and/or agencies with responsibilities for care provision and education, both at the national and local levels. For one of the important problems in dealing with the full-day needs of the young schoolchild, most especially in Scandinavia, is that it is unclear who is responsible, the educational or the child care authorities.

(3) The Preschool Year in Scandinavia

59. Reference has been made to the existence of preschool year programs in the Scandinavian countries as a possible help in bridging the preprimary/primary school break in the child's experience. A brief discussion of the differences

in organization and approach of the different countries will serve to highlight some of the key coordinating and continuity issues.

60. The general background to the preschool year programs, designed to give all children one year of preprimary group experience prior to school entry, is similar in the four countries. Because compulsory schooling in Scandinavia begins at the relatively late age of seven, an obvious route to extending educational benefits to children in their key learning years has been the de facto creation of a universal, if not yet compulsory, "preschool year" for six-year-olds. A relatively flexible approach has been adopted whereby places for the entire age population are planned and active information efforts to encourage enrollment envisaged.

61. Where national approaches have diverged is in the manner in which the preschool year relates to existing educational and care provision. This question essentially turns on the matter of who - which public authorities - will exercise responsibility for the new system. This is far more than a simple question of bureaucratic in-fighting; it is central to the continuity/coordination issue. First, because these preschool classes normally meet for only part of the day, usually for three or four hours, the same problems associated with arranging care outside of school hours for young school-children are raised for the whole six-year-old population. Where the preschool year program is organized as part of the day nursery (which means under the same ministerial authority), as in Sweden, this problem could be resolved by making available enough part-day care places in each day nursery to accommodate those children in need of care for longer periods each day. Of course, in this situation the preprimary/primary gap is not wholly bridged because the preschool year program is physically and administratively separated from the primary school. "School readiness" preparation may be facilitated, but coordination problems are likely to continue. Where preschool classes are organized in a location separate from the day nursery - the case in Denmark and the plans for Finland, where the preschools are under the authority of the Ministries of Education and meet on the grounds of the primary school - the resolution of the after-school care problem is more difficult. If such care is organized at the school, which Finnish authorities expect to happen, then the problem becomes manageable. If, on the other hand, care places must be found in existing day nurseries, this means substantial logistics problems with an extra journey to and from yet another institution. Continuity is hardly facilitated by such an arrangement. If the preschool is separated from the school, however, the advantages of coordination and continuity between preschool and primary school which derive from physical proximity are lost.

62. These complications in care arrangements brought on by the creation of preschool year programs serve to highlight an important issue: the proper use of always scarce resources. The argument has been made that the provision of preschool classes organized in the primary schools, but without after-school care capabilities on-site, has results in spending money for the creation of only part-day places in two locations - the schools and the day nurseries - which is wasteful when increasing numbers of children needing full-day care. While the educational and developmental benefits of the preschool are not to be denied, it is argued with considerable logic that preschool year provision should be made under a strategy which calls for a full-day care capability, either wholly within the existing system of day nurseries (e.g. Sweden) or wholly within the school system (e.g. possibly Finland). Norway, which began preschool classes seven years ago, following the Danish development, moved in this direction with the decision several years ago not to expand preschool classes further, but to absorb them into the full-day child care activities of the ongoing day nursery system.



Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

B. LEARNING EXPERIENCES: PLANNED OR UNPLANNED?

63. Everyone can agree that the creativity and freedom of thought of young children should be preserved and promoted in preprimary child care. The stifling of creative ability by rote learning and other rigid ways of inculcating knowledge, common in many traditional school systems, have never been practiced in preprimary education. But the question of how children are to develop their creative and intellectual abilities and specifically whether learning experiences can be planned - in fact need to be planned - is one on which there is a fundamental divergence of opinion, both between countries and within them.

64. One point of view tends to see a conflict between teaching and intellectual direction by adults and the child's need for creativity, self-direction and free play. This opinion tends to hold that the child's development is spontaneous, requiring no specific planned activities, structured or unstructured, to stimulate it. Preprimary care should consist of unstructured but loosely supervised play in an environment rich in things for the child to discover by itself. The emphasis is put on learning through play, on creativity and on waiting until the individual child is ready to learn ("initiates") rather than on planning activities and devising methods to promote or stimulate learning. This approach sees little need for a defined curriculum plan and little attempt is made to teach children reading, writing or arithmetic. In fact, in systems such as the Danish, there may be explicit prohibitions against "instructing" children in such subjects. Often more emphasis is placed on encouraging the social, physical and emotional development of the child than on its intellectual development.

65. The second major position has a fundamentally different view of the child and its developmental needs. The good development of the child requires or benefits from the purposeful adult intervention and the creation of a stimulating physical, social and intellectual environment. While preprimary teachers have undoubtedly intervened through the years in enriching the child's environment, work by Piaget among others has indicated that language skills, problem solving and learning in many other areas can be done in more conscious and more systematic ways. Many believe that it is therefore essential that teachers of young children be provided with clear developmental goals and have a clear idea of the methods by which they can attain them. To provide sand, water, paint, bricks and various other materials, allowing the child to move from one to the next in the hope that this is providing a stimulating environment is not enough. Thus the inclusion of a planned educational curriculum component in preprimary child care is considered by many as essential to quality care programs.



66. Recent activity in Scandinavia is in this direction. While Denmark seems committed to its unstructured approach, Sweden is now working to create more flexible curricula for the preprimary years which include reading, writing and arithmetic, but with this instruction harmonized with the methods of preprimary teaching which emphasise learning as a two-way dialog rather than one-way instruction. At the same time, the development of curricula for these traditional if fundamental subjects is intended to interpret them not so narrowly as traditional school instruction, but as a part of living and as they relate to the child's real living situation.

67. The country where the most interest is being shown in curriculum development is Finland. Until recently, as in the other countries, there were no official recommendations or directives as to how the general aims (of "promoting child development and learning capabilities") were to be achieved. Practice was localized under different theoretical influences (Froebel, Piaget, etc). Relatively little emphasis was placed on structured learning. This situation, widely characteristic of the Scandinavian countries, is now changing. Authorities are working in Finland to develop a curriculum for the day nurseries FDCs, as well as for the planned 6-year-old preschool class. A team consisting of nursery teachers, academics from the universities and people from the national education and social welfare ministries began work in May 1974 to develop materials appropriate to the different developmental stages through which children advance. Their objectives are to define developmental goals for the different age levels in detail and then to develop a program of activities for children at these different stages. This is not to be a rigid set of directives, but a flexible program which allows the child to proceed naturally through a planned sequence of tasks as it moves from one stage of development to another. Finnish authorities are not as sure as those in Sweden of theories of spontaneous child development, and for this reason they are interested in greater planning activities and structured learning.

(4) Relevance and curriculum content

68. There is another aspect of the curriculum issue: If preprimary learning experiences are planned, what is their content to be? While many see the traditional emphasis of preschool teaching on the acquisition of language and mathematical skills and concepts through developmental games and activities in the classroom, others have raised serious questions about the inadequate attention most preprimary programs give to children's experience of living - to their conditions of up-

bringing and to the real life situations they face daily.

One of the most thorough and thoughtful critiques of the traditional preschool approach is contained in a paper written for OECD by Jurgen Zimmer who summarised his arguments briefly:

(1) It is doubtful whether and to what extent traditional curricula help prepares the ground for what should be the task of preprimary and school learning: to prepare the child for coping with real life situations. The artificial world embodied in many preprimary programs and materials and its remoteness from children's direct concerns in real life point to the fact that the programs are neither determined by nor based on situations of child life

(2) Many programs focus on training in isolated functions and the acquisition of technical and instrumental skills. But learning such skills without reference to the social context for their application is only partial learning. Programs of social learning (which commits itself to the development of individual autonomy) should not be separated from instrumental learning.

(3) The remoteness of these programs from the child's real life situation corresponds to and mirrors the separation of curriculum development from pedagogic practice. Attempts to organize cooperation between psychologists, educators, teachers, parents and children on an equal footing are, so far, few and far between. The child sorts out colors or forms when its mind is on arriving at the care center is filled with the emotional stress created by a quarrel between its parents or the frustrating rules of an angry shop-keeper or the disorienting experience of getting lost in the city. Child care programs have an important contribution to make here if they can recognize the problems and conflicts the child faces and design preschool learning experiences to meet the child's needs for information and skills which will help it deal with these real life situations.

69. The major problem in many existing preschool traditional curricula is that the social and intellectual skills to be developed are not related to the concrete reality in which children have to act. The limitations and contradictions of skills and action in different real life situations are often neglected in favor of "protecting" the child from the realities of the world beyond the preschool.



