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Adapting the nursery school as it has developed in the United States of America to a community in Calcutta, India

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Service Paper

ADAPTING THE NURSERY SCHOOL AS IT HAS
DEVELOPED IN THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA
TO A COMMUNITY IN
CALCUTTA, INDIA.

Submitted by

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(A.B. 1939, Calcutta University, India)

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1952

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This study is primarily concerned with the setting up of a plan for establishing a nursery school in Calcutta which will be a model and an inspiration for others to establish many more of its kind in different parts of the city as well as in the country. As subsidiary to the main purpose the study aims to show that early childhood education is important, that anthropological differences exist between the United States of America and India and to suggest ways of modifying and adapting the United States of America nursery school and parent education programs to meet the needs of children and parents in the community of Calcutta.

It is a frequent criticism that the techniques, methods and objectives of education in India are borrowed from the English and that they continue in use long after they have been discarded in England and replaced by new ones as a result of careful research. The explanation for this is to be found in the absence of proper educational research in Indian educational institutions. India has no practical and effective educational policy yet.

Subjects for study have been added to or eliminated

from the curriculum because of financial need or other administrative conditions, or because of personal whim or genuine idea, rather than as the result of any carefully prepared educational program based on the real needs of the children of the native soil. Since India is independent now, it should be possible for the Government to formulate a sound educational policy. In doing this India need not pass through all the intermediate educational experiences and mistakes experienced by the West. She can adapt and utilize the highest and best educational principles and practices of the present day. It is no longer enough that schools give merely training in academic work, they should also train the child for all important aspects of living. Emphasis on the "whole child" is as essential as academic preparation. Education must be the guided development of the individual personality.

The great importance of early childhood in the development and education of children has been universally recognized. Much has been written and done in the way of research to gain a better understanding of children of pre-school age in the United States. This knowledge should be applicable to the education and care of children in any community in India if certain modifications due to cultural differences are made.

It is often said that owing to vast differences of culture, race, religion etc., the educational systems of America or other western countries are not suited to India. But a science is a science applicable anywhere irrespective of race, religion or country. The basic laws of development are universal and uniform. The developmental interpretations which have proved to be so necessary and satisfactory in the psychological care of the first five years of life in the United States of America should be applicable to India too. The nursery school as a medium for acculturation and for strengthening the normal home has proved invaluable in the United States. In the present dilapidated social structure of Calcutta nursery schools should prove to be an integrating force.

CHAPTER II

WHAT AUTHORITIES SAY

I. IMPORTANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

Writers are wont to call the present age the "century of the child" and aptly so. In most countries of Europe and America the great importance of early childhood in the development and education of people is clearly recognized. England and America, where extremely efficient systems of kindergartens, creches and nurseries have been evolved, deserve special mention in this connection. The Twenty-eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education says ¹ :

Infancy and early childhood are held to be of fundamental and far reaching importance for the entire development of the individual - of importance, that is to say, not only with respect to his physique, his physical well being, but even more with respect to his mental well being, his temperamental and emotional outlook upon life.

Abundant evidence is available from research findings on human development to show that a child's earliest years are by far the most important in shaping personality characteristics which will fit and unfit him for a well-adjusted life.

1. The Twenty-eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education. Preschool and Parental Education, Public School Publishing Co. 1929.

The significance and importance of this period of a child's life is thus expressed by A. L. Gesell².

The most basic and dramatic phases of that development (development of children) are concentrated in the first five years of life

The adult is to a great extent the result of the "environment" that he was in during his formative periods of childhood. Jersild³ and his associates have pointed out;

By the age of six a child has been initiated into most of the major forms of experience that can befall a human being during his life time.

The genetic or developmental approach to child study has grown out of the realization that both desirable and undesirable adult characteristics have their origin in infancy and childhood. It is now fairly clear that men and women are the end products of all the experiences they have encountered in the process of growing up. Informed individuals no longer believe that prolonged frustration and other emotional experiences pass from the child's life

2. Gesell, Arnold L. and Ilg, Frances L. The Child from Five to Ten: Harper Brothers, New York, 1946.

3. Jersild, Arthur T. Child Development and The Curriculum. Bureau of Publications, Teacher's College, Columbia University. New York. 1946.

without leaving harmful attitudes and behavior trends. Thus psychology is concerned with the total span of child development from conception to maturity. It's goal is the safeguarding of development in such a way that no damaging episodes, deprivations, or emotional conflicts are permitted to mar the child's intellectual and social growth.

Each phase of human growth has its own particular needs which must be met if the individual is to expand and develop to the maximum of his potentialities. As has been stated before, the first five years, the so called preschool years, are of the utmost importance in a child's life. Once he has passed the stage of babyhood he becomes even more intensely occupied with exploring this vast new world in which he lives and in discovering his relationships to it. In order that he may succeed in this all important task he must be provided with an environment in which he will find ample opportunity to find things out for himself and at the same time receive proper and adequate guidance.

Among many factors which have contributed to the growth of nursery schools for preschool children in the United States of America, is the desire to apply in practice what child psychologists have found after careful research about children's growing needs, physical, emotional, mental and social. The nursery school contributes not merely to any

one phase of growth and development but to the total growth of the whole child in every aspect of his personality, intellectual, social, emotional and physical.

II. WHAT IS MEANT BY NURSERY SCHOOL

The modern nursery school which has evolved from various stages of development, can be defined by a process of elimination. A nursery school is not a day-nursery. The age range of children cared for in day-nurseries goes below and above that of a nursery school which generally includes the ages from two to six. The purpose of day-nurseries has always been to provide service for underprivileged homes and children. Day-nurseries have always put emphasis on custodial care of children whose mothers had to work. On the other hand nursery schools have always emphasized the schooling or educational value of the child attending, whatever economic motive may have brought him into the school.

In kindergartens the activity of the children is almost all in groups, whereas in nursery schools centres of interest are set up and children go from one activity to another as they like.

A nursery school is not primarily a research center though research centers usually have small groups of children to observe.

A nursery school is not a child care center as they keep

children between the ages of two and fourteen. Some centers mix all ages more or less in one group for custodial care in a program similar to a day-nursery program.

Play schools differ from nursery schools in several ways such as the following: age level restrictions are not always made in play schools, equipment is not complete or carefully selected. They are informal groups without any educational program. The nursery school is not primarily a class for parent education but offers opportunities for parents to learn.

In explaining what a nursery school is Katherine H.
4.
Read says:

It is a school serving the needs of two-, three-, and four-years-old children by offering them experiences adapted to what is known about the growth needs of these age levels. It shares with parents the responsibility for promoting sound growth in a period when growth is rapid and important, -----.

The very foundation of the nursery school program is its concern for mental and physical health. Here well-supervised but spontaneous play and constructive social activities initiate the young child into happy group experiences. The pliable child is stimulated to develop desirable social traits. Gradually to overcome infantile egocentrism, and to experience emotionally stable living.

4. Read, Katherine H. The Nursery School, W. B. Saunders Company Philadelphia 1950. p. 17.

Thus the nursery school offers a program and environment primarily suited to the educational and health needs of preschool children. In many details schools may vary but the basic conditions of (1) indoor and outdoor space, (2) age restrictions, (3) health program, (4) teachers (not custodians), (5) appropriate equipment and materials, (6) definite program, (7) educational objectives and (8) parents co-operation, must be fulfilled in a nursery school.

III. VALUES OF NURSERY SCHOOL

Education is more synonymous with living today than in the past. Educationists are more aware of the learning which takes place in social and emotional areas as well as intellectual ones in the vital earliest years of the child's life. They are beginning to plan for it on a sound basis instead of leaving it to chance. The child before six may not be ready to learn to read but he is ready and will inevitably learn ways in which to respond to people, to think about himself, and to handle his feelings. These things will influence his behavior later.

Children are the men and women of the future on whose shoulders will rest the burden of shaping the world tomorrow. However it is the duty of adults to give them a good foundation upon which to build. Rabindranath

5

Tagore explaining the ideal learning situation for children in preparation for life says that a foetus in the mother's womb and the seed under the soil surrounded by appropriate nourishment grow in seclusion. At that time their only job is by drawing food to make themselves ready to come out into the light and under the open sky. They do not have to procure nourishment, they just draw it from their surroundings. Thus nature keeps them in favorable seclusion surrounded by nourishment, so that no outside interference can reach them before they are ready to tackle it. Early childhood is like the foetus period of mind. At this time children should be in a dynamic environment where they can draw the proper nourishment consciously and unconsciously to get strength and be prepared to step into the adult world.

The work that nature does is extended in the nursery school. Julia C. Fowler⁶ in explaining the value of nursery school points out the part it plays in the total development of the child. She says:

5. Tagore, Rabindranath. Siksha (Education) Indian Publishing House, Calcutta 1921. p. 66
(Gist taken from the original Bengali by the writer)

6. Fowler, Julia C. "Why Nursery Schools?"
Childhood Education; Vol. 23 No. 7. Pp 334-335.

For the child the nursery school serves as a kind of special laboratory for collecting and assembling data about things and about people. He doesn't want to be told how things work. Spoken language is comparatively new to him, and has meaning only in so far as he has first hand experience in interpreting it.

So the child is getting more than facts. He is also getting a way of life. He learns that he has rights, but that other people also have rights. He learns, too, that the world has order and constancy.

As life gets more complex the individual needs more ways of expressing and organizing his reactions to it and more contacts with people who are having those same experiences.

The child has a right to an opportunity to develop a strong well-coordinated body, a personality structure which is sound and vigorous, plenty of intellectual curiosity, some knowledge of how to live with contemporaries in a group, and good follow-through work habits.

The good nursery school meets these needs of the child.

Whatever his needs nursery school offers the child the chance to grow unhampered in many directions. He lives at school. He is being educated for living. A good nursery school looks after the whole of the child's needs. It provides an environment in which the children thrive. The children in nursery school are above all experiencing their entrance into the larger world away from home in a protected and a suitable environment.

Nursery school offers some of the values once found in large families. Children grew up in large family groups

where they had a variety of early social contacts. The chance to play with others of about the same age, the sense of belonging to a group, the sharing of experiences, a chance to be self sufficient and independent, all contributed to some healthy development.

Life in a small family in a small apartment may handicap a child in more ways than one. It deprives him of experience with other children. Too close and constant contact with the same adults in a cramped space may make child and parents both irritable or the children may suffer from overwhelmingly anxious attention from the parents. On the other hand all adults in a nursery school must subordinate their needs because the school exists for the children. Attendance at nursery school seems to help to dilute tensions between a child and others in the home environment.

Moreover children need safe space to run, climb, shout, sing, dig, build with other children as much and as long as one likes. But modern living does not provide the space for the needs of the children, though they still need it. The nursery school provides space for indoor and outdoor children's activity.

