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ABSTRACT

This paper advances a framework for conceptualizing the professional status of day care personnel and describes training options for such personnel. The conceptual framework consists of a historical review of day care providers and discussions of the desirability of the service provided by day care centers and the knowledge base required of day care personnel. The discussion aims to provide a perspective for understanding the current status of day care personnel and the dilemmas surrounding current training options. It also highlights the complexity of the day care system and the impossibility of finding easy answers to the problem of staff training and certification. The four approaches to the training of day care personnel reviewed are: (1) in-service training programs; (2) competency-based training models; (3) baccalaureate training programs; and (3) community college diploma or certificate programs. While each of the training options has different professional status implications, the lack of specificity which exists in most state or provincial regulations does not ensure any differentiation in job role, status, or pay, for levels of training. To date, there is little direct evidence of the impact of different content and levels of training on staff behavior or developmental outcomes for children. There are 111 citations. (RH)

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THE PROFESSIONAL STATUS AND TRAINING OF  
DAY CARE PERSONNEL

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April , 1990

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## OUTLINE

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  - a. a historical review of the providers of day care
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## INTRODUCTION

The demand for the expansion of day care services in Canada and the United States has increased dramatically in the last two decades (Cook et al., 1986; Kahn and Kamerman, 1987; Kamerman, 1986; Young and Nelson, 1973). The role of governments viz a viz the funding, licensing and control of day care is being debated by policy makers, advocacy groups, and professional organizations (Hostetler, 1984; Morgan, 1983). Within these debates there is a noticeable ambiguity, or even omission, regarding the training and certification requirements of those (mostly women) who share with parents the responsibility for the care of young children. This same ambiguity is similarly evident in many of the research and practical texts on day care. (Ruopp et al, 1979; Evans, Shub, and Weinstein, 1971).<sup>1</sup>

The variance in nomenclature used to describe day care personnel is further indication of this ambivalence. "Teacher", "Childminder", "Early Childhood Professional", "Child Care Worker" and "Caregiver" are but a few examples of terms used (Spodek and Sachero, 1982). While each of these titles carries with it some implications for training and qualifications, there seems to be de facto little difference in the functions carried out by

<sup>1</sup> Policies often contain statements such as "staff should have relevant training or experience", without specifying what kind of training and/or experience.

day care personnel based on the various titles (Whitebook and Howes, 1980). The titles, then, seem to reflect the variance in perceived professional status rather than in the actual role function. While early childhood professional organizations and some day care advocates (Gallagher Ross, 1978) emphasize the need for government regulated training requirements for day care personnel, policy makers seem most reluctant to lay down specific requirements. The "tortuous path" and "wandering in the desert" images (Pence, 1990) invoked to describe the hesitance of North American governments to address day care policies are certainly apt in regard to the legislation of training requirements.

A Framework For Conceptualizing the Professional Status of  
Day Care Personnel

Training and certification requirements depend to a large extent on the professional status of an occupation (Griffin, 1989). Amongst the characteristics of a profession delineated in sociological and educational literature are: a sense of common history and purpose (Spodek, 1984); the provision of a desired service (Ade, 1982); and the possession of a systematic theory or claim to a theoretical body of knowledge (Bergen, 1989). While these criteria only partially represent the varied definitions of a profession in the literature, they are particularly pertinent to the day care field. The use of these criteria as a framework for analysis might



shed some light on the reasons for the ambivalence of policy makers, professionals and society at large in determining training requirements for day care personnel. Such an analysis should further provide a perspective for understanding the current status of day care personnel and the dilemmas surrounding current training options. In addition, this analysis will highlight the complexity of the day care system and the impossibility of arriving at easy answers or pat solutions to the question of training and certification of day care personnel.

#### A Historical Review of the Providers of Day Care

A review of the history of day care reveals a lack of a continuous evolution of a professional group providing a service. Day care has come, at various times in its history, under the influence of a variety of professions or interest groups, each with different goals, rationale, and nature of involvement. Social reformers, educational philosophers, charitable upper class women, teachers, social workers and psychologists all were, at various times, involved in the provision of day care. These diverse occupational origins of the founders of day care are still evident in current debates concerning the training of day care personnel.

Social Reformers and Educational Philosophers.

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The short lived infant school, transferred from Britain to North America in the 1820's (and gone by the 1840's) is said to be the ancestor of modern day care. Robert Owen, the British philanthropist and social reformer brought the infant school model to North America, where by 1825, it had spread to "every major city on the Atlantic Seaboard" (Pence, 1980). The significance of the infant schools to the day care movement is largely retrospective. They were a model of a multifaceted attempt to meet the needs of employers, employed parents, and the educational needs of children. Intended originally for children of poor workers, their boundaries extended across classes. The founders of the infant school were probably the first to develop and implement a curriculum for group care of very young children (Pence, 1986; 1990). However, this concern with educational philosophy and pedagogy was not carried over to the day nurseries, which superceded the infant schools.

#### Wealthy Charitable Ladies

Day nurseries were first set up in the United States in the mid nineteenth century by female philanthropists who were concerned about the neglect of children caused by maternal employment (Fein & Clarke Stewart, 1973). The earliest day nursery is thought to be the one established in collaboration with the Child's Hospital of New York City. Nutrition, hygiene, medical examinations and the acquisition

of healthy habits seemed to be the primary concern of the founders of day nurseries. Greenblatt (1977) describes the role the "wealthy charitable ladies" played in the organization of the day nurseries. They raised the funds for the establishment of the nurseries, often adding contributions from their own families' funds. They screened applicants to ensure that only those in dire need (through widowhood or paternal incapacitation) would seek employment. They visited the nurseries, providing council to the matrons who ran them, and served on the boards that set policy and assumed responsibility for the details of management. Though their motives seemed genuinely altruistic, there was a measure of self interest attributed to their work. First, as pointed out by Greenblatt (1977), the lady organizers of day nurseries were, through their involvement, able to escape the "drudgery of domesticity." Secondly, the day nurseries provided a source of domestic servants to the ladies and their friends ( (Vandebelt Schultz, 1978). Involvement of female philanthropists, according to Greenblatt (1977), placed on day care both a "welfare" stigma and a "lasting feminine touch." Their concern was the protection of the child. Education was not a primary function of the day nurseries.

