

# Working



# Woman

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## WE NEED GOOD DAY CARE

*Saskatchewan's present day care program was first implemented in 1974. It was developed in response to pressure from various women's groups, including the Status of Women, Women's Liberation and the NDP women's caucus. The program, however, was only a partial response to the needs expressed by these groups. At first, groups asking for day care took a wait-and-see attitude to give the program time to work before they commented on it. After nearly six years, it is clear that the program has not worked effectively and cannot work effectively.*

*Saskatchewan Working Women considers good day care to be one of the fundamental needs of working women. The inadequacies of the present day care system are therefore an immediate and central concern of all working women in the province. In this paper, Saskatchewan Working Women discusses the basic problems with the province's day care program. We show that the problems arise not only in the implementation — underfunding, inadequate staffing, and other shortcomings — but in the nature of the program itself. We also show some of the ways in which this inadequate program affects the lives of working women.*



### Why Do Working Women Need Good Day Care?

But there's more to this than the idea that child care is women's responsibility. There's a deep-rooted belief in our society that women should carry out this responsibility themselves. They should not share it, or delegate it to others. Each woman who becomes a mother should, according to this belief, devote herself full-time to the care of her child for as long as her child needs it. In addition to this, there's a common idea that women should have the main responsibility for running the household — cooking, cleaning, and providing emotional support for their men. In short, there's still a common belief that "a woman's place is in the home".

#### Is a woman's place in the home?

In our society, women have primary responsibility for child care. Any problems with the care of children are women's problems, too. When mothers work outside the household, they have the main responsibility for arranging for care of their children, whether it's full-time care or after school care. Good child care is one of the main concerns of all working mothers.

#### The reality is otherwise...

The majority of Canadian women no longer *act* according to this belief. The number of women who work outside the household continues to increase. Our economy has required women workers in the job market and women have responded, encouraged by necessity. Most Canadian families need more than one income to get by. This is especially true now, when real wages — purchasing power — have declined. In addition to this economic need to work, women as members of society have the same need as men to use their skills and abilities in a productive way. In our society, that means paid work. But while the economy uses women's work, it supplies nothing in exchange to help women with the work of the home. That burden has remained with them.

#### The idea has its uses for some...

Politicians and other groups have often used the idea that women's place is in the home as the basis for resisting any kind of program that would help women to deal with triple jobs: as mothers, as housekeepers, and as paid workers.

#### We need day care...

Day care is necessary for women, who need to work. But good government sponsored day care doesn't exist for most mothers. Women who have jobs and young children are forced into often unsatisfactory arrangements in order to handle both. Some women make child care arrangements that aren't the best; others work part-time or on evening shifts. Many women quit their jobs at intervals because of child care problems. Juggling job and child care hours is often the most energy-consuming part of a working woman's life. Due to the lack of adequate child care, many women will simply not take paid work when they might otherwise want or need to.

On top of these pressures, working mothers have to cope with guilt: the message that society still sends them is

that they should stay at home. And so our politicians just won't face the facts of the matter and deal with the problems of working mothers. They can ignore these problems by harking back to an attitude that says the problem shouldn't exist in the first place. But wishful thinking doesn't make reality, and the reality is that we need day care!

Women, like men, have a right to paid employment, but the lack of good day care facilities deprives us of that basic right. Through the pressures of child care, we are forced to choose between lower paid work in the labour force or unpaid work in the home. When women can enter the paid labour force without child care problems, this will make us stronger as women and as workers. It will be a step towards the full participation of women in our society.





### Why Do Our Children Need Good Day Care?

The politicians' resistance to meeting women's work needs is supported by a lot of studies which claim to show that children need the undivided attention of their mothers for several years in order to develop properly. These theories can even argue against having more than one child, on the grounds that the second child will detract from the attention that should be given to the first!

For every study that shows the need to isolate children with their mothers, there are countless studies, case histories and personal experiences that show the opposite. In most societies — including our own until recent years — children receive little direct attention from their mother or any other adult. Families are larger. Adults are too busy to spend much time specifically on child care. Child care is often shared among several adults, usually women but sometimes men, and older children often have responsibility for the care of younger ones. These children grow up to be responsible adults. They learn at an early age that they are members of a whole community.

Children need social experiences in growing up as well as close relationships with particular individuals. In our society, good day care is the best way to bring our children into contact with others and to expose them to a wide variety of experiences.





# The Saskatchewan Day Care Program

## How does it work?

The program is administered through the Department of Social Services in a division called the Daycare Division. The program sets standards for and licenses day care centres and family day care homes. It also provides grants to centres and subsidies to parents, where eligible.