It is being recognized more and more that sound learning is based on first hand experiences. Learning has always taken place this way. But modern life limits the intellectual

development of children by limiting their first hand experiences. While there are no formal lessons or classes in nursery school it contributes to the intellectual development of the child. This very freedom from rigid requirements gives the nursery school the ideal situation in which to guide him to the maximum development of his intellectual capacities.

A need for nursery school also arises from the limited experience of the parents. They need to have contact with the body of knowledge about children which is available today. The nursery school is one way to transmit the experience and findings of research centers to practicing parents.

One of the main objectives of education today is the socialization of the child. It is obvious that well-adjusted individuals and the better societies are characterized by a disposition to live in harmony with the principles of mutuality in human relations. Young children are primarily individualistic and too immature to care about the well being of other organisms. However they must eventually come to do so if they are to maintain mental health in a world of interpersonal obligations. Louis P. Thorpe⁷ observes that:

The process of growing up socially and emotionally is one of becoming less and less individualistic or ego-centric and increasingly mutual or sociocentric in disposition.

7. Thorpe; Louis P. Child Psychology and Development.
The Ronald Press Company, N.Y. 1946. p. 191.

8

In a study by Jersild⁸ on the influence of nursery school on the social adjustment of children it was found that:

The opportunities for social participation afforded by the nursery school do not..... have the effect of submerging the child's own individuality; rather, where wholesome relations obtain, the child, while participating fully in social intercourse with his fellows, and tending to avoid unprompted aggressions against others, continues to defend, or learns increasingly to defend his own interest and activities against exploitations by others.

The emotional development of the preschool child is of greatest importance. Growth and development during the first five years are more rapid than at any other time of life. Yet parents and teachers are impatient, tend to push the child and resent his inability to accelerate certain processes. Froebel, Freud and other students of child behavior have observed that the experiences of earliest years are fundamental in character and personality development, and there are many crises in which all the child's physical and psychic energy is needed for solving the emotional problems that confront him. His intellectual power is inadequate to deal with his emotional troubles and most of the time he is apprehensive over whether his

8. Jersild, Arthur T. and Fite, Mary D. The Influence of Nursery School Experience on Children's Social Adjustment, Bureau of Publications. Teachers College, Columbia University, New York 1939. p. 108.

impulses will meet with adult approval, anger or indifference. His physical growth can not be prevented except by disease or death. His mental growth however is intimately interwoven with his emotional development, which can be arrested at any point during these first five years. Because the emotional development of the first five years is so important and proceeds at such highly individual rates, the nursery school set-up provides maximum leeway for individual tendencies, as well as maximum stability of environment. Hence the child receives consistent and understanding guidance to develop a well balanced personality in a nursery school.

⁹
Katherine Landreth explains how nursery school helps children in emotional development.

The nursery school has much to contribute to emotional development. It offers the child companionship with children his own age. From his experience with equals he can build a truer picture of himself. He finds he is as able in many ways as any of the others. He gains support against the at times overpowering adult world in which he can never compete on equal terms.

The physical environment is free from unproductive frustrations. It also provides the child with the raw material necessary for a progressively widening range of experiences and opportunities for creative expression.....The richer and more varied the range of experiences.....the greater its contribution in helping the child to savor life's little moments and maintain his equilibrium in its more troubled ones.

9. Landreth, Catherine Education of the Young Child, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1942, p. 131.

The nursery school provides for the child's physical growth through preventive and remedial health measures. The balanced diet, good health habits, outdoor activity, rest and sleep periods, active play balanced by quiet activity to prevent fatigue and over-stimulation, examination by a physician, all these contribute toward building up healthy children. The prevention of disease and the promotion of optimum growth of the children are the goals of the health program of a nursery school.

CHAPTER III
PLANNING A NURSERY SCHOOL IN
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

I. GENERAL SET UP

Housing An old garage, a vacant plot, a railroad flat or a summer cottage, any place where young children came together for play used to be called a "Nursery School". But after careful study of many years the educators in the United States of America have set up certain standards which every nursery school should maintain, if it is to offer maximum opportunities for child development. Below are suggested some minimum essentials for a possible unit of thirty children.

Neighborhood A nursery school should be built away from heavy industrial smoke and dirt. It should be accessible to transportation.

Building: A A nursery school should not be more than
General
Characteristic two stories high. It ought to be close to the ground with direct access from the play-room to the toilet and to the outdoor play area. Satisfactory toilet arrangement is number one on a list of desirable building features, as two-three and four-year-old children have to get to the toilet often and it is important to build up clean and independent habits in using it.

Indoor Space The National Association for Nursery
and
Arrangement Education and various other standard-setting
groups have tried to fix the space requirements in terms of
minimum square feet per child, such as thirty-five square
feet per child for indoors and a hundred square feet per
child for outdoors. The indoor space should not be too big,
for it may suggest too much running, endless wandering and
vigorous noisy play to the children. Instead it should be
planned in a homelike manner which will provide a wholesome
and friendly environment conducive to the emotional security
of the children who will use it. The building must be clean
and well lighted and properly ventilated. The window space
should be at least twenty percent of the floor space and
windows should be low enough for children to see outside.
Enough windows in playrooms, kitchen and toilet well placed,
at children's height will give light without glare.

There should be an isolation room designed to isolate
the germs and not the child suspected of having them. It
should be cut off from all other rooms and may be glassed,
so that the child can see out to the office or playroom and
so that he can be observed by an adult without going in.
This room should have a private toilet and wash basin and be
well lighted and ventilated.

A properly equipped kitchen with adequate provisions

for cooking, refrigeration, garbage disposal, and storage is a necessity.

An office which can also be used for private conferences, equipped with chairs, desks, telephones and file is a necessity.

Heating equipment where needed should be guarded so that children are not burned on the hot apparatus. Electricity should be in proper condition inspected by building authorities.

A properly equipped bathroom should have: (a) low flush toilets, one for every ten children. Toilets should be inside building so that they are directly accessible on rainy days and can be kept heated. (b) Low wash basins. (c) Individual wash cloths, towels and combs should be washed and disinfected each week.

Outdoor
Space

Outdoor space should be one hundred square feet per child enrolled. The entire yard should be visible from any spot in the yard. The yard surface must drain water off. There should be some grass, trees, shrubs, and flowers. Hard surface for wheel toys is needed. There should be a balance of sun and shade. A provision for a covered year for rainy day outdoor play is very desirable. A fence, high enough to keep children safely enclosed, should be provided. A lock or catch on gate must be high enough

to be out of children's reach.

Sanitation and Safety The walls, floors and outdoor porch must be washable. Sanitary conditions come first. There should be no breeding ground for flies within three hundred feet of the building. Provision should be for enough garbage cans which should be kept clean and inaccessible to the children.

The kitchen should have screen doors. Exits should all open outward. Safety locks should be placed high up on exits to streets. An exit from each room to hall-way or outside and one exit per fifteen children per room is recommended.

Indoor Equipment The nursery school must have certain basic equipment. Besides these minimum essentials there are many other desirable pieces which may be added later on as circumstances permit.

1. Enough tables to seat the number of children enrolled in heights of 16, 18 and 20 inches according to age and size of children.
2. One chair per child eight, ten or twelve inches high according to age and size of children. Also there must be a chair for the teacher.
3. One cot per child in good state.
4. One locker per child.
5. Cupboards for essential materials and open shelves for children's toys and blocks etc.
6. One easel per ten children is recommended.

7. A bench of proper height placed wherever children need to sit down.
8. A phonograph for each room.
9. Piano.
10. A sandbox or sandtable.
11. Teachers' chairs and table.
12. Bulletin boards, one for staff, one for parents and one in each room for children.
13. A filing cabinet for records.

Outdoor All the items mentioned below should be
Equipment standard equipment. Many more can be added.

Here are the essentials:

1. Some kind of climbing apparatus, light jungle gym, or tree house.
2. A sand box in each yard.
3. Sand box toys.
4. One swing per ten children with leather seat.
5. Wheel toys like tricycles, kiddy cars and wagons.
6. A rocking boat in each play-yard.
7. Hollow blocks.
8. Two boards one foot six inches by sixty inches long.
9. Packing boxes of varying sizes without any splinters.
10. Hollow barrels, one or two per yard.
11. Waste basket.

Materials

Under this term minimum class room, household, office, medical and general items are listed.

1. Easel paints in ten colors sufficient for daily use.
2. Brushes in two widths.
3. Finger paint materials enough for daily use.
4. Blocks. Floor blocks in unit sizes and hollow blocks.
5. Clay.
6. Crayons.
7. Small wooden dolls.
8. Inter-locking trains.
9. Toy animals.
10. Dolls.
11. Doll furniture: doll bed, table, chairs and a box for clothes.
12. Dress up clothes for dramatic play.
13. Wooden beads.
14. Puzzles.
15. Peg boards.
16. Blunt scissors.
17. Enough news-print.
18. Non-poisonous paste.
19. Pencils.
20. A few attractive well-mounted and well-placed pictures.
21. Children's scrap-books and picture books replaced from time to time.

22. Sandbox toys, like tin cans, shovels, etc.
23. Plants for nature study.
24. Musical instruments.
25. Office supplies.
26. Dishes - one plate, glass, desert dish, cereal dish, salad fork and two teaspoons per child; four serving spoons per ten children.
27. Clothing and linen, changes for children, bibs, towels, aprons, sheets and blankets.
28. Cooking utensils.
29. Cleaning utensils.
30. Teachers' books.

II ORGANIZATION

An ideal nursery school must be thoroughly organized. The whole purpose of nursery school organization is to stabilize and perfect the environment so that children are safe, well supervised and free to play and learn. Organization is the sum total of planning for behavior and is a means toward an end in a nursery school. That end is the making of a physical and psychological atmosphere in which every one thrives. In a well organized school the building and the equipment are maintained in good order; food and supplies are there as needed; the staff members know what they are expected to do; the program is carried out as scheduled; the children are happy and active; the parents are satisfied, and the records are up to date.

The natural conflict between the intellectual, and intuitive point of view should be recognized and reconciled by giving full credit and importance to both. The nursery school needs teachers who are fully aware of concrete details and teachers who are gifted with intuitive insight. With good organization the highly intuitive teachers, who are so good with children, can function well in the material world because the things are well ordered. Otherwise if one is favored over the other, the nursery school will be either regimented or chaotic. The organizational set up may be built up from various sources but once established it should be completely accepted.

The general trend of organizational set up is as follows:

Board of Directors Many nursery schools are maintained by a governing board consisting of lay persons. A small, well organized working board who attend regular meetings and know of the work in some detail is very effective. This board is elected yearly and is responsible for setting policies, obtaining funds and securing personnel.

The board employs a trained responsible person to take complete charge of operating the school. The by-laws state what responsibilities are delegated by the board to the directors.

Director The director is responsible for the total program of the school and the coordination and

integration of all the services functioning in the nursery school. If she is both technician and director, then she acts as a supervizing director. She is able to direct the staff and shows demonstrated ability which is reflected in the school.