#### Social Workers

Social workers supplanted the philanthropic ladies as mothers' aid legislation reduced the need to work of widows



and wives of "incapacitated, imprisoned, or insane men " (Greenblatt, 1977). The social worker's role , like that of the lady philanthropist, was partly to "gate keep" but also to provide casework to the families of the children in day nurseries. The impact of social workers on the day nurseries is said to be largely in moving day care away from a service for working mothers, to a service for pathological families. O'Brien Steinfelds (1973) quotes a 1919 address at a National Conference of Social Workers as exemplary of this shift. The care of children is necessary, it was reported, when there is "some maladjustment in families". While the social workers did not have any impact on the development of the educational programs for children, it is clear from some of the literature that they had a deep concern for the emotional well being of the children and the mothers (Melby, 1942). With the exception of short periods in history (to be discussed in the next section) social workers have dominated the day care scene from the early 1900's until quite recently.

#### Teachers.

Teachers' involvement in day care has been sporadic, in times of national emergencies, or when unable to find employment in the school system. While some of the early day nurseries employed kindergarten teachers for some of the children for parts of the day, it does not appear that they had major impact on the day nursery programs (O'Brien

Steinfels, 1973). In the 1920's however, nursery school teachers did begin to staff the day nurseries. Certainly, these teachers brought with them ideas concerning the group education of young children. However, problems arose as a consequence. First, as day nurseries paid less than nursery schools, the pick of trained nursery school teachers was "not always the best" (Goldsmith, 1972). Nursery school teachers were not trained to work full days, or with infants and toddlers. They might well have resented the menial tasks associated with infant care. Therefore, although the need for infant care did not subside, day nurseries decreased the service they provided to that group.

With the passing of the Works Project Administration in the 1930's and the Lanham Act during World War Two, the place of teachers in day care became formalized. One of the primary goals of the former was to supply jobs to teachers during the depression. The Lanham Act provided funding for day care (channelled largely through the school system), to facilitate women's participation in the war effort. Leaders in early childhood education, such as James Hymes Jr. established model day care centers, backed by the dollars of industry (Dratch, 1970; Zissner, 1984; Hymes, 1974). However, as the majority of funding subsided after the war, so did the enthusiasm of the teaching profession - an attitude that is clearly evident today. Yet, in the last decade some



teachers, especially early childhood teachers, have claimed day care as their professional territory (Caldwell, 1987).

### Psychologists.

The most recent professional group to enter the day care arena are psychologists. Their most noticeable impact on day care was probably the reinforcement of negative attitudes towards day care. Psychologists such as Bowlby (1966) wrote convincingly of the deleterious effects of separation of the young child from his mother. Bowlby's work has been quoted (usually out of context) in practically every anti-day care article written. More recently, the influence of psychologists has been seen in the research efforts which attempt to assess the effect of day care on children, and the impact of different quality programs on various aspects of development. Interestingly, much of this literature is published in journals of psychology which are largely unread by day care personnel.

In the early 1970's several model, university-based day care programs were set up by developmental psychologists (Fowler, 1980; Willis and Riccuiti, 1975; Tronick and Greenfield, 1973). These model programs bore little resemblance to the vast majority of day care centers in terms of funding, staff qualifications, child-staff ratios, and other factors (Keyserling, 1972). While these programs had disappeared by the 1980's they left a legacy of pride in

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what properly funded day care could accomplish. In addition, most of the very scant literature on day care and training material for day care personnel has come out of these model programs (Fowler, 1980; Willis and Riccuit, 1975; Tronick and Greenfield, 1973). While some developmental psychologists are seen as experts in day care within the academic community, there seems to be little contact between these experts and day care workers in the field.

Spodek (1984) claims that "just as one comes to identify with a culture and a country by being immersed in its history and traditions, so one comes to identify with a field and a profession..." . A sense of belonging to a profession can develop through an awareness and an understanding of the history, making each member part of a larger group that extends beyond the present time.

The history of day care, as viewed from the perspective of the various interest groups or professions that have been involved, does not lend itself to the kind of identification Spodek refers to. No one profession seems to have been able to ensure the provision of adequate care, nor has the co-operation between the groups/professions been outstanding (Greenblatt, 1977; O'Brien Steinfelds, 1973). Furthermore, the review of the history of day care seems to indicate that the care aspect of day care and the education aspect of day care were much more separate than some would indicate today (Caldwell, 1988). Teachers didn't seem able to meet the requirements of care; and descriptions of the "program" of day nurseries fall far short of education.

Pence claims that the history of day care as traditionally presented is "hardly ennobling, let alone profession building" (Pence, 1990) and argues that more emphasis needs to be placed on the earliest part of day care history, the infant school movement. However one views the infant school movement (and there are those who would shudder at the actual program for children in the infant schools) it is the subsequent history of day care that many of the issues and dilemmas regarding the professional status and training of day care workers can be linked. Intermittently viewed as an educational service, and largely viewed as a service to provide shelter and care for the children of the poor and the pathological, day care has been the "victim" of various professional rivalries. It is unlikely that day care personnel would be able to experience the proud feeling of identification with a profession referred to by Spodek (1984).

## The Provision of a Desired Service

The second criterion related to professional status is the "provision of a desired service" (Ade,1982). In relation to the desirability of day care the question must be expanded, to address the issue of what kind of day care service is desirable, for whom, and at what cost? There has been little debate over the desirability of day care as a "last resort solution" for needy families and children. The main focus of the debate has been over the desirability of expanding day care center services as a "normal part of American life", as a positive child care option to be expanded and supported by governments and taxpayers. Consideration of the desirable service question can be looked at from the perspective of two main beneficiaries (or victims) of day care: children and parents<sup>1</sup>.

