

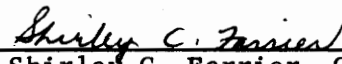
A STUDY OF PARENTAL CONCERNS REGARDING
THE CARE OF SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN IN
PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, VIRGINIA

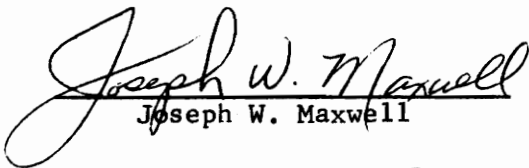
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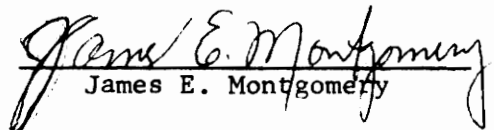
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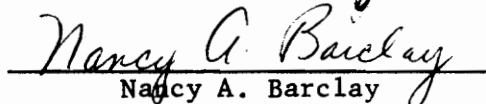
Thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
in
Management, Housing and Family Development

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December, 1975

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to express her appreciation to the members of her graduate committee, Drs. Shirley C. Farrier, James E. Montgomery, Joseph W. Maxwell and Nancy Barclay for their encouragement and guidance throughout her graduate work. Special appreciation is extended Dr. Farrier for her time, interest and direction in writing this research.

The writer also wishes to thank Messrs. Ronnie Graham and Bruce Lemons, elementary school principals of the study area, for their cooperation in making this study possible.

Finally, the writer is grateful to her husband, Clarence, and to her family and friends for their help and understanding during the preparation of this thesis.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Society traditionally acknowledges that responsibility for care of a child from birth to maturity rests primarily with the parents. Rudolf Dreikurs (1964), a noted child development theorist, also stressed the importance of parental responsibility in child care and in the development of children into effective mature adults.

As parents strive to accept and execute the responsibility for their child's proper development, it becomes increasingly apparent there will be occasions when a need or desire will arise for them to engage the aid of others in providing child care. This assistance is generally referred to as supplemental care and is usually defined as an organized service for the care and supervision of children when events require the normal care in the home to be augmented (Kadushin, 1967; Hansen, 1970).

Our nation has used supplemental care for children from earliest times to the present; however, the quality of child care available has generally been of the widest range, from scarce and often poor in quality to plentiful and of good quality (Hoffman and Nye, 1974). The availability of such care has been largely dependent upon the national climate of opinion in Congress and upon executive action. For example, during World War II, child care services were readily available during the national emergency but as soon as the War ended many of the child care centers were closed despite the continued employment of a large number of mothers who desperately needed the service (Allen, 1947). A 1964

Census Bureau Report stated that the number of working mothers with children ages 6 to 17 who entered the work force increased from 43 percent in 1963 to 53 percent in 1973. The magnitude of this situation was indicated by the 13 million working mothers who had 26 million children in this age group (Bureau of Census, Current Population Reports, Series P, No. 265, June, 1974).

National concern for child care was aptly expressed by the Day Care and Child Development Council of America, Inc. when it developed and adopted a bill of rights for child care as part of their campaign to get legislation enacted by 1976. Provisions of the declaration were:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all children are created equal, with certain God-given rights which cannot be taken away, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

"That children are not able to defend or maintain these rights by themselves,

"That the American family is responsible for securing these rights for its children,

"That parents, single or united, must work to provide for their family's welfare,

"That their earnings are seldom sufficient to pay for needed child care while they are at work and stay away from home,

"That even while parents strive to discharge their duty to family and country, six million preschool children suffer daily from a lack of quality care and attention,

"That to protect the future of America's families,

"Be it Resolved that we, the citizens of these United States, stand in support of efforts by every sector of our society to achieve community controlled quality child care services for all families who need and want them by the 200th Anniversary of the founding of this nation in 1976" (Report on Preschool Education, March 6th, 1974, p. 10).

In the foreword of School Age Child Care by Gertrude Hoffman (1973), David Beecher, Acting Commissioner for Community Services Administration, described the present state of child care for the preschool child as being somewhat improved and the needs at last have been recognized at the national level. However, the focus continues on the younger child despite the fact that 70 percent of the children whose mothers work are between the ages of 6 and 15. Beecher further held that the services are not only in short supply but are also often of poor quality. It appears that the needs of the older child are often ignored or forgotten when he enters the public school. Little research has been conducted on requirements of the school age child even though various experts have repeatedly cited the deficiency. Some authorities have strongly advocated the pressing need for a current review and research investigation (Cohen, 1973; Compton and Hall, 1972; Hoffman & Nye, 1974; Keyserling, 1972; and Roby, 1973).

Authorities have expressed concern and called upon society for a more thorough exploration of the child care needs of school age children. Further, they advocated that research be updated and that studies be initiated within the community in order to assess the local needs. The absence of parental opinions in published reports suggested that parents were rarely consulted about their preferences in child care services. Especially noted was the lack of concern for the special requirements of children in the kindergarten through the fifth grade age group who required limited care such as before and after school, and during holidays and summer vacations (Hoffman, G., 1973; Diffendal, 1974; Hoffman & Nye, 1974).

Due to the expressed concern of many in the field of family child care regarding the lack of significant exploration of parental views pertaining to auxiliary care for the school-age child at the community level, the writer believed that such a study would be beneficial. Kadushin (1967) stated that child care services should represent a community investment in its families. In view of the foregoing statements, the researcher determined that a preliminary inquiry of the proposed area of study, Western Prince William County, should be made in order to discover what child care services were available for the school-age children. The inquiry was limited to the Gainesville Magisterial District of Prince William County, Virginia. To acquire the necessary background and become acquainted with the present status of school-age child care services, the investigator interviewed managers of five child care centers in the County. The results were as follows:

- 1) One of the five schools offered before and after school care on a regular basis.
- 2) One school reported that it would offer school-age care only to the older siblings of their presently enrolled students and that no transportation would be available. The cost would be \$13.00 per week for before and after school care on school days and \$6.00 per day on holidays.
- 3) One school reported that it could offer the service with transportation and that the cost would be \$55.00 per month.

- 4) The other three schools had no before or after school care for the residents.

