

# Canadian day care survey



Health and Welfare Canada

Santé et Bien-être social Canada

A REVIEW OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE  
NATIONAL DAY CARE SURVEY

1972

National Day Care Information Centre  
Canada Assistance Plan Directorate

Published by Authority of  
The Honourable Marc Lalonde  
Minister of National Health and Welfare

Maurice LeClair, M.D.  
Deputy Minister of National Health

Joseph W. Willard  
Deputy Minister of National Welfare

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# A REVIEW OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE NATIONAL DAY CARE SURVEY

## INTRODUCTION - NEED FOR DAY CARE

During the past few years, day care has increasingly become a subject of national concern. The Royal Commission on The Status of Women,<sup>1</sup> for example, found that across Canada, no single issue was raised as often. It appears that this heightened interest in day care results from the converging of two different streams of experience in the mutual support of pre-school programs for children.

*Effects of  
Maternal  
Employment*

First of all, the academic and the professional community have, to a great extent, reversed their opinion regarding the importance of group programs for young children. Earlier projects by Spitz<sup>2</sup> and Bowlby<sup>3</sup> were presented as evidence that children should be home with their mothers and

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, Information Canada, Ottawa, 1970.

<sup>2</sup> Spitz, R. A. Hospitalism: an inquiry into the genesis of psychiatric conditions in early childhood. Psychoanal. Stud. of the Child, 1945, 1, 53--74.

<sup>3</sup> Bowlby, J. Maternal care and mental health. Monograph Series, No. 2, Geneva: World Health Organization, 1951.



maternal separation was equated with maternal deprivation. Numerous psychiatrists and social workers attributed a cause-and-effect relationship to their observation that a large number of their troubled clients had come from broken homes or from families where the mother was absent because of employment or because of other reasons. More recently, respected authorities, such as Yarrow,<sup>4</sup> have demonstrated that many of these earlier studies were really no more than unsystematic case studies where maternal separation was only one factor in a host of unfavorable variables. More sophisticated research projects such as those conducted by Langner<sup>5</sup> and by Stolz<sup>6</sup> indicated that children of working

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<sup>4</sup>Yarrow, Leon J. "Separation from Parents During Early Childhood", in Review of Child Development Research, ed. by Martin L. Hoffman and Lois Wladis Hoffman (New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 1964) p. 116.

<sup>5</sup>Langner, Thomas S. and Stanley J. Michael, Life Stress and Mental Health, 1 (London: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), p. 182.

<sup>6</sup>Stolz, Lois Meek, "Effects of Maternal Employment in Children: Evidence from Research", Child Development, Vol. 31, No. 4, (1960), pp. 749-782.

mothers developed as well if not better than did the children of non-working mothers.

*Value of  
Preschool  
Programs*

Around this same time, authorities such as J. McVicker Hunt,<sup>7</sup> Martin Deutsch,<sup>8</sup> S. A. Kirk,<sup>9</sup> and O. K. Moore<sup>10</sup> were presenting impressive evidence that the first few years of life were critical to the emotional and cognitive development of children and that appropriate preschool programs were effective in enhancing the child's development. Dr. Benjamin Bloom, past president of the American Education Research Association, after analyzing the relevant research stated:

"50% of all the factors that determine intellectual functioning are formulated by age four and that we would expect the

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<sup>7</sup>Hunt, J. McVicker, "The Psychological Basis for Using Pre-school Enrichment As an Antidote for Cultural Deprivation," in *Disadvantaged Child*, Vol. 1, Ed. Jerome Hellmuth (Seattle: Bernie Straub & Jerome Hellmuth, 1967), p. 257-299.

<sup>8</sup>Deutsch, Martin, "Early Social Environment: Its Influence on School Adaptation," in *Pre-school Education Today*, ed. by Fred M. Hechinger, (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966), p. 18-19.

<sup>9</sup>Kirk, S. A., *Early Education of the Mentally Retarded: An Experimental Study*, Urbana University of Illinois Press, 1958.

<sup>10</sup>Moore, O.K., *Autotelic Responsive Environment and Exceptional Children*, Hamden: Responsive Environment Foundation, 1963.

variations in the environment to have relatively little effect on the IQ after age eight, but we would expect the greatest effect likely to take place between the ages of about one to five."<sup>11</sup>

Consequently an increasing number of academicians and professionals began to view day care and other pre-school programs as one of the more promising tools in the war on poverty.

