

Proprietary day care

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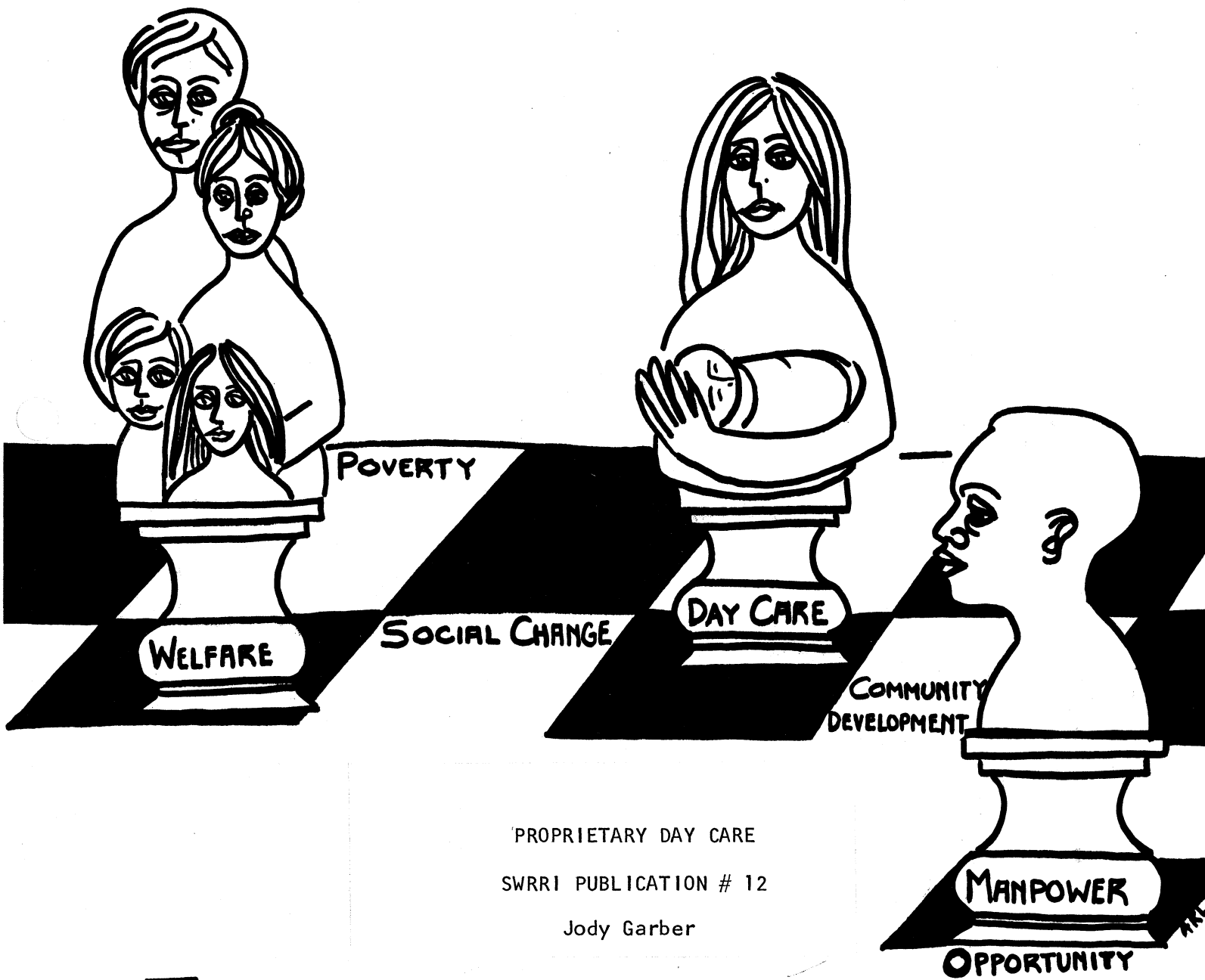
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SOCIAL WELFARE REGIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE



PROPRIETARY DAY CARE

SWRRI PUBLICATION # 12

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INTRODUCTION

It is, perhaps, a gross understatement to suggest that the number of available day care facilities in the United States today falls far short of meeting the existing and fast increasing need for quality day care. The United States Department of Labor Statistics estimates that nationwide day care slots total approximately 641,000 for the almost 6,000,000 pre-school children whose mothers have to work. The United States Children's Bureau and the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor have suggested that at least three million children are subjected to inadequate care while their parent or parents work to bring the family income up to an adequate level.¹ Although the number of mothers in the labor force has doubled since 1950 and has increased more than six-fold since 1940, it has been estimated that adequate child care facilities are available for only two percent of the children under twelve whose mothers are employed. Furthermore, if only group settings providing child care are counted, there are facilities for the children of only one percent of the working mothers.²

The demand for child care facilities is further increased by the changing public attitudes and mores regarding child rearing and women's roles. Both the pressure for freedom from traditional feminine role definitions as well as the growing emphasis on individual fulfillment and expression have resulted in additional and persistent demands for child care programs.