### The Desirability of Day Care for Children:

As young children do not write articles in the press and in academic journals, the assessment of the desirability of day care for young children is left up to various groups of adults, who bring into their assessment a variety of philosophical, psychological and political perspectives.

### Arguments against day care:

Much of the most vocal opposition or concern about day care centers relates

<sup>1</sup> The other groups that could benefit or be harmed by day care are employers, and employees of centers. This will not be covered in this paper.

to the very youngest age group - infants and toddlers. Writers such as Leach (1979) , Pringle (1975) and Fraiberg (1977) oppose day care on the basis of the assumption that infants need a kind of consistent care from people who love them. Leach (1979) puts forth her views emotively:

"A baby who does not have anybody special, but is cared for by many well meaning strangers in turn... sharing his caregivers with other needful small people... is like an adult who moves from country to country, knowing the language of none "

A further concern is put forth by Brazelton (1981), who states that feelings of grief and separation that mothers feel when their young child is in day care may result in an emotional distancing which in the long run may be detrimental to the well being of the child.

Brazelton, Leach and Pringle base their concerns not on specific quantitative data, but rather on their clinical experience and expertise (Leach and Pringle are developmental psychologists; Brazelton is a paediatrician ). These experts have published extensively in lay literature such as parenting books and magazines, and in women's magazines, etc. It is likely, therefore, that their views are read more widely by the general public than those of more research-oriented opinions.

The most outspoken critic of day care for infants and toddlers in the research community is Belsky (1988,1989). Based on a number of findings from studies which used an experimental method called the "strange situation"

Belsky (1988; 1989) concluded that infants in day care are at a greater risk of "insecure avoidant"<sup>1</sup> attachments than are home reared children.<sup>2</sup>

The quantitative research assessing the impact of day care on preschool children (aged 3-5) seems less controversial. There seems to be more consensus amongst researchers that even average quality day care doesn't seem to be damaging to children's cognitive, language and emotional development, and that high quality care can be beneficial to disadvantaged children (as measured by standardized tests). The major concern seems to be in relation to children's social behaviour. Day care children seem to be more aggressive and less compliant than home reared children (Schmidt, 1989).

These concerns regarding the social development of day care children are not often reflected in the literature directed to parents of preschool children (not infants and toddlers). The advice, based on more than a decade of research attempting to assess the impact of day care on children, seems to be as follows: Providing the quality of care is sufficient (as indicated

<sup>1</sup> This commonly used method of measuring infant attachment to caregivers has been used extensively in the research. It has been criticized for its "laboratory quality", i.e. , that there is no proof that an artificially induced "strange situation" will elicit a typical response in the child.

<sup>2</sup> Several authors have claimed that Belsky's conclusions are premature, and that the evidence is as yet inconclusive. Belsky maintains that there is enough evidence to warrant serious concern, and that it is mindless policy to wait until there is final proof of damage in order to apply caution regarding the expansion of day care (Belsky J., personal communication). The infant day care debate is covered in the Early Childhood Research Quarterly (3), 1988, which devoted an entire issue to the various interpretations of the research evidence.



by group size, staff ratio, staff training and certain observable components of the social and physical environment), there is little evidence to suggest that day care is harmful (Scarr, 1984).

The strong opposition to day care for preschool aged children comes, once again, not on the basis of quantitative research which measures developmental outcomes, but from careful in-depth observations of children's experiences. Suransky (1982) in "The Erosion of Childhood" describes in narrative detail numerous examples of interactions between staff and children in a variety of day care settings, that demonstrate how the very essence of childhood is depreciated and dehumanized in group settings. She concludes that "the child who is docile and obedient depicts functional adaptation...the child who is playful is maladaptive, a threat and an interloper" .

Blum (1983) and Maynard (1985) similarly object to the lack of individualized attention and affection that they deem inevitable when several children of the same age are cared for by staff whose shifts rotate, and who change jobs frequently. Their concerns, like those of authors who voice concern over infant day care, are based on a theoretical understanding of the needs of children (based largely on the theoretical stance of Erikson and Piaget) and on their own observations in numerous day care centers, rather than on quantitative research data.

### Arguments for day care:

There are two major strands of logic that appear in the pro - day care argument. One, expounded for example by Hymes (1973;1974), argues that there is a "tendency to overrate the home" as an environment that fosters the development of children. Many parents (of all classes) cannot provide the kind of educational-recreative experiences that children need, such as messy play, gross motor activity and exploration. Often, this is because parents cannot be at home, and often it is because they lack resources and know-how. Thus, group care, including day care, becomes an educationally preferred option.

The second strand in the pro-day care argument seems to bypass the direct effect on children, in favor of a more circular argument. As research has not shown any detrimental effects on children, and parents want to work, in the long run children will be better off emotionally and financially, if their parents are able to work and are satisfied. Some of the studies on the effect of maternal employment can be used to justify this line of argument. Children whose mothers were satisfied with their jobs seem to be more self confident and to have higher aspirations for themselves (Etaugh, 1980).

The entire focus of the debate on whether day care is good or bad for children has been criticized by reviewers of the research (Belsky and Steinberg, 1978; Pence, 1988) as being too narrow in focus and too simplistic. The need for a broader "ecological" approach to day care research has been addressed. However, although day care researchers have proceeded to

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more sophisticated and ecologically valid research questions, the status of day care in the minds of the public remains very much related to that question: is day care good or bad for children ?'

### The Desirability of Day Care for Parents

#### Pro Day Care for Parents:

Advocates of day care for the benefit of adults concerned (mostly mothers) fall into two major categories - the idealists and the pragmatists. The pragmatic advocates of the expansion of day care centers (e.g. Kamerman, 1987; Scarr et al., 1989; Zigler and Ennis, 1989) base their argument largely on a) the numbers of children requiring out of home care, due to maternal employment; b) on the large number of single parent families; and c) on the inadequacy of present levels of provision. For example, it is estimated that by 1995, more than two thirds of all mothers with children under the age of six will be working (Scarr et al, 1989). Data has also been collected which indicates that informal or "patchwork" arrangements, often employed by parents for lack of choice, are less than optimal for the child's development, and almost all induce stress and anxiety for the parents (Kamerman and Kahn, 1987). Therefore, according to the pragmatic view, it is essentially demography and economics that necessitate the expansion of day care (Trotter, 1987).

