

Day Care Center Opens in Fall

The need for day care and the ability to pay will be the prime considerations of a Students' Union day care centre which will open this fall.

The idea of a campus day care centre on campus was first seriously considered in 1969 when the University administration planned to construct an \$86,000 Centre for 40 to 45 children. The Universities Commission, however, turned down the plan. "Having examined the serious shortage of space facing the University in the next four years, government policy against the implementation of enrollment limitations, and current policy concerning capital grants for general student and staff needs or desires, I could not recommend including space for a day care centre in the space formula for a few years," wrote J.R. Jones Capital Planning officer of the Commission. The project was not dead by any means; in May 1971 the Students' Union Day Care Centre was set up by Secretary Vera Radio.

There definitely appears to be



Photo Vic Post
A day care center supervisor giving instruction on rhythm instruments.

a need for a day care centre on campus. Since 1966-67 the number of full-time married students increased by 140 percent while the full-time enrollment increased by 60 percent. Married students comprise 27 percent of the 1971-72 university enrollment.

Lynne Vander Voet, chairman of the Day Care Commission and a single parent herself spoke for many parents when she said that she had to go to university to advance herself financially and to avoid the psychological damage of staying at home. To some divorced parents and unwed mothers university is a way of maintaining self respect working to get off welfare. "Welfare is punitive, not preventative," said Vander Voet.

The Commission feels that day care should be a positive

influence during the child's crucial and formative years. It will attempt to give the child experiences to meet his social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs. Day care should be an enrichment, not a substitute to family life. "The prime consideration in our day care centre will be the child," said Radio, "There are a number of private day care centres in the city which are not concerned about the quality aspect of day care and in this situation, day care may not even be a neutral influence but may become detrimental."

The day care centre, which will be located on the ground floor of the Students' Union Housing project (HUB) at 112 St. and 89 Ave., will provide child care for 60 children between the ages of three and six. The centre will occupy 5,500 sq. ft. and will have three playrooms, a kitchen and office.

Six thousand sq. ft. of space has been allotted for a playground. The Students' Union has allocated interest-free loans of

operating the centre is \$110 per child per month including parental fees the Edmonton City Council has agreed to subsidize the centre for up to \$100 per child per month pending approval by the provincial government. "The Progressive Conservative government gave its support to the concept of day care before its election" said Radio. "The provincial department of Health and Social Welfare has put a freeze on major decisions now, but we hope to hear from them in December". When government is received the city will contribute 20 percent of the total subsidy, the province will contribute 40 percent, and the federal government another 40 percent. Fees for day care centre will be assessed on a sliding scale depending on parental income. It will operate on a break-even basis. The operating cost of a city subsidized centre is considerably higher because there are additional standards to meet.

Howard Clofford, director of day care in Edmonton, said that centre besides being open to the community will have the added advantage of accessibility of a building and the availability of help from the university. He said an attempt will be made to maintain a healthy balance between student and community use so that children do not react with a homogeneous group.

Admission priorities give first preference to children from

single parent families where the parent is at university. Second priority is given to children from homes where one parent must work to allow the continued

Contact Lynne Vander Voet 432-4236 for further information.

"One centre for 60 students will not begin to meet campus



Photo Vic Post
Children making use of the outdoor facilities provided.

education of the other. In addition, a number of spaces will be reserved for children from the nearby community. This condition has to be fulfilled in order to receive the subsidy.

Applications for enrollment will be available from Room 259D SUB the end of January.

needs but it is a start" said Vander Voet. "Perhaps other concerned people could direct their energies toward the establishment of more day care centres in the university community."

by David Chan

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