It seems obvious that a substantial and immediate need exists for quality child care facilities. What is not nearly so obvious, of course, is the means by which this need is to be fulfilled (or significantly satisfied), and the demand reduced.³

The development of day care centers has been discouraged by a general lack of coordination among various departments and agencies concerned with actual center formation. The responsibility for day care development has remained fragmented, inefficient, and illogical. This situation exists on the federal level (where 61 separate pieces of legislation are concerned with child care); on the state level (where the responsibility for child care often lies with several distinct and uncoordinated agencies- licensing, health, education, and so on); and on the local community level (where the fire chief wants toilet doors to swing "in" and the building inspector insists that they swing "out"). The pressing need for more day care seems unlikely to be fulfilled by such outrageous dialogue.

In spite of fashionable rhetoric to the contrary, the existing situation of fragmentation and lack of coordination among units in the structural organization of child care present clear evidence of the total lack of meaningful commitment to child care at all levels of government. There are exceptions, of course, but for the most part, intelligent, comprehensive child care plans are apt to find themselves operating in an inhibiting, if not fatal void.

Non-profit and public agency day care centers have generally been most affected by this lack of total commitment⁴ to child care. There are- except in certain well-defined pilot project cases- no federal funds available for start-up financing for day care centers. That is, the government provides no seed money for the purpose of constructing, purchasing, or remodeling a facility intended for use as a child care center.⁵ The expense incurred in the initial provision of a proper facility in which to house a program is often far too great for a non-profit or public center to absorb. If the proposed center

manages somehow to overcome this primary obstacle to program establishment and to secure a suitable facility, several subsequent potential pitfalls await before final operation is a reality.

Licensing procedures, zoning qualifications, building code regulations, fire department stipulations, ad infinitum, all function to increase the amount of resources expended in the attempt to establish a program. Time and personnel are often as dear as money to a non-profit concern, and all three are subject to the inefficiencies, absurdities, and abuses in the present day care system.

The point is not, of course, that licensing and other functions concerned with center establishment are strictly a waste of time, energy, and money and should, as a result, be eliminated. It is felt, on the contrary, that such functions should be examined, defined, and coordinated in order to provide a meaningful perspective and functional procedural format for quality child care. The system concerned with the provision of day care is at present rather self-defeating. The regulations regarding day care are often petty, competitive, and whimsical and, at best, remain fragmented and disorganized. The system thus functions to discriminate against the development of all types of child care programs at all levels and results in the establishment of merely a token number of centers- not all of them necessarily assured of quality.

The fact remains, however, that because of limited resources, non-profit centers are least able to cope with the system. The relatively recent phenomenon of large-scale, multi-centered proprietary child care companies entering the market may afford an alternative to the virtual stalemate of program establishment and help to satisfy the growing demand for services.

It is difficult to treat proprietary day care as a single, identifiable entity as, indeed, it is difficult to consider "day care" in general as a single concept. In truth, the proprietary field encompasses a wide range of both possibility as well as intent. There exists no valid, comprehensive paradigm of the proprietary center and even common stereotyped images fail to account for major important exceptions. The significant variable distinguishing proprietary centers in terms of this paper is the profit motive, not the specific form of the program, for example, industrial or private.

This study is a preliminary attempt to examine the field of large-scale proprietary child care⁶ with regard to the assumptions made about day care necessary to the maintenance of a profit margin. The paper is based on research substantiated by personal interviews with developers and directors of proprietary corporations. Although an attempt was made to present the opinions of those interviewed as directly as possible with a minimum of editorial comment, it was found necessary to interject explanatory qualifications for reasons of clarity and accuracy.

The main emphasis of the study is not on the economics of the proprietary day care industry per se, but rather on the philosophical and practical ways of thinking and functioning in the day care arena. The concerns to which the research has been addressed involve a consideration of these assumptions and their possible consequences for and impact upon the provision of child care. The examination does not focus primarily on a comparison between proprietary and non-profit centers as such an approach is felt to be misleading. It is, in fact, a damaging yet common error to regard the day care field as essentially a polarization between non-profit and proprietary centers.⁷ There are, certainly,

strong arguments to be made for such a dichotomous analysis, but, again, the dichotomy proves to be more valuable as a self-generating conceptual technique than as an accurate, descriptive tool.

