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by

Tania Sweeney and Adam Jamrozik

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

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Tania Sweeney and Adam Jamrozik

Social Welfare Research Centre
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FOREWORD

Services for young children have been subject of public debates now for some years and have also generated considerable amount of research. At the Social Welfare Research Centre the research into the welfare of children has been conducted since 1980, and a number of monographs, conference papers and journal articles have been published since then. The most comprehensive, and the most widely read, was Services for Young Children: Welfare Service or Social Parenthood? (SWRC Reports and Proceedings No.19) published in 1982. The report examined the history of services for young children in Australia, and more recent innovations and policy changes. The report also identified a number of "unresolved issues" emanating from the apparent disjunction between the manifest policy and common assumptions about the need for child care in Australia and the data on the use of child care. It was these findings and subsequent analysis of data from other studies that led to the study reported in this monograph.

The findings reported here have come from a study of children's services, based on interviews with parents who use child care (formal and/or informal) and with service providers. The reports thus presents the issues of services for young children from the perspectives of users/consumers and those of the people who stand between the users and policymakers. The two perspectives are not always the same, thus illustrating the complexities in the provision and use of children's services as well as giving rise to some fundamental issues that warrant consideration by policymakers and administrators.

The report raises a number of issues. It also provides an insight into the patterns of daily lives of parents and children in the contemporary Australian families. The study was done in the metropolitan area of Sydney (in late 1982) but there is no reason to believe that the lives of families in the other parts of Australia are different.

The most important finding of the study is the extent to which children's services have become part of the normal life for the children who use them and how important these services have become for the functioning of the family unit. The diversity of reasons why parents use child care and the diversity of needs the services seem to meet go well beyond what still appears to be the common perception of the "need" for child care. The findings of the study suggest that the need for child care as something that arises only in

certain circumstances and only in some families appears to be a myth. Rather, children's services appear to be used and regarded as a public utility, seen as essential to the functioning of the family unit and increasingly considered as essential to children's development.

In the study, the importance of children's services is revealed more clearly when parents' reasons for using child care are related to parents' needs, children's needs, and the needs of the family unit. Thus children's services hold value not only for children and parents but may be regarded as an important support for the family as a social institution, in whatever form that institution now functions — two-parent or one-parent. As a value to the child, the services provide — and in many parents' views, are expected to provide — an environment which is more stimulating and more conducive to the child's development and socialisation than the family alone can now provide.

Thus, the findings of the study suggest that the family, as it is constituted and is currently functioning, may no longer be capable of providing alone the kind of environment and care for the child the society expects from it. This does not mean some kind of "parents' inadequacy" or "parent's unwillingness to accept responsibility", but a recognition of the realities of the contemporary social life. Clearly, this situation may be seen by some people as a cause for concern; others may see it as a desirable development. The report does not "take sides" in that argument. However, it points out that this appears to be a reality of the contemporary social scene, which has to be faced so as to serve as a basis for policy formulation and allocation of resources. Rather than viewing children's services as a form of "substitute care", it is more appropriate to view the services as a form of sharing of care between the family and the community, which has now acquired the characteristics of <u>social parenthood</u>, with positive effects for the family and especially for the children.

Until recently, the policies on children's services were based on the assumption that child care outside the family was necessary in unusual rather than in normal family situations. However, the evidence indicates that the provision of services on the selective criteria of "need" in the face of universal need has produced inequitable outcomes, favouring the better off and more articulate middle-class families, to the relative detriment of the lower class families and children, thus maintaining rather than alleviating the inequalities generated in the market. The findings of this study confirm the indications

from other studies that while the services may have benefited some families in "need", the most frequent users of children's services have been the "average" middle-class families and high-income families, using the services regularly and regarding them as a public utility, meeting their own and their children's needs and expected to be used as "a right".

Since the time this study was conducted (1982), the present Commonwealth Government and some State governments have recognised the universality of the need for children's services — as a right of all families and children. The findings of this study, we hope, may contribute to a better understanding of the important issues in children's services and may thus assist in policy formulation and implementation.

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Tania Sweeney
Adam Jamrozik

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO STUDY, METHOD OF STUDY, AND SUMMARY OF CONTENT

1. Why Was the Study Conducted

This is a report of a survey of the provision and use of child care services in five municipalities of the Sydney metropolitan area. The survey was conducted in the second half of 1982 and it entailed face-to-face interviews with a sample of directors and co-ordinators of 49 child care centres/schemes, and a sample of 156 families who used these services.

The research project was the second stage of the research programme into the welfare of young children, conducted by the Social Welfare Research Centre. The first stage consisted of the examination of data on the extent of use of child care in Australia and on the types of child care services provided and/or used. These data were related to the services provided under the auspices of the Children's Services Program of the Commonwealth Government. That stage also included an historical overview of the Commonwealth Government's involvement in services for children, from the 1930s to the present day, noting changes in the Government's policies and the extent of involvement. The results of that research were published in the SWRC Reports and Proceedings No.19, Services for Young Children: Welfare Service or Social Parenthood? (Sweeney and Jamrozik, 1982) and in two further publications (Sweeney, 1982 and 1983).

The data collected and analysed in that research indicated a widespread use of child care services of various kinds, through both formal and informal arrangements. The data also indicated a considerable complexity of those arrangements. In particular, there was evidence that a significant number of children of preschool age had experienced more than one type of care in any given week. For example, the analysis of the results obtained from the nation-wide survey of child care arrangements conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 1980 (ABS Cat.No. 4402.0) indicated the following:

(1) Approximately two-thirds of children under 12 years of age who did not attend school (mainly children under 5 years of age) were cared for at some stage during the week by a person or persons other than

the "person responsible" for the child in formal or informal arrangements. (For definition, see Appendix at the end of this Chapter: p.19).

(2) One quarter of children under 12 years who were not attending school had both parents working in paid employment. Child care was used more by families in which both parents had a paid job; it was used least by families in which neither parent worked; it was used extensively by families in which only one parent worked. However, on the whole, child care was used by parents irrespective of their employment status.

(3) Informal child care arrangements were more than twice as frequent as formal child care arrangements; the former were used more frequently by families on lower incomes; the latter by families on higher incomes.

(4) Of those children who used formal care, 30 per cent used care in centres and 70 per cent used care in pre-schools.

(5) Over 40 per cent of children using care experienced two or more care arrangements during the survey week. Use of multiple arrangements applied to children of all age groups and was more common in families where the mother was in the workforce.

(6) Families in which either or both parents were born in a non-English speaking country used formal child care less frequently than those in which parents were Australian-born or born in an English-speaking country.

(7) The higher the income of the family, the more likely it was that the family used formal child care.

It was clear from our analysis that there was in the Australian community an extensive use of child care arrangements of both formal types such as pre-school or day care, and informal services such as care by relatives, friends or by other "informal" carers. Furthermore, there was also an indication that the Commonwealth Government's stated policy at the time for providing child care services according to certain priority criteria of "need" was not reflected in the use of services. The priority criteria included such categories as:

children of working parents; children of single-parent families; and children of low-income families. However, at least with regard to the last of these categories, the 1980 ABS survey indicated that formal child care services were more often used by middle and high income families than by low-income families. At the same time, the use of child care was widespread throughout all socio-economic strata, thus indicating by inference that low-income families more often used informal child care arrangements.

Thus, there appeared to be a discrepancy between the aim of the stated Government policy and the results the policy was achieving in practice. We inferred from this that the policy was based on assumptions which appeared to be in contrast with social reality. On the one hand, the Government policy on child care services (as it was from 1976 to 1982) seemed to be based on the assumptions that only some children needed those services, e.g. children of working single parents; that services were needed in unusual family situations rather than in normal situations; and that, by and large, the priority of use in the formal services was to be given to "disadvantaged", or "special need", children. On the other hand, the data on the use of child care services indicated that most children of pre-school age used child care, either formal or informal, or both, at some stage; that services were used as part of normal situations of the daily life of families; and that, by and large, formal services were used by children of middle-class parents rather than by children of working-class parents, or of "disadvantaged" parents.

In sum, our analysis of data led us to conclude that what was happening in the community was a development of a modern form of social parenthood, which included formal as well as informal child care arrangements, and involved, at times, the professional carers, the extended family, friends, neighbours, or even the older children in the family itself.

The growing extent in the use of child care and the issues this trend raised for the policy and provision of child care services have been widely noted in journal articles and research reports. However, apart from the ABS surveys, surveys of the users of care have been usually conducted on small samples, and the issues identified in those surveys have not been explored or analysed to any great depth.

For example, Hoy (1979) had analysed the results of the ABS survey of 1977 (ABS Cat.No. 4402.0) and commented on the cost of child care incurred by parents, on the arrangements parents made in co-ordinating child care

with other activities such as parents' employment, and on the types of care experienced by children. Burns (1978: 256-265) reported comparative results from surveys conducted in middle-class and in working-class suburbs of Sydney, and raised a number of issues: a widespread need for child care and a corresponding scarcity of services, a variety of reasons parents gave for using or wanting to use care, and the preferences for certain types of care. Burns noted that child care was used to meet parents' needs, such as the need and/or desire to be employed or to have time for other activities; and to meet children's needs: the need for other children's company, pre-school learning experience, and socialization.

From a survey conducted in Canberra, Dixon and Ferris (1978: 32-35) reported that in their sample of 116 families with children under 5 years of age, 60 per cent of families used child care, and a majority of them (70%) used formal child care. Reasons for using care varied extensively but the most frequently given reasons were stated either as "good for the child", or "both parents working".

In a study of a multi-purpose centre which provided occasional care and after-school care, Esteal (1980: 153-158) found that the reasons for using the services were both parent-centred and child-centred, such as the isolation of the family with lack of relatives and friends, the need for support, and the developmental need of children. Esteal also commented on the difficulties parents experienced in arranging care, e.g. the necessity for reserving places and times in advance.

A range of issues of policy and service provision was raised in a report by Social Research and Evaluation Ltd. (1981a), based on a number of studies conducted by that organisation. Among these were the problems arising out of the categorization of services, each with corresponding differences in guidelines, regulations and funding formulae. These, the authors argued, forced parents and community groups to "tailor the need to the available programmes" rather than being able to use services in a flexible way that would meet their needs.

From reading these and other research reports on the use of child care services, it was evident that child care arrangements were used throughout the community but data on family income and socio-economic status of the users of these services appeared to be rather scarce. What data were available seemed to confirm that formal child care services were used more often by the higher income, higher socio-economic groups, than by the lower income, lower socio-

economic groups. For example, in a study of Young Families in a High Income Suburb, King and Wyllie (1981: 97-99) found that "nearly 7 out of 10 mothers with younger children are using some type of formal child care service for their younger child or children". Over one-quarter of them (26.5%) used two kinds of services. Furthermore, the authors found that about "85% of all mothers have used formal types of pre-school care either in the past or are using them at present". Of those mothers with young children who did not use formal child care services, one-half had their child, or children "regularly looked after by another person" (1981: 102). It appeared, then, that fewer than one out of every 10 young children in that suburb were cared for entirely by their mothers.

An interesting aspect of the findings in that study was the reasons mothers gave for seeing an advantage in child care services. Approximately 80 per cent saw various advantages in having regular time to themselves and they considered that "regular time away from children is essential". Only 4.8 per cent of mothers using child care services mentioned that the child had benefited from the service. Thus, it seemed that the prevailing reasons for using child care in that suburb were instrumental, that is, they were parent-centred rather than child-centred.

King and Wyllie have concluded (1981: 131-133) that (1) the data obtained in their survey seemed to "support a general conclusion that there is a direct association between level of education and use of formal child care services"; (2) the decision to use child care of any kind was independent of the mother's work status; and (3) "in general, mothers using services are well educated, well established in the locality, have the ability to pay and are not working. Such mothers find access to services easy". The authors also observed that, "there are also some mothers who have to use combination of services because individual ones are not entirely appropriate".

Similar results were obtained from a survey of occasional care centres in New South Wales (Social Research and Evaluation Ltd., 1981b: 6). The researchers found that the families who used these centres were,

> overwhelmingly white, Australian-born, small nuclear family groups supported by professional and managerial occupation and income. Such migrants as use them are either English-speaking or from the Northern European countries. Middle European migrants hardly use these services at all. Some single parents use them, but it is a smaller proportion of such parents than are in the population as a whole.

The users were found to be 79.9 per cent Australian-born and another 9.3 per cent came from other English-speaking countries. The majority, (three-quarters) of mothers were not employed. Of those who were employed, nearly three-quarters (73.8%) were in white-collar occupations and 46.9 per cent in professional or semi-professional occupations (1981b:14-15).

The researchers found that families were using occasional care far more regularly than was ever anticipated and a core of families was using occasional care "in conjunction with three or four other services". They also found that 17.9 per cent of parents (mainly mothers) who used occasional care were employed either full-time or part-time, and of them, 73.8 per cent were in professional and other white-collar occupations and 46.9 per cent were in professional or semi-professional occupations. The researchers concluded (1981: 14-15),

> clearly, the women who use this service and go to work are overwhelmingly employed in the more privileged sector of the workforce. To find over 20% of Occasional Care users drawn from such families is the surest indicator yet that these centres are serving, at least in part, a highly privileged sample of their relevant populations.

The researchers also concluded that the differences in usage of child care services according to socio-economic status might have been due to many factors but one factor was undoubtedly the cost of services. This was also the conclusion reached in another report commissioned by the Family and Children's Services Agency of New South Wales in which the authors have stated (1981: 5):

> This report estimates that approximately half the families with children in Western Sydney are unable to afford child care, the weekly cost of which exceeds the fees of most private schools.

These findings and observations about the users of child care services in Australia (in this case, in New South Wales) seemed to reflect similar issues in other countries. For example, in a study of child care services in the United States, Kamerman has observed (1980: 122) that in the sample of mothers she surveyed,

> Approximately half of the women can be described as professionals, middle-level managers or executives; the other half as office-workers, blue-collar workers, or para-professionals.

Kamerman focussed her attention mainly on the issues in child care arising from the increasing participation rates in the labour force by women and especially by women with young children. She has pointed out that (in the United States) the greatest increase in participation rates since 1950 had occurred among women with pre-school children and in more recent years (since 1970) the greatest increase had occurred among women under the age of thirty five years with children under three years of age. This, Kamerman has observed, has been a pattern increasingly common to all advanced industrialised countries, creating social revolution in work and family life. Some countries (especially the countries of Western Europe) have responded to these changes by introducing a widespread range of child care services. However, in the United States, in Kamerman's opinion, "the problem of child care for pre-school children is so complicated... that it is hard even to obtain an accurate picture of how children are cared for during the day when mothers work" (1980: 33).

In Kamerman's view, the issue of child care could not any longer be perceived as "women's and children's issues". As there was progressively less difference between the labour market behaviour of mothers and that of all women, and between women and men, the concern with child care would become broader and would entail the nature of the relationship between work and family life.

Thus, it was evident from the studies conducted in Australia as well as overseas that provision of child care services had become one of the prominent issues in social policy. More often than not, the issue has been perceived as one of the relationship between the role of women in the labour market and their role in the family. However, the evidence from the Australian studies indicated that parents used child care services for many other reasons and that the need for child care services appeared to be more or less universal.

For this reason, we decided to carry out an extensive and in-depth survey with the aim to determine the extent of child care arrangements within families, the reasons why parents used child care services, the range and types of services offered, and the problems encountered by the providers of services in their endeavour to meet the demand for services. The study was conducted in the metropolitan area of Sydney, but we assumed that the issues would be similar, if not always quite identical, in other parts of Australia. However, as a follow-up to the study we plan to investigate in the other States at least some of the issues that have emerged from the study.

Since the completion of our survey in 1982 we have come across some relatively new research related in varying degrees to the issues of child care in contemporary families (d'Abbs, 1983; Meade, 1983; Richards, 1983; Rumley, 1983). As these papers were presented at the Australian Family Research Conference (Canberra, November, 1983) while we were writing this monograph, we have not engaged in comparative analysis of their findings. However, the study of family supports and use of formal services in Geelong, carried out by the Institute of Family Studies (d'Abbs, 1983)appeared to have produced results similar in many respects to our own results, especially with regard to the use of child care service and the socio-economic position of the family.

2. The Aims of Study, Method of Enquiry and Analysis of Data

(1) The Aims of Study

The aims of the study were threefold. First, we aimed to examine empirically the experience of parents of young children who used child care services, and thus obtain some data on the significance the services held for contemporary family life. We aimed to find out how child care services fitted into the life of parents and the family as a whole in a "normal" day, over a week, during holidays. In other words, we aimed to obtain some first-hand experiences of the process of bringing up children in contemporary society. Some of the questions which guided our survey were as follows:

- Who used child care services, and why?
- Did the services meet parents' requirements and expectations?
- If not (or not entirely), what kind of changes would parents want to see?
- How could any such changes be effected, and whose responsibility would it best be to effect them?

The second aim of the study was to examine those issues from the perspective of the providers of child care services, that is, the people who managed child care centres, pre-schools, etc. We aimed to find out what the provision of services entailed in terms of material and human resources; how did the providers go about the business of meeting the needs of parents; what changes providers would like to see in the provision of services; and what were the constraints in effecting any such changes.

The third aim of the study was to draw out from the findings any relevant implications for the policy on child care and child welfare. We found that despite the increased use of child care arrangements and particular services, and despite many changes in child welfare legislation in recent years in most States, the attitudes to, and the definitions of, services for children remained residual. For example, the Commonwealth Child Care Act, 1972 defined child care as,

> the care of pre-school age children at a time or times during the day when they are not being cared for in their own homes or in the homes of other persons.

The implicit assumption in this definition seemed to be that the service provided by the State was a "third-line" service, after the family and after informal arrangements in the community. Such residual definitions we also encountered in the literature on child welfare. For example, some years ago Kadushin (1967: 4) defined child welfare as,

> providing social services to children and young people whose parents are unable to fulfil their child-rearing responsibilities, or whose communities fail to provide the resources and protection that children and families require.

As a result, child welfare services have retained a negative connotation, implying incapacity, inadequacy or malfunction in the family, and thus needed to be provided as an unfortunate necessity. In such a perspective, the positive function these services could perform for parents, for children, and for families as a whole tended to be overlooked and neglected. As stated in one of our earlier publications (Sweeney, 1983),

> Focusing on malfunction, child welfare essentially takes on a negative orientation and is seldom seen in positive terms, that is, in terms of well-being. Consequently, child welfare provisions are rarely seen as being able to enhance the well-being and development of children, an objective which can be consistent with a service fulfilling a supportive role for parents.

(2) The Method of Study

After consultation with workers in the child care field and taking into account patterns of child care use indicated in the 1976 Census (ABS, 1977: Cat.No. 4402.0), we chose four local government areas (LGAs) of differing socio-economic

status in Sydney from which we would select services. We chose one other local government area which, we knew, was relatively well provided for in terms of services to see if child care issues for families there would be very different.

In broad descriptive terms the characteristic features of the five areas (using Congalton's scale 1969) can be summed up as follows:

North(H) — a high status outer suburb, inhabited by an upper middle-class and/or upwardly mobile population, living mostly in detached low-density family/ erected dwellings on middle-or-large blocks of land. Status Class 1 on a scale of 7.

East (H) — a high status suburb, relatively close to the city, inhabited by an upper-middle and middle-class population, living in some parts in middle-density detached or semi-detached dwellings and in other parts in high-density terrace houses or units/flats. Class 1, and in some areas Class 2 on a scale of 7.

East (M) — a middle-class and low-middle class high density suburb, close to the city, inhabited either by an older population or by young rather transient population, living mainly in semi-detached dwellings or units/flats. Class 4, and in some areas Class 3 on a scale of 7.

South(M) — a middle-status outer suburb inhabited by a middle-class population, living mainly in low-density family dwellings. In some ways similar to North(H) but of lower status. Class 3 on a scale of 7.

West(M-L) — a low-status distant outer suburb, inhabited by lower-middle and working-class populations, living mainly in low-density family dwellings. Class 5 and 6 on a scale of 7.

Presented schematically, the configuration of the five areas was as shown in Table 1.1.

TABLE 1.1: LOCATION AND STATUS OF THE FIVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS

Location \ Status	High	Medium	Medium-Low
Inner Suburbs	East(H)	East(M)	—
Outer Suburbs	North	South	West

Note: In the report we refer to the suburbs only by their location, except for the two inner suburbs which we distinguish from each other by referring to East(H) and East(M).

In selecting the five suburbs for the sample, we took both the status and the location of the suburbs into account, as from the perusal of the 1981 Census data and from our knowledge of the areas we expected that the socio-economic status of the families, their life-styles and participation rates in the labour force by women — and consequently the use of child care services — would be related to both these variables and therefore would be useful for comparative analysis of results. Some demographic features of the five areas, recorded in the 1981 Census of Population and Housing are shown in Table 1.2

We have not identified the areas by names; first, to preserve at least a degree of confidentiality; and, second, we wanted to focus on issues in relation to the types of areas rather than to specific localities. In comparison with the population of New South Wales as a whole, the areas East(M) and South(M) would in many respects be classified as "average", middle-class suburbs, with South being of higher-status than East(M). The areas North(H) and East(H) would be well above the average, and West(M-L) would fall below the average.

TABLE 1.2: SOME DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF THE FIVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS IN THE SAMPLE — 1981 CENSUS

Feature	Total NSW	North (H)	East (H)	East (M)	South (M)	West (M-L)
Population — ('000)	5126.2	101.1	51.7	116.2	165.3	108.7
Overseas-born population -(%)	20.3	21.8	32.7	31.5	15.6	22.9
Children 0-4 years —('000)	385.8	5.7	2.1	5.8	12.5	12.5
" 0-11 " —('000)	1001.5	18.0	5.5	15.0	33.5	29.2
Female Participation in the Labour Force — (%)						
—all women	45.5	46.1	53.9	52.5	49.7	47.3
—women 20-39 years	59.6	63.1	77.0	71.7	61.9	52.0
Male Occupational groups 1&2* (%)	18.7	57.3	45.3	20.7	24.8	13.5
Female " " (%)	18.1	32.2	30.8	20.9	18.7	13.3
Unemployment rate —Men (%)	5.2	1.8	4.7	4.9	2.3	5.4
" " —Women(%)	6.4	2.7	4.3	4.8	3.6	7.0

*As used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics: Group 1 consists of "professional, technical, etc." occupations; Group 2 consists of "administrative, executive and managerial" occupations.

In total, then, we had five rather diverse local government areas, from which we selected at random at least one of the following services, where they existed:

- long day care (both community-based and private)
- neighbourhood children's centre
- family day care
- pre-school - full day (9-3) (both community-based and private)
- pre-school - sessional (which was always community-based)
- occasional care

In the pre-school category we included, where possible, centres in the Department of Education schools, centres in independent schools and one mobile. Some areas were characterised by both large and small pre-schools and long day care centres, so we included one of each. In one of our areas, we had two

occasional care centres, one of which was used in our pilot study. We interviewed two centres and two families as our pilot study. In the final sample, we finished with 49 services, having had 3 services who refused or were unwilling to take part (Table 1.3).

TABLE 1.3: CHILD CARE SERVICES IN THE SAMPLE

Type of Service	Total in Sample	North	East(H)	East(M)	South	West
Long-Day Care: Community-based	6	-	2	1	1	2
" " " : Private	5	1	1	1	2	-
Full-Day Care: Community-based	8	2	2	1	2	1
" " " : Private	7	1	2	1	1	2
Sessional Pre-School: Community-based	8	2	1	1	1	3
" Pre-School: Private	-	-	-	-	-	-
Occasional Care: Community-based	6	1	1	2	1	1
Neighbourhood Children's* Centre: Community-based	4*	1*	-	2	-	1
Family Day Care Schemes	5	1	1	1	1	1
Total	49	9	10	10	9	11

*Indicates 1 multi-purpose centre.

The survey was conducted from September to December 1982. From the directors and co-ordinators we obtained a statistical profile of their services (service type, pattern of use, number and age of children, etc.) and information about how the service was established, its funding (if applicable), its management, administration, parent involvement, the director's observations about users (children and parents), special features of the service and whether they wanted to alter their mode of operation.

From 47 services, (we excluded one pilot and one other service) we asked directors and co-ordinators to select a cross-section of parents who would represent different groups of typical users of their service. We had hoped

to randomly select from files but this would have created problems of confidentiality. The directors and co-ordinators approached parents first to seek their co-operation and then gave us the names, addresses and phone numbers of families. In some cases where families did not have phones, the director set up the interview for us. Four of the centre directors felt unable to approach parents on our behalf, so we put up posters requesting survey volunteers. This met with a good response.

We obtained over 200 names of families but due to time constraints and difficulties in arranging appointments we interviewed 156 families (Table 1.4).

TABLE 1.4: SAMPLE OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN BY SERVICE TYPE OF CONTACT

Service Type	Contact Families		Contact Children	
	N	%	N	%
Family Day Care	20	12.8	28	14.4
Full Day Care: community	29	18.6	30	15.4
Full Day Care: private	11	7.1	12	6.2
Long Day Care: community	24	15.4	31	15.9
Long Day Care: private	12	7.7	12	6.2
Multi-purpose Children's Centre	5	3.2	10	5.1
Neighbourhood Children's Centre	14	9.0	19	9.7
Occasional Care Centre	16	10.2	26	13.3
Sessional Pre-School: community	25	16.0	27	13.8
Total	156	100.0	195	100.0

The 195 contact children did not constitute our entire sample of children. Information was also collected of the use of child care by the sisters and brothers of these children when they were aged 11 or under. This led to a total sample of 333 children aged 11 or under (details of family composition and ages of children are given in Chapter 2).

There are two points that need to be noted about the nature of our sample of families, both of which stemmed from the method used in sample generation. First, as the sample of families was contacted through formal child care services, it was not a sample of families with children under 12 years of age,

nor was it a sample of families using any form of care, but a sample of families using formal child care. Two families in the sample had withdrawn their children from regular care between the time of contact and the time of interview but they were included in the sample because the withdrawal was understood to be only temporary. Second, as the families were suggested by service providers or offered themselves in response to advertising, the sample probably had a certain bias: it is possible that we located some of the more "involved" users of child care; and a proportion of them might have represented the families who conformed to what the providers saw as a cross-section of typical users of their services.

Most interviews were conducted in people's homes and whenever possible (or applicable) both parents were present at the interview. Many interviews were conducted in the evening or at weekends. From the parents we collected information about their family characteristics (number and age of children, occupation, education of parents etc.), details about present and past child care arrangements, day-to-day management of care, why they used care, what they were looking for in a care arrangement, whether they wanted their arrangements or features of the arrangements changed.

Our survey was comprehensive in the range of questions we asked of both the service providers and the parents and in some ways it was also different from other surveys on child care services. In particular

(a) We examined the issues in child care services across the whole range of service types and across geographically wide and socio-economically diverse areas.

(b) We included both community-based and private centres.

(c) We used a wide range of questions aimed to elicit objective demographic and socio-economic data as well as respondents' subjective perceptions on the issues in child care.

(d) We did not assume that families' child care requirements would fit into neat, prescribed categories. Many of the questions we asked were open-ended. Thus, we did not talk, for example, in terms of preference for pre-schools over occasional care, but rather in terms of the features sought in care arrangements, such as the number of days or hours wanted.

(e) On the assumption that child care was only one of many aspects and activities in family life, we attempted to locate the issues of child care in the context of the process of daily life experienced by families. The time scale we used was the week and, in some aspects, a month, rather than a single day, and we also took note of periods that departed from the normal pattern, e.g. weekends, school holidays and emergencies.

(3) Analysis of Results

The results of the interviews with parents were examined and coded according to appropriate classification. The categorisation of the qualitative data generated from open-ended questions entailed interpretation and conceptualisation of answers. Some analysis was done by using a computer but most of the qualitative data and the data from the services were analysed and later classified by the authors of the report, using manual methods.

The socio-demographic data of the 156 families were compared, whenever it was possible, with the data from the 1981 Census, and in some aspects, with the data from the 1980 nation-wide survey of child care arrangements carried out by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, Cat.No. 4402.0). The data on the family use of child care, parents' responses on their experience, reasons for using child care, etc., were related, in most aspects, to six variables: family composition (two-parent/one-parent); number of children; ages of children; mother's employment/non-employment; family income; and the area of contact. (Most families lived in the area in which the service through which they were contacted was located. Some lived in adjacent areas but for the purpose of analysis they were included in the area of contact).

The data obtained from the services were related to the type of service and the area in which the service was located.

3. The Content of the Report

As mentioned earlier, the findings of the study have come from two sources of data — parents and service providers — and relate to three aspects of child care services: parents's and children's experience; day-to-day operation of services; and issues related to policy. In order to facilitate the identification and comparison of data from each source, the report has been written in a

sequence which progressively presents the experience of parents and children, followed by the day-to-day experience of the providers of services (directors and co-ordinators), and then by the longer-term experiences of the providers of services and their committees of management with the establishment and administration of services. The purpose of using this sequence was to show the differences between the subjective social reality of parents and children and that of service providers, and then to draw relevant conclusions about the issues of policy on the provision of children's services.

Chapter 2 has been written in three parts. The first part contains the socio-demographic data of the 156 families: family composition; country of parents' birth; location of grandparents; housing; parents' education and occupation; and family income. The second part presents the use of child care services by the families: extent of use of both formal and informal care; types of care used; and the cost of care per family. Children's experience of care is presented in the third part of the chapter: the numbers and ages of children; extent and type of care, hours and days of care; and the cost of care per child. Thus Chapter 2 presents a "static" picture of the families and their use of child care at the time the interviews were conducted.

The experience of parents and children in using care is presented in Chapter 3, thus changing the "static" picture into a "dynamic" one, illustrating the significance of child care services in the lives of parents and children. The Chapter contains both quantified and descriptive data, presenting the processes involved in arranging care over a week and over longer periods. The aspects of care include co-ordination of care arrangements; continuity of care arrangements; and choices in care arrangements. These aspects are followed by impressionistic data of parents' reasons for using care; features of care sought by them; use of mother's time while child was in care; the value of care parents saw for themselves and for their children; and modifications they would like to see in their care arrangements and in the services. Parents' experiences relating to various aspects of child care are illustrated by a number of case studies.

Both Chapters 2 and 3 contain a number of statistical tables. The tables have been placed at the end of each chapter, but references to them are made in the descriptive parts, thus allowing for reading without the necessity of frequent referral to the tables.

The data obtained from the providers of services on the day-to-day operation of centres and schemes forms the content of Chapter 4. The data include a statistical profile of families and children using the services and some data on children's attendance; followed by the providers' perceptions of parents and children, demand for services, methods of allocating priorities, use of services by "special need" and handicapped children, and working relationship of services with other services such as health services. The chapter contains both statistical and descriptive material as well as a summary of verbatim statements of the providers on their impressions and experiences.

Chapter 5 places the issues of child care in a wider perspective, dealing with the experiences of the providers of services and parents' committees with the establishment of services and their management and administration. The related issues concern community initiatives; complying with regulations and categorisation of services; funding; management; and staffing. Thus the chapter presents issues of policy in child care services which, we found, acted as constraints upon providers in their attempts to meet the needs of children and parents and were thus of relevance to the changes in policy that have recently occurred, or may be contemplated in future.

Chapter 6 provides a summary of findings and draws out some of the main issues and implications for policy which (in our interpretation and conclusions) have emerged from the study.

Throughout the report, the analysis of data has been separated from the evaluation of findings. The statistics and the descriptive data in Chapters 2 to 5 are presented without comments and the interpretation of findings and the implications for policy have been confined to Chapter 6. We wish to emphasise that, while this study has produced findings which in many aspects confirmed the findings of other studies (quoted earlier in this Chapter), the nature of our sample calls for some caution in any inferences and generalisations that may be drawn from the results to the population as a whole.

Furthermore, it must be emphasised that in this report "child care" includes both formal care and informal care arrangements, except where specified as either formal or informal care.

APPENDIX

1. Definition of Terms Used in the Report

Terms used in this report are those used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in Child Care Arrangements Australia, June, 1980 (ABS, Cat.No. 4402.0).

The person responsible for a child aged 11 or under was taken to be the mother of the child when present in the household. If the mother was not present the father was taken as the person responsible (this was the case in 4 one-parent families headed by fathers). In no case in this sample were both the mother and father absent.

A child care arrangement was taken to be any regular arrangement at any time of the day on any day of the week when the child was not in the care of the person responsible. An arrangement was regarded as regular if it occurred at least once a month.

Formal child care arrangements were those where the care provided was bound by formal regulations, for example, a long day care centre or sessional pre-school. Informal care arrangements were those where care was provided by source not operating under such regulations; for example, spouse of person responsible, relatives or neighbours. Thus care by a licensed child minder was a formal arrangement while care by an unlicensed child minder was an informal arrangement.

To date, the only Australia-wide data gathering exercise on all types of child care users has been undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Its survey referred to in the text, Child Care Arrangements, Australia, June 1980 (ABS, Cat.No. 4402.0) is a valuable source of information and its results are often quoted. It is, therefore, important to be clear that while the definitions of person responsible and formality or informality of care used here are in line with those of the ABS, the definition of child care arrangement and the period covered by the data-collected differ.

The ABS definition of a child care arrangement was as follows:

> Child care relates to all arrangements made for children under twelve years of age for all times Monday to Friday of the week before interview when the children were not in the care of the person responsible (1980: 1).

Thus the ABS restricted consideration of arrangements to those occurring on week days only and collected information on only those which were actually used in the week prior to interview.

Given the smaller scale of this survey, the data gathered on child care arrangements could be increased. Information on weekend child care was collected and proved to be of particular interest when looking at the arrangements used by the 21% of employed mothers who regularly (at least once a month) worked at weekends. It was also possible to examine the general pattern of child care usage over a month rather than a specific week's use. Allowance could thus be made for arrangements taking place regularly but less often than once per week. This was most helpful when considering the ways in which child care was co-ordinated with the work/domestic/educational/social/and other commitments of parent(s) as such commitments did not always occur on a weekly basis.

2. Description of Services funded under the Children's Services Program

(Source: Coleman, 1978)

(i) Centre-Based:

This involves the regular care and development of children during working hours, and may include extended day care for children of shift workers, or others requiring extended care for their children.

Centre-based day care services may be situated either in buildings designed specifically as child care centres or in houses or other renovated buildings. They can cater for up to 60 children. Where possible pre-school education programs are available to children of appropriate age who are involved in centre-based full day care services.

(ii) Home-Based:

Day care may also be provided in private homes through Family Day Care Schemes. In these schemes, Commonwealth assistance is provided to meet the costs of co-ordinating personnel, and to operate a

special need subsidy. Personnel employed in the co-ordinating unit provide support on a regular basis to people who look after a small number of children (usually a maximum of 4) in their own homes during the day.

The co-ordinator puts parents wanting their children cared for in contact with suitable care givers to whom support and advice is provided. Family Day Care is a flexible system through which a range of services can be provided, e.g. full day, occasional, emergency and outside school hours care. Many young children are better suited to the intimacy of a family setting and some parents prefer this type of care.

Pre-School Education

Recurrent assistance towards the cost of pre-school education is paid in the form of block grants to the States.

Although it is now up to the States to allocate recurrent assistance to pre-schools, this is done on the basis of certain broad conditions determined by the Commonwealth Government. These are aimed at providing access to pre-school services for children in most need, and at maximising the use of existing resources in the form of pre-school buildings.

Pre-schools being funded with Commonwealth money are expected:

- to diversify the use made of their buildings so that a wider range of children's services can be provided;
- to link in with other related community services such as health and welfare services;
- to give maximum support to the provision of services for children in socio-economic need, and with other particular needs.

Pre-school centres are those centres where pre-school aged children attend on a sessional basis and which operate only during term-time. A "session" refers to a half-day (2½ to 3 hours) program or an extended program (up to 5 or 6 hours) for children between 3 and 5 years of age. (Note: the extended program is referred to in this report as full day care). Generally the number of children in a group is between 20 and 30.

Other Pre-School Education Services

These are services providing primarily a pre-school education program other than in normal pre-school centres, for example mobile pre-schools or where there are separately approved grants specifically for pre-school education programs in other than pre-school centres.

Outside School Hours Programs

This includes all services for school aged children in the morning before school starts, or in the afternoon or evening after school finishes. In some cases pre-school aged siblings may attend.

Vacation Care Programs

This includes services provided specifically for children during school holidays.

Multifunctional/Neighbourhood Children Centres

These services meet a variety of needs in a way where no one functional component of the service is clearly primary in relation to other functional components. Such services include two or more of the above service functions and/or other service functions classified under "miscellaneous".

Such services are organised into the one integrated system not necessarily limited to one facility. Multi-purpose but loosely integrated services based on the one facility are also included in this category.

CHAPTER 2

FAMILIES AND CHILDREN USING CHILD CARE

In this chapter we present the findings from the interviews with the 156 families in our sample on their use of child care services. The chapter has three parts. In the first part, the socio-demographic data of the families are presented, family composition (e.g. two-parent and one-parent families, and the number of children) ethnic background, housing, parents' education, employment and occupation, and family income. In the second part, the data on the extent and type of child care services used by families are related to the characteristics of the families, the family being used as the unit of analysis. The use of child care arrangements by individual children forms the content of the third part of the chapter.

The chapter contains statistical data relating to the profiles of families and their pattern of use of child care arrangements. The tables have been placed at the end of the chapter (pp. 44-69) but references to them are made throughout the descriptive parts of the chapter. As a word of caution to the reader, we need to mention that in the two parts of the chapter dealing with care arrangements by families as units and with care arrangements for individual children the descriptions are necessarily complex and may be, at times, difficult to follow. However, child care arrangements in the families we interviewed were in many cases of such complexity that they could not be described easily or represented in simple tables. This was especially so, as the time unit we used to define a regular child care arrangement was an arrangement that was used for a child at least once a month. We took notes on irregular (e.g. emergency) care arrangements, such as using grandparents or other relatives occasionally, but we did not quantify these.

1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Families

(1) Family Composition

Of the 156 families interviewed in our survey, 126 were two-parent families (80.8%) and 30 were one-parent families (19.2%). Of the latter, 26 families were headed by mothers and 4 by fathers (Table 2.1). The highest proportion

of one-parent families was in the area of North (30.7%) and the lowest in East(M), 8.6 per cent. The families had a total of 356 children, 2.28 children per family, and 333 of these children were under 12 years of age (2.13 children per family). There were 16 families in the sample with dependent children over 12 years of age.

The composition of families in the five local government areas included in our study varied with regard to the distribution of one-parent and two-parent families but it was fairly uniform with regard to the average (mean) number of children per family. Rather different from the whole sample were families in East(M), where more families had only one child and the average number of children per family was the lowest of all five areas. Although such variability can be expected in samples of this size, the differences in family composition among the five local government areas also reflect the characteristics of each area. For example, East(M) has a high proportion of young families who live in the area (usually in a unit or flat) before moving out into a house in another area once they have established themselves better financially.

The proportion of one-parent families in our sample was higher than that indicated in the 1980 ABS survey of child care arrangements in Australia (ABS, Cat.No. 4402.0) and higher than that recorded for New South Wales in the 1981 Census (Table 2.2). It was, however, somewhat lower than the estimated proportion of children from one-parent families using child care services funded by the Office of Child Care — 22.4 per cent, compared with 19.2 per cent in our sample (see Sweeney and Jamrozik, 1982: 109, Table 29). With regard to the number of children per family, there were fewer families in our sample with only one child than in the two ABS sources of data and more families with two and three or more children. The proportions of families with only pre-school children and those with both pre-school and school children were almost identical. In two-parent families, 23 families (18.3%) had only one child under 12 years compared with 13 one-parent families (43.3%) with only one child under 12 years. As noted in Chapter 1, the families in our sample were those who were using formal child care services, and the relevant data from other studies in child care indicate that one-parent families and/or families with a greater number of children are more likely to use child care more extensively than other families.

