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PREVIEW

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A SURVEY OF THE NEEDS FOR CHILD CARE SERVICES WHICH ARE IN
HARMONY WITH THE BELIEFS OF THE CHURCH BY SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST MOTHERS WITH PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

The University of Nebraska - Lincoln

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A SURVEY OF THE NEEDS FOR CHILD CARE SERVICES WHICH ARE IN
HARMONY WITH THE BELIEFS OF THE CHURCH BY SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
MOTHERS WITH PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

by

L. Aleene Schaeffer

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College in the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Education

Major: Interdepartmental Area of
Administration, Curriculum and Instruction

Under the Supervision of Professor F. William Sesow

Lincoln, Nebraska

May, 1983

TITLE

A Survey of the Needs for Child Care Services Which are in
Harmony with the Beliefs of the Church by Seventh-Day Adventist
Mothers with Preschool Children

BY

L. Aleene Schaeffer

APPROVED	DATE
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IN
DEDICATION

To My Parents,

*Robert O. and Lois M. Lines,
Who have dreamed doctoral dreams,
longer than any others.*

This is for you.

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PREVIEW

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The past decade has brought about many changes concerning child care services in the American society. Although such services have been available since the latter part of the nineteenth century, never in history has the need for quality child care been so great as at the present time.

Available child care in the United States has always paralleled other historical events. Day nurseries were begun in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In 1854 the first day nursery in the United States was opened at the Nursery and Child's Hospital in New York City.¹ Mothers who worked and had been patients there brought their children to be cared for by the nurses. Similar nurseries were soon opened in Troy, New York and in Philadelphia, and by 1897 approximately one hundred such nurseries were opened to serve poor and immigrant families who found it necessary for women (mothers) to go on the labor force in order to survive. These nurseries, most of which were located in settlement houses, eventually expanded to include toddlers and preschool children. This resulted in overcrowding and it became difficult to provide good physical care. The National Federation of Day Nurseries was founded in 1898 to raise the standards of day care. In an attempt to keep children out of orphanages and institutions,

¹Read, Katherine and June Patterson, The Nursery School and Kindergarten, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980, 7th Ed.

centers continued to open from that time until World War I.² By the turn of the century, at least two programs had been designed by public schools.³ They were located in Los Angeles, California, and Gary, Indiana. As in the centers in the settlement houses, the child's physical health and well-being were still primary goals. The new programs, however, gave thought to teaching child orderliness, good manners and other social values. A few centers reflected the influence of Froebel and the kindergarten program that had developed in the United States and added "gifts", "occupations", songs, stories and games as part of the child's day.

Nursery schools were introduced to the United States in the 1920's by universities, colleges and private schools. Day care was influenced by their educational programs, and in a sense, the two structures became very similar. Although day care necessitated a longer day, the primary goals and emphasis were the same, and nursery school trained teachers worked in both settings. A striking difference, however, was seen in the populations that were served. Day care, which had been deemed a necessary service to immigrants and poor working families, was viewed as a service that should be provided only when the need could be justified. On the other hand, the nursery school served middle and upper class families as one of several options available to them.⁴

²Routh, Marilyn, "A Long Road to an Unsolved Problem--Comprehensive Child Care in the U.S." American Teacher, Nov. 1975.

³Op. cit.

⁴Curtis, Joan, Working Mothers, Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1976.

With each succeeding event in history--World War II, Sputnik, the War on Poverty--child care programs and organizations resurfaced and were revamped. President Nixon dealt a blow to the whole concept of child care when he vetoed the Comprehensive Childcare Development Act of 1971 with the allegation that the Act "would commit the vast moral majority of the national government to the side of communal approaches to child-rearing against the family-centered approach."

TODAY'S NEEDS

The struggling economy, escalating inflation rates, ever-growing numbers of divorced and one-parent families, and low wages for heads of families working at unskilled jobs, have all contributed to the need for additional child care services. In addition, the higher educational levels attained by women today have encouraged them to maintain careers while their children are yet young. The need for child care services has continued to rise as the number of mothers employed outside the home rises. Mothers of preschool children are employed in record numbers. Forty-seven percent of all mothers with preschool children were in the labor force in 1980, and these mothers had 7.5 million children under six years of age.⁵

Available slots in child care centers have not matched the number of children needing out-of-home care. In 1978, child care centers served approximately 900,000 children in the United States. Not only have the number of slots been inadequate, the quality has been inadequate also. In 1975 approximately 77 percent of the available

⁵U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Press Release No. 80-767, Dec. 9, 1980.

spaces were of such inferior quality that they should not have been used. In addition, 10,000 children under six have been left with no supervision while their parents work, and another 500,000 cared for by siblings under 16 years of age.⁶

THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH AND CHILD CARE

Since the early days of the church, Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) parents have had extensive counsel available on the responsibility of rearing children. Parents have been urged to search the scriptures diligently and adhere to the guidance found therein. In addition to the scriptures, but not superceding them, are a number of volumes written by Ellen G. White. Cofounder of the church, lecturer, and foremost author of the church, Ellen White had a great burden for the Christian home and for the care of children. Many of her personal testimonies and articles were devoted to this topic. In her later years, she expressed the desire to write a book for Christian parents that would make clear the "mother's duty and influence over her children."⁷ Such a book, entitled Child Guidance, was compiled from her published and unpublished works after her death but in harmony with her instruction to her trustees. It speaks in detail on discipline, character building, physical and spiritual education. While directed to both parents, clearly the primary responsibility belongs to the mother. She is to be the first teacher, the constant companion to her

⁶ Routh, Marily, American Teacher, Nov. 1975.

⁷ White, Ellen G., Child Guidance, Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1954, p. 5.

children. No place among its pages can one find favor or endorsement for mothers to be employed outside the home. Statements such as "No one else should be left to see to this work."⁸ and "How sad it is that many parents have cast off their God-given responsibility to their children and are willing that strangers should bear it for them."⁹ leave little doubt in the minds of mothers about their responsibility to the task of rearing their children.

Despite this counsel, a large number of SDA mothers have become employed outside the home and have placed their children in the care of other persons. Have these mothers not been grounded in the beliefs of the SDA church? Have they not read the counsel or are they disregarding it?

Seventh-day Adventist parents have certainly not been immune to the economic pressures that plague parents in much of society. A high percentage of SDA women are college graduates and another segment have some, but less than four years, of college training. They have become equipped with marketable skills and may see employment as a preferable option to a constant state of financial need. These parents may also have older children attending various levels of the educational system of the church and find the monetary costs greater than one paycheck can endure. Whatever the reasons, many SDA mothers are not at home

⁸White, Ellen G., The Adventist Home, Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1952.

⁹White, Ellen G., The Adventist Home, Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1952.

with their children. To date, child care centers that are operated by some part of the church (colleges, hospitals, etc...) are available to very few of the children in surrogate care. This means that most of these parents must find SDA day care homes, which are also very few in number, or they must place their children in non-SDA settings.

The church has always strongly advocated keeping elementary through college aged youth immersed in denominational schools and operates the second largest church school system in this country and the largest on a world-wide basis. A greater part of the annual budget has been delegated to education than to any other single expenditure. Scholarships, concerned church members who have no children in school, and workstudy programs all assist parents and their children in the endeavor to reach their educational goals. Despite the fact that the child's first seven years are the most tender and impressionable years of their life, limited effort has been made to serve preschool children and their parents. No one is asking this struggling group of parents about their needs.

THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to assess the needs of Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) parents of preschool children for child care services that are in harmony with the beliefs of the church.

A second purpose was to identify the types of child care settings SDA parents prefer and those which they currently utilize in an effort to determine the proper training programs for caregivers in formal and informal educational settings.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Is there a statistically significant difference in the educational backgrounds between SDA mothers who are employed outside the home and that of SDA mothers who are not employed outside the home?
2. Is there a statistically significant difference in the years of church membership between SDA mothers who are employed outside the home and SDA mothers who are not employed outside the home?
3. What is the most frequently reported reason for being employed outside the home by SDA mothers of preschool children?
4. What types of child care services are currently preferred by SDA mothers who have preschool children and who are employed outside the home?
5. What types of child care services are currently utilized by SDA mothers who have preschool children and who are employed outside the home?
6. Do SDA mothers find available child care which supports the standards and lifestyles of the home?
7. Is there a need expressed by SDA mothers who are employed outside the home for child care services which are in harmony with the beliefs of the church?
8. Is there a statistically significant relationship between years of church membership and an expressed need for child care services that are in harmony with the beliefs of the church among SDA mothers employed outside the home?
9. Is there a statistically significant relationship between

educational backgrounds and an expressed need for child care services that are in harmony with the beliefs of the church among SDA mothers employed outside the home?

10. Do SDA mothers of preschool children feel the church demonstrates a recognition of the unique needs of mothers who are employed outside the home by offering some form of support to this group?

11. Do SDA mothers of preschool children express any feelings of guilt about leaving their children in surrogate care?

12. Is there a statistically significant relationship between SDA mothers' years of church membership and an expressed feeling of guilt about placing their children in surrogate care?

