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Survey of the Head Start Program in Mattoon, Illinois

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SURVEY OF THE HEAD START PROGRAM

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter — Page

I INTRODUCTION.....1

General Introduction
Purpose of the Study
Plan for the Study
Limitations of the Study
Definitions of the Terms

II HISTORICAL REFERENCE.....6

Legislation
Eligibility
Administration
Finance

III REVIEW OF INITIAL HEAD START PROGRAM IN MATTOON.....9

Objectives
Staff
Physical Facilities
Daily Program
Curriculum
Other Agencies
Data Gathering
Results

IV SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE REGARDING THE DEPRIVED CHILDREN.....20

Characteristics of the Deprived Children
Approaches and Ideas in Education of the Disadvantaged Children

V IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE HEAD START PROGRAMS.....36

Language Skills
Development of a Positive Self-Image
Units of Work
Constant Evaluation
Summary

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....45

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

Project Head Start, under the sponsorship of the Office of Economic Opportunity, is the most extensive preschool experiment of all time. During the summer of 1965 over a quarter million children were enrolled in Head Start classes in an effort to wipe out some of the handicaps of social and economic deprivation with which children from rural and urban slums enter kindergarten or first grade. The Head Start program is intended not only to give children greater facility in manipulating and comprehending the spoken word but also to give them psychological reassurance and to provide important physical and medical care.

Project Head Start is a most exciting, productive, and practical project. Through this project, professional educators and volunteers of this country are attempting to reach young children, who are lost in a gray world of poverty and neglect, and help to lead them into the human family. Thousands of adults give unselfishly of their patience, kindness, and time in order that deprived children can become aware of themselves as "someone" with ability to learn and to hope for the future. Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson has stated, "There is no more important task in our community than for such children to hear a voice say: 'Come, take my hand.'"[1]

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[1]"United States Office of Economic Opportunity," Project Head Start--An Invitation to Help, 1965, p. 7.

Purpose of the Study

Project Head Start is a recent educational innovation which is attempting to broaden the horizons of deprived children so that they can become useful citizens in a modern society. At the present time, little is known concerning the use of materials, the experiences, and the techniques used by educators, who are working with deprived children. The most effective procedures should be surveyed and carefully selected for usage in order to enhance the children's skills and background experiences necessary for success in education. This study, which is a survey of Head Start programs throughout the United States, has been made in the expectation that certain implications could be drawn which might serve as useful guidelines for future Head Start programs and with special reference to the Head Start program sponsored by Community Unit #2, Mattoon, Illinois.

Plan for the Study

The establishment of Project Head Start was reviewed in reference to the legislation enacted by the United States Congress. Eligibility, administration, and financing were discussed concerning the establishment of a Head Start Project. Next, the 1965 Head Start Program in Mattoon, Illinois, was reviewed, and then a survey of the literature regarding the education of the deprived children was conducted. Information from articles and reports was gathered from Head Start programs throughout the United States. After a careful study of the materials used, experiences provided, and techniques employed, implications were submitted that could serve as a useful guideline for future Head Start programs in Mattoon, Illinois.

Culturally Deprived and Educationally Deprived--"The term 'culturally deprived' refers to those aspects of middle-class culture--such as education, books, formal language--from which these groups have not benefited. However, because the terms are in current usage, 'culturally deprived' is used interchangeably with 'educationally deprived' to refer to the members of lower socio-economic groups who have limited access to education."[4]

Frank Riessman

Frank Riessman used the terms "culturally deprived," "educationally deprived," "deprived," "underprivileged," "disadvantaged," "lower class," and "lower socio-economic group," interchangeably throughout his book The Culturally Deprived Child.[5]

Project--"A project is an activity, or set of related activities, proposed by local educational agency and designed to meet certain of the special educational needs of educationally deprived children in a designated area."[6]

Program--"A program refers to the performance or execution of the set of related activities by the local educational agency."[7]

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[4]Frank Riessman, The Culturally Deprived Child, (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 3.

[5]Ibid., p. 1.

[6]U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, School Programs for Educationally Deprived Children, "Basic Facts for School Administrators," 1965, p. 4.

[7]Ibid.

Mattoon Head Start Teaching Staff consisted of Miss Betty Lou Cole (principal of Columbian School), Mrs. Phyllis Lape (fourth grade teacher at Bennett School), Mrs. Claudia Richardson (second grade teacher at Bennett School), Mrs. Joan Doemelt (fifth grade teacher at Lincoln School), Miss Dorothy Moran (first grade teacher at Washington School), and Mrs. Ann Swan (third grade teacher at Washington School).

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL REFERENCE

LEGISLATION

Project Head Start is provided for under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The Act was signed into law by President L. B. Johnson on April 11, 1965.

The heart of the bill is a three-year program of Federal grants to the states for allocation to school districts to improve the education of some five million children of families with incomes below $2,000 and other children in families receiving Aid to Dependent Children. Under this title, $1,06 billion is authorized for the fiscal year 1966. Of this amount $43,361 was alloted to the State of Illinois for the year 1966.[8]

The disadvantaged children as referred to throughout this paper are defined by the Office of Education as: "Children whose educational achievement is below average or without special aid are likely to fall below that normally expected of children of their age and grade. The term also includes children who are handicapped by physical, mental, or emotional impairment."[9]

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[8]Philip H. Des Marais, "The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965," Health, Education, and Welfare Indicators, May 1965, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (Washington D.C.), pp. 1-6.

[9]Joseph V. Medeiros, op. cit.

Eligibility

The basis for determining eligibility of a local educational agency (school district) is the number of children aged five to seventeen, as shown on the 1960 census, who are from families with incomes of less than $2,000 a year. The act provides that eligibility be determined on a district basis. All local educational agencies which have at least one hundred such children may be considered eligible. A smaller district may qualify if at least 3% of the children aged five to seventeen are from low-income families, provided there is a minimum of at least ten children.[10]

A project is a set of related activities proposed by a local educational agency. Its eligibility rests on its design to meet certain of the special educational needs of educationally deprived children in the designated area. Recognizing that the needs of educationally deprived children vary from district to district, the law specifies only that projects submitted be designed to achieve the over-all purpose of the title and that they be approved by the appropriate state educational agency.[11]

Although the program is designed primarily for the children of low-income families, children who are members of large families with moderate incomes may participate, thus many children in dire need of help with emotional, physical, and cultural problems can receive it. No child can be excluded from participating in a project under this title on the basis of race, color, or national origin.[12]

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[10] Ibid., p. 10.

