



Survey of preschool facilities in Montana  
by Jean Stephens Baringer

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
MASTER OF SCIENCE in Home Economics  
Montana State University  
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Abstract:

This study was to obtain information concerning the preschool facilities in Montana to determine how they met the Children'S needs in terms of location, staffing, program and equipment by means of a questionnaire.

The sample included 61 Head Start, day care centers, nursery school and child development centers upon which the results are based.

Children of disadvantaged families in the large and the small towns and on the Indian reservations had the greatest preschool opportunities, The middle-class children and those in the medium-sized communities had very little opportunities for care or education at the preschool level. More facilities are needed in Montana to meet these needs.

There was an average of 8.03 persons on the staff which included teaching and non-teaching personnel, Of the 211 teachers, only 7 had a master's degree and 55 had a bachelors degree. There is a need for more qualified, trained teaching personnel in the state preschool program.

These programs were directed towards education for these 3-6 year old children and in meeting their basic needs. Care was a secondary matter. The government played a part in the establishment and operation of a large portion of these preschool facilities, A variety of equipment was in good supply at most of the facilities — long on dolls, housekeeping items and blocks, shortest on large climbing apparatus and vehicles.

Less than half of the facilities were licensed by the state welfare office. The state suggests, but doesn't enforce strict requirements that all facilities be licensed to operate.

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Date August 5, 1970

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JEAN STEPHENS BARINGER

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial  
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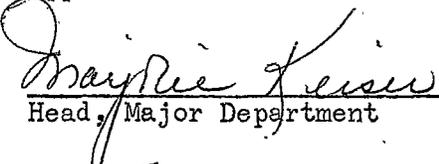
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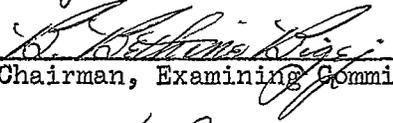
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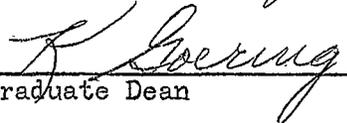
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## ABSTRACT

This study was to obtain information concerning the preschool facilities in Montana to determine how they met the children's needs in terms of location, staffing, program and equipment by means of a questionnaire.

The sample included 61 Head Start, day care centers, nursery school and child development centers upon which the results are based.

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There was an average of 8.03 persons on the staff which included teaching and non-teaching personnel. Of the 211 teachers, only 7 had a master's degree and 55 had a bachelors degree. There is a need for more qualified, trained teaching personnel in the state preschool program.

These programs were directed towards education for these 3-6 year old children and in meeting their basic needs. Care was a secondary matter. The government played a part in the establishment and operation of a large portion of these preschool facilities.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Importance of the Study

"Nothing we can do to move our society forward is more important than our efforts to improve the well-being of American children. In their small hands is held the destiny of this nation."<sup>1</sup> These words characterize the feelings of the nation. In today's world many mothers are working; there is concern for children getting proper care and direction in meeting their individual needs; there is emphasis on developing skills and attitudes for education; and many new child care and education services are being established. With this situation at hand and much needing to be done to help these children, it is hard to know where to start.

Adequate day care services are urgently needed. In 1958 it was discovered that of the children under twelve years of age whose mothers worked full time only 2% or 121,000 children were cared for by group care such as day care centers, nursery schools and the like.<sup>2</sup> In 1960 there were 20,318,000 children under five years of age in the United

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<sup>1</sup>Anthony J. Celebrezze, "Our Responsibilities to Children," The Journal of Nursery Education, XVIX (April, 1964), p. 170.

<sup>2</sup>Elizabeth Herzog, Children of Working Mothers, Children's Bureau Publication No. 382-1960, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), p. 15.

States, there were 83,037 children in Montana;<sup>3</sup> predicted for 1970 there should be 21,317,000 children under five in the United States with 69,000 in Montana and by 1975 to be 27,210,000 children under five in the United States with 77,700 in Montana.<sup>4</sup>

The signing of the Economic Opportunity Act in 1964 introduced the Head Start programs providing disadvantaged children with opportunities for gaining readiness for school. In 1966 there were 906,000 three to four-year old children in preschool, 1,145,000 in 1967 and an estimated 3,000,000 children to be in preschool by 1972, with similar increases for five-year old children.<sup>5</sup> National concern for the care of children has bombarded the congressional transactions; allocations of federal funds have been made available to meet some of these growing needs.

Of the 758 public school systems in Montana (fall of 1968) only 17 of the 99 systems with 300 or more pupils had kindergartens. (Baker, Bozeman, Browning, Conrad, Cut Bank, Deer Lodge, Dillon, East Helena,

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<sup>3</sup>Sarah Hammond Leeper, and others, Good Schools for Young Children (2nd ed.; New York: Macmillan Company, 1968), p. 8. Montana State University, The Montana Almanac: 62-63 Statistical Supplement, (Missoula: Montana, 1963), p. 22.

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Department of Commerce, Population Estimates, Series P-25, No. 381 (Washington, D.C.; U.S. Government Printing Office, Dec. 18, 1967), p. 6. U.S. Department of Commerce, Population Estimates, Series P-25, No. 375 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, Oct. 3, 1967), pp. 32, 40, 48, 56.