In general she is responsible for

1. Assisting the governing body in the determination of policies.
2. Coordinating and integrating all phases of total program through staff meetings and individual conferences.
3. Assisting in the preparation of the budget after consultation with the other members of the staff.
4. Supervizing the health program.
5. Organizing and supervizing the educational program.
6. Determining admissions with the cooperation of the social worker (if available on the staff).
7. Directing in-service training of the staff.
8. Planning and participating in staff and in parent-teacher meetings.
9. Seeing that the menus of total nursery-day are planned with the help of a nutritionist.

Teachers

There should be two teachers in each group, however small the group may be. One adult must be present at all times. A head teacher and an assistant or student-teacher for each group is recommended. A good teacher loves children and understands them through knowledge of child

development and dynamic psychology. She is flexible, has considerable emotional maturity, professional interest, sense of responsibility and good health. At least one teacher should have musical ability.

The specific responsibilities of the teachers are outlined in detail in the educational program. In general they consist of.

1. Carrying out the daily educational program of the group.
2. Guiding the development of each child in the group in all aspects of his personality and in accordance with his individual needs and capacities.
3. Caring for rooms and equipment as they are used.
4. Keeping necessary records.
5. Conferring with director concerning policies and procedures of any special problem.
6. Helping to maintain good parent-staff relations.
7. Doing morning inspections.

Physician A physician, a licensed doctor of medicine or a pediatrician, who likes children and works well with them is essential. He may be on part time. He should be amiable, kind, gentle and should possess a sense of humor. He is responsible for planning the health program of the school. His special responsibilities may include the following.

1. Making all pre-admission and semi-annual physical examinations of the children.

2. Taking full responsibility in case of epidemic exposure.
3. Assisting in the health education of parents and in interpreting the school health program to them.
4. Being on call to provide medical care in case of accidents and emergencies.
5. Assisting in the health education of the staff; instructions as to the best method of giving daily inspections and of the physical and nutritional needs of young children.

Cook A full-day nursery school should have a cook who is able to prepare food skillfully and keep the kitchen clean, and who possesses qualities which make her contacts with children pleasant. She should have a basic understanding of the principles of nutrition particularly as applied to pre-school children and be able to assume the responsibility for general management of the kitchen.

Her duties include:

1. Planning with the director the menus for the total nursery-day with morning juice, lunch and afternoon snack.
2. Cooking meals in a hygienic and sanitary way.
3. Receiving and accounting for all deliveries of food.

Housekeeper It is helpful to have a housekeeper. Since she will have many contacts with the children she must possess desirable personal characteristics.

Her particular duties will include the following:
(If there is no housekeeper these duties must be assigned to other members of the staff.)

1. Keeping all places clean.
2. Washing bibs, towels and small articles in daily use.
3. Assisting with any necessary mending.
4. Supervising the whole school building.
5. Helping the cook.
6. Making purchase of food.

Janitor His duties are:

1. Heating of the school.
2. Caring for the plumbing and electrical system.
3. Caring for the grounds, building and large equipment.
4. Washing windows and mopping floors.

The director must see that every school duty is assigned to someone as a definite responsibility. No regular chores should be left unassigned. A written schedule helps keep every one clear about her duties, especially substitute and student-teachers, and avoids misunderstanding. The multiplicity of detail makes it hard to manage a nursery school efficiently and with harmony. But it should be clearly understood that educational and psychological implications are inherent in all mechanics of nursery school life.

A thoughtfully organized school aims at educational rather than administrative goals.

Staff Relations The effectiveness of a unified and well integrated service depends upon staff relationships. One of the major ways of establishing good staff-

relationships and of offering in-service training is the staff meetings. Staff meetings may be any or all of three types.

(1) Administrative meetings, (2) Supervisory or instructional meetings, and (3) social meetings.

The first staff meeting of each year will be mainly of the administrative type, but as time elapses the supervisory meetings will predominate. The administrative meetings will cover routine matters, announcements, maintenance problems, delegations of teacher assignments and appointment of committees. The need for cooperative planning and working in these areas emphasizes the principle that teacher participation should be a dominant characteristic of such meetings.

The development of staff members as a group depends upon the success of the supervisory meetings. The instructional program should include:

1. Guest speakers who will discuss various phases of preschool education.
2. Reports of observations made by individual staff members.
3. Plans for improvement or adjustment of the program.
4. Means of effecting a more wholesome relationship with other organizations in the community;
5. Discussions of general problems connected with the children, parents or community.

The importance of cooperative thinking and planning necessitates a maximum amount of teacher participation.

Social meetings are most effective means of establishing satisfying and friendly relations among staff members. They should be planned throughout the year.

Although staff meetings, if well conducted, are a very effective means of coordinating and integrating the total program of the school and of determining the solution of problems with which the staff is confronted, there are many instances in which individual conferences prove more appropriate and beneficial. Problems of individual children or difficulties of individual staff members should be discussed privately with the director and with those who are directly concerned.

In-Service Training Even in the United States staffing nursery schools with trained teachers is a major problem, because there are few teacher-training institutions. So the director of a school should hold herself responsible for planning for in-service training of the staff.

III PROGRAM

The nursery school program reflects recent changes in educational concepts. Not so many years ago, education was thought of, as something imposed on a person. It often was unrelated to anything in his present living experience. At present the concept of education is, that it will help

each person develop so that he will be enabled to attain the maximum of his potentialities. The ultimate aim of all education is the training and guidance of the whole individual in all the aspects of his personality, spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional and physical. A well rounded program which contributes toward this harmonious development of the child must be based on sound objectives.

The following fundamental principles ¹⁰ have been drawn up by outstanding leaders on nursery education:

1. Children are persons.
2. Education should always be thought of as guidance (teaching) which influences the development of persons (personalities).
3. Maturing and learning must go hand in hand in the process of development.
4. It is important that personalities be well balanced.

Therefore in guiding children, we should aim to help them develop balancing traits at the same time that we try to supply what they need for self realization.

Some of the balancing traits are:

security and growing independence, self-expression and self-control, awareness of self and social awareness, growth in freedom and growth in responsibility, opportunity to create and ability to conform.

10. Fundamental Principles of Nursery Training School of Boston, May 1944. Mimeographed sheet.

The long range program based upon principles as stated above will meet the needs of the children in the nursery school.

A. PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Health The nursery school should have a constructive influence upon the health of the children and the community. Good medical supervision is one of the basic requirements for good health and a qualified physician must be on the staff for consultation. A balanced daily program which provides the children with rest, food and play for body and mind, forms the basis of nursery school hygiene. The prevention of disease and the promotion of optimum growth of the children are the goals of health practices.

Responsibilities of the Health Services (are):

1. Education of the parent concerning the health needs of the child.
2. Education of the staff by the pediatrician, not only in the above factors important to the parent, but in the special health problems involved in group care of children, and in the use of community health resources.
3. Evaluation of plant and equipment from the point of view of health, sanitation and safety.
4. Evaluation of the adequacy of the total program from the health standpoint.

5. Evaluation of the health of children and staff members; with recommendations for adjustments or treatments indicated.
6. Control of infections among staff and children.
7. Management of accidents.
8. Referral for special services when needed.
9. Keeping of medical records.

11

Sanitation

Sanitary considerations come first.

The Board of Health should certify that the water supply is pure, the sewage system satisfactory and garbage properly cared for and disposed of. Fresh air and light help keep the room a healthy place. Every nursery school needs adequate service to keep surfaces clean and free from germs.

Pre-Admission

All persons who are workers in a

Examination

nursery school must be free from disease.

Teachers, children and parents must follow certain rules of hygiene. The initial health examination of the teachers and other members of the staff should include chest x'ray, vaccinations, blood pressure, heart, hearing and vision.

Pre-admission health examination of the children is meant to promote health of the children as well as to

11. Daytime Care: A Partnership of Three Professions, Child Welfare League of America, Inc. March 1946, pp. 16-17.

prevent disease from spreading in the nursery school. Children who suffer from gross physical defects or illness or who are feeble-minded, should not be admitted to a regular nursery school as they need specially trained staff to look after them.

Morning Morning inspection is often better done by Inspection the teacher than by a visiting nurse, as she is in a better position to know the child's regular emotional behavior, normal skin color, eye expression, and posture, all of which may reveal symptoms of illness. Moreover she can follow up her suspicions by watching the child for the next few hours.

The morning inspection is not primarily a medical procedure. It is of tremendous educational value as it is the first contact of child and parent with the school, which often sets the tone for the day. The teacher must make every child feel that she is glad to see him. The teacher's first step towards inspection is a warm greeting with word and smile, and the extension of her hand. The important thing is that inspection proceed with the child's initiation of the process, whether he offers his throat, his hands or just himself as a whole, to look at first. The actual procedure of inspection is comprised of a careful look into the throat with a flash light, an inspection of as

much skin surface as is necessary and a general sizing up of the child's well being.

The teacher who makes health inspection must be trained in all its details. She must recognize and distinguish quickly between what is normal and what is not.

The morning examination^{or}/daily inspection will cover

Hair and scalp	---	nits, pediculosis
Skin, face	---	pallor or rash
Neck	---	Acutely swollen glands
Hands	---	eruption, scabies, impetigo, ringworm, posion ivy
Body	---	rash, eruption, ringworm
Eyes, lids, mucous membrane	---	redness, discharge or purulent, pink eye, trachoma, conjunctiva redness
Ears	---	Discharge
Nose	---	Discharge - acute - chronic
Mouth, gums, mucous membranes of cheeks	---	redness, exudate
Throat and Tonsils	---	redness, membrane

Isolation Routine isolation of any child who shows signs of oncoming illness will go far toward protecting the health of a group. A child suspected of a communicable disease or a common cold should be kept in isolation till a parent can come to get him. Until then he should be kept as comfortable and happily occupied as possible, with different toys other than regular ones.

First Aid There should be provision for a medicine cabinet in which first aid articles should be kept and locked.

The health program is intimately connected with the physical development of the child. Adequate diet, outdoor activity, rest and sleep periods, active play balanced by quiet activity, good outdoor and indoor apparatus and play equipment all contribute toward the building up of healthy children.

ESTABLISHING ROUTINES

By routines are meant eating, sleeping, toileting, dressing and morning health inspection.

Learning to eat right food is a necessary part of every child's education. Beyond the basic purpose of feeding the children, the object of lunch period is to teach them to eat a reasonable variety of foods in optimum amounts and to enjoy eating. The right approach will foster desirable

habits and attitude in eating and will encourage socially acceptable behavior at the table on the child's own level of maturity. For a good eating situation in the nursery school the right foods well-cooked, good serving and eating procedure, and the teacher's understanding of children's eating difficulties, are necessary.

Every child will be expected to taste all foods served at the noon meal. The emphasis will be on tasting rather than cleaning the plate. No child is ever deprived of his dessert. The teachers will sit at the tables with the children to serve their portions. As children grow in independence they will be permitted to serve themselves. The teacher should not try to make a child eat, should avoid tensions and scenes and should never give or take away food as a reward or punishment. She should endeavor to create a calm, relaxed, cheerful atmosphere, which is conducive to desirable eating habits.

