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ABSTRACT

            Recent studies suggest that with more and more
children in the United States being placed in day care centers,
families are likely to become less powerful as agents of
socialization. In this paper, eight value-laden areas of possible
differences between staff members and parents concerning the process
of child socialization are identified. These areas are discipline,
sex role learning, aggression, parental relation, racial tolerance, religion,
self-direction versus conformity, academic emphasis, and sex
education. Issues involved in these areas are briefly described and
relevant research studies are cited when available. Recommendations
for parents and day care workers are offered to encourage dialogue in
these areas so as to increase the amount of consistency between homes
and day care centers. Recommendations for further research in the
area of parent/caregiver relationships are also suggested.
(Author/MP)

Values and child rearing in the

home and day care center:

Issues for the 1980's

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Abstract

With more and more children in the United States being placed in day care centers, it is likely that families will become less powerful as agents of socialization. In this paper, eight value-laden areas of socialization are examined (discipline, sex-role learning, aggressive behavior, racial tolerance, religion, conformity, academic emphasis, and sex education).

Recommendations for parents and day care workers are offered to encourage dialogue in these areas so as to increase the amount of consistency in childrearing between homes and day care centers.

At a recent parent meeting, I asked one of our mothers what she thought of day care. Her response was puzzling and ambivalent. She was grateful to have found a slot for her child in our well-staffed university sponsored center; but she commented sadly, "Johnny's first word was 'Donna'." Donna is the day care teacher's name.

Is this the first step down the road toward the loss of this day care parents' ability to function as the primary agent of socialization for her own child?

In a major review of literature on the effects of day care on children, Belsky and Steinberg (1978) arrived at two types of conclusions. First, they observed that in studies in which children enrolled in high-quality day care centers were contrasted with home-reared children on measures of intellectual, social, and emotional development, no major differences as a function of the childrearing environment were evident. Second, they noted that many other meaningful questions concerning the broader impact of day care on children and their families have not been asked. These unknowns in the day care equasion included the topics of the present paper: are socialization aims and practices (which are derived from the adults' values) consistent across home and day care environments? If not, how does this inconsistency influence the child's development? And, relatedly, are parents with children in day care as potent as agents of socialization as are parents rearing their children at home?

There have been very few studies addressed to these important issues.

A study by Elardo and Caldwell (1973) arose out of a debate among staff members of Little Rock's Kramer Project (Elardo and Caldwell, 1974). This was a federally funded attempt to offer day care in a public school setting, beginning with infants as young as six months of age. The project staff were primarily white and middle class; the clients were primarily black and poor.

Several staff member: _ ame _ _ after examini_ articles by Stroufe
(1970) and Gr_ 197_ _hat _h_ _ be promoting _ white, midd_e-class
model of appr_ ate _ _ _io: _ _ nsmitting the _ultural _atte _ _
the dominant m_ e- _a _ _ _ _ they questioned _he jus_ifia_l_ of
such transmissi_ _ you_ _ _ _ of other social and ethnic grou_ _.

Other auth_ _ties a_ _ _ _ _ _ time (the early 1970's) cha____ _d
the notion that _ _ld car_ _ _ _ _ _er_ imposing alien _lues upon the
clients (Bee, S_ _ssgr_ _, Va_ _em_. Leckie, & Nyman. 1971; Medi_nus, 1_7_
and Levenstein, _ _71). T_ _ _ _ _ _ _d_ after questioning small groups _ lc
income mothers wi_ chi_ _ _ _ _ ed in their early intervention progra_ _
that differing s_ _al an_ _ _ _ oups were largely in _armony as far as
their values rega___ing _ _ _ _ _ _d child care were con_erned. For exa_ le,
Levenstein reported tha_ _ _re _ _ half of the 35 mothers in her progra_ wanted
their children to g_ to c_l_ege, _ _d Medinnus reported that his parents said
_hat they valued _ adin_ _writin_ and speaking clearly.

Both Horne_ _ _977) _ _d _ _ _ _ _d Clarke-Stewart (1973) assume th_
latter belief - _ _t v_ _ _ _ cons__a_ce rather than dissonance is the m_ re valid
portrayal of t_ _ _ lati_nship be_ween providers and consumers of day _ re.
Fein and Clark_ _ _ _ar_ _efer to the work of Kohn (1959) in reaching _ _ir
opinion that

"Evidence _ _ _ _sts _hat there is a common core of basic human va_ _s that
all subcult_ral _r_ _s embrace. Happiness, honesty, consideration, o_ _ _ence,
dependability, mann_—_, self c_ntrol, popularity, neatness, and cleanl__ _s are
all valued to a _ _ea_ _ or lesser extent in all social classes (Fein & C_ _rke-
Stewart, 1973, p. _70)_

Butler (1973) asked the question "Early Childhood Education: suppl_ment
or threat to the h_ _e?" In her opinion, when an early childhood progra_ is

_sed on values different from those of _ home, a potential threat to the
_mily can exit. The primar sources _ such a conflict wer_ said to _ie
_ certain conflicting cul_ _a_ values _ial classes _d _eligious
_ _ps to which teachers _ _amilies b__. It is ofte_ _he case that within
home, the paren_ or p_r _s have ne_ _ _xamined the__ own values and
ls, nor those th ho_ _r their chi__ (_ _on, Howe, _ _irschenbaum, 1972).
Gecas (1976) s_ __0 families _ t _tate of Washington and con-
__uded that some pa_ _ _ __d their soci__ __on function a difficult one.
_enty-five percent _es and 16 percent _ husbands said that they
_equently worried _ _ _ir role as a soc_a_ization agent. Gecas found that
__sbands and wives _q_ __y disagreed on _ _ children s_uld be taught, and
c_ what methods we _c_ __table. This _ highlighted the fact that parents
c_ _n find that t_ _ own _a_ue conflicts _rought to the surface as they
_empt to reach c__ _re_r_ing decisions.