70. In the eyes of some, however, such protection serves the child poorly in today's world. The child's need they argue is for preprimary curricula which relates to real life situations it faces daily. The learning of skills should be taken out of the school environment and be developed instead in the real life social settings in which they will be used by and useful to children - within the family, the neighbourhood, shops, hospitals, doctor's offices, schools and other places in the child's nearer and further surroundings. What is advocated is not an oversimplified pattern of "learning by doing," but situation-oriented learning in which play and other activities of children in the preprimary (and ideally, primary) school are carried out in a continual exchange of theory and practice. The objective of this approach to learning is to make children capable of coping with and mastering their present and future real life situations.

C. PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL TRAINING

71. One item on which there is substantial international agreement is that the staff of child care programs in the single most important determinant of the quality of care provided. The qualifications and selection criteria are often viewed as the critical aspect of staff planning because the adult-child interaction has perhaps the most far-reaching impact on the child's developing social, emotional and intellectual processes. While all countries staff their preprimary systems with trained personnel, the content and length of their training varies greatly both between countries and between institutions within single countries.

72. In France, creche personnel are obligatorily female. Their education is essentially medically oriented and concentrated on hygiene; the pedagogic and psychological role and impact of the care-taker are treated much less deeply. The staff of the kindergartens are female by tradition, not obligation. In their training great importance is attached to pedagogy and child development, especially in relation to the direction of activities, type of play, creativity and the like. The course is two years following the completion of secondary school. In principle, nursery and primary school teachers receive identical training in teacher training institutes; but very different approaches to and attitudes about teaching and children in practice separate the two institutions and the training for them and teachers rarely transfer back and forth.

73. In Belgium, the differentiation in training between creche and nursery school personnel is similar to that reported for France. The main thrust of training for the care of children under 3 is hygiene; for those over 3, education and development. The basic creche personnel most directly charged with the care of children complete a course of two years following lower secondary school; teachers for the nursery schools, a course of two years at teacher training institutes following upper secondary school.

74. The pattern in Italy is similar: at the creche level, the training of personnel is predominantly medical/hygienic. Qualifications are not standardized, however, and vary considerably. Training for nursery school teachers does not approach the relatively high quality found in Belgium and France, and teacher training is acknowledged as one of the weakest aspects of nursery education in Italy. At present a course of three years in a teacher college follows the completion of the middle school. But private institutions do not always demand the full qualification and in some cases accept staff who have undergone only one year's training. State inspectorial services do not operate in the private sector. It has also been reported that the monitoring of such quality aspects as staff qualifications and staff-child ratios is inadequate in the public sector as well. While a recent decree has proposed university training for Italian nursery school teachers, this appears unlikely to be realized, but there is a new Italian law which should make an important contribution to upgrading teaching skills. The law requires from 1 September 1974 the registration of all kindergartens and kindergartens in the state kindergartens. This registration will entail refresher courses of two months for both categories of staff.

75. In the Scandinavian countries the differences in training for the teachers who staff the day nurseries are far less pronounced than in France, Belgium and Italy. The fact that care for children from 0 to school age is unified in one conceptual framework certainly contributes to this greater similarity in training concept and content. The major concern in these countries is less with the quality issues of training for preprimary staffs than with pay and status differences and with the universal teacher shortage (also a problem in France, Belgium and Italy) which poses a serious obstacle to expansion plans and needs. Country by country, the situation is as follows:

76. In Denmark, teachers in the day nurseries and the preschool year programs receive the same educational preparation, pay and, presumably status. Differences in length of work week and school year effectively mean the pay and status are somewhat less favourable for the day nursery personnel. But the real problem is the shortage of nursery teachers and shortage of places in the teacher training colleges which means



that the teacher shortage will continue despite the existence of college which means that the teacher shortage will continue despite the existence of qualified applicants for training. While the Ministry of Education, which is responsible for these training institutions, states that there will soon be enough teachers to meet all needs without expansion of the training system, others believe that if child care system is to be enlarged the lack of qualified teachers will have to be remedied through increased training facilities.

77. In Norway nursery and primary teachers attend different training colleges and receive different preparation. This has led, in the view of some, to a situation where teachers in the two institutions have different perspectives on issues and even use a different vocabulary, adding to difficulties in working out communications and cooperation between their different institutions. The nursery teachers, partly as a consequence of their shorter and less academic training, receive less pay and enjoy less favourable working conditions and less status than their primary school counterparts. Under the terms of Norway's newly formulated child care act, however, this situation will change in major ways. According to the act, nursery and primary teachers will in the future have parallel training of an equal length, and training for nursery teaching will move to a special division within the teacher training colleges. It is also anticipated that nursery teachers will reach the same pay rate, though not for several years and though their working hours are still expected to be longer. Turning to the question of numbers, there is a serious shortage of qualified staff in Norwegian nursery education, and no real plans for expansion in the number of places in teacher training courses is anticipated. Of the 3000 applicants for such training this year, only 750 places were available. The Ministry of Education has not, in the opinion of some, adjusted its educational plans to the projected needs of an expanded day nursery system and the short-term crisis shortage of personnel is expected to become a long-term dilemma.

78. In Sweden, the themes repeat themselves. Training for nursery teachers is of high quality, with the emphasis split between child psychology, pedagogics and practical experience. It is shorter than the training for primary teachers by one year. The teaching methods are also rather different, with the preprimary stress on "soft" or indirect learning as opposed to actual instruction in language and mathematical skills. There are also differences in status and salaries. All of these differences work to hinder cooperation, most especially because of the difference in attitudes and approach the teachers develop as a result of their different training. Some of these problems are receiving serious study by the Commission on Child Centres, which will issue its report on preprimary staff training in early 1975.

79. Sweden's shortage of qualified teachers, a shortage which is hindering the rapid expansion of the child care system, has led to a number of programs aimed at accelerating the training process, usually through upgrading individuals already working within the system. There are, for example, special training programs designed for child nurses with five years of experience. FDC mothers are also a possible source of future nursery teachers. In the meantime, there are too few places in teacher training colleges although applications for such training have increased rapidly.

80. Finally, in Finland there has been a distinction in day nursery staff training between the child nurses, who have cared for children under three, and the nursery teachers, whose charges are children over three. The training of the child nurses, although including some developmental theory, has been relatively brief and is generally considered as insufficient. Training for the nursery teachers has been of good quality, with an emphasis on child psychology and pedagogy. Nursery teachers have not, however, received the same pay as primary teachers. Teachers trained to staff the preschool year will receive preparation as primary teachers and their pay and status will be identical. The future promises change, however, and according to proposals from a state commission studying the issue of personnel training, new uniform training is envisaged for all persons in charge of children below school age. This would include FDC mothers. The lengthening of the training course for preprimary teachers has also been proposed, but this runs up against two problems: first, the serious shortage of teachers at the nursery level, which would hardly be relieved by extending the training period; and second, the economic realities which make it likely that once these teachers receive more training they will want more money.

81. The teacher shortage exists in severe proportions in Finland because the nursery system has been expanding very rapidly in the last few years. Courses are being adapted to provide "exceptional training" for experienced child nurses and university graduates in sociology, psychology and related fields on an accelerated basis as a temporary response to the shortage situation. Teacher training is also being expanded, and it is estimated that in four or five years the pressure will ease.

(5) Staff/Child Ratios

82. Another important qualitative index for child care is the ratio of adult staff to children. Figures on "class size" are not, however, extensively or uniformly available for different institutions and different countries. But on the basis of available data for the kindergarten age group (3-6 or 3-7 years), it appears that the Scandinavian systems



have more favourable staff/child ratios than do those in France, Belgium, and Italy.

Table 1. Staff/child ratios

Sweden	1:20 (part-day groups)
Norway	1:20 (part-day groups)
Denmark	1:12-20
Finland	1:20 (part-day groups)
Belgium ⁽¹⁾	1:26 (part-day)
France	1:35-40 (estimate) (part-day)
Italy	1:25 (public); 1:32 (private) (estimates) (part-day)

D. PARENT INVOLVEMENT⁽²⁾

83. Interest in the parental role in preprimary child care derives from several sources. First, there is the general phenomenon of increased concern for the first five or six years of life during which the child's care and education have traditionally been the responsibility of the parents. The failure of school systems by themselves to deliver equal educational outcomes has also occasioned interest in the influence of the home in children's school performance.⁽³⁾ Finally, though slowly, appreciation for what the schools can learn from parents as resources has been growing among preprimary educators. The common theme in all of these is the recognition that the great importance of the home cannot be ignored or disregarded and, more positively, that "schools can exercise their influence not only directly upon children but also indirectly through their relationships with parents."⁽⁴⁾

-
- (1) In recognition of the qualitative implications of the teacher/child ratio, the Belgian authorities have invested considerable resources into reducing class size at the nursery school level, and the 1.26 figure for 1972 is an improvement from the 1966 figure of 1:29
 - (2) This section borrows heavily from a report for OECD by Lois-ellen Datta, "Parental Involvement in ECE: A Perspective from the United States." CERI/ECE/73.03
 - (3) For more on this question, see the Coleman Report (USA), 1966.
 - (4) The Plowden Report (U.K.) 1967.