*Working  
Mothers  
Require  
Day Care*

The other development bringing day care to the forefront of attention is the actual need for day care experienced by working mothers. Each year, more mothers enter the labor market and the evidence to date suggests that the failure of a community to provide day care services does not discourage mothers from seeking employment but may result in children being placed in inferior and too often damaging child care arrangements.<sup>12</sup> The reason for this phenonema is that the majority of mothers are working out of economic necessity. There is also a

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<sup>11</sup>Bloom, Benjamin S., *Stability and Change in Human Characteristics*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1965), p. 68.

<sup>12</sup>Children's Bureau, U.S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, *Day Care Services Form and Substance*, 1960.



growing recognition that women require realistic choices in pursuing a role of homemaker, career, or combination of both. The Women's Bureau, in the federal Department of Labour, estimates that in 1971, there were 59,000 one-parent mothers in the Canadian labour force. For the same year, it estimates that there were 634,000 working mothers with 182,000 of these mothers having children under the age of 6.<sup>13</sup>

*Recommendations  
to the Federal  
Government*

In the light of the expanding need for day care services, it is understandable that the federal government has been called upon to assume an active leadership role in assisting the provinces in this field. Recommendations to this effect were advocated in the CELDIC report,<sup>14</sup> by the National Conference on Day Care,<sup>15</sup> 1971, and by the Canadian Conference on Social Welfare, 1972.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Statistical estimates provided to the Canada Assistance Plan by the Women's Bureau, Canada Department of Labour.

<sup>14</sup>Commission on Emotional and Learning Disorders in Children, published by Leonard Crainford, Canada 1970.

<sup>15</sup>Proceedings / Canadian Conference on Day Care / 20-23 June, 1971, published by the Canadian Council on Social Development, Ottawa, 1972.

<sup>16</sup>Unpublished recommendations of the Canadian Conference on Social Welfare, Quebec City, 1972.

An active federal role in the field of day care has also been stressed in the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada. The report suggested that only 1% of the children of working mothers were placed in day nurseries or nursery schools and that they had heard reports from coast to coast that an incalculable number of mothers were leaving their children in casual and often hazardous day care arrangements. One conclusion read:

"Because the provision of day care centres is of major importance to the women of Canada, the Commission believes that the federal government should assume a continuing responsibility"<sup>17</sup>

*Involvement  
of Canada  
Assistance  
Plan*

Recognizing the increasing need for day care, the federal government in 1972, amended the regulations of the Canada Assistance Plan so that in addition to salaries and other previously cost-shared items, the federal government will be able to share in the day care costs to the provinces of rent or depreciation of facilities, program equipment, supplies, food, and other necessary expenditures that arise out of the provision of day care services. During the year 1971, through the provisions of the Canada

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<sup>17</sup>Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, Op. Cit. p.269

Assistance Plan, the federal government spent approximately four million dollars in the field of day care. Because of the amendments to the regulations of the Canada Assistance Plan, it is anticipated that this figure will climb to eight million dollars in 1973.

## THE SURVEY

Because the need for day care services is clearly not being met and because of the anticipated increased involvement of the federal government in this area, it was considered necessary to determine the degree to which the need is unmet and, further, to establish some basis upon which the impact of the greater involvement of the federal government could be measured or evaluated in terms of actually influencing the degree of expansion and the quality of service developed.

The first step towards this end was the decision to conduct a national survey in order to provide an inventory of existing day care services. The survey was conducted during the summer of 1971 by the Canada Assistance Plan Directorate of the Department of National Health and Welfare. The format of the



questionnaire was designed with the help of the Division of Management Consulting Services. The Medical-Social Statistics Office undertook the responsibility for developing the questionnaire and for the processing, editing, and analyzing of the data.

The questionnaire was designed to obtain information concerning the number of day care centres, the number and ages of children enrolled, the variety of day care programs, the sponsorship of centers, funding patterns, staffing patterns, and involvement of parents and volunteers.

The provinces were requested to provide a list of authorized day care services. The questionnaire was mailed to each of these day care centres and whenever feasible, the centres which had not returned the questionnaire were given a follow-up by telephone or telex. This action resulted in a very high response: 1173 out of 1490 centres questioned responded.

## MAJOR FINDINGS

As indicated in Table 1, there are a variety of day care programs designed to meet the differing needs of the young child.