13. Is there a statistically significant relationship between SDA mothers' educational backgrounds and an expressed feeling of guilt about placing their children in surrogate care?

14. Do SDA mothers of preschool children feel the church has a responsibility to young children which includes providing child care services?

15. Do SDA mothers of preschool children feel the establishment of church-sponsored child care services would be of value to the over-all mission of the church?

16. Is there a statistically significant relationship between SDA mothers' perceptions regarding the church's responsibility for providing child care services and their years of church membership?

17. Is there a statistically significant relationship between SDA mothers' perceptions regarding the church's responsibility for providing

child care services and their educational backgrounds?

18. Would the availability of SDA child care services influence mothers of preschool children to seek employment outside the home rather than to remain at home with their children?

ASSUMPTIONS

1. The perceptions of Seventh-day Adventist mothers with preschool children are valid sources of information for determining the needs for child care services.

The Seventh-day Adventist church philosophically recognizes an obligation to all children, not only those of formal school age.

LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

1. The population sampled was limited to Seventh-day Adventist mothers of preschool children who belong to churches of 150 members or more which are located in the states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, and Missouri. This area is specifically identified as the Mid-America Union of Seventh-day Adventists.

2. This study was limited due to the precise nature of a questionnaire which deals with the perceptions of people on a subjective basis.

3. This study was limited to these parents at this time. Parents of even a few years ago may have found the influence of environmental conditions, especially that of the economy, to be quite different.

4. Interpretations of the results of this study were made

within the context of the situation under which the data were gathered. Specifically, findings are applicable to Mid America territory and not to the country as a whole.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Mid-America Union: A geographical division of the Seventh-day Adventist population which consists of North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, and Missouri. This is one of ten such Unions in the United States.

2. Seventh-day Adventist parents: This term refers to members of the Seventh-day Adventist church who reside in the Mid-America Union and who have preschool children.

3. Child care services: For the purpose of this study, child care services refers to a variety of settings in which the young child will receive learning opportunities that will encourage optimum physical, mental, social and spiritual growth while under the direction of trained personnel who exemplify values and lifestyle in harmony with the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist church. The focus is on a close, personal relationship between the caregiver and the child as well as many first-hand experiences to stimulate the child's total growth. It is not simply custodial care nor does it imply an academic approach to the learning experiences.

4. In-home care: This term refers to child care which occurs in the child's home by a caregiver other than the parent, usually a relative or close friend.

5. Day Care Home: A day care home is a child care program with a home-base, as opposed to a child care center. For the purpose of

this study, the day care home will be assumed to be a licensed or registered facility operated by a person trained in the care of young children. Although a limited number of children may be served, it may accommodate a variety of ages, birth through adolescence. It is specifically designed for the parents employed outside the home.

6. Day Care Center: A day care center is a setting which offers child care services to a larger number of young children than the day care home. Children six weeks of age through twelve may be cared for, with ages three through six being the most prevalent ages served. For the purpose of this study, day care center will refer to a licensed facility which is staffed by trained personnel and serves children two and a half years of age and older. It is specifically designed for parents employed outside the home.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

While there has been a wealth of information and guidance for parents, specifically mothers who remain in the home to care for their children on a full time basis, there is no literature nor written counsel available to parents or educators on the problems and needs of Seventh-day Adventist mothers of young children who are employed outside the home.

Only in very recent years (since 1972)¹⁰ has the church, in reality, concerned itself with preschool children. To date, very little has

¹⁰ Babcock, George, "Needed: SDA Kindergartens and Child Care Centers." Journal of Adventist Education: Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 42, 2, Dec. 1979 - Jan. 1980.

been available to help the mother who is employed outside the home with the guilt complex she carries for putting her children in the care of others during the hours she must be away from the home. She has found herself struggling between the church's announced ideal for the care of young children and the necessity of taking employment to meet her family's needs. No alternative child care arrangement has been available which meets church standards for those early years of a child's life. Frequently, parents have chosen early school entrance (age 5) for their children. While there exists at least as much counsel against this practice, there seems to be less obvious objection to employed mothers whose children attend elementary school. This study can bring the need for acceptable alternative child care opportunities and arrangements to the awareness of the general church population and church leadership as well as educators who are involved in Early Childhood programs. It can result in recognition of the need of comprehensive training of effective caregivers to serve in a variety of child care settings. It could also serve as a basis for the development of a curriculum to aid mothers who care for their own children at home and for those who serve as caregivers in day care homes or day care centers. To date, only the Ladder of Life¹¹ series is available from the church and its intended use is with one's own children in the home.

The church must understand the needs of today's parents as they

¹¹ Dept. of Education, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, Ladder of Life, Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1977.