MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HOME ECONOMICS
EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN

HISTORY OF THE COOPERATIVE NURSERY SCHOOL MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES:- ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR URBAN INDIA.

by

Mrs. Sharana E.Moses

A Problem

Submitted to the College of Home Economics of Michigan State University in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the

Degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Home Management and Child Development.

1964.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express her most sincere appreciation and gratitude to her major professor, Dr.William Marshall, for his guidance and supervision of the problem; to Dr.Bernice Borgman, for reading the rough draft and offering her valuable suggestions and criticisms; to Dr.Alice Thorpe, and Mrs.Vera Borosage, for their suggestions and advice as members of the committee; to Mrs.Elise Gans for typing this report with care and patience; and lastly to a dear friend, Mrs.Galdys Dean, for being a constant source of help and comfort to the writer throughout her stay in East Lansing, Michigan.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Most educators and psychologists agree that the first six years of life are crucially important formative years. During that time the foundations of the child's personality are laid, and most of his chances for healthy mental growth are determined. He seems to learn more in those years than he will during any later period of his life. And those are the years during which he makes the transition from being a totally dependent creature to becoming a member of society.

This transition is difficult and sometimes painful. The youngster first discovers that there is a world outside himself, and outside his immediate family, with which he must learn to interact.

The home, of course, is where the child must get his basic guidance in making this transition. Most experts emphasize this fact and point out that no school can possibly substitute for the warmth of family life. A good nursery school, however, can be useful as a supplement to the home. It can help ease the child's entrance into society by scaling the world around him to his needs.

In most cases, the young child's first contact with group learning usually occurs either at nursery school or kindergarten, with his entrance into an environment where his first formalized socialization with peers occurs. This socialization is usually under the guidance of adults other than his mother or immediate members of his family. Whereas, previous to the period of entrance into an educational institution his mother was the most significant person guiding him towards her conscious and unconscious goals of child rearing part of the responsibility at this juncture is assumed by others, mainly by the teacher in the school.

There are, therefore, two agents primarily concerned with the welfare of the child - the parents and the teacher. In the nursery school the child is gradually weaned away, to some extent, from the interactive behaviour patterns with his family to other new patterns with his playmates and teachers. His dependency - independency relationship is now modified by other individuals in his extended environment. The parent and teacher are both similarly involved in maintaining his health and safety, in guiding his resting, eating, and eliminating patterns, in supervising his explorations in play, and in helping him gain mastery over his newly procured environment with other children.

America, more than any other country in the world, has dedicated its scientific resources and goodwill to the nurturance and development of her children. Especially now in the United States, as before, children's health and education are something that possess a very high cultural value.

Pre-school education is coming to be recognized as the foundation education. Independent groups were studying and experimenting in this field before organized research started. During the Second World War the need for custodial care of children of working mothers gave increased impetus to the growth of nursery schools. The writing of psychologists brought parents to be more and more conscious of the fact that personality patterns are largely grounded in the first few years of life.

In this country there exist today different types of nursery schools with different programs, different techniques for socializing the child and different ways of communicating their practices and philosophies to parents of the children at their schools. As Moustakas points out, " . . . there are no set standards for practice and philosophy of nursery school education except in the areas of health and safety . . ."[1] However, the general aim of

---

1 - C.Moustakas and M.P.Berson. The Young Child in School. New York: Whiteside Morrow, 1956, p.17.

nursery school education seems to be to create an environment wherein conditions are suitable to help the child develop to his full capacity socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually. The home, too, strives for these objectives as can the more organized school of the later years.

It seems, therefore, essential that the pre-school years in the life and education of the child be studied systematically and the benefits of the nursery school to both the child and parent be evaluated. This study proposes to examine the philosophy of nursery schools in general, but the main aim of the paper is to study and examine the various aspects of the cooperative nursery schools to see how they differ from other nursery schools in structure, function and outcomes for children.

The term 'cooperative nursery school' is applied to a school formed through the initiative of a few families. In such schools mothers of young children, under the guidance of a trained teacher, conduct play groups for children in order to give them an opportunity for social play. Such situations also provide opportunities for the mother to learn more about children. The parents not only cooperate in the organization and business administration, but also in the educational process of guiding the children.

It is hoped that such a study would yield meaningful data which could be translated into culturally equivalent terms for the purpose of studying nursery school education in urban India. It would, perhaps, provide useful information to the nursery school educators in India where this phase of education is relatively new, so that they could develop programs adapted to the needs of both children and parents.

Chapter II

A. THE NATURE OF NURSERY EDUCATION.

Philosophy of Nursery Education.

The twentieth century has seen many changes in educational philosophy and procedures. True, the seeds of new thought had been growing for a hundred years or more, but it remained for the present century to see them blossom into general acceptance.

"Complex social forces brought the nursery school into being. Yet more complex forces are shaping its organization today. The industrial revolution, economic poverty, war, urbanization, the decline of the birthrate, the progressive education movement, and the growth of the life sciences have all played a role in the establishment of day nurseries, kindergartens, pre-schools and child care centers. The nursery school is, therefore, both a symptom and a product of cultural forces."[2]

In order to understand the philosophy of the nursery school movement and its benefits to the child and the

---

2 - Arnold Gesell and Francis L. Ilg. Infant and Child in the Culture of Today. New York and London: Harper Brothers Publishers, 1943, p.258.

parents, it seems necessary to describe the activities and opportunities it ordinarily provides. Stated briefly, it is to assist parents in bringing their young children to the optimum level of physical, mental, social and emotional development and to provide when it is necessary, away from home situations which will provide an environment for similar phases of the child's development. These children are visualized as playful, imitative, social creatures able to learn things essential to an effective and happy life at their own level of maturity, and to learn without the usual mechanics of instruction.

The progressive education movement gave a new light on how children learn. It contended that the learning process is more rapid and more permanent when it is based on interests and needs and accompanied by activity; and that the whole child, rather than just his intellectual powers, should be the concern of educators. The school is not satisfied that the child learn only to read, write, figure and amass knowledge, but it aims to help him become a healthy, happy, well-adjusted, self-disciplined individual who can make his contribution to the community.

Along with the newer ideas of education, and as a result of research in child development, came the conviction that the young child would profit by organized education in his pre-school years. These early years are the

most formative time of his life. John K. Norton of Teachers' College, Columbia University, in speaking of the three and four year olds, says:

> " . . . education on an organized basis should begin and actually does begin one way or another at these early ages.
>
> As a matter of fact personality patterns for good or bad are fixed in these years to a considerable degree . . . In the past three decades research in child development has revealed that the speed and scope of a child's growth and learning in early years outstrip that of any later period of similar length in his whole life; that in importance to his future efficiency as a person they overbalance later learnings; that early blights are a handicap to be overcome only by vigorous effort in later years, if indeed they can be rectified at all."[3]

The value of rich experiences in the child's pre-school life is pointed out by all who work with young children. "The knowledge that there is a relationship between behaviour and early experiences," says Chittenden, "serves to emphasize the need for making childhood a period filled with worthwhile experiences which, lived fully and completely, will prepare the individual for the next stage in his development."[4] Foster and Mattson in the introduction to their textbook on

---

3 - John K.Norton. "The Place of Nursery Schools in Public Education," Childhood Education, 21:213-14, January 1945.

4 - Gertrude E.Chittenden, Living with Children. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1944, p.1

nursery education, reiterate the thought. "At no age is the influence of environment more marked than it is in the very early years of childhood; at no age is the provision of a good environment more imperative. The nursery school is one of today's answers to the search for a good environment for very young children."[5] It is this early education of the child with which we are dealing in this paper. The term "nursery education" is applied to the guidance and training received by two, three and four year olds in group situations.

The nursery school is a logical extension downward of public education. The old criterion of age of entrance - ability to master the techniques of reading, writing, and arithmetic - is no longer in accord with the fundamental aims of education. "Such concepts as guidance in physical growth, health, behaviour patterns, methods of learning, personality development and social and civic growth now color the picture of educational goals. All these make their appearance early and in acute form."[6]

---

5 - Josephine C.Foster and Marion L.Mattson, Nursery School Education. New York: D.Appleton - Century-Company, Inc., 1939, p.3.

6 - Iowa Child Welfare Research Station, A Manual of Nursery School Practice. (Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa, 1934), pp.7-8.

The aims of nursery education are in line with those of progressive education. They are to promote the physical, mental, social and emotional development of children between the ages of two and five years.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE NURSERY SCHOOL PROGRAM TO VARIOUS PHASES OF A CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT.

Physical Development.

In most instances before a child is enrolled in nursery school he is required to have a physical examination and in most places is required to have immunizations against small-pox and diptheria. The physical examination points up defects that may need corrective measures. Finding these defects at an early age means that remedial work will probably be complete by the time the child enters kindergarten.

In a full day session the child has a dinner at noon and a mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack. In the half day session, he has a mid-period lunch of fruit juice and crackers. For good health and growth the young child needs space to play freely and safely and the use of the equipment that fosters development of his larger muscles. He needs to climb, jump, bend, lift, push and pull. The nursery school provides equipment which facilitates such activities through indoor and outdoor play.

Mental Development.

The nursery school provides an environment that stimulates intellectual growth. There are books and pictures, stories and songs, and opportunities for conversation with other children and with adults to encourage his language development. Imagination can be developed through dramatic play. He can express his own ideas through various media; such as paint, crayons, dough, blocks and musical instruments.

Experiments with nature at this age are simple, such as caring for animals, plants, making a garden and feeding birds. Although such experiments are simple, they help to widen his horizon enough to make him want to learn more about the phenomena about him.

The child also develops his judgment in problem-solving situations both ready-made and spontaneous. The teacher gives him time to work out his problem instead of stepping in to solve it for him. Working with color cones and puzzles, building a bridge with blocks, using pieces of wood and some nails in the workshop for making an airplane, are some examples of using the child's judgment in problem-solving situations.

In the nursery school there is a period set aside for simple music, nursery songs and rhymes. Children enjoy music and group singing or listening to records played while they are involved in some kind of activity. The nursery music is not confined to formalized types. "Music is in the air, on the ground, in the swing, at orange juice-table, anywhere, any time throughout the pre-school day. Children who are happy and who feel free and spontaneous will express themselves musically."[7]

Social Development.

When the children come into the nursery school, they learn usually for the first time about living in a group of children. They learn that others have the same rights and privileges which they have. Here the child learns to share toys and other things by taking turns. He learns that he cannot always succeed by using force. The teacher steps in as such situations arise and helps the child learn more acceptable ways of handling his desires and needs.

In the nursery school there are many opportunities for the child to have experiences in leading and following; for example, a child may lead four or five other children in a dramatic play or follow another

---

7 - Dorothy W. Baruch, Parents and Children go to School (Chicago: Scott-Foresman and Company, 1939), p.337.

leader in some other kind of activity, such as playing fireman, etc.

> "The social life of the nursery school contains a wide opportunity for experience. There are situations which involve fair play, individual rights, development of social skills and abilities and social limits. Most nursery centers agree that promoting the child's confidence and encouraging him to actualize his potential are extremely important to growth in social interactions. Experiences involving sharing contribute to the child's sensitivity, awareness and cooperative life with other children."[8]

Gesell and Ilg call the nursery teacher a "guidance teacher"[9] and the term appears to be especially appropriate.

Emotional Development.

In all of the phases of the child's school development, the cooperation of the parents is essential but with regard to his emotional life, the relationship between the home and the school is most important. Sometimes a child is insecure because the parents themselves are insecure. With reassurance and guidance from the teacher and with the stimulus of contact with other parents who

---

8 - Moustakas C. and Berson M.P., The Young Child in School, New York: Whiteside, Inc. and William Morrow and Company, 1960, p.127.

9 - Gesell and Ilg. op. cit., p.271.

likewise have similar problems, parents feel better able to carry out their responsibilities.

Mental hygienists agree that among the important causes of emotional disturbances are feelings of insecurity and inadequacy. The nursery school seeks to reduce the extent of disturbances by creating a feeling of being "wanted" or of "belonging", and it presents many opportunities to the child to prove to himself his adequacy.

> "The young child thrives in an atmosphere of security in which he knows he is wanted, valued and appreciated as himself. He looks to the teacher for sympathy, understanding, affection and interest. He wants to be free to express his feelings in his own way and time. He strives to learn to understand and accept the feelings of others. An atmosphere of trust, acceptance and respect gives the child a feeling of importance which enables him to explore more and more fully the kind of person he is and is becoming, as well as to bring enrichment to the lives of others."[10]

Summary.

Nursery schools have grown in many ways and have made great strides in broadening and enriching the curriculum in knowledge of play media and materials and in greater understanding of child growth and development. All of these have brought significant contributions to the education of young children everywhere.

---

10 - Moustakas C. and Berson M.P., op.cit., p.127.

The nursery school exists, not only for children, but also provides education for their parents. Parenthood alone does not bring with it all the knowledge necessary to child rearing. Therefore, the nursery school aims, not to be a substitute for the home training, but to supplement it.

Anna Wolf states:

> "A good nursery school then, to some degree, must always be an extension of the home. Though it offers experiences which the home, by its very nature cannot offer, it should not break sharply with all that has gone before in the child's experience. There should be a continuous interchange of experience and counsel between parents and teachers. Teachers must recognize the parent-child relationships as the cornerstone on which the child's life is constructed and must understand the part they can play in strengthening it."[11]

---

11 - Anna W.M.Wolf, The Parent's Manual, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1941), p.323.

B. THE COOPERATIVE NURSERY SCHOOL.

A more recent development in the United States is the growth of the Cooperative Nursery Schools. Cooperative pre-schools have recently become quite popular and the new movement seems to have gained significant impetus in the last twenty years. The parent cooperative nursery schools appear to offer promise of wider development and richer contribution to the well being of the children, their parents and their communities. The distinguishing characteristic of the program is its unique involvement of the parents, especially mothers, in both the administration of the organization and participation in the nursery school as teacher-assistants. In a cooperative mothers actually work with the children giving one or more days a month as part of their child's tuition fee. Under the guidance of a trained teacher they guide the children in activity, learn to use teaching techniques in helping children through periods of anger, fear or aggression, and learn to look at themselves and evaluate their own ways with children. Work with a group is usually supplemented by regular discussion groups where questions and problems can be aired.

Aline Auerbach states that the parents, "need to gain understanding not only of their children, their needs

and motivations at each stage of development, but also of themselves as parents, their own attitudes, feelings and expectations, and the role they play in the parent-child relationship."[12] Thus the parent education program should aim at helping the parents to become more effective as parents. The parent can thus gain appreciation of the significance of his or her role.