<sup>5</sup>Milton Akers, "The Executive Director's Testimony Before the House Education and Labor Committee," Young Children, XXV (March, 1970), p. 237.

Forsyth, Great Falls, Havre, Lewistown, Livingston, Plentywood, Poplar, Red Lodge and Shelby).<sup>6</sup> The enrollment of Montana's public kindergarten children in the fall of 1968 was 3,546, with first grade enrollment of 15,622 children.<sup>7</sup> This means that about 23% of Montana's five-year old children were able to attend public kindergarten. The question is, "Were the other 77% five-year old children able to participate in comparable programs to be ready for school?"

In the Biennial Report by Harriet Miller, State Superintendent of Schools, she recommended that

Educational opportunities not traditionally available to all people in all Montana communities need expansion and improvement. For example: 1) The education of children younger than six years must be recognized not only as a worthwhile expenditure of public funds but fundamentally as important as the education of children of age ten or fifteen. Early childhood education is at least as essential as high school education today.<sup>8</sup>

Montana laws do not require all preschool facilities to be licensed.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Public School Systems, Elementary and Secondary Education Directory, Part 2 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968), pp. 7-8.

<sup>7</sup>Richard H. Barr and Betty J. Foster, Fall 1968 Statistics of Public Elementary and Secondary Schools (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, March, 1969), p. 16.

<sup>8</sup>Harriet Miller, 1968 State of Montana Superintendent of Public Instruction - Biennial Report (Helena: Montana, Dec. 1, 1968), p. 2.

<sup>9</sup>By definition in Standards Relating to Licensing of Day Care Centers for Children by the State of Montana's Department of Public Welfare, State Board of Health, and Fire Marshal, revised June, 1968, just facilities with seven or more children for care for five or more hours of the day for five or more consecutive weeks are required to be licensed.

### Need for the Study

There has been an expressed interest in knowing the availability of preschool education and care in Montana. The most recent known listing of any sort is A Directory of Nursery Schools and Day Care Centers in the United States, compiled in 1951 by Clark Moustakas and Minnie Berson.

In a survey study on youth opportunities in Montana it was recommended that

A university center should help youth organizations and workers by providing current news and information such as news about what other organizations and agencies are doing . . . . current lists of organizations and agencies serving youth, the state administrator, if there is one, and regional or local contact persons.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, recent requests have been made for location of facilities so applicants may apply for work; parents moving to other communities will know what is available for their children in their future location; and, so that workshops can be planned to involve staff members of Montana's preschool facilities.

### Purpose of the Study

Early childhood education cannot afford to be lax in its teachings, supervision and environment. Our challenge is to upgrade preschool facilities and make it possible for young children to develop their potential.

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<sup>10</sup>Dorothy Eck, Youth Opportunities in Montana (Bozeman: Montana, Department of Sociology, Feb., 1969), pp. 21, 24.

The purpose of this study is to obtain information concerning preschool facilities (namely nursery schools, day care centers, child development centers and Head Start programs) in Montana, their location, and how they are meeting the children's needs. In doing so, staffing, programming and equipment can also be determined.

#### Definition of Terms

The terms used throughout this study are hereby listed.

- 1) Preschool - the years between two and five years of age, when a child is not attending a public or private school, including kindergarten.
- 2) Preschool facility - to include the building, program and/or staff (depending on the context in which it is used) of public and private day care centers, child development centers, Head Start programs and nursery schools.
- 3) Day care centers - a substitute for maternal care to serve the emotional, physical, social and intellectual needs of the children whose parents are not at home or are unable to care for them.<sup>11</sup>
- 4) Nursery schools - a supplement to home experiences with emphasis on selective educational experiences where children can learn as they play and share, adults can learn as they have

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<sup>11</sup>Often referred to as day nursery. Katherine H. Read, The Nursery School: A Human Relationships Laboratory (4th ed.; Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1966), p. 47.

opportunity to observe and participate.

- 5) Child development center - is the same as nursery schools, plus it provides "guidance, health services and makes available social services as needed by the child and family."<sup>12</sup>
- 6) Head Start programs - (Operation Head Start - original name, Project Head Start - formal name) a child development center with comprehensive health and medical services, financed by the federal government and operated under the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO).

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<sup>12</sup>The National Committee for Day Care of Children prefers to call them day care centers. Ibid.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study is limited to the concerns and opportunities for children attending preschool facilities. Major areas of concern for this study are 1) children, 2) parents of these children, 3) teachers and personnel involved in the programs, 4) programs for preschool-aged children including the background as well as the trends in early childhood education and care, and 5) the building or facility.

#### Children

Early childhood years are a

period of time when the child lays a foundation for later growth and development. A foundation of trust and security in the child's immediate environment is important - as the child feels 'trusting' in his immediate surroundings, he makes preparations to move out and meet new challenges.<sup>1</sup>

After a child learns the environment can be trusted he develops his senses by touching, tasting, handling, and smelling what's within reach. Then comes learning about himself - what he can do, what he can have, what impulse control can be expected. Around five years of age a child begins to think of and consider others.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>D. Keith Osborn, "Meeting the Needs of the Preschooler", Nursery School Portfolio, No. 4 (Washington, D.C.: ACEI, 1961), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.





























































































































































































