Proprietary day care has been subject to some abuse and discrimination. A general paranoia was evident among the interviewed centers with regard to their perception of public opinion. They felt, for the most part, that "profit making centers are thought to have horns." How much of their feelings was fact and how much was imagination (or projection) is difficult to determine. Intrinsically, however, "there is nothing evil in making a profit from a day care center. The litmus test is not who sponsors child care, but which comes first- the child or the dollar."⁸

The general philosophical as well as practical "ways of operating" of proprietary day care centers can best be discussed within the context of certain conceptual topic areas. Taken individually the selected categories provide a valuable perspective for the comparison of proprietary and non-profit centers; taken as an integrated unit, the topic areas provide an important conceptual framework for any over-all evaluative analysis of individual categorical child care programs. The following topic areas will be discussed: determination of need, services, federal legislation, funding, franchising, public relations, and quality control.

DETERMINATION OF NEED

It is difficult for day care center developers to accurately determine demand for child care services in proposed areas of program creation. Prospective users are hesitant to indicate tacit approval of a program- much less financial commitment- without first seeing the actual facilities and program in

operation. The determination of demand, however, is of great importance to any developing center; immediate expenditure and program credibility through time are dependent upon sufficient and sustained response from clients. If the demand is not there, the program fails.

Non-profit centers often lack the resources necessary for an extensive preliminary survey to estimate demand for services and, therefore, must risk possible program demise as the result of insufficient community response. Large-scale proprietary companies, on the other hand, are able to allocate funds for such a study. Most companies have developed a set of criteria, the application of which allows them to approximate the extent of future community response and, thus, to provide a measure of the desirability of program creation in the area. Little direct questioning of residents occurs. Instead, formulas usually include such variables as housing starts, population, existing competition, number of children in the first grade each year, possible site locations, income level, and so on. The formula is simply applied to a specified area and a determination of project continuation is based on the findings. The results were claimed to be generally accurate and few centers were developed in areas of insufficient response.

The possibility of "occasional misses" exists, of course, and most corporations have established contingent arrangements for such circumstances. One company compensated for an error in center location with the introduction of generally reduced fees and sliding scale tuition payments. "The profits will go down, but at least we will recoup some of the losses." Another corporation has designed its buildings for proposed centers in "such a fashion as to accommodate other commercial uses." If the day care center does not prove to be

profitable in a certain location, the facility is thus capable of being converted to other purposes and either leased or sold toward this end. In this way, "any mistake in program development and community response is kept at a minimum." Some would question the desirability of this latter arrangement. That is, it would appear to be a most difficult, if not impossible task to design a facility for a child care program (geared to the needs, the peculiarities, and the scale of three-five year old children) which would be capable of conversion to an office or medical building. Compromises in the quality of initial facility design would necessarily result, compromises which would be at the expense of the children.

SERVICES

The catalogue of one prominent proprietary child care company claims that its program promotes the "social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development" of the child. The scope of such claims is not unusual and is, in fact, representative of the type of public relations propaganda expounded by most proprietary day care programs. In view of these assertions, however, what is rather unusual, if not totally absurd, is the claim by an administrator of this same center that L _____ Company does not offer "comprehensive services" to their clients. He explained that his clients neither required nor desired comprehensive service provision. One is forced to ponder the existence of a missing link between "social, emotional, physical, and intellectual" developmental components and "comprehensive services."

Actually, the director was intending to indicate an important difference in service orientation between the proprietary and most non-profit or public day care programs. In a somewhat generalized representation, both types of programs offer

services in response to client expectations and requirements. The proprietary center caters for the most part to the middle and upper-middle income person- or to that client who is most capable of paying for personalized care. Medical, dental, and social service components are therefore kept at a minimum in most proprietary programs and function in a more advisory than active capacity.⁹

Most programs offer several alternatives with regard to hours of care and services provided. A variety of schedule selections are available ranging from half-day, part-week to full-day, full-week care. The fees are developed according to number of hours contracted and generally average from \$22 to \$35 per week for full day care service. It is important to emphasize that most proprietary day care centers have only a small percentage (only 10 percent in one experience) of client representation in their full-day, full-week programs. The greatest percentage of clients in the centers contract for part-day or full-day, part-week care. Although the figures as well as the reasons vary from center to center, the generally low full-day percentages are due to characteristics of the client population. That is, most proprietary programs have been developed for suburban, middle-class communities and "make sense" in this context. The developer's packaged program is formulated both as a response to and as an exploitation of these communities. The "set of criteria" for determining demand for a center in an area is rather narrowly defined within this general suburban framework and by no means operates as an objective, universal standard.¹⁰