The cooperative nursery school includes parent education as an integral and extremely important aspect of their program. Frances Upson believes that the aim of parent education is not only to provide training and a stimulating environment for children, but also "to provide training and experience for the mothers that will give them help and greater pleasure in rearing their children."[13]

Jerome Frank states, "The goal of parent education is to help parents to develop their own abilities for communicating successfully with their children rather than looking to others for ready-made solutions."[14]

---

12 - Aline B.Auerbach, Parent Group Education & Leadership Training, (New York: CSSA Publication, 1961), P.1.

13 - Frances Upson, "How Cooperative Nursery Schools can help Young Families," Understanding the Child, XXV (1956), P.11.

14 - Jerome D.Frank, "How do Parents Learn?", Child Study, XXX (1953), P.14.

Parents have been greatly influenced not to rely wholly upon traditional beliefs and customary practices in child rearing but to believe that the care and training of children should be guided by scientific knowledge. Lawrence Frank feels that "individuals need time and the support of others to alter their thinking and to revise their relations." He also states, "In order to foster healthy personality development it is obvious that some of the beliefs, expectations and methods of parents must be revised, and in certain cases very largely superseded by a new orientation. But this means a genuine alteration in our culture, reforming our traditional ideas so that they are consonant with our new knowledge of child growth and development."[15]

The cooperative nursery school provides a unique method of helping parents to gain insights and understanding their children and other children in general. This method of parent education in cooperatives is called unique because it differs from the other nursery schools in that the parent in the cooperative program is actively participating in the teaching and guidance of children

---

15 - Lawrence K.Frank, "Is Parent Education Necessary?" Child Study, XXXIII (1956), P.15.

and observing his own child in relation to other children under the guidance and leadership of a trained teacher. This enables the parent to learn individual differences in children through personal experience and observation and effective ways of relating to children and guiding them. In order that the whole cooperative program may be successful, an effective and complete program of parent education should be carefully planned and carried out.

BENEFITS OF THE COOPERATIVE NURSERY SCHOOL : TO PARENTS

It is essential and useful to examine systematically the various aspects of the cooperative program and to evaluate the benefits of such a program for both the child and the parent in particular and the community in general.

A. Personal Satisfaction:

The cooperative nursery school encompasses the values of the usual nursery school, and in addition, provides several significant advantages of its own. The great value of a cooperative nursery school appears to be that it provides a developmental experience for both the child and the parent as well. The cooperative program is especially beneficial to mothers in many ways.

One of the major reasons for the fast growth of the cooperative nursery school seems to be the fact that many mothers feel the need for this kind of sharing experience. It provides companionship while mothers are learning to do their job. In a cooperative nursery school they see first the advantages to their children - a safe place to play and other youngsters to play with; assistance in learning to manage feelings of jealousy, selfishness, and rebelliousness. Then, as time goes by, they begin to realize their own gains. For one thing, as the mother spends time with a number of children, she begins to worry less about her own child's behaviour, about whether he is happy and whether all children act in the same way. The techniques of nursery school guidance take on a fresh meaning as she spends time with other children.

Another benefit is the sense of significance and responsibility mothers gain through working and participating in the cooperative program, as well as the training in child guidance they receive from trained teachers. It has been said that "the American mother of young children is an anomaly; she is parent and choregirl with aspirations and often training for other professional occupations."[16] By her actual participation in the

---

16 - Mary Waldrop and Ruth Spiegel, "Group Processes in a Community Nursery School," Understanding the Child, XXV (1956), P.14.

school program as teacher-assistant, the mother can learn from others and share her own experience and talents with the group. For example, a mother can be involved by doing the following:

1. participating in planning and carrying out of the program;

2. collecting materials such as books, pictures, records and songs;

3. reading books and articles on child development and child psychology.

4. participating in lectures, discussions, panels, group activities, etc., and on topics relating to nursery school problems;

5. sharing any talent she possesses with the children, for example, playing the piano or other musical instruments, home-making skills, arts, crafts, dancing and drama, etc.

If she does all these, the mother usually continues to be involved in the program and in the growth of her child, which is an important aspect of cooperative nursery education. It is this involvement which makes the co-operative nursery the unique thing it is.

The outlet which parent cooperative nursery schools afford for young mothers seems to be of inestimable value. Young mothers who have had careers, or who have participated actively in community affairs, with the coming of children frequently find themselves cut off from outlets for their special abilities and interests. Many mothers report that their absorption in the service possibilities which exist within a cooperative has given them a sense of significant contributions to a worthwhile community venture while permitting them to continue to carry satisfactorily their responsibilities to their own children and families.[17]

The mothers find satisfaction within the cooperative nursery school by their actual assistance to the teacher in working with the children and by doing various administrative jobs with regard to the running of the school and serving on various committees, thereby applying their energies and talents to something beneficial outside the family. But the most important thing, according to Waldrop, seems to be "that the jobs mothers do and the roles they play strengthen their competence, give them real status and increase their significance."[18]

---

17 - K.D.Wann, "Some Values and Needs for Cooperative Nursery Schools", Understanding the Child, XXV (1956), P.46.

18 - Waldrop and Spiegel, op.cit., P.15.

Francis Upson states that, "Among the means of relieving the young mother's conflicts none offer more definite specific help than a good cooperative nursery school . . . Here the young mother is given food for thought; here is a place where she can use many of her skills; here her child is safe and happy so she can relax and have time for shopping, visiting, etc."[19]

Although most cooperative nurseries rely on the mother as working teacher-assistant, fathers are encouraged to participate when they can. Michigan State University fathers often assist. Many other new groups that are now being organized are encouraged to have both parents working together in as many projects as possible; to participate in study, to help frame the constitution, to participate in parent-teacher conferences and parent education programs. Participation of both parents helps to create a home atmosphere for the child and also tends to give the father a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment. It is certainly a mistake to feel that fathers are only necessary when manual labor is required. A wife who is enthusiastic about the cooperative nursery would certainly like to have her husband share in the program.

---

19 - Frances Upson, "How Cooperative Nursery Schools can help Young Families," Understanding the Child, XXV (1956), P.11.

B. Parent Education.

1. In Unstructured Ways.

In a cooperative nursery there is also ample opportunity for actual observation of child behaviour, learning about the philosophy of the nursery school and how the trained teacher handles various problems, administers discipline and gives encouragement to each individual child. Parents can learn much by observing the trained teachers' practices and also by seeing other children. "Parents are not so threatened by their own child's behaviour or 'misbehaviour' when they have the chance to see others behaving in a like manner.[20]

Many parents join the cooperative nursery school with the desire to be exposed to methods in child care which they can adapt for home consumption. Many ambitious mothers are eager to advance their children; they have not yet learned that children grow at their own individual rate of development. These mothers are under the impression that they can help their children to achieve more success in school if they start them there earlier. The cooperative nursery school, if it is a good one, has a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate normal child growth with emphasis upon materials and

---

20 - Norma Perry, "Personal Growth of Parent Participants in Cooperative Nursery Schools," Understanding the Child, XXV (1956), P.12.

teaching methods in accordance with the individual child's development.

Besides observation, actual parent participation is another important aspect of the cooperative program. Without being much aware of the process, the mother is learning about individual differences and similarities in children in their physical and emotional development, language development, the amount of help and supervision necessary, attention span, equipment used, and approaches to children.[21]

"Through participation under skilled teachers, a mother has an opportunity for observation and further understanding, not only of her own child, but of young children in general . . . She becomes surer and more relaxed in her attitudes as she learns what children are really like at various stages . . . Sensitivities and insights are born, often new attitudes taken on, which are valuable to the mother both at home and at school."[22]

2. <u>In Structured Ways</u>.

Parent education, therefore, seems to be an essential training and guidance to the parents, in

---

21 - Henry Brandt, "Training Teachers and Parents for Cooperative Nursery Schools," <u>Understanding the Child</u>, XXV (1956), P.6

22 - Our Cooperative Nursery School (Silver Springs

helping them to reinforce their understanding and strengths in regard to themselves and their children, and to help them gain new knowledge and understanding about their children's changing developmental stages. The goal is the development and maintenance of healthy family life and "to help parents learn to use the sound, scientific professional knowledge in a creative, independent way, testing as they go, and carefully choosing a specific approach that they feel is valid in the light of all the information they can get."[23]

The various programs that are used to achieve these goals cover a wide range in subject matter, format and method. Each has its special limitations as well as its special values and potentialities for contributing to a parent's education. The aims in parent education programs are also varied according to the needs of the particular parents involved in the program.

Parent education in the cooperative is carried on through different methods and techniques. But any such program should be evaluated in terms of the nursery's basic objectives and meet the needs and interests of the members. The success of the program, however, depends upon

---

23 - Aline Auerbach, Trends and Techniques in Parent Education, (New York - CSSA Publication 1961), PP.9-10.

the members' participation. Katherine Whiteside-Taylor states, "No other single educational medium seems to have as many potentialities for significant parental and pre-parental education as cooperative nursery schools."[24]

(a) Parent Meetings.

> "These are the lifelines of the cooperatives. Planning of regular meetings will insure that decisions affecting the cooperative will reflect the thinking of the majority and that parent education will be a continuing process. Adequate notice of time, place and date should be given. Personal contact by telephone, newsletters announcing the topics for discussion, will help to make the meetings a success. A well run meeting should allow for discussion and sociability. The business meeting should represent the current position of the cooperative and provide opportunity for suggestions. Each member's participation and views are important. Planning programs on a yearly basis helps to provide complete systematic coverage."[25]

In cooperative nursery schools the program is arranged in various forms: Organizational activities such as family participation through pot-lucks, picnics, school open-houses; working groups through planning and making of equipment, maintenance of rooms and equipment and outdoor areas; inviting a good speaker from the child development

---

24 - Katherine W.Taylor, "Cooperative Nursery Schools Educate Families", Teachers College Record, LIV (1953), P.333.

25 - Michigan Council of Cooperative Nurseries, Guidepost No.4,"Parent Education - Orientation".PP.1-3.

and mental health fields to provide information and stimulate the interests and thinking of the members; arranging a symposium with three or more speakers presenting several aspects of a specific subject so that a comprehensive overall picture emerges; films to provide a good shared experience on which to base group experiences.

Other techniques of conducting such parent meetings would be by using the nursery's own resources as: panel discussion by parents themselves, who prepare and present the material which evokes interest and stimulates thinking on the part of the members; book reviews by members of the nursery present different aspects of the subject under discussion; dramatic presentations allow impersonal treatment of personal questions; skits prove an effective method of presenting material - role-playing where certain members are asked to act out roles in a specific situation may help a group to analyse objectively the feelings and emotions involved in such a situation. However, care should be taken to keep role-playing under control due to the unpredictability of the outcome of such spontaneous acting. Sometimes it may be used to just the extent of presenting a problem, with suggestions for solution being brought in the discussion. Usually a good discussion leader is needed to bring out the ideas expressed.

(b) Orientation.

For parents new in the school a good orientation procedure should be planned and put into practice. Some parents are young and inexperienced in handling children, even their own. Others come to school with years of experience as parents and perhaps a good amount of knowledge in early childhood education. But whatever it may be, everyone has something to learn and everyone has something to teach.

Every school should plan to orient or educate its members in the specific methods of operation as well as in the general field of child development. In most schools orientation begins with the original interview for membership when an outline of the school's program and philosophy is usually given to the prospective member. (1) This outline is supplemented by written material which may be a school manual, plus additional items on participation rules or pamphlet material on child development. In orienting mothers as assistants in the nursery, the teacher must explain the underlying plan of daily guidance procedure and also help them understand that such a plan is not rigid, that it is a philosophy based upon the growing needs of small children. (2) At least one meeting at the school before its official opening is generally required for new and second-year members. Parents may be given pamphlets

or a booklet concerning the organization of the nursery school, explaining such things as group meetings, general meetings, and the organization and function of the Parent Council.

Those in charge of the orientation should keep a record of items which need evaluation and reconsideration. One important function of the cooperative administration is that of making certain that pre-admittance policies are well understood by the applicant. Good planning has much to do with smoothing the path for adequate and easy child orientation. The mothers should be told that the normal child possesses the ability to adapt himself rather soon to the nursery, as the physical properties are gauged to the child's level and the atmosphere of the school is friendly, warm and understanding. The teacher should help the mother to understand how the child can be prepared for the introduction into the nursery and his initial adjustment. Some schools prepare their own orientation manuals which are given to the parents.

The teacher should try to understand that she is "in a particularly favorable position to help mothers work through their problems as she sees them in action with their own children, groups of children, and with other mothers."[26]

---

26 - The Los Angeles Council of Cooperative Nursery Schools, Preliminary Guide for Cooperative Nursery Schools, 737 Michettorena Street, Los Angeles 26, California, 1942, p. 7.

(c) Informal Conferences.

In many schools, there is usually the practice of having a short informal conference at the close of each teaching session between the teacher and parents who assist in the program of the day. Important or interesting incidents of the day and any other questions that the parents or teachers may have are discussed at such meetings. Such an experience is valuable to both parents and teachers and reinforces their learning and understanding.

At times individual conferences of parents and teachers are also arranged and held on a personal confidential basis, to enable the parent to ask questions about his own child which he might not feel free to present at a group meeting. This sort of conference is the most direct means the teacher and the parent have to reach a closer understanding and shared insight of the child.

(d) Teaching by Professional Staff.

The heart of the nursery school is the professional teacher. This is true in a unique way for the cooperative, for here the teacher's job is complex. Not only must she be trained to teach the pre-school child and be able to do so successfully, but she also must be able to guide and work with adults. These adults are mostly untrained and yet are her assistants, as well as mothers of the children in the

school. The cooperative program, therefore, requires a teacher with an unusually high degree of maturity and also one who possesses a personality attractive to both children and adults. The cooperative teacher should be able to deal more closely and effectively with the child-mother relationship than the teacher in any other school situation.[27]

In part one of the Los Angeles Council of Cooperative Nursery Schools Guide, the teacher's role in the school is discussed. "A cooperative nursery school can never be better than its teacher. The knowledge and attitudes she brings to her work with the parents and their children sets the tone for each member's feelings toward all the others."[28] The council states that the function of a teacher in the cooperative is two-fold; first, the developmental guidance of the child, and second, the educational guidance of the parent.

"Granting that the teacher has all the educational and physical attributes for pre-school work, she must also have an added quality of being a teacher of teachers

---

27 - The Montgomery Council of Cooperative Nursery Schools, Cooperative Nursery Schools, A Guide for Organization and Administration, Maryland. 1960, P.37.

28 - Los Angeles Guide, Op. cit., PP.7-12.