84. But while there may be growing -- and grudging -- acceptance of the important role parents play in determining their children's life chances, there is still a considerable difference of opinion and practice over the extent to which parent involvement in preprimary education is possible, or indeed, desirable. In some countries, a parental role in or contribution to preprimary education is neither admitted nor encouraged nor readily welcomed. Even where it is accepted as an operative principle, "parental involvement" may connote a variety of meanings and practices. Among these are:

(1) Parents as information recipients and opinion givers. In some systems parental involvement may simply mean that the preprimary institution runs an effective information service to explain to parents its objectives and encourage their interest but otherwise allots them a passive role. Or the parent role may take the form of an advisory parent association whose purpose is to give parents a chance to express opinions that may or may not be given much weight by those administering the institutions. This is the role generally allowed parents in most countries, usually informally through individual parent-teacher contacts or more formally through parent-teacher associations. Most countries lack established machinery -- and often the desire -- to facilitate parental involvement in more active ways.

(2) Parents as advisers and decision makers. In some systems parental involvement connotes actual control by parents. This may take the form of limited advisory committee responsibilities for the overall direction of care institutions, with certain veto and approval roles. Or, at the other extreme, it may involve parents as board members with powers to approve the budget, to set policies to guide program operations, to hire and fire personnel and to make decisions on other matters that have hitherto been the restricted province of professionals -- an actual sharing of power which envisages parents as taking an active part in the educational process.

(3) Parents as aides and employees. Possible roles here include: parents working in the care institution under the supervision of teachers both in non-instructional tasks and, more rarely, in review or teaching of new skills and concepts; parents working outside the institution as community workers or coordinators for liaison between teachers and parents who are reluctant or unable to interact with professional staff directly. While such involvement of parents more directly in preprimary programs is very rare -- most instances of this kind of participation seem to occur in the United States -- it may in some countries gain a special impetus from developments outside the formal educational system, most especially the shortage of qualified personnel. The use of parents inside the system as para-professional aides in the classroom may be an acceptable



way to expand capacities of existing institutions where quality is high but quantity limited, and to improve quality in other care systems through the reduction of high child adult ratios.

(4) Parents as resources for teachers. In some countries there is an increasing appreciation for what schools can learn from the insights parents have into their own children's development. This emphasis on what the parent can bring to the child's preprimary experience is especially strong where attention is being focused on relevance in preprimary curriculum. Here parents have a central role to play in the institution's attempts to relate curriculum to the real life situations of the child. This idea of mutual learning between teachers and parents - an idea deriving from the conception of school and family as complementary institutions in the child's development - is not yet widely accepted. Changes of teacher, parent and administrative attitudes will be required. This would especially involve a new emphasis in initial teacher training and in-service training intended to increase teacher awareness of parents as resources and to develop and encourage the teacher's ability to communicate with parents in order to learn from them in a parent/school partnership. Programmes for extended parent visits to the classroom, especially when children begin in the care institution, exist in some countries. But more extensive use of this format will require leave allowances or other special arrangements be made to permit working parent participation.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

(6) Obstacles to Parent Participation

85. There are a number of obstacles or barriers which make it difficult or impossible for parents to participate in the preprimary education of their children. What are they?

86. Most obvious are those problems which derive from official attitudes and policies on the institutional side. Often, for instance, little more than lip service is paid to the ideal of parental education or to the belief that parents should be involved in the education of their children, with a right to participate in decisions about their educational future. If the professional staff of the preprimary institution regards all matters concerning the child as their exclusive "professional" preserve, then their uncooperative attitudes may effectively block parental participation regardless of official policy statements. Parents are, in fact, rarely given the opportunity to spend a day in the classroom and thereby gain some insight into the educational process. Nor are they usually given places on the governing bodies of schools. In this exclusion, a valuable resource is being lost to the pre-school. Solutions lie both in institutional arrangements and provisions (e.g. places reserved for parents on governing and advisory boards or the creation of such boards) and in changes in the attitudes of the professionals through stressing in

teacher training and subsequent in-service training the importance and worth of parental involvement.

87. Even where the institution is willing and positive about the parental role, there may still be formidable if unintended barriers to parental participation in the institution's approach. The major substantive problem here is that parents often perceive educational institutions as forbidding places staffed by "experts" with little time or understanding for their questions and concerns. This is both a real and an unreal problem. It is real to the extent that the institution gives information at an inappropriate level of sophistication, making it difficult for parents to understand issues or, in consequence, to give good feedback or decisions on them. In such circumstances, it is unlikely that parents will feel they are truly participating. These problems are especially severe in the case of lower socio-economic group parents and of immigrant parents, for whom language may be an insurmountable barrier to involvement. In both these cases there may be a need for outreach activities to uninvolved parents to assure their participation. This raises, however, another as yet unresolved question: to what extent should there be such outreach -- in fact, what role do parents want and need in preprimary education? There are many different speculations about this matter, but almost nothing is known really about what parents want and need in preprimary education? There are many different speculations about this matter, but almost nothing is known really about what parents themselves want.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

88. But parental involvement depends not only on the interest and education level of parents and the receptiveness of teachers and institutions. Logistics -- primarily difficulties of access which relate to transportation needs, other child care arrangements, the timing of meetings and conflicts with the requirements of work life -- are serious problems which pose further obstacles to parental involvement. If working parents are to be able to assume roles as early childhood education partners, then certain changes in other parts of education and society may be required. Most specifically, there is growing advocacy by some that parents' work situations be adapted to allow effective parental participation by both parents in decisions affecting their child's education. Flexible working hours, released time from work for occasional visits with the child in the care institution and in the possibility of shorter working hours each day for parents with young children are among the adjustments called for.

89. Finally, even if all the preceding difficulties have been overcome and parents have become involved in all ways possible, there is yet a final unresolved problem: continuity. For given the compartmentalization of children's educational experience into different institutions and areas of administrative responsibility, the achievement of parental involvement at one level does not necessarily guarantee continuing involvement once the child moves on to the next stage of schooling. Only recently and only in some countries



has attention even been given to the effects of these institutional breaks on the child, the concern being that programmes that do not provide a continuity of policy, philosophy and services are likely to do little durable good and may harm children. Equally, the benefits to be gained from parental involvement would seem to be affected by such discontinuities. Consequently, some urge that priority in planning should be given to ensuring continuity for parental involvement opportunities as well as for the child's care content throughout the preprimary and primary years.

(7) Parent Education

90. The growing recognition of the importance of parents in determining educational outcomes for their children, reinforced by articulated policy about the complementarity of preschool and family in child development, has focussed attention on another topic: parent training or education. "Parent education" like "parent involvement" takes many different forms. One focus is the preprimary institution and its relationship with parents. The quality child care institution, it is pointed out, is a major resource centre concerning the development of the child. Parent training through these institutions is advocated by many. Such training could be informally or formally given through the mechanisms of parent-teacher exchanges, meetings and programmes organised at the local care centre. The purpose of such activities is to provide a way in which teachers can enlist the help of parents at home in supporting the child's development through giving information on children's developmental needs and means of fostering them. Parents with children in the preschool and those whose children do not attend would be able to make use of the experience and expertise the local quality care centre offers.

91. While this kind of educative and feedback function already exists at the initiative of many local schools and parents in different countries, it tends to be limited to middle and upper class parents whose interest in the educational component and development of their children is already high, e.g. university districts, professional parents. Because the success of these local initiatives often depends very much on individuals interest and energy, the results are inevitably very uneven. In some countries, this problem of self-selective parental involvement and benefits from parent education programme has been countered by limited outreach activities to low socio-economic level parents with specialists who are trained as community workers making visits to homes to discuss developmental issues with these parents.

92. The major drawback of these approaches to parent education remains, however. While the informal, voluntary programmes organised at or through child care institutions in different countries are important and provide an obvious service, they tend to reach only a limited and often already "converted" audience, frequently the middle and upper classes. This

unevenness of parental participation in parent education programmes has led many to conclude that exposure to training for parenting should begin much earlier, in the secondary schools at the latest, reaching all young people before they become parents.

93. The only country where such ideas about education for parenthood have actually been incorporated into the secondary school curriculum is Sweden. The Swedish experience is still too new to evaluate for long-term results, but its philosophical place in the system and its practical purposes are useful to recount. Essentially, the compulsory secondary-level parent education course in Sweden is one element in the school's efforts to counter sex role bias in society and to free boys and girls, men and women for shared and interchangeable roles in home, work and leisure activities. The specific reasoning for requiring the course is that although parenthood represents considerable demands on parents, most people becoming parents are untrained for the handling and care of young children and are ignorant of children's psychological, developmental and even biological needs. Education and preparation for actual parenthood at the secondary level has, therefore, several important purposes: (1) to give all young adults an understanding of the basic physical and emotional needs of children and of the importance of early child care by the parent; and (2) to teach them the skills of parenting so that they can perform them competently and even enjoy them. In this way, all students - boys as well as girls - are exposed to the responsibilities of parenthood and learn about their own attitudes and aptitudes in parenting long before facing the reality of dealing with their own children. Improved education in the skills and responsibilities of parenthood aims at enabling young adults to assume parenthood with more awareness and confidence and to find its practice fulfilling.