The results of the initial inquiry indicated that very little child care service was available for the school-age child in the Gainesville District of Prince William County. This situation prompted the investigator to proceed with a more thorough study of the school-age child care within the communities of West Gate and Gainesville.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Child Care in America

The increased employment of working mothers has been cited as a major factor in the renewed demand for more adequate child care services. Blood (1965) described the increase of employed women with special focus on mothers as one of the most startling social changes in American history. The change, according to Blood, was both rapid and unpredicted. It was assumed that after World War II women workers would discontinue working and return to their homes; however, the number of employed women is greater now than during the war time peak. The American family structure has been greatly altered by such visible changes as the division of labor in the home resulting in more male participation in home related duties. The power structure has changed from male family leader to husband and wife combined leadership roles for family continuance. Noticeably present also was the increase in total family involvement required to maintain the "family companionship home" of today (Blood, 1965; Hoffman and Nye, 1974).

Hoffman and Nye related that women have always worked to produce goods and services for their families and have simply moved their labor from the home to the factory and office with the beginning of the industrialization in America. They also observed that early encouragement for female industrial related employment was offered because it was felt that women were more suitable for the inside employment of the retail and manufacturing business. The first census of manufacturing

conducted in 1850 reported that 225,922 women were employed (U.S. Census). Unfortunately, census data prior to 1940 did not provide any information as to whether married women had dependent children; but, from what has been learned of the inhibiting effects of children on the acceptance of employment by mothers, the proportion of mothers employed must be substantially less than the proportions for all married women.

A special Labor Force Report entitled Children of Working Mothers, March, 1973, reported that the last comprehensive nation-wide study which was published in 1968 included mothers who had worked in 1964. Substantial information was made available on the economic and social characteristics of children of working mothers, but little was known about the current supply and demand for child care facilities. One important factor revealed was the matter of obsolete information which was very limited in scope. Despite the need for updated information, there was no firm plan for a national survey of child care arrangements. The Report described situations in our society that needed changes, or improvements. A summarization of these situations included:

- 1) An increased number of low income mothers now serve as the head of the family.
- 2) The increased cost of living demands a greater income to maintain a minimum standard of living.
- 3) The upswing in the national divorce rate to a rate of 4.4% (number of divorces per 1,000 persons in the population), has increased the number of single parent families.

- 4) There has been the establishment of governmental aid through the Work Incentive Program (WIN) in an effort to reduce the welfare rosters.
- 5) The reduction of the stigma formerly attached to employed women, especially mothers, has brought about an increase in the number of female workers.
- 6) Demand for child care has been made by the equal rights organizations. For example, the National Organization of Women (NOW) demands child care for working mothers of all income groups.
- 7) The reduction of in-home related work, which was brought about by improvements in technology, has made a significant contribution to the increased number of women in the labor force.
- 8) The increased mobility of the entire population has contributed to the increased participation of working women (Waldman & Whitmore, 1973).

Authorities from numerous occupations have repeatedly cited the nation's serious child care conditions. Shirley Chisholm, U. S. Congress woman from New York, described American child care services as custodial parking lots. She claimed that while our society is still clinging to the idea that a woman's place is in the home, there is no choice; women must work. She stated that it is the discrimination against women and the indifference to the poor that are at the center of this country's reluctance to expand its support for child care programs. Congresswoman Chisholm continued by vividly pointing out that, despite

the fact we are the world's wealthiest nation, we lag behind many other countries in providing adequate child care facilities. She exclaimed that we spend more on our nation's defense than we do on our children's care (Chisholm, 1973, p. XI).

Mary Keyserling (1972) reported in Windows On Day Care many deplorable conditions as she described the findings of a study of the American Community Child Care Needs & Services conducted in 1971 by the National Council of Jewish Women. "There shouldn't be a single little child in America left alone to fend for himself; yet, there were 18,000 children under the age of 6 who were latch-key kids on their own. This number of latch-key children may be underestimated due to the reluctance of mothers to report that they have no child care arrangements" (Keyserling, 1972, p. 13). In addition to the aforementioned reports on child care in America, Cohen (1973); Hoffman, G. (1973); Hoffman and Nye (1974); and Prescott and Jones (1972) are others who endorsed additional updating of the investigation of the national child care dilemma. The absence of recent supportive statistical studies has most likely deterred the progress in the developmental growth of children, one of our country's greatest assets.

Having pointed out some of the child care concerns that apply to children of all ages, this study will direct its focus more specifically on the consideration of the child care plans for the school-age child. For the purpose of this review, attention will be directed mainly to the needs of children in the kindergarten through the fifth grade age group which includes the age range of approximately 5 through 11 years.

The requirements of this age group have been found to be somewhat different because these children are more self sufficient than the younger preschool children. They need less individual care; however, they need more varied supervision and enrichment activity during the before-and-after school time periods and on special occasions to further support their overall development. For some unknown reason, the care of school age children has almost completely escaped formal investigation, either empirical or otherwise. Perhaps, this may be due to the fact that many parents feel this age group may be old enough to require less formal child care attention. Therefore, this literature review includes recommendations and observations on child care offered by supporters and occupationally affiliated authorities in the area of child development and family related affairs.

In the April 19, 1972, Report on Preschool Education, (RPE) a Presidential Panel reported there were over one million school age American children who received no supervision and wandered about after school or remained home alone. These children are referred to as "latch-key" children. RPE also related that more than three quarters of a million children are being cared for by siblings, who are themselves under the age of 16 (RPE, December 13, 1972). Hoffman and Nye (1974) offered an astounding figure stating the increase in the rate of working women who have school age children as being 152% in the years 1948 to 1965. Since 1965, the rate of working women who have school age children has increased from 42.7% in 1965 to 50.2% in 1973 (Hoffman & Nye, 1974, p. 13). As to the approximate number of school age children in the United States, The Special Labor Report 165,

Children of Working Mothers reported 20.2 million school age children 6 to 18 years of age, (Waldman & Whitmore, 1973). The 1970 United States Census reported there were as estimated 70 million children of all ages in the nation. They also reported there were an estimated 33 million children through age 17 in families in which an adult female was employed either full or part time. The last figure represents about 48% of all children in our country. The extent of national investigation of school age child care concerns is extremely limited. One might assume that as a nation we are of the opinion once a child reaches the age of public school entry, he may be considered by our society as being "of age". The child now requires little in the way of assistance other than to be provided with the essentials of living such as clothing, food and shelter.

Diffendal suggested some considerations as to the needs in providing child care for the school age child.