For the mothers of such a group are expected to take an active part in the teaching program with her, and the teacher must give the mothers as much objective understanding as she does the children."[29]

The Silver Springs Cooperative Manual[30] also discusses the role of the teacher. Even though the teacher is the employee, she is selected for her ability as the leader whose duty it is to set the educational standards and outlook. She must have professional status sufficient to give her self-confidence so that she can be steadfast for undoubtedly her methods will be challenged by the parents as assistants. She must be able to keep an open mind, for although she is hired collectively by the parents to do the best possible work, she will not be required to change her methods to agree with any individual member. She should be a person who is warm and understanding in the education of both the parents and the child.

The selection of the teachers is one of the most vital duties of the executive board. It is clear that inasmuch as the cooperative nursery school group is organized to function on sound educational principles and

---

29 - Ibid. P.9.

30 - Helen M.Jones (ed), Our Cooperative Nursery School, Silver Springs Nursery School, Silver Springs, Maryland (1949), PP.15-17.

procedures, it is the professional leader who has the first responsibility. She is the pivot on which the whole turns and is the most important single aspect of the whole. This does not devalue the functions of the parent group, for the teacher cannot exist without the educational base, and therefore, the value of the teacher-director's job must be recognized. The teacher-director is appointed by the parent group to be the educational leader. She is chosen for her background of knowledge and experience in the field of nursery school education and also for her personal capabilities. The teacher should know that she has the confidence of the parent group for the sound interpretation of good educational standards and she in turn has to rely on the group for a continuing and steady participation in carrying out the administrative needs and the teaching requirements of the school.[31]

(e) Contact with Non-Professional Staff.

While the director is responsible for the standards as the whole, the parents occupy two staff positions. They function as an office staff, taking charge of the administrative jobs through their officers and committees. They also function as the teaching staff with the director.

---

31 - Polly McVicker, The Cooperative Nursery School: Educational Responsibility, National Association for Nursery Education, (1962) PP-6-7.

It is true that if mothers and fathers cooperated, nursery schools could be maintained more economically than with an all hired staff, a good but not the basic reason for the cooperative plan. The unique and exciting value of the cooperative nursery, as expressed earlier, lies in the deep and meaningful learning opportunity afforded to the parents. The initial training which the mothers usually receive before they begin to work should be comprehensive so that along with their learning, the mothers should understand that the nursery procedures are based upon what is good for the child, his basic needs and his unique design. Where this is accomplished, the task of supervision is simplified and the tasks assumed by the mothers have more significance and challenge. Furthermore, when the mothers understand the reasons for the task, its meaning in the life of the child, they are able to put the knowledge so gained into wider use.[32]

(f) Library.

The library in the cooperative nursery school is another important means by which parent education can be carried out. It should provide materials, pamphlets and books on child development, child study and child guidance.

---

32 - The Parent Cooperative - Newsletter of the American Council of Parent Cooperatives. Vol.6, No.1 (Winter, 1963).

The parents should be allowed to borrow these books for as long as necessary according to their needs. Many cooperative schools have their own libraries which are of great value and help to the parents.

BENEFITS OF COOPERATIVE NURSERY SCHOOLS : TO CHILDREN

The basic aim and philosophy of the cooperative, therefore, seems to be that it offers special benefits to the child and his parents as they "go to school" together. Since the cooperatives are schools for young children, they are valid only when the educational direction is clear and when the standards of good nursery school teaching are consistently maintained.

A typical statement of educational philosophy would include the following:

a) Individual acceptance: It is important for each child to be accepted as he is. Each child is helped to develop his own capabilities at his own best rate of progress.

b) Freedom within limits: A child needs to know that there are limits beyond which he cannot go. He needs an order to his day.

He also needs freedom in play; his imagination and curiosity need room to wander.

c) A child-sized world: A child needs to find himself in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere where he can explore, share, play, and communicate with other children of his own age.

d) Parent participation: Parents attend school regularly to work and observe. Thus they learn about children and their problems in truer perspective through close association and guidance under skilled hands. They learn that all children do not have the same problems and that different children and situations need to be handled in different ways.

e) Three-way sharing: In the cooperative one finds fellowship. Child-parent-teacher sharing furthers the adults' understanding of children and facilitates the children's adjustment to their first school experience.[33]

The curriculum in the various cooperative schools is similar although there is no specific "typical" daily

---

33 - The Montgomery Council of Cooperative Nursery Schools, Op.Cit. P.4.

routine. The day's schedule varies from school to school according to the following factors:

a) Length of school morning.

b) Location of school.

c) Physical arrangement of room or rooms.

d) Size of classes.

e) Physical needs of a particular group for indoor play, outdoor play, rest, toilet periods and snack time.

f) Teacher's personality.

g) Season of the year.

h) Age and interest of particular group of children.

i) Routine of school set-up, i.e. whether large equipment needs to be put away or may be left out day to day.

Usually the program of a nursery school will include the following activities, although the sequence of the order of activities may be changed from school to school according to the needs of the school children. A suggested program for three and four year olds would be as follows:

a) Free play gives the child an opportunity to interact socially with other children. During

this time he may elect to do many things in the playroom. He may play in the doll corner, climb, slide, play with cars or blocks, build, or he may elect to watch. We may ask the question, "How does this differ from his play at home?" The child is placed in an environment which has certain limitations. He is supervised, and selected equipment is his starting point for a social situation where he learns to function in a group larger than the one at home and one consisting of children his own age.

b) Creative activity allows for self expression through the use of many types of creative material. The child may feel free to participate if he desires. He will be encouraged but not urged to participate. If he is interested, he may work with paints finger-paints, clay, play dough and materials such as fabric, wire, yarn, crayons, etc.

c) Refreshments are necessary for the child to sit socially and have a needed snack.

d) Talking is a time when the child can share his experiences and loved objects with others.

e) Rhythm and Music give the child an opportunity to march, sing, play musical instruments, dance either with a group or alone, or simply sit and listen to music.

f) Stories will either be read to the child with the entire group or in small informal groups of two or three. The assisting mother will play an important part in this activity.

g) Finger play is enjoyed by the child during this time, either with the teacher's direction or the assisting mother's..

Besides the routine activities, the school may arrange field trips to places of interest such as farms, fire stations, public libraries, woods, etc., as part of the school program. Special events such as Christmas, birthdays and picnics are also part of the program. Children enjoy these recreational activities which help them to gain more knowledge and awareness of the world around them.

Each child differs in his reaction to school. Very often the child tires most easily in the first few weeks. The mother is to feel free to stay with the child if she desires. The teacher usually can help the mother in reaching a decision about staying.

The first few weeks of school will not be typical of the school year and the child's reaction to the school. There will be a period of adjustment as this is the first time the child has been subjected to the nursery situation. He must become familiar with the adults around him, with other children and with safety habits and the program. Different times in the program will be offered gradually so that the child will not be exposed to too much at first.

Another important relationship has been that between the nursery school and the public kindergarten which the child attends later. When teachers and parents of both groups have an understanding of each, it means an improved transition for children and parents.

The cooperative nursery set up varies with the interests, resources and needs of the parents who organize the venture. Generally speaking, parents are responsible for business administration and finance with the consultation of a trained teacher.

"A cooperative nursery school group is many things. It is a workshop in family growth, a dynamic course in child development, an experience in the human values of group effort; and for the children, a rich experience in early education."[34]

---

34 - Polly McVickar, Op. cit., Pp.6-7.

Chapter III

THE HISTORY OF NURSERY SCHOOLS IN THE U.S.A.

A. Non-cooperative Nursery Schools.

Nursery schools are of fairly recent development in the United States, although the idea is not a new one. As early as the late 1700s,[35] Jean Frederick Oberlin started "infant schools" in France for the purpose of teaching religion and morals; fifty years later his principles were adopted by the French National System. From this beginning developed the pre-schools, started by Robert Owen in England, Pestalozzi in Switzerland, and Froebel in Germany.

These infant schools were the forerunners of the modern nursery school movement which began in England with the work of Rachel and Margaret McMillan. In the early 1900's school medical inspections were initiated and they showed that many physical defects in school children had originated in their pre-school years. The infant schools were found deficient in the physical care they provided for children. In 1908 the McMillan

---

35 - National Society for the Study of Education Preschool and Parental Education, 28th year book. (Bloomington, Illinois, Public School Publishing Company, 1929) Part II, Chap.2.

sisters decided to organize a nursery school in which the children of working mothers could get adequate physical care. This school aimed at training both the mothers and their babies in good hygienic habits.[36] Thus, the first nursery was started in London in 1909. Other such centers were also opened during World War I for children of women munition workers. The original aim in organizing such schools and centers was to improve the physical care for pre-school children. Although nursery schools were mainly organized for the purpose of social reform and giving good physical care to children, later on they were established to include the purpose of research and as training schools in colleges.

The nursery school movement came to the United States from England soon after the close of World War I in response to the intellectual interest in young children. Never was a movement planted in more favorable soil. The movement came in on a wave of interest in the study of young children. Psychologists were insisting on the importance of early years. Pediatricians were interested in preventive measures in the early

---

36 - Ilse Forest, The School for the Child from to Eight (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1935), P.42.

years. Home economists were moving away from an emphasis on technical subjects to a study of the emotional relationships in the home. Parents themselves in large numbers were meeting in groups to study children and to learn ways of applying the new knowledge to the rearing of their children.

Into this background of intelligent interest in young children came the concept of nursery school. The day nursery and the "free" kindergarten had catered to the children of the working mother and the family in distress. Those who brought the nursery school to this country were interested in the all-round development and well-being of all children.

The early nursery schools in the United States differed from their predecessors in England in their reasons for being established and in the type of children which they served. According to Gesell and Ilg, "In its most characteristic form, the nursery school in the United States of America is not a corrective reaction to faulty economic conditions, but is a cultural instrument for strengthening the normal functions of a normal home."[37]

Particularly favorable to the development of the movement was the fact that nursery schools were sponsored

---

37 - Gesell and Ilg, op.cit., P.259

from the first by colleges and universities, which saw in them the answer to the need for a laboratory where staff and students might study and work with young children. This sponsorship led to heightened interest in child development research and provided opportunities for training students in such fields as education, home economics, psychology and nursery school teaching, as well as an observation center for practitioners in medicine, nursing and the like.[38] Moreover, though such a program has not been introduced generally into the public schools, a more wide-spread development has resulted from the establishment of nursery schools in settlement houses and as W.P.A. projects.

The first schools were organized around 1920 as laboratories for the study of the normal child and as observation and training centers for student teachers. The children enrolled, for the most part, were from the homes of college professors and other professional workers. Soon well-to-do families were requesting private nursery schools so that their children might have the advantage of such training.

---

38 - Mary V.Gutteridge, "The Nursery School in the Public School", School and Society, Vol.73, No.1900 (May 19, 1951), P.310.

Among the foremost centers of nursery education in these beginning years were the Merrill-Palmer School in Detroit, Dr.Arnold Gesell's Institute of Human Relations at Yale University, the University of Iowa, the University of Minnesota and Columbia University. Each of the universities operated a nursery school for children from two to five years of age and each conducted research and training programs in child development.

The Merrill-Palmer School was established in January 1922 under the provisions of the will of Elizabeth Merrill-Palmer, who was interested in the training of young women for motherhood. It was one of the first nursery schools to be used as a laboratory for the education of young girls in the care and training of children. Similar laboratories for child study and child care were opened in home economics departments of land grant colleges following the example of this school.[39]

Some kindergarten leaders also took an active part in the development of nursery schools. One such example was when Professor Patty Smith Hill at Columbia University influenced many kindergarten teachers to take supple-

---

39 - National Society for the Study of Education, Preschool and Parental Education, 28th year book. (Bloomington, Illinois, Public School Publishing Company, 1929), P.28.

mentary training to become nursery school teachers. In other places, too, such as the University of California, the Cleveland Kindergarten Primary Training School of Western Reserve University, and the National Kindergarten and Elementary College, the kindergarten departments took the leadership in developing nursery schools.

The first nursery school as a part of a public school system was opened in 1925 in the Franklin Public School in Chicago as an experiment to show the possibility of adapting public school environment to the needs of pre-school children.

When we see the growth of nursery schools from their scattered and small start in the 1920s, we find that nursery schools increased steadily from three opened in 1921-22 to 215 in 1930, with the greatest expansion coming during the decade 1931-40.[40]

Another inquiry[41] indicates that nursery schools and child-care centers of all types have increased even more rapidly during the decade from 1940 to 1950 and are destined to greater growth in the future under the impact of defense measures and other forces that are bring-

---

40 - Schools for Children under Six. (Washington D.C. Office of Education, F.S.A., 1947).

41 - Moustakas and Berson, op.cit. P.134.

ing women into the professional, governmental, and general labor force in ever increasing numbers.

In general, however, nursery schools seemed to have failed to advance as rapidly as the demand for them, mainly due to the difficulties of financial support. To give young children an adequate nursery program, with a professionally trained staff, proper facilities and equipment, and the necessary auxiliary services is costly. Parents who desired this experience for their children have had the choice, where nursery schools are available, of sending them to a private nursery school; of attempting a cooperative venture with other parents; or of enrolling them, if the family qualified, in a nursery school subsidized by a governmental or social welfare agency.

The question arises whether the benefits of nursery schools should be restricted to children of parents who can pay high tuition on the one hand, and on the other, to those whose families are "needy". What of children at large, who do not necessarily fall under these two categories?

Arnold Gesell writes:

> "The defence of democracy cannot leave young children and their parents out of account. So far as possible we must try to create equal opportunities for full development in the early years of life. No years are more important...A well reared child needs a good preschool education."[42]

If the children at large are to derive the benefits of nursery school education, without the distinction of economic status, race or color, creed or class, then the need arises for a sponsor who is equally interested in all children. The public school system would seem to be the best solution to the problem - a sponsor to meet all these requirements. The young child with his developmental needs peculiar to his age, should be provided nursery school opportunities whereby he and his family can be benefitted. This aim falls in accord with the nursery school philosophy - full opportunity for the development of every child - and might be handled and managed by the public school system which is prevalent all over United States.

---

42 - Arnold Gesell, "More and Better Schools for Children under Six" (Statement quoted in Portfolio), compiled and edited by Neterer, E., Association for Childhood Education International, Washington, D.C.1949.

B. The Cooperative Nursery School.

We have seen that the nursery school movement in the United States was motivated by a variety of educational interests - research, training and experimentation. Rather recently it became clear that nursery school could be a profitable learning experience for the parent as well as the child and out of this idea evolved the cooperative nursery school. In such schools mothers of young children, under the guidance of a trained teacher, conduct play groups for children in order to give them an opportunity for social play. Such situations also provide opportunities for the mother to learn more about children.