[11] U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, School Programs for Educationally Deprived Children, "Basic Facts for School Administrators," 1965, pp. 4-11.

[12] Ibid., pp. 2-3.

Administration

The local educational agency is responsible for the administration of the local program. It, in turn, is duly responsible for evaluation and reporting to the state agency. The state agency reviews, approves, or disapproves local plans and compiles reports to be sent to the Office of Education in Washington, D. C.

The law requires that the local sponsoring agency develop projects under Title I in cooperation with a Community Action Agency which has been approved under the Economic Opportunity Act in its locality. Genuine working relationships are established during the planning and development of a project and are maintained throughout the operation of the program.[13]

Finance

Head Start programs are financed by the Office of Economic Opportunity up to 90% of their cost. The 10% local share of costs may be provided either in cash or by providing space, equipment, utilities, or personal services. Funds are funneled to the school districts through the state educational agencies, which must approve projects and programs of the districts using guidelines established by legislation.

The amount of money a district is to receive is based on a formula. Payments equal one-half the average state expenditure per pupil multiplied by the number of deprived children. Thus the State of Illinois was allotted $43,361 under Title I in 1965. This amount ranked sixth in amounts allotted in the United States.[14]

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[13] Ibid., pp. 13-14.
[14] Philip H. Des Marais, op. cit., pp. 6-8.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF THE INITIAL HEAD START PROGRAM IN MATTOON

Objectives

The objectives of Project Head Start in Mattoon during the summer of 1965 were not stated in a list because of the hurried planning of the program. However, there were a few objectives which were emphasized by the five teachers who took part in the program. They are as follows:

(1) To help the children's emotional and social development by encouraging self-confidence, self-expression, and self-discipline.

(2) To broaden the children's intellectual horizons through providing a variety of first-hand experiences.

(3) To provide experiences in language development and communication skills.

(4) To give the children frequent chances to succeed.

(5) To provide the opportunity for the children to meet and see teachers, policemen, and health officers in situations which will foster respect and not fear.

(6) To help the children to develop a positive attitude toward themselves, their school, and their community.

Staff

The staff of each of the five centers in Mattoon was headed by a teacher with both professional training and experience in the elementary school. Teachers' human qualities of warmth and concern were stressed as very important in working with and understanding the deprived child. Each head teacher was responsible for a group of fifteen children in her classroom.

The head teachers attended a one-week training session at the University of Illinois for working with the deprived child. This training was most valuable in that it helped to clarify the distinction between the characteristics of the deprived child and the child most commonly labeled as "slow" or "stupid." Many ideas and suggestions for working with the deprived child were obtained from this training.

Working under the head teacher was a paid teacher 'aide' and a volunteer. The teacher aide possessed many of the same qualities as the head teacher, plus the willingness to learn and expand her horizons. Girls, who were regular term college students, were chosen for these positions.

The third person in each classroom was a neighborhood volunteer. Many mothers of the children were encouraged to help in this capacity. However, these mothers were found to be not dependable and many lacked the capacity to perform the general routine tasks required of them in the classroom.

Several of the head teachers resorted to using high school

age girls in the volunteer positions. According to the staff members, this proved to be of more help to the teachers and was an enlightening experience for these teen-agers.

A staff of three concerned people resulted in more time spent with individual children, which was a main factor in the success of this program.

Physical Facilities

The buildings presently used for elementary schools in Mattoon were used for centers. Each of the five groups was in a different building with the exception that two groups met at Washington School. The facilities in each building were at the disposal of each teacher.

The physical arrangement within the classroom was left to the discretion of each teacher and consequently varied according to the significant differences among the teachers as well as those of the children attending the five different classes. The general arrangement of each classroom did provide for the room's being divided into areas of interest with relation to the curriculum. The different areas set up but somewhat overlapping were play area, music area, art and crafts area, rest area, area for presentation of learning concepts, library and reading area, and teacher work area.

Many supplies and much equipment were recommended by the National Office of Education. With the exception of a few carefully selected toys, centers in Mattoon received few new materials because of the lack of funds.

The success achieved by the program was a result of the efficiency with which the materials on hand were utilized. Teachers in Mattoon found that few materials were necessary for a good program because everything was new, exciting, and somewhat frightening to the children. Many experiences with simple materials available provided the children with success and pleasure.

Daily Program

The teachers in Mattoon worked out an agreeable schedule after research and consideration in the areas of the preschool child and the deprived child. Naturally the program had to be flexible for the most adequate use of the time available with the children.

All of the planning and preparing of materials had to be done before and after class. The teacher aides and volunteers were usually very effective in assisting the head teacher in preparations. The smoothness with which the daily schedule was executed facilitated the success of the program in Mattoon.

The adopted daily schedule was as follows:

Morning Program

7:45 - 8:30	Breakfast and travel to centers
8:30 - 8:45	Free play (bathroom and brush teeth in shifts)
8:45 - 9:00	Planning with children
9:00 - 9:15	Group A - art activity (volunteer) Group B - story, poem, record (teacher aide) Group C - directed language activity (teacher)
9:15 - 9:30	Group A - story, poem, record (teacher aide) Group B - directed language activity (teacher) Group C - art activity (volunteer)

9:30 - 9:40	Music
9:40 - 9:50	Health (bathroom and wash)
9:50 -10:00	Milk and sandwich
10:00 -10:10	Rest
10:10 -10:25	Group A - directed language activity (teacher) Group B - art activity (volunteer) Group C - story, poem, record (teacher aide)
10:25 -10:30	Library time
10:30 -10:45	Rhythms
10:45 -11:00	Numbers
11:00 -11:20	Physical activity
11:20 -11:30	Evaluation (show and tell)

Using the foregoing schedule as a guideline, each teacher arranged her schedule according to the children in her group and also to the methods with which she felt she and her helpers could best secure the objectives of the program. The following is one such adaptation of the preceding schedule.

