



## The "Daycare Report" from Becker, Keeley, and Anderson

# A confusing report meant to stall York's responsibilities

### Introduction

During 1969-70 a co-operative daycare centre was opened in Winters College under the loose sponsorship of that college Council and deriving much of its leadership from students and non-students active in the Women's Liberation Movement.

It occupied two rooms on the basement level, south end of the office wing of the college. It was not licensed by the Department of Family and Social Services of the Government of Ontario and did not employ any trained staff as specified under the law.

The college requested that they relocate in the summer of 1970 and after some difficulty alternative space was made available in three first floor apartments and the lobby of the Graduate Student Residence No. 3. Suitable changes in the design of the area were made and the health department, fire marshall and day nursery regulations were adhered to.

At the same time the leadership of the centre changed, licensing applications were submitted and the re-housed, staffed and licensed centre opened for operation in October of 1970. It is licensed for 45 children, between 3 months and 5 years of age and caters to the offspring of students, staff and faculty.

Current operations may be summarized as follows:

Fee levels —	
Participating parent (4 hrs min/wk)	\$55 per month
Non-participating parent	\$85 per month
Part-time (participating only; less than 20 hrs/wk)	\$35 per month
Fee for each additional child	1/2 fee

**Fee subsidies:** Under agreement with Metro Toronto, about 12 families (representing 15 children) who qualify under Metro means test criteria, have a reduced fee paid by Metro. This represents about 30 percent of the total revenue.

**Total population:** 44 children representing 40.5 full-time equivalents.

**Average fee revenue per FTE child including fees from Metro (Oct. 71) — \$54.00.**

**Costs**  
 Capital Expended by Centre (exclusive of University costs) \$49 per child  
 Operating Costs of \$5.00 per child per day  
 77 percent staff wages (6 full time)  
 14 percent food and health care  
 5 percent maintenance, laundry, phone  
 4 percent art and office supplies, depreciation allowance  
 100 percent

**Monthly Costs per FTE child approximately \$105.00**

Volunteers (participating parents) supply additional support of approximately 34 persons x 4 hours per week or 136 hours per week

#### Schedule

5 days per week for 47 weeks a year (closed in August)

#### Participation

All of the 38 family units served have at least one parent who is student, staff or faculty member of the University. Eight families have single parents (mothers).

There are a total of 66 parents represented by the 40.5 FTE children and they may be categorized as:

Students	29
Staff	11
Faculty	10
Spouses of the above not associated with the University	16
	66

For September 1971 approximately 100 parents applied whose children could not be accommodated. Many others might have applied if applications had not been closed off.

### Day Care in Metro

The priorities for enrolling a child in a municipally run daycare centre are:

a) children of a single parent family where the annual income is inadequate to pay the total cost

of day care and still provide an adequate standard of living.

b) where there are two parents but their combined income is inadequate to provide a reasonable standard of living and pay for the total cost of day care.

c) whenever children require special emotional or social needs that can be provided by day care.

care facilities. Unfortunately the survey does not indicate whether or not there are day care centers located closer to the respondents' homes which according to municipal reasoning would fulfill day care needs better because it minimizes the dislocation of children from their home environs.

For September of 1971, the campus day care centre received about 100 applications from

television and film equipment, etc., with almost any size of group of children. Given the large number of students who might be involved, the children would have to be on campus to permit easy access and frequent shift changes of the student observers. (Note: There are now about 500 course registrations in the first course on child development.)

b) Research operations could not be carried out satisfactorily without a reservoir of subjects of at least 150 children who might be rotated through specialized facilities in small groups for a few weeks each year or, alternatively, used as subjects in a centralized research facility adjacent to the day care centre itself.

While both of these types of activities may be possible to limited degrees in off-campus locations, the department has not mounted any concerted effort to negotiate the necessary arrangements in a comprehensive way. Not only is the interest in these areas relatively new but a myriad of off-campus arrangements are difficult to achieve and maintain without the commitment of significant resources.