## Day Care Centres

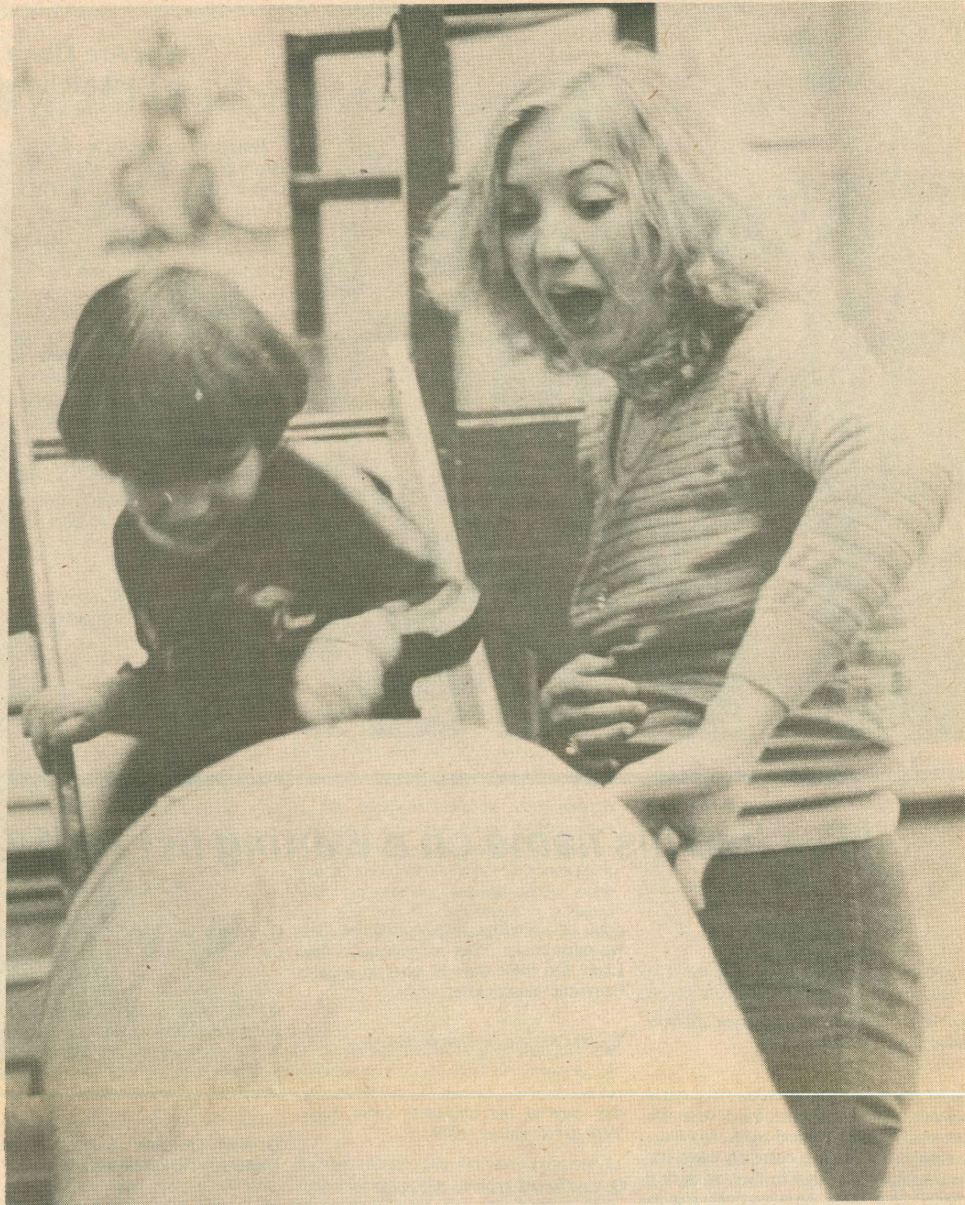
Day care centres provide care facilities for up to 60 children, ranging in ages from 18 months to 12 years. All new day care centres must be parent-controlled and non-profit.

From a parent's point of view, there are three main aspects to consider about her children and a day care centre: quality, availability and cost.

## Quality

We all want our children to have the best care we can supply. There's a great deal of evidence to show that day care centres, when **properly funded and maintained**, are good places for young children to be. They have lots of space to play in, and toys that are fun but safe, too. The children get good meals, have nap times and are well supervised. And they get to play with other children and learn how to do things with others.

But to provide quality care, day care centres need to be properly funded. Most centres are currently forced to operate on a shoestring budget. The government provides each centre with **one** start-up grant of \$400 per child space for equipment and supplies, and for renovations and alterations to the premises. For a 40-child day care, this comes to \$16,000. But building a day care is expensive. The start-up grant is



## Cost

Day care centres currently serve people at the two ends of the income scale: either parents with very low incomes, usually single mothers, or two-parent families where both parents work at relatively better paying jobs. The reason for this is the government's subsidy structure. The government will help pay for day care if the parents' family income is low enough. The problem is that to qualify for a subsidy, a mother must be employed or attending school. If a mother of one child is employed, and has a husband who is also employed, their combined income would have to be less than

qualify for any subsidy. The average fee for day care is now about \$200 per child per month.