(2) Parents' Country of Birth

The majority of parents in our sample — 73.7 per cent of mothers and 70.8 per cent of fathers — were Australian-born. This proportion was somewhat lower than the proportion of Australian-born persons in New South Wales indicated in the 1981 Census (Table 2.3(a)). The highest percentage of Australian-born parents in the sample (mothers and fathers counted together) was in the West (81%) and the lowest was in the East(M) — 64 per cent. This difference, again, reflects the ethnic composition of the five areas. As a group of families using child care services, the families in the sample showed an almost identical distribution of Australian-born parents and those born in non-English speaking countries with the distribution shown in the ABS survey of child care arrangements in Australia in 1980 (ABS, Cat.No. 4402.0) (Table 2.3(b)).

(3) Housing

Over three-quarters of the families in the sample (120, or 76.9%) owned or were purchasing the dwellings they lived in; 33 families (21.2%) lived in rented accommodation, and 3 (1.9%) lived with parents. The proportion of owners/purchasers was higher than that in New South Wales as indicated in the 1981 Census (67.0%). The highest percentage of owners/purchasers was in the West (83.0%) and the lowest in the East(M) — 65.2 per cent (Table 2.4).

More families in our sample than in New South Wales as a whole, proportionately, lived in units or flats (14.7% as against 2.8%). This was so particularly in the two inner city suburbs (East(H) and East(M), reflecting the differences in the housing pattern of the Sydney metropolitan area, with high density in the inner suburbs and low density in the outer suburbs.

Most dwellings (141, or 90.4%) had some outdoor play area for children, although not necessarily belonging exclusively to the family. As would be expected, shared play areas were more frequent in the inner city suburbs where more families lived in units or flats.

(4) Mobility

The families in the sample appeared to be more mobile geographically than the population of New South Wales as a whole. Only 34.6 per cent of them had lived in the same dwelling for longer than 5 years, compared with 52.0 per cent for

the entire population (1981 Census), and 22.5 per cent had lived in the same house for 1 year or less (Table 2.4). There were proportionately fewer families in the two inner suburbs (East(H) and East(M) who lived in the same dwellings for over 5 years) than in the three outer suburbs.

(5) Location of Grandparents

Despite a relatively high geographic mobility, three-quarters of the families in the sample (117) had either maternal or paternal grandparents, or both, living in the Sydney metropolitan area (Table 2.5). The majority of these 117 families (67, or 57.3%), had maternal grandparents living in Sydney; 28 families (23.9%) had paternal grandparents and 22 families (18.8%) had both. One-third of the families had grandparents living either in the household or within 5 kilometres of the family dwelling.

The proportion of families with grandparents living in Sydney was almost the same in all five areas included in the study, but the comparative distances of grandparents' location varied from one area to another. The highest percentage of families (46.9%) with grandparents living either with the family or within 5 km was in the East(H), and the lowest (as well as the lowest overall) in the North (19.2%). In the West, although 78.6 per cent of families had grandparents in Sydney, in nearly one-half of the families (47.6%) the grandparents lived over 10 km away from the family, in some cases as far away as 40 km.

When families had both set of grandparents in the Sydney metropolitan area, only the nearer set of grandparents was included in the statistics. In the remaining 39 families, the grandparents lived elsewhere in Australia or overseas, or were dead, or the family had no contact with them.

(6) Parents' Education

The statistics on the educational qualifications of parents are presented in Tables 2.6(a) and 2.6(b). The statistics are given for the whole sample and for each local government area included in our survey. While statistical inferences cannot be drawn from the sample because of its size and the methods of sampling, the data are sufficiently important to warrant their use. First, the statistics for the whole sample indicate clearly that the educational qualifications of parents in the sample were considerably higher than those

of the population in New South Wales as indicated in the 1981 Census. The differences were particularly noticeable between the educational qualifications of mothers in the sample and all women in the State: the mothers in the sample held a tertiary degree seven times more frequently and all post-secondary qualifications 2.34 times more frequently than all women in the State. Second, in the population as a whole (according to 1981 Census), there were considerable differences between the educational qualifications of both men and women in the high status suburbs (North and East(H)) and those of men and women in the lower status suburbs, especially among men with a degree. In fact, in proportion to the population there were 10 times more men and 8.25 more women with a degree in the North than in the West. Third, parents in the sample in each area show much higher educational qualifications than the population of the area as a whole and the differences are more pronounced among women than among men; furthermore, the lower the status of the suburb the greater the difference between the women in the sample with a degree and women with a degree in the population of the area. The differences are less prominent in the lower levels of educational qualifications.

(7) Parents' Employment and Occupation

In our sample of 152 mothers and 130 fathers, 82 mothers (53.9%) and 128 fathers (98.5%) were in the labour force (2 fathers were unemployed at the time the interviews were held). The participation rates in the labour force were thus higher for both sexes than in the population of New South Wales recorded a year earlier in 1981 Census (Table 2.7(a)). However, the participation rates in the population of the age group 20 to 39 years were higher than in the whole population of 15 years and over (93.5% for men and 59.6% for women) and rather comparable with parents in our sample (as we did not obtain the age of parents in our survey, the age group 20 to 39 years appeared to be an appropriate age group for comparison of parents, especially of mothers, who were likely to have young children).

Of the five areas in the sample, participation rates of mothers (including the four single fathers in the sample) were the highest in East(M) where 73.9 per cent of mothers were in the labour force, and the lowest in South and West with 51.5 per cent and 45.2 per cent respectively (Table 2.7(b)). The participation rates for mothers in one-parent families were somewhat higher than in two-parent families, except in East(H) where they were lower.

With regard to working hours per week, more of the fathers in the sample worked 35 hours or more (94.4%) than men in the total population, (84.2%) but fewer women worked those hours (50.0%, against 59.4% in the population). There were, however, considerable differences in the length of the working week of women in the five areas included in the survey. The highest proportion of women (70.6%) working 35 or more hours was in the East(M), and the lowest was in South (37.5%) and in West (38.9%). In the East(H) the proportion was 56.3 per cent and in North 46.7 per cent.

The pattern of working days in a week was diverse. Of the 82 mothers who were employed, 43 worked 5 days a week, 12 worked between 3 and 4 days, 4 worked 2 days and 6 worked 1 day per week. Of the remainder, 1 worked 7 days a week and 14 worked variable numbers of days from one week to another (no data were obtained from 2 mothers). Most fathers (87) worked 5 days per week, 8 worked between 3 and 4 days, 5 worked 6 days, and 2 worked 7 days per week; 21 fathers worked a variable number of days per week (no data were obtained from 3 fathers). Also, 7 mothers worked shift work and, of these, 2 worked changeable shifts from one week to another. By comparison, 14 fathers worked shifts and, of these, 10 worked changeable shifts.

Some parents also worked over weekends: 17 mothers and 31 fathers worked regularly during weekends (by "regularly" we had taken to mean at least one weekend in four), and 1 mother and 3 fathers worked occasionally during weekends. Furthermore, 23 mothers (28% of those employed) and 66 fathers (52.4%) left home before 8.30a.m. and returned after 5.30p.m. or left for evening shift before 5.30pm.

With regard to parents' occupation, the largest group of both sexes was in the professional, technical, etc., occupations (as classified by the ABS). This was particularly evident among mothers, as 41.5 per cent of those working were employed in those occupations, as against 30.2 per cent of fathers (Table 2.8). The second largest occupational group among mothers was clerical (34.1%). These two occupational groups accounted for three-quarters of all employed mothers in the sample. Thus in comparison with the occupational structure in New South Wales (1981 Census), the parents in our sample were predominantly in professional and other white-collar jobs. This was the case in all five areas included in the survey, and while the proportion of professional and other white-collar occupations varied according to the status of the area, it was higher in each area than among the whole labour force for the area.

(8) Family Income

The collection of data on family income in our survey presented us with some difficulties as some parents were unable to give exact information and gave us only broad estimates. In some families income varied from one week to another because of variable working hours or because the income of some professional and self-employed people (e.g. doctors, lawyers, architects) was variable from one week to another or even from one month to another.

Within the broad boundaries used to determine family incomes per week — under $300; $300 to $600; over $600 — it was evident that the incomes of the families in the sample were, on average, considerably higher than in the population of the State (as indicated in the 1981 Census) and also higher than average in each of the five areas included in the study (Table 2.9(a)). Over one-quarter of the families (27.6%) had gross incomes over $600 per week, compared with 11.8 per cent of the population of the State, and only in one area (North) was the proportion of families in that range of incomes lower than in the total population of that area. Furthermore, a majority of the families who did not state their incomes appeared to be in the high income range, judging from the parents' occupations. The range of incomes varied from one area to another. The greatest range was in the high status areas of North and East(H) where some families reported incomes of $1300 and $1400 per week and others (one-parent families receiving pensions) reported incomes of around $100 per week. The smallest range was in the East(M) and in the West where no family reported incomes over $1000 per week.

Apart from the differences in the levels of income among the five areas, two other factors were clearly evident: family composition, i.e., two-parent and one-parent families; and mothers' employment (Table 2.9(b)). The highest proportion of families with incomes over $600 per week (45.5%) was in the two-parent families where the mother was employed. There were no one-parent families in that income range, and all one-parent families where the mother was not employed had incomes less than $300 per week. A number of these parents, in all cases mothers, were receiving only a pension.

2. Child Care Arrangements in Families

Child care arrangements in the families we interviewed presented a complex picture of arrangements, both in formal and informal care, with widely varied extent and diversity. As mentioned earlier, the 156 families in our sample had a total of 333 children under the age of 12 years: 36 families had one child each; 71 had two children each; and 49 had three or more children each. The number of children in the family, their ages, mother's employment or non-employment, family income, location, and the availability of child care services — all those factors appeared to play a role in the extent and type of care arrangements used by the families.

In this part of the chapter we provide the data on the care arrangements we obtained from the 156 families we interviewed, using the family as the unit of analysis. The use of child care by the families has been quantified in terms of the number of individual care arrangements; the kind of care used (that is, formal and informal care, as defined in Chapter 1); the type of care; and the cost of care. These variables have been related, in most cases, to the number of children in the family; their ages; family composition (two-parent/one-parent); mother's employment/non-employment; family income; and the area in which the family lived. All the data relate to the time when the interviews took place, thus providing a composite picture of child care arrangements in these families at that time, and the picture is presented in quantified terms. The more qualitative aspects of child care, such as parents' reasons for using care services, the process of arranging care, past experience, etc., are presented in Chapter 3.

(1) Extent of Care Arrangements

The majority of families in our sample used more than one regular care arrangement for their children. Only 48 families (30.8%) used one arrangement; 33 families (21.2%) used two arrangements; 26 families (16.7%) used three arrangements; and 48 families (30.8%) used four or more regular arrangements. The largest number of care arrangements in a family was eleven; it was a family with four children under the age of 12 years and the mother was employed. One family had discontinued using child care a short time before the interview took place. The total number of arrangements in the 155 families was 455, or a mean of 2.9 care arrangements per family.

The analysis of data has shown that the extent of care arrangements in a family was related, in varied degrees, to the five factors we had examined: the number of children; the ages of children; mother's employment, family income, and the area in which the family lived (Table 2.10). As would be expected, the extent and complexity of care arrangements were greater in families with more than one child, and the most extensive arrangements (a mean of 3.3 per family)* were in the families where both a child or children under the age of 3 years and a child or children at school were present: 65.0 per cent of these families used four or more regular child care arrangements, as compared with 15.6 per cent of families with a child (or children) only in the age group 3 to 5 years, and a mean of 1.9 arrangements per family for all families in that group.

Mother's employment was another factor related to multiple care arrangements in a family, especially in families with three or more children. The highest average (mean) number of arrangements (3.7 per family) was in the 11 families in which the mother was employed, with three or more children and both children under the age of 3 years and children at school were present. However, the incidence of mother's employment alone, while undoubtedly a significant factor in the extent of care arrangements, did not seem to account for the high level of multiple care arrangements as, for example, the families in the East(M) area which had the highest proportion of working mothers in the sample (73.9%) but also the highest proportion of families with only one child (52.2%) had a comparatively low frequency of four or more arrangements (26.1%) and an average of 2.4 arrangements per family, a shade below the average for all families in the sample. The highest proportion of four or more arrangements in a family (40.6%) and the highest average of arrangements per family (2.9) of all five areas included in the study was East(H). The frequency of mothers in employment in that area was just below the average for the whole sample (53.1% in East(H); 55.1% in sample). The number of children per family was slighly higher than in the whole sample, as was the number of families with three or more children. The noticeable feature of the families in that area was their socio-economic status, as indicated by the income of families as well as the educational levels of parents, especially of mothers. Thus the findings seem to indicate that while each of the five factors used in our analysis was related to the extent of child care arrangements in a family, it was the compound effect of all five factors (when present in a family) that accounted for a high use of multiple child care arrangements.

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*For the purpose of this calculation, four or more arrangements in a family were counted as four arrangements only. Thus the mean numbers of arrangements per family are lower than the true means.

Overall, there was a certain bi-polarity in the extent of care arrangements in the families. The two larger groups of families — 48, or 30.8 per cent, each — were those that used either one or four or more care arrangements. The factors that were most evident in the high multiple use of care arrangements were: the number of children in the family, mother's employment, the area in which the family lived, and the age of children.

(2) Types of Care Arrangements

The sample was chosen from families using formal care but the majority of the families in our sample used both formal and informal care arrangements on a regular basis (Table 2.11). Of the 156 families in the sample, 68 families (43.6%) used only formal care and 86 families (55.1%) used both formal and informal care. The remaining two families had discontinued using formal care a short time before the interviews. At the time of interview one of these families used informal care only and the other did not use care at all. Of the 68 families who used only formal care, 48 used one type of care and 20 used two or more formal care arrangements. These 68 families were the largest group in the sample with regard to use of care. The second largest group (38 families, or 24.4%) used one or more formal care arrangements together with two informal arrangements, and the remaining families used a diversity of multiple formal and informal arrangements.

As mentioned earlier, the total number of arrangements for individual children in the 156 families was 455, or an average (mean) of 2.9 arrangements per family. These arrangements consisted of 237 formal arrangements (1.5 per family), and, 218 informal arrangements 1.4 per family, or 2.5 per family if counting only the 87 families who used informal care. There was a great complexity and diversity of arrangements, both among the families and within the families themselves, as children of different ages in a family were often using different forms of formal and informal care. Furthermore, as will be seen in a later part of this chapter, some children used more than one type of care or a different type of care from one day to another, further adding to the complexity of care arrangements in a family. Consequently, the practice referred to as "packaging" of care arrangements by families was at times quite complex (Table 2.12(a)).

There were noticeable differences in the use of formal and informal care between the families with employed mothers and those where the mother was not employed. In the former, 29 families (33.7%) used only formal care and the other 57 families (66.3%) used formal care together with one or more informal care

arrangements. In the latter, over one-half of the families (39, or 55.7%) used only formal care and the remaining 30 families used both formal and informal care (one family in that group had discontinued using care altogether a short time before the interview took place). Thus the differences in the extent of care usage between the two groups of families were less evident in the use of formal care but rather prominent in the use of informal care.

(a) Formal Care

Most formal care used by the families in our study fell into six categories, or types: family day care; long day care (community-based and private); full-day pre-school care (community-based and private); sessional pre-school; occasional care; and neighbourhood children's centre. Other types of formal care used by a few families included: playgroup, home-based education scheme; hospital-based child care centre, and a special school for children with handicaps. Over four-fifths of the families (128, or 82.1%) used public or community-based services; 22 families (14.1%) used private services; and 4 (2.6%) used both.

The largest group of families (40, or 25.6%) used full-day pre-school care, and over one-half of these (22 families) used it together with two or more informal arrangements (Table 2.12(a)). The second largest group (37, or 23.7%) used two formal arrangements (usually occasional care plus one other type of formal care) together with one, two, or more informal arrangements. There were only 2 families in the sample who used more than four formal arrangements.

The most frequent type of formal care in the multiple care arrangements was occasional care. As will be seen later in this chapter, 32 children in the sample used occasional care, although only one family in the sample used occasional care as the only type of care. Thus, related to families, occasional care was used not "occasionally" but as part of regular multiple care arrangements.

Long day care, full-day pre-school, and family day care were the most frequently used types of formal care by families in which the mother was employed. In the families where the mother was not employed, it was the pre-school, full day and sessional, which was the most frequently used type of formal care. The differences in the extent of use of formal care between the two groups of families were not very great; in the aggregate, counting

all arrangements, the former families had an average of 1.6 formal arrangements per family and the latter 1.4 arrangements per family. However, the families with employed mothers used both formal care and informal care more often than families with mothers not in the workforce (Table 2.11). Two-thirds of these families used both formal and informal care, compared with 42.9 per cent of families in which the mother was not employed. It needs to be noted that particular types of formal care were not used exclusively either by families with employed or not employed mothers, although there were certain trends in each group of families (Table 2.12(b) and (c)).

Of the other factors used in our analysis, the area in which the family lived had some significance in the use of formal care. The highest average use, 1.8 arrangements per family — was in East(H), and the lowest in South, 1.3 arrangements per family; the families in the two remaining areas — East(M) and West — had 1.4 formal arrangements each. The level of family income appeared to have a minor significance in the extent of care, and there was no difference between two-parent and one-parent families.

(b) Informal Care

Informal care was used by over one-half of the families we interviewed (87 families, or 55.8%) but the families which used informal care used it with considerable intensity, more often than not using more than one informal care arrangement. The 87 families used a total of 218 individual informal care arrangements, with an average of 2.5 arrangements per family. More two-parent families used informal care and more of them used multiple care arrangements than one-parent families. Similarly, more families with employed mothers used informal care and more frequently multiple care arrangements than the families in which the mother was not employed.

The most frequent type of informal care was care by relatives (44 families or 28.2%) which in most cases meant care by grandparents. As noted earlier in this chapter, three-quarters of the families (117) in our sample had grandparents (maternal, paternal, or both) living in Sydney, and in one-third of the families (52) grandparents lived either in the household or within 5 kilometres of the household (Table 2.5). In another 20 families (12.8%), grandparents lived within 10 kilometres from the household and in the other 45 families, grandparents lived further away from the household. The data on the use of relatives as child carers thus indicate that approximately one-third of the families who had grandparents in Sydney used them regularly as carers. This

was the case in all five areas, with a higher frequency of usage in the inner city suburbs - East(H) and East(M) - than in the other three areas. The lowest frequency of usage was in the West and in the North. Thus the location of grandparents was a significant factor in the use of informal care; the other factor was the grandparents' age and their state of health.

Of the other types of informal care, the most frequent was care by paid baby-sitter/minder (24 families, or 15.4%). Care by spouse was used in 13 families (8.3%) and by friends and neighbours also in 13 families. The other forms of care included a babysitting club, paid home-help, and a live-in housekeeper (used by a single father). Care by an older child was noted only in one family. As can be ascertained from Table 2.13(a), the use of multiple informal care arrangements was quite frequent; 15 families in the sample used 5 or more such arrangements.

Family income appeared to have some significance in the use of informal care, as the families with higher incomes used paid babysitters/minders more frequently than the families with lower incomes. The most frequent use of babysitters/minders was also recorded in the East(H), a high status area, and the least frequent was in the West where the use of friends/neighbours was the most frequent of all five areas.

(3) Cost of Care

(a) Fees

The cost of child care varied widely among the families, depending on many factors: the number of children in the family, the extent of the use of care, and the type of care used. We have not analysed the cost in relation to all possible factors, as the pattern was diverse, at times varying from one week to another. Also in some families we were able to obtain only estimates of cost rather than precise amounts.

We have tabulated the fees paid by the families in the sample in five groups, ranging from 0-$14 to $65 or over, per week. The amounts recorded were net of any subsidy that a family might have received, and included also the fees for informal care, such as paid to a babysitter/minder (Table 2.14). In the aggregate, approximately one-half of the families (51.6%) paid $24 or less per week, and 29.0 per cent of the families paid $14 or less; nearly a quarter of the families (22.6%) paid between $25 and $44 per week, and the remaining 22.5 per cent of the families paid $45 or more per week. A small proportion of

families (14, or 9.0%) paid over $65 per week, some paying close to $100 per week.

The amounts paid by the families for child care varied with the family incomes. The lowest fees, in the aggregate, were paid by the families with weekly incomes under $300 and the highest by the families with incomes over $600. In the former group, nearly one-half of the families (46.7%) paid $14 or less per week, and only 14.3 per cent of the families with high incomes paid the amounts within that range. At the other end of the scale, 21.4 per cent of the families in the high income range paid $65 or more a week. No families in the low income range paid fees over $65 per week.

These differences were also evident in the five areas included in our study. The high fees were recorded mainly in the East(H) and the low fees in the West, reflecting not only the comparative incomes of the families in those areas but also the extent of care used in each area. The low fees paid by the families on low incomes would also reflect the subsidy that some of these families were receiving. By comparison, fees paid to babysitters/minders by some families in the high income group would add to the fees these families paid for formal care.

(b) Other Contributions

Apart from fees paid, the majority of parents in our sample contributed to the care of their children by other means. The contributions consisted of material costs, such as providing food for the child, or a change of clothes, while the child was in care (especially frequent in families with children under 2 years of age), or of time given by parents to the operation of services, or of both. Contributions in time meant either working on rosters in a centre (usual in occasional care), assisting in a centre in some other ways, or serving on the management committee, keeping books, etc.

In our sample of families, close to one-third (31.2%) of families contributed some material only and 21.4 per cent had some time involvement in an active capacity; a quarter of the families contributed both time and material, and the remaining 22.1 per cent of families made no contributions of any kind. Thus, close to one-half (46.7%) of the families were actively involved in the operation of services, in some way. The involvement was particularly high in the East(H), 59.4%, and in the West 54.8%. Material contributions were uniform in all areas, except in East(H) where they were recorded at one-half

the frequency than the average for all the families.

3. Children's Experience of Care

In this part of the chapter, we examine the use of child care by individual children. The variables used in the analysis of data are: the number of children in the sample; their ages; the extent of the use of care, formal, informal, and both; the type of care used; the pattern of attendance in formal care services; and the cost of formal care. In relation to the child's parents, the only variable used is the mother's employment, as in the analysis of the use of care services by families mother's employment appeared to be a significant factor in determining the extent of use as well as the type of care used. Other variables seemed to be more relevant to the family as a unit rather than to the individual child.

(1) Numbers and Age Groups

Of the 333 children under the age of 12 years in our sample, 195 children were contact children (that is, the children using formal care through whom the contact with parents was made to arrive at a sample of families) and 138 children were their siblings. All contact children except 5 were below school age (not attending school) and nearly three-quarters of them (72.3%) were in the age group 3 to 5 years. Their siblings, as a group, were older and close to two-thirds of them (64.5%) were attending school. In the total sample the great majority of children (71.8%) were children not at school (Table 2.15). Children attending school have been included in the analysis because, as will be seen, many of them used child care, both formal and informal, especially the latter.

(2) Extent of Care Arrangements

There were 67 children in our sample (20.1%) who at the time the interviews were conducted did not use any care arrangements except care by "the person responsible", taken to be the child's mother. Of these, 44 children (65.7%) were at school and 12 (17.9%) were under 2 years of age. It is probable that a certain number of children who were at school would have spent some time of the day (say, after school) without any supervision, thus experiencing "care by self". However, we have noted that most of the children in our sample who were at school and whose mothers were working had mothers whose working hours

coincided fairly well with school hours, although some of them reported problems in arriving at such an arrangement.

Of the remaining 266 children who used care arrangements, 130, or 48.9 per cent, used only one regular care arrangement, 93 (35.0%) used two arrangements, and the other 43 children (16.1%) used three or more arrangements (Table 2.16). The highest number of care arrangements by a child was five, experienced by two children. (In the ABS survey, 1980, 58.8% of children using care used one care arrangement, 32.1% used two, and 9.1% used three or more arrangements. See Sweeney and Jamrozik, 1982: 23).

The total number of care arrangements used by the 266 children amounted to 455, or an average of 1.7 arrangements per child. Among the children who were not at school, the extent of care arrangements and of multiple arrangements was lower among children under 3 years of age and higher among the children aged 3 to 5 years. Thus, while four-fifths (81.9%) of children under the age of 3 years used care arrangements, over one-half of them (55.9%) experienced only one care arrangement. By comparison, nearly all children 3 to 5 years (94.9%) used care arrangements and nearly two-thirds of them (63.5%) used more than one care arrangement regularly.

The extent of care arrangements among the children under 2 years of age was also high: three-quarters of the 48 children in that age group (36 children) used care arrangements and close to one-half of them (47.2%) used more than one care arrangement regularly. Of the oldest group — children attending school — over one-half (53.2%) used some form of care arrangement but the majority (76.0%) used only one arrangement.

(3) Types and Patterns of Care Arrangements

Of the 266 children in the sample who used care, 206 children used formal care and 176 used informal care, the two types of use not being mutually exclusive. There were 90 children (33.8%) who used formal care only; 116 children (43.6%) used formal care together with one or more informal arrangement; and 60 children (22.6%) used only informal care arrangements (Table 2.17). Thus the largest group of children in the sample consisted of children who experienced both formal and informal care on a regular basis, and some of them experienced multiple formal and/or informal types of care. No doubt, the particular types of formal care used by the children in the sample reflect the services through which the families interviewed had been contacted, rather than the

distribution of formal care usage in the community as a whole. The provision of certain types of services in a given area must also be taken into account as a factor in the use of a particular type of formal care. Other factors, of course, would account for the use of informal care.

In the use of multiple care arrangements, the most striking feature of our findings was the diversity of combinations among various types of care. The complexity of the arrangements — commonly referred to as "packaging child care" — is shown in Table 2.17. That table does not show all the details of multiple arrangements but we have ascertained that in the multiple use of formal care the most frequent combination was occasional care linked with sessional pre-school or with another type of care. In the use of informal care the most frequently used type of care was care by relatives, in most cases this being care by the child's grandparents, usually the grandmother, maternal or paternal (Table 2.18). Over one-half of children who used informal care (53.4%) were cared for by relatives on a regular basis. Grandparents were often used as carers together with other forms of informal care, such as care by paid babysitter or child minder, care by the spouse, or care by friends or neighbours.

We have related the extent and diversity in the use of care to the age of the child and to the employment/non-employment of the child's mother, as these two factors appeared to be relevant both to the extent and the type of care arrangements used by children (Tables 2.19 and 2.20).

It needs to be noted that in the data on the use of both informal and formal care the types of care used are not exclusive of one another, and for this reason the numbers and percentages of children using particular types of care are in sum, greater than those of the children using care, as a whole.

(a) Variations by Age of the Child

In the use of formal care the most frequently used type of care by children under 3 years was occasional care; 18 of the 53 children using formal care in that age group (34.0%) used occasional care. The next most frequently used type of care by children in that age group was family day care (16 children, or 30.2%) and long day care, either community-based or private (15 children, or 28.3%). As mentioned earlier, occasional care was often used in combination with another type of formal care.

The types of formal care used by children 3 to 5 years were more diverse. Of the 145 children in that age group who used formal care, the largest number (66, or 45.5%) used full day pre-school, and another 25 children (17.2%) used sessional pre-school. The next most frequently used type of care was long day care (30 children, 20.7%), and then neighbourhood children's centre, occasional care and family day care. The remaining 11 children (and 18 of all children using formal care) used other types of care which included playgroup, home-based education scheme, hospital child care centre, and special school for handicapped children (Table 2.18).

In the use of informal care, the age of the child did not appear to be a relevant factor in the type of care used. Apart from the extensive use of grandparents as carers, the next most frequent type of care used was by paid babysitter/ minder, by spouse, and by friends and neighbours. A small number of children experienced other types of care, such as care through a babysitting club arrangement. The extent of the use of informal care was almost the same for children who were at school as for pre-school age children. Thus, while only 8 children who were at school used formal care, 48 of these children (or 49.5% in that age group) used informal care as a regular arrangement.

(b) Variations by Mother's Employment

Over one-half of the children in our sample (181, or 54.5%) had mothers who were in the workforce, employed either full-time or part-time (this includes the 4 single fathers). More children of employed mothers used care than the children whose mothers were not employed. Overall, 86.2 per cent of children with employed mothers and 72.4 per cent of those whose mothers were not employed used care, but when the children at school were excluded from the totals, the extent of care usage was 96.8 per cent and 83.3 per cent, respectively. The differences were particularly evident in children under the age of 3 years and in children at school. There was less difference in the extent of care usage in children 3 to 5 years (not at school) (Table 2.19(a)).

The differences between the children of employed and not employed mothers were further accentuated in the use of multiple care arrangements: 59.0 per cent of the children of employed mothers who used care experienced more than one care arrangement, as against 40 per cent of those whose mothers were not employed. Again, when children at school were excluded from the total, the extent of multiple care usage was 67.8 per cent and 44.2 per cent. The differences were

again greater in children under the age of 3 years, and particularly in children under 2 years of age, and in children who were at school: over one-half of children (61.0%) under the age of 3 years who used care and whose mothers were employed experienced multiple care arrangements; by comparison, the extent in the children of not employed mothers was only 18.5 per cent.

With regard to the type of formal care used, the majority of the children of employed mother (69.2%) used either family day care, long day care, or full day care, but some children also used sessional pre-school and/or occasional care. Most children of mothers not employed used mainly full day care, occasional care, or sessional pre-school (91.9%), but some also used family day care and long day care. The use of similar types of care by children of employed and not employed mothers reflected the use of the types of care by families, mentioned earlier, indicating that there was no clear division between the types of formal care used by families in which the mother was, or was not, employed. Again, as noted with the use of care by families, occasional care was often part of a regular multiple care arrangement for a child rather than care used "occasionally" (Table 2.20).

An interesting aspect in the use of care arrangements was that while fewer children of not employed mothers used care (72.4%) than those of the employed mothers (86.2%), of those who used care, the proportions using formal care were almost the same in each group — 76.9 per cent of the children of employed mothers, and 78.2 per cent of not employed mothers. In fact, the proportion of those who used more than one type of formal care was greater in children of not employed mothers. The differences in the extent of care usage were in the use of informal care, as 76.9 per cent of the children of employed mothers who used care experienced informal care arrangements as well, as against 50.9 per cent of the children whose mothers were not employed.

Of all the children who used informal care (176), the majority (94, or 53.4%) had care by relatives (usually grandparents, as mentioned earlier), and 52 children (29.5%) used care by babysitter/minder. Care by spouse was recorded by 17 per cent of the children, all of whom had employed mothers.

(4) Attendance in Formal Care

We obtained data on children's attendance in formal care and, as would be expected in the diversity of arrangements, we found the attendance varied from one child to another and, at times, from one day to another for the same child (examples of such arrangements are given in Chapter 4). We have limited the analysis of the pattern of attendance to the five types of formal care most often used (all community-based services): family day care, long day care, full day pre-school care, sessional pre-school, and occasional care. There were 148 children using these five types of care (Table 2.21).

(a) Days Attended per Week

Over one-third (34.5%) of children using the five types of formal care, attended five days a week, and in family day care, long day care, and sessional pre-school, the majority of children using these types of care attended five days a week. The second largest attendance (20.9%) was three days a week, especially in long day care and full day care. Occasional care was used mainly one day a week, but nearly one-third of children using occasional care (10 of 22) had a variable pattern of attendance from one week to another. Overall, 29 children attended a type of care one day a week, two days per week attendance was recorded for 17 children, and most of these used full day care and sessional pre-school. The pattern of attendance in family day care ranged from one to five days and 4 of the 28 children using this type of care had a variable pattern of attendance from one week to another (Table 2.21(a)).

(b) Hours Attended per Week

We obtained data for attendance by hours per week for 112 children, but 16 of them had been excluded from analysis because of the variability of attendance from one week to another. For the remaining 96 children, the attendance per week ranged from 2 hours to 52.5 hours. The most extreme range was in family day care — from 6 to 50 hours per week. Attendance in full day care ranged from 6 to 34 hours, and in sessional pre-school from 2.5 to 27.5 hours per week. Occasional care attendance was from 2 to 3 hours per week. The range in long day care was 32.5 to 52.5 hours per week. The average (mean) attendance per week was the highest in long day care (41 hours), followed by attendance in family day care (25.7 hours), full day care (18 hours), sessional pre-school (12.5 hours) and occasional care (2.9 hours) (Table 2.21(b)).

(5) Cost of Formal Care

We obtained data on the cost of community-based formal care for individual children on 139 children in the sample. The cost per week was extremely variable, depending on the child's attendance, the type of care attended, and the availability of subsidy. The cost per hour was also variable, depending on the type of care and the availability of subsidy (Table 2.22).

The most expensive type of care was family day care. For children without subsidy, the average (mean) cost was $1.40 per hour and $31.40 per week. At one end of the scale were children receiving subsidy, paying as little as 30 cents per hour, but at the other end of the scale were children paying full cost plus the amounts charged for extras (food, etc.) paying a mean of $1.80 per hour and a mean of $77.70 per week. There were also considerable variations in the cost per week.

The average cost per child in long day care was $32.50 per week or $1.10 per hour, coming down to $18.90 per week and 70 cents per hour for children receiving subsidy. The subsidy was allowed for family circumstances or because an older child from the same family attended the same centre. A similar system operated in full day care, but the cost per child was lower: an average of $18.10 per week and/or 90 cents per hour, coming down to $3.00 per week and/or 25 cents per hour for children with subsidy.

Children attending sessional pre-school paid $12.80 per week and/or $1.00 per hour and there were big variations in cost per week, depending on the extent of the child's attendance. For some children, a donation of $2 or $5 per week was requested rather than a fee. Occasional care amounted to an average of $3.40 per child per week, or $1.20 per hour. The cost was lower for the children whose mothers assisted in the running of the centre (a practice common in occasional care) — down to 70 cents per hour — and for the children whose older siblings attended the centre the cost was $1.00 per hour.

TABLE 2.1: FAMILY COMPOSITION IN FIVE AREAS

Family Characteristics	Total Sample N	%	North N	%	East (H) N	%	East (M) N	%	South N	%	West N	%
Two-parent & one parent families:												
Two parents only	118	75.6	17	65.4	23	71.9	18	78.3	28	84.8	32	76.2
Two parents & other adult(s)	8	5.1	1	3.8	2	6.3	3	13.0	-	-	2	4.8
One parent only (mother)	19	12.2	5	19.2	5	15.6	1	4.3	3	9.1	5	11.9
One parent (mother) & adult	7	4.5	2	7.7	1	3.1	1	4.3	1	3.0	2	4.8
One parent only (father)	2	1.3	-	-	1	3.1	-	-	-	-	1	2.4
One parent (father) & adult	2	1.3	1	3.8	-	-	-	-	1	3.0	-	-
Children under 12 years (per family):												
One	36	23.1	7	26.9	6	18.8	12	52.2	4	12.1	7	16.7
Two	71	45.5	9	34.6	15	46.9	4	17.4	17	51.5	26	61.9
Three	42	26.9	7	26.9	9	28.1	6	26.1	12	36.4	8	19.0
Four	6	3.8	2	7.7	2	6.2	1	4.3	-	-	1	2.4
Five	1	0.6	1	3.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
All Families*	156	(100)	26	16.7	32	20.5	23	14.7	33	21.2	42	26.9
All Children*	333	(100)	59	17.7	71	21.3	42	12.6	74	22.2	87	26.1
Children per family(mean)	2.13		2.27		2.22		1.83		2.24		2.07	
Families with Children:												
Over 12 years	16		3		5		2		3		3	
One	11		2		5		-		1		3	
Two	3		-		-		2		1		-	
Three	2		1		-		-		1		-	
Children over 12 years	23		5		5		4		6		3	
All Children	356		64		76		46		80		90	
Children per family(mean)	2.28		2.46		2.38		2.00		2.42		2.14	

* For these two rows only percentages are given in rows (horizontally) to show the distribution of the sample.

TABLE 2.2: FAMILY COMPOSITION : COMPARISONS

Family Characteristics	Sample 1982 N	Sample 1982 %	ABS Survey Australia 1980 (1) %	Census NSW 1981 (2) %
All Families	156	(100)	(100)	(100)
Composition:				
Two-parent families	126	80.8	88.9	84.2
One-parent families	30	19.2	11.1	15.8
Children per family (3)				
One	36	23.1	42.7	35.4
Two	71	45.5	39.0	39.4
Three or more	49	31.4	18.2	25.1
Families with Children 0 - 11 years				
Pre-school children only	86	55.1	53.1	N/A
Both pre-school and school children	70	44.9	46.9	

(1) Australian Bureau of Statistics, Child Care Arrangements Australia, June 1980, Catalogue No. 4402.0 (Families with Children under 12 years of age only).

(2) Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1981 Census of Population and Housing, New South Wales (Family Composition of families with dependants only).

(3) The numbers of children in our sample and ABS Survey 1980 refers to children under 12 years of age; those in the 1981 Census refer to dependent children.

TABLE 2.3: PARENTS' COUNTRY OF BIRTH

(a) Our Sample and Census 1981

Country of Birth	Sample 1982				Census 1981:NSW	
	Mothers		Fathers		Women	Men
	N	%	N	%	%	%
Australia	112	73.7	92	70.8	79.4	77.5
Other English speaking (1)	23	15.1	27	20.8	7.7	8.1
Non-English speaking (2)	17	11.2	11	8.4	12.9	14.4
	152	(100)	130	(100)	(100)	(100)
Not applicable	4	-	26	-	-	-

(1) In 1981 Census, UK, Ireland and New Zealand only

(2) In 1981 Census, includes "all other countries"

(b) Our Sample and ABS Survey 1980

Parents' Country of Birth	Sample 1982		ABS 1980 (1)
	N	%	%
All parents Australian-born	98	62.8	61.6
At least one parent born in non-English speaking country	36	23.1	21.6
No parent born in English-speaking country	22	14.1	14.5
Not determined	-	-	2.3

Source: (1) ABS, Child Care Arrangements Australia, June 1980; Cat.No. 4402.0.

TABLE 2.4: HOUSING

Characteristics of Families	Sample 1982 N	Sample 1982 %	Census 1981 NSW %
Owner/purchaser	120	76.9	67.0
Renting	33	21.2	25.9
Living with parents	3	1.9	-
Not clear/not stated	-	-	7.1
House: Detached dwelling, Semi-detached/terrace, medium density	132	84.6	94.0
Unit or Flat	23	14.7	2.8
Other	-	-	1.6
Not stated	1	0.6	1.6
Outdoor play space : Yes	141	90.4	N/A
: No	15	9.6	N/A
Living in dwelling(1) : 0-6 months	14	9.0	)
7-12 "	21	13.5	) 18.6
13-24 "	15	9.6	N/A
25-60 "	52	33.6	N/A
61 & + "	54	34.6	52.0

Note: The data in 1981 Census refer to persons; the data in the sample refer to families (parents).

TABLE 2.5: LOCATION OF NEAREST GRANDPARENTS

(a) All Families in the Sample

Location of Nearest Grandparents	Two-Parent Families				One-Parent Families			All Families	
	Maternal	Paternal	Both	Total	Maternal	Paternal	Total	N	%
In household or within 5 km.	24	11	6	41	8	3	11	52	33.3
Under 10 km.	7	6	5	18	2	-	2	20	12.8
Over 10 km.	19	8	11	38	7	-	7	45	28.8
Total in Sydney	50	25	22	97	17	3	20	117	75.0
Not in Sydney[1]	-	-	29	29	9	1	10	39	25.0
All Families	50	25	51	126	26	4	30	156	(100)

[1] Elsewhere in Australia, overseas, decreased, or not applicable.