Morning Program

7:45 - 8:30	Breakfast and travel to centers
8:30 - 8:50	Indoor freeplay (restroom and brush teeth in shifts)
8:50 - 9:00	Planning and sharing with children
9:00 - 9:15	Teacher-language directed activity
9:15 - 9:30	Small group work (language and number readiness)
9:30 - 9:50	Music
9:50 - 9:55	Health (restroom and wash)
9:55 -10:05	Milk and sandwich
10:05 -10:20	Rest

10:20 -10:30 Library corner (stories and poems)

10:30 -10:40 Rhythms

10:40 -11:00 Art activity

11:00 -11:20 Physical activity

11:20 -11:30 Evaluation (show and tell)

Curriculum

The basis of the curriculum was language development. Deprived children seem to do poorly in language. They do not know the names of objects and are unable to speak distinctly or in complete sentences. Therefore, every activity stressed the use of language.

Most of the curriculum in Mattoon was organized around units or areas of concentration. Those most commonly used were based on the home, school, and community environments. To these children the environment away from home was new, exciting, and sometimes frightening. Many children had never been outside their home environments.

Units most widely used among the teachers consisted of community helpers, animals, foods, transportation, and nursery rhymes. Through the study of community helpers, the children had the opportunity to meet nurses, doctors, policemen, firemen, and dentists as "helpers" and not people to fear. It also provided the opportunity to teach better health practices such as brushing teeth, washing hands and face, and exercising safety regulations. Studying animals acquainted the children

with pets, farm animals, and circus animals, which many had never seen or heard of at home. The study of foods produced great excitement and results. This gave the children the chance to learn the names and to taste the foods which most people enjoy in their daily diets. Oranges, grapes, bananas, and cabbage were a few of the foods many of the children had never tasted and could not name. Learning how people travel was beneficial in that it helped the children to learn the difference in the uses of cars, trucks, buses, airplanes, boats, and trains. Also where they traveled, whether on land, water, or in the air, was an important outcome of this unit. Stories and nursery rhymes were incorporated throughout the entire program.

Most of the children learned to print their names and to recognize their own when in a group of other names. The visual appearance of letters was discussed according to likeness or difference. The sounds, names, and forms of letters were discussed only as the need was felt by the head teacher and the teacher aide.

Numbers were emphasized in the form of one-to-one correspondence. This was used throughout the daily program of distributing materials and preparing for the lunch which consisted of a sandwich and a carton of milk,

Muscle co-ordination was improved through physical activity on the playground and through rhythms and handwork. For many children this was their first experience with balls, ropes, scissors, pencils, and crayons.

Field trips played an important part in the success of the program in Mattoon. Field trips to "Pinocchio" at the "Little Theater" in Sullivan, Illinois, the firehouse, the circus grounds, the Mattoon Public Library, the Methodist Church, the Link Medical Clinic, the elevator in the Montgomery Ward Building, the Coles County Fair, the Coles County Airport, the IGA Food Store, a farm, and to Effingham by train proved to be invaluable experiences for the children.

The stories, records, nursery rhymes, songs, rhythm activities, handwork, films, filmstrips, field trips, and conversation were carefully chosen so as to co-ordinate and re-enforce the unit of work currently under study. In each of the foregoing, the verbal language involvement of the children was emphasized.

Other Agencies

Many community agencies donated their services in order to help make the program a success.

The children received physical, hearing, visual, dental, and foot examinations from professionals. There were follow-ups for acute physical deficiencies although this was limited because of the lack of funds.

The children received a hot breakfast daily. This meal was prepared by the mothers of the children under the supervision of trained personnel. After the serving of breakfast, lessons for the mothers on nutrition and household management were conducted before they returned to their homes.

A psychologist was also available for conferences concerning the deprived child and the involvement of the parents in the program.

Parent involvement and concern for the success of their children was one area which saw limited success in the program. The success, which was noticeable, came mostly through the home visits which were made by the head teachers and the case workers associated with the Coles County Department of Public Aid.

Data Gathering

Various forms were used to collect operational data on the Head Start program. Sample centers were chosen across the nation to administer forms for gathering information. Two of the centers in Mattoon were chosen as sample centers.

The instruments used throughout the program for gathering information were

Medical-Dental Family Information

Health Record

Psychological Screening Procedure

Parent Participation Record

Staff Member Information Sheet

Paid and Voluntary Worker's Evaluation of Program

Those instruments administered twice during the program were

Preschool Inventory

Operation Head Start Behavior Inventory

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test

Operation Head Start Workers' Attitude Scale

The data heretofore were transmitted to the collection agency in Jeffersonville, Indiana, which in turn transmitted the data to the Office of Research and Evaluation Project Head Start under the Office of Economic Opportunity in Washington, D. C., in August of 1965. Duplicate records were not kept; therefore, no analysis of the data gathered in the Mattoon project could be made. The assumption was formed that the analysis of this data transmitted would be made and the inference in summary relayed to the center in Mattoon. The report at this writing has not been received.

Results

These conclusions seemed justified as outcomes resulting from the Head Start Project in Mattoon as attested to by Mattoon Head Start personnel and supported by other persons connected with Head Start Programs throughout the United States as revealed by their writings.

1. Children gained approximately eight to ten points in intelligence as shown by data gathered from the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test.

   "Standard tests showed significant gains in educational achievement and mental ability of the Head Start children all across the country."[15]

2. Children received medical examinations through Head Start Programs. This was their first medical examination for many of the children.[16]

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[15]"Head Start Report," Scholastic Teacher, Vol. 18, No. 7, March 18, 1966, p. 2.

[16]Professor Edmund W. Gordon, "Which Way Head Start?" Scholastic Teacher, Vol. 12, No. 14, May 13, 1966, p. 2.

3. Children who previously had no toys, books, or art materials in their homes were exposed to varieties of such material.[17]

4. Children learned to take better care of themselves. They learned to wash their hands and faces. They also learned to comb their hair and dress themselves.[18]

5. Children were encouraged to converse more freely. Isolated words became sentence fragements, and gradually a sentence pattern emerged.[19]

6. Children who attended a preschool class were more "at home" when entering first grade than those who did not attend. "Teachers reported that children

-are better able to participate in a wider range of activities;
-show longer attention spans;
-demonstrate more interest in books and stories;
-have more facility in art media and musical activities;
-talk more."[20]

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[17] Ibid.