## Availability

Many parents can't find good day care. There are currently 61 day care centres in the whole province. Most of these (36) are in Regina and Saskatoon. In these cities, most centres have waiting lists; there just aren't enough spaces. And when one considers that there are only 25 other centres to serve the rest of the province, it becomes clear that for most parents, day care is not even a possibility.

The provincial government talks in other terms:

*"Whereas it is deemed advisable to promote the growth and development of day care services for children and to provide or support these services to ensure their availability to all families in Saskatchewan who need these services, these regulations are being passed."*

—Day Care Regulations, SR 213/75



not enough to allow for purchase of a good modern location; as a result, many day care centres in Saskatchewan are found in church basements or old buildings. This is unfortunate because bright, cheerful surroundings are one of the most important qualities of good day care. Since 1978, day care centres have also been eligible for annual equipment grants of \$500 per centre. Although this helps, it is not enough to make major improvements, or find a better building. For example, one good climbing toy costs about \$300.

All other expenses involved in operating a day care centre must come out of parents' fees. These fees cover (besides wages) rent or mortgage payments, utilities and food. As we all know from providing for our own families, the costs of these last three are steadily increasing. Good quality day care requires increased funding.



\$1,000 per month to qualify for the maximum subsidy (90 percent of the day care fee to a maximum of \$150). If they both work full-time at minimum wage, they would qualify for about half the maximum subsidy. If either one makes more than minimum wage the subsidy would go down accordingly. So most working couples don't qualify for much of a subsidy. With the husband making the average Saskatchewan wage, the mother at minimum wage, and one child, the family income will be too high to





## "The main reason was necessity."



### Interview with Jill Hill (a parent who was active in establishing Wascana Co-op Day Care)

**Q.** I understand that you were active in establishing the Wascana Co-op Day Care Centre. Can you please explain why you decided to start this day care centre?

**A.** The main reason was necessity. I was a student at the university then, and a single parent. I needed full-time care for my daughter, Mia. There was only one day care centre within reasonable distance of my home and the school, but it was full, with a long waiting list.

**Q.** Why did you choose day care rather than finding a babysitter or making some other arrangement?

**A.** Mia had been in day care before and I was pleased with the type of care that she received. I think it is important for children to develop social relationships and not be totally dependent on their parents. As a working parent, I think it is important to prepare children to be on their own, to accept social realities and to grow in a social atmosphere. I think day care provides this to a greater extent than a private babysitter. Also as a single parent, I needed child care for which I could receive a subsidy, in order for me to have access to the service. Day care is the only form of child care that is subsidized.

**Q.** Who was involved in organizing the day care centre?

**A.** There was a group of about four people: myself, two other students, and a

staff member of the university. We were the main people who had the time and desire to organize the centre. There was a lot of interest but most people did not have the time to help organize. The Students' Union supported our efforts but while they had the right idea and philosophy, we were the people with the need. The difference between those with the idea and those with the need is often substantial.

**Q.** What were the first things you had to do?

**A.** We had some initial meetings with the Day Care Branch of the provincial government to find out what the regulations were and what things we would have to do to start the centre. First, we had to establish a need for such a facility. We had to collect the names of 30 people who would use the centre when it opened. This was easy, as there were many people who were interested and needed day care. After that, it became more complicated and bureaucratic. The people who have the knowledge and set the regulations (the government) do not have the need for the service; therefore, they have very abstract ideas about day care. As parents, we have the need and some very concrete ideas of how we want our children raised, but we didn't have the bureaucratic knowledge of how to establish a day care. Consequently, the parents do all the work setting up the centre, not the government, but the parents have no input into those regulations that they must abide by. This widens the gap, as the parents end up with the practical experience, which the government representatives lack, but still are unable to have input to make the regulations more realistic.

**Q.** Why did you decide to locate the day care centre at the university?

**A.** There were two main advantages — free rent and convenience. Since most of the parents using the centre were students or staff at the university, it was convenient to have the facility on campus. If we could obtain free rent, then this would reduce our costs significantly. We presented many arguments to the university, but were successful when we argued national reputation. Many other universities have had day care centres for about fifteen years, and ours should be no exception. This argument seemed to appeal to them the most. Eventually, we were granted funding from the government and the right of free space from the university. This process took several months.