Rest and sleep are necessary for good health and continuous growth in young children. Children establish good or bad attitudes toward sleep at a very early age. Children who are new in the nursery school often show resistance to lying down. Ruth Updegraff¹² defines rest

12. Updegraff, Ruth. Practice in Preschool Education, McGraw Hill Book Co., Inc., New York 1938, p. 82.

as an antidote to fatigue and thus includes activities other than sleeping. Restful activities may be listening to music or to a story, looking at books or pictures. The objective of rest for the child is to teach and help him to relax, when rest is appropriate.

Nursery school has regular periods for toileting. The aim for the washing routine is to establish habits of independence in toileting and washing. The pattern for learning in this routine is largely determined by the attitude of the adult. The adult should have a pleasant, matter-of-fact attitude toward toileting. If so the child will enjoy this routine and his learning will be constructive. Most authorities now feel that to begin toilet training too young puts a great strain on the child and retards his learning instead of helping him. It may also upset him emotionally to such an extent that his personality is affected. When a child is mature enough he will start using the toilet of his own accord. Until he is ready, he should be helped to learn to assume responsibility very gradually.

In the dressing routine, children should be supervised according to their needs. At the beginning of the year the children may be entirely dependent upon the teacher. But as the year progresses they develop some independence which is

the goal. Here as elsewhere there are individual differences and the independence fluctuates according to individual moods.

It is expected of children to submit willingly to health inspection by teacher, nurse or doctor. Many children are conditioned against doctors and physical examinations very young because of unpleasant experiences. If the teacher's attitude is right the children will develop at nursery school a matter-of-fact approach to health inspection.

Each day the child will do many things approximately the same way as on every other day. The children's ability to respond to the same stimulus in more or less the same fashion each time, makes it possible to have a nursery school. It is necessary to expect that certain responses will come from the children quickly and automatically and nothing guarantees this better than the stability and regularity of the stimuli. This does not mean regimentation because a good nursery school teacher does not insist upon rigid uniformity of responses but instead is satisfied with reasonably adequate reactions.

MOTOR SKILLS AND MUSCULAR DEVELOPMENT

A yard of nursery school children is a yard in motion. Nursery school utilizes children's natural desire for activity

by supplying the play equipment. Space and large play apparatus provide opportunities for the development of large muscles. Both outdoor play and indoor play provide a medium for large and small muscular development and motor coordination.

The use of jungle gym, balancing boards, swings, wagons, tricycles, sliding boards, teeter-totter and hollow blocks, develop the large muscles. Opportunity for small muscle development and finer motor coordination is provided by manipulating toys, pegs, puzzles, crayons, finger paintings, beads, clay, buttoning clothes, etc.

The manner of using the equipment and play materials, interest in activity and skill, vary from one age level to another and from individual to individual. The teacher should be aware of these variations and should plan challenging activities for each child and according to his maturity.

B. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Difficulties exist in working out relationships with equals and in accepting the limitations that are necessary in a group. Some children withdraw, some are defensive or aggressive and some are friendly and seem to expect friendliness from others. In spite of the conflicts and

problems which occur in nursery school it is important that all children find success in relationships with people of their own age. In guiding the social development of the child, the ultimate goals are:

1. to provide social contact with other children and with understanding adults
2. to present opportunities for learning to respect the rights and property of others and to share and take turns
3. to encourage certain degrees of conformity and cooperation which are necessary for the well-being of the individual and the group
4. to develop confidence in themselves and in adults
5. to promote the feeling of security and confidence which is the essential basis for learning social skills.

The teacher helps the child by accepting him in the group. A good relationship with the teacher is important in helping him grow as a person outside his family. To be of real assistance to the child the teacher should have a full understanding of how children may be expected to behave at each age level. The next step is to study the individual characteristics of each child for formulating methods of approach that will foster wholesome relations between teacher and child. Consistency in affection, discipline and keeping of promises on the part of the teacher is essential if the child is to develop a cooperative attitude toward adults and toward the group. The teacher

can help him most by helping him discover that being with other people is fun. The teacher should help the children like each other more in order to achieve social satisfaction. The purpose of nursery education is not only to help the child develop his own individual capacities in suitable fashion, but it is also to socialize him, that is, to teach him how to enjoy the company of others and to have others enjoy his company.

Much of all this is done through the teacher's guidance of the children's play:- play which constitutes a large part of the nursery school daily program.

C. EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The teacher should share the responsibility with the parent to aid the child in developing a rich and controlled emotional life. Her part in this might be described as follows:

1. The nursery school teacher can help to increase a child's feeling of security and adequacy by accepting him as he is, his feelings and his behavior, knowing that there are reasons for the way he feels and acts. She should recognize that hitting and other forms of motor expression of feeling are normal for a young child.
2. She should help him find acceptable outlets for his feelings.
3. The teacher should try to meet the child's emotional needs as he indicates them through his pattern of behavior, such as nervous habits or speech disorders.

4. The teacher should acquire skill in handling the children, increasing their confidence, making suggestions in a positive way, reducing difficulties in the situations they face, and adjusting her demands to fit their capacities.
5. The teacher should make each child feel loved and valued enough so that he can meet the demands made upon him.
6. She should give the children positive guidance in handling their emotions.
7. Music, art and active play will serve as channels for release of tension. Such activities will bring about a relaxed condition physically and emotionally. An atmosphere of happiness, of security, of being wanted, of confidence and of love, is essential for the child who is to face the reality of his own feelings of anger, fear and pain.

D. INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

The intellectual development of the child is closely interrelated with all the activities in the program. Education is considered as guidance toward optimum physical, mental, emotional and social development.

Play materials form an important element in educational guidance. Proper use of materials is an essential educational process. Providing play activities which challenge the child to think and to do, is to stimulate desirable intellectual attitudes.

The teacher gives the children many opportunities to make choices involving decisions on their part, to determine the relative merits of the chosen and discarded

alternatives, to encourage reasoning, judgment and problem-solving. She gives logical reasons for her requests, suggestions, commands or procedures.

Children who ask for help when confronted by problems are encouraged to locate the cause of their difficulty, with a view to decreasing progressively their dependence on the teacher.

13

Susan Isaacs wrote:

The school, the teacher and the teaching alike are simply a clarifying medium through which the facts of human life and the physical world are brought within the measure of the child's mind at successive stages of growth and understanding.

Thus a nursery school offers the child a vantage point from which to survey the world around him. Young children are very dependent on the experiences they have. Their experiences are the raw materials from which they develop concepts necessary for understanding. It is the teachers' duty to see to it that the experiences are wisely related to the children's interests and level of development. The teacher stimulates their natural curiosity and helps them to develop the capacity for unifying their knowledge.

13. Isaacs, Susan. Chapter V, "The Experimental Construction of an Environment Optimal for Mental Growth" in A Handbook of Child Psychology. Edited by Carl Murchison, Clark University Press, Worcester, Massachusetts, 1931. p. 132.

The child through his experiences grows in his knowledge of the physical world around him - earth, sky, plants, animals and people. Children, from early in life, need to know how to go to first hand sources in quest of knowledge rather than to be entirely dependent on the authoritative word. They need to learn to weigh and measure, to check and challenge what is given them. The nursery school provides an environment which offers materials for testing thought through observation, exploration and experimentation. Such testing comes when contacts with nature abound and the teacher understands the children's need, can answer their questions and lead them to fuller knowledge.

The child is made aware of his physical environment. He develops his concepts through actual experiences with water, earth, sky, animals, plants, etc., which will be initiated by the child's questions but enriched by wise guidance of the teacher. The teacher should see that the environment is rich in opportunities for nature experiences. The teacher should help the child to establish and maintain a sense of security, of safeness, through his acquaintance with the environment.

The child discovers the ways of man. He discovers that there are differences in the way different people live. He is coming upon ways of travel, communications, transportation, man's independence, his need for food, shelter, clothing,

machinery, etc. The children in the nursery school should go for excursions which will further children's social science experiences. The teacher should see that the children have materials to reproduce the world and ways of men in their dramatic play.

The child's development of language is an essential part of his development as an individual. The nursery school teacher should provide many sensory and kinaesthetic contacts for the children so that they can talk about many things. The teacher should encourage acquisition of vocabulary and correct use of words. The teacher should give opportunity to the children to hear and to talk. No attempt should be made to curtail their monologue as they go about their activities. Listening to stories, telling their own stories, naming pictures, hearing the words of songs and poems, chanting rhythmically, all these help children to learn language. The teacher should use correct terms in relation to objects and activities. The teacher should help children to acquire a feeling of power to express themselves in speech rather than a feeling of inadequacy. The teacher can record the children's rhythmic, natural flow of patterned words and repeat them as their own stories or poems, being careful not to kill their spontaneity. Simple field trips will help children

develop new concepts and enlarged vocabulary.

Aesthetic development through music and rhythm should be encouraged first by spontaneous expression of the children. The teacher fosters the children's interest in and enjoyment of singing by her own spontaneous singing in the nursery school. The teacher provides the children with opportunities to listen to music. The teacher observes the children's rhythmic activities during their free play, and gets cues as to their interests and level of development and develops it in the music period. Equipment in the nursery school yard which provides rhythmic bodily experiences, and simple musical instruments indoors, such as tapsticks, rattles, drums, triangle, gong, child's harp, tuned bars or bells, foster readiness for music and rhythmic experiences.

For aesthetic development the teacher provides plastic media such as paints, finger paint, clay, crayons, blocks, sand, etc. These are used for creative expression by the children. Through manipulation the child gets confidence in his ability and sense of achievement. They also find other emotional release. Through them he can project his doubts, hatreds, fears, wonderings outside of himself, and in doing so can find some relief. The teacher helps the child learn how to use art media, by demonstration,

suggestion, and approval of constructive and skillful use of them. The teacher shows interest in the children's work in order to encourage further development.

IV RECORDS

Knowing the whole child is an ideal of education. Records contain specific and definitely observed items about a child's behavior. In the nursery school records play an important role in helping both teachers and parents to understand the child's behavior and thus more effectively guide his development. They also build up a sense of rapport between school and home. One of the most accurate means of obtaining an all round picture of the child's growth and development is from cumulative records. There are two general types of records, group and individual. Below is a list of essential records which a nursery school should keep.

Group Records (1) Registration, (2) Attendance, (3) Weight and height, (4) Immunity chart, (5) Chronological chart, and, (6) Elimination chart.

Individual Records

- (1) Registration card: information regarding the child's family.
- (2) Medical record: information concerning the child's physical development.
- (3) Family case record: information regarding family background and record of contacts between school and the child's family.

(4) General cumulative record: This will be compiled from all other records and will show an approximate picture of the child's growth and development, physical, emotional, social and intellectual.