Table 1: Distribution of Centres by Type of Program (1971)

Type of Program	C e n t r e s	
	No.	%
Full Day Care	543	34.5
Lunch and After School	139	8.8
Half Day	830	52.7
Occasional	20	1.3
Not Identified by respondents	<u>43</u>	<u>2.7</u>
	*1575	100.0

\*Total larger than 1173 as some centres offered more than one type of program.

The full day care program is primarily intended for the pre-school child whose parents are working. Other situations where parent and child are separated during the full course of the day may also require this type of day care.

The lunch and after school program is designed for the young child attending school who requires

supervision before classes begin, during the noon hour and after class before his parents' return.

*Day*

*Care*

*Definitions*

The half day program usually refers to a nursery school and other half day services relating to the social and educational needs of pre-school children.

Occasional programs such as a "Mother's day out" program provide day care services on the basis of once or twice a week.

It is interesting to note that the programs relating to children of working parents (full day care and lunch and after school) constitute about 43% of the day care centres.



AVAILABILITY OF DAY CARE CENTRE SPACES  
FOR CHILDREN OF WORKING MOTHERS

Table: 2 Distribution of Children by  
Type of Program (1971)

Type of Program	C h i l d r e n	
	No.	%
Full Day Care	16,131	39.0
Lunch and After School	1,260	3.0
Half Day	22,681	54.8
Occasional	358	0.9
Not Identified by Respondents	<u>981</u>	<u>2.3</u>
	41,411	100.0

*1 1/4%*  
*in*  
*Day*  
*Care*

The Full Day Care and the Lunch and After School program categories suggest that there were approximately 17,400 children of working mothers enrolled in day care centres in 1971. This represents only 1 1/4% of the 1,380,000\* children of working mothers in 1971.

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\*Estimated number of children of working mothers as provided by the Women's Bureau, Labour Canada.

INCREASING NUMBER OF DAY CARE SPACES

There is no question that there is a tremendous shortage of day care spaces. However, the picture may not be as pessimistic as first indicated. A publication by the Women's Bureau<sup>18</sup> suggested that in 1967 there were about 1% or 9000 children of working mothers enrolled in day nurseries. By 1971, this number almost doubled.

A favorable trend, as revealed in Table 3, is that the rate of growth for day care centres is increasing.

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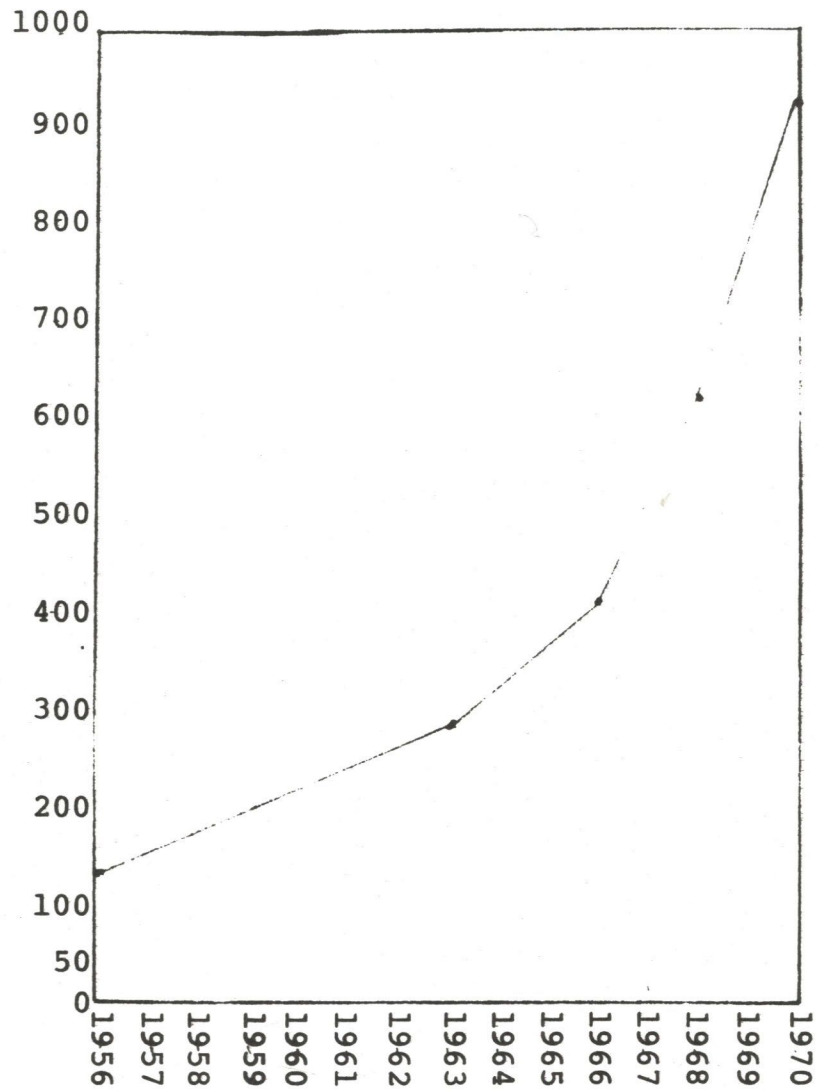
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<sup>18</sup>Women's Bureau, Canada Department of Labour, Working Mothers and Their Child-Care Arrangements, 1970