[18] "Specifics from Head Start," The Instructor, April 1966, Vol. 75, No. 8, p. 23.

[19] Dr. Milly Cowles, "Are Preschool Programs Making a Difference in the Elementary School Curriculum?" Scholastic Teacher, Vol. 13, No. 21, October 21, 1966, pp. 20-21.

CHAPTER IV

SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE REGARDING THE DEPRIVED CHILD

Characteristics of the Deprived

The deprived child is defined by the Congress of the United States as "the child from a family with income below $2,000 or from a family receiving Aid to Dependent Children." For educational purposes, people who work with the deprived child seem to think in terms of cultural and emotional deprivation brought about in many cases by financial deprivation. The term "disadvantaged" is also sometimes used by many educators in reference to the deprived child as "the child whose family is unable to provide him with the care, the sustenance, and the experiences which equip him to function successfully in school and in life."[21]

Any teaching effort to help the deprived pupil should take into consideration his strengths as well as his weaknesses. The following list is considered worthy of careful thought and study when working with the disadvantaged pupil.

1.0 Cultural Inheritance

1.1 The disadvantaged pupil lives with

physical aggression	fear of separation
disease	fear of eviction
fear	fear of homelessness
worry	fear of hunger

[21]Muriel Crosby, op. cit.

1.2 He is not protected from the crisis of life.
He sits with the ill and the dying.
He listens to talk of unemployment and marital troubles.

1.3 He belongs to a family showing
cooperativeness and mutual aid
avoidance of competition
freedom from self-blame
freedom from parental over-protection
children's enjoyment of each other's company
lessened sibling rivalry
no real sense of security
enjoyment of games and cars
ability to express anger
physical style of reacting

1.4 He and his parents are "anti-intellectual" and think talking is of little use.

1.5 He does not really know how the middle class lives.

2.0 Personal Attributes

2.1 The deprived pupil is more like us than not.

2.2 He grows up faster; he lives in a society where he will become a man by age 13 or 14.

2.3 The boy is more male (coarser, more aggressive physically, more open sexually) than the average middle class boy. The girl is bolder, and more outspoken sexually.

3.0 Attitudes Toward Education and Teachers

3.1 The deprived pupil and his parents have a much more positive attitude toward education than is generally believed.

3.2 However, they dislike school because it treats them as second-class citizens.

3.3 They fear being overpowered by teachers in situations where they do not accept the teacher's point of view.

3.4 The deprived pupil has a sixth sense about how people feel about him. He reports knowing as soon as he walks into the room that the teacher does not like him.

3.5 Parents and pupils will be more responsive to and more involved in schools which have demonstrated concern for them.

4.0 Educational Deficits

4.1 The disadvantaged pupil is not set to respond to oral or written stimuli.

4.2 He has poor auditory attention.

4.3 He has poor time perspective.

4.4 He has limited experience with formal language. As a result, people wrongly think he is non-verbal.

4.5 He is relatively slow in performing intellectual tasks not because he is dull but because he
refuses to generalize easily
cannot understand a concept unless he does something physically, as with his hands.

4.6 He does not know
how to get a job
how to prepare for an interview
how to fill out a form
how to take tests
how to answer questions
how to listen

5.0 Educational Strengths

5.1 The deprived pupil is very persistent about something when he develops an interest in it.

5.2 He can be quite articulate in conversation with people of his own kind.

5.3 He is often surprisingly articulate in role-playing situations.

5.4 He has HIDDEN verbal ability.

6.0 Learning Modes

6.1 He is a physical learner.

6.2 He responds most readily to visual and kinesthetic signals.

6.3 He can be taught simply by following the teacher's example; that is, he needs adult models.

6.4 He does not think the way a teacher does.

6.5 If teachers act toward deprived children as if they were dull, these children will behave as if they were dull.

6.6 The deprived child learns language through speech. Sentence pattern drills should supplant much of the drill on grammar.

6.7 He needs more practice in language readiness programs; language laboratories will help.

6.8 He has trouble with word games.

6.9 He cannot learn language through rules or through drill on other people's sentences.

6.10 The teacher must observe the following learning principles:

All learning is stimulated or hindered by the teacher's feeling toward the pupil.

All learning is influenced by how close the curriculum comes to one's personal life and concerns.

6.11 The deprived pupil learns in a one-track way; that is, he persists in one line of thought.

6.12 He needs re-enforcement. The teacher must pick up what he says, appeal to him, and pitch examples to him.

6.13 He lives for today. Reward must be immediate.

6.14 He needs more varied experiences than his circumscribed life affords. He needs field trips, including visits to factories, terminals, new neighborhoods, museums, concerts, and theaters.

6.15 He needs additional practice in work of the pre-first-grade level.

6.16 He needs individual attention.

6.17 Writing assignments should be unstructured, associative. The subjects cannot be middle-class oriented.

6.18 In assigning writing activities the teacher should

make a much closer analysis of the relationship of writing to speech
make much more use of reading as a device for improvement of writing

6.19 The deprived pupil sees reading as a school activity only. The teacher must make him realize that reading is normal, an agreeable part of both school and home life.

6.20 His reading should be related to his experience in a general sense.

6.21 He should have literature and reading showing that people can fail, have problems, often have their dignity shattered, are frightened, have enemies.

6.22 The learning principle on proceeding from experience to speaking to reading is critically important for him.

6.23 Their reality is their environment. Their books must come close to that environment, within reason, or we are telling them they are not worthy to be in the world as we see it.

6.24 It is probably better to spend time imparting skills, techniques, and knowledge rather than teach middle-class values they cannot practice.

6.25 The deprived child can be educated to change in certain kinds of cultural behavior, as clothing, food habits, house furnishings, manners, occupational aspirations.

6.26 The ultimate goal of education for the deprived child is to develop his ability and interest to continue education.[22]

There are special learning problems, which are characteristic of the deprived child, that are centered in the home. As an infant, he experiences little or no consistent warmth and nurturance. He may be talked to infrequently. Any conversation is about the ordinary necessities of living. There are usually no books in the home. There is little stimulation of the five senses. The foregoing produces inadequacies in the readiness of children to learn.[23]

Kaplan points out that the culturally disadvantaged children exhibit two characteristics: "They are from the lower socio-economic groups in the community and they are notably deficient in cultural and academic strengths. The way of helping these children seems to be to 'enrich the cultural environment,' presumably to make

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[22]Joseph V. Medeiros, op. cit.