The idealistic advocates of day care stem largely from the women's liberation movement. The crux of the women's liberation view of day care is the concept that mothers need to be liberated from confinement to the home.

Furthermore, children need to be freed from the family model which carries on the subservient role of women (Hill,1987). Many proponents of women's liberation have demanded day care as a means to personal fulfilment<sup>1</sup>.

Opponents of Day Care for Parents :

Those that oppose widespread public child care (labelled the "profamily" or "traditionalists" (Blum, 1983) see day care as potentially undermining the responsibility of the family. According to Berger (1979a,b) a national day care system would be similar to other social proposals that assert social control over activities once left to individuals, and would lead to the "expropriation of even wider areas of life by the modern state". Berger cautions that the expansion of services like day care may result in the imposition of middle class values regarding childrearing , by professionals onto parents and families.

Bane et al. (1979) similarly put forth the view that families have in the past (and presumably will in the future) supplemented their own care of children with a "rich and diverse array of extended family, community and market arrangements that answer different needs and preferences of families". They fear that government participation in day care could affect the range and diversity of available provisions. Both Bane et al. (1979) and Berger (1979) do not oppose day care centers per se, but they do suggest

<sup>1</sup> Suransky (1982) , however, points out that day care results in one group of women exploiting another group (the child care workers). Liberation, in her view, requires drastic changes in the social structure, rather than in the use of day care.

that centers should be only one of several real options for parents. Their writing firmly suggests that day care centers should not be hailed as the desirable solution. The significance of their viewpoint in relation to the professional status of day care personnel is that the other options for child care, deemed as good as, if not better than day care centers, involve the care of children by untrained non-professionals.

It is difficult to assess how the majority of parents view day care centers as a desirable or undesirable service. Surveys may not explain to parents the differences between various services, and many parents do not know the difference, for example, between day care and nursery school (Kamerman, 1980). It is equally difficult to assess parents' wants by the choices they make. They could choose a child care option because of cost, or on the basis of what is available, rather than on what they would actually prefer.

A final note worth mentioning is that one study (Innes and Innes, 1984) found that many day care center staff felt that parents who place their child in day care are neglectful. This suggests that many caregivers themselves do not see day care as a wholly desirable service.

The answer to the question of whether day care centers provide a desired service is clearly very ambiguous. Regarding the desirability of day care for children, expert and research opinions seem to range from viewing it as harmful and undesirable, to a view regarding it as providing an environment more facilitative to development than is the home. With regard to the

desirability of day care for parents, views range from seeing day care as being the primary vehicle for the liberation of women, to seeing day care as being a service that undermines parental authority, and weakens the family. These unreconciled views of the desirability of the service provided by day care centers must be taken into account in any discussion of the professional status of day care personnel.

#### The Knowledge Base Relevant To Day Care Personnel

Katz (1984), Ade (1982) and Bergen (1989), and several other writers discuss the mastery of a knowledge base as a crucial aspect of a profession. Radomski (1986) states that "members of a profession should master the basic knowledge, information and theories that constitute the profession's knowledge base.

There are several issues currently under debate, concerning the knowledge required by those providing group care for young children. What knowledge and skills are required of day care personnel? If theoretical knowledge is necessary, which theories are relevant and pertinent? What skills need to be acquired? Furthermore, what (if any) relationship exists between the knowledge and the skills required ?

Behind these academic considerations, however, lies a very basic question. "Mothers and grandmothers ", declared Ronald Reagan, "have been caring for children for generations without reading a single book on childrearing ,

or without taking college courses. Why can't day care staff nurture children in the same way<sup>1</sup> " (Blum, 1983). The answer to that question lies at least partly in the perception of the caregivers' role. In other words, a discussion of the required knowledge base for the field must be preceded by a clarification of the role of the day care worker. Is she to be a mother substitute, and, if not, what are the differences?

Attempts to answer those questions have been formulated in two separate articles by Katz (1970; 1980). In the former, she states that preschool teachers model their behaviour on three different role functions: the maternal, or custodial, which primarily addresses the safety and happiness of the child; the therapeutic, which focuses on the child's mental health; and the instructional, which focuses on the transmission of information. Katz claims that all teachers follow all models at some time, but can be

<sup>1</sup> Several answers to assertions like that of Reagan seem to crop up in the literature. a) A caregiver works with a group of children (mostly homogenous in age). Therefore she needs a knowledge base that mothers don't. b) Mothers love their children, whereas caregivers lack that emotional commitment. Mothers don't care about issues of status and professionalism and fringe benefits, while caregivers do (thus requiring additional knowledge). c) Mother love, in many cases, has not been sufficient for ensuring the well-being of children. Knowledge about child growth and development is a good idea for all those caring for children, not just for day care workers. Each response begs further questions; should children be in homogenous age groups; should young children be cared for by adults who don't love them; does the knowledge required reflect a middle class bias toward childrearing. Some of these issues have been raised in the previous discussion. However, a full discussion is beyond the scope of this paper.



categorized as primarily following one or the other. Katz's unfortunate choice of titles for her categories implies that mothers fulfill primarily a custodial role, rather than focusing on the therapeutic or instructional. There is no empirical evidence to back up that assumption, nor is there any concrete evidence to indicate what proportion of maternal, therapeutic and instructional role functions is preferable for mothers and preschool teachers.