In such areas of program development, the majority of mothers with young children do not work full time and do not, by employment criteria, require full-day, full-week services. The stigma of institutionalized care and the guilt

feelings of maternal neglect- particularly strong in such neighborhoods- also function as deterrents to full utilization of services. Most regard the center as a basically substantial, beneficial baby-sitting service. It is unfortunate, but perhaps inevitable that the child care programs themselves often reflect this attitude.¹¹

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

With the exception of the Lanham Act of World War II, federal involvement with child care has been limited in scope and discriminatory in application. "Virtually all federal support for day care has been explicitly for and limited to welfare or near-welfare children."¹² The provision of day care services is a necessary component of various recent work-fare legislation; in the almost obsessive drive to reduce the welfare rolls,¹³ day care has gained new priority and, as a consequence, considerable potential. In spite of the reduced population being considered (children of welfare recipients rather than the children of the population as a whole), a substantial gap still remains between the number of day care slots available and the number in demand. According to Martin Lowenthal of the Social Welfare Regional Research Institute at Boston College,

If every place in every licensed day care facility in the United States were to be reserved for an AFDC child under the age of six, there would still be an excess of one million welfare children left over. There are not enough facilities to accomplish the day care job envisioned by proponents of work for welfare mothers without significant and continuous federal assistance to create and maintain this new industry.¹⁴

Given this over-riding congressional and public concern to limit the welfare rolls through work-fare and, more specifically, the pending passage of some

form of family assistance program, the federal government has committed itself to the continued and increased provision of child care services. "A decade ago, when a similar void existed in nursing-home facilities for the aged, private industry filled it, with results that are now considered somewhat less than ideal."¹⁵ It is the direct responsibility of the federal government to prevent similar abuses from entering the child care arena.

Proprietary day care companies have, at present, been seeking and serving the private, middle and upper-middle income client. The average charge at proprietary centers for full day care ranges between \$22 and \$35 per week and, therefore, necessitates the appeal to higher income groups. Most corporations would welcome the availability of some sort of government aid and, certainly, have anticipated it in their fiscal futures. "While most companies initially train their sights on the middle-class consumer market, many also hope for large-scale government contracts."¹⁶

Proprietary centers are, in fact, already receiving some public support in the guise of tax deductions for out-of-home child care. The Revenue Act of 1971, Title 11, Section 210 provides deduction allowances for employment related expenses incurred during any month to the extent that such expenses do not exceed \$400 (for three children). The Revenue Act of 1971 is admittedly hardly considered to be a great boon to proprietary day care providers. Title V of the Economic Opportunity Amendments of 1971, Child Development Programs,¹⁷ was a far more cogent piece of legislation for child care. It was vetoed by President Nixon for his cited objection to "communal approaches to child raising." It has been suggested, however, that a "second" possible reason for the veto resulted from the President's reluctance to approve as extensive (and as expensive) a program.

When asked their opinions concerning desirable forms for future child care legislation, proprietary center developers suggested several advantageous alternatives. Most frequently mentioned were the possibilities of tax write-offs for industries ("industries would contract with proprietary corporations so 'everyone' would gain"); increased amount and scope of tax deduction benefits for individuals ("housework is work; tax deductions for day care should not be limited to strict, traditional definitions of employment"); and freer mortgage money from financial institutions.

There was some discrepancy among the interviewed centers with regard to this last suggestion. One center indicated that "easy" mortgage money is already available for investment in proprietary day care concerns. Banks were anxious to become involved in the promising and potentially profitable field of day care and presented very few technical and financial obstacles towards this end. A second center, on the other hand, commented on the general difficulty involved in securing mortgage money. Banks, they had experienced, were very hesitant to become involved with proprietary child care because to the relative novelty of the field. It was necessary, in fact, for each director of this particular corporation to personally sign the loan application as increased protection for the bank. The relative availability of mortgage money also seemed to be dependent upon local zoning determinations. That is, the trend to consider day care centers as primarily businesses and not schools was felt to be increasing. This categorization necessitates location of a center in commercially zoned areas and not in those designated for residential use. Since land is considered more valuable in commercially zoned areas, financial institutions are more willing to invest and mortgage money is freer.

The role of the proprietary corporation in meeting the existing gap between the availability and the demand for day care could, indeed, be great. Again, most

federal support for child care has been in the non-profit and public sectors and has been overwhelmingly concerned with providing services to the welfare population. The large-scale provider by applying "the efficiency of business in the field of child care" claims that the amount of waste and inevitable abuse of government funds would be kept at a minimum. They feel that the same guarantee could not be made by the non-profit centers.¹⁸ Given the severe shortage of funds for day care in the country-- "The two billion dollars provided for in the Child Development Act would not have even come close, and even that was vetoed because it was too costly"-- proprietary companies may provide a crucial resource.