With regard to the facilities on the fourth floor of the Behavioral Sciences Building which were designed originally to support some of these functions, the view now is:

a) the capacity of the space (30 children) would be alright for observational purposes but would not be adequate for research unless children were rotated through thereby giving the researcher, over a one year period, a larger group from which data could be collected;

b) the investment in specialized facilities is very modest;

c) certain renovations, most notably washroom facilities, would be required;

d) there is some question about the ability to license a fourth floor space for daycare operations. (A statement was made in 1970 when we were trying to relocate the centre, that ground floor space with immediate access to play area was required.)

In light of these factors and because the space can harmoniously accommodate other functions such as offices, it is suggested that these facilities not be considered as germane to the central question of delivering daycare services to members of the York community.

The chairman of psychology, Malcolm Westcott, suggested that the provision of these academic options would be sufficiently attractive that some financial responsibility for operating expenses could be assumed by the department. It would also be highly desirable, if not critical, that at least some of the staff be specially selected and trained by the department to ensure that the academic

### Operation

Comparison — Metropolitan Toronto Daycare and Private Daycare Centres:

Item	Metro	Private
Number of centres	23	85 with Metro agreement
Number of children	1,400	1,300 with Metro subsidy
Fee	\$5 per day per family up to \$4.75	\$3.00-10, per day up to \$10.00 per child
Fee subsidy	\$7.50-7.85 per day per child	N.A.
Costs	\$0.25 per day	\$0.25 per day
Minimum Fee Paid by Family	80 percent paid by Province	United Fund/private enterprise
Operating subsidy on costs of the day care operations on costs not covered by fees received.	80 percent from the Province	
Future Capital Subsidy	7:30 am - 6:30 pm Children aged 6 mo. - 10 yrs	None
Vacancies (Fall '71)	1 1/2 meals per day	500
Services	Before-After school for school aged children and during school holidays	Pre-School 7:30 am - 6:30 pm

- 85 percent of the families pay the minimum fee of 25 cents per day.

- less than one percent pay the maximum municipal fee of \$5 per day.

- seven to eight Metro Day Care Centres to be completed in 1972 which will increase capacity to 3,000 including private day care centres under Metropolitan Agreement.

- Children should live near the day care centre assigned to.

- No vacancies in Metropolitan Day Care Centres and few vacancies in private centres.

### Metro and York

Metro would be interested in a joint venture with York University on capital and operating costs sharing basis. York's portion of this centre would have to be privately funded as York cannot be recognized as a municipality except by the provincial minister of social and family services, Thomas Wells. If the centre were to be funded by the province through Metro, Metro would want administrative control of the centre, even with a land lease agreement and the funding of the building by Metro.

A daycare centre, integrated and yet shared by Metro and York is a feasible alternative. Operating subsidy formulae are available for use in determining pro rata shares of costs. There are no problems envisaged if children are assigned to the day care centre rather than to either the Metro or York sector; this arrangement allowing more freedom to both groups in their desire to provide what is best for any child. Some conflict would arise with the age differential as York envisages a pre-school day care centre and Metro provides before and after school care for children between five and 10 (that is, school age up to the age of 10 years).

Negotiations between the two parties to cover areas such as insurance, administration, division of space, cross-appointments of children, academic involvement of York personnel, research, etc., will be necessary before a firm commitment by either party can be solicited.

Wells, minister of social and family services announced on Oct. 14, 1971, the availability of \$10 million for building day care centres in municipalities. Before the deadline of Jan. 1, 1972, all of this money and more had been applied for by municipalities indicating a provincial demand for day care in excess of government projections despite the relative newness of the concept of government day care operations. If it can be assumed all municipalities are gauging their building requirements on present and future demand for day care then this field is expanding quite rapidly and the assumption can be applied to any communities including Universities.

### Market

York's co-operative day care centre staff did a market study, the results of which indicate about 200 families would be willing to use on-campus day

parents requiring day care for their children. The priorities of the centre meant children already placed in the centre during the summer months would not be displaced, and the list of applications would be serviced in the order received. Needless to say, applications exceeded vacancies and with additional applications continuing to arrive as students returned to campus, this situation became aggravated.

However, the current waiting list is difficult to estimate as few parents, if any, are pestering the centre with continued pleas for service, indicating that most parents have found alternative solutions, however satisfactory they may be.