IV. ISSUES IN THE DELIVERY OF CHILD CARE

A. THE QUANTITATIVE PROVISION OF CHILD CARE

94. The starting point in analysing and comparing the delivery of child care services in different countries must be the quantity question. One measure of quantity is the number of places available. But because "places available" may mean either part-day or full-day use, counting physical slots in organised care facilities will give only a partial picture of the extensiveness of care provision. The same problem is encountered with the "enrolment rate" measure which indicates the percentage of the different age groups of children in care, again without distinguishing between full-day and part-day usage. But even with this limitation, enrolment rates for children are suggestive of relative magnitudes of quantitative provision. This information is presented for the seven countries studied to the extent available in Table 2. Private arrangements between parents and care-takers not registered with or supervised by the public authorities are not included in these statistics.



TABLE 2

Enrollment rates of children in preprimary care arrangements supervised by public authorities

BELGIUM (1973)

3 - 6 years old : over 90 % of the age group
 0 - 3 " " : (estimate) 37% of children of the age group with working mothers

FRANCE (1972-1973)

5 years : 96%
 4 " : 93%
 3 " : 70%
 2 " : 23%

ITALY (1972)

3 - 6 years old : 61%
 0 - 3 " " (estimate): 3 - 5 %

DENMARK (1973)

6 years : 60% (includes preschool year class)
 5 " : 32%
 4 " : 36%
 3 " : 31%
 2 " : 14%
 1 " : 9%
 0 " : 6%

FINLAND (1974)

0 - 6 years old (estimate): 17%

NORWAY (1972)

6 years : 11% (includes preschool year class)
 5 " : 7 %
 4 " : 6%
 3 " : 4%
 2 " : 2%
 1 " : 1%
 0 " : 1%

SWEDEN (1973)

6 years : 76%
 5 " : 29%
 4 " : 18%
 3 " : 14%
 2 " : 12%
 1 " : 10%
 0 " : 7%

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

B. HOURS OF OPERATION

95. A second important issue in the delivery of child care concerns the number of hours per day and months per year that care facilities are open to receive children. Although a country's situation may appear very satisfactory in terms of the number of places available, care which runs for less than eight, ten or twelve hours daily can leave gaps in the child's day and can thereby constitute a hardship on working parents. Thus a universal system which is part-day is likely to be of only partial benefit to those children who need more extended periods of care because their parents are either unavailable or unable to provide it. To meet the care needs of children and families where both parents work, it is important that the daily hours of operation of care institutions are sufficiently extended and flexible to cover the whole of the parents' full-time working hours. It is for this reason that many of those responsible for the administration and planning of child care give priority to full-day care provision over universality of coverage.

96. All countries currently have both full-day and part-day preprimary programmes, and the part-day activities are frequently organised within the full-day institutions. "Part-day" is generally defined as three to five hours per day while "full-day" care may range from six to twelve or thirteen hours daily. Information on the hours of operation for child care institutions in the different countries is not sufficiently broken down according to numbers of places available and lengths of daily stays to allow useful comparisons.

97. But even full-day institutions which provide care twelve hours a day cannot meet the needs of those parents who are shiftworkers. The general response of authorities to this problem of inconvenient working hours is that answers must be found elsewhere, possibly in care facilities provided by the enterprise, the use of family day-care (1) or the reassignment of parents with young children to day-time shifts. Although special night-time child care or 24-hour institutions are only discussion topics in most countries, some experiments with day-and-night care have been conducted in Finland and a major study-experiment is now underway in Northern Sweden on how to meet the child care needs of parents working nights or other inconvenient time schedules.

98. The issue of months per year is shorthand for yet another aspect of the extensiveness of a child care system. This is the matter of care provision on holidays and during the long summer vacation period. Virtually all school systems -- and some preprimary systems as well -- are organised on a less than full-year basis, usually with a break of several months in the summer and other shorter breaks for single day and extended holidays during the normal school term. At the same time, labour market work requires parental presence for the full year, with fewer holidays and a substantially shorter summer

(1) See paras. 127-138.



vacation period. Child care systems which operate on the same yearly schedule as the school system but which do not offer alternative care arrangements for young children during holiday and vacation time pose a serious problem for working parents. (1)

C. WHO ATTENDS? ACCESS AND USE

99. The issue of who attends preprimary institutions concerns essentially two questions: access, that is, which children is the system designed to serve? and use, that is, which parents and children actually make use of the facilities provided?

100. First, is the system universal? The Belgian and French kindergartens can be considered as such, providing, in principle, places for all children of the given age group. The Swedish preschool year programme for six-year-olds (as of July 1975) and the planned Finnish and Danish preschool classes will also provide universal part-day care. For most pre-primary systems, however, the number of places actually available, for the present and near future, is still limited and in many instances not all families wishing care, even needing it, will be able to have a place. In such circumstances the matter of priorities -- of which children are favoured and according to what criteria -- is raised. In fact, the notion of discrimination is built into many care systems, whose purpose originally was to help parents who were unable to provide the necessary care for their children by themselves. By and large, the creche systems in France and Belgium and the day nurseries in the Scandinavian countries operate on the basis of priorities, with judgements about need made by child care authorities in the municipalities. The favoured categories of children usually include (among others) children of single parents; of ill or disabled parents (or mothers); of working parents and student parents; children from "deprived" or "poor" homes; and children with handicaps.

101. Use is an even more politically sensitive issue in that it concerns the actual, as opposed to hypothetical, identity of those benefitting from the child care system. It also asks the difficult question of what should be the balance between the response to demand in care provision and the response to need? In the past educational provision for children of all ages has been predominantly made in response to demand -- which may or may not reflect real need -- and has frequently been directed away from those who need it most but whose claims on the political system have not normally included the more middle class demand for quality child care.

(1) See paras 54-58 for a fuller discussion of this subject.

102. Not surprisingly, then, the use of preprimary care facilities in many countries is not particularly in line with the priority categories of need established. For parental decisions to take advantage of existing facilities are influenced by a number of factors which may prevent or limit use, even when such use is protected by priority access provisions. Cultural, economic and social factors often combine to become far more important than availability in determining usage.

103. One of the most important of these factors is the financial cost to users, which is obviously related to the socio-economic and cultural background of parents. The nature of this relationship is discussed more fully with other "finance" issues in a later section of this paper (1). An example will serve to illustrate the problem briefly. The children of migrant workers are at the same time more likely to need the experience of preprimary care, but less likely to receive it, given that the initiative for preschool attendance usually must come from the migrant parents, who may suffer from a language barrier as well as from a socio-economic and educational one. Other obstacles, such as the logistics of transporting children to and from care centres, the number of hours per day and month per year care is provided and simple awareness of care availability, are additional stumbling blocks to meeting the care needs of the needy.

104. In this regard the December 1979 Swedish law on child care is a particularly interesting and pioneering effort. Under the terms of the act, which among other things calls for municipal planning in the child care field, municipal authorities are required to initiate case-finding activities to acquire a knowledge of preprimary-aged children living within their jurisdiction who have special needs for development support and stimulation. These needs include physical, mental, social and linguistic problems. The outreach represented by the case-finding and the follow-up in providing care and other services to these children may be a model for other child care systems in responding to need as well as demand.

D. URBAN/RURAL DIFFERENCES IN CARE PROVISION

105. As one might expect, the rural areas of every country are much less well provided with child care facilities than are the urban areas. A representative sample of urban/rural enrollment rates clearly shows the imbalance :

Belgium (1973): Brussels 77%; whole country 37% (children 0-3, with working mothers)

Denmark (1972): Copenhagen 47% whole country 22% (all children 3-6)

Norway (1973): Oslo 22% whole country 5% (all children 3-6)

The list could continue with entries for every country.

(1). See paras. 121-122



106. The reasons for this imbalance are several. The demand for child care deriving from increased female labour force participation is primarily an urban phenomenon, reflecting the more numerous opportunities for labour market work in cities than in the countryside. Parents working in agriculture, the predominant employment sector in rural areas, have generally had less need to arrange care for their children because their work place is often the family farm and the possibility for the children being "cared for" either by the "working" parents or by grandparents has been greater.

107. Added to the relatively low demand for child care in rural areas is the purely physical and logistical difficulty of providing care in sparsely populated areas. This problem is marked in Northern Scandinavia and in countries like Switzerland or Austria where the mountainous areas are not only sparsely populated but also frequently cut off from urban areas due to a geography highly vulnerable to the winter snows. Finally, there is the problem of population shifts which works against child care provision in rural areas. In many regions of many countries, the rural population is decreasing as people move off the land and into the cities. To build permanent facilities is hardly a good investment in such areas because today's need may not exist in the same degree in the future. Thus care provision for the rural areas is unlikely to assume the same form as that in urban areas.