FUNDING AND PROFIT MAKING

Insufficiency of funds for initial program expenditures is not generally a problem for the proprietary day care center. Capital is available for center development and most companies echo the sentiments of one who claimed "substantial endowment at present." Proprietary providers claim that emphasis is placed on the amount of money necessary to do a good job rather than on the more usual non-profit agency question of "how much money is available?" The companies generally agreed that funds are readily available for the enactment of the respective programs. Several corporations boasted¹⁹ of the fact that they- unlike the non-profit and public centers- were not receiving government subsidies or foundation support; they were, instead, independent corporations financed by and thus responsible to private investors. They were not subject to or affected by the insecurity of government funding. This distinction was considered to be of great advantage to the potential quality of the child care programs concerned as the quality of a proprietary program supposedly does not suffer from restrictions of funding sources. Private enterprisers in the day care arena often claim that, "funds are not an issue where quality is concerned."

It should be noted, of course, that the one very important function of a program plan developed by a proprietary provider is, by definition, to make money. A program is developed which will attract and retain paying clients and such a design naturally demands attention to quality facilities and program components as "it behooves business to provide a quality program." As a function of the profit motive, however, it is imperative that the design allow for the maintenance of a profit margin. The programs are initially designed with both these points in mind.

Proprietary center program development and operation are not, then, generally limited by a lack of "sufficient endowment," but rather by this necessity to show a profit. The form in which the limitation is played out depends upon the individual center, but usually involves compromises in the area of service, facility, education, and/or other program components. In any event, however, the claim to unlimited funds is tempered by the necessity to develop and maintain a profit-making program.

It is, perhaps, a different but still very serious question to consider the over-all possibility and feasibility of making a profit from child care. Estimates of cost for the adequate provision of day care are in the range of \$2,000 to \$2,500 per year per child. The Day Care and Child Developmental Council of America puts the annual rate at \$2,100 per child; the Department of Labor in 1969 placed it at almost \$2,000 per child; and the National Capital Area Day Care Association in 1968 estimated the cost to be approximately \$2,400 per child per fifty-week year.²¹ Also, an OEO nationwide study of "exemplary" day care programs shows that systems maintaining a one/five adult/child ratio and having quality educational, developmental, health, and parent involvement components cost between \$2,500 and \$3,500 per child per year.²² The optimal number of children recommended by the interviewed proprietary

companies ranges from 75 to 130 and the suggested staff/student ratio averages 1/10. The statistics mentioned, however, are usually qualified with regard to enrollment elasticity, time of day (affecting student/staff ratios depending upon morning, afternoon and all-day enrollment figures), and by a general hesitation to commit oneself to "hard and fast rules."

The fees charged vary mainly depending upon size, quality and location of program. It was commented, for example, that "the same program can run for \$18 in Manchester, New Hampshire, that costs \$32 in Massachusetts." As an average, however, fees for full day care services ranged from a low of \$22 to about \$35 per child per week.

FRANCHISING

Although the specific area of franchising with regard to the provision of child care is not a focus of this paper, the topic suggests several tangential areas of importance. The question of franchising operations was investigated by most companies interviewed and eventually discarded for the general reasons of quality control and over-all feasibility. None of the firms interviewed was currently involved in the franchising of child care. Few explicit reasons were offered for the dropping of franchise schemes and explanations went little deeper than to state that "the franchise looked good on paper, but it didn't work out that way." The connotation of a franchise was not felt to particularly enhance the quality care aspect of proprietary day care. The association between the packaged marketing of fried chicken and the equally mechanical marketing of children- automatically reinforced by a franchise connection- was felt to be too strong to overcome or, perhaps, too real to deny.

The large-scale proprietary provider has been subject to a sort of emotional

derogatory association with franchised day care. The very conditions of size and profit- regardless of actual corporate organization- promote for many people a rather automatic link with franchised operations. This image association of independent corporate day care with franchise operations does little to enhance the appeal of the former and serves instead to reinforce a negative, sterile, mechanical, and superficial image of day care.

The reluctance of a prospective client to accept the services of a franchise is not necessarily a primary objection. That is, the franchise association simply poses an additional barrier to the acceptance of profit-making day care in general. The idea of "making a profit off of little children" does not sit well with many people; their discomfort is relayed in a refusal to subscribe to and thus promote such services. In the experience of some centers, this anti-proprietary feeling was also evident and, perhaps, strongest in agencies officially concerned with child care, particularly the licensing functions. The centers commented on the general resistance that was displayed by licensing department- hostility that was felt to be unfair as well as inconsistent since little outcry is heard against pediatricians, toy manufacturers, and other involvements profiteering from children. The companies questioned why proprietary day care should be singled out for this discrimination.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

In order to counteract the damaging franchise association²³ and to prevent a more attractive, dynamic impression of services, proprietary companies have mobilized their public relations components. The intent has been to present to the public an image of utmost quality in program design and operation; in many cases, however, the effect has been little more than a bold super-sell of the educational and developmental components of a program. The packaged cheeseburger has been replaced by the

mechanical, robotized toddler scientifically programmed to delight his parents and, later, to astound his teacher.