### Subsidized fee

The York daycare centre is currently responsible for 15 children whose parents receive fee subsidization from Metro. The majority of these parents are students with the remainder being staff. In addition to this, there may be students utilizing day care centre facilities who receive a subsidy for these costs through the provincial student awards program. George Fontaine of Student Awards believes this latter group to be negligible.

With York considering the construction of undergraduate and graduate housing more suitable for family usage (e.g. Calumet College proposal of town houses), then a larger group of students being married with dependents and living at York is a distinct possibility. Given this premise, the only assumption to be made is that the number of parents receiving fee subsidies, living on campus and requesting day care facilities will grow.

No University policy has been issued stating whether or not future residence accommodations will include units suitable for families. However, since family units already dwell in the graduate student residences, it is not unreasonable to assume the future day care needs of families living on campus will be greater in the future.

### Faculty of Education

There is significant and growing interest in psychology department offerings in child development and related fields and an awareness that these courses should be expanded in quality and number of offerings to include practicum and observational opportunities for the students. In addition certain types of research can only be conducted with children "on site" and day care operations might provide opportunities of this sort as well.

While no thorough design work has been undertaken within the psychology department as yet, a few general biases can be stated about such academic programs:

a) practicum and observational programs can be conducted, given modest provision of certain facilities such as one way vision mirrors,

program could be delivered to the students and the researchers.

Ideally, the academic aims of the department could be best served by a large centralized operation (minimum of 150 children) located within a 10 minute walk of the Behavioural Sciences Building and equipped with observational and research space.

The department would in all likelihood continue to expand its relations with outside agencies in order to enjoy more heterogeneous child populations and a broader age range.

The interest of the new faculty of education in academic programs involving predominately pre-schoolers is open only to speculation. It is conceivable that there would be some modest requirement in the long run. In the short run, however, the interests of the psychology department may be considered as the only legitimate ones to be served.

### Joint financing

Metro Toronto daycare centres in some cases are already sharing facilities with other uses and this has resulted in a method of sharing building costs (both operating and capital) of the operation of a day care centre. This method of financing their section of any joint venture York and Metro may enter would seem appropriate and could be applied even if facilities such as kitchens and offices are shared.

Capital costs would have to be borne in proportion by participating parties. Metro Toronto, upon agreeing to a joint operation would finance their sector using public funds provided provincially and municipally. York, however, would have to finance its portion of the centre privately as the centre itself is not academic and the University cannot obtain financing from the Minister of Social and Family Services.

Metro Toronto's interest in constructing additional facilities in this area of the city would be premised on only those parents entitled to fee subsidization. They are not catering in their own operations to families who do not qualify under their means test criterion.

Should York University decide to utilize any day care facilities as a research and/or instructional center additional financing becomes involved. The need for classroom space, observation rooms and research space means additional capital, overhead and operating costs which should not be borne by the daycare centre but by the academic areas deriving direct benefit. It may be assumed the cost of this academic space should be treated in the same manner as other academic space on campus for capital and operating costs.

York can operate a daycare centre as a fully, partially or non-subsidized basis. The current operation on campus is subsidized to the extent of space being rent-free, and no charges for hydro, heat or water and maintenance or repair costs. Otherwise, the day care centre is geared to break-even (accepting that there may be some additional subsidization from Student Councils).

### Student aid

There are two sources of aid for the payment of day care fees. Metropolitan Toronto will pay Fee for Service (FFS) for those parents whose combined income is insufficient to afford day care. This is basically a welfare evaluation by the municipality.

Under the Ontario Student Aid Program (OSAP) there is an allowance for baby sitting or day care service as a cost of attending University. This section of OSAP is applicable when there are two parents with children attending York full time. A single parent is assessed under the OSAP category of Special Consideration.

Through cross-references, students will receive aid where needed from only one of the two available sources.

### Summary

The needs, as against the convenience, of members of this community for on-site day care service are very difficult to assess and relate most closely to the type of residential accommodation which is and may be available on the campus. Another group living remote from York may also have a need for this service but the advisability of encouraging these parents to bring their children sometimes long distances to the campus appears questionable. They probably should relate to local community services where the child will develop relationships which will extend into normal school environments.