108. The importance countries nonetheless attach to the benefits deriving from preprimary group experience has led to a variety of experimental education for children in sparsely populated areas. Some, in fact, see a special need for such preprimary experiences because of the more limited opportunities children living in isolated areas have for contact with other children and adults. The experiments vary considerably, and include mobile care "institutions", such as those which move with the nomadic Laps in Norway and others which travel from village to village bringing play materials and a teacher to children living in sparsely populated regions of France, Finland and Sweden. There are also programmes for these children which combine kindergarten groups with the lower grades of primary school for several days a week and others which supplement less frequent group activities with correspondence work under the direction of parents.

E. THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

109. In Denmark, private ownership of preprimary care institutions was approximately 65 percent in 1972, and in Norway, 54 percent in 1971. In France, only 14 percent of the kindergartens were privately owned in 1971, while in Belgium the private sector accounted for 37 percent of the children in the French system in 1972 and 70 percent of the Dutch children in 1973. In Italy, finally, the private sector provided 82 percent of the care places in 1973. In all of these systems,

the private institutions receive large subsidies from the state, frequently under the same funding formulas as public institutions.

110. It is evident from these figures that the private sector plays a very large role in Belgian, Italian, Danish and Norwegian preprimary care provision. But the extent of private as opposed to public ownership is, it appears from a closer analysis of these country situations, less an issue for child care policy than is the question of the status of private institutions in the system - that is, the degree to which they constitute an independent, as opposed to an integrated, force in the system. For "private" can and does mean very different things in the different countries. In Belgium, Norway and Denmark, it does not in general denote fee-paying exclusiveness. The fees charged to parents are the same for both public and "private" institutions. "Privacy" in these countries refers primarily to the management of the institutions, which in the private sector is provided in Belgium in most cases by the Catholic Church and in Norway and Denmark by a mix of churches; private organisations, societies for the protection of children and private companies. In all of these countries, the private institutions are supervised and their standards are regulated in the same manner by the same public authorities as are the public institutions. Finally, there seems to be little concern in these countries with the public/private ownership issue or with the exclusivity or independence of the private institutions in the system.

111. Private provision in Italy, however, is a very different matter. Here the ~~fundamental~~ ~~difference~~ ~~between~~ ~~public~~ ~~and~~ ~~private~~ ownership constitutes a system imbalance as well. What differentiates the private sector's operation in Italy from the situation in Belgium, Norway and Denmark is that the private sector in Italy, though it receives 73 percent of the total state monies spent on kindergartens, charges enrolment fees to parents considerably above those charged in the public system (which defray the costs of transport and meals alone). At the same time, these private institutions are not subject to the same regulations, standards and quality controls as are the public institutions. In terms of quality, in fact, the private sector lags behind the public, with an average class size in 1975 of 35 children compared to the public sector's approximately 30 children per class. In addition, the training of staff is generally more thorough in the state schools and training standards are subject to regulation, from which the private sector is exempt. Finally, the growth of the public sector is not being particularly favoured through public funding decisions which could help bring the state closer to the private sector in the extent of its care provision.



F. FINANCING CHILD CARE

(1) The Public Role

"Without public support of early childhood education, the middle class is in effect regarding early education as a luxury which the rich are not obligated to share with the poor".(1)

112. It is increasingly agreed in all countries that central governments must take some responsibility for the planning and financing of preprimary child care and education. The history of preprimary education in all countries indicates that it is not enough to rely on the goodwill and foresight of local authorities to set up child care systems while support from the state is more hortatory than financial. Municipal enthusiasm, no matter how sincere, has a habit of evaporating if the financial burden of child care's cost is not partially assumed by the state.

113. In practice, all countries have systems of public subsidies for preprimary care provision. The size of the state's financial contribution differs considerably from country to country, as seen in Table 3, and the financial participation of the municipalities and the parents, the other major parties sharing in the funding of care systems, varies accordingly.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

(1) Lois-ElLEN Datta, "Parental Involvement in ECE: A Perspective from the United States" OECD 1973 (CERI/ECE/73.05)

TABLE 3 : The public role in financing child care

TYPE OF FACILITY	BELGIUM			FRANCE			ITALY	
	Creches	Kinder-gartens	FDC	Creches Jan. 1974	Kinder-gartens	FDC	Creches	Kindergartens
Responsible Ministry/Authority Financial intervention by state and local authorities and parents								
CAPITAL COSTS (CONSTRUCTION ALTERATIONS, EQUIPMENT, etc.):							straight fixed payment from state under terms of 1971 act would have just covered construction costs, leaving all operate costs wholly to municipalities - the steep rise in prices since 1971 has made even this state contribution even less inadequate to cover construction costs and both operating and building costs have increase multiplied since	
- state	60%(80%) ⁺	n.a.	-	80%	67%	-		n.a.
- local + regional	40%(20%) ⁺⁺	n.a.	-	20%	33%	-		n.a.
OPERATING COSTS (SALARIES, MATERIALS, etc.):								
- state	80% ⁺⁺⁺	n.a.	n.a.	30%	teacher salaries	n.a.	n.a.	
- local + regional	(?)	n.a.	n.a.	35%	other staff salaries	n.a.	n.a.	
- parents	(20%)	none	n.a.	35%	after hours and holiday care costs	35%	n.a.	
	DENMARK		FINLAND		NORWAY		SWEDEN	
	Day nurseries	FDC	Day nurseries	FDC	Day nurseries	FDC	Day nurseries	FDC
CAPITAL COSTS : - state	57%	-	effectively ⁺⁺⁺	-	85 ⁺⁺⁺⁺	-	35%(50%) ⁺⁺⁺⁺	-
- local+regional	43%	-	100%	-	15	-	65%(50%)	-
OPERATING COSTS:								
- state	35	n.a.	35-80% depending on "developmental grade" (socio-economic resources) of the muni- cipality - most will range 40-50%		10	33	35	n.a.
- local + regional	30	n.a.	0-45% - most will range 30-40 %		65	33	50	n.a.
- parents	35	n.a.	up to 20%		25	33	15	n.a.

n.a. : not available; +++80%: by loan under terms of a new arrangement; ++: this amount is covered by the private organiser in the case of private creches in the public system

++++: state funds are very limited ;
+++++: half in the form of long-term low-interest loan;
+++++: this year (1974) an exceptioned 50%



114. The size or level of state intervention in the financing of child care has an obvious bearing on both the rapidity and the extent of child care systems expansion. Sweden's exceptional grant of 50 percent, up from 35 percent of the construction costs of child care facilities in 1974 has its origins in the recognition of the need for extra financial help to stimulate municipalities to expand their systems. The funding formula adopted with Finland's 1973 child care act also took account of the hindrance to rapid expansion posed by the up-to-the-minimal state financial role. State subsidies for construction costs are still minimal, but the state contribution to operating costs has increased substantially, now covering from 35 to 80 percent of the costs, depending on the socio-economic resources of the municipality. With costs on the rise, the trend toward an increased state role in financing child care is on the rise practically everywhere : In France, Belgium and Norway, the central government's share of costs have increased recently and are expected to continue over the next few years.

115. But an increased state share in this financing still requires money, and new sources of funds are being sought after everywhere. In Sweden, for instance, although the state share is expected to rise in the next five years, there is general opinion that personal taxation cannot be used very much more to generate more revenues. Some Swedish authorities, in their search for other sources of tax monies, believe that industrial production should and will be taxed more directly, through increases in the social security and social insurance taxes already financed by employers or through corporate income tax. Their argument is that industry profits most directly from increased female labor force participation and therefore should contribute more than it has in the financing of the child care services which have facilitated growth in the women's labor force. Other Scandinavian countries, also highly taxed, may find this route attractive as well.

116. Interestingly, this summer's increase in state funding in Belgium derives from an industry-related source. The Belgian government monies have come from a special fund which has existed since 1971, which itself arose in unplanned fashion from the surplus in insurance contributions over the payments for family allowances (a result of the falling birth rate). One of the most important conditions imposed for receiving the subsidy money reflects the origin of this fund in women's increasing work in the labor market : the requirement that 60 percent of the creche places created are to be reserved for children of working mothers.

117. Another approach to tapping money from business has taken the form of laws and/or proposals to require firms and factories of a certain size to provide child care facilities on their premises. Such was the intent of the Italian law which was supplanted by the 1971 "cadre law" on child care under which the state assumed a greater financial role. In practice, however, the obligations under the old law were rarely observed, and the unions pressed for child care to be removed from the place of

work and established instead in the area of residence - a concern with company paternalism and with parental preferences which has been voiced in other countries with regard to industry child care provision.