[23]Irving N. Berlin, "Special Learning Problems of Deprived Children," National Education Association Journal, Vol. 55, No. 33, March 1966, pp. 23-24.

it more like the middle-class environment."[24] To do so, Kaplan believes, the teachers should be specifically trained and prepared to teach these children. These must be teachers who know the needs, drives, attitudes, habits, motivations, mores, problems, frustrations, values, and the individuals of these children, their parents, and their community.[25]

The term "culturally deprived child" is beginning to be supplanted by "socially disadvantaged child" because everyone has a culture but his problems are a result of chronic impoverishment in a society which affords scant economic opportunity for millions of its people.[26]

Approaches and Ideas in Educating the Disadvantaged

Language development appears to be the basis for many curriculums of Head Start programs. Although listening and speaking skills are only a part of the needs characteristic of language-handicapped children, they are a vital part. Without mastering communication skills, culturally disadvantaged youngsters can never unlock the doors that lead to useful, productive citizenship; they never become first-class citizens.

The above is not to say that culturally disadvantaged children cannot communicate with each other. Some of them have developed "scat" language to a rather high level of fluency. Nevertheless, this "scat" talk does not belong to the world of books or of business--worlds which are foreign to these children.

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[24]John A. Dewar, "Teachers for the Disadvantaged," Illinois Education Journal, Vol. 54, No. 4, December 1965, pp. 173-174.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Information Retrieval Center on the Disadvantaged, The Education of Socially Disadvantaged Children and Youth, (Yeshiva University, New York, New York), 1965, p. 2.

Thus teachers need to approach the instruction of language for these children as if they were teaching a foreign language.

If children are to master the basic language skills of listening and speaking, they must have a wider range of experiences. Such experiences should include listening to stories told or read by the teacher, taking field trips, using and listening to tape recordings, listening to records, and seeing films and filmstrips. In all these activities, the main objective is to provide pupils with opportunities for language experiences. They must have plenty of time to react to and talk about the things they have seen and heard.[27]

Children should have a word in their speaking and listening vocabulary before it is presented to them to read. Experience charts and tape recordings are being used to develop the oral stories of the deprived children in some schools. Each child draws a picture and tells the story to the teacher. She prints the story and the child reads his own story. This procedure represents an individualized experience chart approach to reading readiness.[28]

To accomplish the goal of self-realization and listening, one effective device is the listening center. This consists of tape recorders with headphones. Listening activities foster the development of sensitivity to sounds, becoming aware of new words, interpreting words and tones of voice, discriminating between

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[27]Warren G. Cutts, "Reading Unreadiness in the Underprivileged," National Education Association Journal, Vol. 52, No. 4, April 1963, p. 31.

[28]J. Murry Lee, "What Research Says About the Economically Deprived Child With Implications for Elementary School Programs," Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois, November 1965, pp. 5-6.

sounds of words and word parts, and reacting to ideas presented orally. A final language art activity, which is aided by the use of the tape recorder, is speaking. Through this activity children learn to talk with adults and other children, give descriptions, express ideas and feelings through dramatic play, and acquire desirable oral language habits of usage, enunciation, pronunciation, and voice quality.[29]

Special reading classes of small size have been set up in some schools with particular emphasis on phonics, structural analysis, developmental reading, word meaning, and comprehension. Also, in this project, teachers of reading have worked cooperatively with teachers in other areas to develop a core vocabulary list basic to each department. Each department in turn is responsible for the students' mastery of the vocabulary in that field.[30]

Areas of content for an experimental pre-school program for deprived children were basic language training, reading readiness, and basic concepts in arithmetic. The school was run on a highly task-oriented, no-nonsense manner. Full participation of all children in the learning tasks is treated as a requirement, rather than as a developmental goal toward which the children are allowed to progress at their own rate. Emphasis was placed upon effort, attention, and mastery. This type of learning situation ended in surprising results. The morale and self-confidence of the children appeared to be very high. The children made great gains in all areas of concentration.

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[29] Tom C. Chalkus, "Recordings and Project Head Start," Scholastic Teacher, Vol. 17, No. 4, October 8, 1965, p. 11.

[30] Warren G. Cutts, Special Language Problems of the Culturally Deprived, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Vol. 37, No. 2, October 1962, pp. 80-83.

The stress in the area of language abilities was to encourage the children to make fuller use of whatever language skills they possessed with emphasis on perfecting pronunciation. Vocabulary was extended through the teaching of prepositions, conjunctions, categories, numbers, and colors. Although the method of presentation differed from the traditional, the results were amazingly positive.[31]

Phonographs and records were placed in one hundred fifty homes in the Project in Mississippi. The records not only offered enjoyment but also provided entire families with their first experience in learning together. Sing-along records helped the children to relax and helped to "loosen-up" those who in the past had always been told "Keep quiet" or "Don't speak unless spoken to."[32]

Music is an important educational activity in any pre-school program. Many children will enter the class with a very poor image of themselves. Musical devices are an excellent way to give children the individual attention needed to develop a better image or self-concept.

Songs about the child's name or clothing is an ideal way to draw him into a group situation and at the same time make him conscious of himself as a person. The child may also learn to identify colors, various names of articles of clothing, various names of parts of the body, plus the singular and plural

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[31]Bereiter, Osborn, Englemann, and Reidford, Institute for Research on Exceptional Children, "An Academically-Oriented Preschool for Culturally Deprived Children," University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois, 1965, pp. 1-31.

[32]Marel Harayda, "A Head Start with Records--in Mississippi," Scholastic Teacher, Vol. 18, No. 9, April 1, 1966, pp. 10-11.

of words. Also the highness and lowness, and the loudness and softness of sounds can be heard through music.