**Q.** How did you organize child spaces and staff at the day care?

**A.** We accepted children from two to five years, and later added a few spaces for children aged 18 months. All parents were required to work in the centre for 4 hours per month. This mandatory work time was easy to implement in a centre such as ours, because most of the parents were students with flexible time schedules.

**Q.** What were some of the problems you encountered in the first few months of operation?

**A.** First of all, the day care required a dominant principle of operation. Parents all have different ideas about child care and this had to be worked out. Also, there is the other aspect of providing the necessary bureaucracy for the operation of the centre. It was necessary to establish a criteria for hiring staff, actually hire those staff members, order the food, renovate the space, purchase and replace toys and other equipment, decide wages, plan programs, establish schedules of work for the parents and balance the books. This was a very complicated process and demanded a certain expertise that most of the parents did not possess. All of this lead to a fundamental

problem with the current organization of day care. The parents supported the basic co-op philosophy of day care that gives them participation and control of the inner working of the centre, however, they became the employers and management and were forced to act in that capacity. The parents talked about the need for high quality but did not want to pay the staff more for their labour. Many of the parents couldn't afford to pay more, and the amount of available subsidy would not cover an increase in wages. This is one of the main contradictions in day care.

**Q.** What do you see as the solution to this problem?

**A.** Again, it is very complicated, as I would not like to see the government have total control of the program. I think that it is important for parents to maintain control. However, if day care had an ongoing financial commitment with the government that would realistically cover the costs of equipment replacement and increase the subsidy level in annual increments that again reflected the real costs of day care, then I think this would alleviate some of the problems.

**Q.** What advice would you give other parents that wanted to start a day care centre?

**A.** Parents should talk with people who have had experience in starting centres and read some of the histories that are available from various day cares. Also, they could visit a variety of centres to view the different programs and subsequent problems. There are also groups like some of the trade unions and SWW who have done research on day care and can provide some assistance. By talking to people who have had the experience of starting a co-op centre, they can familiarize themselves with the kind of arguments necessary to satisfy government regulations and obtain funding. I would not put too much importance in the Day Care Branch, as they don't possess any of the experience — just the bureaucratic knowledge of the regulations.

### Family Day Care Homes

The family day care home was introduced by the government in 1977. It has essentially served as a cutback to the day care program.

Family day care homes are located in private homes and provide care for a small number of children (maximum of 8, depending on the age), ranging in age from 6 weeks to 12 years.

Basically, family day care home providers are women who babysit in their homes. This approach saves the government a lot of money. The start-up grants are much lower than for day care centres: a one-time grant of \$100 for the home, and no operating grants at all. For the parents, the maximum subsidy for these homes is \$120 per month, compared to \$150 in a centre. For the workers, there are no benefits. They are not covered by

labour legislation. Many workers in home day care might have a ten-hour day, with no coffee breaks, no sick leave or holiday pay. They experience isolation and low pay, usually less than minimum wage. These bad working conditions are encouraged by the government. These same women, if taking care of the same children in a day care centre, would have far better pay and working conditions.

This situation means a high rate of turnover in family day care homes. This in turn creates unstable conditions for the children. The province does not provide adequate staff to regulate these homes. The program takes financial and other resources from regular day care centres, and is a totally inadequate substitute.





## Why Are There So Few Day Care Centres in Saskatchewan?

Existing procedure doesn't encourage setting up new day care centres. Regulations state that all new centres must be non-profit and parent-controlled. These regulations are good. However, the government's Day Care Division has interpreted this to mean that parents must also supply the initiative and effort in establishing new centres. The Division itself puts no priority on developing new centres. When the program was begun in 1974, government staff were assigned to help interested parents set up new centres. This is no longer the case.

This means that before any centre is established there has to be a group of parents who:

- know of each other's existence;
- form a group large enough for a viable centre;
- have enough time to devote to the organizational effort involved — as most of these parents are working this is often difficult. In addition,

parents often don't have previous experience in establishing a day care centre.

The history of day care centres in Saskatchewan is a poor one. Many have closed over the past five years. Given all the problems described in this paper, this is not surprising. The time required to establish a day care centre is more than many working parents can afford. Day care centres have difficulty establishing themselves financially. Any new day care centre, no matter how well run, takes at least six months to establish a reputation and a clientele. Any centre will have a turnover in parents as parents move in and out of the neighbourhood and as children grow up. This means that a day care centre needs to have a funding base which is independent of a given group of parents. But most day care centres must operate on a shoestring budget based on fees, and are often forced to shut down. This record of failure tends to discourage many parents who might otherwise become involved.

## "I've had his name on a waiting list for 1½ years now."

### Interview with Jan Howden Working Mother

**Q. What current arrangement do you have for child care?**

**A.** We live on a farm about 100 miles outside of Regina. I work full-time at the university, doing clerical work. My two-year-old son, Liam, is currently cared for by his father. Don is a farmer, so during the winter months, he is relatively free to look after our son. However, there are always some days when Don is hauling

grain or attending farm workshops that we must make other arrangements for Liam. On these days he goes to a paid babysitter in our closest town.

