



Photo by DAVID LEACH

using the centre as a resource centre for the social sciences. New facilities could be built with observation facilities so as not to constantly disrupt the children.

Atkinson College, York's shining example of continuing education, implicitly demands adequate facilities on campus if it is to cater to the adult who is studying and raising a family at the same time.

*Daycare is a necessity*

With the outgrowth of benefits from a daycare centre for a wide segment of the York community, the case for adequate daycare facilities becomes more than an issue of convenience. It becomes a necessity.

Of course, one vital aspect in the whole case will be the provincial government's willingness to back up their campaign promises of increased daycare spending. Currently, government subsidies can be found for daycare spending.

The government's Day Nurseries Branch controls rather rigidly the operation of any provincial daycare centre. It is under their definition that staff gain their qualified label. Mostly, the branch plugs graduates of Mothercraft, a one year course that can be taken after grade 13. The York centre ran into some opposition with this bias when they hired an infants specialist who was a mother and graduate of a three year child course at Centennial over a Mothercraft graduate. The branch finally agreed to the centre's choice.

Then there is the hot lunch rule. Every child must receive a hot lunch at noon. They cannot bring what their parents would like them to eat from home. The centre pays 50 cents a child each day to Versafood.

"They send something over in a pot", says one mother. The added expense for the centre is substantial.

*Government relations good*

But generally, the centre claims they have good relations with the branch. "We can usually bring them around to our way of thinking," says co-ordinator Jean Simmons.

The recent emphasis on daycare makes York's scheme a pilot project. They have chosen to abide with the regulatory approach of the Day Nurseries Branch. The Sussex St. Daycare Centre at the University of Toronto is fighting the branch in court right now. They claim their rights as parents override those of the branch.

The Sussex St. centre has refused to hire branch qualified personnel, saying the staff they have has the capabilities, and the trust and confidence of the parents and children. Their claim is that the branch should function as an advisory board to co-operative centres, but that the decisions and regulations should be made by the community involved in the daycare centre.

*The cooperative is best*

For York, the situation is one of playing with the rules, and yet struggling for vested interests and concerns. Developments over the next few years will be a struggle against institutionalizing daycare. It's the co-operative element that breeds a quality environment for kids.

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