(5) Development records: This is a periodic record of each child's personality development noted under various headings.

V DAILY SCHEDULE

It is important that a program be followed carefully by clock time. Children thrive under regularity, but programing does not mean regimentation. Since no rigid division of time can be made in the nursery school, the division of the day into large blocks of time is more desirable than fixing of specific activities. The planning of such blocks of time should be left to the discretion of the individual teacher. The appropriate time for music and story may vary according to the needs and interests of the group.

A sample follows:

8:45 - 9:30	Arrival; morning inspection; free play.
9:00 - 10:00	Free play.
9:45 - 10:45	Wraps off; toilet, wash; juice; rest.
10:40 - 11:30	Free play.
11:20 - 12:00	Wraps off; toilet, wash; rest.
12:00 - 12:45	Dinner.

12:30 - 2:45 Toilet; prepare for afternoon nap;
nap.

2:30 - 3:30 Up from nap; toilet; milk; prepare
for dismissal; play.

VI PARENT EDUCATION

One of the main objectives of nursery school education is the education of the parents, since they are the ones who have the greatest influence on the child's life. At this age, a child is learning about himself and the world he lives in. Both at home and in nursery school he plays, rests and learns to adapt himself to the various demands made on his activities. It is important that there be reasonable consistency between nursery school and home. Therefore child's home and school activities may be closely related in the nursery years. As Lewin¹⁴ says "surroundings are always a part of the person".

Parents and teachers should willingly share any information which would be of value in guiding the child.

Schools vary in their emphasis on parent education programs. In general all schools recognize that there should be some cooperation between teachers and parents, and that there should be some active contacts between them.

14. Lewin, Kurt. "The Process of Personality Development", Parent Education, April, 1937. P. 3, 6-8.

Casual Contacts An informal contact during morning inspection helps, when mother may pass on to the teacher some information regarding the child or his home which may be of value in understanding his behavior. These brief contacts at the beginning or at the end of the school day have greatest value in building up sound human relationships of friendliness, understanding and confidence between parents and teachers.

Conferences There are formal conferences which are
and Meetings planned in advance to bring together parents and teachers. They are profitable meetings if the questions can be raised and explored through discussion. Frequent social gatherings, educational meetings, meetings to prepare gifts or surprises for children, promote friendly relations and a spirit of cooperation among parents.

Participating in groups which carry on projects or take part in activities strengthens a parent's feeling about his ability to meet situations.

Reading and A library specially planned for the
Observation use of parents which contains books on child development and related topics will be of value to parents in understanding and guiding their children. Most parents need orientation in child development. They can be helped through actual observation. Parents will observe

the teacher's handling of difficult situations and guiding children toward purposeful activities.

CHAPTER IV
ANTHROPOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA AND INDIA

Cultural anthropology begins at home. So the family still remains the most fundamental unit of culture. The family is a cultural group because it brings within its orbit persons of different age and sex who renew and reshape the ways of society into which they are born. The home serves as a cultural laboratory for transmitting old traditions to the next generation and for creating new social values. The spirit and organization of the family reflect the historic culture. Whether a culture is a totalitarian or a democratic one is reflected through the family organization. The first subordinates the individual completely to the family-head, demands autocratic parent-child relationships, and despotic discipline of the child, and it completely disregards the individuality of a person. Whereas in a democratic family, the dignity of the individual is affirmed, reciprocity of parent-child relationships is favored, and humane discipline of the child through guidance and understanding is encouraged.

To understand a family therefore one needs to know the attitude of parents toward their children. To understand a particular child one must know the geographical environment,

(land, sea and other physical features) which influences the living of his people and creates the characteristics of their culture. The social environment also should be considered in order to understand the child. The standards and beliefs and hopes of people living in a particular area influence the people and in turn affect the mental make-up of the child. And lastly the biological heredity to which the child is the heir is an important consideration.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The following observations regarding the culture of the United States were made through books¹⁵ and in the course of the writer's stay in that country for more than two years ranging from December 1948 to February 1951, through direct contacts with people, fellow students and pupils of public, private and university schools both in the west and east coasts of America. The writer had ample opportunity to observe and to formulate the opinions expressed

15. Lynd, Robert S. and Lynd, Helen Merrel: Middletown in Transition, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York; 1937, XV - 640 pp.

and

Lynd, Robert S. and Lynd, Helen Merrel: A Study in Contemporary American Culture, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York; 1929, Xp - 21 - 3 - 550 pp.

in this paper either by working in or by visiting the schools mentioned below.

U.C.L. A Demonstration Nursery and Elementary School,
Los Angeles, California
McKinley Public School, Santa Monica, California
Public School, 54th Street, Los Angeles, California
Demonstration School, Claremont University
Golden Gate Nursery School, San Francisco, California
University Experimental School, Iowa City, Iowa
William McKinley Public School, Boston, Massachusetts
Buckingham School (Private), Cambridge, Massachusetts
Shady Hill School (Private), Cambridge, Massachusetts
Nursery Training School, Boston, Massachusetts
Ruggles Street Nursery School, Roxbury, Massachusetts
Hecht House Nursery School
Cambridge Nursery School, Cambridge, Massachusetts
Belmont Day School, Belmont, Massachusetts
Jewish Community Center Nursery School, Brookline
Massachusetts
Public School, Malden, Massachusetts
Nursery School, Wellesley College, Wellesley,
Massachusetts
Cabot School, Newton, Massachusetts
Nursery School, Wilton, New Hampshire
Fresh Meadow Nursery School, Fresh Meadow, New York
City and Country School, New York City
Harriet Johnson Nursery School, 69 Bank Street, New York
United Nations International School, Jamaica,
Long Island

The friendliness of the people of the country helped the writer to verify her opinions formed through books and direct experiences and to generalize about family life, its hopes and ideals, and the cultural background of the children of the country. The writer also had the privilege of having unique, intimate and happy experiences living with families in the United States. Thus the ideas about United States of America culture as expressed in this

chapter are the product of the writer's personal experience in the manner stated above.

Though some characteristics predominate in the different parts of America, still the geographical and consequently the social make-up of children vary considerably from east, mid-west, west and south regions. References are made by Claudia Lewis in her book "Children of the Cumberland"¹⁷ regarding the difference in the cultural background of the children of the United States in different regions. In Arkansas children live in slanting shacks in the midst of endless cotton rows, whereas in a city in the east children play in canyon like streets lined with high brick and concrete buildings on both sides. The southern mountain children know only small cabins and enclosed life of the wooded Appalachian slopes. In the north-west children can look up daily to snow-capped peaks. Children who live beside the sea grow up with that sound in their ears and spaciousness before their eyes. Children who live in towns with their backyards, house-close-to-house, differ in their outlook from the children who have spaciousness of plain stretched out before them.

Though Americanization is going on through public education, spread of industry, radio, motion pictures, air

17. Lewis, Claudia Children of the Cumberland
Columbia University Press. New York. 1946.

travel, etc. still even now there are vast differences between the people of different parts of the United States. Though the differences are fast disappearing still significant characteristics can be recognized in specific groups.

Since the background of the nursery school is supposed to be the eastern part of the United States, the description of that specific group and environment will be helpful. There will be no attempt to make sweeping generalizations concerning these cultural trends or concerning the pattern of the community as a whole. There are too often individuals who do not fit into such descriptions, they act and are reacted upon, which in turn might change the trend altogether after some time, thus changing the cultural pattern itself. The conditions under which the children are growing up today in America are entirely different from that of a few generations ago. Industrialization and the necessary corollary of urbanization have come to stay. The city, the symbol of technological civilization, has its own peculiar characteristics.

The geographical environment may differ from place to place but the cities have a few things in common, such as, lack of space, rush and go, very little contact with nature, and lack of sense of belonging to the immediate neighborhood.

The climate of the eastern part of the United States is temperate. A brisk and invigorating climate almost all the year round gives people an enormous amount of energy to work and be active. The climate has the same effect on the children. The slightest exertion even in play tires out a child in a warmer climate.

The family unit in the United States invariably consists of husband, wife and their children. In some families if either of the parents is divorced the children of the former wife or husband share the same home.

The biological heredity of these children is a mixture of all the European races with some infusion of Negroes, Orientals and American Indians. A typical public school has all kinds of children, rich and poor; negro, caucasian and oriental; Protestants, Catholics, Jews and others; legitimate and illegitimate. They come from all the groups that make up the cosmopolitan population of America.

The social environment of the children scarcely could be called homogeneous in the simple racial, religious or cultural sense. The languages spoken by the children at home include English, Italian, Chinese, German, Irish, Japanese, Spanish, Swedish, Portuguese, French, Russian, Hawaiian and many others. Since English is the state language it is also the teaching medium in United States schools. This common language is one of the factors

which is helping to make a synthesis of all the different cultures in the land.

The social and economic status of the parents vary widely if a public school group is considered. Some parents are unskilled laborers, some are college professors, some parents are on the border of illiteracy, some are Doctors of Philosophy. The difference in economic and family status is shown when children are brought to school by nurse-maids, chauffeurs, grandparents, parents or older brothers and sisters. The children come from solid normal homes and from broken homes where parents are separated or have remarried. The percentage of children from broken homes is much smaller than commonly supposed. Both parents of some children are engaged in professional work as a matter of choice, making it necessary to turn the children over to maids in the after-school hours. Other children have mothers who work outside the home out of necessity. Some mothers spend almost all their time at home. The mothers of children who come to school may be divorced, dead, in hospital, crippled, mentally disturbed, unbalanced or deranged, cruel and negligent. They may have only one child or three or more under six years of age. Though most of the parents can follow the general trend of the country only a small proportion of parents take an intelligent and

devoted interest in the development of their children. In his fundamental constitution a city child in the United States is not much different from the rural child of fifty years ago, but the cultural complex in which he lives has both shrunken and expanded to an almost fantastic degree, shrunken by the confines of an apartment without brother or sister at one extreme, expanded by the space defying technologies of radio, television, motion picture, telephone, automobile and airplane. These paradoxical extremes have complicated the whole process by which the child is initiated into the culture of today. The apartment child has been greatly deprived of his former rural companions human and animal. Living space has contracted perhaps to a single room with one or two windows. He has not got ample intimate contact with growing life, with other children, with a variety of adults. He is deprived of the human relations which were a natural part of family life in a simpler culture. The American nursery school may be interpreted as a reaction to the psychological needs of the urban child.

A child's place in the family in the United States and the attitude of parents toward him have changed considerably now-a-days. In city homes as described by

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Claudia Lewis it is often considered not only necessary but advisable to put the children's bedtime and mealtime on regular schedule which is entirely different from those of parents and adults. They limit children's diet to foods that are good for them, though the adults may eat what is denied to children. The parents leave the children at home when they go out in the evening. The parents expect the children to adhere to a special routine suitable for themselves. In a family where mother works as well as father because she prefers and not out of necessity, a maid takes the child out to play in the park in the afternoon. Thus the child has very little contact with his parents. Many of the parents who have grasped the developmental philosophy of child-care no longer believe and practice authoritarian discipline. They do not consider disobedience as much of a crime as failure to grow in ability to control themselves. Of course there are families who exercise authoritarian discipline which tends to be severe, or even cruel.