In the second article, Katz (1980) aims specifically to articulate the difference between mothering and teaching. The assumption is that preschool teachers should be staffing day care centers. Katz places aspects of caring for children on a continuum, using items such as attachment, objectivity, responsibility for the child, and so forth. Differences between mothers and teachers are highlighted for each item. Parents, for example, are supposed to be optimally attached to their children, to be biased and more concerned about their children than about any other child. Teachers, on the other hand, should be optimally detached, caring for the children yet objective enough to be able to assess their situations, level of development, etc.



This attempt by Katz to differentiate the roles of mothers and teachers is not based on empirical studies, and has met with opposition. Those early childhood specialists who oppose day care (Leach, 1979; Pringle, 1975), do so partially on the basis of the need of young children to be cared for by someone who is optimally attached, not detached. The roles, then, of mothering and "teaching" may not be as easily differentiated as Katz would imply.

In a recent article, Katz (1984) attempts to highlight the knowledge base required of early childhood professionals. Here she drops the comparison with mothers, and compares "professional" (i.e. based on knowledge) responses to children with lay approaches (with mothers presumably fitting into this category). In a simple incident involving intervention when two children squabble over a toy, Katz emphasizes the knowledge of social, verbal and cognitive development as well as of clinical, curriculum and management considerations, that such a decision requires. The professional (based on knowledge) response will bring forth all the relevant knowledge, and base the decision on the strategy that will result in some learning for

the child. The lay person would tend, according to Katz, to base a decision not on knowledge and not on a consideration of the long term learning consequences, but on what will bring about a more immediate solution to the problem.

Once again, there is little empirical evidence to support Katz's claim. One study (Hess et al., 1981) compared the views and behaviours of mothers and preschool teachers, and found similarities in the perception of developmental goals for children. Furthermore, it was found that mothers have a more explicit teaching style than teachers, and more tendency to appeal to their own authority, with less flexibility than teachers.

Another study (Verma and Peters, 1975) has in fact demonstrated that trained day care staff do what is expedient, whatever "works fast", rather than basing their decisions on theoretical knowledge. Research, then, seems to have provided little information for clarifying the difference between the caregiver (teacher) role and the mothering role.

The view that parents have of the role of day care staff is also very confused, as pointed out by Blum (1983). The role is to:

raise our children...according to the best theories of Freud, Erikson and Piaget; to make them healthy, secure intelligent, challenged, social, happy, ambitious, talented and competent..... while keeping track of their spare socks, wiping runny noses, sweeping floors cleaning potties, taking out garbage... and not ever charging more than two dollars an hour

In other words, day care staff are expected to be:

nanny and nurse, friend and grandmother, disciplinarian and housekeeper, as well as psychiatrists (Blum, 1983)

The association of day care workers with the traditional maternal role, which Katz attempted to refute, is very firmly established in our society. According to Blum, this is even unwittingly reinforced by "sensitive professional" day care advocates who recommend the use of senior citizens and teens in day care centers... "anyone can look after children" .

In spite of this lack of clarity regarding the role of the day care worker, and the differences between mothering and teaching, there is, amongst professionals and day care advocates, a consistent demand for training (i.e. increasing knowledge) of day care personnel. The study most often

quoted as providing the rationale for training day care personnel was the American National Day Care Studies (Ruopp et al, 1979). There it was found that neither

the total years of formal education nor the length of work experience in day care contributed significantly to the quality of caregiver-child interactions, or to any gains in developmental tests. What did make a difference was education and training related specifically to child development or to early childhood education.

This finding was (and still is) extremely popular within the field of early childhood education, and with others concerned with the training of day care personnel. It was likely just as popular with policy makers, who could interpret it to mean that academic requirements (and therefore higher pay) are simply not relevant to the day care field. In other words, these findings could be interpreted to mean that whether or not day care personnel have high school, university or no academic qualifications matters not, as long as they are given some training related to child development, somewhere "along the way".

In spite of its popularity, the National Day Care study can be criticized for its lack of clarity with regards to training. Firstly, the study did not differentiate between type, quality, content and length of training. There was no differentiation between a twenty four hour in-service program and a lengthy course of training. Secondly, as pointed out by Berk (1985), caregiver education was confounded with caregiver race and with the

socioeconomic status of the children served, which precluded the independent examination of the effects of formal education experience on caregiver effectiveness. Furthermore, both Seedfeldt's (1979) study of Head Start teachers and Berk's (1985) study of day care personnel indicate that increased formal education of caregivers was related to more favorable developmental outcomes in children, or to caregiver behaviors that are likely to result in more favorable outcomes. Recently, Whitebook et al (1989) have found years of formal education to be a better predictor of quality caregiver interactions with preschool children than specific early childhood training.

The consensus amongst professionals seems to be that some training (and hence knowledge) is desirable. The debates amongst professionals relate to the kind of knowledge, how much knowledge is required, and the relationship between knowledge and practical skills. The proposed knowledge base required for day care personnel ranges between two extremes. On one hand, a range of academic courses, combined with practice, is seen as essential. Amongst the areas of knowledge deemed necessary, in this view, are theories of child development and learning (Seaver and Cartwright, 1977); curriculum models for early childhood programs, and family studies (Spodek, 1972). On the other hand is the view that practical skills are important, and that caregivers can be trained to acquire those skills with minimal theoretical base.

Two further points can be made with regard to the knowledge base of professional day care personnel. First, the interdisciplinary nature of the knowledge base deemed relevant implies that it "borrows" from many fields:

developmental psychology, sociology of the family and early childhood education. The result is that day care professionals lack expertise in any one field, leading to a "jack of all trades, master of none" phenomenon. There will always be a higher source of professional expertise in the relevant professions.