Songs which will help develop basic language skills should have very simple word phrases and endless possibilities for word substitutions. "Question" songs will also be a help to children with poor language development. Songs are not a completely effective device unless every child is actively singing. When selecting songs for children, one should remember that songs should have simple repeated word phrases, repeated melody sections, and should not be in a dialect or feature an incorrect usage of language.[33]

Before any teaching or learning can take place, certain basic needs of the children must be met. These basic needs must be overcome before educational deprivation can be attacked. "You can't learn on an empty stomach" is more than a clever quip. Children who are never certain about their next meal, and who are not healthy, defend themselves with "I don't care" or "I can't." In addition to the psychological harm which they do, the purely physical inadequacies drain them of every ounce of energy and are a factor in poor attention and attendance. The free lunch and limited medical services of Head Start programs are well known, but a great deal more should be done to increase their effectiveness.[34]

Hunt attempts to describe the psychological basis for using pre-school enrichment as an antidote for cultural deprivation.

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[33]Robert B. Smith, Music in the Child Development Center, University of Illinois, 1965, pp. 1-9.

[34]James E. Mauch, "If the present rate continues, one out of every three students now in fifth grade will drop out before finishing high school," Illinois Education Association Discussion Topic, Vol. 28, No. 4, December 1965.

He summarizes evidence showing: "(1) that the belief in fixed intelligence is no longer tenable, (2) that development is far from completely predetermined.....(4) that experience is the programmer of the human brain-computer....."[35] Thus he attempts to prescribe from existing knowledge, a program of circumstantial encounters for the purpose of enriching the experiences of culturally deprived pre-school children.

Kirk proposes through his study of individual differences that it is now necessary for the school to enter two new areas: "(a) The development of pre-nursery schools and provisions for disadvantaged children at the ages of one and two in order to minimize the interindividual differences, and (b) the extension of programs of diagnostic and remedial tutoring to all children with learning disabilities."[36]

The professional staffing for a program for the disadvantaged is under new concern and revision in many cases or programs. Teacher attitude is extremely important in helping disadvantaged children. The teacher needs to realize that vocabulary and language concepts develop slowly. He or she must learn to accept each child as he is and to respect him as an individual. He or she must take nothing for granted and carefully check all his assumptions concerning the child and the child's experiences. For example, many culturally deprived children have extremely limited horizons; many have never traveled more than two blocks from home before entering school.[37]

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[35] J. McVicker Hunt, "The Psychological Basis for Using Pre-School Enrichment as an Antidote for Cultural Deprivation," University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois, December 1962, p. 30.

[36] Samuel A. Kirk, "The Challenge of Individual Differences," University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois, December 1964, pp. 1-23.

[37] Warren G. Cutts, "Reading," op. cit.

Many classroom problems are the result of the clash between the teachers' middle class attitudes and their pupils' lower class attitudes. Teachers, despite their desire to be helpful to the culturally deprived child and despite their best intentions, often become frustrated because they cannot transcend their own value system to meet that of the children. Teachers need help in developing a certain way of thinking about these children and the problems they encounter with them.

There is a great need to teach these children socialized behavior. The middle class child can usually learn good manners by observing his parents; whereas, about the only way the underprivileged child can learn good manners is by observing his teachers.

Educators must have very clearly in their minds the educational goals for these children. "Should the goal be that these children learn the important things in life; not to steal, not to hit people over the head, to be able to stand some small frustrations and still go on with the task? Or should the goal be that they learn, like Lee Harvey Oswald, to read and write, no matter what?"[38]

New concepts and ways of thinking must be put into context familiar to the children's experiences. Teachers must make an extra effort to enter into the disadvantaged children's world. Through this, the children's world will be broadened to include ours.[39]

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[38]Bruno Bettelhelm, "Teaching the Disadvantaged," National Education Association Journal, Vol. 54, No. 6, September 1965, pp. 8-12.

[39]Michael Cole, "What It Takes to Teach the Disadvantaged Child," Grade Teacher, Vol. 83, No. 7, March 1966, pp. 83-90.

Preparation of teachers for teaching the disadvantaged is a continuous process. Some aspects can be supplied in advance of a teaching experience. The pre-service program of teacher education should seek to develop a sense of genuine respect and empathy for the children.

Teacher education should include experience in a disadvantaged community outside the college classroom. This could be an excellent way to learn to relate to disadvantaged adults and children. Students could also learn that, although sharing a common sub-culture, the disadvantaged are unique individuals worthy of recognition and guidance.

Teachers must learn not to expect pupils to react in some preconceived "proper" way. Many disadvantaged children react by doing rather than saying, and some have not learned to control their impulses.

Pre-service education should also include preparation in the history of minority groups in the United States. The need for research on the problems of the culturally disadvantaged should also be stressed.[40]

Several of the foregoing ideas should be offered through in-service training for teachers as well as in the pre-service education of future teachers.

The ideal teacher-pupil ratio of one to five in Project Head Start proved most helpful in meeting individual needs of the children. Parent and volunteer services helped to make

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[40]Educational Policies Commission, "The Education of Teachers of the Disadvantaged," National Education Association Journal, Vol. 54, No. 6, September 1965, pp. 12-13.

this ratio possible.[41]

A unique feature of some of the Head Start Programs was parent participation--working as teacher aides, helping with planning, and serving in many non-professional jobs depending upon their skills and aptitudes. Many of these parents had never been concerned with the regular school program. A Joliet, Illinois, parent who had helped in the Project commented, "I have learned something from it myself--how to get along with other people's children and my own better."[42]

The selection of materials for the pre-school experience merits great study and careful selection. Materials for the kindergarten should help answer children's questions, arouse their curiosities, and stimulate their desires "to find out." Materials should be easily manipulated by the children and related to their immediate environment.[43]

Project Head Start's child development centers were planned chiefly for rural and urban economically disadvantaged children who lacked verbal skills, possibly had never left their city block or country mile, needed major or minor medical or dental care, and had never been accustomed to an environment of books or toys. The selection of the proper materials is very important in order to facilitate the proper growth and the background which these children need.

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[41]Loretta Hunt, "Getting a Head Start," Scholastic Teacher, Vol. 11, No. 2, September 24, 1965, pp. 10-11.

[42]Francine Richard, "Giving Them a Head Start," Illinois Education Association, Vol. 54, No. 2, October 1965, pp. 63-64.

[43]Dr. Lucile Perryman, "Language Development in the Kindergarten," Scholastic Teacher, Vol. 17, No. 15, January 21, 1966, p. 15.