(b) Families in Five Local Government Areas

Location of Nearest Grandparents	Sample		North		East(H)		East(M)		South		West	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	156	(100)	26	(100)	32	(100)	23	(100)	33	(100)	42	(100)
Total in Sydney	117	75.0	17	65.4	23	71.9	17	73.9	27	81.8	33	78.6
In household or within 5 km.	52	33.3	5	19.2	15	46.9	8	34.8	13	39.4	11	26.2
under 10 km.	20	12.8	5	19.2	2	6.3	4	17.4	7	21.2	2	4.8
over 10 km.	45	28.8	7	26.9	6	18.8	5	21.7	7	21.2	20	47.6

TABLE 2.6: PARENTS' EDUCATIONAL/OCCUPATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS[1]

(a) All Parents in the Sample and 1981 Census

Educational Qualifications	Sample 1982				Census 1981:NSW	
	Mothers		Fathers		Women	Men
	N	%	N	%	%	%
Degree (incl. 2nd & higher degrees)	32	21.0	34	26.1	3.0	5.7
Other Tertiary (Diploma, etc.)	21	13.8	9	6.9	4.0	3.0
Trade, Technical, etc.	15	9.9	24	18.5	12.1	24.6
Total post-secondary	68	44.7	67	51.5	19.1	33.3
Higher School Certificate	24	15.8	27	20.8	N/A	N/A
School Certificate or below	60	39.5	33	25.4	N/A	N/A
Total without post-secondary	84	55.3	60	46.2	71.4	58.5
Not clear/not stated	-	-	3	2.3	9.6	8.2
Total	152	(100)	130	(100)	(100)	(100)

(1) Data from 1981 Census refer to persons 15 years of age and over but exclude persons in that age group who were still attending school.

TABLE 2.6: PARENTS' EDUCATIONAL/OCCUPATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (1)

(b) Parents in Five Local Government Areas (Per Cent)

Area	North		East (H)		East (M)		South		West	
Source of Data	Sample	Census	S*	C**	S*	C**	S*	C**	S*	C**
No. in Sample	25	-	31	-	23	-	32	-	41	-
MOTHERS										
Degree (incl. higher degree)	24.0	9.9	29.0	9.8	26.1	5.0	25.0	2.7	7.3	1.2
Other Tertiary (eg Diploma)	12.0	8.7	29.0	6.1	17.4	3.6	12.5	4.9	2.4	2.8
Trade, Technical, etc.	36.0	18.4	3.2	14.1	4.3	12.8	-	16.0	9.8	11.3
Total post-secondary	72.0	37.0	61.3	30.0	47.8	21.4	37.5	23.6	19.5	15.3
Higher School Cert.	12.0	-	19.4	-	13.0	-	28.1	-	7.3	-
School Certificate or less	16.0	-	19.4	-	39.1	-	34.4	-	73.2	-
Total without post-secondary	28.0	55.7	38.7	56.8	52.2	67.6	62.5	68.0	80.5	76.9
Not clear/not stated	-	7.3	-	13.2	-	10.9	-	8.4	-	7.8
FATHERS										
No. in Sample	19	-	26	-	21	-	29	-	35	-
Degree (incl. higher degree)	57.9	23.7	38.5	19.3	23.8	8.7	20.7	6.3	5.7	2.6
Other Tertiary (eg Diploma)	5.3	10.2	7.7	5.1	-	2.7	13.8	3.7	5.7	2.2
Trade, Technical, etc.	10.5	18.6	15.4	15.0	42.9	21.5	20.7	35.8	8.6	28.6
Total post-secondary	73.7	52.5	61.5	39.5	66.7	32.9	55.2	45.7	20.0	33.3
Higher School Cert.	15.8	-	23.1	-	9.5	-	20.7	-	28.6	-
School Certificate or less	5.3	-	7.7	-	23.8	-	24.1	-	51.4	-
Total without post-secondary	21.1	42.2	30.8	49.7	33.4	57.1	44.8	47.9	80.0	60.0
Not clear/not stated	5.3	5.3	7.7	10.8	-	10.0	-	6.4	-	6.6

(1) Data from 1981 Census refer to person 15 years of age and over but excludes persons who were still attending school.

* = Sample; ** = Census.

TABLE 2.7: PARENTS' EMPLOYMENT STATUS

(a) Employment Status and Hours of Work

	Sample 1982				Census 1981: NSW	
	Mothers		Fathers		Women	Men
	N	%	N	%	%	%
Employment Status:						
No. in Sample	152	(100)	130	(100)	(100)	(100)
Employed	80	52.6	113	86.9	38.1	62.3
Self employed/ employer	1	0.7	13	10.0	4.4	10.9
Unemployed	-	-	2	1.5	6.8	4.0
Employed — on maternity leave	1	0.7	-	-	N/A	-
Total in labour force	82	53.9	128	98.5	45.4	77.3
Not in labour force	70	46.1	2	1.5	54.6	22.7
In labour force age group 20 - 39 years	N/A	-	N/A	-	59.6	93.5
Hours worked per week:						
No. employed	82	(100)	126	(100)	(100)	(100)
35 and over	41	50.0	119	94.4	59.4	84.2
25 - 34	13	15.8	2	1.6	9.7	3.9
15 - 24	15	18.3	-	-	9.8	1.9
Under 15	9	11.0	1	0.8	10.6	3.0
None/not stated	4	4.9	4	3.2	10.5	6.9

TABLE 2.7:

(b) Participation in the Labour Force by Mothers — 5 Local Government Areas

Mothers in the Labour Force	Families in Sample and in 5 LGAs					
	Sample	North	East(H)	East(M)	South	West
All Families — N*	156	26	32	23	33	42
Mothers in Labour Force — N	86	16	17	17	17	19
Participation Rate — %	55.1	61.5	53.1	73.9	51.5	45.2
Two-Parent Families — N	126	18	25	21	28	34
Mothers in Labour Force — N	68	10	14	15	14	15
Participation Rate — %	54.0	55.6	56.0	71.4	50.0	44.1
One-Parent Families — N*	30	8	7	2	5	8
Mothers in Labour Force — N	18	6	3	2	3	4
Participation Rate — %	60.0	75.0	42.9	100.0	60.0	50.0
NSW — 1981 Census						
Participation Rate — All						
Women 15 years + — %	45.4	46.1	53.9	52.5	49.7	47.3
Women 20 - 39 years — %	59.6	63.1	77.0	71.7	61.9	52.0

* Includes 4 one-parent families headed by father.

TABLE 2.8: OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS OF PARENTS

Occupational Group	Sample 1982				Census 1981 : NSW		
	Mothers		Fathers		Women	Men	Women 20-39 years
	N	%	N	%	%	%	%
Professional, technical, etc.	34	41.5	38	30.2	16.4	11.7	20.7
Administrative, executive, managerial	2	2.4	6	4.8	1.7	7.0	1.3
Clerical	28	34.1	13	10.3	34.0	8.4	36.5
Sales	4	4.9	16	12.7	11.3	6.8	9.1
Farmers, fishermen, timbergetters, etc.	-	-	-	-	3.5	6.3	2.4
Miners, quarrymen, etc.	-	-	-	-	-	1.1	-
Transport and communication	1	1.2	9	7.1	1.8	6.8	1.8
Tradesmen, process workers, labourers	2	2.4	23	18.3	9.2	40.2	8.6
Service, sport, recreation	9	11.0	5	4.0	13.0	5.5	11.3
Armed services	-	-	3	2.4	0.2	1.5	0.3
Inadequately described/ not stated	2	2.4	13	10.3	8.9	4.7	7.9
Total: all employed	82	100.0	126	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

TABLE 2.9: FAMILY INCOME

(a) Family Income in Five Local Government Areas

Area	Families in Sample N	Gross Weekly Family Income (per week) (Per Cent of families)			
		(1) Less than $300	(2) $300 to $600	(3) Over $600	(4) Not stated Not known
Total Sample*	156	(30) 19.2	(64) 41.0	(43) 27.6	(19) 12.2
Comparable NSW -1981 Census	-	56.7	25.3	11.8	6.1
Areas:					
North -Sample	26	(5) 19.2	(8) 30.8	(8) 30.8	(5) 19.2
-1981 Census	-	31.8	24.3	41.0	3.0
East(H) -Sample	32	(5) 15.6	(9) 28.1	(14) 43.8	(4) 12.5
-1981 Census	-	48.6	20.6	23.0	7.5
East(M) -Sample	23	(3) 13.0	(11) 47.8	(6) 26.1	(3) 13.0
-1981 Census	-	58.7	24.1	11.6	5.7
South -Sample	33	(7) 21.2	(13) 39.4	(9) 27.3	(4) 12.1
-1981 Census	-	42.0	33.4	19.3	5.0
West -Sample	42	(10) 23.8	(23) 54.8	(6) 14.3	(3) 7.1
-1981 Census	-	48.8	33.3	11.4	6.5

Note: Family income as indicated in the 1981 Census has been increased by 15 per cent for the purpose of comparison, to allow approximately for increases in incomes between June 1981 and October/November 1982 (when the interviews took place). The comparative income levels thus used were as follows:

(1) Less than $300: Census - less than $332

(2) $300 - $600 : " - $333 - $575

(3) Over $600 : " - Over $575

* Numbers in ( ) give the numbers of families.

TABLE 2.9:

(b) Gross Weekly Family Income and Mother's Employment

Family Characteristics	Families in Sample N	Gross Weekly Family Income (% of families)			
		Less than $300	$300 to $600	over $600	Not stated/ Not known
All Families	156	19.2	41.0	27.6	12.2
Mother employed*	86	14.0	37.2	36.0	12.8
" not employed	70	25.7	45.7	17.1	11.4
Two-Parent Families	126	7.9	43.7	34.1	14.3
Mother employed	68	5.9	33.8	45.5	14.7
" not employed	58	10.3	55.2	20.7	13.8
One-Parent Families	30	66.7	30.0	-	3.3
Parent employed*	18	44.4	50.0	-	5.6
" not employed	12	100.0	-	-	-

* Includes 4 one-parent families headed by father.

TABLE 2.10: CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS IN FAMILIES

Family Characteristics	Families in Sample N	Number of Care Arrangements								
		One		Two		Three		Four or more		(Mean)
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Family Composition										
All Families in Sample*	156	48	30.8	33	21.2	26	16.7	48	30.8	2.5
Two Parent*	126	37	29.4	27	21.4	21	16.7	40	31.7	2.5
One Parent	30	11	36.7	6	20.0	5	16.7	8	26.7	2.3
Number of Children										
One	36	21	58.3	11	30.6	4	11.1	-	-	1.5
Two	71	17	23.9	16	22.5	18	25.4	20	28.2	2.6
Three or more*	49	10	20.4	6	12.2	4	8.2	28	57.1	3.0
Ages of Children										
Incl. a child under 3 years*	54	15	27.8	14	25.9	11	20.4	13	24.1	2.4
" a child at school	50	14	28.0	9	18.0	10	20.0	17	34.0	2.6
" both	20	3	15.0	2	10.0	2	10.0	13	65.0	3.3
Neither -only 3-5 year olds	32	16	50.0	8	25.0	3	9.4	5	15.6	1.9
Mother's Employment										
Mother Employed	86	21	24.4	19	22.1	12	14.0	34	39.5	2.7
With one child	25	13	52.0	9	36.0	3	12.0	-	-	1.6
" two children	33	5	15.1	6	18.2	7	21.2	15	45.5	3.0
" three or more children	28	4	14.3	3	10.7	2	7.1	19	67.9	3.3
Mother Not Employed*	70	27	38.6	14	20.0	14	20.0	14	20.0	2.2
With one child	11	8	72.7	2	18.2	1	9.1	-	-	1.4
" two children	38	14	36.8	8	21.1	11	28.9	5	13.2	2.2
" three or more children*	21	6	28.6	3	14.3	2	9.5	9	42.9	2.6
Family Income (per week)										
under $300	30	11	36.7	5	16.7	8	26.7	6	20.0	2.3
$300 - $600	64	25	39.1	10	15.6	7	10.9	22	34.4	2.4
Over $600*	43	9	20.9	12	27.9	8	18.6	13	30.2	2.5
Not stated	19	3	15.8	6	31.6	3	15.8	7	36.8	2.7
Family in the Area										
North	26	12	46.1	2	7.7	2	7.7	10	38.5	2.4
East (H)	32	5	15.6	7	21.9	7	21.9	13	40.6	2.9
East (M)	23	6	26.1	9	39.1	2	8.7	6	26.1	2.4
South*	33	10	30.3	5	15.1	8	24.2	9	27.3	2.4
West	42	15	35.7	10	23.8	7	16.7	10	23.8	2.3

* Includes one family with no care arrangements at the time of interview.

TABLE 2.11: CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS IN FAMILIES : FORMAL AND INFORMAL CARE AND MOTHER'S EMPLOYMENT

Number of Formal Arrangements in a Family	Type of Arrangement in Family									
	Formal only		Formal + 1 Informal		Formal + 2 Informal		Formal + 3 or more Informal		Total Arrangements	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
All Families in Sample										
One	48	30.8	15	9.6	21	13.5	14	9.0	98	62.8
Two	17	10.9	3	1.9	12	7.7	5	3.2	37	23.7
Three	2	1.3	1	0.6	3	1.9	7	4.5	13	8.3
Four or more	1	0.6	-	-	2	1.3	3	1.9	6	3.8
Informal only	-	-	-	-	1	0.6	-	-	1	0.6
Total Families using	68	43.6	19	12.2	39	25.0	29	18.6	156*	(100)
Families with Mother Employed										
One	21	24.4	11	12.8	10	11.6	8	9.3	50	58.1
Two	7	8.1	1	1.2	10	11.6	4	4.6	22	25.6
Three	1	1.2	-	-	2	2.3	6	7.0	9	10.5
Four or more	-	-	-	-	2	2.3	2	2.3	4	4.6
Informal only	-	-	-	-	1	1.2	-	-	1	1.2
Total Families using	29	33.7	12	14.0	25	29.1	20	23.2	86	(100)
Families with Mother Not Employed										
One	27	38.6	4	5.7	11	15.7	6	8.6	48	68.6
Two	10	14.3	2	2.9	2	2.9	1	1.4	15	21.4
Three	1	1.4	1	1.4	1	1.4	1	1.4	4	5.7
Four or more	1	1.4	-	-	-	-	1	1.4	2	2.9
Total Families using	39	55.7	7	10.0	14	20.0	9	12.9	70*	(100)

* Includes one family not using care arrangements at the time of interview.

Note: Percentages are those of total families in each group

TABLE 2.12:

(a) "PACKAGING" OF CARE ARRANGEMENTS : FAMILIES

Formal Arrangements	Informal Arrangements									Total Arrangements
	Nil	Spouse	Relatives	Baby Sitter/ Minder	Friends Neighbours	Multiple Arrangements				
						2	3	4	5+	
Family Day Care	6		2				1			9
Long Day Care	12		2	1		3	2		1	21
Full Day Pre-School	18			1		12	4	2	3	40
Sessional Pre-School	9			1	3	5				18
Occasional Care	1									1
Neighbourhood Children's Centre	2	2	2		1	1	1			9
MULTIPLE ARRANGEMENTS										
2 arrangements	17		2		1	12	2	2	1	37
3 arrangements	2			1		3	4		3	13
4 arrangements						2			2	4
5 arrangements	1								1	2
Informal Arrangements only						1				1
Total Arrangements	68	2	8	4	5	39	14	4	11	155*

* Sample = 156 families (1 family not using care at the time of interview).

TABLE 2.12: (b) Types of Formal Care Used : Mother Employed

Type of Formal Arrangement	Formal Arrangements Only N	%	Formal + Informal Arrangements N	%	Total Arrangement N	%
One Formal Arrangement						
Family Day Care	4	4.7	2	2.3	6	7.0
Long Day Care	9	10.5	9	10.5	18	20.9
Full-Day Pre-School	7	8.1	10	11.6	17	19.8
Sessional Pre-School	-	-	3	3.5	3	3.5
Occasional Care	-	-	-	-	-	-
Neighbourhood Children's Centre	1	1.2	5	5.8	6	7.0
More Than One Formal Arrangement						
Two Formal Arrangements	7	8.1	15	17.4	22	25.6
Three or More Formal Arrangements	1	1.2	12	14.0	13	15.1
Informal Arrangements only	-	-	1	1.2	1	1.2
Total Arrangements	29	33.7	57	66.2	86	(100)

TABLE 2.12: (c) Types of Formal Care Used: Mother Not Employed

One Formal Arrangement						
Family Day Care	2	2.9	1	1.4	3	4.3
Long Day Care	3	4.3	-	-	3	4.3
Full-Day Pre-School	11	15.7	12	17.1	23	32.9
Sessional Pre-School	9	12.9	6	8.6	15	21.4
Occasional Care	1	1.4	-	-	1	1.4
Neighbourhood Children's Centre	1	1.4	2	2.9	3	4.3
More Than One Formal Arrangement						
Two Formal Arrangements	10	14.3	5	7.1	15	21.4
Three or More Formal Arrangements	2	2.9	4	5.8	6	8.6
Total Arrangements	39	55.7	30	42.9	70*	(100)

* Includes one family not using care at the time of interview.

Note: Percentages refer to the total number of families in each group.

TABLE 2.13: USE OF INFORMAL CARE BY FAMILIES

(a) Extent of Use

Family Characteristics	Families in Sample	Families Using Informal Care		Arrangements in a Family								Arrangements		
				One		Two		Three		Four or+		Total	Use per family	
	N	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		*	**
All Families	156	87	55.8	19	12.2	39	25.0	14	9.0	15	9.6	218	1.4	2.5
Two parent	126	72	57.1	16	22.2	30	41.7	12	16.7	14	19.4	187	1.5	2.6
One parent	30	15	50.0	3	10.0	9	23.3	2	6.7	1	3.3	31	1.0	2.1
Mother's Employment														
Employed	86	58	67.4	12	14.0	25	29.1	8	9.3	12	14.0	149	1.7	2.6
Not employed	70	29	41.4	7	10.0	14	20.0	6	8.6	3	4.3	69	1.0	2.4

(b) Types of Informal Care Used

Family Characteristics	Families in Sample	Families Using Informal Care		Type of Informal Care Used									
				Spouse		Relatives (1)		Baby Sitter/ Minder		Friends/ Neigh.		Other (2)	
	N	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
All Families	156	87	55.8	13	8.3	44	28.2	24	15.4	13	8.3	9	5.8
Two parent	126	72	57.1	13	10.3	32	25.4	22	17.5	11	8.7	7	5.6
One parent	30	15	50.0	-	-	12	40.0	2	6.7	2	6.7	2	6.7
Family Income p.w													
Under $300	30	15	50.0	3	10.0	12	40.0	2	6.7	-	-	1	3.3
$300 - $600	64	32	50.0	4	6.3	16	25.0	7	10.9	6	9.4	3	4.7
Over $500	43	27	62.8	4	9.3	10	23.3	12	27.9	5	11.6	3	7.0
Not stated	19	13	68.4	2	10.5	6	31.6	3	15.8	2	10.5	2	10.5
Family living in													
North	26	12	46.2	4	15.4	4	15.4	4	15.4	2	7.7	1	3.8
East (H)	32	20	62.5	1	3.1	12	37.5	10	31.2	2	6.3	1	3.1
East (M)	23	13	56.5	3	13.0	9	39.1	1	4.3	1	4.3	2	8.7
South	33	20	60.6	2	6.1	10	30.3	6	18.2	2	6.1	2	6.1
West	42	22	52.4	3	7.1	9	21.4	3	7.1	6	14.3	3	7.1

* = all families; ** families using.

(1) Includes, in a majority of cases, grandparents
(2) Includes baby sitting club, older children, paid help, live-in housekeeper.

Note: The sum of the types of care used is greater than the number of families using informal care, as a family may use more than one type of care.

TABLE 2.14: COST OF CHILD CARE : FAMILIES

(a) Fees

Family Characteristics	Families in Sample N	Cost of Child Care per family per week($)					
		0 - 14	15 - 24	25 - 44	45 - 64	65 & +	Not Stated
		Per cent of families in sample					
All Families*	155	29.0	22.6	22.6	13.5	9.0	3.2
Two-Parent Families*	125	28.0	24.8	19.2	14.4	9.6	4.0
One-Parent Families	30	33.3	13.3	36.7	10.0	6.7	-
Family Income per week:							
Under $300	30	46.7	23.3	23.3	6.7	-	-
$300 - $600	64	35.9	21.9	23.4	12.5	4.7	1.6
Over $600*	42	14.3	16.7	23.8	16.7	21.4	7.1
Not stated	19	10.5	36.8	15.8	21.1	10.5	5.3
Families living in:							
North	26	19.2	34.6	15.4	15.4	11.5	3.8
East (H)	32	9.4	18.8	37.5	6.3	21.9	6.3
East (M)	23	21.7	13.0	17.4	39.1	4.3	4.3
South*	32	18.8	34.4	18.8	15.6	9.4	3.1
West	42	61.9	14.3	21.4	2.4	-	-

(b) Other Contributions

Family Characteristics	Families in Sample	Contributions (% of families)			
		Material	Time	Both Time and Material	None
All Families *+	154	31.2	21.4	25.3	22.1
Two-Parent *+	124	26.6	26.6	26.6	20.2
One-Parent	30	50.0	-	20.0	30.0
Families living in:					
North	26	30.8	23.1	26.9	19.2
East (H)	32	15.6	18.8	40.6	25.0
East (M)	23	34.8	30.4	4.3	30.4
South *+	31	38.7	12.9	16.1	32.3
West	42	35.7	23.8	31.0	9.5

* Excludes one family not using child care at the time of interview.

\+ Excludes one family using only informal care.

TABLE 2.15: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN — THE SAMPLE

Age (In whole years)	Contact Children		Siblings of Contact Children		All Children	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Under 2	25	12.8	23	16.7	48	14.4
2	24	12.3	11	8.0	35	10.5
3-5 (not at school)	141	72.3	15	10.9	156	46.8
5-11(at school)	5	2.6	89	64.5	94	28.2
Total	195	(100)	138	(100)	333	(100)

TABLE 2.16: CARE ARRANGEMENTS USED BY CHILDREN IN THE SAMPLE

Type and Number of Care Arrangements	Age of Children (whole years)								All Children in Sample	
	Under 2		2		3-5 (Not at school)		5-11 (at school)			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
All Children in Sample	48	(100)	35	(100)	156	(100)	94	(100)	333	(100)
Not using care	12	25.0	3	8.6	8	5.1	44	46.8	67	20.1
Using care	36	75.0	32	91.4	148	94.9	50	53.2	266	79.9
Children Using Care: Number of Arrangements										
One	19	52.8	19	59.4	54	36.5	38	76.0	130	48.9
Two	13	36.1	6	18.8	65	43.9	9	18.0	93	35.0
Three	4	11.1	5	15.6	23	15.5	3	6.0	35	13.2
Four	-	-	1	3.1	5	3.4	-	-	6	2.2
Five	-	-	1	3.1	1	0.7	-	-	2	0.7
All Children using	36	(100)	32	(100)	148	(100)	50	(100)	266	(100)
Total arrangements	57	-	55	-	278	-	65	-	455	-
Formal Care Number of Arrangements										
One	26	96.3	21	80.8	120	82.8	5	62.5	172	83.5
Two	1	3.7	5	19.2	24	16.5	3	37.5	33	16.0
Three	-	-	-	-	1	0.7	-	-	1	0.5
All Children using	27	(100)	26	(100)	145	(100)	8	(100)	206	(100)
Total arrangements	28	-	31	-	169	-	9	-	237	-
Informal Care Number of Arrangements										
One	23	88.5	13	72.2	63	75.0	42	87.5	141	80.1
Two	3	11.5	4	22.2	19	22.6	6	12.5	32	18.2
Three	-	-	1	5.6	2	2.4	-	-	3	1.7
All Children using	26	(100)	18	(100)	84	(100)	48	(100)	176	(100)
Total arrangements	29	-	24	-	109	-	56	-	218	-

TABLE 2.17: "PACKAGING" OF CARE ARRANGEMENTS (NUMBER OF CHILDREN)

Formal Arrangements	Formal Arrangements only	Informal Arrangements						All Children
		Spouse	Relatives	Babysitter/ Minder	Friends/ Neigh.	Spouse &/ or relatives and Babysitter	Other and Multiple	
Informal arrangements only	0	8	24	13	4	3	8	60
Family Day Care	9	1	6	2	-	3	-	21
Long Day Care	20	-	10	3	-	4	1	38
Full-Day Pre-School	20	2	11	3	2	3	9	50
Sessional Pre-School	11	-	6	4	2	-	-	23
Occasional Care	8	3	-	3	1	-	2	17
Neighbourhood Children's Centre	6	2	5	-	2	-	4	19
Other types & Multiple Formal Care	16	4	6	4	3	1	4	38
All Children	90	20	68	32	14	14	28	266

TABLE 2.18: TYPES OF CARE ARRANGEMENTS : VARIATIONS BY CHILD'S AGE

Type of Care Arrangement	Age of Children (whole years)				All Children Using Care	
	Under 2 N	2 N	3-5 (Not at school) N	5-11 (At school) N	N	%(1)
Formal Care:						
All Children Using	27	26	145	8	206	(100)
Family Day Care	10	6	10	2	28	13.6
Long Day Care:						
- Community	5	8	19	-	32	15.5
- Private	-	2	11	-	13	6.3
Full Day Pre-School:						
- Community	-	-	31	-	31	15.0
- Private/Other	-	-	35	-	35	17.0
Sessional Pre-School:						
- Community	-	-	25	-	25	12.1
Occasional Care	9	9	14	-	32	15.5
Neighbourhood Children's Centre	3	2	13	5(2)	23	11.2
Other Types of Care(3)	1	4	11	2(2)	18	8.7
Total Formal Arrangements(4)	28	31	169	9	237	-
Informal Care:						
All Children Using	26	18	84	48	176	(100)
Spouse	3	3	15	9	30	17.0
Relatives	13	11	48	22	94	53.4
Baby Sitter/Minder	9	6	25	12	52	29.5
Friends/Neighbours	1	1	12	8	22	12.5
Other Arrangements	3	3	9	5	20	11.4
Total Informal Arrangements (4)	29	24	109	56	218	-

Note: (1) Refers to % of children using a type of care.
(2) Used as before and/or after school care.
(3) Includes: Playgroup(10); Home-based Education Scheme(2); Hospital Child Care Centre(3); Special School for children with handicap (1); unclear (2).
(4) The number of arrangements is greater than the number of children as a child may use more than one arrangement.

TABLE 2.19: CHILDREN USING CARE AND MOTHER'S EMPLOYMENT

(a) Extent of Care Usage

Age of the Child (Whole years)	Mother Employed			Mother Not Employed		
	Children in Sample N	Children using care N	%	Children in Sample N	Children using care N	%
Under 2	22	19	86.4	26	17	65.4
2	22	22	100.0	13	10	76.9
3 - 5 (not at school)	81	80	98.8	75	68	90.7
5 - 11(at school)	56	35	62.5	38	15	39.4
Total	181	156	86.2	152	110	72.4
Total excluding children at school	125	121	96.8	114	95	83.3

(b) Multiple use of Care

Age of the Child (Whole years)	Mother employed			Mother not employed		
	Children Using care N	Children using Multiple care N	%	Children using care N	Children using Multiple care N	%
Under 2	19	14	73.7	17	3	17.6
2	22	11	50.0	10	2	20.0
3 - 5 (not at school)	80	57	71.3	68	37	54.4
5 - 11(at school)	35	10	28.6	15	2	13.3
Total	156	92	59.0	110	44	40.0
Total excluding children at school	121	82	67.8	95	42	44.2

TABLE 2.20: CHILDREN USING CARE AND MOTHER'S EMPLOYMENT : A SUMMARY

Category of Usage	All Children in Sample		Mother Employed		Mother Not Employed	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Children in Sample	333	(100)	181	(100)	152	(100)
Not using care	67	20.1	25	13.8	42	27.6
Using care	266	79.9	156	86.2	110	72.4
Children Using Care	266	(100)	156	(100)	110	(100)
One care arrangement	130	48.9	64	41.0	66	60.0
More than one arrangement	136	51.1	92	59.0	44	40.0
Formal Care	206	77.4	120	76.9	86	78.2
One type of care	172	64.7	103	66.0	69	62.7
More than one type	34	12.8	17	10.9	17	15.4
Informal Care	176	66.2	120	76.9	56	50.9
One type of care	141	53.0	91	58.3	50	45.5
More than one type	35	13.2	29	18.6	6	5.4
Formal Care Arrangements	206	(100)	120	(100)	86	(100)
Family Day Care	28	13.6	20	16.7	8	9.3
Long Day Care	45	21.8	38	31.7	7	8.1
Full-Day Pre-School	66	32.0	25	20.8	41	47.7
Sessional Pre-School	25	12.1	7	4.9	18	20.9
Occasional Care	32	15.5	12	10.0	20	23.3
Neighbourhood Children's Centre	23	11.2	23	19.2	-	-
Other Types of Care	18	8.7	13	10.8	5	5.8
Informal Care Arrangements	176	(100)	120	(100)	56	(100)
Spouse	30	17.0	30	25.0	-	-
Relatives	94	53.4	50	50.0	34	60.7
Baby Sitter/Minder	52	29.5	32	26.7	20	35.7
Friends/Neighbours	22	12.5	16	13.3	6	10.7
Other informal arrangements	20	9.1	11	9.2	9	8.9
Total Care Arrangements	455	(100)	287	(100)	168	(100)
Average (mean) per child*	1.7	-	1.8	-	1.5	-
Formal Care Arrangements	237	-	138	-	99	-
Average (mean) per child*	0.9	-	0.9	-	0.9	-
Informal Care Arrangements	218	-	149	-	69	-
Average (mean) per child*	0.8	-	1.0	-	0.6	-

* Average (mean) per child of all children using care.

TABLE 2.21: CHILDREN'S ATTENDANCE IN FORMAL CARE

(a) Days Attended per week

Type of Care	Children Attending N*	Days per Week					Variable
		One	Two	Three	Four	Five	
Family Day Care	28	4	1	3	2	14	4
Long Day Care	32	-	2	10	1	19	-
Full Day Care	31	2	8	14	3	4	-
Sessional Pre-School	25	1	6	4	-	14	-
Occasional Care	32	22	-	-	-	-	10
All Children Attending-N	148	29	17	31	6	51	14
" " " -%	(100)	19.6	11.5	20.9	4.1	34.5	9.5

(b) Hours Attended per Week

Type of Care	Children Attending N*	Hours Per Week					Variable (not included in total)
		Average (mean)	Standard Deviation	Most Common (Mode)	Minimum	Maximum	
Family Day Care	13	25.7	16.3	-	6.0	50.0	6
Long Day Care	16	41.0	0.9	40.0/ 42.5	32.5	52.5	2
Full Day Care	27	18.0	7.1	18.0	6.0	34.0	-
Sessional Pre-School	20	12.5	6.2	12.5	2.5	27.5	-
Occasional Care	20	2.9	0.4	3.0	2.0	3.0	8
Total Children attending	96						16

* The number of children attending each type of care is, in sum, greater than the total number of children attending the five types of care, as a child may attend more than one type of care (see Tables 2.17 and 2.18).

TABLE 2.22: COST OF FORMAL CARE : FEES PAID FOR A CHILD

Type of Care/ Type of Fees	Cost per Week			Cost per Hour		
	Children N	Mean $	Range* Min.-Max.	Children N	Mean $	Range* Min.-Max.
Family Day Care	27			19		
Regular Cost -no subsidy	15	31.40	16.00-48.00	11	1.40	1.20-1.60
Subsidy -family circumstances	4	12.75	9.50-16.00	1	0.30	-
Regular Cost plus payment for extras	2	77.70	67.00-90.00	1	1.80	-
Cost varies with use -no subsidy	6	-	-	6	-	-
Long Day Care	32			16		
Regular Cost -no subsidy	24	32.50	20.00-47.00	12	1.10	0.90-1.30
Subsidy -family circumstances	7	18.90	8.50-28.50	3	0.70	0.50-0.80
" -older child attends	1	30.00	-	1	0.80	-
Full Day Care	30			27		
Regular Cost -no subsidy	24	18.10	10.50-26.00	21	0.90	0.70-1.10
Subsidy -family circumstances	2	3.00	-	2	0.25	-
Total Subsidy - family circumstances	2	-	-	2	-	-
Subsidy -older child attends	2	7.50	4.00-11.00	2	0.80	-
Sessional Pre-School	24			21		
Regular cost -no subsidy	14	12.80	2.00-23.00	11	1.00	0.80-1.20
Free Service -donations requested $2	8	-	-	8	-	-
" " - " $5	1	-	-	1	-	-
" " -no donations	1	-	-	1	-	-
Occasional Care	26			26		
Regular Cost -no subsidy	13	3.40	2.00- 5.00	13	1.20	0.80-1.60
Subsidy -Mother helps	4	2.20	1.00- 3.50	4	0.70	-
" -older child attends	1	3.00	-	1	1.00	-
Cost varies with use -no subsidy	8	-	-	8	-	-
Children on whom data on cost were obtained	139			109		

* Most common range of fees: exceptional cases have been excluded.

CHAPTER 3

CHILD CARE IN THE LIVES OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN

To this point the data in the previous chapter on child care arrangements in the families we interviewed have been presented in a quantified form, providing a "static" picture or a snapshot of care arrangements at the time the interviews were held. In this chapter, we present, first, what may be called the "dynamics" of child care arrangements, and then the significance that child care services have in the lives of families, both for parents and for children. These aspects of child care are examined under four headings: activities involved in arranging care, in a day and over a week; continuity of care arrangements over a longer period of time; significance of care services and their value for parents and children; and parents' expectations of child care services.

With regard to the activities involved in arranging care, it is important to note (as will be seen) that child care arrangements in a family are not made in a time vacuum; they are "fitted in" into the overall daily, or weekly, activities of parents and children: employment, domestic tasks, school, social life, and leisure. The "synchronization" of these activities can be extremely complex, involving various members of the family, and, with child care, often the relatives and/or friends as well. Neither do these activities occur in the same place, and the distances between the home, the workplace, the school, and the child care service can be substantial, involving travelling by car or bus, or walking. Furthermore, the activities do not always occur at the same time every day of the week, and one day is not necessarily the same as another.

Over a longer period of time, in that part of the family life cycle when children are young, the needs for child care change, as more children are born, as the family changes location, as the mother enters or leaves the labour market or changes jobs, and for a number of other reasons. Each such change in a family calls for change in child care arrangements, and that task (as will be seen) can be very difficult, complex, and often frustrating. The majority of the families in our sample had experienced changes in child care arrangements in the past, some modifying the arrangements to a degree, others changing them completely.

Parents gave one or more of the following reasons for using child care (a) mother's ability to be employed, (b) the value of care for the child, (c) for the parents, and (d) for the family as a unit. This was evident in the responses we received from parents to the question on their reasons for using care; the features sought by parents when arranging care; and the use of time by the mother when the child, or children, were in care. For most parents, child care services have become an integral and essential part of their lives which is taken for granted. This was expressed in the value they saw in child care for parents and children and in their expectations of child care services: what child care meant for mothers and children; what changes they would like to see in their current care arrangement; and what they perceived as desirable or "ideal" care arrangements.

These aspects of child care are presented here in both descriptive and quantified form. Again, as in the previous chapter, comparisons are made between the families with employed and not employed mothers, two-parent and one-parent families, families with one or more children, and, in certain aspects, families with different levels of income and living in the five local government areas in which the study was conducted. The descriptive part includes some typical case studies, illustrating the nature of the processes involved and specific issues related to child care arrangements. Statistical tables have been placed at the end of the chapter (pp. 99-112).

1. Activities Involved in Arranging Care

(1) Co-ordination of Care Arrangements

It has been noted in the previous chapter that the diversity and complexity of care arrangements for some children in our sample were quite extensive. Over one-half of the children who used care experienced more than one type of care as a regular arrangement in any given week or month. For the majority of children this involved both formal and informal care.

However, the extent of the diversity and complexity of care arrangements was revealed more clearly when care arrangements were analysed for the family as a unit (Tables 2.10, 2.11, 2.12). When the activities of the family were examined over a period of a week, it became clear that care arrangements often varied from one day to another, according to the other activities of parents and children and depending on the availability of care. The complexity of

care arrangements was greater in those families where both parents worked, where parent(s) worked shift work or irregular hours, or where either of them worked on weekends. Furthermore, the complexity would increase in families with with more than one child. It would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, to quantify the processes involved, but the following case studies illustrate some of the activities involved over a week, in families with multiple care arrangements:

1 child family — 2 parent family. Father works full-time. Mother works 9-5, 3 days a week and 9-2, 2 days a week doing 2 jobs. Child attends Long Day Care Centre (community) for 2 days a week and a Sessional Pre-School 2 days a week. On the remaining day mother takes child to work with her or occasionally leaves child with a friend.

2 child family: — Single father (no other adults in the household). The father has a job which always involves some evening hours, although the amount varies, and frequent weekend work. The children both attend school. They go from school to an After-School Programme and on from there to Family Day Care from which the father picks them up. When the father works at the weekend he uses a regular network of Friends to provide care for the children.

— 2 parent family. Father works full-time. Mother works part-time, 3 days a week, with flexible hours. The children attend a Neighbourhood Children's Centre for 2 of those days (the most days their mother could obtain) and on the remaining day a Relative cares for the children.

— 2 parent family. Mother works full-time with set hours, father works full-time but has flexible hours. The younger child attends Family Day Care for 4 days and is cared for by the Father on the fifth day. The older child goes to a Full Day Pre-School (community) for 3 days, to Family Day Care for one day and is cared for by the Father on the fifth day. The parents prefer

family day care for younger children and the stimulation of centre care for older children. The older child is in the process of transition from one form of care to the other.

— 2 parent family. Father works full-time. Mother works one day a week, 9-3, and attends University part-time. The younger child goes to a Full Day Pre-School (community) 3 days a week (on one of these days mother works), an Occasional Care Centre for 3 hours on one day and is cared for by a Private Minder for 2 hours on the fifth day. The older child attends school. On one day a week both children are in the care of a Paid Neighbour for 3 hours after school hours.

3 child family:

— 2 parent family. Mother works part-time, 5 days a week plus 1 evening a week and 1 weekend in 4. Father works full-time. There are 4 children. The youngest is cared for by a Relative, who lives some distance away, 5 days a week. The second youngest is also cared for by that Relative but only on 3 days, on the remaining 2 the child attends a Full Day Pre-School (community). The oldest 2 children attend school. Father cares for the children when Mother is working outside of normal hours.

— 2 parent family. Mother works part-time on a rotating shift spread over 7 days. Father is self-employed. There are 3 children, none of whom attends school. All 3 children use a Multi-Purpose Children's Centre (this centre is classified as a Neighbourhood Children's Centre in our tables) and a Hospital-Based Child Care Centre on a regular basis but with variations in hours. Care at other times when mother is working is provided by Father, if not working himself, or a Friend.

The following two cases illustrate the complexity of care arrangements in some families in greater detail. One refers to a family where both parents worked shifts and irregular hours, and the other refers to a family with both school-age and pre-school age children; the mother used sessional pre-school care

for the latter, and worked herself as a family day-carer for other children.

Case A:

Two parent family with two children, aged 4 & 7 years. Both parents work shifts; mother is a nurse who works Saturday evening and Sunday morning and father works 8.30am - 5.30pm ten days then has four days off, and every four weeks works 7 days on afternoon/night shift. His work involves a lot of overtime, 45 hours in the week of the interview.

The youngest child attends a long day care centre two days a week (8.30am - 4pm) and the older child goes to school. When both parents are working at the weekend, the children stay overnight at a babysitter's place. Grandparents also used to care for the children, but are not the main source of care now as they had been in the past. Mother uses the long day care centre for the child's need to mix with other children, and uses the minder so she can work — for her own satisfaction as well as for the money.