Secondly, as pointed out by Clarke Stewart (1988) and Caldwell (1988), one of the most important aspects of the knowledge base of day care professionals is yet to be developed. There are currently hardly any available curriculum models for infants and toddlers and almost no evaluative studies. Most existing programs are designed to a large extent on the basis of common sense and guesswork, rather than on precise knowledge. Unlike other professions where the knowledge base deemed relevant is fairly clear cut, and where the members of the profession claim authority and expertise relating to a particular body of knowledge, there is considerable ambiguity surrounding the knowledge base of day care personnel. Many would argue that day care workers are mother substitutes who require no further knowledge than do mothers. Others argue that it is essentially a combination of personality, characteristics and skills that are required, and that theoretical knowledge is not necessary. The proponents of a prerequisite knowledge base for day care personnel suggest a broad range of theoretical knowledge relating to child development, curriculum and the family. However, there is little empirical evidence that clearly demonstrates what knowledge is required. Furthermore, the view of the role of the day care worker, as mother

substitute, caregiver, or teacher, will influence the assessment of how much and what kind of knowledge are required.

### TRAINING OPTIONS FOR DAY CARE PERSONNEL

At a first glance, a review of various training models available to day care personnel may seem to reflect the various positions articulated in the previous sections, concerning the knowledge base required of day care staff. In other words, some training programs are based on the assumption that day care workers require an in-depth understanding of child development theories, while other programs are based largely on the acquisition of skills related to the care of children. In fact, however, much of the literature suggests that program decisions regarding training were based largely on factors quite separate from this theoretical debate (Evans, Shub and Weinstein, 1971). Economic convenience and the learning potential of day care employees seem to override theoretical concerns.

Peters and Kostelnik (1981) point out the difficulty of categorizing different training models. Training programs range from federal efforts to the "smallest program in remote areas". The sponsorship varies from locally sponsored to state or regionally sponsored, or college and/or university sponsorship. Furthermore, few training programs are well documented, and even fewer are evaluated. The methods used in the few programs that have been evaluated were generally faulty and unreliable (Peters and Kostelnik, 1981). Bearing in mind these difficulties, an attempt will be made to review



four different approaches to the training of day care personnel<sup>1</sup>.

#### Local In-Service Training.

In the 1970's a plethora of inservice training programs and materials were devised (see Parker and Dittman, undated; Haupt, 1972; Honig & Lally, 1975; Lally et al, 1973; Honig, 1979.). The rationale for inservice training, which seemed to be agreed upon by experts at the time, was that formal academic qualifications "should not be overemphasized for day care staff" (Riciutti, 1977; Oyemade and Chargois, 1977; Meyer, 1977). Personal characteristics, such as emotional warmth and maturity, similarity of ethnicity and socioeconomic status amongst teachers and children, and openmindedness, were all cited as important characteristics for staff (Oyemade and Chargois, 1977). Other basic requirements cited were: 18 years of age, health, willingness and ability. Supervision and inservice training was the recommended way of ensuring that caregivers, selected on the basis of these desirable personal characteristics, would be able to meet the developmental needs of children (Chambers, 1971).. An example of the curriculum of an inservice training program published in a booklet on staff training by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare included:

<sup>1</sup> A model of training not reviewed in this paper is an interdisciplinary graduate studies program for directors, supervisors or consultants in day care. A proposal for a Canadian model is described in detail by Pence and Shimoni (1989), and by Almy (1975; 1982).

philosophy for the program; child development;  
 ..personal hygiene; charm and good grooming;  
 sewing; creative work activities and experiences  
 for the young child; demonstration of cognitive  
 learning stimulation; sensory perception and  
 use of toys and equipment;,,,making toys from  
 waste material;...first aid.

(Parker and Dittman, undated)

The methods to be used to implement the training included "living and learning together..visiting professionals, visiting toy stores, reading from books and magazines " (Parker and Dittman, undated).. The inclusion of areas such as "charm" and personal grooming in a training program reflects the idea prevalent at the time that day care positions were a way of raising the status of uneducated, poor women.

One of the best known manuals designed as a guide to inservice training is "Infancy and Caregiving", by Honig and Lally,(1975). The main components of the book are an explanation, in very simple terms, of the developmental theories of Piaget and Erikson, combined with a multitude of ideas for activities with children, as well as caregiver practices that the authors believe are derived from those two theories. In addition, the book provides a number of tips for trainers, regarding different techniques, such as role play, group discussion, and modelling, as well as lists of teaching aids and resources.

As mentioned previously, while there is no research attesting to the effectiveness of various training programs, there are some very serious

problems inherent in the model itself. First, many of the inservice training models developed in the 1970's were tinged with the excitement, idealism and naivete of program developers at the time. The model day care programs that were established in those years (from which much of the training material emerged) were staffed, at the director and supervisory levels, by highly qualified professionals. They could run the training programs, monitor staff progress and provide reinforcements for staff. The vast majority of day care programs lacked this level of qualified leadership. Therefore, many of the inservice training sessions were run by experts who were brought in periodically. With little ongoing support and encouragement it is unlikely that these sessions would result in significant changes in caregiver behaviors (Peters and Kostelnik, 1981). Secondly, the success of inservice training programs would depend, to some extent at least, on the motivation of the staff to participate. Bearing in mind that most day care employees work long hours at an emotionally and physically strenuous job, one wonders how many workers had the energy, time or inclination to participate in training. In addition, many centers operating on a low budget would not hire relief staff for inservice training time (Lero & Kyle, 1985), requiring staff to attend sessions during their lunch breaks, or during evenings or weekends. Under these circumstances the enthusiasm or participation in training is often short lived. Therefore, while inservice training is often cited as a key component of a quality program, there is little real knowledge available concerning the effectiveness of various kinds of inservice training; the



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degree to which both staff and children benefit from it; or the conditions required for this kind of training to be effective.

### Competency Based Training

The competency based training model for which there is most documentation is the Child Development Associate (CDA) Program, originally set up in 1971 by the the Administration for Children, Youth and Families, in the United States (Zigler, 1971; Klein, 1980). The CDA program represents a massive national effort involving government, leaders in child development and early childhood education, and professional organizations (American Association of Elementary/Kindergarten/Nursery Educators; the Association for the Education of Young Children ). It is aimed at improving the competence of staff and to increase the number of new staff entering the field (Klein, 1980).