"There is a need for development of programs which meet the needs of the following: migrants, odd hour care, Indians and older handicapped children in addition to rural children. No one has made an extensive examination of the reasons for cost variations in the few existing school age programs. An examination of the scope of the needs for school age care combined with cost analysis of existing programs would provide a baseline for future development of school age care. A major unknown in the area of school age care programming is parent views and expectations for programs. What elements would parents like to see in a program for school age children? Do they view both before and after school supervision as a necessity? Does the age of the school age child affect their views? There is considerable variety in funding sources for the existing programs" (Diffendal, 1974, pp 9-10).

A study conducted in 1972 by a Federal School-age Care Task Force in the Northwestern United States Region X was made in anticipation that the 1973 Comprehensive Child Care Plan legislation would be passed. One study conducted by the Task Force was comprised of a survey of 99 parents of school age children in which they were asked concerns and opinions about child care needs. Parents seemed to prefer more after school care than before school care mainly because they did not leave for work before their children left for school. This was substantiated by the record of one-third or less attendance in the before-school programs than was evidenced in the after-school programs. Many parents expressed an interest in after-school sports and recreation programs run by the schools and nonschool organizations. This study revealed more than 75% of the parents were of the opinion these programs could be a solution to day care problems provided the children were properly supervised and accounted for daily until the parents returned to the home.

California leads the nation in the provision of child care facilities. After World War II, this state continued to operate established centers and to incorporate new and expanded centers into the public school systems. Care in these facilities was provided for children in the nursery through elementary school age groups. Prescott and Jones (1972) cited some of the reasons why Californians accepted day care centers. Care was provided for the children of the World War II workers. The centers aided in reducing the number of women on the relief rolls and the residents had social concern for providing good experiences for the children.

Senator Russell Long indicated in his Finance Report, Child Care Data and Materials (1974) there were about 19 million children under 6 which includes 10 million age 3 to 5 and another 45 million children age 6 to 17 in the United States. The 6 to 17 year olds would not require full time child care but rather after school or summer programs until age 13 or 14. Long continues that although mothers with school age children were more likely to work than mothers with younger children, both groups have shown increased employment in recent years. It was very difficult to estimate the number of child care facilities required or how many spaces were available due to the large number of private unlicensed and in-home facilities. Long suggested that the greatest need in day care was for those families in which the working mother's total income was between \$6,000 to \$8,000. This was often the total income of two employed parents. When this group had day care, it was often expensive and sometimes of poor quality.

Long estimated that about 575,000 children received full day care in day care centers and only 21,000 school age children in about 350 schools operated day care centers for over 108,000 children, yet they offered little in the way of "extended day" programs for school age children of working mothers.

Edward Ziegler made an additional plea for school-age care consideration by suggesting the need for more adult-child interaction to aid in mutually supporting child rearing and friendship. Additionally, Ziegler cited these basic assumptions in the publication, Day Care Serving School Age Children (Ziegler, 1973, p 15).

"Day care must aim at meeting each young person's developmental needs.
 Day care should strengthen, support and supplement the family schools and other institutions.
 Day care must also support each child's need for close relations with children his own age."

In an attempt to discover how parents viewed child care concerns, Rana (1973, p. 52) surveyed 118 mothers in California and reported that care was often given in private homes and was provided by relatives and non-relatives. It was stated that children of school age were more likely to have mothers in the work force regardless of whether they were from one or two parent families. Continuing, she stated that in 84% of the working mother households having two parents, the major share of the detailed decisions concerning child care was generally made by the mother. More than half of the mothers stated the family home was the location of their choice for all child rearing functions. The above information indicates that most parents are interested in maintaining the home as the center of many child development functions, including child care.

Child Care in Virginia

Virginia has not been a leader in the effort to increase the interest in child care investigation. Former Governor Linwood Holton attempted to begin some definitive action when he scheduled the 1973 Governor's Conference On Day Care Needs In Virginia. The meetings held May 2nd and 3rd. in Richmond, Virginia, were attended by specialists in related child development fields. The goals of the conference were to bring together all interested in day care for the State and to plan cooperative programs; to establish consistent standards of quality for all related programs; to incorporate all efforts of concerned day

care specialists and related personnel, and to develop legislation for the General Assembly that would aid in meeting Virginia Child Care Goals. At this conference, Ms. Nancy Travis, Director, Southwestern Day Care Project of the Southern Region Education Board is quoted as saying:

"I would like to emphasize a need for more school-age day care. Hardly anybody leaves a two year old alone. Some may; but a great many six, seven, and eight-year olds are wandering the streets. Interestingly enough, parents themselves do not see the need for school-age day care" Report of Governor's Conference (1973, p 14).

The report made to the Governor from the Conference recommended:

"THAT AN OFFICE FOR CHILDREN BE ESTABLISHED IN THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR IN ORDER TO ASSIST IN THE COORDINATION AND DELIVERY OF COMPREHENSIVE CHILD CARE SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA" Report of Governor's Conference (1973, p 16).

Mrs. Mildred Dickerson, Coordinator of Early Childhood Education at Madison College, Harrisonburg, Virginia completed the report and submitted it to Mr. Otis Brown, State Secretary of Human Affairs. Mrs. Dickerson stated that the General Assembly established a Study Committee with Delegate Vince Callahan of Fairfax serving as the Chairman and voted to continue the study through 1975.

According to a fact sheet distributed by the Women's Bureau of the U. S. Department of Labor, working women with children in Virginia increased 49% between 1960 and 1970, only slightly less than the national average. The Bureau reported that 174,000 Virginia children from 6 to 17 years of age have working mothers. Two-thirds of the women with children 6 to 16 were listed as being employed outside the home.

Pearl Spindler remarked at the Governor's Conference (1973) that it must be assumed there were other children who needed day care in addition to the children of working mothers. They included: children of single-parent families; those who have ill mothers; those who need contact with other children; those who live in overcrowded housing; or those who need a more stimulating environment to foster their development. Spindler continued by stating that at the present time, the availability of child care in Virginia is limited. Only 352 day care centers were licensed in the state in 1973. These centers provided care for 19,061 children. There were 525 licensed day care homes with a capacity for 4,288 children. These two facilities provided a total of 23,349 spaces (Report On Governor's Conference, 1973, p 7). Specific data on other arrangements for the care of Virginia children was not available. To conclude, findings of child care plans in Virginia revealed that only a fraction of the children who need care are served in licensed child care centers or in licensed day care homes. Serow (1971) reported that an estimated 34,000 (low) to 68,400 (high) spaces were needed in Virginia. No specific number of school-age or latch-key children was determined in the State reports reviewed.