The capital cost of a facility for 150 children on this campus would be between \$275,000 and \$464,000. Alternatively this sum might be used to produce bursaries for daycare services for needy parents. Between 18 and 30 children could enjoy 100 percent subsidy for 9 months of the year on the earned interest.

The academic significance of the facility is less nebulous than the service aspect given the difficulty of assessing the true market. The needs of the Psychology Department should be refined and documented more thoroughly than has been possible to date. We should determine whether their needs may be harmoniously married with a service agency and what scale of operation they foresee as necessary to support their programs.

## Day care report ignores real issue

By MARILYN SMITH

When president David Slater agreed to set up a daycare task force, fund finding was seen as the priority issue. There wasn't any question about the demand for daycare facilities. The 100-name waiting list in September proved that.

Now there are 16 children waiting to get into the centre and 10 on the list for next year. One parent co-ordinator in charge of enrolments reports three and four calls every night enquiring about the daycare facilities.

Some students, like those at Atkinson College, have a greater need for daycare facilities because more students are parents who come back to school. Yet at no point does the report talk about the vital daycare needs of daytime Atkinson students. Provision of adequate daycare is necessary to the health of Atkinson.

The big controversy in the report is the suggestion that York align itself with Metro to provide daycare facilities in a new and jointly-built centre. If York and Metro amalgamate, Metro would be the administrator. The centre would move out of the control of the parents and the York community. The best solution is to have, as the report suggests, a free-standing operation — without even university interference; the worst solution, a Metro-administered centre.

The Metro operation, while catering only to low income families, is a service operation. Although some demand has been expressed for service type daycare at York, the beauty of the York approach has always been its stress on the co-operative element of daycare where parents formulate policy and work their shift in the centre.

Should some parents require a service type of daycare, subsidy from Metro is always available, if the parents fall within the means

criterion set out by Metro. A York service daycare centre is one of the expansion projects proposed in the daycare's report of last spring.

Actual capital costs for building the new centre are the problem. Access to provincial funds is through the municipality only. Ten million dollars is slated for daycare in the new winter works program.

Other alternatives are private donors, federal funds and as yet unexplored but existing possibilities. This is primarily where the report fails, daycare spokesmen accuse. The task force should have exhausted funding possibilities instead of opting out for the convenient answer of standardized, institutionalized Metro daycare.

The references to the availability of off-campus daycare are misleading. Only two centres are located close to York. Spaces are scarce and costly. At \$55 per month per child, the York Centre is a relative bargain compared to private centres that cost between \$90 and \$300 a month.

The argument about situating a child in a daycare centre in his neighbourhood for the sake of continuing ties to be carried on to school age, is not really applicable to the York situation.

Students, in the university for a few years, are especially transient and may end up anywhere after completing their studies. Recent figures released by the Family Allowance people show the average Canadian family moves every four years.

In a survey conducted last spring by the daycare centre, one question was "would transporting your child to and from a campus-located daycare facility be a major problem to you?" Over three quarters of the respondents said no. The campus-located daycare centre has the special advantage of

convenience. Place of work or study is nearby and a parent can participate in the centre and drop in to see the child during the day.

The total lack of imagination in projecting what the academic resource possibilities are for a daycare centre is another negative spot in this sullied report. Sir George Williams University in Montreal has a \$50,000 daycare centre with a special resource function for early childhood education studies. Surely the behavioral sciences and the faculty of education can be expected to find scope for their projects in a centre designed to best serve the children but permit observation.

The possibilities of academic value in the daycare centre also provide other funding routes. With faculties like psychology there are many big chiefs with large study grants who might find the resources they needed if a proper daycare centre was available.

The suggestion that the \$300,000 it would take to build a centre for 150 children be turned to the production of bursaries to support 18 to 30 children is ridiculous.

Daycare is no notion of convenience or a passing mode. It is a hard core and widespread need, that is only now finally being recognized.

York psychology professor Esther Greenglass, in her work on the Liberal party task force on implementing demands of the Royal Report on the Status of Women says, "everywhere we went, daycare was the recommendation most frequently mentioned. There was virtual unanimity for the establishment of daycare centres in Canada."

The York task force report wasted a lot of valuable time in not accepting that consensus view. The report needs to be revised, with a concrete vision of moving daycare from its present shaky status to established permanence in the York community by means of adequate funding.