**Q. Has Liam ever been in day care?**

**A.** Yes — very much so. He never cried while attending day care, and looked forward to seeing the other children. He really loved it and the opportunity to play with other children of all ages. Now that he is no longer at the day care, he is always excited when he has the opportunity to play with other children.

**Q. Did he like it at the day care?**

**A.** Yes — very much so. He never cried while attending day care, and looked forward to seeing the other children. He really loved it and the opportunity to play with other children of all ages. Now that he is no longer at the day care, he is always excited when he has the opportunity to play with other children.

**Q. Why are you no longer using the day care?**

**A.** Well, there are two reasons — convenience and financial. Don has more time in the winter months, so it is easier for us to have Liam at home. Also, since we do not qualify for any subsidy, we are saving close to \$200 a month that we would spend on child care.

**Q. Did you have any problems in finding day care for Liam last summer?**

**A.** I would have liked Liam to attend the University Co-op Day Care, but there were no spaces at that time. Luckily, the Wascana Day Care had an opening for a child of his age (then 18 months), so I took that one. I didn't consider any other day care in the city, primarily because I needed something close to my work place. I already drive 40 miles to work every day, so I really didn't want day care in another part of the city. If he hadn't been able to get in to the day care at the university, I had made tentative plans to leave him with one of the neighbours on the farm. However, this was very tentative, as she was only able to babysit for a few months.

**Q. Would you like to have Liam in day care in the future?**

**A.** Oh yes. Hopefully, he will be able to start at the University Co-op Day Care in April. I've had his name on the waiting list for one and a half years now, and if all goes well, he will be able to start soon.

**Q. Why do you want him in the University Co-op Day Care?**

**A.** First of all, I prefer a co-op situation. I think that parents should have some input into what goes on in the day care. I think that day care should be organized on a non-profit basis. I think that parents should have the opportunity to work in the day care for part of the time.

Second, I have had an opportunity to review the philosophy of this day care and have visited there. I like what I saw and I like the philosophy of the staff and the emphasis of the centre. Third, the surroundings and equipment are good and the child-staff ratio is lower than most.

**Q. Would you have any problem having time free from your job to work in the day care?**

**A.** In my present job, no. I have a very unusual work situation in that I'm currently filling in for another worker who has been gone for the last year and a half. She might return to her job in October, but I won't know that until that time. Last October, I thought I would have to change jobs, so I had interviews for work in a different department. During the interview they asked me how much time I usually miss due to the fact that I do not live in the city. They also asked me what type of child care arrangement I had. I told them that I was trying to get a space in the University Co-op Day Care. In order to have Liam there I would be expected to put in one and a half hours a week, which I could arrange through extended lunch hours and not taking coffee breaks. I was told that this factor would work against me in getting the job. I didn't get the job due to seniority and was able to remain in the

same job. However, I face the same situation next October.

**Q. Why do you want to have Liam in a day care situation?**

**A.** First, it's a good opportunity for Liam. It gives him a chance to play with other children and to have

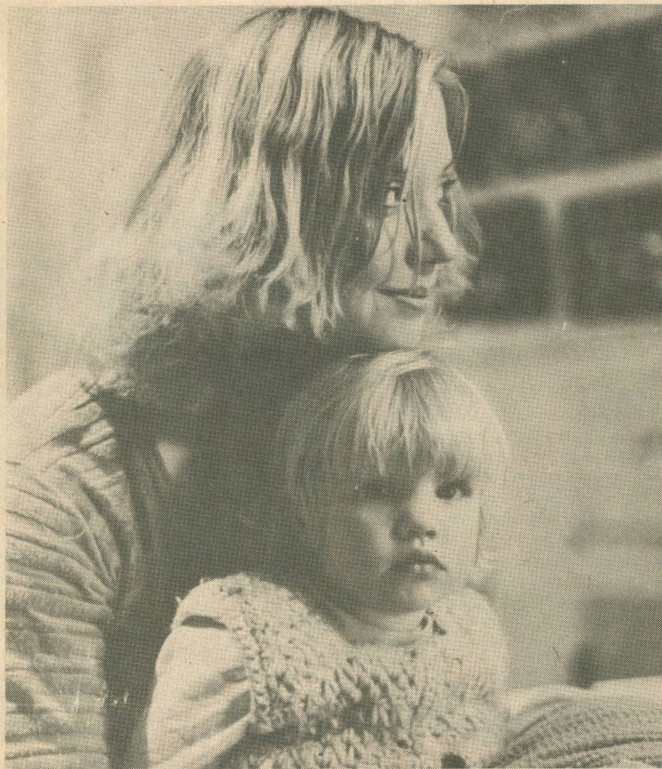
Since he is an only child, I think this type of atmosphere is important for him. Second, I think that it is important for him to experience other adults apart from Don and myself or just one other babysitter. I think the program is stimulating for the children, providing them with a variety of experiences and social relationships. In addition the variety of ages of the children is important. Liam learns faster when he is at the day care. It is very imaginative and challenging for him both physically and mentally. The day care is also convenient because, in my case, it is at the work place. This is a big factor. Lastly, I prefer day care because it is a subsidized form of child care, unlike private babysitters. While we don't qualify for the subsidy at this particular time, we may need this financial assistance in the future.