The development of the Child Development Program involved , at the onset, determining the knowledge and skills that would be required of competent child caregivers. These were defined as the ability to: :

- establish and maintain a safe and healthy learning environment;
- advance the physical and intellectual competence of children;
- build in the children a positive self concept and individual strength
- promote positive functioning of children and adults in groups;
- coordinate home and center child rearing practices;
- carry out supplementary responsibilities related to children's programs

(Klein and Lombardi, 1982)

The competencies listed are said to form the "philosophy or framework..of good early education and child development " (Klein, 1980). They are broadly defined so that they can be used in a wide variety of settings,

without violating differing educational views or cultural backgrounds of staff and children.

Following the articulation of competencies, training guidelines were published by the Administration for Children, Youth and Families. Several pilot training projects were developed, in different settings using different training techniques. Some common features of all CDA training programs are summarized by Hamby (1980):

- all training is geared to leading to the acquisition of competencies
- at least fifty percent of training time is spent in supervised field work
- training is organized so that academic and field work are an integrated set of experiences
- training is individualized according to each trainee's needs with respect to the acquisition of the CDA competencies
- length of training time varies according to each trainee's rate of acquisition of competencies
- indicators of competency are not predetermined by lists of skills; they are established for each candidate.

The following is one example of a CDA training program, sponsored by an American community college. Candidates are supplied with self-directed field based learning modules. Each learning module consists of a general objective related to an area of competence; specific objects; a short

bibliography including filmstrips, "multi-media kits"; and a set of questions and assignments. A checklist of classroom competencies is provided. This is used both by the trainee and by the supervisor, to assess the trainee's performance both before and after completing the module, and for trainee self evaluation. The supervisor discusses the written assignments with the trainee, including activity plans for children. The supervisor then observes the trainee implement the plan with the children. The trainee can receive college credits for successful completion of the modules, yet completion of the CDA program does not necessitate attendance at a college. (Beaty and Minyard, 1974).

The CDA program, then provides an extremely flexible way of training day care personnel, based on a fairly wide consensus amongst professionals concerning the required competencies of day care workers. The theoretical knowledge required for successful completion of the CDA program is very minimal (although some programs that use the CDA do include more theory). It has been deemed more suitable than training provided by institutes of higher education because the "educational needs, learning history and life style of child care personnel differ substantially from those of the traditional population served by universities and colleges (Kurtz, 1975).

However, several criticisms of the CDA program can be voiced. First, it is striking that no major evaluative effort has been undertaken to assess the effectiveness of CDA based training, considering the extensive nature of the CDA, and the degree of government involvement<sup>1</sup>. Secondly, the CDA program

1 see footnote following page

answers the demand for staff training, but only marginally alters the occupational or professional status of day care workers.

Zigler doesn't want teachers to provide child care. Teachers are trained as educators, and they are expensive. What we need is something called a CDA. Someone with a degree would ruin the system CDA on job training would do the bulk of the work...  
(Trotter, 1987)

The final concern regarding the CDA program relates to the question of how much theoretical knowledge is required of day care workers. While proponents of the CDA program proclaim that "theoretical preparation" in early childhood development and early childhood education are "carefully integrated with practical, everyday on-the-job experiences" (Klein and Lombardi, 1982), the training modules reviewed above contained very minimal theoretical content. Katz (1984) and Seaver and Cartwright (1977) and Feeney & Chun, 1985) suggest that adults working with young children require a sound theoretical knowledge base, in order to make decisions for each child,

<sup>1</sup> It might also be noted that the Director of the Office of Child Development at the time that the CDA was initiated was Professor E. Zigler, of Yale University. Professor Zigler is one of the leading writers on day care and child care policy. It is therefore suprising that an evaluative component to the CDA program would be lacking.

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and in order to differentiate and select appropriate programs for children. There are many packaged programs and gimmicks available which promise wonderful results for young children. If caregivers are taught to do certain things, but not taught why they will not have the tools necessary to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate programming for children (Seaver and Cartwright, 1977). Therefore, concern for the inability of CDA graduates to ensure quality programs for young children has been expressed (Bowman, 1986).

#### Baccalaureate Training Programs For Day Care Personnel

The two major academic disciplines that have provided training for day care are Child Care and Early Childhood Education. Child care work originated primarily in residential settings, with disturbed or handicapped children (Vanderven, 1986). The trend towards de-institutionalization of children, and the recognition of the fundamental commonalities that exist between normal and exceptional children of different age groups, have led to the preparation of a "generic" training program. This prepares its graduates to work in a variety of settings, including day care. (Vanderven, 1986). Although several articles have been published concerning training and education in child care practice, it is difficult to acquire a clear picture of the nature of child care training. One Canadian university, offering a Bachelor's degree in Child Care, provides courses in child development, family systems and behaviour management as some its core courses. Practicum experiences take place in a number of residential and child care settings.



The appropriateness of this kind of training for day care personnel can be questioned, due to its lack of emphasis on group programs for normally developing children. A graduate of such a Child Care program could, conceivably, complete studies in this program with no preparation or practical experience in a group setting with preschool aged children. However, because of the academic status attached to this graduate, he/she would likely be considered more qualified for a supervisory position in day care, as compared to a graduate of a non-degree program designed specifically to train day care staff.

A similar problem exists concerning Early Childhood Education programs at universities. The majority of academic early childhood education programs are geared to kindergarten and primary school teachers. University training programs for early childhood education vary considerably from institution to institution, but their basic components have been summarized by Peters et al. (1974) as follows: a liberal education; child development; the history and background of early childhood services; interpersonal relations; skills for acquiring new knowledge; a basic content area, and the practice of professional skills. The content area usually includes mathematics, reading, the arts, humanities and the sciences, and the child development area includes "a consideration of alternative theories and their support, specification of developmental trends in the areas of physiological, intellectual, emotional and social development". Because of the wide variation in early childhood programs, the National Association for the Education of

Young Children has recently attempted to clarify what differentiates early childhood education from other teacher education, and has produced guidelines for advanced degrees in early childhood education. It is too early to predict what impact this will have on university based early childhood education programs (Early Childhood Teacher Education, 1988).