CHAPTER III
PROCEDURES AND METHODS

Location of the Study Area

The research for this study was conducted in the Gainesville Magisterial District of Prince William County, Virginia. Prince William County is located approximately 40 miles south of Washington, D. C., adjacent to the southern border of Fairfax County. The 1975 population of the county was estimated to be approximately 136,651 by the County Planning Department.

The study area, the Gainesville Magisterial District, lies in the western section of the county and contains both rural non-farm and urbanized residential areas. The County Planning Department reported that the District had a combined rural-urban population of 18,456 in 1975. This District was an especially suitable location since both rural non-farm and urban residents could be surveyed and compared at the same time.

The West Gate Elementary School is located in an urbanized area of the District near the city of Manassas, Virginia. Families in the school area resided in single family homes, apartments, condominiums, townhouses and mobile homes and most of the students walked to school. The school had an enrollment of 670 pupils, representing 456 families, at the time of the study in May, 1975.

The Gainesville Elementary School is located between the two rural towns of Gainesville and Haymarket, Virginia. Families resided predominately in single family homes and all students are transported

to school. At the time of the study the school had an enrollment of 558 pupils representing 450 families.

Procedure and Methods

The investigation was conducted by the writer through a questionnaire distributed to students for completion by their parents. Permission to distribute the instrument and to conduct the study was received from Mr. Ronnie Graham, principal of West Gate Elementary School and from Mr. Bruce Lemons, principal of Gainesville Elementary School.

Objectives of the study were to investigate:

- 1) the concerns and opinions of parents regarding supplemental care for children in the kindergarten through fifth grade age group
- 2) recommendations of parents for the improvement of present and future child care in the communities
- 3) the difference between the responses of the Gainesville and the West Gate parents

The writer constructed the questionnaire and letter of instruction to parents which were delivered to the participating schools. The surveys were subsequently taken home by students for completion by parents. Upon return of the questionnaires to the designated schools, the forms were returned to the investigator.

Due to the nature of the study which required open-ended responses and the desire to retain the individuality expressed in the returns, descriptive rather than inferential statistics were used. Charts indicating the totals and percentages of responses were prepared along

with the descriptive summary in order to more effectively illustrate the results of the study.

Description of the Instrument

The questionnaire was designed to investigate three specific areas of special interest:

- 1) characteristics of the respondents
- 2) current child care practices
- 3) parental preferences for child care arrangements

The instrument contained 25 questions which elicited data related to 105 variables. For further information relating to the questions in the instrument see Appendix.

CHAPTER IV
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study on the utilization of child care services and the parental concerns and preferences relating to child care are reported and discussed in this chapter. Characteristics of the families who participated in the study sample are described at the beginning of the chapter. The sample description is followed by a report of findings on data fulfilling the three objectives of the study as stated in Chapter III. The findings are presented in the following order: child care services utilized; the ranking of factors that parents consider important in selecting child care services; the parental preferences for child care services; the effects of availability of child care services on the working arrangements of parents; and the parental preferences for improvements of child care services in their communities. The report of findings and discussions are first presented according to the individual school attendance areas of West Gate and Gainesville and then combined to show the responses of the total community.

Sample

The investigation was conducted among urban and rural non-farm families who had children in the West Gate and Gainesville Elementary Schools. In West Gate 450 questionnaires were distributed and 117 were returned (26.5%); in Gainesville 456 questionnaires were distributed and 96 were returned (21.3%). Altogether, 906 questionnaires were distributed and 213 were returned, a 24.1% rate of response.

The sample contained both single and two parent families from white, black and other racial groups. The average age for the mothers was 33.5 years and 36.1 years for the fathers. Incomes of the families ranged from no income to over \$29,000 per year. Occupations of the parents included unskilled laborers, craftsmen, construction and manufacturing technicians, operatives, military and government employees, retail sales, office workers, homemakers, professionals, and managerial employees. Families resided in a variety of housing types including apartments, townhouses, condominiums, mobile homes, and single family homes.

Specific demographic characteristics of families in the sample are shown in Table 1 and include: number of families, parental composition of families, racial characteristics, sex of person answering questionnaire, employment of mothers, and the types of housing.

There were 558 children in the families of the sample. However, this study is primarily concerned with children in the 5 to 11 age group because the initial inquiry revealed an absence of services available in the before and after school time periods for children in this age group. Of the 558 children reported, 355 were in the elementary school group (ages 5 through 11 years). Table 2 illustrates the distribution of these elementary school children by age, sex, and school area.

Child Care Services Utilized

In order to investigate the concerns and opinions of parents regarding supplemental child care arrangements, the researcher first needed to determine what type of child care facilities the families

TABLE 1

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILIES IN THE SAMPLE

Characteristic	West Gate		Gainesville		Total (%)
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	
Number of families participating in study	117	(54.9)	96	(45.1)	213 (100.0)
Parental composition					
One parent	11	(9.4)	6	(6.2)	17 (8.0)
Two parent	106	(90.6)	90	(93.8)	196 (92.0)
	117	(100.0)	96	(100.0)	213 (100.0)
Race					
White	111	(94.9)	83	(86.5)	194 (91.0)
Black	5	(4.2)	13	(13.5)	18 (8.5)
Other	1	(0.9)	0	(0.0)	1 (0.5)
	117	(100.0)	96	(100.0)	213 (100.0)
Sex of respondent					
Female	106	(90.6)	80	(83.4)	186 (87.3)
Male	11	(9.4)	16	(16.6)	27 (12.7)
	117	(100.0)	96	(100.0)	213 (100.0)
Employment of Mothers					
Not employed	50	(42.7)	55	(57.3)	105 (49.3)
Employed	66	(56.4)	36	(37.5)	102 (47.9)
No response	1	(0.9)	5	(5.2)	6 (2.8)
	117	(100.0)	96	(100.0)	213 (100.0)
Family Housing					
Single family	69	(59.0)	94	(97.9)	163 (76.5)
Townhouse	41	(35.0)	0		41 (19.3)
Other	7	(6.0)	2	(2.1)	9 (4.2)
	117	(100.0)	96	(100.0)	213 (100.0)

