



A Day-Care Guide for Administrators, Teachers, and Parents

Richard Ruopp, Brigid O'Farrell, David Warner, Mary Rowe, Ruth Freedman

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The need for day care in the United States is enormous and increasing rapidly. Between 4 and 4.5 million preschoolers have mothers who work, and only about 2 percent of these children are in child-care centers. Demand for day care cuts across social and economic lines. It may be a means of improving a family's economic status or simply a way of giving a mother the freedom to pursue her own interests.

This book is based on *A Study in Child Care, 1970-71*, prepared for the Office of Economic Opportunity. From an original list of 188 centers, the study selected 20 programs, representing the wide diversity of groups interested in providing child care. These included centers and systems located all around the country—on Indian reservations, in the inner city, in mobile trailers, in Appalachia, and in the suburbs. Sponsors, too, were diverse, including employers, unions, private corporations, federal, state, and local agencies, as well as parents.

The study interviewed directors, teachers, support staff, children, community people, and parents. Children and teachers were observed in their daily center routines. Budgets were carefully recorded with attention to both dollar and in-kind revenues and expenditures. A panel of child-care experts acted as advisors for the study, and all final case studies were reviewed by the centers involved.

Part I of the book describes the people involved in child care and what they do: the children, the staff, directors and boards, and parents. Part II delineates basic program components—education, nutrition, health, and supplemental services—and uses examples from the centers the authors felt were handling these aspects in creative or particularly appropriate ways. Part III examines operating costs for day care, outlines start-up activities and their costs, and describes a model center serving 50 children. Part IV consists of detailed case studies of four of the programs studied: a small urban center, a large urban home-care program, a small program for migrant children, and a large rural child-care system. The appendix contains four summary charts of all 20 centers studied.

This book will be useful to people who are operating, or considering operating, day-care programs, to teachers, and to parents who are attempting to choose a day-care center for their children or evaluate a center their children presently attend. As the authors explain, "Our intent is not to propound hard and fast rules but merely to point out what's working for others and might prove helpful to you."

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