

# Day care survey

## Ontario's first licenced co-operative day care centre must expand to meet the increasing needs of the York community

By RHONDA ROVAN

Two hundred and sixteen children would be using day-care facilities at York if they were available but only 40 are now enrolled at York's co-operative day care centre, according to a survey compiled by the parents at the centre.

Under the organization of Dr. Alan Simmons, a parent at the centre, the survey is part of a long range planning report.

Questionnaires were sent to 1,500 married students. Forty three per cent returned the surveys and of these, 25 per cent answered they have children.

Of the 800 questionnaires sent to faculty and staff, 56 per cent were returned of which 54 per cent said they had children.

The survey shows that 70 per cent of the children are between the ages of three months to five years. Altogether, there were 283 couples with a total of 314 children.

The second question the survey asked was, "What do you do with your children as far as day-care is concerned?" Of the 283 couples, 70 per cent have day to day care for their children in one form or another. In practically all cases both parents are not at home during the day because of work or school involvement.

### Centre popular

A third question put forward by the survey asked, "If there were day-care available at university would you enroll your child?" To this question, 216 answered, "Yes."

In organizing pre-school day-care facilities, there are three main types that can be established. Type one is the co-operative. This involves minimum staff, is economical and is run completely by the parents. The co-operative system is what presently exists at York. Once a week, the parent spends a half-day in the centre participating in the programme.

The second type is one in which the parents participate in a limited way in that there is a board of directors made up of parents. The parents direct the programme, but hire professional staff.

The third type of facility is a professional set-up from top to bottom where there is no parental involvement.

### Board concept favoured

In the survey, the parents were asked which system of the three they would prefer to enroll their child in if it were made available. 20 per cent answered in favour of the first, 35 per cent answered in favour of the second and 32 per cent were in favour of the third. 13 per cent were undecided.

Elody Scholz is an undergraduate at York and co-ordinator of the day-care programme. She would eventually like to see a variety of day-care centres on campus each run in the desired manner of the parents involved.

Scholz feels that if this situation existed, it would satisfy the needs of many parents who for one reason or another do not wish to enroll their child in a co-op.

"There are many mothers who work a 40 hour week who cannot possibly give their time in the centre. What they need is a system that does not require their participation," said Scholz.

This year's day-care programme has been quite successful. "The university has been extremely co-operative this year," Scholz said. It has spent \$5,000 in renovations and does not charge the centre for rent, a fee which would normally be \$3,600.

### Support from Becker & Small

The centre has been able to buy things through the university due to the support of John Becker, Assistant Vice President (Student Affairs) and Bill Small, Vice President (Administration).

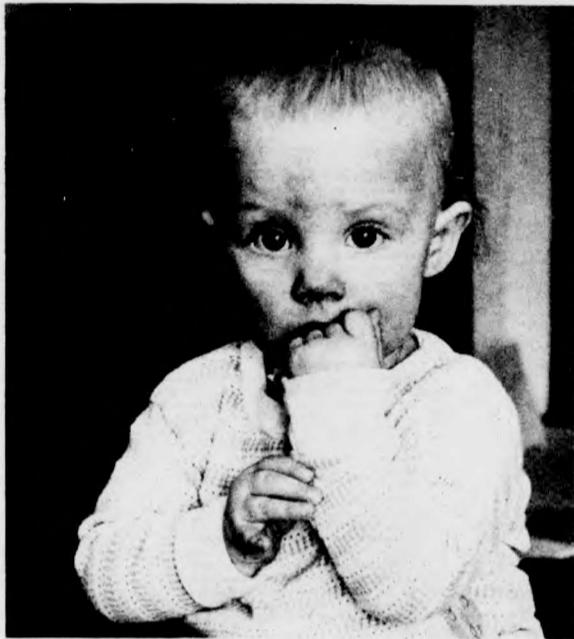


photo by Harry Kitz

"The biggest advantage of the co-operative is that it is so inexpensive," Scholz said. Present fees are \$45.00 a month full time and \$25.00 a month part time.

It costs the parent \$65.00 if he is unable to participate and must hire a student for the half-day.

Even though the co-operative is reasonable in fee, there are still some parents who cannot afford it. Scholz is optimistic about obtaining Fee for Services arrangement, in other words a subsidy, with the Borough of North York. A contract with the borough would pay a percentage of the fee for the parents who cannot afford it.

### Graduated fees favoured

Another suggestion Scholz mentioned is the possibility of a sliding scale in fees: the staff or faculty would pay more than the student. Scholz does not think that the present fee will be increased, next year.

One of the problems that the centre has to contend with is that the staff is only paid \$2.00 an hour. Scholz would like to see the staff paid more reasonably. A solution would be to increase maximum enrollment, but over-crowding has its obvious drawbacks. Another solution would be to have the university pay for things such as the centre's business phone and supplies. This would be a considerable financial help.

York's day-care centre is situated in the lobby of Graduate Residence 3. The centre also occupies three suites off the lobby. It is open week-days and stays open throughout the summer.

### Not many volunteers

There are four paid staff in the centre, three of them full time and the other part time. There are some student volunteers, but not as many as last year. "It's a drawback being so far away from the main campus area," said Scholz, "We just don't get many volunteers." The centre was located in Winters College last year where it was more accessible for students to drop in from time to time.

The main area or 'family room' of the centre is filled with a variety of toys and has ample room for the children to run around in. Here, the pre-schoolers of different ages play together. Off the main area on one side is the office and a suite of rooms for the infants. On the other side are rooms where the children carry out most of their creative activities of drawing and painting. There is also an assemblage of toilet-training pots in bladder-inspiring psychedilia. The parents build all the miniature-proportioned furniture for the children.

York's day-care centre is the first co-operative nursery to become licenced under the Ontario Day Nurseries Act. At its formation in 1969, the centre was run by three women's liberationists in Winters College. Eventually, the centre had to comply with pressure from the university to become licenced.

### Clean environment

"When we grew bigger and moved location, we had to forfeit some of the original concepts," said Scholz. She added, "The most important thing is that the children enjoy themselves in a clean, stimulating environment."

The children play in a relatively unstructured atmosphere where free expression and creativity are stressed. The centre has a non-authoritarian attitude and there is never any physical punishment invoked. Future plans hold the possibility of a co-op in College F for 1972 and perhaps a new centre in the future Graduate Residence 4.

The day-care centre is a necessary commodity of a university community and the present success of York's centre leaves optimistic hope for new centres on campus in the future. Maria Dewit, a parent at York's co-op expressed her appreciation when she said, "It's the best thing that ever happened to me."

# AGYU

ART GALLERY OF YORK UNIVERSITY

Ross Building N.145 Mondays - Fridays 11 - 5

LIGHT AND  
MOVEMENT

CANADIAN AND  
INTERNATIONAL  
ARTISTS

Extended to  
March 19

ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO

317 Dundas St. W., Toronto

Tel. 363-3485

Tonight, 8:30 p.m.

Dissolution of Dada  
and Survival of Duchamp

a lecture by George Heard Hamilton, Director, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Mass.

The lecture will be held at the Ontario College of Art,  
100 McCaul Street. Student admission: \$1.25