118. To return once again to the central issue of future funding, the problem at both the state and municipal levels is how to make the gains of child care provision clear enough to the people who must pay the bills. To argue the issue on its merits - that preprimary care is good for young children - is often difficult. The benefits of institutional care are real enough, but are not usually compelling in financial debates. They are too long-term and the social costs associated with inadequate care are not easily quantifiable. When large public investments are sought, most authorities agree, the immediate and near future economic situation is the best ally in rallying support for public financing of child care expansion. An example, the prospect of greatly increased needs for labor as a result of the North Sea oil has brought about a substantial change in the attitudes of many businessmen and politicians in Norway about the advisability of investing public funds in child care expansion. Similarly, the expansion of public care provision in Sweden and Finland, in the last decade is closely associated with the labor shortages both countries have experienced. Economic returns are also important to municipalities in their willingness to provide more funds for child care systems. If they see the possibilities of new industry location or factory expansion which will require more labor and will add to local revenues in the form of taxes, their enthusiasm for care provision is likely to be much greater.

119. Special note should be made of the financing approach in one country, Denmark, which appears to be moving in a different direction than in most other countries. Under the terms of new Danish legislations, the whole funding approach to child care and other social welfare programs and services will be altered from 1975. The current system where by state subsidies (are given in specified amounts) to different programs will be replaced by a system of state bloc grants which will, within certain ceiling limits, reimburse 50 percent of all municipal expenditures on social programs. This change is in line with an overall policy of decentralization which will, by 1976, place all control and decision making responsibilities for child care in the hands of the municipalities.

120. One of the less frequently discussed issues within the finance dilemma is the problem of disparities in the financial capabilities of the different local references between municipalities in age balance, socio-economic level of the populace government authorities. And tax base obviously affect the amount of the revenue that will be available to finance child care. These inequalities in local economic base can lead to significant



differences in care quality if they are not redressed by state financing. In recognition of the equity issues raised by these unequal abilities to pay, some governments have found ways to intervene additional financial aid. The Finnish approach with scales the state's contribution depending on the "developmental grade" of the municipality is one way of seeking to equalize the financial burden born by the municipalities. The already-mentioned Belgian special fund is another. In addition to providing more subsidies to aid in the construction and operation of creches, it is also being used to equalize municipal burdens by topping off budgets of poorer municipalities to bring them up to roughly the same expenditure level as the richer municipalities. Finally, there has been discussion in connection with the new Danish decentralization and state bloc grants system to add a supplemental 17 percent to the 50 percent state share of local child care expenditures for municipalities with limited local resources.

(2) Costs to parents

121. In every country parents bear a certain proportion of the costs of child care through the payment of a fee. Countries have attempted to deal with the deterrent effect of fee payments by structuring fees on a sliding scale dependent on family income. While this practice undoubtedly reduces the financial burden for some parents, costs may still be prohibitively high for others. In Denmark, for example, even the lowest income families are faced with very substantial fees. Authorities in other countries also report that the minimum income to qualify for a free place is often so low that practically no one is eligible. Then there is the problem of the second child. While the cost of arranging institutional care for one child might be tolerable for a family, if care must be provided for a second child, even reasonable fees may be beyond the family's means or may eliminate the economic gains from a second family income. Thus even the highest quality and most convenient system of child care will be inaccessible to parents if the fees charged is beyond their ability to pay.

122. The findings of studies in France and Denmark tend to confirm that not all families make equal use of child care facilities. According to French data children enrolled in the creches tend to come from middle class families and have mothers with stable jobs. Two thirds are only children, and children from large families are rare (1). Danish survey results show that although the use of day nurseries by employed mothers did not seem to be connected to family income level, among women without jobs there was a clear difference according to economic situation. Those economically better off used child care to an extent close to that of their occupationally employed counterparts.

(1) "The Role of Women in the Economy : France " OECD MO(73)13/08, par. 334, 1973)

Non-working women in lower income groups, however, used child care to only a very limited extent. (1).

123. The limited nature of these studies requires caution in generalization about parental decisions on the use of child care facilities, and much more research will be required on this question. In fact, the question of exactly what effect the size of parental fees has on usage decisions and especially what effect increasing user fees would have is currently under study in Denmark. The answers to these questions are likely to be of considerable interest to all countries looking for new sources of funds, particularly if, as some believe, parental decisions on the use of child care institutions would be little affected by some increase in fees.

124. A final issue of parent costs concerns fee differential. Because cost to parents is likely to have an effect on the mode of care chosen, the real preferences of parents may be distorted if differential fees are charged according to the type of institutional care. Thus in a system such as that in France where for family day care (FDC) are about 60 percent of those for the public creches, the "demand" is likely to be weighted in favor of the FDCs. The parents may actually prefer small group care for their young children in the home-setting of the FDCs, the free differential adds a distorting element to clear estimation of parental demand. For this reason some countries have for some time charged the same fee to parents for FDC and institutional care (e.g. Sweden, Belgium) and others are contemplating a move in this direction (e.g. Norway).

(1.) "Care of Married Women's Young Children", Danish National Institute of Social Research, 1969).



G. ALTERNATE MODELS FOR THE DELIVERY OF CHILD CARE

125. Institutional Provision

The issue of the manner in which public subsidies for child care should be spent is often as controversial as the issue of the size of the subsidy. To some, the publicly regulated and/or operated care centre is the best use of public funds for child care. The arguments for such programme centres outside the home are several: because they can be organised to accommodate significant numbers of children, they can provide certain advantages and services which home care cannot deliver. These include :

- Health and nutritional care services can be more effectively dispensed when a large number of children are gathered in a central location.
- Quality educational programming can be developed and implemented by qualified personnel.
- in-service training programmes for personnel can be managed more effectively.
- Staff-to-staff ratios and staff-children ratios can be more effectively monitored.
- Programmes of scale located in neighbourhood areas can offer educational and related programming activities tailored to the needs and interests of special populations of children, e.g. language instruction for immigrant children, special compensatory programmes for children from poor homes.
- Programmes at centres located within a neighbourhood setting can structure meaningful roles for parents in the preprimary education of their children through service on advisory boards or curriculum committees, as employees in the programme centre itself and through participation parent education programmes organised at the centre.
- The developmental quality and content of care, as well as health standards can be more effectively monitored in institutional than in home care programmes.
- Finally, programme centres outside the home fall more readily in line with the growing parental and public acceptance of a public role in preprimary educational provision as a conceptual downward extension of the state role in compulsory education. Public financing may in fact be easier to win precisely because care institutions can be monitored for health standards, quality programming and qualified personnel.

126. There is a negative side of institutional care provision, however: cost. The costs of institutional child care are likely to be higher than the costs of care in a home. Facilities for centres must be constructed. Moreover, the maintenance of high quality physical and developmental care, principally a matter of salaries of qualified personnel in small ratios to the children, can be very expensive. A vastly increased proportion of public funds will usually be required if subsidised institutional care is to be provided to all children from 0 to school age, or even to all children of working or single parents. Given the financial burden the expansion of institutional child care provision constitutes, it is not surprising that countries are looking to less expensive alternatives.

(2) Family Day Care

127. Family Day Care (FDC) arrangements are part of the publicly subsidised system of child care in each of the seven countries studied. The FDC option is the subject of considerable discussion and debate where expansion of care provision is contemplated. Its attraction for policy makers are several :

- .. Most importantly, costs. FDCs are seen as less expensive ways of providing more child care places, especially for infants and younger children. No construction costs are required, and in some countries public authorities may be inclined to look on FDC as a panacea.
- .. Flexibility. FDC places are much easier and faster to create than new institutional places, even if training courses are involved for the FDC mothers. They are good for marginal provision in response to rising and falling demand because investment physical facilities are not required. The "system" can, in principle, expand and contract fairly easily (except for the fact that once employed, the FDC mothers who are salaried will not "contact" without problems). In times of unstable demand, the FDC is seen as a good solution.
- Individualised care. FDCs, because they are small, are seen as better than institutions in cases where specialised care is required. Infants and small children may especially benefit from the individualised attention possible through quality FDC, and the vulnerability of the youngest children to illness may be reduced because there are fewer children in the care group.



For sparsely populated areas. The difficulties of child care provision in rural areas may, in part be overcome by FDC type solutions. Institutional provision requires a certain minimum number of children, which in sparsely populated areas could be assembled only by transporting the children great distances. If FDC personnel were well qualified, they could provide an important educational service to children and families living in these areas.

128. The actual status of Family Day Care provision varies from country to country. The following capsule descriptions aim at summarising the situations in the different countries.

129. Belgium: Until recently all home-based care was purely private in the financial sense. But a Royal Decree of February 1974 has brought some FDC provision under the organisation of the creches, thereby enabling them to receive subsidies payable through the creches to which they are attached. In return, they must conform to certain specific conditions relating to standards and quality laid down by the creches' supervising agency. All FDCs, both newly "public" and private, are now subject to compulsory registration designed to ensure minimum standards of hygiene, though a number have not registered for that reason. It is anticipated that the Belgian system with home centres attached to creches is likely to be further encouraged. No qualifications are required to become an FDC mother, save a "healthy" home environment.