Case B:

Two parent family with three children, aged 5, 8 & 10 years. Father works 5 days, 9am - 5pm; mother works at home as a family day carer; she cares for twins who are 5 years old and they go to sessional pre-school (afternoon session) with her son. She also looks after 2 other pre-school children on a part-time basis. Her eldest 2 children attend school, which has the sessional pre-school attached.

The mother finds the organisation of her day extremely busy. She finds 7.30 - 8am a "mad rush", getting the children dressed and ready for school. They leave at 9am and the two eldest children are taken to school. On her return, mother cares for her youngest son, the twins and the 2 part-time children. The children spend the morning playing at home or at playgroup (one morning a week). Mother organises lunch for them and is back at the pre-school (in the school grounds) at 12.30pm. She gets home at 12.45pm stays there till 2.45pm when it is time to return to the school and the pre-school to collect all the children. She is back home with the children a little after 3.30pm.

Because of this pattern of care arrangements mother finds she has no time for shopping (it is done on Saturday mornings or Thursday evening) or time for herself. The following year the twins will go to school with her youngest son and she then intends to give up being a carer for family day care in order to have a rest.

(2) Transport and Time

We have not quantified the data on the transport arrangements for taking children to and from care, or on the time taken to do this.* From scanning the data, we gained clear impressions of a range of factors involved: distances, hours of care and/or mother's and father's employment, the number of care arrangements, and the number of children using care.

It appeared that the majority of families used the car as a means of transport, some used public transport, some walked, and others used more than one type of transport. In families where the mother worked, the child would be often "dropped off" by the mother on the way to work and taken home either by mother or father. Some families used joint arrangements with friends and neighbours, sharing the use of the car or each providing transport on alternate days. Grandparents were also used to take children to and from care.

Transport arrangements were more complex in those families where more than one child was using care, as the hours or days for each child would not necessarily be the same. The arrangements were further complicated where children in a family used different care centres and in the families with children attending school. The time taken for the task of delivering children to and from care ranged from as little as 10 minutes to one hour and sometimes more. However, that time was in some instances "shared" in the sense that the child, or children, would be delivered to care on the parent's way to work, to do shopping, or to attend to other tasks.

Case C:

Two parent family with children aged 3½, 4½, 6 & 7½ years. The two eldest attend school, the third child attends a pre-school (9-3) 2 days per week and is cared for by grandparents 3 days per week. The youngest child is cared for by the same grandparents 5 days a week. The mother works "on call" one night a week and one weekend in four, at a hospital. She also works casual work as a medical technologist and at the time of interview had worked for 20 weeks, 4 hours a day, 5 days a week either 9.30am - 1.30pm or 10am - 2pm.

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* It was impossible to do so with any precision because of the degree of variations among the families and/or variations within one family from one day to another.

On 3 days her parents who live some distance away, either come to her house to mind the children, or she drives them to a rendezvous point (½ way between her house and theirs) and her father meets her there and the children go with him. (This is reversed in the afternoon). On one of the two pre-school days, she drops one child at pre-school and the other to her parents. She shares the pre-school drive with a neighbour who, on the other pre-school day, takes the child with her.

Case D:

Two parent family with three children aged 2½, 5 & 7 years. The father works 4 or 5 days per week, 12-14 hours per day as a self-employed owner-driver. The mother works 5 days per week, 3 hours each morning from 8am - 11am. The youngest child is cared for by the grandparents. The 5 year old child attends a private pre-school with extended hours one day per week and on the other days is cared for by the grandparents. The oldest child goes to school.

Each morning the two eldest children go to a neighbour. From there the elder goes to school on the bus and the other is taken to pre-school by the neighbour. The mother drops the youngest child at the grandparent's home before going to work. In the afternoons, the mother picks up the youngest child on the way home from work. At 3pm, she collects her other child and the neighbour's children from pre-school and she is home when the eldest child returns from school.

2. Continuity of Care Arrangements

In determining the continuity of care arrangements in a family, we obtained information on past as well as current care arrangements in the family. For the purpose of analysis, continuity or change in care arrangements referred to both formal and informal care and a change in the arrangements was taken to mean any change in the form of care, e.g. pre-school to long day care. Change in the place, e.g. one pre-school to another, or a change in the pattern of attendance, e.g. from 3 days to 5 days was not counted as a change. Thus the actual changes of place and attendance pattern of children in a family might be considered to have been underestimated.

(1) Past Care Arrangements

In our sample, the care arrangements at the time of interviews were first-time arrangements in only 25 families (16% of the sample). Another 26 families (16.7%) had the same arrangements as in the past with regard to the type, or types, of care used; 39 families (25.0%) had partly different arrangements from those in the past; and the largest group (66 families, or 42.3%) had totally different arrangements from those used in the past (Table 3.1).

The frequency of changed arrangements was higher in the families with employed mothers and higher still in one-parent families, especially where the parent was employed. As would be expected, the frequency of change rose with the number of children in the family. As well, it tended to be higher in the high status areas than in the lower status areas, and higher in the two inner city suburbs than in the three outer suburbs. These differences were not extremely marked but showed a consistent trend in the directions mentioned.

In individual families, the reasons for changes in care arrangements were diverse and we have not attempted to quantify or classify them. However, certain reasons appeared to be quoted more frequently than others. The mobility of the family was one such reason; as noted in the previous chapter, the families in our sample were more mobile geographically than the average mobility of the population, especially the families in the two inner city suburbs. It was also in those two suburbs that mothers' participation in the labour force was high and so was the extent of care arrangements. Another factor in changing arrangements was the suitability of a particular type of care for a child; parents often changed care arrangements when they found that the type of care used was not meeting the child's needs. Additions to the family was another cause of changing arrangements, and mother's changing employment or hours of work was also a factor.

Any one or more of these reasons would lead to a change of care arrangements over the early period of child rearing in a family. The four case studies which follow here illustrate such changes, especially the effects of moving locality, the birth of another child, the difficulty of reconciling a changing employment pattern with a stable child care arrangement, and maintaining a place for a child in care when mother leaves workforce.

Case E:

Two parent family, three children aged 4, 6 & 10 years. Mother works Monday to Friday 9am - 2pm and every second Saturday, as shop assistant. At the time of interview, father was not working because of an accident.

When the eldest child was two years old, the mother went back to work to save for a deposit on a home. Mother was away from home from 7am - 4pm and child was cared for in a private long day care centre located in a private house. Mother felt the quality of care had been poor.

The family moved house and mother went back to work part-time when the second child was two years old. The child was minded by the mother's sister. When the third child was 6 months old mother went back to work full-time to supplement family income. The two youngest children were then minded by a neighbour for $20.00 per week and they stayed in this arrangement until the youngest child was two years. The neighbour also minded 5 other children under one year and one child under four years. The parents had placed their childrens' names on a centre waiting list and after nine months were given a place for both children. They preferred a centre as they felt the minding situation was unsafe, with too many children. They now feel the centre has benefitted their children socially and developmentally and that the staff really care ("it's not just minding").

Case F:

Two parent family with two children aged 2½ and 5 years. The father works 12 hours per day, 6 days per week; mother is not in the paid workforce.

Both children have a number of regular care arrangements. The elder child uses full day pre-school 3 days per week, is cared for by a babysitter 4 hours per week during the day and one evening per week. He is also cared for every Saturday morning by the grandfather and once a month by the grandmother. The younger child attends a toddler group at a sessional pre-school and occasional care once per week and like his brother is cared for by a babysitter at least twice a week and by grandmother and grandfather.

The elder child, now 5 years old, has used occasional care, 3 hours every week, from the time he was one. The centre was used so that the mother could shop without the baby. When he was 3 years old, the child attended a pre-school. However, the mother felt unhappy about what she considered to be the aggression of other children and consequently placed him in another pre-school which he attended for 3 sessions per week. The mother had another baby that year and

found it difficult to co-ordinate pre-school finishing and starting times with the baby's sleep periods — in order to pick the child up after a morning session she would have to get the baby up from his sleep. Sometimes the mother left the baby at home and would "dash" to the pre-school to collect the other child. The elder child now goes to a full day pre-school, which the mother likes less than the other centre but finds full day care easier. The child also goes to the occasional care centre in pre-school holidays.

The younger child, now 2½ years old, has been going to the occasional care centre since he was 6 weeks old. At the time of interview, he was attending 3 hours one morning per week. He also goes to a toddlers' group for 2½ hours per week at the sessional pre-school his brother had attended. He is booked into that sessional pre-school for the year he turns 4, but will go to the full day pre-school in the interim (while he is 3 years of age).

This mother was considering sharing a babysitter with another family. That babysitter would look after all the children, possibly 2 days per week. The mother may use her for the younger child 2 days per week in addition to full day pre-school till he turns 3, or she may use her all year and then send the child to sessional pre-school when he is 4. The mother commented that, in terms of her child care arrangements, she wanted to keep her options open.

Case G:

Single parent (divorced) family with one child aged 3¾ years. Mother works 9am-5pm Monday to Friday. Child attends a community-based long day care centre full time.

This mother worked until 5 weeks before the baby's birth and resumed work 11 weeks after. At that time she started working at a restaurant (several kilometres from home) on Saturday evenings. The baby was cared for during the weekend by the grandmother who lived close to the restaurant. After 5 months the mother resumed work on a temporary/casual basis where she had been employed prior to the baby's birth. At this time the mother and baby moved to the grandmother's home and at the same time her employer also moved, so trips to work still involved travelling several kilometres each way. The baby was now cared for by the grandmother. The mother went on to benefits for a while but again started work when the company moved to the city. The family found a place in a local child care centre and the baby attended, at first, 2 days per week, then 3, then full-time.

Case H:

Two parent family with two children aged 3 months and 3½ years. Father works 9am - 5pm five days per week and mother was not in the workforce at the time of interview. The elder child was using a private long day care centre one day per week.

Mother had been working as a specialist nurse until she had the second child. She had worked 2.30pm - 11.30pm because of child care problems — the daytime hours of centres did not correspond with work hours and she had found it very difficult to find a centre that would take very young children (under 2's). When she did find a centre, she would take the child there and her husband would collect her in the afternoons. When mother had the second child, she decided to leave the elder one at the centre, but reduce the number of days attended. She felt this was best for the child, who would have continuity and something that she was used to.

Mother has usually worked evenings (mainly weekends) since the first child was 10 months old. At that time she worked night duty on weekends and used a hospital creche on Mondays so she could sleep. Her husband would take the child to the centre and she would collect her.

In a family with more than one child, changes in care arrangements may involve change for each child, or for one child but not the other child, or children. We have not quantified changes for the children in the sample with complete precision of identifying each change or modification in care arrangement for each child, but we have calculated that of the 206 children who used formal care at the time the interviews were held, 55 per cent of the children under the age of three years and 58 per cent of those over 3 years of age had experienced changing care arrangements, either in formal care or informal care, or in both.

(2) Process of Arranging Care

The process of arranging care involves, first, obtaining information about care services available in the area accessible to the family, and then securing a place for the child, or children. Given the limited availability of care services in most areas, and the range of the types of care, each with its limitations with regard to the hours of operation, programmes, the number of places available for children in various age groups, and cost, the process of arranging care is far from simple — in most cases.

(a) Sources of Information

The families in our sample reported a variety of methods used in arranging care which they were using at the time the interviews were held. The most frequent method was obtaining information through the informal network of friends, neighbours or relatives; over one-third of the families (60, or 38.5%) reported this as their source of information about the availability of services. "Phoning around", using telephone directory or information obtained from the local government office, or local knowledge (e.g. noticing a centre in the area) was the second most frequently used method (17 families, or 10.9%, each). Other sources of information included parents' previous personal involvement in child care (14 families, or 9.0%) and consulting welfare agencies, health clinics, social workers or local community information centres (11 families, or 7.0%). The other families in the sample had used more than one source of information (18, or 11.5%), or were not clear about the means they had used.

(b) Choice in Formal Care Arrangements

The question on choice in arranging care was concerned with the choice in the services available, and the types of services available to the parents but not with the choice about days or hours of care. However, it is possible that some parents included the latter in their responses. The choice concerning the cost of care was, however, clearly excluded in recording parents' responses.

With regard to formal care arrangements at the time of interviews, 36 families (23.1%) reported that they had investigated the availability and/or suitability of formal care and had some choice in deciding on their care arrangements. The largest group of families (62, or 39.7%) reported that they had no choice; another 16 families (10.3%) had either partial choice — e.g. with regard to one child but not to another; the remaining 42 families (26.9%) had not looked for choice but had arranged the type or types of care that they found to be available (Table 3.2).

The differences in the extent of choice reported by the various groups of families that were identified in the analysis of responses showed certain trends rather than distinct disparities. There were some differences in the degree of reported choice between one-parent and two-parent families, the former reporting a lower frequency of choice, especially where the parent was working. Some differences were also noted between the families with one child

and those with more than one child. With regard to areas, the frequency of "no choice" was found to be higher in the two inner city suburbs (East(H) and East(M)) than in the other three areas. Over a quarter of families in the sample (42, or 26.9%) stated that they had not looked for choice, and this was a more frequent case in one-parent than in two-parent families.

Thus, while the identified differences were consistent with the trends and differences identified earlier with regard to the other aspects of care (e.g. extent of care) and certain family characteristics, the data also indicated the individual nature of problems encountered by parents in arranging care, determined by the circumstances of time, place, and the activities of the family with which child care arrangements had to be co-ordinated. In essence, there were two issues concerning the choice in arranging care: one, whether a family had <u>any</u> options in obtaining care (Table 3.2); and, second, whether the parents were able to obtain care in terms of hours and/or days they wanted (or needed), or considered suitable for themselves and/or for their child, or children.

The first two cases give examples of the problems of just finding <u>a place</u> in care. The third case gives an example of limitations in the choice of hours and days of care; the fourth, the problems of finding care in one place for more than one child; and the fifth case illustrates the problems of arranging care for more than one child in a family, where one child is under the age of three years.

<u>Case I</u>:
Two parent family with two children aged 5 & 10 years, living on a new housing estate. They have been there 2 years. Father works 8am - 5pm 5 days a week as a storeman and the mother works on the weekends as a store manager. Joint weekly family income is $280. The elder child attends school and the younger attends a mobile pre-school, 2 days per week, 9.30am - 2pm.

The child attends the mobile pre-school as it was the closest. When the child was enrolled the mother didn't have a car, so there was no choice. To travel by bus to and from the closest pre-school in a neighbouring suburb would have taken all morning.

The mother sent her younger child to pre-school as the elder child had found it hard to settle into school and she had wanted to avoid those problems. However, it has been difficult to pay what the family consider high pre-school

fees, especially at the time when the parents were unemployed. However, as noted above, there was no choice in services.

The pre-school fees are $9.00 for 2 days. In addition, the mother supplies lunch and pays $6 per term for orange juice. The family had problems with the fees when they were on unemployment benefits, even though the pre-school gave a reduction of $2 per day. Although they had severe financial problems, the family did not think of taking the child away from pre-school, as the child really needed to be with other children.

The mother is annoyed that there was no choice in services, at least for families who have no transport — "you take what you can get — the government know you have no choice". The government/Education Department pre-school is free (they ask for a donation) but "has a long waiting list and if you've just moved into the area you have no chance of a place".

Case J:

Two parent family with two children aged 4 years and 9 years. Father works a 69 hour week, Monday to Friday. Mother works 9.15am - 3.15pm as occupational therapist. Younger child uses a private long day care centre five days a week.

At her first job in Sydney, both parents worked together and mother was able to take the elder child to work with her. That was the best way for her of getting back to the workforce. Only when mother started working in a different place, did she need care. At that time she would have chosen a centre other than the one she did but others in the area did not have suitable hours or vacancies. The elder child used the long day care centre the younger one now attends, 2-3 days per week.

The family then went to England and while father was studying, mother worked to support the family. The younger child, then 11-12 months old, went to a centre one day per week and used a babysitter 2 days per week.

When the family returned to Australia, the younger child was 2¼ years old. Mother needed to go back to work to pay off debts in England. They put his name on the waiting list at the centre his sister had attended. While waiting for a place they interviewed 2 family day carers who, they felt, were unsuitable. They then advertised privately for a minder but that was

unsuccessful. A friend of the family who also had one child under school age offered to mind the younger child. Although the family knew she was returning home (overseas) the mother agreed as there were no other options. When the child turned 2½ years old, he was able to go to kindergarten. In order to "wean" him from the minder, the mother sent him to kindergarten (long day care centre) 2 days and used a babysitter 2 days. When he was 3 years, the babysitter left for overseas and the child went to the centre 4 days and later 5 days when they had the vacancy for the extra day.

At the request of her employer, the mother had gradually been increasing her work days. Her employer had stated that it wouldn't make any difference if she didn't work extra days, but the mother felt her job might be threatened if she didn't.

The mother finds the organisation of her day difficult. She drops the elder child at school at 9am and the younger one at kindergarten shortly after, before arriving at work. She is always late for work because of the need to organise and deliver the children. She leaves work at 3.30 (she is supposed to start at 9.15 am and finish at 3.15 pm) and she collects the younger child on her way home. The elder child makes her own way home from school.

The mother used to collect the elder child from school, but as she was always late, the child was 'hanging around' the school waiting for her. At one stage, the child would make her own way home but go to a neighbour's home for care. However the mother didn't like taking favours from neighbours, so she gave the child the front door key to let herself in. The mother didn't like giving her the key but felt it was safer than her waiting at school. She would be happier if she could work 15-30 minutes less but thinks she wouldn't do justice to the job, which she feels ought to be classified as full-time.

Case K:

Two parent family, three children aged 3, 9 & 11 years. Mother works 4 days per week helping husband in real estate business. She works from 9am - 3pm. Family income is about $300 per week.

Mother works 9am - 3pm because the pre-school (the only place she was able to find for the youngest child) she uses for care closes at 3pm. Child attends for 2 days because that is all that was available. The other two days the child's grandmother looks after him. The mother wanted the child

to start at pre-school one day per week and then increase it to four days in order that the child would get used to it, but she had to take the two days as the only option available.

Case L:

Two parent family, three children aged 1½, 3 and 4½ years. Mother works as part-time clerical assistant two days per week and studies as well; father is a lecturer. Family income is $600 per week.

The three children use a neighbourhood children's centre and in addition are cared for by relatives and friends and the family uses a babysitting club.

The mother felt she needed to work both from a financial and personal point of view and therefore needed care for all three children. She did not like the idea of family day care as she felt the three children would not fit easily into one family, yet she did not want to separate them. Mother contacted 20-30 centres trying to find a place for all three children and eventually found one centre located about 8 kilometres from home. Mother drives the children to the centre, then takes the car a part of the way back and catches a bus to work. This is reversed in the afternoon. Her total travel time from home to child care centre to work and return takes 4½ hours each day.

Case M:

Two parent family with two children, aged 3 years and 18 months. Father works rotating shifts and mother works in the city (they live on the outskirts of Sydney), Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm. The older child attends a private long day care centre, 7am - 5.30/5.45pm, 5 days per week and the younger child is cared for by a babysitter. The exact hours of care for each child, particularly the younger one depends whether the husband is working day or evening shift.

Mother returned to work when the first child was 4 months old. The child, was cared for by a grandmother for 6 months, but she fell ill so he was then cared for by a friend of the family. This arrangement remained for 12 months until mother fell pregnant again and she left work, not planning to return. However, 6 months after the second child was born, the family had financial difficulties so mother returned to work, part-time, 9am - 5pm, 3 days per week. She did not have anyone to mind the children so she approached the local family day care scheme.

One carer they interviewed had a baby the same age as their younger child. However, the parents were not keen on her nor she on them. They accepted a second carer, but one child did not like the care situation — the child used to cry and would come home dirty, etc. At that stage, mother was thinking about working full-time so decided to advertise for a minder in the local paper. A suitable minder was found and the younger child has been with her for about 9 months.

While mother worked part-time, the elder child attended a sessional pre-school for a short time. Knowing she would be resuming full-time work, she tried to find a place in a kindergarten which had longer hours. The parents found the private centre the child is now attending through advertisements in the local paper. The parents pay $80 per week for child care from their net family income of $450: they receive no subsidy as both children are in private care situations.

3. Need for Child Care

(1) Reasons for Using Care

The reasons given by parents for using child care were diverse, and parents often gave more than one reason. The reasons were not exclusive of one another, and while some parents saw their needs for child care in terms of a single need or purpose, the majority saw their needs in a broader perspective. Child care was used to enable the mother to be employed; to give the mother time for attending to family-related tasks, such as shopping, housework, or more attention to the other child, or children, in the family; to make the mother's life easier and/or to follow certain interests; and to meet the child's needs (Tables 3.3(a) and (b)).

Parent-centred reasons for using child care were as important as child-centred reasons. Two-thirds of the families in the sample (66.0%) stated that they used child care arrangements, and particularly formal care, to meet the child' needs, and close to one-half (46.2%) mentioned the reason for using care as enabling the mother to be employed. The mother's personal reasons, such as the need to have a break from motherhood and/or to preserve her mental health, also figured prominently in the responses (27.6%). The time factor for mothers was important for meeting personal needs, relieve pressure and tension, and for attending to personal and/or family-related tasks.

There were substantial differences in the frequency of certain reasons given by the families in which mothers were employed and those where mothers were at home. The emphasis on mother's employment figured prominently among the responses from the former (76.7% of families). In families where mother was not employed, the child-centred reasons were the more frequently given (88.6% of families) than in families with employed mothers (47.7%). Similarly, the mother's personal reasons and family-related reasons were more often given in families where mother was not employed.

Such differences in the need for child care would be expected. However, other factors that we have analysed appeared to reinforce these differences. For example, child-centred reasons were given far more frequently by the families with more than one child than by those with only one child, and more frequently by the families with lower and middle incomes than by those with high incomes. While there was, no doubt, a relationship among the three factors — mother's employment, the number of children in the family and family income, with proportionately more mothers with only one child being employed and thereby contributing to family income — the emphasis on child-centred reasons for using care was significant in all families, and especially among those where mothers were not employed and therefore having more extensive contact with the child, or children.

If the responses or the reasons given by parents for using care are viewed together with the data analysed earlier in this report, e.g. on the extent of the use of care, there is a certain consistency which seems to indicate that, notwithstanding individual differences that may occur across the socio-economic strata, the need for, and the use of, child care was more parent-centred in the higher socio-economic families and more child-centred in the lower socio-economic families. The latter was indicated, for example, by the high frequency (92.9% of families) of child-centred reasons mentioned in the responses from the families in the West area of our sample (Table 3.3(b)).

The following case studies illustrate the various reasons for use of child care and how those reasons can change over time or even vary within the family. The first 2 case studies show use of care because of children's needs, the next 3 because of parent's needs, and the last 2 show use of care originally because of particular family needs.

Case N:

Two-parent family with two children aged 4 & 6 years. The elder child attends school and the younger goes to a full day pre-school 1 day per week. The family live on an isolated farmlet on the outskirts of the city.

The mother decided to send the elder child to pre-school when he was 4 years old. He was very attached to the mother, and he needed to be with other children and get an idea of what school would be like. The pre-school provided a social life for both mother and child.

The second child was sent to pre-school for a different reason. He was much more outgoing than the first child and needed entertaining. He was 3 years when he started pre-school.

Case O:

Two parent family with four children aged 2, 5, 7½ and 8½ years. The eldest two children go to school, the 5 year old goes to full-day pre-school 3 days per week and with the youngest child is cared for once a fortnight by a mother's help.

When the mother was pregnant with the second child she returned to work as a nurse, working night duty so she could sleep during the day. She continued this work after this child was born and after the third child was born. She worked for the money and a change in her lifestyle. The mother worked night duty (9pm - 7am) so as not to disrupt the family. She would sleep during the middle of the day and for a few hours more when her husband returned early from work. When each of the two eldest children was able to attend pre-school she would sleep for longer in the middle of the day.

She no longer works but uses pre-school for her third child — for a different reason, to give him added stimulation that he cannot get at home.

Case P:

Two parent family with two children aged 22 months and 4 years. Father works 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. Mother does not work. The elder child attends full day pre-school 2 days per week and occasional care once a week. The younger child goes to occasional care once a week with her brother.

The mother has been using the occasional care centre for the last 18 months. She needed time to shop and have time on her own. She also feels that the centre has been good for her elder child, as it has prepared him for kindergarten. She was looking for something that would give him the company of other children and some activities (play dough, threading beads, etc.). The occasional care centre provided this. He still goes to the centre as he has friends who go on the same afternoon.

While the children are at occasional care the mother shops or, once a fortnight, does voluntary work with Meals on Wheels.

Case Q:

Two parent family with two children aged 2 years and 3 months. The father works 9am - 5pm 5 days per week and the mother, previously an air hostess, has not worked since having the first child. Both children use occasional care for 3 hours every Friday, except where there are 5 Fridays in the month and then they use it for 2½ hours each Friday that month.

This mother uses occasional care for her sanity. She first became aware of the centre's existence when she saw it advertised in a baby health centre two years previously. However, at that stage she felt she could cope. Earlier in the year of interview she visited relatives interstate and found it helpful to have assistance in caring for the children. On her return to Sydney the mother thought she would like to use a child care centre that could provide the same sort of help. This was especially so as she was pregnant with the second baby and wanted the elder child to use a centre before the baby was born. At the time of interview the elder child had been using occasional care every Friday afternoon for 3 hours for the past 6 months. Until recently, the mother had been taking the baby shopping with her, but often she'd "lose" 1 hour because of needing to feed him, change him, etc. Therefore, for the last month the baby had been using occasional care as well. The mother felt she valued 3 hours alone "I want to be ...(name)... not mother for 3 hours of the week".

This mother felt the major problem with occasional care was that one could only use it 3 hours per week, a total of 12 hours per month. On the day of interview she had used it for an extra ½ hour which meant that she would have to restrict her hours next month. On the day of interview she had to decide whether to collect the children when the 3 hours had expired and take them back with her to finish the shopping or use the extra time and reduce hours next time. She chose the latter.

For this mother, occasional care played a family support role. She took all the caring responsibility for the children and was feeling particularly tired trying to care for the 2 year old as well as the new baby. The mother had had 3 weeks bed rest before the baby was born. When asked what it meant to her to be able to use a child care service, she replied "that place alone is heaven".

Case R:

Two parent family with two children aged 3½ and 5½ years. The father works as a shift manager of computer operators and has three different shifts. The mother does not work. Both children attend a sessional pre-school 3 mornings per week and go with their mother to a mothers' support group once a week.

The elder child has been going to the pre-school from the time she was 3 years old. She was 2 years old when they first moved into their present house. The mother felt, that, at that time, she was "virtually a child basher", caused by a number of changes to family circumstances — she had become pregnant with second child and was totally bedridden, had moved house and had lived elsewhere for 5 weeks "between houses" and had an aunt visiting which disrupted family routine.

At the time of moving into the new home, the mother and child were causing each other a lot of problems. The clinic sister suggested they see a psychologist who recommended that the child go to a pre-school. The Department of Youth & Community Services gave the mother a list of pre-schools in her area. She rang the pre-school now used and was placed on the waiting list. They explained they could not accept the child till she was 3 years old and advised her to put her name on their waiting list and not to check with other centres. The mother followed this advice. The child was given a place just after she turned 3 years.

The mother feels the child has benefitted from pre-school attendance. The child will now mix with people, although she rarely goes out of the house. She is not as possessive of her mother as before and now can cope with other children — previously, the child had to be given warning that children were coming to visit. The child is now 5½ years old and still has health problems — she is almost deaf in one ear and partly deaf in the other.

When asked what it meant to be able to use a child care service the mother replied, it "saved my sanity and saved Sarah's life".

Case S:

Two parent family with two children, aged 10 months and 2 years. Father works 9am - 5pm 4½ days per week, mother is not working. Elder child uses occasional care once a week and younger child uses occasional care once a fortnight. The mother also now uses her live-in housekeeper recently employed to look after the children occasionally.

The mother first needed help with child care when her husband was first ill and she had to visit him in hospital, preferably without the elder child who at the time was one month old. After several inquiries about child care services the mother found the local occasional care centre. The director offered her 3 hours per week, that is, 12 hours a month of care and this was at a time when, as the mother stated, she "really needed help" ...(name of centre)... "was no use at all". The mother did use occasional care but relied on a girlfriend to mind the baby while she visited the hospital. Both children now use occasional care, the elder child because his mother feels he needs the company of other children. Without the centre, the child would not be exposed to other children until he goes to kindergarten. The occasional care centre was used for care purposes when the father was in hospital a second time, but the mother found it difficult to use — it was time consuming to get children to and from the centre and to fit its use in with visiting hours.

Case T:

One parent family with two children aged 4 and 6 years. Mother does not work. The elder child attends a special school and the younger child attends a private full day pre-school, 3 days per week.

When the elder child, born with minimal brain damage, went to school, the teachers found his behaviour difficult to cope with and they requested that the mother spent time at the school supervising him. The younger child was placed in a pre-school centre, being unable to attend the school with her mother. Child care, initially used for a problem elsewhere in the family, was later continued to benefit the child concerned — it provided her respite from the family's need to care for her brother and it provided her with opportunities to mix with other children.

(2) Features of Care Sought by Parents

The reasons given by parents for using child care were reflected and amplified in their responses about the kind of features they looked for when they decided to use child care services. These responses were related mainly to formal care services, and they ranged over a wide number of aspects of care, such as the type of care, location, accessibility, hours of operation, and the character of carers (Table 3.4).

It needs to be noted that in their responses the parents in our sample referred to formal care. The emphasis on wanting to use, and seeking certain features of formal care was evident, irrespective of whether the mother in a family was employed or not, and also irrespective of the availability of informal care to the family. Parents felt that formal care services provided a more stimulating environment for their child, or children, than could be provided at home (this will be further evident later in this chapter in the data on the value of care, as perceived by parents).

The most frequently sought feature of care was its availability and accessibility (mentioned by 69.2% of families). This included specific types of care, hours of operation, and location of services. To some parents (21.2% of families) availability meant simply a place, irrespective of the type of care or hours of operation. Features of care programme or content related to the needs of the child, such as education, stimulation, companionship and promotion of independence, were mentioned by 60.3 per cent of families, and one-half of families responded in relation to the qualitative aspects of care, such as consistency, the character of carers, and the environment of care (e.g. cleanliness, good facilities and equipment) and its atmosphere. Rather surprisingly, only a small proportion of families (6.4%) mentioned low cost as a feature they looked for when they sought to find care for their children.

The availability and accessibility of care (specific type, location, hours of operation) as well as the qualitiative aspects of services, such as consistency of care and the character of carers, were mentioned more frequently by the families in which the mother was employed than by those where mother was not employed. Conversely, features of care related to the needs of the child, such as the content of programmes — education, stimulation, promotion of independence, etc. — were more frequently mentioned by the families with not employed mothers.

In relation to the other family characteristics, the families with more than one child and those in the middle-range incomes appeared to place more emphasis on the programme related to the child's needs. Availability of service and the cost were more frequently stated in the families with lower incomes. There were no consistent differences among the families in the five local government areas included in the study, except for the families in the North where the highest frequency of responses was given on all four features of care sought by parents. This seemed to reflect the extent of service provision in the area as it was also in the North that the highest percentage of families reported that they had some choice in arranging child care (Table 3.2).

(3) Use of Time by Mother when the Child is in Care

The question on the use of time by the mother when her child (or children) were in care brought a range of responses, covering a wide variety of activities. We have classifed these into work (employment), family-centred activities, personal pursuits, and community work (Table 3.5).

The most frequently mentioned activities (72.4% of families) were family centred, such as housework, shopping, and time spent with the other child, or children, in the family. The frequency of these responses was, rather surprisingly, much higher than the frequency of family-related reasons given for using care (6.4% - Table 3.3). Time at work was mentioned by 42.9 per cent of families, and mother's personal activities, such as social visits, sport and study, were mentioned by 37.2 per cent of families. Community work, which in most cases meant an involvement with child care services in a voluntary capacity, was mentioned by 11 families (7.1%).

As would be expected, time at work was the most frequently mentioned activity by the families in which mother was employed, but the other kinds of activity, especially the family-centred tasks, were also frequently mentioned. It is important to recall here that one-half of the 82 mothers in the sample who were employed worked part-time, or less than 35 hours a week, and 7 mothers worked shifts. This meant that many of these mothers used child care when they were not at work, using that time for family-centred or personal activities, or to sleep. Correspondingly, family-centred activities of some kind were mentioned by most families with not employed mothers, and personal pursuits were mentioned by over one-half of them (58.6%), compared with only 19.8 per cent of families in which the mother was employed. Involvement in

community work was also higher among the former, although, overall, active involvement in community work was mentioned rarely.

There was some apparent relationship between the frequency of various activities and family size, family income, and the area in which the family lived, but the indications were of a tendency or trend rather than of substantial differences. The differences were consistent with those previously noted, in that the activities of mothers in larger size families were more frequently family-centred in low and middle income families than in high income families. As for the five areas in the sample, there was a clear difference in the frequency of family-centred activities in the families living in the three outer suburbs and those in the two inner suburbs, the former recording much higher frequency of those activities — 75.6 per cent to 97.6 per cent, as against 46.9 per cent and 52.2 per cent (Table 3.5(b)).

4. Significance of Child Care in the Lives of Parents and Children

It must be evident from the data presented and analysed up to this point that child care services constituted an important element in the lives of families we have interviewed. Child care was used for the benefit of the child, the parents, and the family as a unit.

We attempted to ascertain the parents' perceptions of the significance that child care had for them by asking three open-ended questions: what value they saw in child care for themselves and their children; what changes or modifications they would like to see in the provision of services and their existing child care arrangements; and what they perceived as "ideal" child care services that would meet their and/or their children's needs as well as possible. The questions were open-ended so as to elicit subjective perceptions of parents rather than presenting them with options within a predetermined range, thus inducing responses in terms of needs as they may be perceived rather than in terms of existing types of services and their availability.

(1) Value of Child Care for Parents and Children

We attempted to gain an impression of the value of child care to parents and children by asking, "what does child care mean to you and to your child, or children?" By asking this open-ended question, we aimed to evoke a subjective

perception of parents of the role the provision of child care played in their and their children's lives. The responses we received were both related to concrete values, such as ability to be employed or to pursue certain tasks, and related to more abstract values such as freedom, mental health, and so on.

(a) Value of Child Care to Mothers

We have classified the responses received into four broad categories, consistent with the classifications we used in asking about the reasons for using care and about the use of time by mothers when the child was in care (Table 3.6). The most frequently given responses (85.9% of families) were related to the personal values to the mother, such as a break from motherhood, easier life, not being confined to the home, and freedom and independence. Ability to be employed was the second most frequently stated value (33.3% of families), and family-related values was the third (17.3% of families).

As would be expected, the ability to be employed was stated very frequently by the families with employed mothers, and the value of mother's employment was in terms of economic need or a continuation of a career, but in most responses it was simply stated as "the need to work". However, it was the personal values to the mother that were stated with high frequency by both the employed and the not employed mothers, the latter stating a value in that category more than twice as frequently as the former. Again, these responses were consistent with those recorded on the other aspects of child care discussed earlier, but it needs to be noted that while the most frequently mentioned activities engaged in by the mothers while their child, or children were in care were family-centred, the most frequently mentioned values of child care to them were personal.

Except for the differences in the frequency of responses related to certain values between the families with employed and not employed mothers, there were no discernible differences in relation to the size of the family, or the area. In relation to family income, the main difference was in that the families with high incomes mentioned the value of employment more frequently than the other families, and personal values were most frequently mentioned by low-income families. The frequency of the values of being able to work was consistent with the indication of participation rates of mothers in the five areas.

(b) Value of Care to the Child

We have classified parents' responses on their perceptions of the value of care to their children into five categories: emotional, developmental, socialisation, educational, and in terms of positive features of the services they used. The most frequently stated values (69.2% of families) were related to socialisation, and among these the most frequently mentioned was the company of, and interaction with, other children their children enjoyed. Responses related to emotional, developmental and educational values were almost equally distributed, each being mentioned by about 30 per cent of families.

There were no great differences in the responses of families with employed and not employed mothers, except that among the former more emphasis appeared to be given to the positive features of services. The professional approach of carers and the intellectual and social stimulation the children received were the most frequently mentioned among these. Overall, close to a quarter of the families mentioned the positive features of formal care as a value to their children.

Negative values, or effects, such as the child's confusion or anxiety, lack of discipline, or difficulties in relating to other children were very rarely mentioned.

In relation to the other factors analysed, socialisation for the child was a more frequently stated value among the families with one child than among the others, and families on the lower incomes gave more emphasis to the emotional values for the child. There did not appear to be any discernible differences among the families in the five LGAs included in the study.

(2) Desired Changes in Child Care Arrangements

The question on the changes that parents would have liked to see in the child care arrangements they had was asked in order to ascertain the extent to which, in the parents' view, their care arrangements were meeting their and/or their children's needs. The question was meant to refer to arrangements rather than services, but parents often replied, or appeared to reply, in terms of their own care arrangements in relation to formal services which they used.

The responses obtained suggest that the families in the sample fell into three broad groups. First, there were families who were satisfied with care, whatever their own care arrangements were, because they had experienced considerable problems in obtaining child care in the past. Second, there were the families in which parents wanted to see modifications in services so as to improve their existing care arrangements, or be able to make different arrangements altogether, for a variety of reasons. Third, there were families in which parents saw child care services as beneficial to their children but not necessarily essential to the functioning of the family; the parents in these families did not give much thought to any changes in child care services or their own arrangements.

In the majority of families (62.2%) parents wanted to see some modifications in their care arrangements. There was no difference in the frequency of that response between two-parent and one-parent families, or between the families with employed and not employed mothers. Neither was there much discernible difference among the families in the five local government areas covered by the study. However, the wish for modification was expressed more frequently by parents in the families with more than one child, and especially in the families with both a child under the age of 3 years and a child at school. In the latter group, this was particularly the case in the families where the mother was employed. Furthermore, the families who had multiple care arrangements more frequently expressed the need for modification or change than those with only one care arrangement (Table 3.8).

The kinds of modifications most often mentioned (50.5% of families) were those leading to increased flexibility in care arrangements, particularly in formal care arrangements. There were many reasons given for wanting such changes, e.g.,

- the problems of trying to find and then maintain a stable and, if possible, a good quality place for the child.
- the problems encountered in putting together a "package" of care necessary to meet the family needs, no one particular service, or a type of service, being sufficient.
- the difficulties of managing care, especially if there was more than one child in the family; e.g. co-ordinating care and work arrangements which may be in different places, neither of which was near home.

— finding care for more than one child, especially if one child was under 3 years of age and another was at school.

— the need to have flexible care arrangements that could be adapted to changing family circumstances.

The common factor in most of the expressed need for flexibility was the changing needs of the family over a period of time, e.g. when a mother left the workforce, perhaps on a temporary basis but wanted to leave her child in a long day care centre so that the child would continue benefiting from that experience, but the need may then be for shorter hours of care.

The second most frequent wish for change or modification (38.1% of families) concerned the level of fees, and then the need for different facilities and/or programmes (21.6%). The need for better location of services and/or transport arrangements was expressed by a small number of families (7.2%). Some families (12.7%) expressed the need for totally or substantially different arrangements; the reasons for this were often directly related to the specific needs, or preferences, of the family and did not seem to have a common factor or pattern. Overall, the kind of changes or modifications wanted did not seem to be related to mother's position in the workforce, as the frequency of answers was quite similar in the families where mother was working and in those where mother was not working. In fact, the need for greater flexibility was more frequently expressed in the families where mother was not in the workforce.

(3) Parents' Perceptions of "Ideal" Care Arrangements

The question, "what would you see as 'ideal' care arrangements in your family" was open-ended; it was aimed to obtain some indication of the extent to which parents might have thought about child care beyond their existing child care arrangements and beyond the existing provision of services.