TABLE 2

NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN THE 5 TO 11 YEAR AGE GROUP
DISTRIBUTED BY AGE AND SEX

n = 355

Ages	West Gate		Gainesville		Total by Sex		Total	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	No.	Percent
5	11	7	4	9	15	16	31	8.5
6	11	7	8	11	19	18	37	10.5
7	22	8	7	9	29	17	46	13.0
8	14	15	12	16	26	31	57	16.0
9	16	15	15	23	31	38	69	19.5
10	16	8	24	16	40	24	64	18.0
11	13	12	14	12	27	24	51	14.5
Totals	103	72	84	96	187	168	355	100.0

were actually using. Questions were included in the instrument to determine what type of child care was used in the before and after school time period; to obtain parental opinions as to the quality of the present arrangements; and to gather data regarding the parents knowledge of services available in the communities.

Before School Care Arrangements

Of the 213 families responding to the study questionnaire, 48 of these families, 34 in West Gate and 14 in Gainesville, used a total of 76 various arrangements for before school care. The most frequently used arrangements before school were a close neighbor; the wife and the husband. During the before school time period, the wife cared for the children more frequently than the father. It was observed that six children stayed alone (Table 3).

After School Care Arrangements

Of the 213 families responding to the study, 81 families, 57 in West Gate and 24 in Gainesville, used a total of 125 various arrangements for after school care. The most frequently used arrangements for after school care were a close neighbor; the husband; other; and the wife. In the after school period there were 12 reports that indicated the child stayed alone (Table 4). In the after school time period the husband watched the children more frequently than did the wife. As in the 'before school' time period, the close neighbor was the most often used means of child care.

Before and After School Care Findings

The data revealed that the urban West Gate parents used child care services more frequently than did the rural non-farm Gainesville parents. Parents in both communities used after school care more frequently than

TABLE 3
 VARIATIONS IN 'BEFORE SCHOOL' CHILD CARE
 n = 48

Type of Care	Frequency	Percent
Husband	14	18.4
Wife	18	23.6
Relative to the Home	7	9.2
Close Neighbor	20	26.4
Far Neighbor	1	1.3
Private Day Care	4	5.3
Child Stays Alone	6	7.9
Other	<u>6</u>	<u>7.9</u>
Totals	76	100.0

TABLE 4
 VARIATIONS IN 'AFTER SCHOOL' CHILD CARE
 n = 81

Type of Care	Frequency	Percent
Husband	18	14.4
Wife	16	12.8
Relative in the Home	12	9.6
Close Neighbor	41	32.8
Far Neighbor	2	1.6
After School Program	4	3.2
Private Day Care	3	2.4
Child Stays Alone	12	9.6
Other	<u>17</u>	<u>13.6</u>
Totals	125	100.0

before school care. The most frequent type of child care was a close neighbor.

The observations regarding children staying alone without supervision were supportive of Keyserling (1972) and Ruderman (1968). They estimated that approximately seven percent of the nations school age children were left alone unsupervised.

Two general observations relating to child care services were that mothers made arrangements for child care in 98.1% of the families, and that parents rated their present child care arrangements as either satisfactory or excellent.

Factors Considered in Selection of Child Care

Respondents were asked to rank in order of importance six different factors to be considered in selecting child care. Mothers and fathers differed somewhat in the order in which they ranked the factors; however, they agreed that the two most important factors were quality of care and quality of supervision. Rankings of these factors by the mothers and fathers of each school and from the combined school areas are depicted in Table 5.

Preferences for Child Care by Income Groups

The responses of families were divided according to income groups in order to observe variations in child care preferences of families of different economic levels within the sample (Table 6). Results of the analysis by income groups in both areas revealed that a sitter in the home, a relative and a close neighbor were the three most desirable types of child care. Two additional types of child care, public school

TABLE 5

FACTORS CONSIDERED IN THE SELECTION OF CHILD CARE

Ranking of Factors by Fathers			
Ranking	West Gate	Gainesville	Both School Areas
1st	Quality of Care	Quality of Supervision	Quality of Supervision
2nd	Quality of Supervision	Quality of Care	Quality of Care
3rd	Hours of Operation	Tutorial Help	Tutorial Help
4th	Transportation	Hours of Operation	Hours of Operation
5th	Tutorial Help	Transportation	Transportation
6th	Meals and Snacks	Meals and Snacks	Meals and Snacks
Ranking of Factors by Mothers			
1st	Quality of Care	Quality of Care	Quality of Care
2nd	Quality of Supervision	Quality of Supervision	Quality of Supervision
3rd	Hours of Operation	Transportation	Hours of Operation
4th	Transportation	Hours of Operation	Transportation
5th	Tutorial Help	Tutorial Help	Tutorial Help
6th	Meals and Snacks	Meals and Snacks	Meals and Snacks

TABLE 6
 PARENTAL PREFERENCES FOR CHILD CARE BY INCOME GROUPS
 n = 213

Income Groups	n	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice
WEST GATE AREA:				
\$2,000 to 13,999	30	relative	close neighbor	public school
\$14,000 to 18,999	49	sitter in home	public school	close neighbor
\$19,000 to 23,999	26	sitter in home	close neighbor	private day care
\$24,000 and above	12	sitter in home	relative	close neighbor
GAINESVILLE AREA:				
\$2,000 to 13,999	29	relative	close neighbor	sitter in home
\$14,000 to 18,999	26	relative	sitter in home	close neighbor
\$19,000 to 23,999	16	sitter in home	relative	close neighbor
\$24,000 and above	25	close neighbor	sitter in home	relative
COMBINED WEST GATE AND GAINESVILLE AREAS:				
\$2,000 to 13,999	59	relative	close neighbor	sitter in home
\$14,000 to 18,999	75	sitter in home	sitter in home	close neighbor
\$19,000 to 23,999	42	sitter in home	close neighbor	close neighbor
\$24,000 and above	37	sitter in home	close neighbor	relative

care and private day care were identified as second and third choices in the West Gate Area. Variations of preferences within the income groups are identified in Table 6.

