

dilemma: is there a solution?

by the Co-op eight hour day, from 9 AM. She is a former junior high teacher, and has had no formal pre-school educational experience.

She is sometimes by at least one volunteer from the Co-op. Not all volunteers mind the children, some fathers do as well. Some volunteers work half-days from 9 AM to 1 PM, or from 1 PM to 5 PM. The hours meet to ensure that three people are present to feed the children, whom are too young to feed themselves.

The Centre has reasonable rates, with special rates for parents who do volunteer work. Fee plans are: 1) \$48/week for parents who cannot volunteer; 2) \$30/week for parents who can put in one hour per week; and 3) \$10 if the parent puts in two half days per week. Parents are currently doing the work for the Centre.

The Centre is operating for some time now. This is the first year that it is in coordination. Previously, it was run entirely by the parents, but now Mrs. Wong directs and coordinates the activities of the Centre.

At present, 14 children are in the Day Care Centre, ranging in age from one to five years of age. Most of them are young, and only 4 of them are three years of age or older. Mrs. Wong has limited the Centre to 14, although there are at least two other Co-op children who want to put their children in the Day

Care Centre is operated only for the benefit of Co-op parents.

The younger children learn to play together, sharing the toys instead of hogging them. The older children are taught to count, to tell time, and to recognize the letters of the alphabet. The babies have a special room in which they can nap on foam mats placed on the floor.

The rooms in the Centre are each given a special function. The largest is used as the workroom. In it, the children have small benches and tables to sit at, and all kinds of small toys to play with.

Here they learn to tell time, draw, paint, etc. There is also a couple of TV's for them to watch in this room. In another room all the riding toys are kept. The Centre has 3 or 4 types of different vehicles to ride on, and the children must come to this room to use them. As previously mentioned, the babies have their own room. In this room are kept all the smallest toys for them to play with.

The Centre is cleaned by the parents who have children in the Centre. It is done by a family, one night at a time, or maybe a week at a time. All the parents must do this. The Centre gets pretty messy during the run of a day - crumbs on floor, toys scattered, etc., so these parents have a lot of cleaning to do.

There is talk of building a new Co-op building with a proper Day Care Centre built into it but until then, the Centre will stay where it is. Mrs. Wong would like to have the workroom enlarged, but since the apartment will be used again as an apartment once the Day Care Centre moves, the walls cannot be knocked out to enlarge the rooms.

She says that the facilities available to her are adequate for the present, but that several things are needed - more children-size tables and chairs, a playpen, arts supplies, a mop, kitchen ware, and towels and face cloths. The Parents Committee tries to get people to donate the things needed by the Centre. They generally know the people who can donate, or where donations may be found.

Mrs. Wong says she could fill the nursery with young babies because that's where the greatest demand is.

She envisages the Centre splitting into two sections, one to care for the babies, and the other to care for the older children.



Photo by Bob Boyes

Senate may soon decide centre's fate

BY ROY NEALE

The coming Senate meeting may well decide the fate of Pre-school training in Fredericton. At stake is about \$40,000 in the form of backing a mortgage. A new building, located on land owned by UNB would be part of an answer to the problem. The final solution lies deeper than that. In other provinces and at other universities the centres are funded by the governments on local provincial and federal levels.

Those funds insure that qualified and fully reliable help is available at a reduced fee. There should not be any discrimination on the basis of the level of wealth. In the past some students and working mothers from Fredericton have

had the Pre-school Centre priced out of their range. In the case of foreign students this exclusion has been keenly felt.

Although the Senate can not do the whole thing, it can make sure that six years of experience is not scattered to the winds. The provincial government, although sympathetic to the problem has not enacted any legislation to keep this vital community service out of the hands of unqualified profiteers. Should the Pre-school Centre disappear all that remained in Fredericton would be the profiteers. A small step is needed for this not to happen. The Senate holds the future of a vital civic service in its grasp.

Both Roy Neale and Roland Morrison are BRUNSWICKAN staffers.

Photo by Bob Boyes