The question elicited a variety of responses, most of them referring to formal care. However, in a quarter of the families in the sample (40, or 25-6%) there was no response or parents said that they had "not thought about it". In 34 families (21.8%) parents stated they were satisfied with their child care arrangements. In the other 82 families, most responses referred to either a greater flexibility of care services (33 families, or 21.2%) or to a preferred form, or type, of care (50 families, or 32.1%). In the latter category, the responses were highly individualised, ranging from specifying one type of

preferred care (e.g. family day care, centre-based, etc.) to multiple forms of care, often both formal and informal (Table 3.9). The issue of cost was mentioned in 20 families (12.8%) and the other issues such as location and facilities were mentioned relatively rarely. From the analysis of responses, both their kind and frequency, more thought to the possibility of "ideal" child care services (and, by inference, more thought about child care) appeared to be present in:

(i) families in which the mother was employed;
(ii) families in the higher socio-economic areas;
(iii) families with more than 2 children.

TABLE 3.1: CONTINUITY OF CARE : PAST CARE ARRANGEMENTS: FAMILIES*

Family Characteristics	Families in Sample N	Past Care Arrangements							
		Totally Different from present		As present + some changes		Same as present		No past arrangements	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
All Families	156	66	42.3	39	25.0	26	16.7	25	16.0
Two parent	126	50	39.7	35	27.8	20	15.9	21	16.7
One parent	30	16	53.3	4	13.3	6	20.0	4	13.3
Mother's Employment									
Mother employed	86	41	55.4	23	26.7	9	10.5	13	15.1
Mother not employed	70	25	35.7	16	22.9	17	24.3	12	17.1
Children in Family									
One	36	14	38.9	6	16.7	10	27.8	6	16.7
Two	71	29	40.8	18	25.4	7	9.9	17	23.9
Three or more	49	23	46.9	15	30.6	9	18.4	2	4.1
Families Living in									
North	26	11	42.3	10	38.5	4	15.4	1	3.8
East (H)	32	18	56.2	5	15.6	6	18.8	3	9.4
East (M)	23	10	43.5	5	21.7	4	17.4	4	17.4
South	33	13	39.4	5	15.2	10	30.3	5	15.2
West	42	14	33.3	14	33.3	2	4.8	12	28.6

* Data on both formal and informal arrangements. "Past care arrangement" means all regular arrangements used in the family since child(ren) were born.

TABLE 3.2: AVAILABLE CHOICES IN CURRENT CARE ARRANGEMENTS*

Family Characteristics	Families in Sample N	Choices available when arranging care							
		Had choice		Had no choice		Had some choice or indetermined (1)		Did not look for choice	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
All Families	156	36	23.1	62	39.7	16	10.3	42	26.9
Two Parent	126	31	24.6	50	39.7	14	11.1	31	24.6
One Parent	30	5	16.7	12	40.0	2	6.7	11	36.7
Mother's Employment									
Mother employed	86	18	20.9	41	47.7	8	9.3	19	22.1
Mother not employed	70	18	25.7	21	30.0	8	11.4	23	32.9
Children in Family									
One	36	9	25.0	15	41.7	2	5.6	10	27.8
Two	71	20	39.7	25	35.2	5	7.0	21	29.6
Three or more	49	7	14.3	22	44.9	9	18.4	11	22.4
Families Living in									
North	26	8	30.8	9	34.6	1	3.8	8	30.8
East (H)	32	4	12.5	13	40.6	6	18.8	9	28.1
East (M)	23	5	21.7	14	60.9	1	4.3	3	13.0
South	33	9	27.3	12	36.4	6	18.2	6	18.2
West	42	10	23.8	14	33.3	2	4.8	16	38.1

* Data on formal arrangements only.

(1) "Had some choice" refers to families where a choice might have been for one child but not for the other(s). "Indetermined" refers to responses which were not definite.

TABLE 3.3: REASONS FOR USING CHILD CARE: FAMILIES*

(a) Reasons and Mother's Employment

Reasons given by Parents	All Families			Mother employed			Mother not employed		
	Responses N	Responses %	Families %	Responses N	Responses %	Families %	Responses N	Responses %	Families %
To enable Mother to Work	72	29.5	46.2	66	50.4	76.7	6	5.3	8.6
Reasons for work unspecified	48			43			5		
For economic reasons	16			15			1		
To further career	5			5			-		
To have outside interest	3			3			-		
To give Mother time for Family	10	4.1	6.4	1	0.8	1.2	9	8.0	12.9
For domestic tasks(housework, shopping)	6			1			5		
For time with other children	4			-			4		
For Mother's Personal Reasons	43	17.6	27.6	16	12.2	18.6	27	23.9	38.6
To have a break from motherhood	22			7			15		
To preserve mental health	15			7			8		
To study	6			2			4		
To meet the child's needs	103	42.2	66.0	41	31.3	47.7	62	54.9	88.6
For companionship	37			16			21		
For stimulation/ development	23			11			12		
For socialization/ independence	18			6			12		
For preparation for school	16			5			11		
For special attention (eg handicapped child)	9			3			6		
Other Reasons	11	4.5	7.1	4	3.1	4.7	7	6.2	10.0
No Response	5	2.0	3.2	3	2.3	3.5	2	1.8	2.9
Total Responses	244	(100)	-	131	(100)	-	113	(100)	-
Total Families	156	-	(100)	86	-	(100)	70	-	(100)

* Multiple responses: the percentages for families are higher than those for responses, as a person may have stated more than one reason.

TABLE 3.3: REASONS FOR USING CHILD CARE: FAMILIES*

(b) Summary of Family Characteristics

Family Characteristics and (N) in Sample	Reasons as stated by parents/mother (Aggregate of Responses)*									
	To Work		Time for Family		Personal		Child's Needs		Other and not stated	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
All Families (156)	72	46.2	10	6.4	43	27.6	103	66.0	16	10.3
Mother's Employment										
Mother employed (86)	66	76.7	1	1.2	16	18.6	41	47.7	7	8.2
Mother not employed (70)	6	8.6	9	12.9	27	38.6	62	88.6	9	12.9
Children in Family										
One (36)	22	61.1	-	-	11	30.6	13	36.1	4	11.1
Two (71)	30	42.3	8	11.3	19	37.7	54	76.1	7	9.9
Three or more (49)	20	40.8	2	4.1	13	26.5	36	73.5	5	10.2
Family Income p.w.										
Under $300 (30)	7	23.3	2	6.7	15	50.0	20	66.7	1	3.3
$300 - $600 (64)	28	43.8	1	1.6	15	23.4	53	82.8	4	6.3
Over $600 (43)	27	62.8	7	16.3	5	11.6	18	41.9	8	18.6
Not stated (19)	10	52.6	-	-	8	42.1	2	10.5	3	15.8
Families Living in										
North (26)	13	50.0	2	7.7	7	26.9	13	50.0	2	7.7
East (H) (32)	15	46.9	5	15.6	5	15.6	22	68.8	7	21.9
East (M) (23)	14	60.9	-	-	7	30.4	14	60.9	2	8.7
South (33)	16	48.5	2	6.1	9	27.3	15	45.5	4	12.1
West (42)	14	33.3	1	2.4	15	35.7	39	92.9	1	2.4

* The percentages refer to families in each group: total percentages amount to more than 100 as more than one reason has been by some respondents.

TABLE 3.4: FEATURES OF CARE SOUGHT BY PARENTS WHEN ARRANGING CARE FOR THEIR CHILD(REN)

(a) Features of Care Sought & Mother's Employment

Features Sought	All Families			Mother Employed			Mother not employed		
	Responses N	Responses %	Families %	Responses N	Responses %	F* %	Responses N	Responses %	F* %
Programme Related to Child's Needs	94	31.0	60.3	47	27.0	54.7	47	36.4	67.1
Benefit to the child — (education, stimulation, company, promotion of independence, happiness)	70			30			40		
Capacity to meet special needs — (child under 3 years, 2/3 children together, child with difficulties/handicap)	24			17			7		
Qualitative Aspects	77	25.4	49.4	49	28.2	57.0	28	21.7	40.0
Quality & Consistency — (reputable, good, well run, reliable, trustworthy, stable)									
Character of Carers — (loving, kind, motherly, understanding, good with/ attentive to children)	30			19			11		
Environment — (clean, safe, pleasant, good families/equipment)	13			8			5		
Atmosphere — (homely, warm, informal)	11			3			8		
Availability/Accessibility	108	35.6	69.2	64	36.8	74.4	44	34.1	62.9
Specific Type — (centre-based, home-based, pre-school, family day care)	37			21			16		
Hours of Operation — (long hours, flexible, irregular, weekend,evening)	22			17			5		
Location — (close, convenient)	16			7			9		
Anything — a place —	33			19			14		
Cost — cheap, subsidised	10	3.3	6.4	7	4.0	8.1	3	2.3	4.3
Other features — (trained staff, hot meals, discretion, staff ratio)	13	4.3	8.3	7	4.0	8.1	6	4.7	8.6
No Response/not stated	1	0.3	0.6	-	-	-	1	0.8	1.4
Total Responses	303	(100)	-	174	(100)	-	129	(100)	-
Total Families	156	-	(100)	86	-	(100)	70	-	(100)

* denotes families.

TABLE 3.4: FEATURES OF CARE SOUGHT BY PARENTS WHEN ARRANGING CARE: A SUMMARY

(b) Summary of Family Characteristics

Family Characteristics and (N) in Sample		Features Sought (Aggregates of Responses)*									
		Programme to meet child's needs		Qualitative Aspects		Availability/ Accessibility		Cost		Other Features	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
All Families	(156)	94	60.3	77	49.4	108	69.2	10	6.4	14	8.9
Mother's Employment											
Mother employed	(86)	47	54.7	49	57.0	64	74.4	7	8.1	7	8.1
Mother not employed	(70)	47	67.1	28	40.0	44	62.9	3	4.3	7	10.0
Children in Family											
One	(36)	15	41.7	19	52.8	30	83.3	1	2.8	5	13.9
Two	(71)	50	70.4	35	49.3	47	66.2	4	5.6	5	7.0
Three or more	(49)	29	59.2	23	46.9	31	63.3	5	10.2	4	8.2
Family Income p.w.											
Under $300	(30)	16	53.3	8	26.7	24	80.0	3	10.0	4	13.3
$300 to $600	(64)	44	68.8	36	56.3	39	60.9	6	9.4	3	4.7
Over $600	(43)	24	55.8	26	60.5	27	62.8	-	-	7	16.3
Not stated	(19)	10	52.6	7	36.8	18	94.7	1	5.3	-	-
Families Living in											
North	(26)	17	65.4	18	69.2	23	88.5	5	19.2	2	7.7
East (H)	(32)	20	62.5	15	46.9	19	59.4	1	3.1	6	18.8
East (M)	(23)	15	65.2	13	56.5	15	65.2	1	4.3	2	8.7
South	(33)	21	63.6	13	39.4	17	51.5	1	3.0	2	6.1
West	(42)	21	50.0	18	42.9	34	81.0	2	4.8	2	4.8

* Percentages refer to families in each group: total percentages for each group amount to more than 100 as more than one feature of care would be mentioned by a respondent.

TABLE 3.5: MOTHER'S USE OF TIME WHILE THE CHILD IS IN CARE

(a) Mother's Use of Time and Mother's Employment

Use of Time/ Activity*	All Families			Mother Employed			Mother not Employed		
	Responses N	Responses %	Families %	Responses N	Responses %	Families %	Responses N	Responses %	Families %
At Work	67	26.0	42.9	67	56.7	77.9	-	-	-
Family Centred	113	43.8	72.4	28	23.7	32.6	85	60.7	121.4
Housework	32			9			23		
Shopping	39			8			31		
Other Children	30			7			23		
Other Activities	12			4			8		
Personal	58	22.5	37.2	17	14.4	19.8	41	29.3	58.6
Social: -friends, relatives	10			3			7		
-sport	13			3			10		
-other social	7			-			7		
Study	11			5			6		
Sleep	3			1			2		
Other personal	14			5			9		
Community Work	11	4.3	7.1	3	2.5	3.5	8	5.7	11.4
Other Activities	3	1.2	1.9	2	1.7	2.3	1	0.7	1.4
Not Stated	6	2.3	3.8	1	0.8	1.2	5	3.6	7.1
Total Responses	258	(100)	-	118	(100)	-	140	(100)	-
" Families	156	0	(100)	86	-	(100)	70	-	(100)

* Multiple responses: the percentages for families are higher than those for responses, as a person may have stated more than one activity.

TABLE 3.5: MOTHER'S USE OF TIME WHILE THE CHILD IS IN CARE : A SUMMARY

(b) Summary of Family Characteristics

Family Characteristics		Use of Time/Activity (Aggregate of Responses) *									
		At Work		Family Centred		Personal		Community		Other or Not Stated	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
All Families	(156)	67	42.9	113	72.4	58	37.2	11	7.1	9	5.7
Mother's Employment											
Mother employed	(86)	67	77.9	28	32.6	17	19.8	3	3.5	3	3.5
Mother not "	(70)	-	-	85	121.4	41	58.6	8	11.4	6	8.6
Children in Family											
One	(36)	22	61.1	15	41.7	12	33.3	1	2.8	3	8.2
Two	(71)	25	35.2	56	78.9	32	45.1	7	9.9	4	5.6
Three or more	(49)	20	40.8	42	85.7	14	28.6	3	6.1	2	4.0
Family Income p.w.											
Under $300	(30)	8	26.7	24	80.0	15	50.0	3	10.0	2	6.6
$300 - $600	(64)	24	37.5	57	89.1	20	31.2	7	10.9	3	4.7
Over $600	(43)	26	60.5	18	41.9	16	37.2	1	2.3	2	4.6
Not stated	(19)	9	47.4	14	73.7	7	36.8	-	-	2	10.6
Families Living in											
North	(26)	9	34.6	20	76.9	13	50.0	1	3.8	1	3.8
East(H)	(32)	14	43.8	15	46.9	13	40.6	1	3.1	2	6.3
East(M)	(23)	14	60.9	12	52.2	6	26.1	1	4.3	1	4.3
South	(33)	15	45.5	25	75.6	11	33.3	2	6.1	3	9.1
West	(42)	15	35.7	41	97.6	15	35.7	6	14.3	2	4.8

* The percentages refer to families in each group: total percentages for each group amount to more than 100 as more than one activity has been mentioned by some respondents.

TABLE 3.6: VALUE OF CHILD CARE TO THE MOTHER*

(a) Value of Child Care and Mother's Employment

Value of Child Care	All Families			Mother Employed			Mother not Employed		
	Responses N	Responses %	Families %	Responses N	Responses %	Families %	Responses N	Responses %	Families %
Work/Employment	52	22.4	33.3	50	40.0	58.1	2	1.9	2.9
Mother can work:									
-economic need	7			7			-		
-continue career	4			4			-		
-unspecified	41			39			2		
Family	27	11.6	17.3	14	11.2	16.3	13	12.1	18.6
Mother can do her family tasks	8			4			4		
Mother can attend to other children	8			4			4		
Mother can be a better mother	2			1			1		
Community support ("couldn't cope otherwise")	9			5			4		
Personal	134	57.8	85.9	48	38.4	55.8	86	80.4	122.9
Break from motherhood	28			8			20		
Mental health, "sanity"	19			6			13		
Freedom/independence	21			9			12		
Can study	5			2			3		
Easier life, more time	40			13			27		
Can have social life	6			3			3		
Convenience, "luxury", "everything"	13			6			7		
Misses the child's company	2			1			1		
Other Values	7	3.0	4.5	6	4.8	7.0	1	0.9	1.4
Not stated	12	5.2	7.7	7	5.6	8.1	5	4.7	7.1
Total Responses	232	(100)	-	125	(100)	-	107	(100)	-
Total Families	156	-	(100)	86	-	(100)	70	-	(100)

* Multiple responses: the percentages for families are higher than those for the responses, as a person may have stated more than one value.

TABLE 3.6: VALUE/SIGNIFICANCE OF CHILD CARE TO MOTHER: A SUMMARY

(b) Summary of Family Characteristics

Family Characteristics and (N) in Sample		Value/Significance mentioned (Aggregate to Responses)*							
		Can Work		To Family		To Mother		Other and Not Stated	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
All Families	(156)	52	33.3	27	17.3	134	85.9	19	12.2
Mother's Employment									
Mother employed	(86)	50	58.1	14	16.3	48	55.8	13	15.1
Mother not employed	(70)	2	2.9	13	18.6	86	122.9	6	8.5
Children in Family									
One	(36)	19	52.8	7	19.4	35	97.2	3	8.3
Two	(71)	17	23.9	11	15.5	57	80.3	13	18.3
Three or more	(49)	16	32.7	9	18.4	42	85.7	3	6.1
Family Income p.w.									
Under $300	(30)	4	13.3	6	20.0	37	123.3	4	13.3
$300 - $600	(64)	18	28.1	9	14.1	52	81.3	7	10.9
over $600	(43)	24	55.8	6	14.0	28	65.1	5	11.6
Not stated	(19)	6	31.6	6	31.6	17	89.5	3	15.8
Families Living in									
North	(26)	12	46.2	9	34.6	25	96.2	3	11.5
East(H)	(32)	11	34.4	2	6.3	29	90.6	4	12.5
East(M)	(23)	11	47.8	5	21.7	20	87.0	1	4.3
South	(33)	9	27.3	6	18.2	22	66.7	9	27.3
West	(42)	9	21.4	5	11.9	38	90.5	2	4.8

* Percentages refer to families in each group: total percentages for each group amount to more than 100 as more than one value/significance would be mentioned by a respondent.

TABLE 3.7: VALUE/SIGNIFICANCE OF CARE TO THE CHILD (AS PERCEIVED BY PARENTS/MOTHER)

(a) Value/Significance of Care & Mother's Employment

Value/Significance of Care	All Families Responses N	All Families Responses %	All Families Families %	Mother Employed Responses N	Mother Employed Responses %	Mother Employed Families %	Mother not Employed Responses N	Mother not Employed Responses %	Mother not Employed Families %
Emotional	46	15.0	29.5	21	12.4	24.4	25	18.1	35.7
Break from mother	13			3			10		
Better relationship with mother/parents	7			2			5		
Happy in Care	19			12			7		
Confused, anxious, less happy	5			3			2		
Would rather be at home	2			1			1		
Developmental	47	15.3	30.1	23	13.6	26.7	24	17.4	34.3
More independent, confident	18			10			8		
Improved speech, conversation	8			4			4		
Improved intellectually, socially	21			9			12		
Socialization	108	35.2	69.2	62	36.7	72.1	46	33.3	65.7
Introduction to society	10			7			3		
Company, interaction with children	61			33			28		
Learning to share	2			-			2		
More disciplined	5			2			3		
Less disciplined	3			2			1		
Difficulty in relating to other children	1			1			-		
Overall socialization	26			17			9		
Educational	45	14.7	28.8	22	13.0	25.6	23	16.7	32.9
Good preparation for school	27			13			14		
Pre-reading, pre-writing	4			3			1		
Learning through play	14			6			8		
Positive Features of Services	37	12.1	23.7	26	15.4	30.2	11	8.0	15.7
Professional approach	10			9			1		
"Like an extended family"	2			2			-		
Intellectual, social stimulation	17			9			8		
"Good for children"	8			6			2		
Other	5	1.6	3.2	4	2.4	4.7	1	0.7	1.4
No Change/Effect	3	1.0	1.9	2	1.2	2.3	1	0.7	1.4
No Response/Not stated	16	5.2	10.3	9	5.3	12.2	7	5.1	10.0
Total Responses	307	(100)	-	169	(100)	-	138	(100)	-
Total Families	156	-	(100)	86	-	(100)	70	-	(100)

TABLE 3.7: VALUE/SIGNIFICANCE OF CARE TO THE CHILD (AS PERCEIVED BY PARENTS/MOTHER)

(b) Summary of Family Characteristics

Family Characteristics and (N) in Sample	Value/Significance mentioned (Aggregates of Responses)*											
	Emotional		Developmental		Socialization		Education		Teachers of Service		Other (No change) Not Stated	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
All Families (156)	46	29.5	47	30.1	108	69.2	45	28.8	37	23.7	24	16.4
Mother's Employment												
Mother employed (86)	21	24.4	23	26.7	62	72.1	22	25.6	26	30.2	15	19.2
Mother not " (70)	25	35.7	24	34.3	46	65.7	23	32.9	11	15.7	9	12.8
Children in Family												
One (36)	9	25.0	11	30.6	28	77.8	7	19.4	14	38.9	5	13.9
Two (71)	20	28.2	22	31.0	48	67.6	19	26.8	13	18.3	11	15.5
Three or more (49)	17	34.7	14	28.6	32	65.3	19	38.8	10	20.4	8	16.3
Family Income p.w.												
Under $300 (30)	13	43.3	8	26.7	19	63.3	10	33.3	8	26.7	3	10.0
$300 - $600 (64)	19	29.7	23	35.9	49	76.6	14	21.9	10	15.6	5	7.8
Over $600 (43)	10	23.3	10	23.3	33	76.7	13	30.2	19	44.2	3	7.0
Not Stated (19)	4	21.1	6	31.6	7	36.8	8	42.1	-	-	5	26.3
Families Living in												
North (26)	9	34.6	9	34.6	24	92.3	11	42.3	3	11.5	2	7.7
East(H) (32)	9	28.1	4	12.5	24	75.0	8	25.5	6	18.8	4	12.5
East(M) (23)	7	30.4	5	21.7	19	82.6	3	13.0	11	47.8	4	17.4
South (33)	5	15.2	11	33.3	15	45.5	4	12.1	10	30.3	11	33.3
West (42)	16	38.1	18	42.9	26	61.9	19	45.2	7	16.7	3	7.1

* Percentages refer to families in each group: total percentages for each group amount to more than 100 as more than one value/significance would be mentioned by a respondent.

TABLE 3.8: DESIRED CHANGES BY PARENTS IN CHILD CARE SERVICES/ ARRANGEMENTS

Family Characteristics	Sample			Mother employed			Mother not employed		
	In Sample N	Wanted Changes N	%	In Sample N	Wanted Changes N	%	In Sample N	Wanted Changes N	%
Family Type:									
All Families	156	97	62.2	86	55	64.0	70	42	60.0
Two-parent families	126	77	61.1	68	43	63.2	58	34	58.6
One-Parent families	30	20	66.7	18	12	66.7	12	8	66.7
Children under 12 years:									
One	36	20	55.6	25	12	48.0	11	8	72.7
Two	71	45	63.4	33	21	63.6	38	24	63.2
Three or more	49	32	65.3	28	22	78.6	21	10	47.6
Ages of Children:									
With child under 3 years	54	29	53.7	30	14	46.7	24	15	62.5
" school-age child	50	31	62.0	28	20	71.4	22	11	50.0
" both (above)	20	16	80.0	11	10	90.0	9	6	66.7
" neither (only 3-5 years)	32	21	65.6	17	11	64.7	15	10	66.7
Number of current care arrangements(1) :									
One	48	24	50.0	21	11	52.4	27	13	48.1
Two	33	22	66.7	19	11	57.9	14	11	78.6
Three	26	15	57.7	12	7	58.3	14	8	57.1
Four or more	48	36	75.0	34	26	72.2	14	10	71.4

Type of Changes Wanted:	% of families(2)	Changes wanted N	%	% of families(2)	Changes wanted N	%	% of families(2)	Changes wanted N	%
Totally different arrangements	12.7	12	9.5	14.5	8	11.0	9.5	4	7.5
More flexibility	50.5	49	38.9	45.4	25	34.2	57.1	24	45.3
Lower fees	38.1	37	29.4	40.0	22	30.1	35.7	15	28.3
Different programme/ facilities	21.6	21	16.7	23.6	13	17.8	19.0	8	15.1
Better location and/or travel	7.2	7	5.5	9.1	5	6.8	4.8	2	3.8
Total changes wanted	62.2	126	(100)	64.0	73	(100)	60.0	53	(100)

(1) One family with no care arrangements at the time of interview.
(2) % of families in the group wanting changes.

TABLE 3.9: "IDEAL" CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENT - AS PERCEIVED BY PARENTS*

Perceived "Ideal" Arrangement	All Families			Mother employed			Mother not employed		
	Responses N	Responses %	Families %	Responses N	Responses %	Families %	Responses N	Responses %	Families %
Flexibility of Care To be able to use care when needed; longer hours, flexible hours, hours to fit work hours	33	17.0	21.2	14	13.1	16.3	19	21.8	27.1
Preferred Form of Care Centre-based; family day care; care in own home; baby sitting; care for handicapped children; care for 0-3 year olds; occasional care; one care for all children; others	50	25.8	32.1	30	28.0	34.9	20	23.0	28.6
Features of Care Continuity; reliability; educational programmes; feedback; constancy	9	4.6	5.8	7	6.5	8.1	2	2.3	2.9
Facilities Safe care; better facilities; more attractive facilities;	4	2.1	2.6	3	2.8	3.5	1	1.1	1.4
Location/Travel Care close to home; pick-up system between school and centre	4	2.1	2.6	3	2.8	3.5	1	1.1	1.4
Cost Lower fees; not to pay when not using service; tax deductibility	20	10.3	12.8	12	11.2	14.0	8	9.2	11.4
Satisifed with Current Arrangements	34	17.5	21.8	16	15.0	18.6	18	20.7	25.7
No Response/"Not Thought about it"	40	20.6	25.6	22	20.6	25.6	18	20.7	25.7
Total Responses	194	(100)	-	107	(100)	-	87	(100)	-
Total Families	156	-	(100)	86	-	(100)	70	-	(100)

* Multiple responses: the total percentages for families amount to more than 100 as more than one response would have been given by some respondents.

CHAPTER 4

CHILD CARE SERVICES IN FIVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS : METHODS OF OPERATION, PATTERNS OF USE, AND PROVIDERS' PERCEPTIONS

In this chapter we present the data on the use of child care services in the same five Sydney LGAs from which we had drawn the sample of 156 families using those services. This information was obtained from the directors of centres and co-ordinators of schemes of the 49 services from which the sample of 156 families was drawn. The aim of collecting this information was first, to present the experience of the 156 families we interviewed in a wider context of child care usage; and, second, to examine the issues of child care from the perspective of the providers of services and thus provide a comparative framework for the analysis of data.

The data examined here consist of both statistics and directors' and co-ordinators' views, and relate to the profiles of families using the service; the pattern of children's attendance; the age composition of children; the directors' and co-ordinators' views and perceptions of children in their care and the children's parents; the demand for services; directors' and co-ordinators' methods of allocating priorities; the use of services by "special need" and handicapped children; and the relationship of child care services with other children's services.

To obtain this information, the directors and co-ordinators were asked to provide us with statistics on attendance for the week during which the interview took place or for a "typical" week. Not all centres and schemes in the sample provided this information, either because they did not have it or because they found it too time-consuming to extract it from their books. In some cases the statistics were approximations rather than exact numbers. For these reasons, the data need to be viewed as an illustration of the complexities involved in the provision of child care, not as a basis for precise statistical inferences. However, the examples given do indicate that the pattern of usage differed from one type of service to another and from one local government area to another. The differences appear to be related to three main factors: (1) the characteristic features of a given area, e.g. the socio-economic status, family composition, women's participation in the labour force and hours worked; (2) the constraints of the service type, such as

the hours of operation or the maximum number of children for which a service is licensed; and (3) the policy of the service and its director in allocating priorities.

As we have shown in Chapters 2 and 3, child care services were used by all kinds of families and for a variety of reasons. While the characteristics of the families and the reasons for using child care could be classified, the reasons did not always fit into neat, discrete categories; they were determined by the needs of parents as well as by the parents' perception of their children's needs. There may have been a range of needs for services in one family, especially in a family with more than one child. Thus parents sought to reconcile their needs by seeking a type of service which best fitted their range of needs. The result was often a compromise. The availability of an appropriate service was an important factor in their decision; often, parents had no choice and used the only service that was available to them.

By contrast, services were classified into certain types. Some centres provided only one type, others more than one type of service. The more types of service a centre provided the more complex were the problems of management, funding formulae, and various regulations the centre had to comply with in order to be allowed to operate. Thus the providers of child care services faced the problems of reconciling the constraints imposed by precise legal requirements and financial limitations with the usage of the service which was determined by "uncategorised" needs of parents and children. The more these needs varied and the service attempted to meet them, the more complex became the operation of the service.

Again, the experiences reported by the providers of child care in the 49 centres and schemes in our sample should not be regarded as necessarily applying to all children's services, but it may be reasonably assumed that they typify the broad range of experiences encountered by the providers of services in the provision and operation of child care at the time of the survey (1982).

1. Profiles of Families

Of the 49 services surveyed in our study, 32 services supplied us with the profiles of a total of 2178 families using these services. The data need to be interpreted with some qualifications, for three reasons. First, no information about families was received from the 17 other centres or schemes in our sample;* second, the quality of recording might have been somewhat variable among the services; and, third, although we asked for information relevant to the time of interviews (September-December 1982), some services might not have had complete, up-to-date information.

Response rates from the local government areas varied from 63 to 70 per cent. Representativeness according to service type was more variable, ranging from 12 out of 14, or 85.0 per cent, from full day pre-schools; to 3 out of 5, or 60.0 per cent, from family day care schemes. No data was obtained from occasional care centres. However, subject to these qualifications, the profiles of families do present certain distinct patterns with regard to the five local government areas as well as with regard to the service type used, thus allowing for some generalisations about the characteristics of families using formal child care services in those areas.

In many ways the characteristics of the 2178 families in this sample reflect the characteristics of the population in each of the five areas as recorded in the 1981 Census. This is especially noticeable with regard to the frequency of two-parent and one-parent families, families in which English was not the first language, and the extent of participation in the labour force by women (Tables 4.1(a), (b), (c)).

For example, East(H) shows a high percentage of one-parent families, corresponding to similar high percentage of separated or divorced persons in that area recorded in the 1981 Census. Similarly, East(H) and East(M) indicate higher proportion of families in which English was not the first language, again corresponding to the proportion of overseas-born, mainly middle-class persons, living in those areas (see Table 1.2). The participation rates in the labour force by women also reflect the data recorded in the 1981 Census, showing a positive relationship between the socio-economic status of each

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*This number (17) includes 6 occasional care centres from whom we did not ask for family profiles because of the "floating" nature of attendance at those centres.

area, as indicated by women's education and occupation, and participation rates in the labour force. As shown in Table 4.1(c), the high participation rates in the labour force by women, and especially by women 20 to 39 years, were recorded in the Census of 1981 in the same two inner city suburbs as in our sample of 156 families.

(1) Type of Care Used

The relationship between the characteristics of families and the type of service they used are clearly reflected in Table 4.1(a). The most noticeable distribution is evident between the use of pre-school and the other types of care. Family day care, long day care and neighbourhood children's centre show a higher frequency of use by one-parent families, families with employed mothers and to a certain extent the families in which English was not the first language than the families using full day care or sessional pre-school. However, the two categories of use are not mutually exclusive, and certain families with employed mothers were using pre-school, either full-day or sessional. It may be assumed, on the data we obtained from the 156 families, that the use of particular types of care was probably due not only to parents' preferences but also to their ability of reconciling their daily activities with the availability of a particular type of service. It will be seen later in this chapter that the priorities given by service providers to certain categories of families and/or children would also have been a factor.

(2) Use of Service Types in Five Areas

When the various types of service are related to the areas in which they were provided it is evident that the characteristics of families using the services are more closely related to the type of service rather than to the area (Table 4.1(c)). While there are some differences in usage between one area and another (thus reflecting the characteristics of the population in a given area) by and large, the families in which mother was employed, (this included one-parent families) used the services which provided extended hours of care and more flexible hours of care than the more rigid pre-schools. Nevertheless, pre-schools were also used quite extensively by mothers who worked either full-time or part-time. This was particularly evident in the areas where women's participation rates in the labour force were high (e.g. East(H) and East(M)).

TABLE 4.1: PROFILES OF FAMILIES USING CHILD CARE SERVICES

(a) Five Types of Service

Type of Service	Total in Sample		Family Day Care	Long Day Care	Neigh'hood Children's Centre	Full Day Care	Sessional Pre-School
No. of Centres/Schemes	32		3	8	3	12	6
No. of Families Using	2178		314	449	133	784	498
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%
Family Characteristics*							
Two-parent families	1926	88.4	80.3	82.2	78.9	92.2	95.8
One-parent families	252	11.6	19.7	17.8	21.1	7.8	4.2
Families where English is not the 1st language	174	8.0	14.6	12.9	8.3	6.4	1.8
Mother employed F/T or P/T	832	38.2	89.2	52.9	32.8	25.1	13.2
Children of school and pre-school age**	941	43.2	20.7	44.1	32.3	53.4	43.4
More than one child of pre-school age**	519	23.8	14.6	18.0	37.6	23.6	31.5
Families with a handicapped child	46	2.1	1.3	0.9	-	3.3	2.4
Children from outside municipality attending centre/scheme	135	6.2	8.3	6.9	6.0	6.1	4.4

* Categories are not mutually exclusive
**Includes children not attending centre/scheme

TABLE 4.1: PROFILES OF FAMILIES USING CHILD CARE SERVICES

(b) Five Local Government Areas

Local Government Area	Total in Sample		North	East(H)	East(M)	South	West
No. of Centres/Schemes	32		6	7	6	6	7
No. of Families Using	2178		506	381	297	412	582
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%
Family Characteristics*							
Two-parent families	1926	88.4	91.1	82.2	89.2	88.8	89.5
One-parent families	252	11.6	8.9	17.8	10.8	11.2	10.5
Families where English is not the 1st language	174	8.0	4.3	16.0	22.9	0.7	3.4
Mother employed F/T or P/T	832	38.2	36.8	48.1	51.1	47.3	28.1
Children of school and pre-school age**	942	43.2	36.6	43.0	53.5	27.2	55.2
More than one child of pre-school age**	519	23.8	17.6	10.5	16.5	21.1	43.6
Families with a handicapped child	46	2.1	4.0	1.3	2.4	1.0	1.7
Children from outside municipality attending centre/scheme	135	6.2	4.9	15.5	6.1	3.4	3.3

* Categories are not mutually exclusive
** Includes children not attending centre/scheme

TABLE 4.1: PROFILES OF FAMILIES USING CHILD CARE SERVICES

(c) Summary of Data from 32 Centres/ Schemes in 5 LGAs of Sydney

Local Government Area		Sample	North	East(H)	East(M)	South	West
Centres/Schemes							
Family Day Care	N	3	1	1	N/A	1	N/A
Families Using	N	314	88	108	-	118	-
Families with employed mothers	%	89.2	90.9	75.9	-	100	-
Long Day Care	N	8	2	2	1	1	2
Families using	N	449	117	87	53	55	137
Families with employed mothers	%	62.9	64.1	55.1	75.4	65.5	67.9
Neighbourhood Children's Centre	N	3	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	1
Families Using	N	133	-	-	73	-	60
Families with employed mothers	%	42.8	-	-	43.4	-	30.0
Full-Day Care (Pre-Schools)	N	12	2	3	2	3	2
Families Using	N	784	181	148	121	187	147
Families with employed mothers	%	25.1	14.4	27.0	49.5	20.3	22.4
Sessional Pre-Schools	N	6	1	1	1	1	2
Families Using	N	498	120	38	50	52	238
Families with employed mothers	%	13.2	4.2	34.2	32.0	25.0	8.0
All Centres/Schemes	N	32	6	7	6	6	7
Families Using	N	2178	506	381	297	412	582
Families with employed mothers	%	38.2	36.8	48.0	52.1	47.3	28.1
1981 Census (NSW)							
Female Participation in Labor Force:							
-age 15 years and over	%	45.4	46.1	53.9	52.5	49.7	47.3
-age 20 to 39 years	%	59.6	63.1	77.0	71.7	61.9	52.0
Children 0-4 years with employed mothers	%	29.6	37.7	44.9	35.0	31.0	25.2

(3) Comparison Between the Two Samples

There were some differences between the characteristics of the sample of the 156 families we interviewed in our study and those in the sample of 2178 families on which the data were obtained from the 32 services. The first sample showed a higher proportion of families in which English was not the first language, of one-parent families, and of families in which mother worked either full-time or part-time (this last category included one-parent families).

The reasons for these differences may be explained by the selection procedure of the first sample and by the quality of data obtained from the services in the second sample. In asking for the names of families for the first sample we used a quota sampling and asked for a selection of "typical" families using the services. This means that we obtained a cross-section of the users but not necessarily in the exact proportion of families in each category which we later used for comparative analysis of data. On the other hand, the information we received from the 32 services was based on the records kept in those services and these, we have reasons to believe, were not all of the same exactness. Furthermore, the lack of data from the remaining 17 centres and schemes must have undoubtedly affected the nature of the aggregates, particularly as we obtained a low proportion of returns from family day care schemes (which cater for a high proportion of working mothers and one-parent families) and no returns from occasional care centres.

In relating the demographic and socio-economic data of the users of child care services (in both samples) to the same characteristics of the population of a given area, the former reflect the latter, as would be expected. However, the data obtained from our sample of 156 families suggest that in the higher socio-economic areas the differences between the users of child care services and the population at large were less pronounced than in the lower socio-economic areas. This suggests that the use of formal child care services was more universal in higher socio-economic areas and among the higher socio-economic groups. The reasons for these differences were probably many, but the higher participation rates in the labour force by women with higher educational and occupational qualifications, greater reliance on child care services among the higher socio-economic groups, and the provision of services were undoubtedly relevant factors.

2. Patterns of Use

(1) Attendance: Full-Time and Part-Time

We obtained statistics on children's attendance from 29 services: 5 family day care schemes; 7 long day care centres (4 community-based and 3 private); 3 neighbourhood children's centres; and 14 full=day pre-schools (7 community-based and 7 private). Statistics were requested for the week preceding the interviews or for the nearest week for which statistics were complete. Full-time attendance meant that the child attended for the whole day, five days a week; part-time attendance meant anything less than that, e.g. less than five days a week, or less than for the whole day.

For the 1213 children who were using family day care schemes, long day care centres and neighbourhood children's centres, the average (mean) attendance pattern was 38.7 per cent attending full-time and 61.3 per cent attending part-time. The highest average full-time attendance (55.9%) was in community-based long day care centres, and the lowest average (10.1%) was in private long day care centres. In family day care schemes, it was 41.6 per cent, and in neighbourhood children's centres it was 26.4 per cent (Table 4.2(a)).

The variability of the attendance pattern showed considerable similarity with the data on children's attendance which we obtained from the interviews with 156 families (see Table 2.21). The greatest variability was recorded in family day care schemes where the average full-time attendance varied from 29.0 per cent in the North to 58.3 per cent in the West; the most regular pattern of attendance was in community-based long day care centres, from 45.3 per cent in the North to 54.7 per cent in the West. Attendance in the neighbourhood children's centres fell in between these two extremes, from 18.6 per cent in the West to 33.3 per cent in the East(M).

The outstanding feature of private long day care centres was the high proportion of children attending part-time. The difference in the attendance pattern between community-based and private long day care centres was particularly prominent in the East(H) where in the community-based centre over two-thirds of children attended full-time while in the private centre full-time attendance was only 5.6 per cent. This private centre was used predominantly on a part-time basis (by some children, often for one day only and then for 6 hours, as reported in our interview with staff). This centre catered for 2-4 year olds, had the highest fees in our sample ($15 per day) and, in fact, seemed to be used as regular occasional care. The community-based centre had a high

proportion of special need children and was located in an area with a large proportion of working women. These factors may, in part, account for the high proportion of full-time use. The two community-based centres in the West had a policy of giving preference to full-time children — one took only full-time children and the other allocated half of its 40 places per day to full-timers. Attendance at the 3 neighbourhood children's centres was mainly on a part-time basis. However, as we obtained the data on neighbourhood centres from only two local government areas, the comparisons with the other service types can be only tentative.