The following list is reported to contain the most valuable and effective educational materials in terms of facilitating growth in children. This list was compiled by forty-five teachers and directors of Head Start Programs attending an orientation session at Rutgers University.

pictures (particularly of the children and still-life scenes)

records (lively ones to move to)

films (ones that depict action)

filmstrips (unusual scenes and bright colors)

rhythm band instruments (excellent for promoting group activity)

large blocks (used to create imaginary objects and for muscular coordination)

paper (creative activities to extend the imagination and redesign the real world)

books (especially picture books and lively stories for teachers to read to children)

clothes (dress-up and imaginary play)

water (for exploration in terms of touch and play)

housekeeping equipment (dramatic play)

sand, dough, clay (learning to create)

paint, tempera, and finger (painting for expression)

hand puppets (very good for language development exercises)

cardboard boxes (to make stores, trains)

telephones, real and play (excellent for expression and language development)

playhouses (imaginary play and group interaction)

outdoor play equipment (developing muscular coordination)

puzzles (cognitive development)

colored beads (creating new patterns, dramatics)

tinker toys (designing and language development)

woodworking material (building and muscular development)

tape recorders (language development and discovering self through hearing self)[44]

The over-all attitude is changing toward pre-school programs for the disadvantaged youth of America. More and more educators are recognizing the importance of working with culturally disadvantaged children during the early formative years. Some schools are now shifting emphasis from the junior high and senior high schools to kindergarten and first grade. This shift is long overdue and should be extended downward until it reaches into the pre-school years.[45]

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[44]Dr. Milly Cowles,"Selecting Materials for the Preschool Nursery," Scholastic Teacher, Vol. 17, No. 10, November 19, 1965, p. 13.

[45]Warren G. Cutts, "Special Language," op. cit.

CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE HEAD START PROGRAMS

Language Skills

The curriculum of a pre-school program features a stress on language skills and the development of a positive self-image. These are deemed crucial in orienting children toward learning and were often found to be deficient in disadvantaged children.[46]

Since language development is regarded as a prime pre-requisite for reading comprehension, the pre-school program should be designed to build language development to prepare the children for formal reading activities. The less-verbal disadvantaged children, who are particularly weak in using the language of the school, have been less able to achieve in reading.[47] Therefore, language skills should be the most important skills to be stressed in a seven week Head Start program.

Although children may have the desire to communicate with other individuals, they are not always capable of doing so because of their limited vocabularies. To communicate with these children, the teacher must strive to reach the children's level of communication. Then the teacher must help the children to gradually increase their vocabularies. This can be accomplished through

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[46]Shirley Feldmann, "A Pre-School Enrichment Program for Disadvantaged Youth," Preschool Education Today, edited by Fred M. Hechinger, Doubleday and Company, Inc., (Garden City, New York), 1966, pp. 97-100.

[47]Dr. Milly Cowles, "Are Preschool," op. cit.

stories, pictures, experience charts, field trips, and extemporaneous conversations.[48] Repetition of "new" words will help to instill them in the children's speaking vocabularies.[49]

A clear, distinct speaking voice is an excellent example for those children who pronounce words incorrectly. Repeating a sound or a word correctly may bring new joy and a sense of accomplishment for children who formerly pronounced the word incorrectly. Consequently, words develop into phrases, and phrases develop into sentences which help the children to establish better communication skills.[50]

Songs can be utilized for language development. Songs are introduced that stress children's names and labels for familiar objects. Repetition of songs re-enforce both word pronunciation and the correct use of language.[51]

Many of the problems of poor verbal communication are created by insufficient listening habits. Much of what children learn in a preschool program must be transmitted by verbal communication. Not only must children be able to listen for meaning, but they must be able to listen in order to understand and follow directions. Without highly developed listening skills, children are greatly handicapped when they are involved in a learning situation.

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[48] Ibid.

[49] Martin Deutsch, The Disadvantaged Child and the Learning Process, In Passow, A. H. (ed.) Education in Depressed Areas (New York, Teachers' College Columbia University, 1963), pp. 163-180.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Shirley Feldmann, op. cit.

Development of a Positive Self-Image

The disadvantaged children often have a poor estimate of their personal worth. They do not feel well treated at home and do not feel secure in their family relationships.

It is an important task of the Head Start program to help the children to develop a positive self-image. This can be attempted in several ways.

Units could be developed to help children understand themselves better. The Washington School in Decatur, Illinois, has a most helpful and interesting series of units.

Kindergarten

Major Theme:	"Where Am I?"
Unit I	"I Learn to Know My School"
Unit II	"I Learn to Feel at Home in School"
Unit III	"I Grow up in School"

Grade I

Major Theme:	"Who Am I?"
Unit I	"I Am an Unique Individual"
Unit II	"I Can Do Many Things"
Unit III	"I Am a Contributing Member of a Group"

[51]

Disadvantaged children need to have experiences in which they see themselves as successful individuals. Teachers need to be especially alert to praise them for what they can do successfully. This may take some searching on the part of the teachers, but it should pay dividends.[53]

Still another approach is to have these children look at themselves in a full-length mirror. Through this activity, children learn to consider the parts of their bodies as parts of a whole, active person, with the abilities to talk, shout, walk, run, and jump.[54]

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[52]"New Curricular Ideas for Helping Children Discover and Fulfill Their Potentialities," Decatur Public School, Decatur, Illinois, mimeographed, 1965, 165 pages.

[53]J. Murry Lee, op. cit.

[54]Francine Richard, op. cit., p. 67.

Throughout the building of a positive self-image, the teacher must remember to develop the whole child and his attitude toward himself, as well as toward other individuals. The child must come to realize that he is a worthy individual in society and just not another mouth to feed--if he is to become a contributing member of society.[55]

Units of Work

A Head Start program should have definite goals in developing language skills and a positive self-image, which can be reasonably accomplished within the seven week period. Units of Work should be chosen carefully so as to facilitate the accomplishment of the goals. Units of work based on the immediate community of Mattoon are a good source of information relative to the children's environment.

The following Units of Work are adequate for a seven week Head Start program: Community Helpers, Foods, Ways of Travel, and Animals. The stories, music, art, dramatic play, pictures, and field trips should all be selected and planned so as to correlate and re-enforce the present Unit being studied.