The term "cooperative nursery school" is applied to a school formed through the initiative of ten to twelve families. In such schools the parents not only cooperate in the organization and business administration, but also in the educational processes of guiding the children. A qualified teacher is hired who is in full charge each day. Each mother gives a certain amount of time assisting the teacher in charge and/or takes care of certain administrative duties. These schools usually operate on a half-day basis from two to five days a week. They are generally housed in churches, private homes and recreation centers; a few have their own buildings built and owned on a cooperative basis.

The cooperative operation cannot be clearly categorized. It varies with the interests, the resources and the needs of the parents who organize the venture; but, generally speaking, parents are responsible for business administration and finance, and under the direction of a trained teacher chosen by themselves, take some part in setting up and maintaining facilities and in working with the children.

Historical Development.

We have heard educators say more than once that it takes fifty years for a new development in their field to grow strong enough for general public acceptance. If that is so, the cooperative nursery school movement appears to be running just about on schedule.

The first cooperative nursery in this country was started in 1916 by a group of twelve faculty wives at the University of Chicago. This first school had a slow growth but about a decade after the Chicago mothers began their nursery school another small cooperative was founded in New York City. A pioneer cooperative in Cambridge, Massachusetts, started by a few mothers in 1922, owned its own school a few years later. Splendid units were launched in

Northampton, Massachusetts, and Berkeley, California, in 1927. In general, however, the idea was regarded as ultra progressive and experimental.[43] By the 1940s mothers were in a mood for progress and experimentation. The cooperative idea began to catch on and fathers took a hand. In Bloomington, Indiana, there are two cooperatives. There are similar nursery schools in Silver Spring, Maryland; Croton-on-Hudson, New York; and Sierra Madre, California. Today we find that the cooperative nursery school movement has spread widely and seems to be gaining popularity. In 1954 the University of California at Los Angeles offered a one-day conference on cooperative nurseries. Anticipated attendance was 125 but the final registration was 550. Many reasons, some sociological, could be cited for this development: the increased birthrate, the migration to the suburbs, shorter working hours for fathers, and the development of the nursery school movement in general.[44]

Values.

The organization of the cooperative is believed to be unique as it takes into consideration parent education as a part of the larger educational scheme. "Education

---

43 - Miriam and Jerome Ellison, "We started our own School," The Saturday Evening Post, Feb.23,1957,P.25.

44 - Dorothy Barclay, "The Co-operative Nursery Comes of Age," The New York Times Magazine, Feb.27,1955. P.18.

for family life through the experience gained in the cooperative nursery school applies methods advocated by the more progressive leaders in the educational field today. Personal growth, which has been, and still is the keynote of the philosophy of the progressive education movement, when consciously sought makes the education of the parent an interesting experience both for the parent and for the child.[45]

Rhoda Kellog, supervisor Golden Gate Nursery Schools, San Francisco, points out in her book, "Nursery School Guide,[46] that the cooperative nursery schools are underfinanced, poorly housed, and haphazardly equipped. The daily session is too short to maintain a good school. Having constantly changing assistants (untrained mothers) does not give serenity to the school as a whole and particularly to the children whose mothers are assisting. She is of the opinion that cooperative nursery schools attempt too much in making half of their program that of parent education; that no teacher, however gifted and well-trained, can stand up under the dual role of the teacher of children and of parents.

---

45 - Clara Tucker, A Study of Mother's Practices and Children's Activities in a cooperative Nursery School, Teachers College Contributions to Education, No.810, Teacher's College, Columbia University, 1940. pp.2-3.

46 - Rhoda Kellog, Nursery School Guide, (Boston:

These criticisms undoubtedly may seem valid and have certain degree of importance, but after careful scrutiny we realize that the essential feature of an educational program is the teacher, although fine equipment, materials and housing are important. Those who have worked and had the experience in cooperative schools feel that the knowledge and insights gained by the parents are valuable and carried into the home where they are useful for years. The cooperative nursery school seems to afford parents a practical training experience in pre-school education of young children.

> Olive McVickar writes, "We believe that a cooperative contains within its structure all the elements of the best possible education for young children. What a mother learns to do at school, she finds she can also do with success at home - the same sort of discipline, the same creative encouragement, the same solutions to all the ordinary situations of life with children. For the children it means the tremendous advantage of consistent values, the same at home and at school."[47]

---

47 - Olive B.McVickar, "Parent and Child", New York Times Magazine, (August 13, 1950). P.36.

> "The cooperative nursery school is an experimental approach to the education of the parent through demonstration. The organization of the school is one in which the parent and the child are actively interested and one in which they work cooperatively toward the solution of their problems. A solution is sought for many problems which involve changes in behavior - evidence of learning on the part of the parent and of the child. Each is given guidance in the solution of his problems as an individual and as a member of the group. In the cooperative school there is an appreciable opportunity for close association between the home and the school in the problems to be solved by the child."[48]

C. Present Status of Cooperatives in Michigan.

According to a survey conducted this year, Michigan's parent cooperative movement is about 26 years old. This survey came about as the result of a curious teacher stating a need, an enthusiastic state board and the astounding cooperation of nursery presidents, treasurers and teachers. The 1961 Fall Directory[49] listed 117 licensed centers. The growth in number of nurseries licensed perhaps reflects the national rise in average income, size of families, and

---

48 - Clara Tucker, Op. cit., Pp.8-9.

49 - Michigan Council of Cooperative Nurseries, Survey 1964.

interest in children and education.

In 64% of the cases, nurseries were started by groups of interested parents who possessed a desire to provide nursery experience for their children and were willing to work to provide it.

Help in organizing new nurseries came primarily from two sources - The Michigan Council of Cooperative Nurseries and its area representatives, or experienced parents and teachers. Word of mouth, newspaper articles and announcements in church bulletins, at P.T.A. and Y.W.C.A., etc. helped to spread the word. Seventy per cent of the nurseries were independent, while thirty per cent were church related or sponsored by another group (Y.W.C.A., community center, P.T.A.). Fifty-seven per cent paid rent, sixty-four percent met in space provided by a church, five percent used rented homes and thirteen percent were housed in vacant public school rooms (usually unused country school buildings). Groups also met in Boy Scout cabins, quonset huts, Y.W.C.A.'s and World War II temporary housing units. These facts appear to indicate that nurseries are quite adaptable to any environment.

For the most part women handled the administrative work of the nursery. In ninety-one percent of the boards, members were listed as "always women" or "usually women". The term of office was usually one year and there seemed

to be no consistent pattern for insuring a carryover. Training of board members and officers usually involved a meeting with their predecessors, perhaps a written report, but chiefly "learn on the job".

In sixty percent of the nurseries, the membership was given a complete budget and account of expenses. Fifty-two percent of the budgets were compiled as a joint effort of the board and teachers; for the rest, the task was up to the teacher or the treasurer. Eighty percent of the accounts were kept in regular ledgers and the condition of the books were rated good to excellent in eighty-two percent of the nurseries. Ninety-eight percent of the nurseries were self-supporting. Deficits in budget were met by money-raising projects. In some cases schools received small financial grants for the first year.

However, in order to be fully realistic, it must be pointed out some cooperative nurseries did not develop into permanent schools. In some cases the organizing mothers were willing only to work to the extent that the school fulfilled their individual needs but were not interested in organizing a school for the future benefits of the community. Some other mothers found the task of administration and the problems of finance so time-consum-

ing that they gave up their responsibilities to a private sponsor who could shoulder the responsibility and direct the school. Some schools could not find teachers with sufficient training and background to run the school efficiently and add more to the guidance of the mother's education.

Chapter IV

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

I. Value of Nursery Education.

The value of nursery school education and the effect of group experience on the young child is a matter of both theoretical and practical importance today in the field of child development. The theoretical importance stems from the relevance which this group experience has to the processes of socialization and those through which group identification is achieved. The practical importance is primarily seen in the fields of education, child welfare and others concerned with the health and development of the young child.

In the present chapter, a brief review of literature pertaining to the value of nursery school education for the pre-school child and the global effects of such an experience on the various aspects of his development, will be dealt with.

A number of social trends of the present day, such as the increasingly large proportion of mothers in the labor force and the consequent need of better provision for care of their children during the working day, have led to the provision of varying programs offering day care for children.

> "The importance we accord to good social adjustment, and to the ability to function effectively in the group, has led to a concern for providing the child with opportunities for group experiences at an early age. The value that educators and others place upon utilizing the child's full potential for learning during the pre-school years, for the stimulation of creative interests and intellectual skills, has helped to create a pressure for the extension of schooling downward into those years."[50]

The term 'nursery school' refers to the type of program that has developed with a background from the fields of child development and education. Its main aim in the present day seems to be to provide the pre-school child with an environment geared to his emotional and developmental needs. In the past the children who attended nursery school were usually those that tended to come from above-average homes, but the present day trend and interest in providing enrichment programs for the culturally deprived has enabled more lower-class children to participate in nursery school programs. "The nursery school serves as a supplement to the home experience of the child, covers a relatively shorter period of time (than the day nursery), and places its primary emphasis upon selective educational experiences."[51]

---

50 - Joan W.Swift, "Effects of Early Group Experience: The Nursery School and Day Nursery," "Review of Child Development Research, Edited by Hoffman and Hoffman, Vol.I (New York: Russell Sage Foundation), P.249-250. (The author in the preparation of this chapter, is indebted to Swift for her excellent article in the Hoffman and Hoffman volume.)

It is therefore important for the nursery school teacher and others concerned with the administration of the group program to know more about the specific effects of different teaching techniques, the range of learning experiences that can take place in the group setting and those developmental needs of the child which must be taken into consideration in planning a sound program.

Research in nursery education did not get under way until the 1920's when a number of nursery school programs were established specifically for research and training purposes. In general, research is mostly from the nursery schools that have been connected with a university or a training center. Historically, the first approach to determine the effects of nursery experience on the child was by the measurement of changes following nursery school attendance. There have been numerous studies attempting to measure such changes and the literature covers nearly forty years. The period of greatest research concentration fell between 1925 and 1940. It can be said to have begun with the study by Woolley (1925) reporting changes in intelligence scores following attendance at the Merrill-Palmer Nursery School, and to have culminated with the publication of the yearbook "Pre-school and Parent Education" by the National Society for the Study of Education,

in which a large number of pertinent studies on intellectual development and the effect of the nursery school on I.Q. were brought together.

The research of this period mostly concerned itself with the question of whether nursery school attendance could bring about acceleration of mental growth as seen in performance on intelligence tests. The later and more recent research concerned itself mainly with the effects of nursery school attendance on the social and emotional adjustment, upon later work orientation and relations with authority in the school situation. A few studies were concerned with physical status and motor development.

Although there is no way of measuring exactly what the effect of a year or so in a nursery school will be in the life of a child, or what the child would have been like had he not had the experience, it is possible to compare the development of a nursery school and non-nursery school group of children. Some conclusions can thereby be drawn as to the effect of the nursery training or experience. A few studies made on the effect of nursery school experience upon intellectual development, social development, physical development and motor skills and emotional development will be quoted in the next few pages.

Studies on Intellectual Development.

In 1924, two years after the Merrill-Palmer Nursery School was started, Woolley[52] reported results of tests made in which Stanford-Binet tests were given to the nursery school group of children and also to a group of children whose application to the Merrill-Palmer Nursery School had been refused. Woolley reported the results as showing "very significant increases" in I.Q's for the nursery school as compared to the control group.

It has been hypothesized that the nursery school setting, designed to provide those experiences necessary to increase intellectual curiosity and add to the child's knowledge, would produce accelerated mental growth in the children attending. The most extensive work pertinent in this area was carried out at the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station, as part of a larger series of studies on the effect of a variety of environmental conditions upon intellectual development. Swift reports,

> "The overall findings have been reported by Wellman (1932, 1934, 1940); Skeels, Updegraff, Wellman, and Williams (1938); Skeels (1940) and others (Skodak, 1939; Stoddard and Wellman, 1940). Wellman, (1943) has summarized the studies on

---

52 - H.T.Woolley, "The Validity of Standards of Mental Measurements in Young Childhood," School and Society, XXI (April, 1925), PP.476-82.

> nursery attendance, whose findings generally reflected gains in I.Q. by children attending nursery school. The investigators interpreted this to demonstrate that such attendance can bring about positive changes in intellectual functioning, changes which do not occur during similar periods of non-attendance and which are maintained over a period of later school attendance.
>
> These findings, however, while similar in direction to those originally reported by Woolley (1925) and others (Starkweather and Roberts, 1940; Frandsen and Barlow, 1940), have not been duplicated by the majority of investigators at other institutions (Kawin and Hoefer, 1931; L.D.Anderson, 1940; Bird, 1940; Olson and Hughes, 1940; Jones and Jorgensen, 1940; Lamson, 1940; Goodenough and Maurer, 1940). The studies made by these investigators reported no significant changes in I.Q. associated with nursery school attendance."[53]

Attempts have been made to account for such differences and it was believed that certain factors like practice effects, bias of testers, coaching by parents or nursery school teachers, inadequate standardization of the tests used, inadequacies in statistical handling of the data, etc., could have influenced the results. Also, the important factors that should be more carefully considered are the specific nature and content of the program provided for the children, its relation to the changes expected, and its relation to the children's experiences outside the nursery.

---

53 - [illegible], op. cit., p. [illegible].

In the opinion of Sigel,[54] one of the major contributions of the nursery school, is in the area of the child's cognitive or intellectual development. The cognitive processes of thinking, reasoning, problem solving and the acquisition of knowledge can all develop by the nursery school experience. Pre-school children at their age are thought to have greater needs in the affective area than the intellectual. Research has shown evidence of young children's intellectual functioning.

Susan Isaacs[55] reports that little children show ". . . strong and spontaneous . . . interest . . . in things and events of the physical world." Her anecdotal data demonstrate how children can formulate new experiences, show logical cause-effect thinking, and engage in "mutual correction and genuine interchange of opinion."

The few research studies on nursery school and its effect on I.Q. have already been pointed out. But I.Q. tests do not reflect the child's curiosity, his motivation to learn, nor his ability to gain insights into various types of relationships. If these tests of inte-

---

54 - Irving Sigel, (The Merrill-Palmer Institute) "Developmental Considerations of the Nursery School Experience." Speech given at the Council of Child Development Meetings, September, 1962, P.1.

55 - Ibid. P.15.

lectual competence had been more varied and geared to a broader based assessment of the child's knowledge and understanding of the world about him, the results may have been different. But the important fact lies in that the nursery school experience emphasizes less of the intellectual. Teachers usually follow through on emotional issues, rather than the intellectual ones.

However, on the basis of these studies, certain generalizations about nursery school attendance cannot be made, as the studies were inconclusive and contradictory, but the results of these studies do not seem to rule out the possibility that certain types of nursery programs can contribute to increases in I.Q. "The nursery school nevertheless offers a unique opportunity for intellectual growth and development. The atmosphere is probably more benign than later school situations."[56]

Studies in Social Development.