E_____ centers will be equipped with such gimmicks as a specially designed portable television studio that youngsters can use to produce their own shows. They will also have an impressive array of audio-visual aids, ranging from a machine that 'reads' to children from cards they select, to tape-recorder cassettes....²⁴

And, as if to add insult to injury, "E_____ has compiled a list of 150,000 observations about children and has identified 1,800 important skills and concepts for pre-school children to acquire."²⁵ One is led to wonder why only 150,000 observations? Why not 150,001?

This representation is extreme; it does dramatize, however, an important and rather dangerous trend among large-scale providers of child care. It is not uncommon for companies to stress their educational, developmental, and professional components, nor, of course, is this necessarily bad. The importance of such features is certainly recognized; they should be recommended, not regretted. What is to be avoided, though, is the almost patronizing promise to produce a bunch of little whizzes. In the zeal to promote the advantages of their programs²⁶ companies tend to forget the young age, the tender sensibilities, and the limited capabilities of the children involved. And so, unfortunately, do the parents.²⁷

The projection of an "attractive" child care image is further advanced by the refusal of many proprietary companies to use the term "day care" to refer to all-day as opposed to morning or part-day services. It is felt that the phrase itself connotes derogatory welfare and poverty stereotypes and serves only to conjure up visions of institutionalized, second-rate services. "Schools," "child care," and "full-day" are frequent substitutes for "day care." One director commented that day care and welfare are so linked in the minds of some that they are virtually

regarded as synonyms. As a case in point, one woman actually asked aghast, "Are my children going to be in with the day care kids?"

QUALITY CONTROL

The maintenance of a determined quality standard would seem to be a matter of great importance to the multi-centered proprietary child care corporation; problems inherent in quality control are compounded in child care programs by the very nature of the operation. The programs deal in the provision of a service, not a product. Standardization is necessary for accountability, control, and profit, but standardization must not be substituted for or confused with actual quality. Control is meaningless, if not self-destructive, when it becomes an end in itself.

There was a consensus that quality control was indeed crucial to program success and most interviewed companies claimed to operate on the "open-and-run-them-right-or-close-them" system. The mechanisms for assuring continuity in program quality and design, however, seemed surprisingly casual and ill-defined. Most of the researched child care corporations retained a basic central office control²⁸ and relatively little autonomy was delegated to the individual centers. What small degree of independence the centers did exercise was a function of the particular program director or teacher. In most cases, the director was hired by the main office and subsequently was responsible for the staffing (according to specified and pre-determined set of criteria) of his/her individual program. Qualified personnel were regarded as a primary means of program quality control.

It seems agreed, given the organization, design, and philosophy of the proprietary child care company, that some sort of quality control over individual programs is necessary. It is evident, though, that standardized quality- often regarded as conformity- is not part of the American dream. At best there is something unattractive about "maintaining standardized quality" in a chain operation of day care

centers. Children are individuals, not doughnuts, and any attempt to mold them or even to control them is looked upon as highly suspect, if not unpatriotic.

This is a dilemma with which large-scale child care companies must contend. Control must be maintained in order to protect the advantages of large-scale operations in general²⁹ and to assist with the ultimate realization of a profit margin. Quality must also be maintained in order to assure a profit through continued community demand for services. The standardizing effect of efficient quality control as an operative technique, however, must be publically minimized lest it be confused with impersonal, institutionalized conformity. The public should be made aware of- not deceived by- the proprietary necessity for quality control as it is an integral part of proprietary operations. The existence of quality control should be noted and its limitations evaluated in the minds of prospective clients.

CONCLUSION

The lack of substantial response for full day care services from proprietary child care centers leads one to question the legitimacy of even discussing large-scale proprietary corporations within the recognized day care framework. The services provided by the profit making companies would at times seem more appropriate in a discussion of specialized, personalized babysitting. Furthermore, the general restriction of services for people from inner-city, low-income areas raises the considerations of social accountability and justification. The questions are valid and, perhaps, even fundamental for any real understanding of proprietary day care.

The primary objective of proprietary day care companies is, by definition as well as conscious design, to make money. Packaged programs are developed, marketed, and operated toward this end; every component must be justified by its regard and every aspiration tempered by its exigencies. Given the profit motive, proprietary

companies cannot afford the luxury of a social conscience.