Although leaders in the field of Early Childhood Education (Caldwell, 1988; Bowman, 1983) claim the training of day care personnel as their "territory", they have not been given any official "mandate" to do so (Joffe, 1977). The omission of courses relating specifically to day care or to group programming for children under the age of four highlights the question of the appropriateness of university early childhood education for day care personnel (Pence and Shimoni, 1989).

Spodek and Saracho (1982) have raised the question of whether the kinds of practices in day care and in other forms of early childhood education might be significantly dissimilar, so that early childhood education may not be appropriate for the training of day care personnel. This view is debated by Bowman (1986) who claims that "child care, preschool, and special education programs should be staffed by teachers who know about, and can plan for the total development of the child (which is the aim of early childhood education). Clearly, this would necessitate fairly drastic changes in the curriculum of many university training programs if they do, indeed, wish to successfully incorporate day care into their sphere of professional expertise.



Community College Programs in Early Childhood Development

Many community colleges across Canada and the United States sponsor one or two year programs in early childhood education. These certify graduates to work as day care personnel or as nursery school teachers or as aides to kindergarten teachers (Lero and Kyle, 1985). The content varies in the different institutes; some base their program on the competency model, while others place more emphasis on the theoretical component, essentially offering courses in child development, curriculum for preschool children, and family studies. These are combined with supervised field experience in a group setting with young children. In Canada, most community college programs are non-transferrable to university programs.

Each of the training options described here (non certificate inservice training; competency based training which leads to certification; community college and baccalaureate programs) have different professional status implications. However, the lack of specificity which exists in most state or provincial regulations does not ensure any differentiation in job role, job status or pay, for the various levels of training. Finally, to add to the complexity of the situation, there is to date very little direct evidence to distinguish the impact on staff behaviour or developmental outcomes of children attributed to different content and levels of training.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> many factors influence the nature of care that children receive in day care centers, and often organizational factors such as size of center, group size, and staff ratio can outweigh the impact of training. (Ruopp et al,1979).

## Conclusion

The pervasive theme that is evident in almost every issue concerned with day care is ambivalence, polarization of views, lack of clarity and a dearth of empirical evidence to support the various views. Historically, day care has generally been a "last resort" service in which a variety of interest and professional groups have had varying degrees of impact and control. Coherent government backing of day care has taken place only in times of economic or military crises, and has never lasted long enough to provide a solid framework for the expansion and regulation of the service. Today, various interest groups are debating the desirability of the expansion of day care services. Government involvement in the expansion and control of day care center services would entail vast amounts of money. The lack of consensus regarding day care, combined with strong pressure from segments of the population other than families with young children<sup>1</sup> for alternative social services are probably the main reasons why both Canadian and American Governments continually side step the issue of a comprehensive day care .

Lack of empirical knowledge and different perspectives of the role of the day care center worker are associated with a lack of decisiveness concerning the amount, content and format of appropriate training for day care personnel. The major training initiative in which the U.S. government

<sup>1</sup> According to Belsky, the senior citizens in the United States are vocal in opposing government support for day care (Belsky, 1989).

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was involved is a field based competency model that will achieve little in terms of affecting the salary and professional status of day care personnel. Many see this as a pragmatic solution. The flexible entry requirements and length of training provides opportunities for people of all educational levels, and it is beneficial economically. However, the importance of formal education and qualifications is seen by others as essential to those adults who are responsible for implementing educational and developmentally sound programs for young children.

Two main academic sources of training for day care personnel exist today: Departments of Child Care and Departments of Early Childhood Education. Both sources lack emphasis on the group care and education of prekindergarten age children, and on infants and toddlers. Thus, graduates of academic programs "qualifying" them to work in day care may actually know much less about day care than graduates of community college or field based training programs.

Scarr et al (1989) have stated that it is the day care workers that bear the brunt of society's ambivalence concerning day care. This is certainly true, and is reflected in the low status (Hostetler, 1984) and low wages (Whitebook and Howes, 1980) day care personnel receive. Correlated with these phenomena is high staff turnover (Galinsky, 1988), deemed to seriously affect the emotional stability of children.

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The questions regarding the training of day care personnel are inextricably linked to much wider issues concerning the role of day care in our society, and can be seen as part of a vicious circle. As long as the ambivalence towards day care remains, it is unlikely that any major effort to upgrade the professional status of day care personnel through education and training will be made. This is true on a societal level, in terms of the funding and developing of training programs. It is also true on a personal level, in that the ability and motivation of day care personnel to upgrade their education and qualifications will be hindered by their low status and low salary (Why should a person with a Baccalaureate degree work in day care and receive half of the salary of a teacher in the school system?). On the other hand, it is unlikely that changes in the professional status and salary will be forthcoming when day care workers require no formal academic training.

In view of the diversity of opinions regarding day care and consequently the training of day care personnel, it would seem that caution is warranted in the regulation of training requirements. Major research efforts might be helpful in determining the effectiveness of various kinds of training for day care personnel. However, it is difficult to imagine that one kind of "product" of a training program would be equally suited for all children and all families. The diversity of the population probably warrants diversity in the kinds of training that should be received by adults who care for children. The major dilemma of any future policies regarding

training will be how to allow for diversity while ensuring maximum protection of children.

The failure to develop national guidelines for training is blamed by day care advocates on the low priority given to children's needs in North American society. But it could equally represent a deep cultural ambivalence about child care (O'Brien Steinfelds, 1973) that most likely will not be resolved in the near future.

Morrison (1989) claimed that an appreciation for the scope and magnitude of the childcare problem and for the societal implications of the currently debated solutions has only recently become apparent, and that a clearer understanding of the full spectrum of psychological, cultural and political issues in child care, will take us into the 21st century. It follows, then, that the dilemmas concerning the training of day care personnel are enmeshed in this spectrum of issues.



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