130. France. The functioning of the FDC ("creche familiale") in France is regulated by a 1971 law whose purpose was to replace purely private home care. The FDC was seen as a way to assure care for children under three in the absence of sufficient numbers of creche places. The FDCs are attached to a creche or a PMI (Protection Maternelle et Infantile) centre. It is the PMI that, in consultation with parents, makes the placement of children in FDCs. The FDCs are expanding very rapidly, more so than the public creches. Cost considerations are very important in France, for the municipalities and the parents (fees for FDC places are approximately 60% of the fees charged for creche care). No special qualifications are required of FDC mothers.

131. Denmark: FDCs were recognised as child care institutions and put on the same basis as other child care institutions, with the same rights to public subsidies and the same requirements for meeting certain standards, by Denmark's basic child care law of 1965. Their status in the future is somewhat unclear at the present because there are now empty places in some nursery institutions as a result of some earlier municipal overbuilding and the declining birth rate.

There is talk about taking children back from FDC places in private homes to fill these institutions. But respect for the right of parents to choose the kind of care preferred and recognition of the importance of not changing the mode of care for children already in FDC means that the phasing out of reduction of FDCs in excess-capacity municipalities will be gradual, with no new placements in FDCs.

132. The subject of parental fees is also under discussion in Denmark. Currently, parents pay less for FDC than for institutional care. But as of April 1976, it is proposed that fees will be the same whether care is in FDC or a day nursery. By equalising the cost factor authorities believe parental choice is more likely to be made on substantive grounds. Many think that for the youngest children FDC will remain the preferred mode of care while parents will want the trained staff and developmentally rich environment of the day nursery for their older children. Some municipalities are already equalising the costs to parents of the two forms of care.

133. Norway: In Norway Family Day Care is a live political question although no official policy has been decided yet about its role in the expansion of child care in the country. There is currently a large quantity of privately organised FDC, but public, municipally organised FDC exists as only a very limited system (600-700 places). There is a strong desire on the part of the municipalities to replace institutional child FDC because it costs much less. State planners want to organise a system whereby FDCs will be attached to the day nurseries, with the nursery teachers having supervisory responsibility over the homes and close contacts with FDC mothers. They also want to give an adequate wage with the full social security benefits associated with regular jobs to FDC mothers. The costs to parents will be roughly equivalent for both FDCs and institutions. FDCs are especially seen as a way to expand the supply of care to children under three years of age. No special educational qualifications are required of FDC mothers, but a three-week course of training is now offered and a few experiments with continuing on-the-job training have also been organised. Another idea under discussion is the adoption of an on-the-job training scheme run and staffed by teachers from the day nurseries.

134. Sweden: In 1969 FDCs first became eligible for public funding in Sweden in return for meeting certain standards and submitting to supervision. The fees parents pay are the same for FDC and institutional care. The mothers running FDCs are "employed" by the municipalities, with full social security benefits.

135. The FDCs are seen as a complement to child care institutions in Sweden, but are not generally viewed as being



equal in the quality of care provided. There is substantially more concern with the problem of FDC quality in Sweden than elsewhere. FDC mothers do not have the training that personnel in institutions have, nor do they provide the same range of equipment and materials for the children to work with. While there is a 90-hour training course for FDC mothers, which includes child psychology as well as care components, and while most mothers take the course (although it is not required), and also have the possibility of coming to training days and consultations with day nursery staffs - many believe that the training of FDC mothers is not sufficient. Another problem is also pointed out. If the FDC mother is ill, what happens? On rare occasions a child nurse may be available to substitute, but they are not numerous enough to give stability to the system. Others point out that there are serious limits to the expansion of the FDC system in Sweden, especially in the Stockholm area, because a very large proportion of young women - potential FDC mothers - are already working. There are simply not many women at home to serve as FDC mothers. The future, many Swedish authorities conclude, lies in institutional provision, which will be necessarily very expensive for a few years in terms of construction costs, but then will decrease.

136. The major argument in favour of FDC as a desirable form of care is in the case of the child with special needs for more individual care. Some extend this argument to the care of infants and very young children for whom institutional care places, first are very costly and second, are not being built very much any more precisely because of costs. These children also would benefit from close individualised attention. But for older children, it is felt that FDCs do not meet the pedagogic aims of the preprimary system for children. For the present, FDC is seen as a limited complement to institutional care. Where and when they are necessary, the FDC mothers should have more and better training. At present, there are no formal requirements for FDCs to be attached to preprimary institution, although the recommendation that the two forms of care be closely linked to ensure quality provision in the FDCs is considered likely.

137. Finland. Finland's child care act of April 1973 brought private FDC into the public realm by assigning the National Board of Social Welfare the responsibility of supervising all FDCs and monitoring the numbers of children in such care and the standards. The act also raised the possibility of starting a system of publicly subsidised FDC. But however it develops, FDC is seen as only a minor part of the child care system because it is not judged consistent with or able to fulfill the socialisation and education objectives of the system.

138. FDC mothers are municipal employees under the terms of the act. Qualifications for these women is a very high priority issue, the key to assuring high quality care. Sixty hours training courses have been organised for FDC mothers, and the course is now expanding to 150 hours and opportunities for further training are planned. Curriculum for these courses is set by the National Board of Social Welfare in consultation with national education authorities.

(3) Direct Income, Transfers and Individual Choice

139. A final approach to the question of what form of child care subsidy from public funds will provide the greatest benefit per unit of currency spent is to give the subsidy directly to parents, allowing them to make their own choice as to the type of child care arrangement they prefer. Public subsidies under this approach might take a variety of forms, including:

- a voucher system whereby parents would receive vouchers according to some formula which they could use to "pay" for the kind of child care institution or arrangement they desire.
- a child allowance which could be used by the family to pay for private or public institutional or FDC care, or could be retained as a "salary" for one of the parents (effectively, the mother) to remain at home in care of young children.
- tax deductions or rebates which would offset child care fees in part or in whole, tied to family income or independent of it.

140. All of these options emphasise the efficiency of leaving the choice among types of care with the parents, making the form of public subsidy more neutral with respect to the type of care provided. At the same time, they all assume the existence of a fairly extensive system of child care institutions, perhaps both public and private, which will assure a sufficient range of alternatives for the exercise of parental choice. Indeed, most admit that the provision of such allowances and deductions must be coupled in public policy with the availability of adequate care facilities (which means publicly subsidised) for those families in which both parents choose to work. This approach is not, therefore, incompatible with either the institutional or FDC approaches. A major effect really seems to be more in the realm of social policy: creating the possibility for real choice for parents in the matter of child care by opening the possibility for one parent to remain at home with the young children, acknowledging the importance of the occupational status of child rearing within the family and helping protect the family against the erosion of income at the time when there is only one income earner.

144. But the effects of such income transfer programmes are unclear and uneven. For example, low income families which pay little or no taxes would not benefit greatly, if at all, from tax deduction and rebate schemes. Further, the effect of the French "mother's salary" on labour force participation is still unknown. Some believe that rather than create real choice, such allowances actually discourage labour market work - indeed, some see that effect as the intention of policy makers. In the end, most governments tend to be more content and committed, for reasons of equality and equity to place first priority and greatest emphasis on the direct public provision and supervision of care facilities, frequently coupled with policies of direct payments to parents.



Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

H. THE IMPORTANCE OF PLANNING

142. All central governments engage in planning - in projecting needs into the far and near future, setting targets for meeting those needs and formulating policies for achieving the targets. The more centralised the politico-administrative system, the more centralised the planning. In the child care field, however, there has been markedly little planning, and until very recently child care provision (except that which has fallen within the province of ministries of education) has been far more a matter of ad hoc state measures and exhortations and uneven local initiative.

143. The role of planning in child care provision has, however, received greatly increased attention in the last five years. The 1971 Italian "cadre law" for creche provision has a five year planning dimension and targeted goals. Because of the nature of the funding formula and current economic conditions, these goals are effectively unattainable, but the attempt to look ahead was an important step. French child care provision has also been incorporated into the centralised national five-year plan. But the problem in both of these instances is that planning and the setting of goals are "top-down" operations, while they may produce proper estimates and helpful policies leave little room and place little importance on the process of planning at the municipal level, where the initiative for child care provision must originate. The approach more recently adopted to planning by several of the Scandinavian countries, a mix of political, economic and social realism plus psychology, shows considerable insight into the need for and benefits from involving local authorities more fully in the planning process.

144. Chronologically, the Finnish law came first. The first step of the child care legislation of April 1973 was to bring all care arrangements made for children by families outside their own homes under the control of the municipale administration. Even strictly private arrangements were to be subject to inspections for standards. Most importantly, this move provided municipalities for the first time with the possibility of knowing how many children were in care outside their own homes, an important start on the road to planning. Another part of the law then required municipalities to estimate their "need" for child care and to plan how they would move toward meeting that need over a five-year planning period. Next municipalities were to send their plans to the regional administration and then to the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, whose job it is to adjust the local plans to national limits and to work out the state aid role over the five years.