Table 3:

Increase in Day Care Centres from 1956 - 1970

Number  
of  
Centres





AGES OF CHILDREN REGISTERED IN DAY CARE CENTRES

While there is general agreement among day care personnel that qualitative group care is beneficial for children aged three and over, there is considerable controversy concerning the value of group care for children under the age of 3. The traditional view is that children under the age of three would best be served by placement in supervised family day care homes where they would experience more individualized attention. A second school of thought holds that it is difficult to recruit the number of adequate family day care homes needed, and that group care for infants, safeguarded by high standards, may be a more satisfactory solution.

*Services  
Lacking  
for  
Infants  
and  
School-Age  
Children*

Nevertheless, both groups agree that the two age groups most sadly neglected in terms of child care arrangements are the under three's and the young school age child. The latter has been referred to as the latch-key child. He is often unsupervised in the morning as his parents leave for work before classes begin, often has to fend for himself over the noon hour, and may be unsupervised from three o'clock until the parents arrive home from work.

Table 4 indicates that there is justification for the concern about the lack of day care services for children under the age of three and for school age children.

Table 4: Ages of Children Registered in Day Care (1971)

Ages of Children	C h i l d r e n No.	%
Under 2	1,056	2.6
2	3,286	7.9
3 to 5	34,580	83.5
6 and over	1,581	3.8
Age not specified	<u>908</u>	<u>2.2</u>
	41,411	100.0

The vast majority of day care spaces are directed to the three-to-five-year old group. The limited number of spaces available to children under the age of three likely reflects the general philosophy that the infant and the very young child should not be in group care. With the increasing questioning of this particular view, it is anticipated that the number of centres offering care to this age group will significantly increase during the next few years. It is also likely that if increased attention is

focussed on the needs of children of early school age, the number of centres offering services to this age group will expand.

#### SPONSORSHIP OF CENTRES

*Value  
of  
Differing  
Auspices*

There are characteristic strengths associated with the type of auspices or sponsorship of day care centres. Parent cooperatives provide a structure which, by definition maximizes parental involvement and control. Non-profit, community, board-operated programs lend themselves to community inputs and citizen understanding of the needs of day care. Commercial centres increase the availability of services to the middle and upper income groups.

Changing philosophy, new ideas, innovations, and models of services arising out of different sponsorships should contribute to the overall development of day care.



Table 5 gives the distribution of centres by sponsorship.

Table 5: Sponsorship of Centres (1971)

<u>Sponsorship</u>	C e n t r e s	
	No.	%
Public	89	8
Community Board	347	29
Parent Coop.	186	16
Commercial	499	43
Other	<u>52</u>	<u>4</u>
	1,173	100

The 52 centres classified "Other" include centres operated by such organizations as universities, hospitals and social action groups.

It is interesting to note, that the commercial centres constitute just less than half of the total number of centres. Along with the current interest shown in all levels of government in providing day care services, it is likely that there will be a significant increase in the percentage of public and community board-operated centres.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Table 6 indicates the source of funding of day care programs.

Table 6: Source of Funding of Day Care Services (1971)

<u>Source of Funds</u>	<u>No. of Full Day Care Centres</u>	<u>No. of Half or Part-time Prog.</u>
Gov't Grants	33	52
Gov't Operated	47	22
Gov't Purchase of Service	227	100
United Appeal	32	44
Privately Raised Funds	57	161
Parental Fees	<u>527</u>	<u>537</u>
	*923	*916

\*The totals are higher than the actual numbered centres because most centres have more than one source of funds.