The family unit sometimes becomes a complex institution when it consists of husband, wife, children and grandparents. There is a chance of divided loyalty of the children.

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Gesell opines that

The mother and father should be responsible for the government and management of the home. They as parents (and not as children of their own parents) should determine the goals of the family life. On matters of so-called discipline the judgment of the parents ought to prevail. Grandmother can claim no natural authority in these matters, although her consultative wisdom may often prove invaluable.

Thus though the emotional bonds with grandparents or relatives exert a broadening and beneficial influence on the development of the child's personality, they are not permitted to overstep their prerogatives. The parents are the sole authority in matters of discipline and goals of family life. Naturally the parent-child relationship is more intimate and intense. It depends on the individual temperament of parents whether the relationship is flexible or rigid.

Parents in the United States in general, encourage developmental detachment among their children. It is expected that at a certain age or after they get a job, the children who have matured to be adolescents or youths detach themselves from the family and start their own life as a separate unit. Though the parents have sufficient emotional attachment, still they no longer have any

18. Gesell, Arnold and Ilg, Frances L. The Child From Five to Ten, Hamish Hamilton Ltd., London W.C.1 end Ed. p. 331.

responsibility to their children whatsoever. On the other hand when the parents are old and have retired, they can not claim any assistance from their children, nor does society demand it though it is frequently given. Whether a parent is versed in the developmental philosophy of child care or not, he in some tangible or intangible way impresses upon his children the need to be progressively independent in judgment and to earn their own living. A child in any culture is born into a religious group. He has no other choice. Religious practices, morals and ideals which are translated into the way of life of his cultural group are learned by children. In the United States and in Europe religious practices are more or less of a community character. It is not individualistic in the strictest sense of the term as the Hindu religion is. It puts emphasis on the improvement of society as a whole and the individual as a member of the whole comes as a natural sequence. A child is initiated into religious practices by his mother at mealtime and bedtime prayers and through church. Moral concepts are developed within the family and also moral training is given by the family. People make virtues out of self-control, foresight, individual achievement and responsibility, through a discipline which uses reward and punishment and affectionate attention from mother and father.

INDIA - CALCUTTA

India is termed a sub-continent. There is a vast difference in physical features, climate, race, religion and way of living from north to south and east to west. The chief characteristics of India are its vastness and its variety. The area of India at present is almost equal to Europe including Russia. India stretches over twenty-nine parallels of latitude, and from 8° north to 37° north. India's variety is the corollary of its vastness. In its huge expanses are included sandy deserts, thick forests and fertile soil, the southern table land and the wide plains of northern India, the world's highest mountains and the low-lying flats on the seacoast that are covered by every tide.

According to ethnographers and historians the huge population is composed of numerous racial elements. Some, as Kolarian and pre-Dravidian, go back to neolithic times, some are pre-historic, such as Aryans, some are historical invaders like Alexander's Macedonians, Saks, Huns, Moghuls and Pathans up to the British in recent times.

According to linguistic experts the inhabitants of India speak between them twelve principal languages and two hundred and twenty dialects. There are in India seven principal religions, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism,

Sikhism, Christianity and Zoroastrians. The people of India observe many different customs and belong to different stages of civilization, from primitive tribes to progressive and highly educated individuals. India in short, is a living museum of race, language, culture and religion in different stages of development.

In spite of its diversity in physical, economic and sociological features a thread of unity runs throughout the land, as eighty-four per cent of the population live on agriculture. But the present cities, the creation of British rule and lately industry, are completely different from rural India which is the real India. Unfortunately distinct social cleavages exist between rural and urban society. Since this study is concerned with a city, a description of it is necessary.

Geographically Calcutta is situated in the eastern part of India. It is an inland port which gives an international character to the city. One meets every nationality in the clubs of Calcutta. Climate is tropical, temperature goes down to 50 fahrenheit sometimes and rises up to 107 fahrenheit in May and June. The special characteristic is its oppressing humidity. Torrential rains during the monsoon months of June to September sometimes paralyze the traffic system of Calcutta. The rest of the year it is pleasant to live and work.

It is the most unplanned city in the world. By the side of palatial buildings one will find the dilapidated huts of a slum without the minimum facilities for human need for existence. There is very little open space such as parks for the children or adults. Big open spaces and parks are near the office quarters which are far removed from the congested residential quarters.

During the last three years the population has increased to a fantastic number. The partition of the country which has dislocated the normal life of the city in many ways, is also responsible for the pressure of population on Calcutta. The displaced person (refugee) problem is very acute. At present the Calcutta population is equal to that of the entire province (comparable to a state in the United States) of Bengal ten years ago.¹⁹ People are living like cattle. It is not a normal life of course. Something constructive should be done quickly to stabilize the lives of these uprooted people. This unsettled condition is having a far reaching effect on the mores and sense of values of the community.

The social environment is thus in the process of changing. In every way this seems to be a transition period from rural to urban life and from agriculture to industry.

19. Calcutta Corporation Gazette 1951.

A description of family life in rural India will give better perspective to the life of families living in the cities. The typical family consists of a father, his sons and grandsons together with the corresponding women folk: mother, daughters-in-law and daughters and granddaughters until they are married and enter into other joint families of their respective husbands. This family may include a widowed grandmother, also a widowed aunt may be included with her children if her husband's family cannot support them. This agnatic family is the historical unit of Hindu society and the whole of Hindu law is directed to upholding its permanence. Jointness is the normal condition but partition can always be demanded. So long as the family remains undivided it is regarded as joint in food, worship and estate, however scattered its members may be. All the men when at home live together in a common house, share meals cooked on a common hearth, and carry out together the family rites. The income of the ancestral property and generally the earnings of individual members of the family are placed in a common fund, out of which the expenses of all the members are paid. The control of family affairs is in the hands of the father and in his absence the eldest male members of the family, though in matters of importance all adult members are usually consulted. The mother is

responsible for all internal management. This joint family system is administered throughout the country with slight variations in certain regions. Since there has been no other agency to look after the aged, the sick and the destitute, which require insurance against emergency, this institution of the joint family has maintained the stability of society in spite of several upheavals in the country. It is peculiarly suited to rural India where agriculture is the main vocation and all the members of the family contribute towards the job. Thus the contribution of the earnings of individual members is not ear-marked neither is it the responsibility of an individual to run the family or the estate.

This brings us to the parents' attitudes toward their children. One can almost say that there is a hierarchy of loyalty, that is, a child pays highest loyalty to the family-head. The parents exercise immediate control over the child but the final word rests with the grandmother. The result is less contact and tense relations with the parents, but divided responsibility. The children have emotional bonds with a number of adults other than their parents and the companionship of peers. Discipline is enforced through imitation and from fear of being ostracised from other children. It is an accepted code ²⁰ that a child should be

20. 'Kautilya's Artha Shastra' edited by R. Shamshastri, Bangalore, India, 1915.

lovingly and leniently treated up to the age of five, from the sixth year to fifteen he should be trained and disciplined through regularity, then from the sixteenth year on he should be treated like a friend and given responsibilities and freedom to act on his own. Though family practices differ widely like individual personality, it is certain that children get more positive than negative discipline at home. Negative punishment is enforced when there is gross misconduct e.g. disrespect to elders or destruction of others' property. Then a child is now allowed to mix with other children until he thinks he can control himself. This is the accepted practice of middle class people, but there are numerous instances of hitting, whipping and other inhuman punishments.

The cycle of birth and death goes on in the house. The marriage ceremony, from which children are not excluded is performed in the house. For days dramatic play goes on among the children based on these exciting experiences. Babies are not generally weaned until another child is expected, which is often after the second year. They have different food than adults up to five or six years when they start almost the same food as adults. They are never left alone, somebody with whom the child has some emotional bond is always there to talk or keep watch while mother is away.

The smaller children are put to bed in the simplest manner. Six or seven of the toddlers lie huddled up against one another on one cot. Four or five of the bigger ones in another. Pillows, sheets, nightshirts do not seem to be necessary. They sleep peacefully under the stars unmolested by all the talk and noise around them. The matriarch, the grandmother sits guard with a rosary in her hand until everybody is ready to retire. She might be telling fairy tales to older children at this time. The mothers come to take their respective children prior to retirement for the night. A fourteen year old boy or a girl might still share his grandmother's bed together with another toddler. The whole tempo is different from the life of the city. There is much leeway in maintaining the routine, it is like the "self-demand" schedule though people are not conscious of this scientific term. Because there is such a variety of contacts and life is so self-sufficient, there seems to be great inertness in regard to making any contact outside the family group. Naturally the horizon is limited.

When people started coming to towns and cities they transferred the same pattern of family life as in rural living. The way of living which is suited to agricultural economy is entirely a failure in a city. Joint families exist in a different form in cities but the standard of living and way of life are far from ideal. In a family where

several brothers with unequal incomes live together an atmosphere of peace and happiness is seldom found. There is no longer a house father who has the authority to work for the good of all. Few agree to pool their resources for the common fund. There is a lack of adjustment and sacrifice on the part of the more fortunate members, though such sacrifice and tolerance are not only expected but demanded. Instead of a collective sense of right and duty, it has become individualistic. In such families children are the sufferers due to family tension. Since there is no accepted standard of behavior and loyalty as in former times the children get confused. Ideals and values differ among the different couples of the big family as each is in a different stage of development and has different types of friends and interests. Naturally the children are guided in different ways by their respective parents, yet they live in the same big family group. As a result the children develop various complexes.

Fortunately this dilapidated institution is disintegrating under the influence of increased individualism and personal ambition, though it may be delayed because of the fresh problem of displaced persons. In modern families, however, the husband and wife are tied together more

intimately than ever before. This individualistic life is conducive to the development of the personality of the husband and the wife and naturally of the children also.

Discipline as meted out to children in this crumbling institution can be termed "laissez-faire". Though in many instances it is authoritarian in the extreme, out of desperation and ignorance most of the parents make little effort at intelligent guidance of their children. Things will work out for the best, is the attitude of the parents in this chaotic family structure. This attitude is not born of native intelligence which appreciates the import of growth factors without formal instruction, but rather it is born of the inertness of the parents. It is a common complaint of school authorities that the present generation of students are the worst disciplined they have ever known as parents do not control them. On the other hand parents complain that the schools do not discharge their duties of training the children.

The difference between the structure of Western and Hindu societies which strikes the observer most, is the caste system. The theory is that, originally there were four castes differentiated by functions, the Brahmins being teachers and priests, the Kshatriyas soldiers and administrators, the Vaishyas merchants and the Sudras

manual workers. In the four classes there never seems to have been any hard-and-fast dividing line. Sir Edward Blunt in "The Caste System of Northern India"²¹ observes that:

Constant intercourse in the course of business drew divergent elements together, and also separated them from communities of which they were formerly part, till at last a new caste occupational in nature, is formed. This process still goes on at the present time.