145. The biggest influence in the new act, it is generally agreed, is the more and more important role given to planning at the local level. It is also, in the opinion of many, the biggest advantage of the law. Because municipalities



must establish plans for a future of five years, the year-to-year ad hoc approach of the past will not satisfy planning requirements. Further, because it is left to the municipalities to define their own need, they are more likely to take responsibility for or "own" the findings. The chances for more purposed, planned child care provision are, in these circumstances, greatly enhanced. While it is too early to tell what results of this exercise in planning will be, Finnish authorities point out that the nature of the debate about child care has been substantially altered by the act's planning requirement. Before the law, the dominant question in the child care debate was how much do parents really "need" child care? Following the law, the question most frequently heard is how the municipalities are to meet the need that they themselves have established?

146. Municipal planning is also a major element in the Swedish law on child care of December 1973. Swedish planning is particularly focussed on the immediate requirement that all municipalities provide, by July 1975, part-day places in care institutions for all six-year-olds in the country. The longer-range aspect of the planning is that it will cover a five-year period and will, as in Finland, require municipalities to list their "needs" for preprimary program activities and indicate how and to what extent the municipality intends to meet these needs with day nurseries, part-time groups and family day care provision. The requirement that municipalities also initiate case-finding activities to learn of children with special needs during their preprimary years is an important allied planning tool. While the initiative for the creation of new places to meet the needs established will continue to rest with the municipality, the fact of planning and the self-definition of needs means that municipal authorities must come to grips with the figures and really see where they are and where they should be going.

147. Finally, Norway is about to embark on the municipal planning approach to child care provision. A project on municipal planning is closely linked to a new child care act, to be submitted to Parliament in late 1974, which will call on municipalities to determine their needs for child care and to initiate the planning process for meeting the needs. The specifics of this project were not yet fully defined in July 1974, but the Swedish legislation has been an obvious model for Norwegian work.

148. A brief footnote should be made at this point with reference to Denmark. The direction of child care planning in Denmark appears to be taking a very different direction from that of the other Scandinavian countries. The emphasis on municipal planning leading up to national plans and on balanced national growth is entirely absent here. The reverse process, a strong move toward decentralisation in child care and education, as well as in other social welfare programs and

services, is underway and is expected to be complete in April 1976 when the current child care law and national authority responsible for child care will effectively disappear. Some seriously question the wisdom of Danish policies in this matter, insisting that the political popularity of decentralisation and the shift to a new funding formula of state bloc grants to the municipalities will negate fifteen years of work in building up a national capability for evaluation, monitoring, controlled experimentation and, simply, informed communications as to what exists and what is planned in the child care field. Others see decentralisation as a means of returning control to local authorities and local citizens.

V. WHO IS GOING TO CHANGE? THE FUTURE ORGANISATION OF WORK AND FAMILY LIFE

149. All too frequently the debate on child care provision has become a controversy between housewives and working mothers. This slant on the issue has tended to produce two ideological positions, one of which aims to secure for every woman the right to draw a line freely between home and work by providing publicly organised child care for ten or twelve hours a day, and the other which seeks to assure the mother's role in the home care of young children, positively by providing economic incentives to encourage care by the mother and negatively by assigning the burden of "mother's guilt" to those who leave their children in the care of others. In this only-home/only-institution care debate the child's varied needs often receive scant attention. Yet it is the young child - or more precisely, the responsibility for the child's care - that is at the heart of the debate and at the heart of a real and growing social problem.

150. Although the care of young children is but one aspect of the equalisation of opportunities and life chances for women, it is coming to be seen more and more as sine qua non issue. Especially as legislative changes have been eliminating many overt areas of discrimination, and a number of the covert areas as well, it has become clearer that women's possibilities for taking advantage of increasingly equal opportunities are still severely limited because society continues to assign them the principal responsibility for the care of young children. Parents cannot and should not avoid responsibility for the children they bring into the world, but if equal life chances and life roles are to be enjoyed by both men and women, then this responsibility must be more equally shared.

151. The 24-hour continuous-operation publicly-funded child care institution could effectively accomplish this equalisation, relieving both parents equally of the responsibility of child care and leaving only the residue of guilt. But neither our social nor our human values allow for such total disregard of children. Care institutions open ten or twelve hours a day, universally available for the children of working parents, would cover the work schedules of most employed parents in roughly



the same way. But few, if any, argue that such long hours of care away from home and parents are good for children, particularly for the very youngest. In fact, preprimary personnel in all countries are more inclined to set the maximum daily stay which has a positive or neutral effect on the child as no more than six, possibly seven hours. For children under three, they raise serious questions about even this length of institutional stay, even in high quality care systems. In short, no one claims the answer will be found in institutions. Adjustments must come instead in other areas of social and economic life. Most importantly in the condition of working life.

152. There are two conditions these adjustments must meet if they are to resolve the problem: first, the proposed change must improve the situation of the children; and second, it should not discriminate against women by unequally placing the burden for child care on the mother but should give it equally to both parents. The various policies suggested for the resolution of the problems arranging care for young children must be measured against both of these criteria.

153. One approach to easing the difficulties of caring for very young children has been the extension of maternity leave provisions. This does, in fact, resolve some of the problems of care for the child. Because the early months of the child's life are viewed by many as the time in which close continued contact between child and parent(s) is determining for the child's future human relationships, guaranteeing the mother against income loss while she remains at home in care of the infant during its first three months or six months or even first year or two may allow the desired mother/child relationship to develop. Because the child's first year is also the period during which institutional care provision costs are extremely high, the "public" or tax-payer's interest may also be well served by an extension of maternity leave. In fact, maternity leave has been lengthened recently in Finland to six months at full pay, and while other countries tend to be less generous, the extension of maternity leave is under discussion in every country.

154. Maternity leave is, however, for women only. It is the woman who must leave her job, despite the possibility that the best parent to stay at home will not on every occasion or at every stage in the family's life be the mother. One way to meet this objection to maternity leave schemes may be to move to a system like Sweden's equality-oriented parental leave. Coverage under this program's pioneering parental benefits formula now gives either parent the right to remain at home with the child at 90 percent of salary for six months, and there is a current proposal to lengthen the period to 7 months. While it is too early to know how the parental leave provisions will actually work in terms of men and women sharing the care of the newborn infant, Sweden's approach goes far in creating the conditions for choice.

155.; Increasing interest is also being shown in the possibilities of social insurance to cover salary loss of parents who stay home when the family requires this. In particular such times would include when a child is under three and when a child is sick. In most discussions of such proposals, it is generally assumed that it will be the mother who reassumes the home child care role. But again, the best parent to stay at home will not always be the mother. Fathers share the parental responsibility and should have the right to take time out to assume their family roles. Once more, it is Sweden which has pioneered with legislation in this area, in the creation of a sick leave provision of ten days per year to be taken by either parent of a sick child. Longer insured leave periods for post-maternity-leave child care are only in the discussion stage in the different countries.

156. Child allowances and "mother's salary" proposals are two further measures which are advanced by some as counterbalances to the economic and social pressures that encourage of force the full-time employment of both parents. They are both, however, fairly obviously intended for use by women, not men. Nor are they generally concerned with creating equal choices for women or with promoting the sharing of home and work roles by men and women.

157. It becomes clear from this discussion of alternative approaches to the problem of child care for young children that "special circumstance" leave policies (e.g. for child illness) and even more extended stay-at-home schemes offer only partial and temporary answers. If a society really wishes to limit the number of hours a day young children spend in institutional care, in the interest of their welfare and good development, without shifting the burden unequally to the mother, then the changes required and the policies to implement them will be more fundamental and far reaching. If it is not good for children to stay for long hours in even the highest quality care institutions, then perhaps it is the parents' work schedule and the length of the working day that must be adjusted to allow fathers and mothers to spend more time with their children at home.

158. A number of measures which would have the effect of making it easier for both men and women to combine employment with the care of children and other family responsibilities are actually under discussion in different countries. They include the creation of vastly more non-marginal part-time jobs for both men and women; wider adoption of flexible working hours; compensated leave time for the care of sick children; and a shorter working day for parents of young children, or possibly for all parents or simply all workers. Indeed, the shorter working day for all workers, in the form of the six-hour day, is being discussed seriously enough in Sweden that an experiment is under consideration for possible trial in northern Sweden.

159. Although the widespread adoption of such measures is still far off in most countries, some slow progress is being made. And recognition is growing that only when the organisation of work is adapted to the needs of workers and their families in a way which does not deprive children of contact with their parents, women of equal opportunities for the exercise of non-mother roles, and men of the possibility of sharing in the home care of their children will equality become the condition of all in our societies.



Fundação Cuidar o Futuro