**Q. Do you have any criticisms of day care?**

**A.** I think that the government lacks initiative and interest in providing a good quality program. I think this is due to the position of women in our society which leads to a lack of funding and expansion of day care. Some day care lack facilities and space and most could improve with the addition of staff, larger and better space and lower child/staff ratios. There is a tremendous lack of available spaces in the day cares. Also the available spaces should be given to working people, perhaps based on need rather than on a first come, first serve basis. If there were enough spaces to fill the demand and need, then this wouldn't be a problem. I'm not in agreement with all day care centres and the way they operate. I think we need more centres, but of good quality. I prefer day care for Liam because I know he is getting good care in the centre that he will be going into in April.







## Workers and Parents

The largest operating expense for day care centres is wages. Caring for children is not something that can or should be mechanized or streamlined. Good quality child care depends very much on how the workers can perform their jobs. The Saskatchewan government recognizes this to a certain extent and has organized a 40-hour training course for day care workers. Worker training is important; many provinces require a year-long course for day care workers.

Training in and of itself will not ensure good quality care from workers. The most qualified worker will not do a good job if she is overworked and underpaid. Day care workers in Saskatchewan centres usually are overworked and underpaid. Saskatchewan regulations call for a ratio of ten children to one staff for two- to five-year-olds; this ratio is among the worst in Canada, and it causes great strain on workers. Most day care workers in Saskatchewan, no matter how well trained, make minimum wage. Train-

ing does not increase workers' wages. Nowhere in Canada do increased training requirements mean higher wages for day care workers, or better quality care. Poor wages and working conditions mean high staff turnover, and this in itself means lower quality care. New workers need time to get used to a place, and to get to know the children.

But under the present system, the money to increase day care workers' wages would have to come out of parents' pockets. So parents often find themselves in conflict with the workers over wages and working conditions.

In other care situations, such as schools or hospitals, the wages of the workers are not established in each institution. These institutions don't have to depend on serving enough people on a month-to-month basis to cover their costs. The costs are spread out over the province, and are subsidized through the tax base where required, because it is recognized that the service is socially necessary and desirable. So should it be with day care.

### Interview with Molly Barber Day Care Worker

## "The major problem is money."

**Q.** How did you first become involved in day care?

**A.** In 1972, I was living in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and I was looking for a program to develop a trade or skill. The technical school offered a one-year day care training program. The course was free and I didn't have the resources to take another program. I completed the course, including the practicum, which involved working in four different day care centres. After I finished, I worked at one of these centres for one year and then worked at the day care centre at the University of Wisconsin for one more year. I then moved to Saskatoon and began work at a centre there. At first I was director of the centre, for a period of six months; then I continued as a worker for another year and a half. The centre closed due to financial problems, so I found work in another centre in Saskatoon for one year. In 1978, I moved to Regina and worked at the University Day Care Co-op for the next two years. Two months ago, I took another job, unrelated to day care.

**Q.** You have worked in day care for many years in many different circumstances. Why have you continued?

**A.** It is the only kind of work that I have training for. The training program I took enabled me to be the director of the centre when I moved to Saskatoon. In Saskatchewan, there is no comparable program, so any worker with some training is in demand. I also like working in day care, even though the wages are generally very low. You have a certain control over the work you are doing and the conditions of the work place.

**Q.** Can you describe what it is like to work in a day care centre?

**A.** There are two different types of situations: collective and hierarchical. In the collective situation, the staff works collectively, rotating the directorship on a

monthly basis and making collective decisions about how the centre should be run. For example, all the staff attend all the meetings to decide on programming, food and equipment ordering, shifts and problems that can occur. We work directly with one another and have much more control over the day-to-day operations. If the centre has a low staff ratio, such as 1 staff member for each 7 children (usually 1 to 10) then the work becomes more interesting. You have the time to plan field trips, design learning activities, and arrange for resource people to visit the centre. The work becomes very satisfying when you can go beyond the custodial care, that is keeping the children dry, clean, fed and happy. The lower the child/staff ratio, the more opportunity one has to expand the resources that makes a better learning environment for the children and makes the work more satisfying and enjoyable.