The data we received on children's attendance in full day pre-schools, was not sufficiently detailed for analysis and for this reason we have not tabulated the results. Overall, the pattern of attendance reflected the pattern of sessions offered (e.g. two or three days per week) and most pre-schools appeared to operate either at full capacity or close to the number of children allowed under the licence provisions. In most pre-schools, the majority of children attended on a part-time basis; thus the number of children attending per week was, in most centres, greater than the daily attendance. The exception was in two pre-schools which showed a substantial full-time (five days per week) attendance: one of these centres was in the East(H), with over one-half of children attending full-time; the other was in the East(M) which took only full-time children. Only two of the 14 centres reported some vacancies.

Because the numbers of centres/schemes from which we received the data on children's attendance was not large, the patterns of recorded attendance do not necessarily represent the patterns of attendance in all child care services. However, the indications from the centres had considerable similarity with the data we obtained from 156 families we interviewed, suggesting that the pattern of attendance in child care services was determined by a number of factors: parents' needs, availability of services and the policy that might be adopted by the director or the management committee of a centre or scheme.

(2) Age of Children

Information on children's ages was received from 14 centres/schemes: 5 family day care schemes and 9 long day care centres, providing data on 1254 children attending these centres/schemes. In aggregate, more than one-half of these children (52.5%) were in the age group 3 to 5 years, 38.0 per cent were under the age of 3 years, and the remaining 9.8 per cent were over 5 years of age,

most of whom were children at school attending before and/or after school centre (Table 4.2(b)).

The distribution of children's ages attending the 14 centres/schemes confirmed our findings from the 156 families we interviewed, indicating that family day care was used extensively by children under the age of 3 years. There was considerable variation among the areas, ranging from 45.3 per cent of 0 to 2 year olds in the West to 75.4 per cent in the East(H), with an average for the five schemes of 56.5 per cent.

Furthermore, there were variations in use within this 0 to 2 age group (not shown in Table 4.2(b)). For example, 40.2 per cent of children in the East(H) scheme were aged 2 up to 3 years, whereas in the two North schemes the figures were 29.4 and 16.7 per cent. One of the two schemes in the North, a neighbourhood children's multi-purpose centre, had the largest group of babies (0 up to 1) in care, representing 19.4 per cent of its children in that week. The other scheme in the same area had only 2.0 per cent of its children in the 0 up to 1 age group. These schemes were located in different parts of the municipality, the last scheme being on the border of another local government area of a somewhat lower socio-economic status. It is likely that the use of this scheme reflected the demands of the neighbouring municipality.

It should also be noted that all schemes, particularly those in the North and West, had a high proportion of children over 5 years (taken to be school age children) using their service: 15.9 per cent and 20.9 per cent, respectively.

Use of community-based long day care centres by the 0 up to 3 year group was reasonably high in the East(H), 39.6 per cent, and in the West 16.4 per cent. The figures, however, tended to reflect the number of children each centre was allowed to take under State licensing regulations. It may also be noted that three of the four centres which returned our questionnaires provided out-of-school or after-school services and the numbers of children attending these accounted for a small number of the centres' population, especially in the West.

The use of private long day care centres by the 0 to 2 group (usually the 2 up to 3 group) was lower than in the community-based centres. The exception was the centre in East(H) which was specifically licensed for children 2 - 4 years. No private centre catered for 0 up to 2 year olds. These centres

also did not cater for school age children.

In pre-schools, except for a few children who were under the age of three years (usually 2½ years +), all children were in the age group 3 to 5 years.

3. Service Providers' Perceptions of Parents and Children

In the course of interviews we asked the directors and co-ordinators to give their own views of parents and children who used their services, who they were, why they used child care, what their needs were, and other factors they thought relevant to the use of child care services. We thought these subjective perceptions of service providers were important as the providers of services played an important role in children's development and family lives, they devised programmes, decided on priorities, sometimes counselled parents, interpreted policy on special need, and so on. Thus, in a situation where the demand for child care was greater than the availability of care services, the directors and co-ordinators played a role of "selectors", converting, as it were, a universal demand into selective use.

The views obtained from the directors and co-ordinators of services ranged widely but showed a certain pattern, by and large reflecting our findings from the interviews with the 156 families described in the previous two chapters. In all, we obtained comments from 44 centres/schemes. These comments are presented below, first in a summary form and then more detailed in a shorthand version of the respondents' verbatim statements, for each area and for each type of service within each area. As will be seen, the directors and co-ordinators showed varied extent and depth of perception in their assessment of parents and of their reasons for using child care. In some cases, their views on parents' needs for child care were similar to those we received from parents themselves; in others, they were more critical, suggesting that parents often used child care for their own reasons rather than for meeting their children's needs.

TABLE 4.2: CHILDREN'S ATTENDANCE IN A TYPICAL WEEK

(a) FDC s, LDC s and NCC s:
Full and Part-time Attendance

Classification	Total Sample N	Total Sample %	North N	North %	East(H) N	East(H) %	East(M) N	East(M) %	South N	South %	West N	West %
Family Day Care:	(5)		(2)		(1)				(1)		(1)	
Licensed for E.F.T's*	609	-	209	-	150	-	Not		100	-	150	-
EFT's in that week	477	-	165	-	98	-	available		93	-	121	-
Total no. cared for	651	(100)	255	(100)	122	(100)			130	(100)	144	(100)
—full time	271	41.6	74	29.0	62	50.8			51	39.2	84	58.3
—part time	380	58.4	181	71.0	60	49.2			79	60.8	60	41.7
Vacancies	72	-	35	-	7)2FT)5PT				7	-	23	EFT's
Long Day Care(Community):	(4)		(1)**		(1)						(2)	
Licensed per day	180	-	40	-	40+4 emergencies						100	-
Attendance per day	197	-	40	-	44	-	Not available		Not available		113	-
Total no. cared for that week	256	(100)	53	(100)	53	(100)					150	(100)
—full time	143	55.9	24	45.3	37	69.8					82	54.7
—part time	113	44.1	29	54.7	16	30.2					68	45.3
Vacancies	NIL	-	NIL	-	NIL	-					NIL	-
Long Day Care(Private):	(3)		(1)		(1)				(1)			
Licensed per day	74	-	40	-	14	-			20	-		
Attendance per day	70	-	36	-	14	-	Not available		20	-	Not available	
Total no. cared for that week	158	(100)	63	(100)	36	(100)			59	(100)		
—full time	16	10.1	4	6.3	2	5.6			10	18.6		
—part time	142	89.9	59	93.7	34	94.4			49	81.4		
Vacancies	25	-	25	-	NIL				NIL	-		
Neighbourhood Children's Centre:	(3)						(2)				(1)	
Licensed per day	80	0					55	-			25	-
Attendance per day	76	-					51	-			25	-
Total no. cared for that week	148	(100)	Not available		Not available		78	(100)	Not available		70	(100)
—full time	39	26.4					26	33.3			13	18.6
—part time	109	73.6					52	66.7			57	91.4
Vacancies	3	-					3	-			NIL	-

* E.F.T. means equivalent full-time children.
**Component of a Multipurpose Centre.

TABLE 4.2: CHILDREN'S ATTENDANCE IN A TYPICAL WEEK

(b) Long Day Care & Family Day Care: Attendance By Age of Child

Age (years)	Total N	Total %	North N	North %	East(H) N	East(H) %	East(M) N	East(M) %	South N	South %	West N	West %
Family Day Care:	(5)		(2)		(1)				(1)		(1)	
0 and under 3	385	56.5	161	57.1	92	75.4	Not		65	50.4	67	45.3
3 to 5	193	28.3	76	27.0	19	15.6	available		48	37.2	50	33.8
Over 5	103	15.1	45	15.9	11	9.0			16	12.4	31	20.9
Total in sample	681	(100)	282	(100)	122	(100)	-		129	(100)	148	(100)
Long Day Care: (Community based)	(4)		(1)*		(1)						(2)	
0 and under 3	48	18.6	2	3.8	21	39.6	Not		Not		25	16.4
3 to 5	194	75.2	51	96.2	31	58.5	available		available		112	73.7
Over 5	16	6.2	-	-	1	1.9					15	9.9
Total in sample	258	(100)	53	(100)	53	(100)	-		-		152	(100)
Long Day Care: Private	(5)		(1)		(1)		(1)		(2)			
0 and under 3	43	13.7	8	12.7	20	47.6	2	4.4	13	7.9	Not	
3 to 5	272	86.3	55	87.3	22	52.4	43	95.6	152	92.1	available	
Over 5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Total in sample	313	(100)	63	(100)	42	(100)	45	(100)	165	(100)	-	
All Services:	(14)		(4)		(3)		(1)		(3)		(3)	
0 and under 3	476	38.0	171	43.0	133	61.3	2	4.4	78	26.5	92	30.7
3 to 5	659	52.5	182	45.7	72	33.2	43	95.6	200	68.0	162	54.0
Over 5	119	9.8	45	11.3	12	5.5	-	-	16	5.4	46	15.3
Total in sample	1254	(100)	398	(100)	217	(100)	45	(100)	294	(100)	300	(100)

* Component of a Multipurpose Centre.

(1) The Types of Families using services: Directors considered the users were mostly middle-class families, often including teachers and nurses. Some directors mentioned that often the mothers were older, often in second marriage, from professional and technical occupations: this was more so in East(H) and East(M) than in other areas. In the West, the LDC centres tended to have mothers working in banks, building societies, teaching — not many factory workers. As one director described them, "lower middle-class families with aspirations, coming up from the working class". Compared with long day care and family day care, pre-school directors reported fewer working mothers and fewer single parents.

(2) Parents' attitudes: Some directors noted that there had been a change in parents' attitudes to children's services, although some parents still felt guilty about leaving their children. In some pre-schools, the directors noted that parents related differently to their children than in earlier years, talked to them more freely, and were happier about someone else's looking after their children. By contrast, other directors (mainly those in long day care centres) saw the lack of communication between parents and children as a significant problem in children's development.

One director (in a pre-school) felt that both the increased expectations of parents and lack of availability of jobs had led to a situation in which "parents and society together are creating pressure for children to succeed". This view was expressed by others who thought that children were now expected to learn at an early age. Considerable pressure was put on pre-schools to increase the ability of children but there was no training for parents many of whom judged children's learning and intelligence by something concrete like the ability to write. One director stated that parents had asked her to test the children's abilities, as a local private school had been rejecting five-year old children as not competent enough. In addition, pre-schools which were attached to schools were used to secure a place at a "good" school and help prepare the way for the child's educational and occupational success.

Some directors thought that the literature on child development was partly at fault, while others thought that pre-school teachers themselves were also ambitious and wanted to prepare their children for school. Several directors commented that children in school now went directly into formal work and did not receive sufficient preparation for this.

(3) Change in Children: Some directors noted that along with increasing expectations of parents, teachers and society generally, children had changed. Television had an impact: children came to pre-school knowing more. One director had changed her programme accordingly, as she thought that things she would have taught in a week now took a day. In addition, she felt, the hectic life parents led meant that children were forced to grow up. The programme had to be more stimulating. A number of other directors felt that children were ready and happy to attend a children's service.

(4) Children's problems: Directors in several centres noted that a large number of their children suffered from health and/or behavioural problems. Often these problems were detected at centres and children were referred to health services. Among the health problems the most frequently mentioned were hearing or ear problems, often associated with speech and/or behavioural problems.

(5) Reasons for Using Child Care: Although the directors and co-ordinators reported various family circumstances of an individual nature which necessitated the use of child care, their opinions varied according to the type of service and also according to the area in which the service was located. By and large, career orientation by women was mentioned in the high socio-economic status area; economic necessity in the West. Of particular concern was the stress and anxiety experienced by families (both parents and children) due to separation, isolation, economic pressures (particularly in the West) and the rat-race kind of living. Women were seen at times to be lacking the knowledge and skill of mothering. The potential child abuse was mentioned in many cases.

In long day care, family day care and neighbourhood children's centres parents' employment (usually referring to mother's) was the most frequently given reason. However, in the high socio-economic areas — North and East(H), the directors seemed to be aware that the reason for mothers' work was often a pursuit of a career and equal opportunity rather than economic need. By contrast, in the West area, the reason was seen to be economic necessity, mainly due to high mortgage loans.

In pre-schools, the most frequent reasons mentioned were parents' desire to meet the child's developmental needs of education and socialisation. Parents' employment was also a factor but of lesser frequency. The need for mothers to "have a break" and the difficulty of coping with children were seen to be the reasons in all types of service. These frequently related to single parents.

For the purpose of comparison, the views of directors and co-ordinators have been tabulated, showing each type of service in each of the five areas (Table 4.3). When these views are compared with the patterns of use discussed earlier (Table 4.1), it is evident that there was not always a clear distinction between reasons for parents' using different types of services. Working parents used both pre-school and day care, and "non-working" mothers were as likely to use either of these services. Working mothers also used occasional care, especially those who worked evening or night shifts and needed to sleep during the day (see East(M) in Table 4.3). Equally, non-working mothers would use any one or more of the whole range of services because they needed "relief" and/or they thought the child(ren) needed stimulation.

It is also evident that the location of a service was a significant factor in parents' choosing one type of service rather than another. In certain areas there apparently was no choice. The policy of a centre or scheme was another factor. For example, (as will be seen in a later part of this chapter) in most areas, because of the shortage of places in centre, the co-ordinators of family day care schemes did tend to give preference to children of working mothers and of single parents and to children seen to be "at risk".

(6) Directors' and Co-ordinators' Perceptions: Types of Services and Area. As a summary, the directors and co-ordinators views on parents and children and on parents' reasons for using child care are presented here for each of the five areas included in the study and for each type of service in each area. It can be seen from this summary that there are common features in most responses, but there are also differences, especially with regard to the directors' and co-ordinators' views on parents' reasons for using child care. For example, parent-centred reasons for using child care were more frequently given in the higher socio-economic areas than in the lower socio-economic areas. Mothers' employment was a common factor in using family day care and long day care, but the reasons for mother's working varied from one area to another. Children's education (preparation for school) was evident as the reason for using pre-schools. The need for mothers to "have a break" was a common factor in all five areas and in all types of service.

However, these features were not exclusive of one another, indicating that the need for child care could rarely be related to one factor. Secondly, while there may be identifiable relationships between a particular kind of need and a corresponding type of care, that relationship was one of trend rather than one of clear and discrete category.

Listed below are some service providers' views on parents and their children:

(a) North

FDC: Social isolation is a problem for both parents and caregivers; many men in the area are losing jobs; FDC gets children of newcomers and people who are not part of the establishment; working mothers; guilt among parents about leaving children with another family, so parents do not get involved with the service; much informal care in the area.

LDC (private): Have 10 children in care before 8am, parents work; some families very dependent for assistance with child-rearing; parents don't communicate enough with the centre — give up responsibility, "off load" children.

NCC (multi-purpose centre): Number of child abuse problems; anxiety on parents' part; children with aggressive behaviour; people from different cultural backgrounds; at local public school 60 per cent of children have single parents.

P/S full-day (community based): Children are emotionally disadvantaged; parents are a problem — they are not caring; centre provides stability; lonely women — lonely parents, want too much too soon from children.

P/S sessional: Children come well prepared for pre-school as they have been to playgroup (one operates at the centre); pressure by parents on the centre to test children — private schools rejecting 5 year olds as not competent enough.

(b) East(H)

FDC: Some parents feel guilty, others sad, at leaving children in care; all places in the scheme could be taken by special need children.

LDC (community): (1) parents help one another with babysitting; parents need help to know what is normal in child development; potential child abusers, those who need help with mothering; have full range of parents, including professionals, others in difficult circumstances; some developmentally delayed children.

(2) 60 per cent of parents working full-time, including professional people; centre's committee narrow-minded, especially about special need.

LDC (private): Staff see children as undisciplined because at home they are put in front of TV and left; lower-class children more natural, with better developed speech; working parents career-oriented; working mothers — "if they have to work they shouldn't have children".

OCC: Middle-class parents feel they have equal right to child care; centre is a good contact point for mothers, especially those new to the area or when a mother's friends are working and mother is lonely.

P/S full-day (community): (1) Parents interested in programme — want to know if staff are trained, discuss matters with staff, concerned with children's health and behaviour problems.

(2) Number of mothers work to pay for pre-school — want to give the best start.

P/S full-day (private): (1) Problems with parents' asking for subsidy — they are referred to Youth and Community Services; some Greek families but children Australian-born; problem children mean problem parents; too much is expected of children, too early — children are expected to know alphabet, spell their names; pressure on centre to achieve results;

(2) No training for parents; parents judge children's abilities by concrete evidence — writing, etc.; high expectations in the area — if a child does not achieve parents feel they are failing; children with health problems — speech, hearing (glue ear); single parent-families.

P/S sessional: Community spirit among parents good; range of ethnic groups and mixed groups; hardly any single parents; variety of occupations — professional, technical — not many mothers work, some are older, have been educated and now chosen to be mothers; only a few in their 20s, many in second marriage; some mothers work full-time, some part-time, some on weekends.

(c) East(M)

FDC: Very few migrant families use service, but many carers are migrants (mainly Chinese).

LDC (community): Have a number of special need children — difficult behavioural problems; parents don't know what they are looking for in care, especially for children under 3; many parents can't cope with children and need support; little interest by parents in what is happening in centre.

LDC (private): Many children with speech problems — from average middle-class families; population is so mobile that people are coming and going; parents too busy, not really interested.

NCC: (1) Parents are anxious, need reassurance when children are away for 10 hours; children suffer stress; women should work and not be isolated at home, but with two parents working they don't see enough of children.

(2) Four to five single parents, 2 to 3 migrants; employ special migrant worker.

OCC: Number of children come from home units; parents often teachers, nurses — "teachers make the lousiest mothers"; number of English parents, not many other migrants; majority of mothers are older, some in second marriages; many tertiary educated people; a few nurses who work at night and use OCC to sleep during the day.

P/S full-day (community): Parents interested in quality programme — look for a good environment for children to learn.

P/S full-day (private): Centre has some "nervous" children and children with speech, hearing problems; parents used to feel guilty when they sent children to P/S, children were slower; now children are happy, outgoing more confident; parents now have different approach, talk to children more freely.

P/S sessional: Children with visual, hearing, respiratory and developmental problems; not many working mothers.

(d) South

FDC: Parents prefer FDC to private minding but prefer centre care to FDC; less quality control in FDC for under 2s; however, parents have less choice for younger children; parents are interested in finding a place close to home with someone to be checked on, want carers of the same socio-economic status, want to know carer's husband's job, number of children at home; people who work shifts and have no transport are not catered for.

LDC (community): Many "welfare" cases; problems with parent committee — committee now abandoned.

LDC (private): (1) Most parents work and some work at nights;
(2) Have children of school teachers who come for 5 days.

OCC: Parents have formed a babysitting club; centre provides interest and contact; few hours' care is long enough for children, although some parents want longer hours; parents are living in a rat-race society which creates pressures; many families isolated, have no relatives close by.

P/S full-day (community): (1) more than half of the mothers work;

(2) takes 4 year olds — children want to go to kindergarten; many people in the area are coming or going — children are disadvantaged; children are changing — influence of TV and adults hectic lives; many school teachers among parents.

P/S full-day (private): Parents reasonably well-off — all have two cars, etc.; programme at centre changed to meet high expectations by parents; parents and society are together creating pressures on children to succeed; teachers also ambitious to prepare children for school.

P/S sessional: speech, hearing problems among children — difficult to know where to refer them; programme changed to prepare children for school — focus on speech skills; parents don't have much time to do this.

(e) West

FDC: Children in FDC 11 to 12 hours per day, spending the whole of childhood in FDC; many families need counselling, many families are breaking up — have high mortgages, one pay goes for paying mortgage; some mothers have no experience of mothering; many single parents, including fathers — children don't have a mother model; families have problems when they lose jobs, accumulate debts.

LDC (community): (1) children at centre more competent, learn differently; families need two jobs to buy a house; women working in banks, building societies, teaching — not many factory workers among them; some parents work in the City, some locally — lower middle-class families coming up from working class; some parents feel guilty about working; isolation.

(2) families suffer stress, much loneliness, especially among migrants used to extended families — only choice in child care; have had some hyperactive children, some referred with speech problems, some spastic children.

NCC: Children come from small families — hence many children with speech problems — they lack conversation at home; some are uncreative, with poor listening and language skills; many families on social security benefits; some referrals from Youth and Community Services.

OCC: Number of users live in flats, number are single parents, mainly divorced, a few are working; some women are doing technical courses.

P/S full-day (community): Children want company, stimulating setting; some children with hearing problems; no speech therapy services available.

P/S full-day (private): (1) about 14 working mothers, others need a break from children; hours of care are long enough, especially for school teachers and nurses.

(2) parents middle-class, working, reasonably well-off; number of mothers work.

P/S sessional: (1) three-to-five year olds; travelling and sessions limit area of access; a few mothers work, others leaving children at centre because there are vacancies; parents prefer half-day care.

(2) mainly 4 year olds; some health problems — speech and hearing; some single parents, some working mothers.

(3) have 49 children — too many to pick up individual problems; some hearing problems ("can't always tell if not hearing staff or ignoring them"); many parents putting children in pre-school for minding at too young an age — not mature; no working mothers; some children are brought in by babysitters; service is not meeting local need — need for FDC.

4. Demand for Services and Allocation of Priorities

In order to obtain some indication of the demand for child care in the five areas included in our study and of the methods and criteria used in the allocation of priorities we asked directors and co-ordinators whether they had waiting lists and, if so, how many children were on them. Secondly, we asked how they allocated the priorities of access if the demand for services exceeded the availability of places. Thirdly, we asked about the numbers of "special need" children attending the centre/scheme, the type of special need, the number of children in each type, and whether these children received any subsidy from the Commonwealth and/or State governments.

(1) Demand for Services

We received responses about the demand for service from all 49 centres and schemes in our sample but the information obtained varied extensively from one service to another and from one area to another (Table 4.4).

Furthermore, the answers were not always precise and were given in various forms. Some directors apparently kept precise waiting lists; others stated they had waiting lists but were not able to give specific numbers of children on the list.

It became evident that the meaning of a waiting list was different for each type of service. For example, in pre-schools parents were apparently placing children on waiting lists for years ahead, when children were babies, so as to secure a place when the child reached, say, the age of 3 years. In occasional care centres parents enrolled as members and arranged a rostered time for the child. In some long day care centres there were waiting lists for children of certain age (usually under 3 years old) but not for other age groups. In family day care schemes there was often a fluctuating demand.

However, in the analysis of the answers received, certain patterns could be identified:

> In community-based long day care centres from which we received information, waiting lists were extensive, especially in the West where one director reported a waiting list of 300, mainly for part-time care. Most private long day care centres had vacancies. One director in East(H) reported a long waiting list but did not specify numbers.
>
> Neighbourhood children's centres had variable waiting lists, except in the West where there was a long waiting list.
>
> Occasional care centres were usually fully booked out and had to reject requests for care.
>
> Both full-day and sessional pre-schools, especially community-based, had long waiting lists; this was so particularly in the West.

Of the five areas, the biggest access demand for all types of care (except family day care, for which we did not receive information) was in the West and the lowest demand was in the North. There was also heavy access demand in the East(M), especially for long day care.

(2) Priorities

Under the funding conditions and policy guidelines most community-based services are asked to give priority to certain groups of children. The range of priority groups differs according to the type of service. The priorities used by the services in our sample, as reported in the interviews, are listed

by service type in each of the five areas in Table 4.5.

From the responses we received, it appeared that family day care schemes tried to accommodate all or most applicants; one definitely giving preference to special needs children. However, the co-ordinators felt that, because of the nature of demand, they catered for working and/or single parents and for children at risk, anyway.

Most community-based long day care centres stated that they tried to give priority to special need children as defined in the Child Care Act. However, all of these centres had long waiting lists (two had lists of over 200) and the priority system was almost meaningless for most children waiting to be admitted.

Neighbourhood children's centres also attempted to give priority to disadvantaged children but were more restricted by the size of centres and by the licensed number of places for different forms of care.

There was no priority system in occasional care centres, except for two centres which had special provisions for accepting emergencies. Community-based pre-schools, working according to different policies, varied in their system of priorities. Four of the full-day centres explicitly stated they gave priorities to special need children while the others gave preferences to 4-year olds and to those on the waiting list. Three of the eight sessional pre-schools stated they gave preference to a range of special need children or to children with particular special need. One of the two sessional pre-schools attached to a Department of Education school gave preference to those children who would later go to that school. All private pre-schools admitted children according to their waiting lists. Some had heavy bookings ahead; others had vacancies.

(3) Special Need and Handicapped Children

We left the question on special need and handicapped children "open" as at the time of our survey special need categories were not standardised across service types (in fact, as far as we know, the categories of "need" in pre-schools are still different from those in the other services). We also wanted the directors (including those in private centres) to specify those children whom they believed to be "special need" but who, for one reason or another, were not eligible for subsidy.

The answers we received were again variable in their specificity. Of the 41 centres and schemes which provided this information 25 (or 61%) had stated that they had special need children. The numbers and proportions varied more between the service types than between the areas (Table 4.6). Family day care schemes and long day care centres clearly stood out as those with relatively large proportions of special need children. The pre-schools had smaller proportions of special need children and the "needs" were often related to the child's handicap such as hearing, speech, or visual difficulties. The one sessional pre-school in the West which had a large percentage of special need children was located in a "high need" area, had low fees ($2.00 weekly donation) and had an explicit policy of taking special need children.

Private centres had very few special needs children. Of those which supplied information only one long day care centre and one pre-school had stated they had such children, and their numbers were low.

5. Relationship with Other Services

It was evident from the responses we received both from the 156 families we interviewed as well as from the directors and co-ordinators of centres and schemes (as well as from the owners of the private centres) that child care services performed a wider function than simply providing "care". Parents used child care for a variety of reasons: to meet their children's needs, their own needs, or the needs of the family as a unit, often all three. The most appropriate label to define this range of functions would be one of "family support". However, viewed from the perspective of children rather than that of parents, child care services would be seen to provide what the child's parents did not provide (for whatever reasons); opportunity for emotional and intellectual development, preparation for school, company of other children, and socialisation generally.

The awareness of this wider function of child care services was evident in the responses we received from the directors and co-ordinators of centres and schemes. Many of them aimed to fulfill that function by implementing interesting and stimulating programmes. However, many were also aware that within the limitations of services they were not able to do this alone, and for this reason they had establied links with other services of specialissed kind to meet what they saw as the needs of some, or all, children in their care. The extent and form of such links appeared to depend on the directors' and co-ordinators' own

initiative but also on the availability of particular services in a given area.

In our sample of 49 services, we received specific statements from 23 services on the links these services had with other children's services (apart from links with other child care services). Most links were with the Health Department's nurses, speech pathologists and psychologists (Table 4.7). All types of services had such links, although they were more frequently mentioned in pre-schools and long-day care centres than in the other types of service. The relationships were mentioned in all five local government areas but appeared to be more established in East(M) where children were apparently at times referred to the centres by pediatricians or speech therapists.

However, routine health screening of children were rare and in only one area community nurses continued to screen children regularly. In two other areas this had been the practice but the screening had ceased due to staff cut-backs in the Health Department. The directors felt that it was important to have routine screening so that problems unnoticed by child care staff would be detected by health staff. One director expressed the view that all children should be screened rather than only the "problem" children so that the children who needed attention would not be stigmatised.

The service which in the directors' opinion was rather inadequately provided was speech therapy and children with speech difficulties had to wait a long time to receive attention — as one director stated, "children who are 3 now will be likely to see a speech therapist by the time they are 6". One centre had overcome this problem by employing its own speech therapist on a part-time basis, using the special subsidy in the pre-school funding formula to pay the therapist's salary.

TABLE 4.3: PARENTS' REASONS FOR USING SERVICES (as reported by directors/co-ordinators)

North	East(H)	East(M)	South	West
		Family Day Care		
Work — users more pressed financially than caregivers	Need to work; need to have break from	Parents who work use FDC;	Some users prefer FDC to private minding but would prefer centre-based; no choice — stress, work; medical reasons	Mothers have to work if buying a home; almost all work because they have to.
		Long Day Care (Community-based)		
Mother's Employment*	Mothers return to work after maternity leave; about 50% are single parents; some children are "at risk"	Pursuit of equal opportunity; some parents cannot cope with children	Work or special need; no other LDC community based in area — because of this special need given high priority	Work for economic reasons — paying off mortgages; education, family support.
		Long Day Care (Private)		
Parents work F/T or P/T; women follow careers, not always for economic reasons; some cannot handle children; some "off load" children — even in school holidays	Not all parents work; those who work are career oriented	Number of single parents; most parents work	Most parents work F/T or P/T — others use centre for a break. Some work night shifts — need to sleep during day; many parents are teachers	None in area
		Neighbourhood Children's Centre		
70% of parents work and/or single parents; lot of separation & anxiety — parents need a break occasionally*	None in sample	Both parents work, mother usually P/T; single parents use for stimulation, socialisation; health reasons; service used as kindergarten	None in sample	Parents work — look for quality care; those who use P/S expect children to learn.

* Component of a Multipurpose Centre.

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TABLE 4.3 continued ...

		Occasional Care		
Appointments, etc; not because parents work	Relief, have a break, play tennis; some mothers work F/T, some work P/T; service used as substitute for extended family; some parents do charitable work; experience for children	Attitude change — people do not mind other people's caring for ther children; parents cannot cope for 24 hours a day; some parents work nights (nursing); used for appoint appointments; much demand for LDC	Relief, especially for mothers with babies; used as playgroup; some parents use it regularly	Used as P/S because no place in P/S; support for mothers; experience for the child; appointments; no friends to help out
		Pre-School — Full Day (community-based)		
Parents seen as not caring; P/S used as means of freedom; some parents work, use 2 P/Ss; child's education	Mothers work (50% of users); interest in programme; to secure place in school; continuity from P/S to school;	Benefit for the child — training; 75% of parents work — many work P/T or shift; others are looking for work	Preparation for school; socialisation; most mothers do not work; some work P/T; many teachers	P/S experience for the child; socialisation; parents use service 1 or 2 days because of cost
		Pre-School — Full Day (private)		
No information available	Child's education; parents' need to get out of house; some mothers work P/T; preparation for school	Almost 50% of mothers work — even when unemployed they want children to learn	Use P/S for child's benefit or for own relief; only few parents work F/T or P/T	Some parents work others need a break; those working use P/S "to salve their conscience"
		Pre-School — Sessional		
To secure place for child in private school system, for child's discipline; no mothers work, some help spouses in business or play tennis	Some mothers work P/T; Parents' commitment to particular P/S philosophy	For child's education; not many parents work (about one-third)	Child to play with other children; school readiness; learning, socialisation	Some mothers work; "Escape" for mothers; some see benefit for the child

TABLE 4.4 : DEMAND FOR SERVICES (Summary)

North	East(H)	East(M)	South	West
(1) Have referrals — number unspecified (2) No waiting list; increase in demand for care of 1 year olds when mothers return to work from maternity leave	No waiting list	Family Day Care Attempts to meet demand by referring request to care-givers in locality; difficult to place under 1 year old	No waiting list as such; experiencing fluctuating demand	No information available
No information available*	(1) Waiting list for under 2 years old —approx. 50 (2) Waiting list 1 yr —150, of whom 60 are 3 year olds	Long Day Care (community-based) Over 200 on waiting list, mainly under 3's. Parents re-enrol on waiting list every year	No information available	(1) over 100 on waiting list, mainly under 3's.
Vacancies available; currently asking for permit variation to cater for 2 year olds	Long waiting list — number unspecified	Long Day Care (private) Quite a few vacancies — 14 at time of interview	(1) Attempts to meet demand without waiting list; Requests for under 2's but does not accept them. (2) current vacancies; bookings for 1983 mainly for 1-2½ yrs.	None in area
No information available*	None in area	Neighbourhood Children's Centre (1) Waiting list varies (2) About 25 on waiting list, majority under 3	Not applicable	Over 90 on waiting list; majority wanting LDC. Half of them will go to school in 1983

* Component of a Multipurpose Centre.

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Table 4.4 continued ...

No vacancies	Used by approx. 180 persons; has to refuse people, especially for morning services	<u>Occasional Care Centres</u> (1) Has approx. 100 members - mostly rostered. Licensed for 10 children; usually cares for above that number (2) Licensed for 15 or 20 (not sure); at times cares for more than 20; demands for LDC	Mornings (10-1) usually booked out; afternoons quiet	Big demand every morning; has to refuse regularly about 7 requests daily
(1) Excess demand for 10 who cannot be accommodated (2) Fully booked for 1983; 20 on waiting list - all 3 year olds	(1) 4 and 5 year olds fully booked; early bookings used (2) Full - children booked in when babies	<u>Full Day Pre-Schools</u> (community-based) Booked out until 1986; (takes 60 F/T, full week children)	(1) Booked out for 1983 and 1984; big demand for 2 & 3 yr. olds (2) Booked out for 1983 & 1984; waiting list, numbers not specified	40 on waiting list
No information available	(1) Booked out till 1985; Excess of 20 for 1983 (2) 12 booked for 1983; Big demand for under 3's	<u>Full Day Pre-Schools</u> (private) Half the places for 1983 filled	Waiting list - numbers not specified	(1) Had 90 children waiting for 1982 - could take only 60; (2) Big waiting list for 3 yr. olds - number not specified
(1) No information available (2) Children put on waiting list when they turn 2 years	Booked for 60 for 1983 but some will probably not come	<u>Sessional Pre-Schools</u> Had 80 children on waiting lists for 1982 but only 50 places	Cares for 90; waiting list - numbers not specified	(1) 200+ on waiting list - some have been on list for 2 years (2) ditto (3) 100 on waiting list

TABLE 4.5: PRIORITIES IN ACCEPTING CHILDREN

North(H)	East(H)	East(M)	South(M)	West(M-L)
Single and/or working parents and people "in crisis"	Attempt to meet most requests —most fit into special need category	Family Day Care Attempt to accept all requests	Children's needs rather than parents' needs (most parents work). Priority to single parents, families under stress, medical reasons(parents' and/or children's)	All children — most mothers who apply have to work
Disadvantated; single or working parents; people in crisis	2.Centres : 1. Waiting lists; 2. Economic need; special need arising from family circumstances	Long Day Care (community-based) According to Child Care Act, but due to the size of waiting list (207) priority virtually to single parents	According to Child Care Act; single, working parents, special economic need; families where a parent is incapacitated	2.Centres : 1. Priority on waiting list to special need children; F/T children; 2. As per Child Care Act; keep one-half of places for F/T children
No priorities —vacancies in centre	Takes children over 2 years old, up to 4 yrs. —no special priority	Long Day Care (private) Usually a waiting list, but vacancies at time of interview	2.Centres : 1. None 2. Usually a waiting list, but vacancies at time of interview	None in area
No information available	None in area	Neighbourhood Children's Centre 2.Centres : 1.Children referred to pediatricians, speech therapists; single parents; h'capped children; 2.Attempt to accept single parents first & "desperate"	None in area	12 places to full day children (high percentage of families in area on social security benefits.

*Component of a Multipurpose Centre

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TABLE 4.5 continued ...

Bookings, plus 4 emergencies	Bookings	Occasional Care 2.Centres : 1.People can book 2 weeks ahead —usually book in when attend; 2.Anyone, unless child under 3 years, then must book ahead.	Bookings; cannot book more than one week ahead	Bookings: never had an emergency need for care
2.Centres : 1. Waiting list 2. Disadvantaged children first, then 4 year olds	2.Centres : 1. Bookings:Children are booked when babies; 2. In order of application unless humanitarian reason or single parent	Pre-Schools — Full Day (community-based) Takes only 4 year olds; booked until 1986	2.Centres : 1.According to policy: economic need, migrants, handicapped children; 2.As above	Priority to 4 year olds: 40 on waiting list
According to waiting list	2.Centres : 1.Waiting list: booked until 1985; 2.Waiting list, then if places available, anyone.	Pre-Schools (private) No priorities — had vacancies at the start of the year	Waiting list	2.Centres : 1.Waiting list 2.None, but waiting list for 3 year olds.
2.Centres : 1.Bookings 2.Special need; then children under 4 yrs; then children in the area	Handicapped children and and then waiting list (takes children only at 2 years 9 months)	Pre-School — Sessional Priority to children who will later go to the school with which the centre is associated	None — most children get a place	3.Centres : 1.Waiting list(over 200) 2.Genuine welfare referrals — from doctors, parents who cannot cope, wide range of other reasons; 3.Licensed to take children over 2 yrs.9 mths. usually takes 3 yrs. 6 months because of lack of space.

TABLE 4.6: SPECIAL NEED AND HANDICAPPED CHILDREN (*)

North(H)	East(H)	East(M)	South(M)	West (M-L)
20/95 =21% 7 single parents) 4 unempl.parents)(C) 7 migrant) 2 handicapped)(N)	39/122 =32% All economic need and/ or single parents	Family Day Care No information available	40/130 =31% 27 single parents) 2 Aboriginal)(C) 11 "Ethnic" children)	21 single parents Other special need but number not specified
20/53 =38% 20 single parents (C)	34/53 =64% 22 single parents (C)	Long Day Care (community-based) 15/100 =15% 15 single parents (C)	No information available	1. 23/62 =37% 20 single parents) 1 migrant) (single parent))(C) 3 incapacitated) parents) 2. single parent, migrant, economic need —number not specified
No special need children	No special need children	Long Day Care (private) 2/55 =4% 2 developmentally delayed (N)	1. No special need 2. No special need	None in area
No information available	None in area	Neighbourhood Children's Centre 1. 9/36 =25% special need —not specified (S) to be applied 2. No special need children at the time	None in area	Have special need but number not specified

(*) Abbreviations used: (C) =Commonwealth subsidy; (S) +State subsidy; (N) No subsidy.

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TABLE 4.6 continued ...

No special need	Low-income parents — number not specified(C)	Occasional Care Centres No information	Occasionally but very few special need children	4 handicapped children (estimated)
1. 1/38 =2.6% 1 economic need(S) 2. 13/143 =9% 4 hearing defect 5 speech defect (N) 4 little/no English	1. No special need 2. No information available	Full Day Pre-School (community-based) No information available No information available	1. 2/48 =4.2% 1 economic need) 1 handicapped)(CS) 2. None at time of interview	7/80 =9% 1 speech problem) 1 visual ") 1 handicapped)(S) 2 behaviour) 2 not specified
No special need children	1. No special need	Full Day Pre-School (private) No special need	No special need	1. No special need 2. 4/162 =2.5% 1 hearing problem 1 behaviour " 2 not specified
1. 3 slow developers(N) 2. 9/120 =7.5% 9 handicapped (S)	3/40 =7.5% 2 handicapped) 1 economic need)(S)	Sessional Pre-Schools 2/50 =4% 2 not specified (N)	No special need	1. 5/160 =3% 5 economic need(CS) 2. 15/80 =19% 15 not specified(N) 3. No information

* Abbreviations used: (C) =Commonwealth subsidy; (S) +State subsidy; (N) No subsidy.