*Commercial  
Centres*

Almost all of the 1173 centres relied to some extent on parental fees as one source of funding. The majority of the publicly-subsidized centres use a sliding scale whereby the fee is assessed according to the parent's ability to pay. Other than parental fees, the majority of full day care centres relied on the governments purchasing the day care services on behalf of families that could not afford to pay the full cost.

### STAFFING

It is generally agreed that the staff-child ratios and the qualifications of staff, are two of the major factors influencing the quality of the day care program. Staff costs constitute the major component of a day care centre's budget. Consequently, the feasibility of using volunteers or unpaid staff, while maintaining a qualitative day care service, has been discussed in the day care literature.

Table 7 presents the current (1971) distribution of paid and unpaid staff by the type of program.

Table 7: Distribution of Paid and Unpaid Staff by Program (1971)

Type of Program	Full-Time Staff				Part-Time Staff			
	Paid		Unpaid		Paid		Unpaid	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Full Day Care	2363	93.5	165	6.5	954	56.7	729	43.3
Half-Time or Part-Time	989	64.9	535	35.1	814	20.4	3168	79.6

\*Full-Time staff in the Half-Time program refers to staff on duty during the hours the centre is opened.

As would be expected, the reliance on paid staff significantly differentiates the full-time day care centres from the centres offering a half-time or a part-time program. However it is interesting to note that the full day care centres did recruit a sizable number of unpaid staff for part-time positions.

#### DEPLOYMENT OF STAFF

In day care, there are three major staff functions. Some staff members work directly with the children, some work primarily with parents, and some serve in other capacities (cook, housekeeper, janitor, secretary) which though necessary, are not directly related to the parents or to the children. Examining the staff deployment in these three areas can give some indication of the philosophy, and to some extent, of the quality of service provided. For example, there is a growing recognition of the need to ensure some continuity in the child's experience at home and at the centre. When a social worker or another staff member is assigned to work with the parents, it indicates that the centre views the child as a part of the family as a whole, and that it recognizes the family may have other problems

*Functions*

*Social*

*Work*



which, if not resolved, may diminish the effectiveness of the day care experience. Likewise, if a centre does not deploy staff for cooking, janitorial, and other routine responsibilities, it may mean that the staff will have less time to give to the children and this policy may reflect on the quality of service being offered.

Table 8 indicates the deployment of staff according to program.

Table 8:

Deployment of Staff According to Program (1971)

Type of Program	Staff Assigned to					
	Children		Parents		In Other Areas	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Full Day Care	3012	76.3	216	5.5	721	18.2
Half-Time or Part-Time	3136	81.5	221	5.7	492	12.8

The deployment of staff does not differ significantly between full-time and part-time programs. The table indicates that the centres are making some attempt to provide services to the parents as well as to the child. Since information on staff qualifications and on the role of the staff members working with

parents was not obtained, it is not possible to generalize on the adequacy of this aspect of day care.

#### PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The desirability of parent participation and involvement in the day care program has been stressed increasingly in day care literature.

Table 9 indicates the involvement of parents as staff and as volunteers in the day care centres.

Table 9:

Involvement of Parents as Staff and as Volunteers by Type of Program (1971)

<u>Type of Program</u>	<u>Parents Employed as paid staff</u>		<u>Parents serving as Volunteers</u>		<u>Fee Reduced for Parent Involvement</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Full Day Care	116	13.2	643	72.9	123	13.9
Half-Time or Part-Time	105	1.4	5811	76.4	1691	22.2

Although the full-day care centres employ about the same number of parents as do the half-time programs, the latter rely significantly more on parent volunteers and they utilize the reduction of the parental fee for parent involvement to a much greater degree.

This is understandable in that parents who are working will have less opportunity to be involved during the day with the day care centre. It would be interesting to obtain information concerning the various ways the full day care centres have been able to involve parents in their program.

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

During the summer of 1971, the Canada Assistance Plan Directorate of the Department of National Health and Welfare conducted a national survey to provide an inventory of existing day care centres.

1173 out of 1490 centres responded to the questionnaire, 43% serving children of working mothers and 57% restricted to half-time or part-time programs.