If the proper "ground work" and "follow-up" are executed, field trips can be one of the most worthwhile experiences of the program.[56] Otherwise they are a waste of time, energy, and money.

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[55]Loretta Hunt, "Getting a 'Head Start,'" Scholastic Teacher, Vol. 17, No. 2, September 24, 1965, p. 11

[56]Francine Richard, op. cit., pp. 62-67.

Field trips to the fire station, police station, IGA Food Store, Coles County Airport, Coles County Fair, train trip to Effingham, and possibly to a children's show would be adequate for the units planned for a seven week program.

The purpose of units of work with the disadvantaged children is not so much the mastery of knowledge of the subject as it is to broaden the experiences of the children, to stimulate and help develop their curiosity and to provide them with a basis for verbal communication.[57]

Constant Evaluation

Head Starts' problems are obviously enormous. Perhaps the first summer's work did little more than outline the challenge. But project workers are not backing off. "The summer proved it is feasible to make a massive and significant intervention in the development of very young children."[58]

Dr. Edmund W. Gordon, a New York psychologist in charge of the Head Start evaluation for the Office of Economic Opportunity, feels the gains achieved during the summer are in danger of being cancelled unless they are followed up by further enrichment programs-- including individual instruction and exposure to art and music. "Feeding a starving child at the age of five won't save him from malnutrition if he is on a starvation diet again at six or seven."[59]

If Head Start Programs are to be effective, not only are

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[57] Ibid.

[58] "What 'Sonny' Learned," Newsweek, Vol. LXVII, No. 8, February 21, 1966, p. 87.

[59] Ibid.

follow-up programs necessary, but also a continuous evaluation of "what" is being done and "how" it is being done, is essential. Head Start personnel must constantly strive to use the available resources more effectively.

Summary

The following material, which is a contribution of Minnie Perrin Berson to the literature of Head Start, provides a summary of the implications yielded by this study, with which the author is in wholehearted agreement.

Early childhood specialists often state that a pre-kindergarten program based on child development philosophy is good for all children under six. They contend that the best way to compensate for gaps in experiences and deficits in social, perceptual, and cognitive skills, is through individualized pre-kindergarten programs rather than contrived educational blueprints for "those children."[60]

It cannot be denied that families living in poverty are alienated from other families in the nation through their economic, educational, and social deprivation. There are, however, differences from family to family and child to child. One family may need intensive help in every facet of life to survive, while another family requires only a few special services to "get over the hump."[61]

Head Start children, like their parents, show a wide range of individual differences. A program that is appropriate for each child provides the following essential conditions of sound early childhood education.

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[60]Minnie Perrin Berson, "Prekindergarten Programs," Illinois Education, Vol. 54, No. 5, January 1966, p. 220.

[61]Ibid.

1. Classes must be small and informal. The smaller the group the more visible is each child. Fifteen children to a Head Start group was not a number taken out of the air; it has long been recommended by early childhood specialists, and is maintained in some of the finest centers.

2. Activities rarely involve the total group. Children under six play and work in small clusters. Adults must be available to these small groups as well as to individual children for one-to-one contacts.

3. The program must be highly individualized. The small child learns the most when he has access to human resources for help with the how's, why's, and what's. While the advantaged child who has had much encouragement to ask questions needs an adult to help him explore, the disadvantaged child who has often lacked such encouragement needs an adult to reassure him that his questions are valued and respected.

4. The program must permit the child to be active. The small child learns best through direct experience with his body, limbs, and senses. He needs a program that will invite him to learn in this direct way.

5. The program must provide an outdoor as well as an indoor classroom. Outdoor activity in the pre-kindergarten program is not "recess." The playground, with all that its environs provide, gives the small child an extended classroom with bugs, birds, trees, and plants; a sky to observe; dirt for digging, and an opportunity to learn about people, vehicles, and the various social occupations and services. It also affords wonderful vigorous activity and dramatic roustabout play. For the disadvantaged child, a safe outdoor facility and such opportunities rarely exist outside school.

6. Nutrition and rest must be a part of the program. The young child fatigues easily and needs to be given the necessary supplementary food and appropriate rest periods to facilitate healthy physical growth and emotional well-being. Teachers in Head Start programs remarked again and again that the children were more alert, cheerful, and energetic as a result of food and rest periods.

7. Daily routines and activities must be predictable, flexible, and balanced. Most children work and plan alone as well as in small groups. Total kindergarten routines usually are planned in the following order: arrival time; breakfast, first activity period; midmorning snack; a brief rest; second activity period; getting ready for lunch; lunch; nap and afternoon activities for those who lack suitable conditions at home.

8. Curriculum content, materials, equipment, and activities must be child-sized. The child under six is not a candidate for instruction in formal "subjects." He needs an environment rich in sturdy equipment and unstructured materials geared to his emotional, social, physical, and intellectual development. He needs opportunities to interact spontaneously with the children and adults in his group. He needs to be encouraged to develop abilities to observe, experiment, imagine, and conceptualize through the child's natural route or "play." A curriculum of quality for young children is designed to involve the child in enjoyable and meaningful experiences and processes of language; literature; music and movement; dramatics; the arts; mathematics; and the social, and physical and biological sciences. The joy of success at this stage paves the way for future achievement.[62]

A great innovation has appeared to affect profoundly the nature and extent of early childhood education. What the influence project "Heat Start" will hold at this point for the future of American education can only be conjectural. However, there is much promise of great good. It is very apparent that this movement has established some revolutionary precedents:

1. Many schools across the land were open most of the summer.

2. Fifteen children to a group produced amazing educational results.

3. Three adults worked fruitfully together in a single classroom with a group of children.

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[62]Ibid., pp. 220-221.

4. Nutrition--often including breakfast, snack, and lunch at school--strengthened the education program.

5. The public school was a natural center for bringing to families medical, dental, social, and psychological services.

6. Parents were an indispensable part of the education picture and the education process.

7. A community action program linked with education was a powerful way to fight poverty.[63]

There is no question that mistakes were made in Head Start, and that some programs were not as good as they might have been. However, even the critics have praise for the over-all plan as a good one that should extend through the entire school year and that should eventually become part of the elementary school structure.

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[63] Ibid., p. 222.

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