Clarke-Stewar _1977) in a review of _esearch on child care in the family,
n_ted that there a _ _ifferences in parent _ values and attitudes toward child
c_re that are rela-_d to their membership _n a cultural group. She pointed out
t_at such differences are unfo_ _nately no_ yet clearly articulated in the
r_search literature on child development.

As the result of my experience as director of The University of Iowa's
Early Childhood Education Center, which is a day care center in which children
from infancy through age 5 attend for 10 hours a day, I have identified staff
members and parents. These fall under the headings of: 1) DISCIPLINE,
2) SEX ROLE LEARNING, 3) AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR, 4) RACIAL TOLERANCE, 5) RELIGION,
6) SELF-DIRECTION VS. CONFORMITY, 7) ACADEMIC EMPHASIS, and 8) SEX EDUCATION.

I will now discuss each of these areas and describe the issues involved
and cite relevant research when it is available.

AREA	ISSUES	STUDIES
1. Discipline	What is the right amount of strictness or permissiveness? Is physical punishment to be used?	Research shows that parents' approaches to discipline are related to their social class. (Deutsch, 1973). Lower class parents more often rely on physical punishment and appeals to power, middle class parents more often rely on verbal reasoning and appeals to the child's sense of justice.
2. Sex Role Learning	With regard to value conflicts in the area of sex role learning, Hess and Croft (1972) offered the example of a teacher who separated two boys who were fighting with wooden blocks, sending one boy outside to play ball and another to the housekeeping corner. The latter boy's parents wanted to know why their son was told to play house with the girls - they weren't about to let anyone make a "sissy" of their son. What are the appropriate sex roles for young children to learn? Should boys be allowed to paint their fingernails and try on dresses? Should staff members encourage girls who do not play with trucks and other mechanical objects to do so?	
3. Aggressive Behavior	How much aggressive behavior should the staff allow?	One major finding of the Elardo and Caldwell (1973) study was that the predominately lower-class sample of parents believed that young children should be aggressive and fight at the Center, so that others would not think they were sissies or cowards. The staff did not agree.

4. Racial Tolerance

    Should Center serve as a place to teach children to respect children of other racial backgrounds?

    What if certain parents say not to allow their child to play with others of a certain race?

5. Religion

    What position should Center take regarding the celebration of religious beliefs other than those represented by the parents?

6. Conformity

    How independent should children be encouraged to be?

    Winetsky (1978) found that middle-class teachers and parents shared a high preference for self-direction on the part of young children, in contrast to the preferences of working-class parents whose behavioral expectations for children emphasized conformity.

    Rubenstein and Howes (1979) found that mothers were more restrictive than the child care staff.

7. Academic Emphasis

    How much of an emphasis on structured, teacher-centered "lessons" should occur at a Center?

    Can there be too much "free play?"

    Child care workers may perceive their role differently than parents see them. Instead of being a structured, authority figure, child care workers often fuction as facilitators or "helpers."

    Hess, Price, Dickson and Conroy (in press) found that mothers taught in a style that was more direct, demanding and explicit than did pre-school teachers.

8. Sex Education

    Should Centers have separate toilet facilities for boys and girls?

    Should sexual exploration be encouraged?

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENTS AND STAFF MEMBERS

Clarke-Stewart (1977) concluded that child care center policies should
reflect the cultural identities and values of the parents served, she believes
that the implementation of this goal will be difficult. Operationally, what
is implied? Clarke-Stewart stated that "this is not to suggest the specific
programs or interve .....is be targeted to particular ethnic groups - that all
Afro-American mothers be assigned to model 'A'; while all Greek-American
mothers enroll in program 'B'." p. 81

She recommended that a sufficient variety of child care programs be
available so parents may choose the arrangement that is most compatiable with
their values. Butler (1973) recommended that parents and staff members work
together with the child's welfare in mind. Concrete suggestions for resolving
social or cultural differences were not offered, nor were examples of much
differ.... .... ioned.

P... ... .) studied the interpersonal relationship between 212 parents
and 89 caregiver in day care settings in Detroit, using a structured inter-
view technique. His date revealed minimal attempts to coordinate day care
children's socialization processes. Powell recommended: 1) that Center provide
a specific area of the room for parent/caregiver interaction, 2) that caregiver
be trained to work with adults as well as children, and 3) that the term
"parent involvement" in day care include more emphasis on interpersonal relations
among caregivers and parents.

MY RECOMMENDATION: Parents and staff should use my eight issues and
anything they might want to add, as the basis for a meeting to discuss a united
approach to childrearing, in which all parties - parents and caregivers,
confront, discuss, and attempt to resolve any disagreements regarding childrearing.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH

Research questions:

Needed are studies on -

- The effects of the parent/caregiver relationship on the development
of the child.

- The determinates of parent/caregiver interaction.

- Children's perceptions of the rules of parents and caregivers.

- The degree of value conflict within and between various groups,
and on which issues. Also what are the sources of differences
between the socialization practices between parents and caregivers?

- What variations exist among various settings - preschools, day care
centers, family day care home - with regard to their function as
socialization settings?

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I believe that there is no area more important or in more
critical need of investigation than that of values and childrearing in the
home and day care center.

I hope the 1980's will not only see the wider availability of day care
centers, but also a more systematic series of studies related to the issues
raised in this paper.

Only then will we remedy our present lack of knowledge about the sociali-
zation of our children.

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