The tendency of children to follow in the trade or profession of their parents is so universal that one wonders at the Hindu law-givers enforcing it in the code. It is said that the stable door, in social matters, is always locked after the steed has bolted. Hitler would not have troubled to penalize all relations between Jew and German had there not been evidence to show that difference between the two were being obliterated. Indian social systems of joint family and caste have broken down in Indian cities. This can be seen from the numerous instances of men and women pursuing occupations outside those indicated by their hereditary castes. But the idea in some cases is so deep rooted that it is not a matter of surprise to hear of a Brahmin-

21. Quoted from Social Problems by S. Natarajan, Oxford Pamphlets on Indian Affairs, Oxford University Press, London, 1944, p. 10.

Christian or Brahmin-Muslim pursuing the profession of undertaker or leather merchant.

Religious training is imparted in the family first through observation and imitation, secondly through initiation. The children imitate their mothers and others in arranging flowers in the shrine of the family deity, giving alms to beggars and ascetics, reciting prayers, hearing stories and attending all religious functions that take place at home or at neighbors' houses. Community worship which is seasonal has social character but every-day worship which is performed at home in the shrine, a separate room or a corner of a room, is individualistic. For certain period of time, which may vary from five minutes to a few hours, one meditates in the shrine. Before being initiated one learns to relax and concentrate and think oneself a part of the whole, the Divine. It is made functional so as to become an intrinsic part of one's everyday life. Every work is dedicated to God, from breakfast till bedtime at night.

The impact of city life has changed this way of life also. No definite religious training is given to children except to the specialists, as priests. Spiritual development through everyday life, though not altogether neglected,

is not emphasized. Children do not see adults sit and talk or think of something which is not of immediate concern. Religion is becoming something moved from everyday life. The sense of values is changing. Though among the intelligentsia there is a tendency for a harmonious synthesis of Hindu, Muslim and Christian religions, it seems to be more or less on an intellectual level. It has not reached the masses and consequently no change in the home training of children is evident. The social side of religion is developing fast and getting more emphasis and entertainment than individual worship. Thus the children are getting imbued with spiritual and religious ideas through these social functions and festivities in cities.

CHAPTER V

MODIFICATIONS FOR A NURSERY SCHOOL IN CALCUTTA

I. General Considerations.

The plan for establishing a nursery school in Calcutta depends upon in which locality it is going to be set up.

The first concern is the language. Though the State language is Hindi, the mother tongue or the provincial language is Bengali. There are four other distinct minority language groups in the city. They represent other provinces but are spoken by permanent residents of Calcutta. These languages are spoken at home and though by accident they are scattered all over the city, there is a natural tendency to form a linguistic group. If a nursery school is to be set up for any of these language groups it will require trained teachers who speak the same language as the children. The State language is taught from the fifth standard on. Of course all teachers know the State language, but it is not possible to have several other languages in addition to it in one school. Until there is an agreed plan to teach entirely in the State language, it is advisable to establish the nursery schools on a linguistic basis.

Calcutta is in a mobile state. Though there are

permanent residents who represent distinct cultural groups, the displaced persons, who comprise one half of the population of Calcutta at present, have complicated the entire cultural structure. The religious, linguistic, economic and sociological groups will want different types of nursery schools, if they are started on that basis. To cater differently to all of them will accentuate the existing parochial differences. The ideal is to bring up the children in a situation conducive to establishing mutual understanding and tolerance, which will be reflected in later life.

In the United Nations Organization's nursery school there are twenty-nine nations, languages and religious groups represented among its children and staff. But in the school there is only one language, English. That is a strong unifying force. Nursery-school-age children generally do not understand racial differences. Moreover the parents of these children also are imbued with international spirit and the home environment is thus also conducive to the fostering of a one-world feeling from the beginning. For this reason it is not advocated that different nursery schools be established for the aforesaid groups.

The next concern in regard to a nursery school in

Calcutta is the economic status of the group. When the population is vertically cross-sectioned each section represents all the different economic statuses of the individuals. If the school comes under the public school system, it is possible that these people, representing different economic strata, will send their children to the same nursery school. Whereas, if a tuition fee is charged the population is horizontally cross-sectioned and the group of parents belonging to the same economic strata, who can afford to pay the tuition fee, will bring their children to this nursery school.

The report called "Post-War Educational Development
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in India" thus summarizes its recommendations:

- (a) An adequate provision of pre-primary instruction in the form of Nursery Schools or classes is an essential adjunct to any national system of education. The provision in this respect at present is negligible.
- (b) In urban areas, where sufficient children are available within a reasonable radius, separate Nursery Schools or departments may be provided; elsewhere nursery classes should be attached to Junior Basic (Primary) Schools.
- (c) Nursery Schools and classes should invariably be staffed with women teachers who have received special training for this work.

22. Post-War Educational Development in India: Report by the Central Advisory Board of Education. Government of India Press, Simla, January 1944. p. 18.

- (d) Pre-Primary education should in all cases be free. While it may not be feasible to make attendance compulsory, no effort should be spared to persuade parents to send their children to school voluntarily, particularly in areas where housing conditions are unsatisfactory and/or mothers are accustomed to go out to work.
- (e) The main object of education at this stage is to give young children social experience rather than formal instruction.
- (f) On the basis of normal age-range of three to six years provision has been made for 1,000,000 places in Nursery Schools and classes.
- (g) The total estimated net cost of the proposals set out in this chapter when in full operation is Rs 3,18,40,000.

From the foregoing summary of the report, it is evident that the Government is fully aware of the need for a nationwide plan for nursery schools, but it has not got the trained personnel or worked out a detailed scheme as yet. It shows that the scheme is child-centered and their educational need is emphasized. No other details are available regarding language, housing, or program of parent education.

If income were not to be a basis for necessary qualification, then any child will be eligible for nursery school care. Conceivably in a future where home and school are working more closely together for common aims of integrated child care, education and development, any child would benefit by attending a nursery school.

Building Considering the local climate of Calcutta a few changes have to be made in adapting the model nursery school of the United States. A few people advocate all-outdoor nursery schools as an ideal for the tropics, but children need enclosures for protection from air, sun and rain. The buildings should not be made too durable, because new ideas need new housing after something like twenty years. Indestructible bad school buildings are one of the curses of Indian education in cities.

Kitchen The windows should have fine wire netting to keep off the flies and insects.

Bathroom The special kind of toilet to which Indian children are accustomed should be provided.

Outdoor A big portion of the yard should be covered
Space for rainy days and for every day use if the sun is very strong. Big shady trees to cover the yard, to keep it cool and breezy should be planted.

Sanitation Extra care should be taken for cleanliness as germs breed quickly in humid and hot climate. Provision for quick garbage disposal should be arranged.

Special No heating arrangement is required in
Feature Calcutta climate. Instead an adequate number of ceiling fans are required during the hot and rainy seasons. Air-conditioning is desirable but it is still very expensive.

Plenty of drinking water is needed in hot climate and should be made easily available.

Materials Books, gramophone records and musical instruments should represent Indian language and culture. Dolls, doll clothes and doll furniture and dress-up clothes for dramatic play should be of indigenous materials. Forks and spoons are unnecessary as children have to learn to eat with their fingers. The teachers should be extra careful in supervising the washing of children's hands before and after meals.

II. PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Thoughtful people have realized that welfare of mind and body is interdependent and all knowledge should be coordinated. The morning inspection by a teacher in the nursery school will have no value or significance whatsoever, if it can not be followed up to its proper end, that is bringing about social consciousness among the parents and due treatment and care by home and physician.

Other things being equal the physician has to be watchful for malnutrition which is most common even among the children from well-to-do homes due to ignorance about a balanced diet. As a precaution against the prevalent diseases it should be made certain that there is no fly and mosquito-breeding ground near the nursery school.

Yearly booster shots of typhoid and cholera vaccine should be enforced and vaccination against smallpox is absolutely imperative. Wearing of shoes to prevent hookworm should be encouraged.

III. SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

If religion is to play a vital part in an individual's life it shall not be taught in a specific period set apart for that purpose nor consist merely of formal teaching of doctrine. The building of a peaceful, secure world depends on the way children are reared. Love and good example are two things essential to healthy childhood. In days when religious intolerance is so acute, and it is being exploited for purely personal gains even in schools, the nursery school has a definite part to play in laying the foundation for moral and cultural rehabilitation. Although the nursery school will be attended by children of different religious groups the emphasis should be on the unity of all religions rather than the differences among them.

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Madam Montessori has a unique way to suggest. It is called a "Silence" training by the Montessori method. The procedure is as follows, the children having been told beforehand what to do in the silence game. The teacher

23. Montessori, Maria. Montessori Method. Translated by Anne E. George. Frederick A. Stokes Company. New York, 1912.

writes on the blackboard in big letters SILENCE. When the children see it they stop playing and sit motionless at their tables and look at the magic word which they cannot read. The teacher stands or sits near the blackboard in an attitude and with an expression of tranquility, which has a calming effect on the children. After five minutes the children follow the teacher who bows down her head on her clasped hands in an attitude of prayer. The teacher then steps into the next room very quietly and calls in a very sweet and faint voice a child's name. One at a time as their names are called each child comes tiptoeing into the next room flinging himself joyously into the waiting arms of the teacher. They gather around the teacher but remain peaceful and quiet. Since the group is small, only seven to ten children, it does not take much time. Then as informally as it starts so it ends. The teacher comes with the group back into the former playroom and the children start their activities again perhaps in a more relaxed and quiet way than before.

This procedure will encourage questions on the part of the children and the teacher will then have an opportunity to develop in the minds of children a personal relationship with God. She will try to foster the growth of love, wonder, worship and faith.

IV. PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAM

Here again because of the varied background - educational, racial, linguistic, religious, social and economic - of the members of the parents group, it is difficult to develop a program that meets the needs and interests of all. They are individually so varied in development and experience that few group labels can be given them. Of course they are all parents, adults, men and women and city residents, but beyond that there is no homogeneity at all. They may be young and old, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, modern and old-fashioned observing purdah, laborer and capitalist, liberal in religion and fanatic, or possessing many other opposite characteristics. These diversities may not exist in all nursery schools but nevertheless it will be a general characteristic of public urban nursery schools, and more or less true in the schools which will cater to a certain economic class.

The zeal for reforming underlies the attitude of nursery schools and teachers toward parents, and over- . expectant sentiment underlies the attitude of most parents toward schools. The child who will come to the nursery school is the product of his home environment which will be very much different from that of the school. Therefore it is wise for the nursery school to take leadership and

help parents to cooperate in accepting the school concepts of hygiene, diet, discipline and education, however divergent the parent group may be. A child should not live in two sharply contrasted worlds, one at home and another at school. Rather these two institutions should be in harmony as to disciplinary and educational procedures. Such co-ordination is desirable and worth striving for.