Preferences for Child Care by Family Housing Type

It was found that the parents in both areas living in single family homes most preferred a relative, a close neighbor or a sitter in the home child care arrangements (Table 7). Townhouse residents (West Gate only) stated their first three preferences to be: a sitter in the home, a public school program or a close neighbor. The limited number of residents in mobile homes, apartments, and condominiums made these housing types insignificant for this study. The findings in this study regarding parental preferences are in agreement with several references from the literature review (Hoffman & Nye, 1974; Keyserling, 1972; and Ruderman, 1968).

How Child Care Would Change Working Arrangements

In response to the question, "Would the availability of day care services make any difference in their present working arrangements?" 38 families (Table 8) indicated "yes". It was also reported that more mothers in the West Gate area would change their working arrangements than did the mothers in the Gainesville area. When asked to briefly describe how their arrangements would differ, a variety of responses were given by mothers in both communities.

Preferences for Improved Child Care Services

From a list of seven variables (Table 9) parents were asked to indicate their three preferences for child care services to be improved or established in their communities. The residents of both the areas

TABLE 7

PREFERENCES FOR CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS BY FAMILY HOUSING TYPES
n = 213

Housing Type	n	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice
WEST GATE AREA:				
Single Family House	69	sitter in home	close neighbor	relative
Townhouse	41	sitter in home	public school care	close neighbor
Other	7	relative	sitter in home	close neighbor
GAINESVILLE AREA:				
Single Family House	94	relative	close neighbor	sitter in home
Other*	2			
COMBINED WEST GATE AND GAINESVILLE AREAS:				
Single Family House	163	relative	close neighbor	sitter in home
Townhouse	41	sitter in home	public school care	close neighbor
Other	9	relative	sitter in home	close neighbor

*insufficient sample

TABLE 8
 HOW CHILD CARE WOULD CHANGE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS
 n = 38

Change	West Gate	Gainesville	Total	Percent
Could go to work	11	4	15	39.5
Could work more hours	9	0	9	23.7
Eliminate sitter expense	5	2	7	18.4
Better morale & security	1	0	1	2.6
Better recreation & other	1	2	3	7.9
Gave no reason	1	2	3	7.9
Total	28	10	38	100.00

TABLE 9

PREFERENCES FOR IMPROVED CHILD CARE SERVICES
n = 213

Variable	1st Preference	2nd Preference	3rd Preference	No Reply	Total & Percent
Public Sponsored Care	51 23.9%	40 18.8%	44 20.7%	78 36.6%	213 100
Private Sponsored Day Care	11 5.2%	17 8.0%	29 13.6%	156 73.2%	213 100
24 Hour Child Care Center	11 5.2%	28 13.1%	28 13.1%	146 68.6%	213 100
County Sponsored Recreation & Education Program	81 38.0%	44 20.7%	23 10.8%	65 30.5%	213 100
Improved Transportation to and from Care Center	13 6.1%	32 15.0%	35 16.9%	133 62.0%	213 100
Emergency Care in Child's Home	33 15.5%	37 17.4%	38 17.8%	105 49.3%	213 100
Industry Sponsored Day Care	7 3.3%	7 3.3%	10 4.7%	189 88.7%	213 100

generally agreed in the selection of their preferences to be: first choice, county sponsored recreational and educational programs; second choice, public sponsored day care centers; and third choice, emergency care in the home in the event of illness or emergency. Improvement of transportation to and from child care centers was expressed as the next most preferred service. A large number of parents did not respond to this question. The lack of response may be attributed to the fact that they were satisfied with their present arrangements, and did not regard further needs for child care services at this time, or they did not understand the question.

General Observations

The following observations were made from the data:

- 1) Although pupil enrollments were nearly equal in both schools, response from the urban West Gate area was greater than from the rural school in Gainesville.
- 2) The majority of the respondents from both school areas resided in single family homes.
- 3) Few black and other racial groups responded to the questionnaires.
- 4) A greater number of the questionnaires was answered by the mothers than by the fathers.
- 5) Relatively few one-parent families were represented in the samples.
- 6) Professional and technical occupations were the predominant types of employment.

- 7) Total annual family income was relatively high with 55.4% being in the \$9,000 to \$18,999 income group.
- 8) Parents of both school areas generally expressed satisfaction with their present day care arrangements.
- 9) The availability of day care services could change the working arrangements of approximately 20% of the responding parents.
- 10) The most desired improvements in community services were for county sponsored recreation and education programs after school, public sponsored child care programs, and emergency care services in the home.
- 11) The mothers and fathers in the urban and rural areas generally agreed that children should be approximately 12 years of age before being left alone for short periods of time.
- 12) The majority of the parents agreed that sibling care was permissible; however, many of them expressed reservations as to the advisability of the practice on a regular basis.

Summary

In achievement of the objective of investigating concerns and opinions of parents toward supplemental care for school age children, the researcher gathered (and analyzed) data from 213 families in the sample. These families had 355 children in the elementary school age group from 5 to 11 years old.

It was found that 48 families used 76 variations of child care in the time period before school and that 81 families used 125 variations of child care in the after school time period. The urban families in the sample used child care services more frequently than the rural non-farm families.

Factors that parents considered most important in the selection of school age child care services were quality of care and quality of supervision. The hours of operation of child care centers and availability of transportation to and from the child care centers were also considered to be important.

Both urban and rural non-farm parents most preferred that a relative, a close neighbor, or a sitter in the home provide child care. The researcher also found that child care arrangements could affect working arrangements of 38 families. It was found that more parents could go to work and that others could work longer hours if adequate child care services were available.

In response to the questions concerning recommendations for improvements in child care services, parents indicated that they would like to have additional county sponsored educational and recreational programs, public sponsored day care centers, emergency child care in the home and improved transportation to and from child care centers.

The differences between responses of the urban parents and the rural non-farm parents were observed and analyzed; however, they were quite similar.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The objectives of the study were to examine 1) parental concerns and opinions regarding supplemental care for children in the kindergarten through fifth-grade age group, 2) recommendations of parents for the improvement of present and future child care services in the community and 3) the differences between the responses of the West Gate and the Gainesville parents.

Two elementary schools in Prince William County, Virginia were surveyed by means of 906 questionnaires which parents voluntarily completed and returned. Of the 213 families that responded, 117 were from the urban area of West Gate and 96 were from the rural non-farm area of Gainesville. The rate of return (24.1%) was low; however, the total sample was high in comparison to samples of similar studies. The researcher located only two other surveys related to school age child care that included as many as 100 families.