TABLE 4.7: RELATIONSHIP OF CHILD CARE SERVICES WITH OTHER CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Area and Service	Nature of Relationship
NORTH	
Neighbourhood children's centre	Sponsor provides other services such as counselling, wants to expand into providing emergency accommodation for families.
Full Day pre-school (community-based)	Has hearing specialists providing own services within P/S; and employs a part-time speech therapist.
Sessional pre-school	A doctor from local health clinic visits — the centre had handicapped children.
EAST(H)	
Long day care (community-based)	Centre is involved in case conferences with the Department of Youth and Community Services; sponsor has a social worker who is available to parents and children; uses private psychologist for testing.
Long day care (private)	Health workers visit; children can be referred to local health clinic.
Full day pre-school (community-based)	Health Department staff used to come to conduct hearing tests.
Sessional pre-school	Children referred to Health Department and Department's speech pathologist visits; local health centre has surveyed all kindergartens in the previous year.
EAST(M)	
Long day care (private)	Director takes one child to visit hospital once a week.
Neighbourhood children's centre	Some children referred to the centre by pediatricians or speech therapists because of children's delayed development.
Occasional care (1)	Gets referrals from local hospital and a city hospital; a few children attend speech therapy.
" " (2)	Links with baby health clinic.
Full day pre-school (community-based)	Previous year health centre screened every child — identified cases of dental and eye problems. Currently only identified "problem" children — this method criticised for drawing attention to these children.
Full day pre-school (private)	A year previously used to have screening for all 4 year olds.

TABLE 4.7 continued ...

Area and Service	Nature of Relationship
Sessional pre-school	Refers children to hospital when necessary; counselling service offered by Education Department when needed.
SOUTH	
Long day care (private)	Children with speech problems referred to a clinic.
Full day pre-school (community-based)	Links with the area children's service committee of the Australian Early Childhood Education.
Full day pre-school (private)	Links with the area children's service committee of AECE director consults committee re children who might need help.
Sessional pre-school	Refers children to Health Department but difficult to get help because of Department's staff cutbacks.
WEST	
Family day care	Has family enrichment programme, provided by a technical college.
Long day care (community-based)	Children referred by Clinic for language stimulation; links with Health Department. (Centre has had some hyperactive children).
Full day pre-school (community-based)	Considerable assistance from Health Department; some difficulties in obtaining speech therapy — waiting list for this service.
Sessional pre-school (1)	Teachers identify 2 to 3 undetected problems per year; nurses come in to give health checks; problems rather frequent.
" " " (2)	Links with special schools in the area.

CHAPTER 5

CHILD CARE SERVICES: THEIR ESTABLISHMENT, FUNDING AND ADMINISTRATION

It would be evident from the data presented in the previous chapter that directors of centres and co-ordinators of schemes played an important role in the provision of children's services as well as in their quality. The role of these persons, however, needs to be seen in the context of the policy, or policies, which determined the level and type of resources necessary for the provision of services, with corresponding effects for parents and children who might have wanted to use them. The ability of a centre or scheme to provide a certain number of places for children, for certain age groups, and at certain days or hours, as well as the ability to provide children with high quality care and interesting, stimulating programmes, was determined by the availability of funds, competent management and adequate staffing. These aspects of child care services were determined by the rules and regulations of funding and/or licensing authorities, that is, by the constraints of policy which affected the day-to-day operation of services and even the establishment of services.

In this chapter, we present the experiences of the directors and co-ordinators of services (and of community groups involved) in the establishment, funding, and administration. These experiences provide considerable insights into the reasons why certain types of services became established in some areas rather than in others, and why they operated in certain ways. One factor which had undoubtedly influenced the establishment of child care services of certain types and in certain areas was the "submission model" of funding which was used in the past and especially in the period from 1976 to 1982. Many of the services in our sample had been established on that model, and the experiences of the community groups who took the initiative for obtaining these services (and the problems they had encountered in the process) can serve as useful pointers for any changes in policy that may be considered by the Commonwealth and State governments.

As far as we know, both the Commonwealth and the State (NSW) governments have now adopted a "planning model" for funding new services; hence, some of the problems experienced by the services in our sample may now be overcome. It will be seen, however, that the problems encountered by the directors and co-ordinators in the management and administration of services, as reported to us, were related

not to the submission model but to the range of requirements concerning recurrent funding, licensing, staffing, and other conditions imposed by various authorities. All these conditions acted as constraints on the ability of a service to meet the needs of parents and children, especially with regard to the flexibility of service. The more flexible the provision of services, the more difficulties the providers of services would encounter in complying with the rules and regulations of the funding and/or supervising authorities. The providers stood, as it were, between the users of services and the policy-makers — "two different worlds" — attempting to reconcile the needs of parents and children with the available resources and the constraints of policy. For this reason, the aim of our study was to elicit and then compare the experiences of both the users and the providers of services, so that the issues of children's services could be seen in the context of everyday social reality.

1. Establishment of Services

Prior to recent changes in policy the establishment of services for young children was not a simple, routine matter. It entailed a series of complex processes, beginning with the organisation of local initiative, followed by a range of activities related to formal approval, funding, compliance with various regulations required by Commonwealth, State, and Local governments, and an appropriate sponsorship and management. The information we obtained from the 49 services in our sample of their experience has provided numerous examples of how complex and varied these processes could be.

(1) Initiative

Historically, services for young children in Australia had been established on the initiative of philanthropic organisations such as the Sydney Day Nursery and the Kindergarten Unions, and, later, by groups of parents anxious to establish services for their own children. Community initiatives on a larger scale emerged in the 1970s. As Social Research and Evaluation Ltd. explained (1981a: 21), that approach emerged,

> as a progressive alternative to the excessively bureaucratic form of existing social services, as well as to the traditional "charity" model of social need satisfaction. It developed initially in the non-government sector under the banner of "self-help", and was only slowly (and partially) incorporated into government policy and practices.

The Social Welfare Commission supported community involvement in decision-making about the form the services should take, subject to a pre-determined priority location. Later, the report of the Priorities Review Staff on Early Childhood Services (1974) suggested that Childhood Services Field Officers, acting as catalysts, would help local groups (possibly including local governments) initiate submissions for funds. This approach was finally adopted and applied until 1976 (Sweeney and Jamrozik, 1982: 80).

From 1976 to 1982, funds for the establishment of child care services were allocated under the Children's Services Program (CSP) by the Minister for Social Security, according to some priority, on the basis of submissions put forward by parents' groups, local government, or non-profit organisations.

Thus, the initiatives would typically come from the community, except in the case of the recurring funding of existing pre-schools (introduced in 1973) and the agreed funding arrangements between the Commonwealth and the States on supporting pre-schools conducted by State education departments. The reliance on community groups (usually parents' groups) for the establishment and sponsorship of services under the Children's Services Program is evident in that, by 1980, of the 1542 projects approved by the CSP, 661, or 43 per cent had community groups as their sponsor — see Table 5.1 (Coleman, 1981).

The reliance on community initiatives for the establishment of services had attracted criticism on the ground that, because of its complexity, it did not necessarily result in the provision of services in the areas where they were most needed. As McNulty observed (1982: 37),

> The process known as the submission model begins with a group of parents unable to find the child care they need, coming together to form a committee and seek a grant to establish a centre or service — the procedure is complex and requires that the group research and establish the need, prepare a submission and maintain group stability over a period of at least three years in the face of continuous frustration. The skills needed are sophisticated and not readily available in high needs and growth areas where community cohesiveness is not highly developed, thus the criticism that the submission process favours the articulate middle-class.

Some modifications have since been made in the submission model. For example, during 1982, the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments joined forces to establish seven multi-purpose children's centres in "need" areas, with the State instrumentalities or local councils providing land and the Commonwealth providing capital and subsidies for recurrent costs. These centres have been

built with some cost savings in the design of buildings and were completed within a year of the start of the pilot program. This scheme has provided a model to show that centres could be established on a planning model, with community involvement either during and/or after the process of service establishment. We understand that the planning model, allocating funds to areas of high need, has been now generally adopted in New South Wales.

TABLE 5.1:

Estimated Number of CSP Approved Projects by State and Sponsor Type as at 31 December, 1980 (excluding pre-school and vacation care services)

	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	ACT	NT	TOTAL
State Government	3	1	6	20	9	1	0	0	40 (3%)
Local Government	98	164	28	10	60	23	0	10	393 (26%)
Education/Student	23	21	10	14	6	1	10	1	86 (6%)
Religious/Charitable	116	56	48	23	24	11	9	23	310 (20%)
Community	171	159	126	57	53	43	35	17	661 (43%)
Other	13	12	10	7	5	1	3	1	52 (3%)
Total	424	413	228	131	157	80	57	52	1542 (100%)

Source: M. Coleman (1981), Children's Services Program: Funding and Planning Attachment 6.

(2) Process of Establishment

Under the submission model of fund allocation, community groups, having decided they needed a service for children and taken initiatives to obtain it, had to go through a complex process of establishing the service. The process entailed many tasks and involved many government instrumentalities. It also took considerable time before the service became operative. Symonds (1981: 5) described the process (in N.S.W.) as follows :

> The licensing of child care centres proceeds through a tortuous path that provision of much needed services suffers from delays and "community groups" sponsoring the projects suffer from disenchantment, despair and too often, defeat. The Early Childhood Services Advisor, the Department of Youth and Community Services Plans Officer, Local Government, the Department of Services (registering as a charitable organisation) and the Board of Fire Commissioners, are all participants in the process.

The problems experienced in the process of establishing services often delayed and constrained a group's ability to meet the needs quickly after the initiative had been taken. Delays could be detrimental in their outcomes. As community groups would take initiatives at the time when they experienced the need for service, that need remained unfilled, that is, children missed out on it. The parents' committee might have become frustrated and exhausted by the hours of work required over a long time and perhaps might have given up its efforts. Furthermore, by the time a centre of service was finally established the parents who had taken the initiative would have school-age rather than pre-school children. The sponsoring body, such as the local council, might have become sceptical about the value of sponsoring child care and would withdraw or lessen the much needed support.

In our sample of 49 services the centres which had experienced least problems with establishment were those set up in the early post-war period. There were 11 centres established in the 1940s and 1950s, and all but one of these were pre-schools. Of the others, one was established in the 1960s, 21 in the 1970s, 9 in the 1980s, and no establishment date was obtained for 7 centres.

The problems experienced by the centres established since 1960s tended to fall into the following categories:

(a) delays due to indecision on the part of a government department or to complex policy requirements and/or lack of clarity or consistency about what was required in the submission;

(b) inordinate costs imposed by policy and regulations which were not always met by government grant;

(c) constraints imposed by the categorisation of services.

(a) Delays

Ten of the 49 services in our sample experienced delays in setting up their centres. Of these, 2 were pre-schools, 3 neighbourhood children's centres, 3 occasional care centres, and 2 long-day care centres; 9 centres were community-based and 1 was private; 3 were built for the purpose, and the others involved finding premises and adapting them for use as child care centres.

The time between getting a group together to determine the need and write a submission for funding and the time of starting the service varied between 10 months and 6 years. Four of these services opened before they received the first payment from the government. All 10 centres have been approved since 1976 and most of them opened after 1979.

Common causes of delays were: finding a property suitable for child care purposes and, in cases where renovations had to be done, waiting for capital; modifications to premises where capital grant for renovations was not sufficient; inaccurate, insufficient or inconsistent information and delays in obtaining information; and non-completion of a job by tradesmen (Table 5.2).

TABLE 5.2: COMMON CAUSES OF DELAYS IN ESTABLISHING SERVICES (10 CENTRES)

Cause of delay	No. of Centres experiencing delays	Time taken to establish service (years)		
		1 & under 2	2 - 3	5 - 6
Finding a suitable property	4	1	2	1
Obtaining approval for funding	6	2	-	4
Insufficient/inaccurate information	6	3	2	1
Insufficient capital for renovation	5	3	1	1
Problems with BFC and/or local council	5	4	1	-
Problems with tradesmen	2	1	-	1
Total cases of delays	28	14	6	8
No. of Centres	10	4	4	2

It needs to be noted that the suitability of a property/building for a child care centre would be determined by a range of conditions: locality; licensing regulations pertaining to the particular category of service to be offered (e.g. long-day care, etc.) and the number of children to be served; local council regulations; regulations of the Board of Fire Commissioners (BFC); and conditions related to funding. It would be a rare occasion when all these conditions could be met at the same time, and a delay in meeting one condition would cause delays in others.

All ten centres in our sample which experienced delays in establishing the service had encountered problems in meeting all these conditions from the outset. Some committees had difficulties in obtaining adequate information from the authorities on what would be required of them and two of them had to change premises because they were not able to obtain either the licence for operation or the approval from the BFC. Some began operation on temporary permits before they were granted a licence, and one opened without a permit and during the first four years had four permits before a licence was granted.

(b) Complying with Regulations

Regulations imposed by the BFC on child care centres are very strict and apparently stricter than those required of other organisations, such as the Education Department or a senior citizens' club. The people we interviewed considered these differences in requirements as inconsistent and not always logical. The inconsistency has been noted in other studies (e.g. Symonds, 1981: 6).

How complex the requirements of various authorities could be was illustrated by the experience of parents in one centre (a pre-school) in our sample. This group started as a playgroup in a church hall, without funding for a pre-school. The committee was advised by the Department of Youth and Community Services (YACS) that it would not get funding while the activities were conducted in a church hall. On the advice of the social worker employed by the local council the committee made representation to the council to use the community hall and their request was granted. The Department of Youth and Community Services would not grant them a permit without alterations to the hall as the Board of Fire Commissioners would not approve the hall for licensing. The BFC originally requested that the ceiling be replaced but the local council refused to do this as the cost would have amounted to $50,000. Then, the BFC wanted the ceiling to be lined with foil and the local council agreed to do this. The group

eventually succeeded in opening the pre-school, and obtained the licence after operating on a permit for 2 years, but not before seeking direct assistance from the Minister for Youth and Community Services.

(3) Categorisation of Services

The wish to establish services quickly often meant that groups decided on a type of service that was likely to receive funding without undue delay, especially if funding was "guaranteed" for a particular service type. In New South Wales, long-day care and occasional care, and until recently pre-schools, were all guaranteed certain levels of State funding. In one of our neighbourhood children's centres, for example, the group decided to apply for State funding for that reason but it still took the group two years to find a house, renovate it with what it was found to be inadequate funding, before the service became operative.

This problem was exacerbated when a group wished to provide more flexible services to meet parents' demands but found that it was "locked" into a particular funding which prevented this. In one of our occasional care centres, for example, the group wanted occasional care because the parent group consisted mainly of mothers at home. However, not only did the group find that it could not provide occasional care as it wanted (because restrictions on hours per week/month) but it could not meet the variety of needs found among the users. The group applied for funding to the Office of Child Care but the State authorities then said that if the group received such funding its licence would be withdrawn because the house given by the local council would be too small and unsuitable for such a centre. As the Commonwealth would not fund an unlicensed centre, the options for the group were either to continue providing service as it was, perhaps defying regulations, or to find and fund another building.

This example illustrates some of the problems of perpetuating funding categories outlined by Social Research & Evaluation Ltd. (1981a: 13). The parent group in this case sought, in its submission, to find the category of service that would best fit within the existing range of funded services. For this reason the parents moulded their need in terms of occasional care rather than meeting the need for flexible child care. Once they established their service, however, they certainly saw the need for a more flexible operation, in terms of both their own and others' needs. But from the authorities' point of view, the solution to their child care problems was seen to be occasional care,

operated according to government guidelines rather than a flexible child care service that could meet a variety of needs for children whose parents may or may not have been in the labour force.

(4) Sponsorship

In order to receive government funds for children's services a community (or parent) group must be incorporated. At times, there would be no immediate parent group that was able or willing to go through this process and in such cases another organisation such as a local council or a large welfare agency (or another established community organisation) could become the official sponsor for setting up the service. The management of the service might have, or might have not, been later handed over to a parent group.

The type of sponsor a group would obtain could be significant in the group's ability to cope effectively with the complexity of funding formulae and administrative regulations. Appropriate sponsorship has become more important in recent years, as the funding formulae and administrative arrangements have become more and more complex (McNulty, 1982, Appendix 1). In order to cope with this complexity and changes in funding policy, a service could work well, that is, it was able to maintain stability and provide a good quality programme, only if it had a good management, especially good financial management and a concerned and involved board or committee.

In our sample of services, sponsorship arrangements varied considerably. Of the 6 community-based long day care centres, 5 were backed by sponsor, such as a local council or a non-governmental organisation; the sixth which was established in 1968 was at the time of the interview financially secure but had always had an accountant on the committee.

Of the 8 community-based full day pre-schools, 2 had a council or voluntary organisation as sponsors and in 3 others the local council or another organisation had provided the land and/or building for the service. One other pre-school was associated with an independent school. Of the 8 sessional pre-schools, 2 had large organisations as sponsors and 3 were associated with schools.

The value of having a large and co-operative sponsoring organisation clearly seemed to be in that the organisations provided considerable assistance with financial management or sometimes assisted "in-kind". For example, they usually undertook the accounting for the service (e.g. payment of staff wages) and in

one case provided monthly computer printouts indicating the financial situation of the centre. The sponsors sometimes contributed direct financial assistance as well; for example, funds for the purchase of equipment.

Long day care centres seemed to benefit more from the advantages of a large sponsor than the other types of service. The range of benefits included the provision of land; the provision of a building; the handling of staff salaries and on-costs; financing operational deficits; maintenance; the reduction in or delay of an administrative levy.

The security of a service having a large and co-operative organisation as sponsor, in addition to having a stable and reasonably adequate operational funding formula for mainstream services, was reflected in the fact that it was the community-based long day centres that had extended their services into vacation and before-and-after school care. Some were planning to extend their services further, e.g. to cover or increase places for the 0 - 2 age groups. Of the six long day care centres, four offered extended services, one of these centres being an "old" established service run by parents. One other was considering the possibility of providing more places to babies. One neighbourhood children's centre provided after-school care and this centre, too, was sponsored by a council, although there had been some difficulties in the relationship, partly caused by the newness of the concept of a neighbourhood children's centre.

Local government councils sponsored most types of services in our sample. The relationship between councils and services varied but seemed to be best when the service was reasonably secure financially and the council was not forced to make up deficits.

The most varied approaches of local councils were in occasional care. In five of the six cases of occasional care there was a close relationship between the service and the council, though the council was not the sponsor as such. The council had provided premises in three cases and in two of those had paid for renovations. In the third instance, the council had initially tried to charge market rent but later relented. For two centres, councils had allowed shared use of a community centre. In one of the instances where the council provided the house for occasional care, it also paid the telephone bills, did repairs, paid for renovations required by the Board of Fire Commissioners and contributed toward 1½ salaries (in 1981 to the level of $9,500, approximately).

Some of the greatest difficulties seemed to occur between local government councils and the family day care schemes they sponsored. In two of the local government areas (in one of the five areas the scheme was backed by a church) the initiators of the submission had wanted a long day care centre, but family day care was seen by the local council as a cheaper option and one which at the time was more likely to be funded. The funding formula for family day care had until 1982 remained static and had not kept pace with inflation and/ or staff costs, to the extent that in one scheme interviewed, the council had been forced to subsidise 50 per cent of its operational costs. Understandably, that council had tried to enforce a "user pays" principle for its scheme, and that scheme had the highest fees for any long day care or family day care scheme. The scheme had always suffered from lack of support by aldermen who believed that children should be cared for by their mothers and this lack of support was exacerbated by the funding situation. This problem had created staff insecurity as the staff felt the scheme was constantly under threat of closure.

In one other scheme, the council funded a deficit of $15,000 in 1981. The people in that scheme felt the council had not always been supportive, and though they had been provided with accommodation, the premises had been only temporary and at the time of interview they were still waiting to be moved into permanent premises where they could expand their play group sessions and other activities.

2. Funding

The issues of funding examined in this section refer to both capital and recurrent funding but mainly to the latter. There are two kinds of capital funding: for property (e.g. building, land) and equipment. In recurrent funding there are, broadly, three categories: salary subsidy, grant-in-aid, and special need subsidy. Various aspects of funding arrangements — sources of funding, levels of funding, formulae, administration — can act as constraints on a service's ability to be flexible, give priority to certain groups of children, or provide a good quality programme.

At the time our interviews were conducted (and, we believe, still now) every service type in children's services was funded according to a different formula and was subject to different administrative arrangements (e.g. see McNulty, 1982). Some services received funds from the Commonwealth, others

from the State (N.S.W) and others from both. The reasons for these differences would have been due to both a "historical accident" (e.g. all long day care and occasional care centres in New South Wales received 20 per cent of the cost of agreed salaries from the State) and to a deliberate policy (e.g. under Commonwealth funding according to the Child Care Act 1972, long day care centres had a higher priority than occasional care centres). As a result, some services received a subsidy of 95 per cent of the cost of some salaries; others received only 20 per cent.

In New South Wales, community-based long day care centres received both Commonwealth and State funds. Most received 75 per cent of agreed (if not all) staff salaries under the Child Care Act 1972, and an additional 20 per cent of salaries for some but not the same staff from the State.

The State-funded neighbourhood children's centres received 90 per cent of staff salaries plus a $5,000 grant-in-aid per annum. Some neighbourhood children's centres received funding from both State and Commonwealth sources.

In our sample, 21 of the 33 centres and schemes which received direct grants had reported difficulties in coping with the level of funding; two of these had had problems with capital and equipment grant and the others with the level of recurrent or operational grant. The reported problems with the level of funding fell broadly into three categories:

(1) inadequate capital and equipment funding; this was reported mainly by the State-funded neighbourhood children's centres;

(2) inadequate operational grant and sometimes inadequate explanation (or no explanation) of the purpose of grants; this was the case in most occasional care centres;

(3) inadequate level of special need subsidy; present in the centres funded under the Child Care Act 1972 and in family day care schemes.

Examples of these problems and their consequences for the services and parents are given below.

(1) Inadequate Capital

Two of the State-funded neighbourhood children's centres in our sample reported they had received inadequate capital and equipment funds to renovate and/or equip their centres. In one case, $5,000 was left to equip the centre after the premises had been purchased and partly renovated (funds were insufficient to renovate fully). The parents being inexperienced in setting up a centre, had found it difficult to plan for the expenditure of this money. The director estimated they really needed $10,000 to equip a centre properly. The consequence was that fees were high ($9 per day for long day care and $8 for full day care) and the revenue from the fees was going to buy new equipment. The view expressed to us was, firstly, that the revenue gained from the higher fees had to be put aside to spend on replacement equipment when needed; secondly, that first users had been penalised; and, thirdly, that neighbourhood children's centre fees should be cheap because they used parent labour. The director suggested that in capital funding equipment grants be kept separate from grants for purchase and renovation and that a "blueprint" be provided to groups as to how best to spend the funds.

The other State-funded neighbourhood children's centre, apart from problems such as being located in a temporary facility and experiencing delays in obtaining initial funding, had problems caused by insufficient funds to modify the premises to make them suitable for a child care centre. After operating for a year without funding, (apart from $2000 from the State Minister's Special Fund), this centre received a recurrent grant and an equipment grant of $8000. When the centre opened, the bathroom was used for storage and parents had to buy a sink and pay for a plumber, as well as pay for a fence. There was no heating or fans, and there was no equipment in the yard and no storage shed. The centre had one kitchen sink and two basins for children. The local council, which acted as a sponsor, had initially contributed $2000 for some work to be done in the yard, but the centre was paying the council back for its staff to do the work.

(2) Inadequate Operational Grants

The level of the operational grant was a problem for most services, although the centres funded under the Child Care Act which also received 20 per cent of salaries from the State experienced fewer problems than the other services. The problem reported by the long day care centres was in that the Commonwealth

and State grants were calculated on different bases, and salaries for some staff who might be expected to be part and parcel of a long day care centre, such as the cook and some assistants, were not funded.

In the State-funded neighbourhood children's centres, one director felt that the level of the recurrent grant plus a $5000 grant-in-aid did not take into account the centre's capacity to collect fees — in that area, for example, there was a high proportion of the population on social security benefits. The effects were that there was not sufficient money for maintenance, and savings had to be achieved, firstly, by the director's not claiming travel expenses, and secondly, by not taking children on excursions.

One of the neighbourhood children's centres in our sample was Commonwealth funded and also reported problems with the level of recurrent funding, in that when the numbers of children enrolled fell slightly, the centre received less funding. This centre received 75 per cent of 3 salaries (on a Commonwealth centre based funding formula) and 20 per cent of 6 salaries (State funded). Fees were $10 per day on average. The consequences were: the centre could not afford more staff to cater for the under-two-year-olds; it could not afford relief staff; insufficient staff meant staff had only one half hour for lunch; the centre had to charge children when they were away from centre because of illness or holiday (this was a common practice).

Every family day care scheme and four of the six occasional care centres in our sample were having financial difficulties caused by inadequate operational grants (at the time of our interviews family day care schemes were receiving $7/child/week; this was changed later to $10).

It was evident to us that the <u>level</u> of grants in family day care schemes was related to the <u>structure of the funding formula</u> which determined how the level was achieved. The problems with the family day care funding reported to us were as follows :

(a) the first complaint was that the formula did not take into account every child registered in the scheme. Numbers of children were counted on a representative <u>day</u>, and the suggestions we received were that this should be changed to a representative <u>week</u>.

(b) Some co-ordinators felt that the caregiver's own child(ren) should be counted for funding purposes as they took up much of the caregiver's and staff's time as well as using the resources of the scheme — e.g. equipment, toy library, space and time.

(c) The funding did not take inflation into account (as was the case with Child Care Act funding) and there was no adjustment to reflect changes in the award.

(d) The level of funding arrived at did not reflect the work (e.g. visiting by Child Development Officers) associated with large numbers of part-time children. For example, one scheme had 165 children, of whom 81 were part-time. In another, 45 children were full-time and 73 part-time. The level of staffing, funded according to equivalent full-time children, was insufficient and visits had to be reduced.

(e) The numbers of children fluctuated across the quarters of the year and therefore it was difficult to budget (especially with Special Needs Subsidy, discussed below). A number of co-ordinators felt that because funding relied on numbers of children, there could be a tendency "to stack numbers" in order to secure the minimum income.

(f) Schemes were funded for a certain number of equivalent full-time children, but actually had more children.

The reported effects of the inadequate level and inappropriate formula were as follows: two schemes had cut back visiting by Child Development Officers; another scheme levied family day carers and parents $12 and $10 a year respectively to cover potential deficits; there were not enough toys for carers; in some cases, the schemes were unable to purchase or hire or otherwise have access to a bus to transport children on excursions; in some cases, sponsoring bodies, usually councils, had had to make up large deficits, in one case 50 per cent of costs. It was suggested to us by one co-ordinator that as well as having a representative week, not day, to count numbers, there should be a loading for part-time children and for the size of locality, and that funds should be indexed. (Most of these problems may not be overcome entirely with the new funding formula which has come into operation since then. As far as we know, the new formula does not alter the structure of

funding for any service, and the levels of funding have increased only for family day care schemes).

Occasional care centres were the other category of service experiencing financial difficulties, forcing them to increasingly rely on voluntary labour and fund-raising to keep the centres going. Some centres had to raise fees to keep the service open and viable. (There were two exceptions to this, which are noted below). These services seemed particularly vulnerable to inconsistency in policy and funding. The following example seemed to be a "typical" case. This occasional care centre, which operated for the first 10 months without funding, had experienced irregularity of State Government cheques. Each time a cheque was received there was no statement explaining funding period covered. Initially, the centre received $2000 then $500, then $1700 (twelve months prior to interview). It had received its last cheque at the beginning of 1982 and our interview was in September 1982. A director of another centre explained "... you musn't depend on it and it is not guaranteed — you might get it this year but not next year ... no one wants you to become dependent". The cheques for this centre were always four months late.

The two occasional care centres that were not experiencing severe financial difficulty had other sources of funds and did not have to rely solely on the funding formula. One had substantial council support for staff salaries. The other received an initial grant from the State Government of $12000 consisting of $5000 plus nurse's wages. It then received 20 per cent of wages, but in 1981 the centre obtained $5000 from "left over funds" in the New South Wales Children's Services Fund. At the time of interview, the centre had $14,000 in the bank. In 1982, the government recurrent grant was withheld because of this surplus.

(3) Special Needs Subsidy

As stated earlier, centres established under the Child Care Act 1972, family day care schemes and neighbourhood children's centres, experienced problems with their special needs subsidies which were calculated differently. (Since the time of our interviews, the Commonwealth subsidy formula has been changed, but we are not in a position to say whether the new formula solves some of the problems reported by our services).

The family day care schemes we interviewed had large numbers of special need children; one, for example, had 39 out of a total of 122 (approximately 32 per cent) on special need. In that scheme, the funds for special needs subsidy exceeded the operational grant by just over $8000 a year. Another scheme had 18 per cent of its children receiving special need subsidy, whilst in another (although the figure was not given to us) we were told that the scheme constantly exceeded its special need grant.

The special need grant formed a significant part of the schemes' budget, but it seemed evident that there were budgeting problems caused by the way it was calculated — as one co-ordinator explained:

> The assessed upper limit to be spent in the current quarter is equal to the E.F.T. number for the previous quarter. Consequently, if the E.F.T. goes up or down, this affects the amount of special needs subsidy available. For example, our E.F.T. was down last quarter (98 compared to 146) — now I have to knock $70 per week off the amount currently being paid out. Do I ask all families to find another $10 per week for child care because our numbers have dropped? It's unfair. Actually, I have written to the Office of Child Care asking for an advance this quarter.

Long day care centres funded under the Child Care Act 1972, especially those with large numbers of special need children, reported financial problems and consequent fee increases because the level of special need was not sufficient. The Special Need formula for these centres was at the time of our survey calculated differently to that for family day care schemes. In one centre, only 30 per cent of children paid full fees, 45 per cent were on government special need subsidy (though the director felt, 65 per cent ought to receive it), the remainder paying varying levels for different reasons; for example, fees were reduced if two or more children attended the centre. In 1982, fees were increased by $12.50 per week over the previous year because there had been no increase in special need subsidy. In effect, the extra revenue was collected from other parents to subsidise special need children. The full fees were $52.50 and under the old subsidy system the centre received $10 per week per special needs child, the centre having to find the remaining $42 from other sources.

Similarly, another long day care centre, licensed for 60 and a total child enrolment of 62 per week, had 39 per cent of special need children. The maximum fee was $40 per week and the minimum $5 per week, the maximum fee in 1981 being $34. The director of the centre, located in a high need area,

felt the centre would find it difficult to budget if all its users were on the pension, i.e. special need.

State-funded neighbourhood children's centres also experienced problems with the level of the Special Needs Subsidy, which was a maximum of $5000 per annum. One centre, in an area where 50 per cent of the families using the service were on benefits, had to share approximately $100 between 9 children per week, of a total of 35 who passed through the centre each week. The full fees at the time of interviews were $7 for long day, $5 for short day and $2.50 per half day session. Therefore, for the full week in long day care the cost was $35. (If each of the 9 children were in full-time long day care, for example, each would receive approximately $11 subsidy and would have to pay $24).

Pre-schools reported problems with the level of the basic subsidy per child rather than the Special Needs Subsidy, although many of the persons interviewed felt the administrative paper work associated with the subsidy for handicapped children was cumbersome and did not assist them with programming for the child.

By and large, the provision for special needs subsidy was not questioned. Only in one occasional care centre (the only one in our sample receiving Commonwealth funding) and in one long day care centre the parents were reported to have had heated discussions about giving priority to special need children, as they felt that they, as middle-class parents, had an equal right to use the service, a service that in one case they had established.

(4) Sales Tax Exemption

Another issue related to funding that was raised by the people we interviewed was the distinction made in sales tax exemption according to the type of service. We were told that under the existing provisions, children's services other than community-based pre-schools did not receive sales tax exemptions. Directors of these services (both community-based and private) raised this issue and thought this distinction discriminated against services which were in fact providing an educational and developmental programme. They felt that if such exemptions were allowed, then fees could be better contained.

3. Management and Administration

The management and administration of child care services involves many people and entails a variety of tasks. The complexity of arrangements and the problems which often occur in the arrangements are related to the divisions of responsibility and the divisions of labour as well as to the relationships between the providers of services (that is, directors of centres and co-ordinators of schemes), the management committees, the sponsoring bodies, and the governments which fund the services and provide conditions and rules and regulations for their operation.

In the survey we have interviewed, both directors and management committees and/or sponsors spent a great deal of time involved in undertaking the administrative tasks associated with the maintenance of a community-based service. The complexity of bureaucratic administrative and funding processes created demands upon a teacher's/director's time, time which some of them felt could be better spent in face-to-face work with the children, parent support and staff training. Members' parent management committees also devoted many hours to the task of administration, even where a large sponsoring organisation provided that support. We discuss here the issues of management and administration we recorded in our interviews under the headings of: parental involvement; directors' administrative responsibilities; problems encountered with funding and regulations; and staffing.

(1) Parental Involvement

Parents' involvement in children's services can take a number of forms: management, assisting with tasks in the centre, fund raising and participation in the development of the programme. We encountered most of these aspects of parental involvement in our study. (Parents' involvement in the actual programmes, such as occurs particularly in occasional care, is discussed later in the chapter under "staffing").

Under the policy of both the Children's Services Program and the NSW Children's Services Fund, parent involvement/management in services is seen to be desirable, if not essential. However, in our sample of services the major determinants of the nature and extent of parental involvement was not only whether a service was community-based or private but also what kind of service it was — pre-school, occasional care, etc.

Not all community-based services had management committees involving parents: only three of the six long day care centres and six of the eight full day care pre-schools had such committees; two of the five family day care schemes did have management committees with parent involvement. In a few of the private centres in our sample, parents were involved in excursions but not in management, fund-raising or service delivery.

Fund-raising was a major activity of parents involved in both community-based pre-schools and occasional care centres. The funds obtained from these activities were sometimes crucial in keeping the services (usually occasional care) viable and/or open. Fund-raising was also critical for the provision of services in new centres where capital funding (including funding for equipment) was inadequate.

Only two of the service providers (both in sessional pre-schools) expressed the view that parents had an input into the programme, as opposed to having a management or fund-raising role. One pre-school, for example, had parents' meetings once every two months to enable parents and staff to discuss the programme, as well as having observation mornings which parents could attend to observe the children and discuss educational/programme issues with the staff. In the other pre-school, parents met each month to discuss the programme with the director and make changes. The parents in both pre-schools were involved in a variety of ways and had a common interest: in one pre-school, they were drawn together by their belief in a particular pre-school philosophy and in another they belonged to a small, geographically isolated and closeknit community, characterised by an intense interest in arts and crafts.

Some of the problems experienced by centres with regard to parents' involvement in management were :

(a) lack of continuity of committees — one director had "solved" this problem by asking her parents for an extended commitment to the committee to enable continuity.

(b) lack of skills, especially in relation to accounting.

(c) original committees (that is, committees established when a a service was first set up) either not wanting to hand over management to new parents or undertaking the management task for so long that there was no one else to take over the job when they stopped.

(d) confusion as to the exact nature of management tasks required by government(s) and lack of clarity in the division between the director's role and that of the committee.

(e) conflict amongst members as to the purpose of child care, especially on such issues as which families should receive priority of access and fee subsidy. Two centres (one community-based long day care and the other occasional care) had had particular problems with this. In the latter case, the "middle-class" members having set up the service felt they had a right to use it and should not have to focus their service on those "in need".

One of the major problems of having parent committees related to the effects of their lack of continuity from year to year. Management committees not only required people with skills to handle large sums of money, staffing and employment issues, etc., but needed time to learn the nature of the complex tasks required of them and the conditions of funding and policy under which they had to operate. Often this could not be achieved within a year and yet it was common for committees to change from year to year.

In some services, the members of parents' committees were active in day-to-day administration. Two examples will illustrate this. In one centre, a parent-managed pre-school, the treasurer's "job" had been divided among three persons to cope with the workload. The treasurer kept the books, the assistant treasurer paid the accounts and salaries and the fees officer collected the fees and did the banking. In yet another pre-school, the treasurer spent one full day per week at the pre-school, and the fees officer one half day twice per week. (The fees officer also had a paid, part-time job). Often, the treasurers were accountants or other professionals, able to "donate" their skills. However, some centres did not have parents with such resources and they found the tasks of budgeting and planning complex and difficult.

(2) Role of the Teacher/Director

In the centres where the directors were also teachers, the day-to-day administrative tasks were reported to us to be a major problem for them. (Under NSW child care regulations, centres do not have to have a director who does/not teach till they are licensed for more than 60 children). For example, the teacher/director of one long day care centre for 40 children spent 30 per cent

of her time doing the accounts and budgeting despite the fact that this service had a large sponsor which took the major responsibility for the administration of the finances. The director (who also spent 40 per cent of her time counselling parents) was able to spend only 1½ - 2 hours per days with the children. Officially, and under the funding arrangements, this director was the only early-childhood-trained staff person. The director, however, knowing that her face-to-face teaching would be limited, had employed trained assistants (although under the funding formula they were not recognised as being trained). In another example, a neighbourhood children's centre teacher/director spent one hour per day of a ten hour day on administration. A director of a similar centre had employed an unfunded part-time assistant to help with the administrative workload.

(3) Administration of Funding and Regulations

Two major issues arose in the interviews with regard to the administration related to funding and regulations.

(a) the administrative (and programme planning) difficulties caused by funds coming from different sources (Commonwealth, State, Local governments, fees, special funding authorities) for the same programme or different programmes provided within an "integrated" service.

(b) the unpredictability of the arrival of Commonwealth and State funds, particularly in relation to recurrent funding.

Long day care centres emphasised problems arising from the lack of co-ordination between Commonwealth and State funding, especially in terms of not funding the same "agreed" staff. The Commonwealth funding was according to the Child Care Act and minimum staff levels specified by State regulations, whereas the State funded according to its desired staffing levels. For example, one of our long day care centres funded under the Child Care Act 1972, received 75 per cent of 7 salaries from the Office of Child Care (paid to the staff via the council as sponsoring body), it received 20 per cent of 11 salaries from the Department of Youth and Community Services, (paid to the centre which then passed the funds on to Council).

Commonwealth-funded neighbourhood children's centres were in the same situation. For example, one such centre received 75 per cent of 3 staff salaries from the

Commonwealth and 20 per cent of 6 staff salaries from the State.

We came across an unusual case of an occasional care centre which received Commonwealth funds according to a days and hours formula (and received a special need grant) and also received State funds, but on a 20 per cent agreed salary basis. The problems caused by complexity of funding from these different sources was exacerbated by the fact that the Centre had an interim treasurer who was not adequately conversant with the system, and the co-ordinator felt that perhaps fees were higher than they ought to be because of this.

It was evident that centres often found it difficult to plan their service and to budget as their funds from different sources arrived at different times and, as stated above, did not cover the same staff salaries. The situation became more complex when any service tried to provide an extended programme; for example, if a centre provided out-of-school and vacation care. In the long day care centre mentioned above, out-of-school care was funded by a special State 3-year programme, peculiar to that area, and these funds (not on-going) were paid to the centre twice a year. The vacation care programme (joint Commonwealth and State funds) were paid by the Department of Youth and Community Services, directly to the Centre.

Pre-schools or other services wishing to extend, faced the same problem. An anomaly in the system appeared to be the case of neighbourhood children's centres or at least those that were State-funded. One such centre wanted to provide after-school care which apparently was not accommodated within the neighbourhood children's centre formula (despite the fact that such a centre was supposed to be flexible and provide a variety of care). This centre was providing an after-school programme funded from a short-term grant from a special area fund, and the director understood that funds would expire at the end of that particular calendar year. Vacation care was also not provided for within the formula and this programme was funded from a separate Commonwealth/State fund, administered by the State.

Such administrative/funding arrangements worked against the concept of providing an integrated service and acted as a disincentive to a centre in which extending or integration services might be considered. The case of the neighbourhood children's centres was particularly disturbing as these centres were introduced with the idea of being a multi-purpose, flexible, integrated service. As the director of a State-funded neighbourhood children's centre stated, "if you really want to be a neighbourhood children's centre, then funding doesn't allow

you to be — it's better to be a long day care centre — you get more funding — if you want to offer low fees and varying services, you have to find the money elsewhere".