The social element is the one distinguishing situation where differences in behavior can be noticed in preschool children following their attendance in nursery school.

---

56 - Ibid. P.18.

> "Personality studies in pre-schools have been more concerned with the social development and adjustment of children than with any other area of development. The evidence available through such studies seems to indicate that nursery schools are making their greatest contribution by helping children to develop social skills and that nursery school children make gains in social development over and above those that would come with growth and maturation."[57]

Hattwick[58] (1946), using an average of three teachers' ratings on sixty personality characteristics, found that children became more sociable with longer nursery school attendance. 'More sociable' as used by Hattwick means that the child no longer "fears strange people", "avoids play with other children", "stays close to adults", etc.

Jersild and Fite (1939) made a thorough study of the social adjustments of nursery school children using ten observations of behavior during fifteen minute periods over a school year.[59] Their findings concluded that nursery school influences social behavior over and above the improvement that would naturally come with age. The

---

57 - Clark E.Moustakas,"An Educational Program for Four Year Olds based on Research, Theory and Practice:" Doctoral Thesis, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York (1949), P.7.

58 - B.W.Hattwick, "The Influence of Nursery School Attendance upon the Behavior and Personality of the Preschool Child," Journal of Exp.Education. (1946),PP.183.

59 - A.T.Jersild and M.D.Fite, "The Influence of Nursery School Experience on Children's Social Adjustments," Monogr. Social Research Child Development - No.2 (1939), P.15-17.

same authors, utilizing data collected through direct observations of nursery school behavior, found that mutual interests seem to be the best basis for the development of many friendships within the group and that to a large extent behavior acceptable to a teacher becomes the behavior acceptable to the children in the group.[60]

Parten[61] was more interested in the amount of various types of social behavior children engaged in. One-minute observations of each child were made indoors every day for a period of a year. Parten found that solitary play was common to all nursery school children; that the younger children engaged in more onlooker and parallel activity than the older children; and the older children engaged in more highly integrated group activity.

The child in the nursery school learns to play a social role. Sigel reported:

> "The social behaviors expected and rewarded in the nursery schools provide embryonic role definitions. Such characteristics as sharing, taking turns, inhibition of aggression, cooperation, and acceptance of adult authority, keeping

---

60 - Ibid. P.89-93.

61 - M.B.Parten "Social Participation among Preschool Children," Journal of Abnormal and Soc.Psychology, 27: (1932-1933) P.257-65.

> active and busy, assuming initiative and independence and participation with others are all the 'desirable'. The degree to which children reflect social habits frequently is presumed to indicate social maturity . . . To behave in the ways indicated suggests impulse control, respect for others, achievement striving, and reality-orientation. In other words, in the nursery school the social rewards contribute to the child's acquisition of role behavior."[62]

> "Thus, role experimentation occurs by virtue of the nursery school experience in two ways : (1) the real life requirements necessitated by the child's shift from a homebound individual to the school child; and (2) dramatic play either spontaneously emerging or as a part of the teaching program."[63]

Summarizing the significant findings on social development and adjustment, we can say that with an increase in nursery school attendance, children became more sociable, more active and engaged in more constructive play, and used more successful social techniques. From the above studies on social development we might notice that there was no attempt to study how much the activities themselves and the way in which they were conducted contributed to the social growth of pre-school children. Also, the fact seems to be that here material is not available concerning the kind of social experiences and guidance the children were receiving in the various programs.

---

62 - Sigel, Op. cit. P.12.

63 - Ibid. P.14.

Physical Development and Motor Skills.

One of the essentials of a nursery school program is the provision of adequate space, properly designed equipment and sound health routines. If these requisites are combined with the stimulation afforded by a group of agemates, it is believed that it will lead the child to greater and more purposeful physical activity and the establishment of better health habits and physical health.

There are few research studies which have concerned themselves with the assessment of nursery experience in terms of physical status. From the standpoint of physical development, an interesting study was done by Updegraff of Iowa in 1933.[64] Three hundred and twenty-eight children, one nursery school and three control groups, were studied for the purpose of comparing the frequency of certain communicable diseases of childhood. Health records of the four groups were compared in terms of the frequency of chickenpox, measles, mumps, scarlet fever and whooping cough. On the basis of the facts resulting from the investigations, it was found that there were fewer contagous diseases among nursery school children.

---

64 - R.Updegraff, "Comparative Frequency of Certain Communicable Diseases of Childhood in Nursery School and Non-Nursery School," Child Development, 4 (1933). PP.298-307.

Sigel talking of the physical-social dimensions of the nursery school in order to define the nature of the place says:-

> "From the physical point of view, almost all equipment provides the child an opportunity for testing his own competence with a physical world commensurate with his own ability. This provides the child with greater control over his physical world than may be the case in the adult world. Such control can contribute to the child's sense of competence and mastery over the physical environment."[65]

In an extensive study of children's motor abilities and use of equipment in the nursery, Gutteridge (1939) found that motor achievement rose rapidly during the early preschool years but dropped off sharply after the age of three. This was attributed to the lack of environmental stimulation and challenge to further effort offered by the standard nursery equipment, rather than to the attainment of a physiologically determined level of skill. It was, therefore, thought that the usual equipment provided in the nursery, though adequate for the two and three year olds, was too stereotyped, inflexible and limited in function to provide the necessary opportunity and stimulation for maximum development of motor skills in the four and five year olds.[66]

---

65 - Sigel op.cit. P.3.

66 - Swift, op.cit. P.260

Moustakas has quoted another study in his thesis with regard to motor development and adjustment.

> "Using the McCaskill series of motor skills as a means of measuring motor achievement, skeels et. al. (1938) found that pre-school girls made higher scores than control (non-preschool) girls at every age but four, and that pre-school boys were superior to control boys in total score on motor skills at every age. The investigators concluded that motor coordination itself was dependent on maturation and that differences in motor skills appeared mainly in skills which pre-school children had known opportunity to practice. The longer the residence in nursery school, the more the opportunity for practising various motor skills; and therefore, the higher the score on motor achievement."[67]

On the basis of the research done in this area, Moustakas quotes the generalization that "Motor coordination is dependent on maturation and differences in motor skills, other things being equal, may be largely attributed to differences in opportunity to practice." He, therefore, suggests that the nursery program (for four years olds) should consider the above fact by planning experiences which do not force or pressure a child, but which give him freedom and numerous opportunities to use both large and small muscles in complex and simple tasks involving both massive and fine coordination.[68]

---

67 - Moustakas, op. cit. P.33

68 - Ibid. P.50.

Emotional Development.

Studies on emotional development have been on two general types; those which dealt with the global emotional adjustment and those which have been concerned with specific areas of adjustment.

Joel (1939) found that with increasing nursery school attendance, children made a higher score on emotional maturity.[69] Another study was made by Hattwick (1946). The results of this study showed that with longer attendance in nursery school, children had fewer nervous tendencies such as less wiggling while sitting, less twisting of hair and less tenseness at rest, etc.[70]

Appel (1942) by using timed observations, found that the most frequent type of aggression was over a desire "for the possession of property".

> "Forty-two per cent of the total number of aggressive acts of two-year-olds and twenty-seven per cent of the total number of acts of four-year-olds were of this nature. The aggressive behavior displayed by two-year-olds was less persistent, more fleeting than

---

69 - Walther Joel, "The Influence of Nursery School Education upon Behavior Maturity," Journal of Experimental Education. 8 (1939), P.165.

70 - La Berta W.Hattwick, "The Influence of Nursery School Attendance upon the Behavior and Personality of the Preschool Child," Journal of Experimental Education, 5 (1946), P.187.

> than displayed by four-year-olds. The more privileged schools used more teaching techniques (encouraging attitudes and procedures which might help children on future occasions), while the less privileged schools used more ending techniques aimed at restoring peace as quickly as possible."[71]

Moustakas in his thesis reports a study made by Andrus and Harowitz (1938).

> "These investigators in their study on insecurity feelings found a tendency for nursery school children, as a result of nursery school experience, to become less sensitive to suggestion or criticism and a marked tendency to become less inactive and to offer more resistance to imposed authority. They found a +.15 median correlation between "insecurity" (frequent anger outbursts, nervous habits, constant withdrawal, etc.) and length of time in nursery schools."[72]

From the studies done on the emotional development we may summarize that with increasing nursery school attendance, children made their scores on emotional maturity; exhibited more persistent aggressive behavior and more hostility; were less sensitive to suggestion and criticism and offered more resistance to imposed authority. The largest percentage of aggressive behavior in pre-school children was over a desire for possession of property;

---

71 - Appel, Madeline H., "Aggressive Behavior of Nursery School Children and Adult Procedures in dealing with such Behavior." Journal of Experimental Education. 11: (December 1942). P.185-199.

72 - Moustakas, op. cit. P.20.

there was a high degree of consistency in aggressive behavior displayed from child to child from one year to the next.

These studies on emotional development are valuable in that they provide certain contributions for education. They lay stress on the values that can be gained by progressive training of children in handling problems and situations, both simple and complex. It is also noted that children learn to cope with and overcome fears as a result of the change that comes from within them with added growth and experience acquired in the course of daily living. It is, therefore, important to allow children to work out their emotional problems in both fantasy situations and in real-life situations depending on the individual child's modes of attacking his problems.

The studies on emotional development also point out certain limitations. In most of the studies conducted, there seems to be no attempt made to differentiate growth and maturational influences from environmental influences. Equated groups of nursery school and non-nursery school children should be studied to note the emotional development and adjustment. In order to study the environmental

influences carefully and objectively upon pre-school children, matched groups of children both in and out of nursery school, in controlled and experimental settings, should be the basis for investigation and then the influence of various kinds of environments on emotional behavior noted.

Therefore, in order to be able to study further the actual value of nursery schools, it seems necessary to break down the global concept of nursery experience into its component parts and thus try to differentiate those variables likely to have positive effects from those of little relevance to development.[73]

Program.

The typical nursery school program attempts to stimulate creative expression, provide for the acquisition of information and offer learning opportunities in such areas as language, communication, motor and social skills. Swift reports,

> "Various studies have been concerned with the development and assessment of specific programs for such learning. (Jersild and Blenstock, 1931; Hilgard, 1932; Colby, 1935; Updegraff, Heilinger, and Learned, 1938; William and Mattson, 1942; Dubin, 1946). Early studies in this area also included several methods emphasizing the handling of routines and habit training as a major aspect of the nursery program (Hill and Van Alstyne, 1930; Dunshee, 1931; Campbell, 1933; Dales, 1941)."[74]

---

73 - Swift op. cit. P.260

74 - Swift op. cit. Pp.261-62

Much of the material regarding specific aspects of the nursery program has been consolidated into an accepted body of practice and has been published in a number of texts and pamphlets which are available to all nursery school practitioners.

In trying to assess the success or failure of the various nursery programs, certain principles of learning in the pre-school years are to be considered such as those that are related to developmental stages, the acquisition of skills and the conditions conducive to learning. There is even evidence to indicate that important learning takes place in a non-specific way when the child explores his environment, when he is exposed to different types of experience and has the opportunity to experiment at first hand with many kinds of materials. Therefore, a good nursery program should be based on an understanding of all these factors. Carefully planned opportunities for a wide range of experiences with materials appropriate to the age and developmental level of the child probably provide for the most fruitful learning.

Adult-Child Relations.

A number of investigations have been made where adult-child relationships and their influence on personality have been referred to although they were not the major objectives of the study. Langdon (1933) made a thorough survey of practices in pre-schools. As a result of this study the following frequent acts and objectives of nursery school teacher were listed: to help children to learn good eating habits; to help children learn rest and sleep patterns; to guide children in developing skill and independence in toilet habits; to protect children from danger; to help children to develop independence, skill and enjoyment in their play; to emphasize independence in use of manual and fine arts materials; and to tell children when it is time to perform various activities. Langdon's conclusion was that nursery school teaching techniques were mainly directed toward immediate ends without regard to ultimate emotional and social effects.[75]

---

75 - Grace Langdon, A Study of Similarities and Differences in Teaching in Nursery School, Kindergarten and First Grade, (New York: John Day Co., 1933). P.277.

Appel (1942) concluded that nursery school teachers made the greatest contributions to personality development in children by fostering the habit of seeking out and trying to understand the purposes and feelings of children. The other conclusion drawn from the same study was that when teachers utilized a great deal of disapproval and moralizing, children immediately became defensive and either reacted with resistance or completely withdrew.[76]

Harowitz (1940) using teacher's ratings, found that with increased nursery school attendance, there was an increase in children's independence of adults in relation to overt activities and at the same time an increase in children's dependence on the adults for attention and affectional support.[77]

Landreth et. al. (1943), using ten-minute timed observations, found that in WPA nursery schools there were fewer total teacher contacts and more commands than in university nursery schools. Petting and fondling were employed more than three times as often in the university

---

76 - Madeline H.Appel, "Aggressive Behavior of Nursery School Children and Adult Procedures in Dealing with such Behavior," Journal of Experimental Education, 11 (December, 1942), PP.194-5.

77 - Eugene L.Harowitz, "Child-Adult Relationships in the Pre-School Years," The Journal of Social Psychology, 11 (1940), P.57.

nursery schools. Much more deprivation and punishment were also used in WPA schools. The emphasis in both WPA and university nursery schools was on minimal teacher contacts so that children could learn to respond to diminished cues and to become progressively more independent of the teacher.[78]

These studies further emphasize the importance of the teacher's role. As the pre-school child is still dependent upon the adult for approval, direction and attention, he will seek clues to the adults' judgments of his behavior. Some of his interpretations may be incorrect due to insufficient knowledge and lack of clarity. Guidance from the teacher in making the situation clear and communicating her values to him, will help to make the child's learning experience more effective and real.

Peer Relationships.

The most distinctive feature of the nursery school experience in the life of the child seems to be the opportunity it provides for play with a group of children of his own age. The way in which he uses this opportunity, and the kind of relationships he forms with his group, reveal certain significant aspects of his social adjustment.

---

78 - G.Landreth, G.Gardner, B.Eckhard and A.D.Prugh, "Teacher-Child Contacts in Nursery Schools," Journal of Experimental Education, 12 (1943). PP.71-85.