As a case in point, one administrator spoke of his desire to go into working class areas because he felt it to be a "social responsibility of the day care industry." He admitted, however, that the sense of responsibility must cease at a "certain profitability point below which a profit is no longer being made." This was only fair, he argued, because in low profit and non-profitable areas, proprietary's planned child care package would necessarily degenerate into mere custodial care. "In such cases, it would be better for the non-profit center to take over." Such reasoning, it is felt, though logically defensible, is somehow hideous, selfish, and very, very wrong.

Child care services represent more than an incidental convenience to thousands of families. To many poor and near-poor the availability of day care facilities is a crucial factor in their efforts to alter the conditions of their existence. Proprietary child care corporations cannot denounce non-profit and public programs for their deficiencies on the one hand, and on the other advocate and promote their development in areas of greatest need (if, indeed, lowest profitability). Proprietary child care developers are attempting to soothe their consciences and fill their pockets at the expense of the public and, explicitly, the needy.

Proprietary child care has the potential to substantially alleviate the need for additional facilities with the provision of quality day care programs. They have the capacity to bridge the gap between service provision and demand. The potential must, however, be made responsible to the child, not to the dollar. It will not happen automatically; a conscious effort must be made by the government, the public, and the proprietary providers themselves to safeguard the legitimacy of the endeavor. The effort requires a serious commitment to day care as a guaranteed

right, and to the provider as a socially accountable agent. Without this commitment, any attempts in the field of day care will remain inadequate and any hopes for the future of child care will be destroyed.

APPENDIX

Living and Learning Schools, Inc. is a large, multi-centered public corporation whose main office is located in Waltham, Massachusetts. Living and Learning is currently responsible for the operation of 12 child care programs and, as of this writing, has 13 more under construction. The corporation is one of the fastest growing child care concerns in the northeast area and, indeed, in the country as a whole. Living and Learning considers the optimal size for a program to be 130 children. "It's not too large for a single director to know the staff and students, but it's large enough to be economically feasible." The charge is \$32 for full day, full week care.

Pied Piper Care Centers, Inc., located in Cumberland, Rhode Island, currently operates one child care program in that city and has plans to expand operations and develop additional centers in the near future. Pied Piper is a stock holding corporation started in September 1969. An independent corporation, Pied Piper Realty, Inc., handles the construction aspect of the field and leases the buildings for the centers to the parent corporation. The corporation researched in full the idea of a franchise, but determined that program quality could not be adequately controlled in a franchised operation. Pied Piper considers 85 children to be the optimal number for one location. The center is opened from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and charges \$25 for full day, full week care. Day care "provides an important service to the community, but even more important is the service provided to the children of the community to meet their needs."

Educare Child Centres is a privately funded, closed corporation located in Wellesley, Massachusetts, which currently operates 5 child care programs. The company has a relatively flexible program design which they are able to adapt to the needs, the demands, and the peculiarities of a particular community. The optimal ideal size for a center thus ranges from 80 to 100 children. The centers are open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and the fees range from \$18 to \$32 depending on center location. Quality day care "is a necessity; it is essential for allowing mothers to work and/or to send their children to a quality facility without the stigma of 'getting rid of them'."

Little Shavers Day Care Centers was originally an independent child care corporation located in Florida and responsible for the operation of three child care centers. Controlling interest in the corporation was taken over by Avtec, a large Woonsocket, Rhode Island, based conglomerate. The programs in Florida now just pay lease to Avtex for their land, but no communication or program direction is involved in the association. The main office of Little Shavers is now located in Cranston, Rhode Island. The company currently operates a program in Woonsocket, and is negotiating to buy three additional centers in the state. The center, licensed to hold 75 children, is open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. and charges \$22 for full day, full week care. Day care is seen "to provide children of working families with a good educational and social environment."

Romper Room Schools, Inc., a division of Hasbro Industries of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, operates three child care programs in Rhode Island. Romper Room has also developed plans for the operation of centers in other areas of the country including

Michigan, Texas, Georgia, and Florida. The optimal size for a center is considered to be about 90 children. The centers are open from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and charge \$25 for full day, full week care. "Children are so vulnerable. Day care is more than a legal or public responsibility; it is a moral responsibility."