The ideal will be to have some other agency take charge of the parents' education before the child reaches nursery school age. An adult education program for preparation for parenthood will minimize the parents' unhealthy guilt feelings and feelings of self-consciousness and antagonism. This will give a better background to the parents to appreciate nursery school procedure. Parent education is a large and important problem and it should be solved independently rather than in a makeshift arrangement in a nursery school. The nursery school teacher may or may not be efficient in working with adults and to demand it from the teacher might hamper her primary object of teaching the children. The writer believes that the children's interests will suffer if the school aims at having a really thorough parent-education program. The teachers' interest will be divided and it is rare that a good nursery school teacher is also good in adult education.

Parent-Teacher Relationships The parent teacher relationship should be friendly but reserved, and controversial topics should not be discussed in school. Arguments and disagreements with parents can affect the teacher's feeling toward them and their children.

Parents should not be made to feel that they must agree with the school or the teachers in all matters, but their general confidence is essential for their children's feeling of security.

Parents should not be over urged to attend whatever parent meetings may be arranged. The teachers should always admit that they are only teachers and not oracles of wisdom or psychiatrists. The parent should not be told of a child's misbehavior. It often does harm to tell, rather than good. Everyone behaves better if good and improved conduct is assumed to be the rule. When it is necessary to discuss a child's behavior problem with a parent it should be done in a general and constructive way. Recommendations that a child see a physician or similar suggestions may be made. Advice to parents should be offered only where teachers feel sure that it is absolutely suitable. A teacher need never feel ashamed to say that she does not know, and a sympathetic attitude toward a parent's trouble will often be all that the parent really needs anyway. The teacher should have warm human interest

in parents and this can be given in everyday personal contacts.

Parents need to be told in writing the school's rules and regulations which apply to them so that they can refer to them in future. Though in actual practice rules and regulations are often nothing but matters of parent-child-teacher etiquette.

The following are a few suggestions regarding rules and regulations for helping the parent and teacher work together.

1. Children who become indisposed will be isolated. A parent must call for such a child immediately after being notified.
2. Parents should never slap or spank a child in school and should not threaten to do so outside. They are urged not to do this at home either.
3. A child's faults are not to be discussed within his hearing. The school feels that such things should always be discussed in privacy and only good things said when he is around.
4. Parents should bring children to school regularly. However, a child should be kept at home if he is not perfectly well.
5. Toys, food and candy should never be brought to the school, as sharing personal toys is not easy.
6. Parents should make their "good byes" brief. When leaving they should not give any instructions to their children about being a good boy or about playing or lunch.
7. Parents should plan for conferences instead of talking to teachers while they are on duty, not even to ask simple questions like how much a child has eaten.

8. Parents should air complaints about the school freely to the director but not to anyone else.
9. Parents should make arrangement for observation at a suitable visiting time.
10. Parents should cooperate in the health program as far as practicable.

In the absence of any special agency for parent education the nursery school has a role to play in bringing home to parents some concepts regarding hygiene, diet, discipline and education.

Hygiene There has been a general conviction among various educational experts that the study of hygiene and health in school (without any relation to life) will in some mysterious way, affect parents and homes as well. This has not been proved true in a country like the United States where literacy is as high as any other country in the world, not to speak of India where literacy is so low. It is not a body of information alone that parents need. They need to know how to apply the information. The unfavorable aspects of health and sanitation in India which are scandalous, are concerned as much with mental attitudes as with ignorance and economic deficiency. One of the fundamental things which schools must bring about is changed ideals in regard to health and disease. Parents must be brought to recognize that health is dependent upon definite hygienic laws, that protection

against some diseases is possible, and that when disease has laid hold of them it can best be overcome by helping the body in its fight against invading poisons rather than by trying to secure the aid of intrinsic forces and powers. Along with this the school must help to inculcate a forward looking view of life, an ideal of health and cleanliness, a dissatisfaction with things as they are, a belief that they can be improved, a strong social desire to cooperate with others for successful attainment of improved conditions. The school must give the necessary knowledge for this, both to children subtly throughout the day and to parents through the parent education program.

A few suggestions to get parents interested in hygiene and diet of their children are:

1. Showing movies of children of other lands - their healthful living.
2. Lectures on health, hygiene and nutrition in non-technical terms. Later, informal group discussions.
3. Practical demonstrations.
4. Big colored posters intelligible even to illiterates.
5. Inspiring public institutions, like public library, cinema, or municipalities to hold regular popular programs.
6. The teacher may help the parents by demonstration and discussion to find out how to cook foods so that the maximum value is obtained and how to substitute items that have similar food value for ones which the child dislikes.

Discipline The problems of discipline manifest themselves in battles of will between adults and children. In the world children are at a disadvantage as everything is geared primarily for adult use. If homes were built to meet children's physical and emotional needs the conflicts would be greatly reduced and many disciplinary problems would be eliminated. A good nursery school set-up helps to minimize disciplinary problems. Here good buildings, equipment, organization, programing and teaching techniques eliminate innumerable points of unnecessary friction between children and adults. Parents should be encouraged to observe the teachers' handling of difficult situations.

A few suggestions are given below to discuss in conferences and parents' meetings:

1. Parents should be urged to be consistent in their discipline. The child has no way of learning what is right and what is wrong except through the reward and punishment of approval or disapproval. If the training is inconsistent, if the child is scolded one day and ignored the next time for the same thing, he does not know what to expect and therefore a disciplinary problem is created.
2. Unduly harsh discipline or exposure to frightening threats and roughness may bottle up spontaniety and may make an atmosphere unfavorable to development and free expression of originality. This should be discussed as a general topic without pointing out specific cases.

3. Discipline in a nursery school is administered by teachers whose manner is so gentle and pleasant that the firmness and quiet assumption of authority behind it may escape the observer if not pointed out. Parents should be helped to think out for themselves that gradual adjustment and self-control from within is one of the educational objectives of the nursery school.
4. Through discussion and conferences the teacher should help parents to widen their margin of tolerance. The development of a good conscience in children is dependent firstly on the deep affection of the parents and secondly on appropriate prohibition from them.

Education Since the children are sent to schools in India to learn the three R's parents need orientation in nursery school educational objectives. Gertrude

²⁴
Hildreth writes:

Experiments with young children demonstrate the wastefulness of teaching immature and unready subjects. The child suffers as much from precocious stimulation to learning as he suffers physically from an adult diet. Learning cannot be forced with any permanent and beneficial effect. The unready pupils are those who have not reached the point where they can profit from the instruction given.

It has to be explained to the parents that unless readiness is present response to any sort of formal teaching cannot be successful. The nursery school offers children a variety of opportunities to develop motor skills

24. Hildreth, Gertrude. Learning the Three R's, Educational Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1947. p. 302.

and to intensify through use the sensory and perceptual abilities basic to reading readiness. In nursery school the children give themselves considerable practice in listening to stories and explanations, to records and to music, Many opportunities are afforded them to respond rhythmically and to sing while at school. Books are an important part of the nursery school environment. Pictures and illustrated story books are frequently handled.

Threes and fours gather around the teacher to look at the pictures as she reads to them. They learn to turn the pages at the proper time. So, incidently, they learn that books are stores of fun, the source of stories, and they begin to 'read' stories from pictures. Experiencing with block building, easel painting, clay and finger painting develop interest and skill in expression through a variety of media. These varied activities obviously contribute to the basic motor, perceptual and social maturities essential to reading readiness. The significance of these pre-reading activities should be brought home to the parents through conferences and meetings in order that they may appreciate nursery school educational procedure.

Parent education does not consist solely of focussing on the child. His growth, management, development and similar topics are all important, but helping parents gain

a greater measure of security is the primary end and aim of parent education.

The usefulness of workshop experience can be extended to parents. Actually playing with finger paints, clay, blocks and other materials is thoroughly enjoyed by adults. There is no stiffness about such a gathering and the problem of getting acquainted is solved automatically.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

While home influence of the right kind is an inestimable blessing, most children under the stress of modern life, are deprived of a real, educative home environment. In America, for example, where modern economic and industrial conditions have set into motion in the highly industrialized areas a progressive disintegration of family life, there is a special need for a co-ordinating agency that would help to integrate the child's life and act as a centrifugal force. Such a center in this age, must inevitably be the school. Nursery schools are but one new device for supporting family values against new social pressures. As Gesell²⁵ says:

"..... the nursery school in the United States of America is not a corrective reaction to faulty economic conditions, but is a cultural instrument for strengthening the normal functions of a normal home".

To India this is not of theoretical interest only. She cannot afford to neglect the import and far-reaching significance of similar developments there. None of the institutions which by their very nature are entrusted with

25. Gesell, Arnold. and Ilg, Francis L. Infant and Children in The Culture of Today. Harper and Brothers, Publishers, New York. 1943. p. 259.

grave responsibilities towards the development and education of the younger generation are discharging their functions efficiently. The cultural chaos in India, consequent upon the breaking down of the old order and the imperfections of the new one, has deprived children of the educative resources that are normally available in a well-ordered society. The home and the family, for instance, on which all cultures have been built up for ages, have ceased to exercise genuine educative influences on the majority of Indian children. The parents are often too poor and ignorant to provide material and psychological conditions conducive to the proper growth of their children. One cannot reasonably expect in most Indian homes those minimum amenities of life which have a refining and cultural influence on children in other lands. Parents are pre-occupied more intensely than in other countries with the ever present and ever unsolved problem of earning a livelihood and they have neither the leisure nor the resources of knowledge and of money to bring up their children properly.

In saying this, the moral values and disciplinary effects of the arduous apprenticeship for village children on the farm or in the workshop is not being ignored. The family stripped of many of its former functions is still the citadel where attitudes of love and affection are

fostered, where ethical values and social outlook are born. But one cannot get away from the fact that most children are brought up in an unhygienic, unrefined, de-educative environment and it is therefore the business of a good school to make up for the defects and handicaps of poor environment.

Current history and research are making people increasingly aware of the fact that those foundations which are laid in early childhood are the bulwark not only of the individual but of the nation and the world as well. Persons concerned with the education of the young are responsible for providing the opportunity for children to build for themselves foundations which will support an on-going civilization and culture.

Of the present generation in India few persons really experienced democracy in any form and most of them may never have been members of a working democratic group. Modern democratic communities have accepted the fact that early childhood education is a difficult as well as socially important task. To build up a sound democratic society one has to build from the bottom. For this reason the present study has planned an adaptation of the nursery school for Calcutta hoping that it may serve as a model for duplication, which will help the community in general

and children in particular to appreciate democratic society and become healthy members of it.

Need for Research

Since this study is based on the assumption that Indian children basically follow the same gradients of growth as that of American children, research in that field would help in furthering insight into child development in India. There have been no practical and effective research studies and experiments on the development of Indian children to the writer's knowledge. The field is vast and challenging.

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