The importance of this particular area of development in the pre-school child's life can easily be seen in the large number of studies that have been conducted dealing with social relationships and social adjustment during the pre-school years. Parten's study on the social participation of pre-school children is one of the earliest and most frequently quoted studies in this area. "In it she differentiated six categories of social participation; unoccupied behavior, solitary play, onlooker behavior, parallel play, associative play, and organized or cooperative group play.[79]

Swift cites several studies in peer relations as follows:

> "Studies by Beaver (1932) on initiation of social contacts, and by Caille (1933) on resistant behavior, have provided further pertinent data. Studies of aggressive behavior were undertaken by Jerslid and Markey (1935), Fite (1940), and Appel (1942). Studies of friendship and positive social relations have also been carried out by Challman (1932) and Green (1933). A study on sympathy and cooperation in young children by Murphy (1937) is among the most extensive works in this field."[80]

---

79 - Swift. op. cit. P.270.

80 - Ibid.PP.270-71.

These studies in general report that there is an increase in all forms of social interaction with increasing chronological age in the pre-school years.

Personality Factors in Nursery Adjustments.

The effect of the nursery experience on the individual child seems to depend largely upon the child's own personality, abilities and interests. The earlier experiences of the child in the home also have an effect on these factors.

The relationships between factors in the home situation and the child's adjustment in the nursery have been studied by various investigators. Swift reports a study made by Baldwin:-

> "On the basis of ratings of parental behavior in the home, using the Fels Behavior Rating Scale, a measure of 'democracy' was obtained which was found to be associated with free and active participation in the nursery school activities, successful aggression and self-assertion, and creative and constructive behavior. Other syndromes of parental behavior, subsumed under the heading 'indulgence' were found to be associated with physical apprehension and inhibition in development of large muscle skills."[81]

The relationship of nursery school training to the development of certain personality traits was studied by

---

81 - Ibid. PP.278-79.

Walsh.[82] Here the results of the Bonham Sargent Personality Scale used on 22 nursery school children were compared over a six-month period. It was found that the nursery school children showed less inhibition, more spontaniety, sociability, self-assertiveness, initiative, independence, and self-reliance, greater increase in curiosity and interest in environment, and the acquisition of more numerous habits of health and order than the control group. Interestingly enough, the less desirable traits increased in the control non-nursery school group.

Similar results were found by Greene[83] in her study of the relation between nursery school and kindergarten, as shown by the ratings of the teachers on a group of questions concerning social adaptability.

Cushing[84] in an experiment in 1934, used 33 former nursery school children in comparison to 25 non-nursery school children. Based on kindergarten teacher's ratings

---

82 - M.E.Walsh, "Relation of Nursery School Training to the development of Certain Personality Traits," Child Development, 2 (1931), P.72-73.

83 - Katherine B.Greene, "Relation Between Kindergarten and Nursery School," Childhood Education, 7 (1930-31), Pp.353-55.

84 - H.M.Cushing, "A Tentative Report of the Influence of Nursery School upon Kindergarten Adjustment Reported by Kindergarten Teachers," Child Development, 5 (1934), Pp.304-14.

on a list of behavior characteristics, it was found that the nursery school produced children who tended to be somewhat superior in adjustment and school attitudes and considerably exceeded in amount of material used and in participation in activities, although they were four months younger on the average than the non-nursery school children.

In "The Case for Nursery School" by Bradbury[85] in 1934, a review was made of previous literature on nursery school education and the conclusions drawn were that nursery school tends to accelerate the intellectual growth, to affect positively the personality development, to establish health habits and to allow for the contraction of fewer contagious childhood diseases.

Value of Cooperative Nursery Schools.

Cooperative nursery schools are a recent development. Although they generally include the many benefits previously cited of a regular nursery school, they offer additional advantages. "We believe that the cooperative school has vitality because it is an expression of our democratic way of living. Cooperative schools are provid-

---

85 - Dorothy Bradbury, "The Case for Nursery School", Childhood Education, 12 (1936), PP.406-8.

ing leadership in the modern trend toward parent education and better parent-teacher-child relationships in the school."[86]

> "The great value of the cooperative school is that it provides a developmental experience for both the child and the mother. The child makes the step out of his sheltered home together with his mother who contributes to his independence by her growing understanding. The mother finds in the school a workshop where she knows she is welcome and where she can see the educational process going on."[87]

Parent education is an integral part of the cooperative nursery school. Nursery school teachers have found that to accomplish the best development of the child they must plan to unify efforts in the child's behalf. In the cooperative nursery school "the most important part of the parent education program of the school is the mother's participation."[88]

Besides participation in children's groups, the parent education program is carried on through staff and educational meetings and individual parent-teacher conferences.

---

86 - Our Cooperative Nursery School, Silver Springs Nursery School, Inc., Silver Spring, Maryland. (1949) P.9.

87 - Edith N.Norton, Parent Education in the Nursery School, Bulletin of the Association for Childhood Education International, Washington 5, D.C.

88 - Our Cooperative Nursery School, op. cit. P.14

> "Just as in any other kind of education, parent education will be most effective if carried out in a democratic way. Here the teacher accepts differences in personality among the parents as she does with the children. With her special knowledge of childhood and her experience with many young children, she brings to the parents ways of broadening their knowledge and deepening their experience. She does not force anything on them. She is deeply convinced that she does not know everything and she is eager to learn more. Parents and teachers then learn together and become partners in a common undertaking for the benefit of the child."[89]

In the cooperative nursery school it is also the teahcer's function to help mothers understand their children and to participate in the school program. Parent-teacher relationship is another important aspect of the cooperative program. "The relationship between teachers and mothers in a cooperative is a many-sided one, and the school runs smoothly when both teachers and parents fully understand their differing functions."[90]

Yet, care should be taken that a teacher's efforts, at times in trying to educate the parent in matters of child guidance, should not imperil the tone of the school. The basic philosophy of the cooperative aims at extending, enlarging and enriching the home. There may be times when

---

89 - Edith N.Norton, op. cit. P.6.

90 - Our Cooperative Nursery School, op. cit. P.15.

parents fail to interpret a concept the way it is intended to be conceived in spite of the very best intentions of the teaching staff or program planning committee. The more the mother understands her role as a teacher-assistant, the greater is her contribution to the program.

The teacher is the leader in the school. The responsibility for the educational program and professional standings of the school rests upon the teachers. The mothers learn from the teacher and so does she learn and grow in insight and skill through her relationship with mothers and children. The cooperative nursery is a triangular relationship between the parent, teacher and child.

Another advantage of the cooperative nursery school is its relatively low cost compared with the usual private school. Low cost is not the primary concern of the cooperative nursery school. At times the tuition fee is raised in order to provide better salaries for teachers, to establish a building fund, and to meet increasing costs. "We have learned that it is the active interest and participation of each member that makes possible any low cost without sacrificing standards."[91]

---

91 - Ibid. P.14.

The cooperative nursery school offers mothers the opportunities to use their talents and abilities which cannot be fully expended in the home. The wide range of activities of the nursery school "elicits whole-hearted cooperation from most of the mothers and explains why their interest grows as their participation increases in the school affairs."[92]

Summary.

1. From the studies quoted we may conclude that the results of most of them support the idea that the experience of the nursery school does seem to influence a child but the findings reported have been inconclusive and conflicting.

2. The findings reported so far do not support the conclusion that nursery school experience is an essential one for every child. The general conclusions, therefore, must remain provisional. However this statement is subject to further definition of relevant aspects of the nursery situation and the variables that which make it up.

---

92 - Ibid. P.14.

3. Results from the studies that have attempted to evaluate the nursery school experience globally have generally been inconclusive as they have not taken into consideration the specific variables that bring about the changes, as in terms of the effects of attendance upon intellectual, social and physical development.

4. Studies on emotional behavior stress the values that can be gained by progressively training children in handling problems and situations by themselves. They should be allowed to work out their emotional problems in both dramatic-play situations and real-life situations, depending on the individual child's modes of attacking his problems.

5. A more fruitful approach to assess the value of nursery experience seems to be the one where the global concept of nursery experience was broken down into the component parts which make it up, such as, the physical setting, the program, teacher-child relationships, peer group interaction, and the personality characteristics of the individual child. In so doing, it would be possible to differentiate those variables likely to have positive effects from those of little relevance to development.

6. Personality studies in pre-schools have been more concerned with the social development and adjustment of children than with any other area of development, and the evidence available seems to indicate that nursery schools are making their greatest contribution by helping children to develop social skills and that nursery school children make gains in social development over and above those that would come with growth and maturation.

7. Findings from the various studies of the nursery program emphasize that the careful planning of a good program suited to developmental level of the child would probably ensure fruitful learning. Routine practice of skills or exposure to overly complicated materials at an age when maturation and interest are not appropriate would not result in learning and may even hamper the child's interest and motivation to learn at a later age.

8. The most important single factor in determing the nature of the experience for the child is the teacher. The teacher's support to the child in the pursuit of his interests and her specific methods in communicating the goals and values to the child are greatly stressed.

9. The child's ability to utilize the peer group aspect of the nursery increases with chronological age. It also depends on the individual child's make up and temperament. Another important factor affecting the child's peer-group relations seems to be the kind of experiences available at home.

10. The cooperative nursery school offers additional benefits besides those that are derived from the ordinary nursery schools, such as parent education program, better parent-teacher-child relationship, lower cost due to parents participation, and opportunities for mothers to use their talents and abilities for the benefit of the school.

The above principles and generalizations are derived from research done in education and psychology on the pre-school child over a number of years. Therefore, a nursery program planned and guided by the above generalizations and principles, while preserving the biological integrity of the individual, would at the same time help to preserve the social integrity of the group. In such a program, children are more spontaneously expressive, use more constructive and effective social skills, and increase their understanding of each other's desires and purposes.

Chapter V

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

In order to assess some values of the cooperative nursery school as seen by both teachers and mothers, simple questionnaires were developed from existing questionnaires.[93,94] *These were sent to four teachers and twelve mothers working in four different cooperatives in East Lansing and Lansing. The schools were:

1. Spartan Nursery School, Michigan State University.
2. Central Cooperative Nursery, Lansing.
3. Meridian Cooperative Nursery, Haslett.
4. Edgewood United Church Cooperative Nursery, East Lansing.

The objectives of the questionnaire were:

A. To learn the attitudes of these mothers and teachers towards the cooperative nursery school program,

B. To learn their perceptions of the benefits of a good nursery experience to children and parents,

---

93 - The Montgomery Council of Cooperative Nursery Schools, Cooperative Nursery Schools, A Guide for Organization and Administration, Maryland: 1960.

94 - Central Cooperative Nursery School Pamphlet. (The author has developed the questionnaires with the help of the existing questionnaires from the above two sources.)

* - See Appendices - "A", "B" and "C".

C. To learn the opinions of these mothers towards a parent education program and its benefits.

Mother's Questionnaire and Answers:

1. How did you first hear of the Cooperative Nursery School in which your child is?

Answer: From neighbors and friends.

2. Do you feel you were adequately informed of the basic aims and obligations of:

A. Cooperative Nursery School Organization?

Answer: All responses were affirmative.

B. Teacher Responsibility?

Answer: Eleven responses were affirmative and one was negative.

C. Parent Responsibility?

Answer: Eleven responses affirmative and one negative.

3. Do you think your teacher is:

A. Making initial adjustments as smooth as possible?

Answer: All mothers' answers were affirmative.

B. Effective with those children needing special attention, i.e. "wanderers", "pushers", etc.?

Answer: Yes.

C. Anticipating and preventing acts that precipitate crisis?

Answer: Eleven answers were affirmative and one was undecided.

D. Flexible in changing routines to stimulate activities?

Answer: All responses were affirmative.

E. Flexible in changing routines to suit the children's needs?

Answer: All mothers felt this was being done.

4. Do you think your teacher and participating parents provide a good nursery school experience for your child? If undecided, or answer is no, please state the areas in which you think change is needed.

Answer: All mothers were of the opinion that the teacher and the other participating parents were providing a good nursery school experience for their child.

5. Do you feel that you were adequately prepared to assist at the nursery?

Answer: Eight mothers said they were adequately prepared; four mothers felt that initially they were not prepared, but that in time with parent orientation they were able to cope with and could helpfully assist in the nursery school.

6. What type of parent education meetings have been held in the past? Do you feel they were useful to you? How?

Answer: General meetings held were about the school program and activities. There were meetings on orientation, discussions with the use of films, speakers and seminars for the most part. Of this group two mothers were not able to attend any meetings thus far and could not offer comment. The others benefited greatly from the meetings and felt they learned much they had not been aware of regarding the nursery school.

7. Please be specific about how your teacher is helpful, or not, in assisting your participation.

Answer: Ten of this group of members felt they were definitely helped by the teacher. Several teachers conducted conferences at the end of each participating day and discussed the good and bad aspects of the day's activities which were very helpful.

8. What type of programs would you like to have for the parent education meetings?

Answer: Ten mothers said they would like to have speakers or films on the problems of child-

rearing, child care, child development and on safety measures. One mother stated she did not feel the need for parent education, but that it might be beneficial for the others.

9. Do the following sources adequately take care of your questions and comments?

A. Parent-Teacher Conferences?

Answer: Ten responses were affirmative and two were negative.

B. General Meetings?

Answer: Eleven answered yes and one did not answer. One mother wanted more specific information regarding special problems concerning children and how to deal with them.

C. Newsletter?

Answer: Six mothers answered they did not get a newsletter, five answered affirmatively and one made no comment. One of the affirmative replies also stated that their newsletter was of no consequence.

10. Please comment on the following and offer any suggestions you may have:

A. Nursery School Equipment.

Answer: Ten mothers felt that the equipment was adequate and of good variety. One mother

felt additional equipment for large muscle activity was needed. The twelfth mother did not comment.

B. Field Trips.

Answer: All mothers felt that field trips were an important part of the program and were good for the children. It was suggested that more and well-planned trips were needed such as trips to a teacher's home, to a farm and a visit to the dentist. Three mothers gave no suggestions.

11. How do you think fathers can be helpful in the program?

Answer: All mothers stated that fathers can be helpful by taking children to and from school, by giving a day to teaching situations, by familiarizing themselves with the school so that they can understand both the child and the mother in discussing the school. Fathers they said can also be used as "resource persons".

12. What have you as a mother learned about children from your experience in nursery school?

Answer: Mothers mostly felt they understood children better. They were made to realize that children should not be pushed but should be allowed

to do things in their own way. The mothers learned that the children had varied interests and can amaze one with their accomplishments which were not evident in the home setting. They also realized that children adjust to situations much more rapidly and easily than they thought. One mother said she learned that her child was "typical" in his behavior. As a result of the nursery experience this mother could cope more casually with her child. She reported that she knew how much to expect from him and is more aware of experiences for him in order to broaden his interests and abilities. She marvels at how rapidly children develop, change and grow. Another mother became more conscious of her particular child's needs and how they could be met. She realized that children need periods of freedom, but that supervision was also necessary. There was more awareness of the child's abilities and disabilities. Still another mother stated she had learned how to cope with unpleasant situations and that now she has a better understanding of children. The nursery school experience gave her a chance to see her child with other children. There was

also an easy and welcome opportunity for communication with other parents.