FOOTNOTES

1. Office of Planning and Program Coordination, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, "Day Care Planning in Massachusetts," Boston, March 1969, p. 3.
2. Martin Lowenthal, Work and Welfare: An Overview, Social Welfare Regional Research Institute, Boston, August 1971, p. 118.
3. The potential for utilization of quality day care facilities is far greater than even these figures indicate. It has been estimated that 90 percent of the children of working mothers are being cared for in their own homes by relatives, neighbors, older siblings, and so forth, and only 10 percent of the children of working mothers receive out-of-home care. In addition, 90 percent of the out-of-home child care is family day care, not group day care and only 10 percent of this care is licensed. (Edna Hughes, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D.C.)
4. It should be emphasized that "commitment" in this sense refers to the comprehensive establishment of meaningful and effective mechanisms by which these regulations can be enacted with a minimum of both monetary and temporal expense.
5. The most related program available is the Special Food Service Program for Children under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture. This program makes funds available for up to 75 percent of the cost of purchase or rental of portable kitchen equipment.
6. Small, single-unit proprietary operations are not a primary focus for the study although certain reliable generalities may be drawn.
7. Often translated in terms of the good guys versus the bad-- depending, of course, on which side you're on.
8. Alice Lake, "The Day-Care Business," McCall's, November 1970, p. 97.
9. It was commented that medical and dental associations have themselves made very strong objections to the provision of certain services within the centers. One director stated that, "The medical profession would 'place bombs in our buildings' because we would be stealing their patients."
10. The formulas developed for determining need for a center are generally appropriate only in a suburban, middle-class neighborhood; the formulas would lose their utility when applied to an urban, multi-class setting.
11. It is recognized, of course, that a mutual reinforcing process occurs. That is, the centers not only reflect the attitude of the community, they also help to shape it.
12. Patricia Gerald Bourne, "What Day Care Ought to Be," The New Republic, February 12, 1972, p. 19.

13. The drive to reduce the welfare rolls has become a legislative "cause celebre." The desired end has superceded any attempts to assure the basic rationality of the means. The fiscal reality of most work-fare legislation is denied, the human costs ignored. It is, perhaps, a perfect absurdity that the surge to reduce the welfare rolls continues virtually regardless of the cost.

14. Lowenthal, Op.Cit., p. 118.

15. Alice Lake, Op.Cit., p. 96.

16. Ann Cook and Herbert Mack, "Business in Education, the Discovery Center Hustle," Social Policy, Sept./Oct. 1970, p. 6.

17. The bill appeared to be a legitimate attempt to "provide every child with a fair and full opportunity to reach his full potential by establishing and expanding comprehensive child development programs" based on the Headstart experience.

18. The "comparison of efficiencies" between the non-profit and the proprietary center was discussed in the course of interviews with several proprietary day care directors. The profit making company, they stressed, was a business and being a business was more efficient and, thus, more capable than the non-profit center of maximizing returns on government expenditures. This is felt to be a most suspect assumption, if not actually contrary to reality. Non-profit child care programs are often forced to exercise the utmost efficiency in operation as their very means of survival. The profit aspect of a concern has little direct relationship to corporate efficiency.

19. In some instances the boast was actually more of a wail. The centers were proud of their independence, but jealous of the so-called advantage given to the non-profit centers by the government. The boast was a defence for honesty and integrity in the form of "at least we don't leech off the government for funds."

20. They are actually the same point. It is necessary to provide an attractive program to which parents will respond in order to realize a profit. The question, however, can get played out in different ways. Most centers feel the necessity to emphasize program services as they believe that only then will the public respond- and continue to respond- to the program. The investment in services will be repayed by public acceptance of the program. An opposing philosophy, on the other hand, places the emphasis on "capital goods" as a more reliable, responsible business venture. "An investor is more interested in investing in capital goods and equipment, not in services." A higher priority in this case is placed on equipment (tangible investment) than on services.

21. Martin Lowenthal, Op. Cit., p. 129.

22. Patricia Gerald Bourne, Op. Cit., p. 22.

23. It is not only the association of day care with franchise that is potentially damaging, but also the very nature of a proprietary outfit. Viewed as a whole organization and not by individual center, large-scale proprietary providers of child care are- by very definition- multi-centered, highly organized, relatively efficient operations. They do not inspire the immediate confidence awarded to small Mom and Pop type centers and to cooperative non-profit programs.

24. Paula Dranov, "All System Go in Experiment on Day Care for Children," Springfield Daily News, November 16, 1970.

25. Ibid.

26. It is not intended, again, to demean or to deny the very real advantages that are available as the result of participation in a quality child care program. The recommendation is not to eliminate beneficial components (social, educational, nutritional, and so on), but rather to view them in a realistic, meaningful perspective.

27. A promotional account for a chain of nationwide child care centers focused on the professionalism of their board of advisors. The professionalism advisor of physical development for the company is Bart Star of Green Bay Packer football fame. Mr. Star has "selected the equipment and physical exercises that will promote optimum muscular coordination and development of each stage of a child's growth." (National Franchise Reports, Chicago, December 1969). Mr. Star's ability as a quarterback has been well-documented and his fame deserved; his ability as an expert child-development specialist, however, has been a well-kept secret. No matter---- Bart Star is a professional.