Contact was made only with families having children in the specified age group of 5 through 11 years, thus eliminating non-relevant sample families. Maximum privacy was afforded the participants by using the students to distribute and return the questionnaire thus eliminating personal contact between the researcher and parents. Data relating to the families and their recommendations for improvement of school age child care have been made available to the participating school district.

Families in the sample had 355 children in the elementary school age group of 5 to 11 years. These families used 76 variations in child care in the time period before school and 125 variations in child care during the after school time period. The urban families in the sample used child care services more frequently than the rural non-farm families. The differences between responses of the urban families and the rural non-farm families were tabulated and analyzed but no significant differences were found in these responses.

Factors that parents considered important in the selection of child care services were: quality of care; quality of supervision; hours of operation; transportation to and from child care facilities; and tutorial help. Both urban and rural non-farm families preferred that child care services be provided by a relative, a close neighbor, or a sitter in the home. It was found that members of 38 families in the sample could either go to work or work longer hours if adequate child care services were available. Parents indicated they would like to have additional county sponsored educational and recreational programs, public sponsored day care centers, emergency child care in the home, and improved transportation to the child care centers.

Limitations

The responsibility for the distribution of the instrument was delegated to the elementary school students for delivery to the parents and return to their schools. A greater degree of participation may have been achieved through the use of interviews or other methods.

An official county-wide public school survey preceded the distribution of the researcher's instrument by approximately one week. The

parents were obligated to return the official school survey, whereas they were asked to voluntarily participate in this study. It is anticipated that more parents would have responded to this study if the instrument had been distributed prior to the county survey or if more time had elapsed between the two studies.

Conclusions

Parents from both school areas expressed concern about present child care for school age children in their communities. There was general agreement by urban and rural non-farm parents about the following areas of school age child care.

- 1) Concern about the quality of child care services was indicated by parents.
- 2) Parents indicated a preference for child care in the home. Responses from both areas acknowledged the need for additional child care services in their communities. Rural non-farm respondents were more aware of existing child care services and after school activities in their community than were the urban parents.
- 3) The majority (98.1%) of arrangements for school age child care were made by mothers.
- 4) No public or private transportation was available to places of child care. Transportation was a major concern of parents.
- 5) Both employed mothers and non-employed mothers wanted child care services in order to enable them to seek employment, return to work, or to work extended hours.

6) The majority of parents expressed general satisfaction with their present child care arrangements; however, many families indicated a desire for additional and improved child care services. The findings of this investigation indicate interest in further study at the community level and are in agreement with those of child care authorities Cohen (1973); Hoffman, G. (1973); Hoffman & Nye (1974); Keyserling (1973); Roby (1973); and Spindler (1973).

Recommendations for Further Study

In view of the present study, the following recommendations for future study are made:

- 1) Modification of the questionnaire to include only the questions that deal directly with child care services and parental preferences for these services. This would aid in more rapid evaluation of data and encourage additional parental participation.
- 2) Distribution of the modified questionnaire to parents of all Prince William County elementary school children as an official school district research study. The increased number of respondents and the use of the Prince William Schools Research Department would provide a more extensive and accurate appraisal of county child care needs.

Recommendations for Community Action

In consideration of the findings of this study, the following recommendations for future action in the community are made:

- 1) Seek support of local elected officials and appointed county officials in strengthening child care services.
- 2) Enlist the aid of the County Health Department and Social Services personnel in the evaluation of special child care needs of lower income families. The agencies have expressed interest in cooperating in this type of study.
- 3) Encourage additional investigation of child care needs through cooperation of community service groups such as women's clubs, civic organizations, and the county Department of Parks and Recreation. Rural communities would especially benefit from an appraisal of child care needs since most of these communities have limited child care services and limited after school recreation activities.
- 4) Seek support of local county officials for improvement of transportation within the county. For example, residents of both rural and urban communities would benefit from a mini-bus service and a safe bicycle path system.
- 5) Seek the advice of adjoining counties that have previously established child care services and facilities.

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APPENDIX

Dear Parents,

Your agreeing to assist with the study on Child Care Arrangements is deeply appreciated.

We ask that the mother respond to all questions and that both parents respond to questions 23, 24 and 25.

Single-parent families will please ignore the spaces relating to spouses.

To protect your privacy, you will be asked to give only your post office address and not your name.

Please note that all questions refer only to school-age children in the kindergarten through fifth grade age group.

Thank you very much.

QUESTIONNAIRE -- CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS

1. Your post office address _____.
Example: Manassas, Gainesville, etc.
2. In what type of dwelling do you live? Please check the appropriate space below.
 1. _____ Apartment
 2. _____ Townhouse
 3. _____ Mobile Home
 4. _____ Single-Family House
 5. _____ Other (specify) _____
3. Race: Please check.
 1. _____ White
 2. _____ Black
 3. _____ Other (specify) _____
4. Sex: Please indicate sex below.
 1. _____ Female
 2. _____ Male
5. Family Type: Please indicate your family type below.
 1. _____ Two-parent
 2. _____ Single-parent
6. Below indicate by sex and age, all the members of your immediate family living in your home.

	Male	Female	Age
1. Yourself	_____	_____	_____
2. Spouse	_____	_____	_____
3. Oldest Child	_____	_____	_____
4. Next Youngest Child	_____	_____	_____
5. Next Youngest Child	_____	_____	_____
6. Next Youngest Child	_____	_____	_____
7. Next Youngest Child	_____	_____	_____
8. Next Youngest Child	_____	_____	_____

7. Please indicate below other members of your family who live in your home such as aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc.

	Relationship	Male	Female	Age
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____

8. Below describe your occupation, for example: mechanic, teacher, nurse, carpenter, etc.
1. _____ Mother
 2. _____ Father
9. How many hours are you (and your spouse) generally away from home each day for the purpose of employment, including travel time?
1. _____ Mother
 2. _____ Father
10. Income: Please indicate below the best description of total yearly income for all of your household members before taxes.
- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. _____ \$2000-\$2999 | 5. _____ \$14,000-\$18,999 |
| 2. _____ \$3000-\$3999 | 6. _____ \$19,000-\$23,999 |
| 3. _____ \$4000-\$8999 | 7. _____ \$24,000-\$28,999 |
| 4. _____ \$9000-\$13,999 | 8. _____ \$29,000-and up |
11. Indicate by checking appropriate space below who is responsible for making child care arrangements for your school-age children in kindergarten through fifth grade age group.
1. _____ Mother
 2. _____ Father
12. Do you presently use any type of child care arrangement for your school-age children in the before-school time period?
1. _____ Yes
 2. _____ No

If the answer to the above question is yes, please check below all the before-school child care arrangements you use. (More than one may be checked.)