Questionnaire for Teachers and Answers.

1. What do you feel are the advantages to a teacher who works in a cooperative nursery school? Disadvantages?

Answer: One teacher welcomed the part-time work which gave her the opportunity to be home the other part of the time. There was the feeling of a sense of fulfilment in doing something important. The teacher felt that her contact with parents enriched her. There was an opportunity to observe different personalities, many techniques, and to get to know children as part of a family. Social contacts with parent and child were made possible.

Some of the disadvantages were that remuneration was not adequate, the teaching load was doubled due to parent orientation and continuous organization. One of the participants in the Teacher's Questionnaire did not list any disadvantages.

2. What in your opinion could a good parent education program accomplish?

Answer: A good parent education program should give parents self confidence and guidance in bringing up children. It should give parents needed reassurance regarding child behavior and problems. Parents will have a fuller understanding and appreciation of their child and other children. Good communication is promoted with teachers and increased trust in them is developed. There will be increased knowledge of a child's development at different stages. Parents will become acquainted with different types of activities and suitable equipment for both the school and the home.

A. Could you give some specific ideas for such a program?

Answer: Specific ideas for such a program are speakers in the field of child guidance and cooperative nursery movements followed by discussion. Another is the use of films followed by discussion conducted by a qualified leader. Informal get-togethers would be of value to work on money-making parent projects. Study groups and conferences would be of great benefit.

3. One of your duties would be participating in membership interviews; upon what basis would you select members and their children?

Answer: Some considerations would be the willingness of the parents to devote time for the nursery's best interests and whose philosophies are in agreement with the nursery school program.

4. Do you feel that the presence of mothers helps or hinders your work as a teacher?

Answer: Participation of mothers helps a great deal in the daily routine. Mothers bring many talents and have many refreshing suggestions and ideas. They also make it possible for the teacher to give needed individual attention.

Summary:

In summarizing the findings of the questionnaire, the general impression of both mothers and teachers was that the cooperative program is unique in many respects. Cooperative nursery schools seem to be making an effort to provide the best possible opportunities and experience for the preschool child.

Parents feel that the teacher's personality plays a significant role in the organization and functioning of the school and that she provides a good nursery experience for the child.

Teachers and parents generally expressed positive attitudes toward the cooperative nursery school.

Chapter VI

GENERAL SUMMARY

This study, in general, was concerned with the history of the nursery school movement in the United States, and the value of the nursery experience to the pre-school child. The main purpose of the paper was to study the development of a type of nursery called the cooperative nursery school program, its philosophy, practices and values.

Historical Development.

The nursery school in America had its beginnings in 1914 as an educational movement. Some of the initial impetus came from Britain. The original motivation behind these schools was primarily educational. Later other factors such as economic forces; interest in the study of young children by psychologists, pediatricians and home economists; interest of parents in learning ways of applying the new scientific knowledge to the rearing of their children have been instrumental in the concept of the nursery school.

In many instances nursery schools in America are associated with research centers devoted to the scientific

study of child development and educational psychology. The fact that many nursery schools were sponsored by colleges and universities from the beginning promoted the development of the nursery school movement. Such sponsorship provided needed laboratories where staff and students might study and work together with young children. It also led to heightened interest in child development research and provided opportunities for training students in such fields as education, home economics, psychology and nursery school teaching.

Benefits of the Nursery School to Children and Parents.

Today the nursery school is interested in the all-round development and well-being of children. It aims at promoting the optimum development of the whole child in all areas of his growth - physical and motor, emotional, social and intellectual.

The life of the child in the specially planned environment of the nursery school provides opportunities for play of a varied nature and the companionship of children of like age and interests, under control and guidance. Vigorous muscular activity, the use of materials that bring forth creative effort, introduction to music, stories, nature and science experiences which are

scaled to his level of understanding help to widen the child's horizons and lead to individual achievement and skill.

The nursery school is the first break from a pattern of home life. The kind of experiences provided at this time are important to the child's later development. Therefore, happy and worthwhile experiences similar to the home experience should be provided. Human relationships are formed when children learn to share their experiences. It is a first and fresh experience in the transition from family living to peer living.

Group experience and participation as a member of the group are provided. Group living, even at this age, can help the child to use freedom within the limits set by the needs of others in the group as interpreted by the teacher. In his warm relationship with the teacher and his peers the young child feels secure in his first major break from home and is able to find happiness in his new life while retaining his close ties with his family. The growing-up process is greatly facilitated by the strong home-school cooperation upon which the cooperative nursery school philosophy is built.

The nursery school supplements the home and family's efforts to promote the following:

1. good physical growth
2. growth in the use of his body
3. emotional satisfactions and control
4. social satisfactions and skills
5. intellectual growth

The child learns through many first hand experiences as he meets them naturally in his daily living and makes his own selection of activities that will help him learn.

Nursery schools may provide the starting point from which parents can gain new insights about their child. They can also be an extension of the family environment. Parents often learn to find solutions to the problems of the child through the cooperation of the teacher.

One of the most important features of a good nursery school is the valuable parent-teacher relationship. Daily contact between parent and teacher at nursery school can set the stage for an increased understanding of child growth and development. A parent who knows how his child acts in a group of other youngsters and learns to set his standards according to the child's own needs and abilities will be better equipped to help him face the difficulties that his later school life will present.

Benefits of the Cooperative Nursery School Program.

A more recent development in the United States is the growth of the cooperative nursery schools. They grew out of the idea that nursery school can be a profitable learning experience for the parent as well as for the child. A cooperative nursery is a group of families organized to provide their children with pre-school experiences.

It is administered and maintained by the parents on a non-profit, usually non-sectarian basis. Under the guidance and supervision of the teacher, the parents assist in the organization and the educational program of the school. This would naturally bring down the cost and the school can be maintained more economically than with an all-hired staff.

The cooperative nursery setup varies with the interests, resources and needs of the parents who organize the venture. Generally speaking, parents are responsible for business administration and finance with the consultation of a trained teacher.

The concurrent parent education program within the cooperative nursery school is important because it gives

parents information and reassurance needed concerning their children. The different methods of parent education utilized in the cooperative may in some way help parents to develop healthy attitudes toward child-rearing.

The cooperative program is an attempt to bring preschool experience within the means of most families. Improved mental health resulting from improved family understanding is a goal of the total nursery program.

Cooperative programs help to develop a sense of responsibility and group cooperation in parents which can be carried over into every aspect of community life.

Questionnaire and Conclusions.

A questionnaire was developed by the author for both teachers and mothers working in four cooperative nursery schools. The object of the questionnaire was to determine a few teachers' and parents' attitudes ~~to~~ towards such programs, toward the nursery school as an experience which helps the overall growth of the child.

In most cases, mothers and teachers felt that the nursery school experience was beneficial to the child. The contact between parents and teachers was helpful in bringing about a greater understanding and enjoyment of

their own and other children through active participation in the nursery and parent education programs.

In view of the many benefits of a nursery school, it may seem contradictory to consider whether a child should or should not join one of these organized play groups. The question is categorical and the answer depends on a complex set of factors which are largely cultural and which differ with particular homes and communities. The practices of different nursery schools vary tremendously with the personalities of the directing teacher and her staff and their insight into child development. The final decision, of course, rests upon the total welfare of the child including his home-life. Ideally, the nursery school should depend upon the maturity of the child, the disposition and interest of the child and the motives of the parents.

The results of the nursery schools already in existance seem to be significant. Parent-teacher relationships are essential as they both try to work cooperatively for the common goal of socializing the child. Owing to the complex social and educational forces, the nursery school has had a rapid growth. The expansion of facilities for special groups, such as the underprivileged and the children of working mothers, brought with it an increased demand for private nursery schools as the

general public came to know the values of nursery education. It, therefore, seems to be imperative to develop sound programs, train sufficient teachers who meet the present high standards and develop adequate parent education programs which are a part of the nursery school philosophy. In this development, many parents are eager participants. Without their interest, cooperation and leadership, perhaps the American nursery school would not have experienced this phenomenal growth within the last fifty years.

Nursery schools have grown in many ways. They have made strides in broadening and enriching the young child's education, growth and development. Their contributions to the child, parent and community are significant.

Chapter VII

IMPLICATIONS FOR URBAN INDIA

Need for Pre-school Education.

The importance of pre-primary education is receiving increasing recognition in present day India. During recent years educators and psychologists have concentrated much attention on the problems of the pre-school child. "It has been fully appreciated that the first six years of an individual's life are plastic and impressionable."[95] It is during these years that the foundations are laid for mental, moral and emotional behavior. Many disturbances that arise in later childhood or adolescence seem to owe their origin to an unfavorable development of children during their pre-school period. The importance of early childhood education is being greatly felt in modern India.

In India the initial movement of early childhood education outside the home derived historically from Froebel who originated the kindergarten. Then came the day care centers which were first started for the children of those mothers who worked. Today they seem to be

---

95 - S.N.Mukherji, Education in India - Today and Tomorrow, 3rd edition revised (Baroda: Acharya Book Depot, 1957), P.

quite popular in most of the big cities of India. The effects of industrialization and the consequent urbanization, the growth of life sciences, the realization by parents of the benefits of early childhood education and the nationwide effort to increase literacy of the country, are reasons for schools, even at the pre-primary level.

The motivation behind all these schools seems to be primarily educational. The present day changes in the educational philosophy and procedures have thrown a new light on the education and learning processes of the young child. It has been reported by research workers in the field of childhood education and psychology that these early years are not to be crowded by forcing the child to go through processes of learning. It is the whole child, rather than just his intellectural powers, that should be the concern of the educators. Otherwise, the all-round development of the child would be in danger of being jeopardized.

Pre-primary education is still in its infancy in India. The start has just been made. According to the report of the Ministry of Education, Government of India,[96]

---

96 - Education in the States, Published by the Ministry of Education, Government of India (1959-60), P.3

the total number of recognized pre-primary and pre-basic schools in the country increased from 928 in the year 1957-58 to 148,145 in the year 1959-60. The figures have, however, increased considerably during the last four years, but the writer regrets the inability to give the exact number due to the lack of documentary evidence available here. The number has grown steadily, but it is still very small in comparison to the pre-school population figures.

Problems to be faced.

1. Private Sponsorship.

A small percentage of these schools are managed by the government and the local boards; but the majority of them are under private control. They enrol children of the age group three to six. There is usually no conformity regarding accepted standards in these private schools.

2. Inadequate Space and Equipment.

A large number of these private schools or classes are conducted in the following way - equipment is either poor or inadequate; staff is undertrained and records of children's health, interests and development are seldom maintained. In most of the nursery schools there is no mid-morning lunch or juice and snack time.

Some of the pre-primary children attend their classes in classrooms that are a part of some secondary schools in urban areas. Otherwise, most of the nursery or kindergarten schools are housed in the home of the head of the school. A few are housed in community centers or churches. Often the space is inadequate for the children's activities. Some schools allow as little as ten or twelve square feet of indoor space per child and no outdoor place at all. The sanitary conditions in most of the schools are not satisfactory; some may have a common towel for all the children.

The physical set-up of nursery schools forms one of the most important features in the nursery program. Hence, great care should be taken to provide the right kind of environment for the child. The building, the arrangement of the room and equipment suited to the developmental needs of the child should be carefully planned. Provision for adequate indoor and outdoor space for each child, as per the rules, suitable equipment, and safety measures should be the concern of the nursery school authorities. Parents' cooperation with the teacher would help to meet these needs.

3. Structuredness of Nursery Program.

It is found that in most of these schools, the majority of the educational experiences for the pre-primary child are highly structured and academic. Children are expected to sit at small individual tables doing individual tasks, like writing numbers, passing their fingers over sand paper letters or copying the drawing made by the teacher. Conversation is discouraged and children are taught to engage themselves in some reading or writing and not to waste their time in play. In some schools children have to pass examinations.

4. Unique Problems.

The school also has to face some unique problems. One of them is multi-lingualism. Since children may come from different language groups, teachers try to speak to them in their native language, if they happen to know it. At other times usually English or Hindi (the national language) is used to talk and interpret to the children.

Another situation the school has to face is the problem of the child's relationship with the "Ayah" or maid who looks after the child at home. Most of the children have these maids who usually take the child

to the school. Sometimes they stay with the child until the session is over or they go back home to attend to other duties and go again to fetch them after school. If the maid absents herself from work, or when she gives up the job, it causes serious anxiety in the child. Getting used to the new maid causes new problems to the child. Some of the ayahs try to secure discipline by playing one sibling against the other. The behavior of some of these maids towards the young children causes the child to suffer from tension.

A modest attempt to introduce scientific ideas of childhood education have given certain glimpses into India's educational system and into the thinking of the parents in relation to the scientific concepts. Provision for the teaching of reading, writing and numbers, and helping the pupils to get into higher academic schools seem to be the two things that enhance the value of a nursery school for parents. Whether the nursery school provides proper physical or psychological care appears to be of little concern to the parents.

In an atmosphere of such difficulties, running a different type of nursery school, such as the American nursery school, would obviously be a very difficult task.

Parents may at first frown at the idea of a nursery school which emphasizes play and advocates the postponement of formal learning until the age of six. The idea of allowing a child to explore his own world and discover himself by providing him with suitable play experiences rather than rushing him toward scholastic learning before he is ready for it may seem strange and take a long time to take root in the mind of an average Indian parent. But the difficulty has to be faced and a solution sought.

Recommendations for Improvement.

1. Parent Education Program.

The nursery school authorities or heads should first of all plan to carry on a wide parent education program. The school should prepare pamphlets, folders and newsletters describing the outlook of the school and the educational philosophy underlying the nursery school experience for the child. Such material can be helpful in stimulating the thinking of parents and acquaint them with the modern science of child development and guidance.

Even before attempting to implement the cooperative nursery school idea, the author feels that there is a

definite need for the complete reorientation of nursery programs in India. Whether or not government involvement would be possible or helpful in a cooperative nursery program in India is a question which cannot be answered at this time.

The philosophy underlying nursery experience, the principles guiding childhood education, and the importance of this early group experience to the child's life and development should be made clear to the public and parents. New trends in this direction have already been started. There seems to be a growing awareness that the pre-school years are important and there should be more nursery schools. But the few existing nursery schools are found only in the large cities, and even they need to undergo a thorough change in their administration and practice.

2. Establish various types of Nursery Schools.

(a) Laboratory Nursery Schools.

The harmful effects of subjecting the child to unnecessary academic pressure at the pre-school age without paying attention to his inner growth and emotional life should be thoroughly explained. The home science colleges that are coming up all over India should face the challenge. Newer types of nursery schools are needed,

such as the laboratory pre-school and cooperative nursery schools that are found in the United States to show the public the value and benefits of such programs to the young child.