**Q.** How is working in a non-collective situation different?

**A.** This is basically a hierarchical situation. The staff do not become involved to the same extent in the design of the program. There is not the same interaction between the staff members and subsequently between the staff and the children. I always felt like I was just performing my job, and never initiating anything.

**Q.** Who generally works in day care?

**A.** In my experience it is usually young women, 18 to 25 years of age who have little job training. In Saskatchewan, this is especially true because we don't have a training program. The turnover of day care workers is very high, the average person working for about six months. The wages are very low and the workers are always looking for another job that will pay better. There are also some older women who work in day care.

**Q.** What are some of the problems you experience as a day care worker?

**A.** The major problem is the money. A worker can barely live on the average wage and certainly can't support a family. For this reason, the turnover rate is very high. Also there is no job security. The centre may close for financial reasons, such as the one centre I worked at in Saskatoon. Usually there is no contract so the job expectations can change very suddenly with a change of the parent board. A worker may find that her work is satisfactory for a long period of time, but when the board changes, the expectations change, and the worker may be let go. The current child/staff ratios are also a problem. With a ratio of 1 to 10, the care is purely custodial. It is impossible to implement good learning programs and often your work is not very good due to the large number of children. There is often problems with the lack of equipment. It is difficult to have a good program if you don't have good or even adequate equipment to work with. In some of the centres I have worked in, there is a problem with the physical surroundings. In one centre, there were constant problems with the plumbing, the electrical system and in the winter, we had problems keeping the place warm. All of these things detract from your principal job — child care.

**Q.** What do you think day care workers can do to change these conditions?

**A.** I think day care workers should unionize. At a minimum day care workers should get together to discuss problems that they experience. Quite often, a worker thinks that the problems are her own personal problems, but when we do get together we find that we all share the same concerns and day-to-day problems. A union would be the best for the simple reason that it would provide us with a contract that would

discuss our working conditions and provide us with a contract that would discuss our working conditions and provide us with a formalized way of bargaining with the parent boards. This way we could discuss the issues without the parents feeling under attack. The wage issue is the most contentious and it is difficult for the workers to improve their wages. The centre I worked at in Saskatoon had to close because it could not afford to pay us \$3.75 per hour. The money thing is always a problem.

**Q.** How do you think day care workers could solve this problem with the parent board?

**A.** The parents must realize that the structure of day care forces them into the role of management. I have found that it doesn't matter how much people earn, they do not want to pay more for day care. I think that all day care workers should be employees of the government and bargain collectively with them for wage increases. That is where the money eventually comes from. This would allow the workers and parents the time and conflict-free atmosphere to discuss philosophy and educational programming in the centres. I believe that the workers should have the responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the centre and it is the duty of the parents to lead the fight for better day care. I think that it is the parents' responsibility to pressure the government for increased funding and spaces.

**Q.** What do you think about the 40-hour training program for day care workers in the province?

**A.** I think there should be a comprehensive two-year training program that would be paid for by the government. Such a program would include extensive training in actual day care centres. The current program is very insufficient.



# The Day Care Needs Study Shows

## — We Need Day Care

### What Do We Use Now?

Our best indicator of child care use and need comes from a study done in 1978 for the provincial Department of Social Services by the Sample Survey and Data Bank Unit at the University of Regina. This study is the most recent and most extensive investigation of this type.

The *Day Care Needs Study* estimates that in Saskatchewan, 28 percent of all children between 19 months and 5 years are in some form of child care other than their parents or school.

What kind of child care do these children receive?

Paid babysitter	72%
Unpaid friend/relative	16%
Day Care Centre	12%

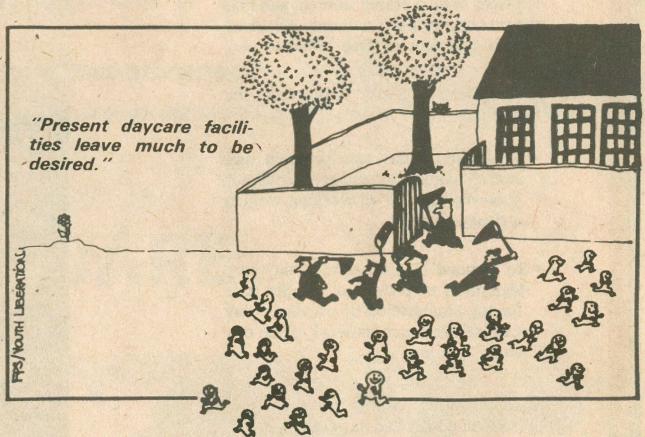
Only 12 percent of these pre-school children are cared for in day care centres. Of all children in this age group, children in day care represent only 3 percent.