1. _____ Husband
 2. _____ Wife
 3. _____ A Relative in Your Home
 4. _____ A Close Neighbor
 5. _____ A Far Neighbor
 6. _____ Before-School Program in Public Schools
 7. _____ Private Day Care Center
 8. _____ Child Stays Alone
 9. _____ Other (please describe) _____
13. Do you presently use any type of child care arrangement for your school-age children in the after-school time period?
1. _____ Yes
 2. _____ No

If the answer to the above question is yes, please check below all of the after-school child care arrangements used. (More than one answer may be checked.)

1. _____ Husband
2. _____ Wife
3. _____ A Relative in Your Home

4. _____ A Close Neighbor
5. _____ A Far Neighbor
6. _____ After-School Program in Public Schools
7. _____ Private Day Care Center
8. _____ Child Stays Alone
9. _____ Other (please describe) _____

14. Using the following scale: 1 = excellent
 2 = satisfactory
 3 = adequate
 4 = unsatisfactory

Please rate below the present day care arrangement for your school-age children. (If you rate any of the below unsatisfactory, briefly explain your rating to the right of the check mark.)

Kindergarten _____
 First Grade Child _____
 Second Grade Child _____
 Third Grade Child _____
 Fourth Grade Child _____
 Fifth Grade Child _____

15. Below check the method of contact most often used with your school-age children during your absence, should the need arise.
1. _____ Telephone
 2. _____ Neighbors Check Periodically
 3. _____ Relatives Check Periodically
 4. _____ Other (write in) _____
16. Please check below the person you, the parent, would most likely contact for child care in the event of an emergency such as illness, school holidays, overtime at work, etc.
1. _____ Neighbors
 2. _____ Friends
 3. _____ Family
 4. _____ Other (write in) _____
17. Please rank below your 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice for the type of child care you would most prefer for your school-age children.
1. _____ Sitter in your home
 2. _____ Close neighbor
 3. _____ Relative
 4. _____ Public school before & after program
 5. _____ Child stay alone
 6. _____ Child stay alone
 7. _____ Other (describe) _____

18. Does the area in which you live offer any type of care for school-age children kindergarten through fifth grade? Please check below the available programs in your community.

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. In-home care | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> don't know |
| 2. Public school | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> don't know |
| 3. Private agency | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> don't know |
| 4. Church-sponsored care | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> don't know |
| 5. Industry-sponsored care | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> don't know |
| 6. Other (write in) | <hr/> | | |

19. Does your community offer any programs for after-school activities in which you could enroll your school-age children (kindergarten through fifth grade)? Please check below the activities offered.

- | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Scouts | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> don't know |
| 2. Sports | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> don't know |
| 3. Church-sponsored youth groups | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> don't know |
| 4. County-sponsored recreation programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> don't know |
| 5. Other activities
(Please write in) | <hr/> | | |

20. From the list below select three services that you would like to see improved or established in your vicinity regarding child care for your school-age children (kindergarten through fifth grade). Put 1 by your first choice; 2 by your second choice; and 3 by your third choice.

- Public-sponsored day care centers
- Private-sponsored day care centers
- 24 hour care in a child care center
- County-sponsored recreational and educational programs
- Improved transportation available for getting children to and from child care destination
- Emergency child care in your home in the event of illness, such as the Public Health Homemaker's Service
- Industry-sponsored child care facilities at your place of employment

21. Would the availability of any of the day care services as listed in question 20 make any difference in your present working arrangements?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

22. If the answer to question 21 is yes, please describe briefly below.

NOTE: Both parents will please respond to the three questions listed below.

23. At what age do you (and your spouse) feel a child can be safely left at home alone for three or four hours?
 1. _____ Mother
 2. _____ Father
24. Do you (and your spouse) feel that a twelve to fourteen year old brother or sister could care for a five year old child for several hours such as before and after school hours?
 1. Mother _____ Yes _____ No
 2. Father _____ Yes _____ No
25. Using the following scale (1 = most important through 6 = the least important), please rank below the most important factors you (and your spouse) consider in selecting school-age child care.

	Mother	Father
Quality of child care program	_____	_____
Hours of operation	_____	_____
Transportation (to and from child care)	_____	_____
Tutorial help available	_____	_____
Quality of supervision of children	_____	_____
Availability of meals and snacks	_____	_____
Other (please describe)	_____	_____
Use space below		

VITA

Phyllis Cassell Nunley was born in Roanoke, Virginia, July 15, 1932. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Cassell of Roanoke, Virginia. Upon graduation from Jefferson High School in 1950, she entered and graduated from Radford College in June, 1955, receiving a Bachelor of Science Degree in Home Economics.

In 1954, she married Clarence Fredrick Nunley. They have three children, two sons, Frederick Louis, and David Cassell and a daughter, Jenny Leigh.

She was employed as a substitute and full time elementary teacher in the Prince William County, Virginia school system from 1965 through 1967.

She completed requirements for the Master of Science Degree in the Department of Management, Housing and Family Development at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in December, 1975 with combined emphasis in child development and family relations.


Phyllis Cassell Nunley

A STUDY OF PARENTAL CONCERNS REGARDING
THE CARE OF SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN IN
PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, VIRGINIA

by

Phyllis Cassell Nunley

(ABSTRACT)

This study investigated the concerns and opinions of parents regarding supplemental care for children in the kindergarten through fifth grade age group; recommendations of parents for the improvement of present and future child care in the communities; and the differences between the responses of the rural non-farm and urban parents.

Data obtained from the 213 questionnaires voluntarily completed by the parents of the rural non-farm and urban communities revealed that parents preferred home care by a relative or close neighbor; that quality of child care and quality of supervision were the two major factors to be considered when selecting child care services; and that 'after school' care was used more often than 'before school' care. Parent responses in both rural non-farm and urban areas were generally in agreement. Lack of transportation and 'after school' care programs in their communities were cited by parents as concerns.