Nursery education in the United States has lived through its pioneering days and has made tremendous progress in developing various types of nursery school programs for the pre-school child. The laboratory pre-schools that are attached to many of the universities give a good pre-school education to young children and train teachers in nursery education. Much research in the field of childhood education and guidance is carried on in these schools. It would be a good idea to start similar schools in India. Today we see American nursery schools providing the best possible facilities for the growth and learning of young children. India has much to learn from these schools. It is with this intention that the writer has taken up the present project.

(b) Cooperative Nursery Schools.

The study of the cooperative nursery schools was especially undertaken because this idea is new to India. The benefits of the cooperative program which have been discussed at length in the second chapter seem to be especially desirable to the Indian parents.

When we take in hand the education of the child, it seems important to seek the cooperation of the parents first. We need their help in the work of their child's education. The cooperative nursery schools where a group of families organize to provide their children with pre-school experiences afford greater enjoyment for both the parents and their children. A greater understanding of one's own children and others' children is promoted through the active participation of the parents, especially mothers, in the nursery and parent education program. Since the cooperative nursery is administered and maintained by the parents on a non-profit and non-sectarian basis, it would be a novel and worthwhile experiment for Indian nursery school educators and parents as well. Besides, in many of the urban areas in India, there are educated mothers who are not in the labor force. They usually have servants and older members of the joint family to help them with their household duties.

It would, therefore, be a novel and interesting idea to start a few nursery schools on the cooperative basis or implement the cooperative program in some of the nursery schools that are already in existence. Such a venture would definitely provide the mothers with a better training to understand their own and other children. It would also

help to bring down the cost of the nursery education, which at present is very high, and thus make nursery school experience available to many less privileged children.

Since most nurseries are private, the cost per child is rather high. Nursery education is available only to limited groups of the privileged children who can afford to pay tuition for a private nursery. If parent cooperatives are started it would help to bring the cost down and make the advantages of this early education available to a greater number of children. Parent education and short orientation programs should be arranged by the nursery school educators in order to explain the benefits and organization of the nursery school to the parents.

Proper attention and care seems to be lacking in the emotional life of the child. In the care of the young child, the physical and emotional are so intimately related that the adults who offer that nurture cannot divide it into assigned parts, nor take independent roles. Proper guidance must be given in the adjustment and solution of the emotional problems of the child. The parents' help should be especially sought in such matters. Hence, parent cooperatives would ensure such care.

How to implement them.

The present study has been helpful in pointing out how such a change could be implemented. A few suggestions are given for starting better nursery schools in India, and for the implementation of co-operative nursery schools in some of the bigger cities.

1. State Intervention.

(a) Licensing and the approval of the State Education Board must be required. The school organization's primary responsibility should be to know what the local and state requirements are under which it is to function.

(b) State supervisors must be set up to inspect and supervise the various nursery schools in the State along with the help of the local Board of Education.

(c) The State should pass laws and see that school boards establish and maintain adequate nursery facilities upon the petition of a reasonable number of parents and interested citizens. Such schools are needed even for children who come from good homes for it is believed that they can derive much benefit, both educational and physical, from attendance at a nursery school.

(d) The State should pass laws regarding health regulations and practices for these young children. As the health and well-being of the child are so important for the wholesome growth and development of the child, great emphasis should be laid on this aspect of the nursery program. First aid must be made available. Health records, weight and height charts should be maintained. Good sanitary conditions must be provided for.

2. Parent-Teacher Contact.

There seems to be the need for the establishment of a closer parent-teacher contact. This relationship is very valuable and essential for the success of a sound nursery program. Hence, more parent-teacher meetings, conferences, social gatherings, discussion groups consisting of parents and nursery educators should be planned. This would reinforce the teacher's job in interpreting the methods of the school to the parent and can set the stage for an increased understanding of child growth and development.

3. Increasing Efficiency of Staff.

Short orientation training courses, seminars and conferences during summer vacation on subjects relating to child guidance and development should be arranged by the State Education Department for the benefit of nursery

school teachers. These sessions would increase the understanding and efficiency of the staff.

(b) The pay of the nursery school teachers being low, it does not attract many young people to take up nursery school training programs. The pay scales of these teachers should be revised and a reasonable income set in order to equip the school with better trained personnel..

4. Demonstration Nursery Schools.

Finally, demonstration nursery schools could be set up, especially by the Colleges of Home Science which are being started all over India. Most of the staff who work in these institutions have had training in child development from foreign countries, especially the United States. They could start the American type of nursery schools in their colleges and demonstrate to the others how a good nursery school program is planned and worked out. This would help the others to start similar programs.

It is hoped that the people in India would, through an educational program, realize the great value of early childhood education and the need for good nursery schools. Perhaps this may help the young children to develop into good Indian citizens, better able to solve the many

economic and social problems confronting the country which is rich in history and culture, but newly modern and struggling to be a democracy.

The provision for an adequate number of nursery schools in India is yet a distant dream, especially when sufficient money is not forthcoming for universal compulsory primary education. Yet the difficulty has to be solved on its own merits. It is hoped that the study of nursery schools in general and cooperative nursery schools in particular, in this country, would provide useful material for starting better nursery schools in India.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Auerbach, Aline B., Trends and Techniques in Parent Education, New York: CSSA Publication, 1961.

Baruch, Dorothy V., Parents and Children Go to School, Chicago: Scott-Foresman and Company, 1939.

Chittenden, Gertrude E., Living with Children, New York: The MacMillan Company, 1944.

Forest, Ilse, The School for the Child from Two to Eight, Boston: Ginn and Company, 1935.

Foster, Josephine C., and Mattson, Marion L., Nursery School Education, New York: D.Appleton - Century Company, Inc., 1939.

Gesell, Arnold and Ilg., Francis L., Infant and Child in the Culture of Today, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1943.

Jones, Helen M. (ed.), Our Cooperative Nursery School, Silver Spring Maryland: Silver Spring Nursery School, Inc., 1949.

Kellog, Rhoda, Nursery School Guide, Boston: Houghton Miffin Company, 1949.

Langdon, Grace, A Study of Similarities and Differences in Teaching in Nursery School, Kindergarten and First Grade, New York: John Day Company, 1933.

Los Angeles Council of Cooperative Nursery Schools, Preliminary Guide for Cooperative Nursery Schools, 737 Michetterena Street, Los Angeles 26, California, 1948.

The Montgomery Council of Cooperative Nursery Schools, Cooperative Nursery Schools, A Guide for Organization and Administration, Maryland: 1960.

Moustakas, C. and Berson, M.P., The Young Child in School, New York: Whiteside, Inc. and William Morrow and Company, 1960.

Mukherjee, S.N., Education in India, Today and Tomorrow, 3rd Edition, Acharya Book Depot, Baroda, 1957.

National Society for the Study of Education, Pre-school and Parental Education, National Society for the Study of Education, Public School Publishing Co., Bloomington, Illinois, 1929.

Swift, Joan W., Review of Child Development Research, New York: Russel Sage Foundation, Vol.I. 1964.

Taylor, Katherine W., Cooperative Nursery Schools Educate Families, Teachers College Record, LIV, 1953.

Tucker, Clara, A Study of Mother's Practices and Children's Activities in a Cooperative Nursery School, Teachers College, Contributions to Education, No.810, Teacher's College, Columbia University, 1940.

Wolf, Anna W.M., The Parent's Manual, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1941.

PERIODICALS

Appel, Madeline H., Aggressive Behavior of Nursery School Children and Adult Procedures in Dealing with such Behavior, Journal of Experimental Education, 11: December 1942.

Barclay, Dorothy, The Cooperative Nursery Comes of Age, The New York Times Magazine, February 27, 1955.

Bradbury, Dorothy, The Case for Nursery School, Childhood Education, 12: 1936.

Biber, Barbara, Schools for Children under Six, Office of Education, F.S.A., 1947, Washington, D.C., Journal of Pediatrics, January 1949.

Brandt, Henry, Training Teachers and Parents for Cooperative Nursery Schools, Understanding the Child, XXV, 1956.

Cushing, H.M., A Tentative Report of the Influence of Nursery School upon Kindergarten Adjustment Reported by Kindergarten Teachers, Child Development, 5: 1934.

Frank, Jerome D., How do Parents Learn, Child Study, XXX, 1953.

Frank, Lawrence K., Is Parent Education Necessary, Child Study. XXXIII, 1956.

Gesell, Arnold, More and Better Schools for Children under Six (Statement quoted in Portfolio), Compiled and edited by Neterer, E., Association for Childhood Education International, Washington, D.C., 1949.

Greene, Katherine B., Relation between Kindergarten and Nursery School, Childhood Education, 7: 1930-31.

Gutteridge, Mary V., (The Merrill-Palmer School, Detroit 2.,) The Nursery School in the Public School, School and Society. Vol.73, No.1900.

Harowitz, Eugene L., Child Adult Relationships in the Pre-school Years. The Journal of Social Psychology, 11: 1940.

Hattwick, B.W., The Influence of Nursery School Attendance upon the behavior and Personality of the Pre-school Child. Journal of Experimental Education, 11: 1940.

Iowa Child Welfare Research Station: A Manual of Nursery School Practice. University of Iowa, Iowa City, 1934.

Jersild, A.T., and Fite, M.D., The Influence of Nursery School Experience and Children's Social Adjustments, Monograph, Society for Research in Child Development, No.2. 1939.

Joel, Walther, The Influence of Nursery School Education Upon Behavior Maturity, Journal of Experimental Education, 12: December 1943.

Landreth, C., Gardner, Gladys M., Ekhardt, Bettie C., and Prugh, Anne D., Teacher Child contacts in Nursery Schools, Journal of Experimental Education, 12: December 1943.

McVickar, C.B., Parent and Child, New York Times Magazine, August 13, 1950.

McVickar, Polly, The Cooperative Nursery School Educational Responsibility, National Association for Nursery Education, 1962.

Moustakas C. and Berson M., Directory of Nursery Schools and Child Care Centers in the United States, Detroit, The Merrill-Palmer School, 1951.

Miriam and Jerome Ellison, We Started Our Own School, The Saturday Evening Post, February 23, 1957.

Ministry of Education, Government of India Publication, Education in the States, 1959-60.

Norton, John K., The Place of Nursery Schools in Public Education, Childhood Education, January 1945.

Norton, Edith K., Parent Education in the Nursery School, Bulletin of the Association for Childhood Education International, Washington 5 D.C.

Perry, Norman, Personal Growth of Parent Participation in Cooperative Nursery Schools, Understanding the Child, XXV - 1956.

Parten, M.B., Social Participation Among Pre-school Children, Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 1932-33.

Skeels, Harold M. et. al., A Study of Environmental Stimulation: An Orphanage Pre-school Project, University for Iowa, Studies in Child Welfare, Vol.15, No.4. 1938.

Updegraff, R., Comparative Frequency of Certain Communicable Diseases of Childhood in Nursery School and Non-Nursery School, Child Development, No.4. 1933.

Upson, Frances, How Cooperative Nursery Schools can help Young Families, Understanding the Child, XXV, 1956.

Waldrop, Mary and Spiegel, Ruth, Group Processes in Community Nursery School, Understanding the Child, XXV, 1956.

Walsh, M.E., Relation of Nursery School Training to the Development of Certain Personality Traits, Child Development, 2: 1931.

Wann, K.D., Some Values and Needs of Cooperative Nursery Schools, Understanding the Child, XXV, 1956.

Woolley, H.T., The Validity of Standards of Mental Measurements in Young Childhood, School and Society, Vol.1, 1925.

PAMPHLETS

Michigan Council of Cooperative Nurseries, Pamphlet. Survey, 1964.

Michigan Council of Cooperative Nursery Schools, Guide Post No.4.

The Parent Cooperative: Newsletter of the American Council of Parent Cooperatives, Vol.6, No.1 - Winter, 1963.

THESIS

Moustakas, C.E., An Educational Program for Four Year Olds Based on Research, Theory and Practice; Columbia University, New York, 1948.

SPEECH

Sigel, Irving, The Merrill-Palmer School, Detroit: Developmental Considerations of the Nursery School Experience. (Speech given at the Council of Child Development meetings). September, 1962.

APPENDIX "A"

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MOTHERS.

1. How did you first hear of the Cooperative Nursery School in which your child is?

2. Do you feel you were adequately informed of the basic aims and obligations of:-
   (a) Cooperative Nursery School Organization?
   (b) Teacher Responsibility?
   (c) Parent Responsibility?

3. Do you think your teacher is:-
   (a) Making initial adjustments as smooth as possible?
   (b) Effective with those children needing special attention?
   (c) Anticipating and preventing acts that precipitate crisis?
   (d) Flexible in changing routines to stimulate activities?
   (e) Flexible in changing routines to suit the children's needs?

4. Do you think your teacher and participating parents provide a good nursery school experience for your child? If undecided, or answer is no, please state the areas in which you think change is needed.

5. Do you feel that you were adequately prepared to assist at the nursery?

6. What type of parent education meetings have been held in the past? Do you feel they were useful to you? How?

7. Please be specific about how your teacher is helpful, or not, in assisting your participation.

8. What type of programs would you like to have for the parent education meetings?

9. Do the following sources adequately take care of your questions and comments?

   (a) Parent-Teacher Conferences?

   (b) General Meetings?

   (c) Newsletter?

10. Please comment on the following and offer any suggestions you may have:-

   (a) Nursery School Equipment.

   (b) Field Trips.

11. How do you think fathers can be helpful in the program?

12. What have you as a mother learned about children from your experience in nursery school?

APPENDIX "B"

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS.

1. What do you feel are the advantages to a teacher who works in a cooperative nursery school? Disadvantages?

2. What in your opinion could a good parent education program accomplish?
   (a) Could you give some specific ideas for such a program?

3. One of your duties would be participating in membership interviews; upon what basis would you select members and their children?

4. Do you feel that the presence of mothers helps or hinders your work as a teacher?

APPENDIX "C"

314 Abbott Road,
East Lansing.

Phone - 337 - 1468.

Dear Mrs. . . . . .

I am a foreign student from India studying at the Michigan State University under the guidance of Dr.William Marshall, Associate Professor, in the College of Home Economics. For my master's problem, I have chosen the topic "The History of the Cooperative Nursery School movement in the United States - its implications for urban India."

It is hoped that the study of this problem would yield useful information regarding the benefits of the cooperative nursery program and help the development of better and newer types of nursery schools in our country.

I would very much appreciate your kind cooperation and help in answering the attached questionnaire.

Thanking you,

Yours Sincerely,

(MRS.SHARANA MOSES)