Is this by choice? For some women, of course it is. Many women, however, are not satisfied with the type of child care they and their children are currently using.

The following chart compares what parents are using to what they prefer. Day care users show the highest satisfaction with 88 percent, while about 41 to 45 percent of users of babysitters are satisfied. That's half the rate for day care users.

Preference  
Percent of all using each type

Use	Day Care	Sitter out	Sitter in	Friend/rel.	Parent
Day care	88				
Sitter out		41			
Sitter in			45		
Friend/rel.				21	
Parent					35



### Would More People Use Day Care?

The best answer comes from the long waiting lists for existing day care centres. But *The Day Care Needs Study* indicates that more spaces are needed now in Saskatchewan.

The study indicates that 71 percent of parents with children 19 months to 5 years prefer some form of non-parental child care. Forty percent of these prefer day care centres or nursery schools.

The study estimates that in June 1978, there were 2,100 children from 19 months to 5 years using day care centres

in Saskatchewan. How many more could be expected if cost and availability were no problem, and parents used what they preferred?

There are 4,300 children whose parents are employed or attending school who need day care.

There are also 10,200 children not in day care now, whose parents are not employed or attending school but prefer day care. Day care is their right as well. Adding these to the 2,200 existing spaces gives a total need of 16,600 spaces.



### Day Care Need Children 19 months to 5 years

Existing spaces	2,100
Worker/student need	4,300
Minimum estimate of need	6,400
Other parent need	10,200
<b>TOTAL DAY CARE NEED</b>	<b>16,600</b>

### Other Children Need Day Care, Too

Day care centres are available mainly to the two- to five-year age group. This is because day care centres, by a new law passed in 1977, are not allowed to serve children under 18 months. The law was passed with the introduction of family day care homes. Experience in many places shows that infants can receive good care in day care centres, given low child-staff ratios and proper equipment. Many parents prefer such care for their infants. The *Day Care Needs Study* estimated a need of 2,900 spaces for infants. We need infant day care in Saskatchewan.

Although it is not illegal for school-age children to attend day care, most day care centres are not set up for them. With the difficulty most centres have in maintaining ordinary operations, it is understandable that they do not provide lunch-time or after school programs for children. Yet many parents require this

service. The *Day Care Needs Study* estimated that 19,000 children between 6 and 12 years of age require day care or lunch-time or after school programs.

#### Children Who Need Day Care

Infants	2,900
19 months — 5 years	16,600
6 — 12 years	19,000

*The Day Care Needs Study* was a telephone survey, with a sample size of 1,708 respondents randomly selected from most of the province. The study, however, excluded the far north of Saskatchewan and Indian reserves. So estimates presented here would be even higher were these areas to be taken into account.



# SWW is Fighting For a Good Day Care Program

We have shown that there are many problems with Saskatchewan's Day Care Program. We believe that good day care is a right of all working women, and that the present problems will only be solved with a program of **free universal day care**.

Specifically, SWW advocates the following:

- to demand a day care program that ensures availability and accessibility of good day care to all working women in Saskatchewan
- to demand an extension of day care legislation to provide a broader base for the organization of provincial day care centres such as work place day care
- to encourage and promote parent/worker controlled day care
- to encourage direct government funding of day care workers' wages to eliminate the major division between parents and workers
- to oppose any government move to promote or facilitate private enterprise exploitation of day care
- to demand quality care regulations equal to the real needs of children, parents and workers; for example, lower child/staff ratios and the promotion of non-sexist literature and toys in centres.

Saskatchewan Working Women has begun a campaign to fight for good day care. We have started by promoting information such as this publication, about the need for more and better day care, and about the need for a different, radically improved day care program that makes a serious attempt at meeting the need in Saskatchewan. SWW is also



developing information and proposals for union bargaining which directly address the issues of day care, including work place day care, the need for maternity/paternity leave, and parent/worker control of day care.

There is a need for active involvement among unions, women's groups, community groups, and interested individuals in fighting for good day care. Changes will only come about when we organize to make them happen.



## WHAT IS SWW?

The Saskatchewan Working Women grew out of a Saskatchewan Federation of Labour Women's Conference in February, 1978. Those involved in the organization believe that there is a need for working women to organize and become more active in fighting for change. The objectives of the organization are:

- to provide a network of solidarity, specifically with women workers, but also on a broader basis with other women and men

- to unite women in the organized labour movement and encourage unorganized women to organize
- to work to gain equality for women and end discrimination in the work force
- to improve working conditions, wages, hours of work, job security, day care and other benefits of importance to women.

Saskatchewan Working Women is an organization open to all women (unionized or non-unionized, paid or unpaid) who agree with our objectives.

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