One of our centres was, in fact, a multi-purpose centre set up before neighbourhood children's centres were introduced on a "large" scale. It still had to cope with the administrative, budgeting and planning problems involved with providing a range of services funded from different sources, administered differently and with cheques arriving at different times of year. This centre provided the following services:

long day care	- Child Care Act 1972	- 75% of salaries of minimum staff direct from Commonwealth; - 20% State — salaries of agreed staffing direct from State.
pre-school	- joint Commonwealth/State funds	- administered by State.
occasional care	- State funds (20% of agreed salaries)	- administered by State.
before and after-school care	- Commonwealth funds	- administered by Commonwealth.
vacation care	- Commonwealth/State funds	- administered by State.
family day care	- Commonwealth funds	- administered by Commonwealth.

This centre also provided other services, e.g. temporary care for handicapped children, which were not funded from government sources. A large voluntary organisation sponsored the child care services and assisted with financial management by providing the services of their accountant who produced monthly financial statements. The co-ordinator of all child care services, who was not involved in direct service provision, felt that a computer would assist them with their budgeting to overcome some of the problems caused by lack of co-ordinated funding (as well as lateness of some (usually State) cheques).

The other major problem with the administration of funding related to the <u>unpredictability</u> or lateness of government cheques. Moreover, when cheques (usually State Government) did arrive, the funding period which they covered

or the purpose for which they were intended (eg. salaries, equipment, etc.) was not always made clear. This was particularly the case with occasional care, which seemed to suffer most from unpredictable arrival of cheques.

Slowness of cheques was mentioned by a variety of services; it did not seem to be confined to one service type. It was a problem mentioned by a multi-purpose centre, neighbourhood children's centre, family day care, pre-schools, and occasional care. In all, this problem was mentioned by 14 of the 37 community-based services (the 37 included Education Department pre-schools which did not receive cheques directly, and other independent schools who claimed to receive no funds from government). Three of the 14 had solved their problems by learning to budget to cover potential deficits or learning the best time to forward subsidy claims so that quick receipt of funds was ensured (in the case of Commonwealth-funded centres). A few examples of the problems caused by lateness of cheques will suffice.

(a) One pre-school in our sample received its subsidy cheque for the last term of 1981 during the Christmas holidays when the pre-school was closed. The centre therefore had to wait till 1982 to make use of it. Clearly, it was impossible at that point to offer a fee reduction to the previous year's parents. The new pre-school funding formula, calculated on a per capita, not salary, basis, was specifically designed to enable fee reductions for low-income parents to be more available, and to achieve this end it would need to be paid in advance. The only other way a centre could offer a fee reduction would be if the centre had substantial assets on which to draw.

(b) In another instance (pre-school) the centre usually received cheques every term, but during 1982, two cheques had been "forgotten".

(c) In yet another case, the pre-school did not receive any funds for a year and discovered later that it was possibly because it did not have a parent committee. This pre-school had a council as sponsor who could tide them over financially.

(d) We had three cases where services had difficulty paying staff because cheques did not arrive on time — in one case (a pre-school) the staff would have had to work without wages if the centre had not had a fete to raise funds to pay them and tide the pre-school over. In another case, a family day care scheme, the co-ordinator and Children's Services Development Officer took less salary when they started as they only had $6000 in kitty and the funds were slow in coming. When the scheme finally was paid one quarter of funds in advance, the staff took part of that money to cover their back salary.

Several services stated they could not predict when operational, grant-in-aid or special need grants would arrive.

The State-funded neighbourhood children's centres, for example, received a $5000 grant-in-aid to assist with subsidy of fees (in fact, they were given $2500 and had to apply for the remainder). One reported that they were not sure what a "grant-in-aid" was, whether the level changed with inflation and, in fact, did not receive it for the first six months, anyway. Services adopted various strategies to overcome these problems. For example, a long day care centre, had learnt to overcome this problem with the Commonwealth — it made its subsidy claim early in the term, knowing the cheque would take two months to arrive. Yet another long day care director calculated her funding for the Office of Child Care and had only once had a late cheque! As the director of a well established pre-school stated "places {referring to other pre-schools} have funding problems, they have not budgeted for those problems".

(4) Staffing

During the course of our interviews, a number of issues were raised by the directors and co-ordinators with regard to the staffing of services, which were seen to have an effect on the quality of care provided. The issues seen to be the most important were related to: staff duties, conditions and support; finance problems caused by "unfunded" staff or by insufficient staff; trained and untrained staff; and the involvement of "volunteers". We report here only briefly the comments we have received because the involved nature of these issues warrant a full treatment elsewhere.

(a) Staff Duties, Conditions, Support

The conditions and awards for staff working in child care services vary markedly and have been described and analysed in other research reports (eg. Social Research and Evaluation Ltd., 1981; Dolan, 1983; Forbath, 1983). Perhaps one of the most important differences is between the conditions of trained teachers in pre-schools (who work a prescribed number of hours per day and have ten weeks' holiday per year) and their counterparts in long day care and neighbourhood children/s centres (who work a different number of hours per day and have four weeks' annual leave).

In our interviews, one of the main concerns expressed was the directors' own position. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, centre directors, particularly those in long day care and neighbourhood children's centres, were concerned that they were unable to devote as much time to the children as they would have wished. This was due to the regulations according to which the centres caring for fewer than 60 children did not have to have a separate position of a director. Thus most of the directors in our sample of services were in fact teachers/directors. In one large long day care centre of 40 places, for example, the director was in fact the only trained teacher for 20 children over 3 years of age. Because of the high proportion of special needs children, this director spent a great deal of time on family support as well as administration. The problem had been partly overcome by her policy of employing trained (Child Care Certificate) assistants, although under the regulations this was not required. Times of the day were also set aside for the director to be with the children.

The directors of neighbourhood children's centres faced the same problem and felt they had a multitude of roles to fulfil — that of teacher, administrator, trainer of staff, parent supporter, committee supporter, and on occasions liaison person with government. It was in these centres that the directors were often working a ten hour day with half an hour lunch break. One such director felt she would like more time — for parents, for organising excursions and planning activities, for holding staff meetings during the day and for administration (at the time of interview her administrative tasks took one hour per day).

Another problem expressed by service providers was their sense of isolation and hence their need for support from others working in the field of child

care. The isolation took two forms: isolation from other ideas about programming, and isolation from other services experiencing similar operational problems. At the time of our interviews, the neighbourhood children's centres, for example, had formed their own association to help them deal with this last problem and lobby for better conditions for these centres.

In many cases, the people felt they would like the advisers of the Department of Youth and Community Services to provide more support, both in the areas of offering programmes and ideas, and in bringing services together to discuss ideas, problems, etc. This used to happen in some of the areas we visited and still did in one at the time of our interviews. Most service directors, however, recognised the difficulties under which advisers were working, namely difficulties of lack of time caused by staff shortages and policy and structural changes within the department itself. Some felt that the advisers could offer only advice, and not the support needed; that had to be found elsewhere — often with a sponsor.

(b) "Unfunded" and Insufficient Staff

We have already mentioned some of the problems related to the unfunded or partly funded, but required, staff (required under licensing regulations) earlier in this chapter (under Funding). The then current policy appeared to have some anomalies which caused operational problems for services. One such anomaly, for example, was that the position of a cook in a long day care centre (an essential staff member in that service) was not funded because the position of that person did not entail a face-to-face contact with children. However, a neighbourhood children's centre, (which is usually smaller and caring for fewer long day care children) could obtain funding for a cook, provided that person spent a part of his/her day as an aide in the centre. Thus the salary of a cook in a long day care centre had to come from sources other than government funds, usually from fees or from fund-raising.

The problem of insufficient staff was raised especially in centres where the directors of centres caring for fewer than 60 children were also expected to be teachers, already mentioned earlier. In addition, some services were not funded for relief staff and costs for these had to be borne by parents.

In many centres, particularly in pre-schools, it was reported to us that parents took on administrative tasks in order to free the director for face-to-face teaching. Examples included parents acting as a purchasing officer,

publicity officer, enrolment officer, outings organiser and liaison officer (liaising between the centre and parents using the service but living in geographically isolated areas), roster supervisor, booking officer, equipment officer and activities co-ordinator.

(c) Trained and Untrained Staff

The issue of trained and untrained staff in children's services has been a subject of considerable debate and was also raised in our interviews. Most centres and schemes provided us with the profile of their staffing arrangements but we have come to the conclusion that the value of this data was somewhat limited, for to analyse the significance of this issue many variables would need to be considered, such as the size of the service, staff/child ratios, ages of children, etc. We have found such analysis to be beyond the scope of our study.

However, one aspect of the data we obtained warrants a comment, namely, that, contrary to popular belief, private centres did employ trained staff, although the ratio of untrained staff to trained "face-to-face" staff seemed to be higher than in the community-based centres. In 4 of the 5 private long day care centres in our sample, 4 employed trained staff and 5 of the 7 private pre-schools had trained staff, although in 3 of the 5 pre-schools the owner was also one of the trained staff persons.

(d) The Issue of "Volunteers"

The issue of using voluntary help in children's services has been raised on many occasions in conferences and public debates as well as research reports. The use of volunteers has been referred to as a means of providing services "on the cheap", and it has been argued that the volunteers were not always volunteers in the true sense because their presence was often mandatory for the centres to continue functioning (Social Research and Evaluation Ltd., 1981b: 11).

The issue of voluntary assistance was also raised in our study. Our survey confirmed that occasional care centres and pre-schools to a lesser extent relied on parent involvement to maintain the service, both to staff the service and manage it, that is, administer and in some cases plan and develop the service. Here we are concerned with their role in the staffing of the service.

All six occasional care centres in our sample had parent rosters, with the number of parents needed at any one time varying with the number of children licensed to be on the premises at any one time. Rostering usually involved assisting at the centre for three hours per month. The practice, however, was not without problems. For example, one centre charged the same fees for rostered and non-rostered mothers (fathers were scheduled for working bees) and, although there was no obligation in this centre to go on rosters, the system had been found to be unreliable. This centre had "solved" its staffing problem by acquiring the assistance of two young people on unemployment benefits. Parents were more than welcome to stay and assist if they wanted. Another centre had also had the problem of roster work tiring out mothers with new babies and had introduced a policy of not rostering mothers with babies less than 6 months old. These mothers and those who were pregnant were also mentioned as a problem in the roster system by one of the pre-schools.

Some centres were using a differential fee system, designed to encourage mothers to work on the roster. One centre, for example, charged twice the rate per hour for non-rostered mothers and had approximately 50 such mothers as centre users compared with 60 who were rostered.

Community-based pre-schools were the other category of service where rostering mothers, usually for kitchen duty and general assistance, was a common practice. Of the sixteen community-based full day and sessional pre-schools, ten had roster systems. Another sessional pre-school which had various forms of parental involvement did have mothers coming into the centre to do cooking and preparation of materials but these activities were not "compulsory". In two of the ten centres it was pointed out to us that the parents' presence was a "staffing" requirement of the Department of Youth and Community Services. In one instance, the requirement was imposed because the design of the community hall used on a part-time basis for pre-school was such that children playing outside needed the attention of one constant adult. This pre-school had two paid staff and two "helpers" per session. Here and in two other pre-schools roster duty was compulsory — a condition of enrolment. In other pre-schools it was expected. At one centre, where the roster was compulsory, the board of management had a policy of not allowing mothers to bring their younger children with them (hence they would have to arrange and possibly pay for child minding). If parents did not take their turn at rosters, they were asked to contribute $20 for the day to go toward the employment of a helper for that day.

The nature of rostering in pre-schools was generally quite different to that in occasional care. In the latter group of services, parents were expected to assist with the care of the children generally, that is, help supervise. However, in most of the pre-schools roster was in the form of kitchen duty — preparing morning tea, washing up, making the staff coffee, etc., thus relieving paid assistants of these duties.

The extent of roster duty varied between occasional care centres and pre-schools. Parents using occasional care regularly were also expected to work on the roster regularly — usually three hours per month — whereas parents using pre-school were asked to do roster duty approximately once per term.

It should also be noted that parents were not the only "volunteer" staff. Three centres (one pre-school, one occasional care and one multi-purpose neighbourhood children's centre) relied on other voluntary staff. In the case of the occasional care centre, they were people on unemployment benefits; in the pre-school they were volunteers (one had a Child Care Certificate); and in the multi-purpose centre, they were from a religious order. Voluntary labour helped the centres manage financially and keep fees down.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS, ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Analysis of all issues emanating from the volume of data in this study is beyond the scope of this monograph. In order to keep it to manageable proportions, we have restricted the commentary in this chapter to those findings which appear to be the most important for consideration by the relevant government authorities — Commonwealth, State, Local, by the providers of services, and by all persons who are concerned with, or involved in, services for young children.

The most important finding of the study was the significance of child care services for parents, for children, and for the functioning of the family unit. We obtained a measure of that significance by the methods we used in the study. First, by using three sources of data (information from parents; statistical and descriptive data from services; and personal views of service providers) we obtained comparative perspectives on the role the child care services performed, thus providing an empirical test for the assumptions and commonly held beliefs on child care in the society today. Second, the use of open-ended questions enabled us to elicit candid opinions from parents and service providers, rather than responses circumscribed by questions asking for "Yes/No" answers, or responses limited by a predetermined range of options. Third, the dimensions of time we used in asking about child care arrangements in the family (e.g. a day, a week, past arrangements) we obtained an impressionistic picture of the processes involved in the "fitting-in" of child care arrangements into the overall functioning of the family as a unit.

Through these methods of enquiry we obtained not only data on child care arrangements but also a considerable insight into the family life in contemporary society; for through their comments about child care parents said a great deal about their lives and their children's lives, and about the social context of parenthood as well as that of childhood. The responses of service providers further added to that insight. Such an insight, we consider, can be of value to the formulation of policy on children's services because it appears to be true "how little is known about the ordinary daily patterns of children's lives and how decisions about day care and other services for

children and parents continue to be made in the absence of systematic information ..."(Boocock, 1975).

1. Who Uses Child Care and Why

As stated earlier (in Chapter 1 and in the other parts of this report) any gen-generalisation from this study needs to be made with appropriate qualifications. Because our sample of 156 families was drawn from families using formal child care, our findings would not necessarily apply to all families with pre-school children. However, the data obtained from the parents in our sample on their use of both formal and informal care, as well as the data from the services (Table 4.1), suggest that most families today use (or need to use) child care services at some stage. Some families use child care constantly, on a full-time or part-time basis; others have the need to use it less regularly. The arrangements for care may be formal or informal, or both. In our sample, the majority of families used both formal and informal care arrangements, and the "packaging" of care had an array of configurations.

The reasons for using child care given by the families in our sample were extremely diverse and it was evident that the reasons did not remain static but changed as the conditions of family life changed, such as when children grew older, additional children were born, the family moved location, or the mother entered or left the workforce. We have classified the variety of reasons into three broad categories: the family needs, the parents' needs, and the child's needs. These categories of needs were not mutually exclusive and, more often than not, all three were present in a family.

Family needs may be economic and/or social. In our sample, for example, in over one-half (55.0%) of families the mother was employed either full-time or part-time. In single parent families, 60 per cent of parents were employed. In some families the mother worked out of economic necessity; this was so particularly in the middle-to-lower socio-economic area of the Western LGA in the study. In others, the mother worked for economic and/or personal reasons. However, mother's employment was not the only reason related to family needs for using child care. Other children in the family and a variety of family-related tasks (shopping, housework, etc.) were frequently mentioned reasons.

Parents' needs that we identified referred mostly to the needs of the mother. It was evident that some mothers worked for personal reasons rather than for

reasons of economic necessity — to pursue a career and/or to reduce the sense of isolation. This was indicated in both the data we obtained from the interviews with parents as well as from the opinions of some directors of services. Again, mother's employment for personal reasons was not the only reason related to parents' needs. The need to have a "break from motherhood", "mental health", "sanity", freedom and independence, were frequently mentioned.

With regard to mothers in outside employment, it is important to note that they used child care services not only when they were at work but also at times when they were not at work. This they obviously found necessary to do, so that they were able to attend to such tasks as shopping, visiting a doctor, or any other activity, or to take a rest. The last reason was quoted several times by mothers who worked shiftwork. It was not surprising, therefore, that one of the most frequent replies to the question "what aspects of services parents valued, or desired, most?" was the flexibility of service.

Using child care for reasons related to the needs of the family or to the needs of parents may be regarded as an instrumental use of child care. The third category of needs, the child's needs, we consider to be equally or even more important in, and directly relevant to, the provision of child care services. Our findings indicate that many parents — in their own judgement and in the opinions of the providers of services — did not adequately cope with the task of child rearing. Again, whether this occurred because parents had to work or wanted to work, or felt they needed to work, or whether they could not reconcile satisfactorily the task of caring for their children with their other goals or pursuits, or whether they felt they lacked the knowledge and ability to cope, may be an issue for debate. But from the point of view of children's needs and interests, it is evident that the services did provide essential support for parents and, indeed, played the role of social parenthood. The opinions we received from the directors of centres and co-ordinators of schemes indicate clearly that they saw the role of services as one of overcoming the deficiency of the care a child might receive in his or her family, thus enhancing the child's emotional, intellectual and social development.

In our sample, 80 per cent of children under 12 years of age used care and over one-half of them (51.1%) regularly experienced more than one type of care in any given month. Care arrangements within a family and for each individual child varied considerably from one family to another. As the case studies presented in Chapter 3 indicate, within a given family one day of the week was not necessarily the same as another, and the arrangements for care

varied considerably so that they could be fitted into the overall pattern of family activity. The complexity of arrangements was greater in those families where both parents worked, where parents (or either of them) worked shift work or worked irregular hours, or where they worked at weekends. The complexity was further increased in the families with more than one child, especially in the families with both a child under the age of three years and a school-age child, or children.

In the diversity of reasons given by parents for using child care, family-needs, and especially mothers' needs related to time and/or work, were important factors in the extent and type, or types, of child care sought or used. At the same time, the needs of the child figured prominently among the reasons given by parents for using child care services and/or for selecting a particular type of care. Moreover, the services were seen as meeting those needs in a positive sense, that is, as enhancing the child's personal and social development. Thus, for reasons of parents' needs and interest and for reasons of child's needs, the need for child care services was seen by parents to be more or less universal.

The extent of child care usage in the families we interviewed was shown to be related to a range of factors. The average (mean) number of regular care arrangements in a family (both formal and informal) was 2.9 arrangements per month, ranging from one to eleven regular arrangements. The highest number of regular arrangements was in the families with the following characteristics: families with three or more children under the age of 12 years, especially where both a child under the age of 3 years and a school-age child, or children were present; families in which the mother was employed, again greater in families with more than one child; and families with higher incomes (Table 2.10).

Over one-half (55.8%) of families in our sample used informal care as well as formal care, and the use of informal care in those families was quite extensive — an average of 2.5 regular care arrangements per month. An interesting feature here was the use of relatives as child carers, in most cases the grandparents of the child, more often maternal than paternal but in some cases both. Over a quarter (28.2%) of the families used relatives as carers, and in one-parent families the frequency was as high as 40.0 per cent.

It was rather surprising to find out that, although the geographic mobility of the families in our sample was greater than in the population of New South Wales as a whole and in each of the five local government areas we surveyed,

three-quarters of the families had grandparents living in Sydney and close to one-half of these (44.4%) had the nearest grandparents living either in the household or within 5 kilometres of the household. Furthermore, the proximity of grandparents' location was nearer in the higher socio-economic status areas and in the inner city suburbs than in the outer western suburbs.

The analysis of data obtained in our study, both from the interviews with 156 families and with the directors of centres and co-ordinators of schemes, appears to indicate that of the family characteristics which we have identified as related to the use of child care (i.e. the size of the family, ages of children, mother's employment, income and location), the higher-than-average socio-economic status of the family (as measured by family income and parents', especially mother's, occupation) was one of the constant factors in the use of child care.

This may be explained by a number of factors that have emerged from the analysis of data:

(1) Family incomes in our sample were, on average, higher than family incomes of the population in New South Wales as a whole and in each of the five local government areas included in the study (Table 2.9(a)).

(2) Although the distribution of incomes varied considerably among the families in each of the five areas, the extent of the use of child care was still slightly higher in the higher status areas than in the lower status areas, and it was the highest in the high status inner city suburb of East(H) (Table 2.10).

(3) The participation rates in the labour force by mothers were higher in families with high incomes than in those with low incomes, and mother's employment clearly accounted for a higher family income (Table 2.9(b)).

(4) Mother's employment as a reason for using child care was more prominent in the higher income families than in the lower income families (Table 3.3(b)) and the expressed need to work was for both economic reasons and personal reasons, e.g. to follow a career.

(5) Parents in the higher income families tended to have a busy life, described by some directors of centres as a "hectic, rat-race existence". This was not always for reasons of mother's employment but in some cases for reasons of social engagements, sport, or study.

(6) The expectations of child care services tended to be different in the higher income families than in the lower income families. Although the value of services was recognised in all families, in the former, child care services were often regarded as "a right, not a privilege"; in the latter, they were more often seen as "a necessity".

(7) The cost of child care: the amounts expended on child care was related to the levels of family income, suggesting that the cost of care was a factor in the extent of the use of care. Thus while 46.7 per cent of families with incomes below $300 per week paid $14 or less per week for child care, as against 14.3 per cent of families with incomes over $600 per week; at the other end of the scale, 21.4 per cent of high-income families paid over $65 per week and no family with income below $300 per week paid more than $64 per week. It needs to be noted that over a quarter of high-income families (27.9%) used paid babysitters/minders, as against only 6.7 per cent of families with low incomes (Tables 2.13 and 2.14).

The more extensive use of child care by higher income families than by those with lower incomes thus appeared to be related to a cumulative effect of a number of variables which characterised the families in our sample. The conclusions we have reached on the relationship between the socio-economic status of the family (identified by family income and parents' educational and occupational qualifications) and use of child care are in many respects similar to those arrived at in other research findings (e.g. Burns, 1978; Social Research and Evaluation Ltd., 1981a; King and Wyllie, 1981, d'Abbs, 1983). At the same time, there were many common factors in most families, indicating rather clearly that child care services, both in use and expectations, have now become an important social provision, perceived as essential family support for meeting parents' needs, children's needs, and the needs of the family as a unit.

In relation to parents' needs, some parents in our sample (usually mothers) expressed the value of child care services to them as a necessity because they had to work for economic reasons; others, because they felt "inadequate to look after the child all the time"; some said that they "didn't want to be a full-time mother" and were "not interested in staying home". Some described child care as a "luxury", "a blessing". One mother said, child care meant to her the "difference between being happy and unhappy — wouldn't have had a child otherwise".

As a value to the child, formal child care services were seen by parents as a necessary provision, facilitating the child's development and providing the child with environment and experience which the parents felt they themselves were unable to provide. Parents' awareness of their children's needs was clearly evident in the reasons they gave for using child care (Table 3.3), in the features they sought when arranging care (Table 3.4), and in the value they saw in formal care for their children (Table 3.7). This awareness was also evident in the efforts they were prepared to make to obtain care and/or specific type of care, as illustrated by the case studies of individual families' experience (Chapter 3).

The value of child care to the family as a unit was evident in most responses, especially when the use of services was related to the other activities of parents and children in the course of a day or a week, and even more so in the context of family history. How important child care was for the functioning of the family was well illustrated by some of the case studies. Each change in the family, such as mother's entry into the labour force, birth of another child, or change of location, was associated by changes in child care arrangements, and, at times, such changes were contingent upon finding satisfactory arrangements. Thus, while in the aggregate the higher socio-economic status families in our sample used child care to a greater extent than the lower status, lower income, families, at the micro-level of individual families the needs for child care were diverse but were present in all families.

2. Formal Child Care Provisions

(1) Classification of Services and Content of Programmes

Traditionally, services for young (pre-school) children have been labelled either "care" or "education". This distinction was based on the assumption that certain services, such as long day care, provided supervision for children whose mothers worked, and pre-school kindergartens provided education for children of mothers not in the labour force. Our data indicate that to a certain extent this assumption was still reflected in usage, but the reasons for the differences in usage did not seem to be in the type of service or in the content of the programme but rather in the hours of service provided and in the accessibility of the service, or in its availability to the parents living in a given area. Thus it was not the type of service or the content of programme but rather the external factors such as the funding and/or licensing requirements that by and large served to maintain the distribution of usage between the two types of services.

The content of the various types of service seemed to depend primarily on the aims and functions a service performed, as perceived by the providers of services, that is, the directors of centres and, to a lesser extent, the co-ordinators of schemes. These aims and functions were seen by them to be one or more of the following : supervision, preparation for school, the provision of a more stimulating (and often more stable) environment that a child received at home, the provision of opportunities for the child's socialisation and development, or support for the family.

There was certainly a diversity of role perceptions among service providers. The information we obtained from services (Chapter 4) indicate that providers of services may be entirely child focussed but may or may not attempt to provide a programme which was related to the needs of parents. Thus a director's or a co-ordinator's perception of the role of the service would be reflected in the nature of the provided programme and in the extent to which the children received attention and/or the individual families received assistance and support.

Some service providers saw the aim of their service as teaching children specific skills, namely reading and writing, while others saw preparation for school — school readiness — as important, but not the learning of specific skills or tasks. One director in the latter group, for example, felt that

pre-school experience helped a child's reasoning ability, maintained the child's interest in group activity, helped in pre-reading skills, and broadened the child's perception of the world. Another pre-school director who felt that the children attending the centre were emotionally disadvantaged (despite the high socio-economic status of their parents), considered that the aim of her service was to improve the children's quality of life by providing them with the consistency and stability of relationship not available to them at home.

On the whole, there was some distinction in the focus of programmes between the services falling into the rubric of "care" and those of "education". However, this distinction, again, seemed to be due to a certain extent to the external constraints imposed on services, but more so to the individual perception of the providers of services, and in some cases to the expectations of parents.

In terms of children's needs, some service providers saw themselves as complementing family care and this attitude was reflected in their programme. For example, one director of a centre where all children attended for the full week felt it was unnatural for children to be totally confined within a centre and never having excursions. When the service was established she convinced the sponsor, a local council, to postpone the implementation of an administrative levy for 9 months and with the money saved she bought a mini-bus. All children were then taken on excursions regularly, either once a week or once every two weeks, depending on their age. The director felt it was her role, in part, as that of sharing the responsibility for care of the children with parents. However, in another centre, children went on one excursion per year, because the owner/director believed that taking children on excursions was a parental responsibility. (It is possible that the cost of excursions acted as a disincentive but this was not the reason stated by the owner/director).

Irrespective of the differences in the individual providers' perceptions of their roles and of the functions of their services, our overall impression with some exceptions, was that, most providers saw these roles and functions not as a form of substitute care but rather as a form of social parenthood, or sharing care with the children's parents. In that perception some providers focussed their attention mainly on children's needs and others felt that in addition to being sensitive to children's needs they ought to be responsive to parents' needs as well.

As part of this sharing of care, some service providers saw as an important part of their function to identify children with health and/or behavioural problems and refer them for attention to appropriate services. Others, especially those in long day care services and family day care schemes where there were large numbers of "special need" children, spent a great deal of time on counselling parents and providing them with general support. One director of a long day care centre, with 45 per cent of children receiving special need subsidy, for example, estimated that 40 per cent of her time was spent on counselling parents.

Thus the providers of services played an important role in determining the extent of the care programme, the range of its functions (e.g. by establishing contact with health services), as well as in determining priorities of admission with regard to numbers and ages of children, and determination of "special needs". Working in conditions of financial and regulatory constraints, the providers of services thus mediated between the parents and children on the one hand, and the policymakers on the other, or, as it were, between a more or less universal demand for care and a selective provision of care — a function that has been defined as "resource allocation at the periphery" (Jones, 1983).

However, there was yet another function that the providers of services performed. If child care services are considered as a value to children, then the role of service providers was that of "social parents", complementing and in some cases supplementing or even partly substituting parental care, which among some parents in our sample was seen to be inadequate, both in the providers' views and in the views of parents themselves. That function was clearly recognised by the providers (Chapter 4) and by the parents (Chapter 3).

(2) Establishment and Operation of Services

The administrative arrangements in the provision and operation of child care services that we found in our study were extremely complex (Chapter 5). The complexity appeared to be due not so much to the diversity in the demand for services from parents as to the constraints imposed upon the services by the various authorities involved; Commonwealth, State and Local governments. These constraints were "external" to the services themselves and were evident in all aspects of service provision: in the process of establishing services, in the funding formulae, and in the everyday administration and operation. There were also "internal" constraints, emanating from the boards and committees of management, staff attitudes, and the directors' and co-ordinators'

perceptions of their role and of the role the services fulfilled, or were expected to fulfill.

Among the important issues which arose in the course of interviews with the providers of services were the following :

(a) The long and complex process of establishing a service was often discouraging to a parents' group who, by the time they finally obtained the service, no longer had pre-school children. The delays were caused by a number of factors: inadequate capital, complex policy requirements, and inconsistent, often conflicting rules and regulations imposed by the authorities.

(b) In taking the initiatives to establish services, parents' groups attempted to define their "need" in terms of existing service categories and were responded to by governments in terms of these categories. As a result, parents' groups who wanted to provide for their own needs and those of "potential" users found themselves locked into either inflexible and inappropriate categories and/or having to operate under rigid guidelines — for example, only being able to use occasional care for a set number of hours per week or month. Even when guidelines were made a little more flexible, as it occurred in occasional care where the guidelines were changed from a maximum care of 3 hours per week to 12 hours per month, we found that most co-ordinators maintained the old guidelines, i.e. 3 hours per week, in order to meet the demand for at least a few hours of care by large numbers of children. As a result, occasional care was used in many centres as regular care, often combined by parents with other part-time care, such as sessional pre-school.

(c) Centres that attempted to provide a variety of services, had to cope with different policies and different funding and administrative arrangements for each service component. Several single purpose service types received funding from both Commonwealth and State Governments, at different times throughout the year and for different staff, making it difficult to budget

and plan services. Moreover, the discrete funding categories acted as a disincentive to providers who might have considered the provision of extended or integrated services. Only some of the long day care centres and two of our neighbourhood children's centres/multi-purpose centres in our sample had attempted to provide vacation and/or before and after school care, and in all but one of these cases they were assisted in their administrative task by large sponsoring organisations. Similarly, services that were supposedly set up as an integrated service, namely neighbourhood children's centres, did not receive funding for vacation care and for before-and-after school care as part of their "normal" funding. These additional services were funded separately and funds were not guaranteed.

(d) Some services had been established in a piecemeal fashion, sharing premises with other community services, and therefore able to operate for only a limited number of hours or days. This situation was encountered in some pre-schools and occasional care centres. The numbers of children these centres were able to take and the quality of service they provided were thus affected. Even if these centres received recurrent funding, they were not able to extend their services without capital funds that would have been needed for substantial alterations to premises or for new premises.

(e) Many services found the levels of funding inadequate, especially if they wanted to give due priority to certain categories of "special need" children. The levels and formulae of funding had an adverse impact on both the numbers of children the services were able to cater for, on the extent of fee rebate they were able to offer, as well as on the quality of service they provided. Family day care appeared to be the service particularly affected by the structure of the funding formula as it was based on the equivalent full-time children and it was not taking into account the additional work of the co-ordinators that was associated with large numbers of part-time children, such as visiting the carers in the scheme. The quality of service was thus affected (e.g. visiting was reduced) and in some cases operating deficits had to be covered by sponsoring bodies or by higher fees.

3. Implications for Policy

Most studies of child care services carried out in recent years have produced similar and somewhat predictable conclusions, namely: (1) the services were inadequate and, therefore, there was a need for more funds from governments, especially from the Commonwealth Government; (2) there was a need for a more equitable allocation of funds so that services would be provided where the need was greatest; and (3) there was a need for greater flexibility in the services; thus need for a reconsideration of the existing constraints on the types of services and for a simplification of rules and regulations.

Our study has certainly provided evidence to support all three arguments. However, the issues in child care services appear to be far more complex and more fundamental. We have pointed this out in our previous report, Services for Young Children: Welfare Service or Social Parenthood? (Sweeney and Jamrozik, 1982: 113) where we observed that:

> ... the development of services for young children, especially pre-school and care facilities, has taken place, and continues to take place, in the context of a diversity of theories, a diversity of interests, a diversity of lobby and pressure groups and a diversity of ideological, political, economic and social perspectives, even religious perspectives and beliefs.
>
> Unavoidably, theories, interests and perspectives have been competing with one another and often are found to be in conflict. In such a situation, development of a cohesive, coherent and consistent policy and services is difficult, especially so as theories and interests change with time. Not the least problem is the absence of a clear responsibility by governments for the provision of services for young children.

In the same report we also made an observation that behind the arguments advanced about services for young children were three main issues concerning varied perceptions on children's needs, children's rights, and on who was to be responsible for ensuring that those needs and rights were met. These issues remained unresolved; for while there was agreement in the theories of child development which indicated the crucial nature of the early years for the child's future development, there was less agreement in the society, on the "best" ways of caring for young children. In some views, it was the family that was seen as the institution where the best caring could, and should take place; in other views, the responsibility for the nurture and care of the child should be shared between parents and society, and the child

should be exposed to a wider social environment early, not as a matter of necessity but as a desirable, or even essential, condition of the child's growth and personal as well as social development. This being so, we argued that in formulating a policy on services for young children,

> ... it is appropriate to ask whether the assumptions held in society about the "best" way of caring for young children are valid. For example, can the family, as currently constructed, ensure the kind of care for the young child the society expects from it? Has the family the necessary personal and material or even temporal resources to carry out this task? What kind, if any, of exposure of the child to a wider community is necessary to ensure an adequate basis for the child's development? (1982: 114)

We further observed (1982: 127) that the issues of services for young children appeared to be debated in a rather narrow framework of a choice between family care or a substitute care. When the latter was considered, arguments were raised as to "who is to be responsible?" In such a perspective children became objects of instrumentalist transactions. What was needed, it seemed, was a wider perspective encompassing the whole socio-economic environment in which the services for young children would be determined on two main criteria: first, what kind of environment did the child need for an adequate development to become a socially well functioning adult: and, second, how such an environment could best be provided.

In <u>this</u> study, these "unresolved" issues were certainly evident in the opinions expressed to us in the course of the interviews with parents and providers of services. As the views were those of the users and providers of services, it would be expected that both would share common perceptions (and common interests), not necessarily shared by all sections of the society. However, the prevailing views were broadly in agreement with the manifest policy of the present Commonwealth Government, stated in 1982:

> A Children's Services Program under a Federal Labor Government will provide services for children 0 to 15 years which complement the care they receive from parents. Access to community child care is a right, and the aim of such care is to provide all children with developmental and social activities in safe surroundings provided by skilled and caring people for the range of hours which meets the children's needs and those of their parents/carers. Children's services should be federally-funded and community-based and should be financed by subsidies rather than tax deductions or rebates (<u>Social Security Bulletin</u>, July 1982).

The policy statement also gave some indications on how that policy would be implemented, and the three aspects which appeared to be of particular relevance to our study were:

- allocating resources on a planning model based on needs rather than the present submission based model which favours the articulate;
- moving towards a program on multi-purpose centres at the local level or other appropriate sites such as the workplace...
- ensuring that the users of a service take part in the management of the service so that a service reflects the real and varied needs of the users.

The findings of our study seem to have significant implications for the above-stated policy, mainly in relation to the planning of services according to "need", and to the implementation and administration of services. In relation to "need", it is necessary to ask: what constitutes "need" for children's services; who determines the "need"; and on what criteria? In relation to multi-purpose centres, there appear to be a host of unresolved issues concerning the relationship between the responsibilities and respective powers of the Commonwealth and State governments as well as the day-to-day operation of these centres.

(1) Determination of "Need"

Embodied in the question of "need" is the issue of equity. The need for services, as perceived by individuals or community groups, is largely determined by the subjectively perceived, or felt, need. This means that any service or programme that provides resources such as information or funds on selective criteria of expressed "need" will tend to favour those individuals or groups who are better able to fit their "needs" into the provider's definition. Any such service or programme also becomes subject to lobbying and political pressures and influences.

No doubt, under any system of resource allocation, some groups in the community will be able to make their demands heard better than others, especially if the demands are made on the grounds of need as well as of right. As we have stated in one of our reports (Jamrozik, 1983: 78).

> We witness here what may be called a dilemma of the Welfare State, or a "paradox of democracy". The more relevant certain services become to people's normal social functioning, the more likely they tend to be demanded and utilised by the better-off sections in the community. The inequality will be greater if the initiative to formulate the demand for service rests with the community, as has been the case with services for young children.

The system of resource allocation in child care services, as it has operated until now, has enabled the people who were better equipped to cope with it to benefit more from the services than others who were less able to fit their needs into the "needs" criteria. To achieve greater equity in service provision would therefore call for some universal criteria on which the governments would determine priorities for resource allocation. The inequities would be further reduced if the government accepted the responsibility for the provision of services rather than relying on "community initiatives", as has been the case in the past. However, the criteria on which the need for services is to be determined will still remain a problematic issue. If, for example, mother's employment is to be used as the main criterion (as it has often been the case) then the services are likely to be more available to the families with higher incomes, and in the higher socio-economic status areas, because it is in those families and in those areas that women's participation in the labour force is now considerably higher than in low-income families and in low socio-economic status areas. The analysis of our findings has shown that both the use of child care and the expectations of child care services were higher in the middle and high income families and in the higher status areas. As a director of a centre in our sample said, "the need for child care services was socially created".

At the same time, notwithstanding the socio-economic differences in usage, our study suggests that the need for child care services is now universal, especially when that need is perceived in terms of family needs, parents' needs, and children's needs. Most of the families in our study, whether they were in a high income group or not, or whether the mother was working or not, regarded child care services as an essential element in family functioning. They also felt that, alone, they were unable to meet the needs of their children. Child care services were regarded by them not as a form of substitute care or as a welfare service but as a form of social parenthood. That need for social parenthood, or shared care, appeared to be almost universal.

For most families child care services provided "family support"; for some families more than for others. However, while the need for child care at some time was universal, "special need" for care did occur often and was not necessarily related to the economic position of a family. Families needed child care because a child experienced developmental delay, or they needed care for one child because of a problem with another child in the family. But in the system as it operated at the time the acceptance of special need children into a service depended upon the discretion of a director and/or committee of management of a centre or scheme. The belief of service providers in the "universal" need for the child care and the financial difficulties a centre or scheme encountered if it accepted too many special need children on the grounds of economic need often worked against priority being given to these children.

Another important finding of our study was that the need for child care services as well as for a particular type of care changed over time, as mothers moved in or out of the workforce, or as the size of the family increased. For example, some mothers who temporarily left the workforce to have another child wanted to keep an older pre-school-aged child at a centre so as to maintain a stable place for the child. Thus the needs of a family for child care could not be defined as being of one kind or another at all times but only one point of time.

Thus, in order to ensure an equitable provision of, and access to, children's services, any planning for the provision of these services will have to take into account a number of criteria in determining the "need" for services. Which of these are to be regarded as more important than others will depend on many factors — political, economic, social — that policymakers will take into consideration. We cannot debate this issue here, except for pointing out, on the evidence of our findings, that while some needs may be related to the socio-economic position of the child's family, the range of needs is wide and diverse, and the need for child care is likely to be encountered by most families, at least at some time or another. Hence, any planning would need to be based on the universality of need for child care as part of normal functioning of the family rather than on selective criteria. Such an approach to planning will not, of course, prevent establishing priority areas.

Secondly, although we have classified the needs expressed to us by parents into family-centred, parent-centred, and child-centred, we have also noted that these needs were not exclusive of one another. All three would be

identified in most families, though with some differences in individual families as well as in certain groups of families. In searching for a common factor in determining the need for children's services, the definition used in Project Care, (Social Welfare Commission, 1974: 17) namely, the "importance of meeting parents' needs where these have direct bearing on children" appears to be the most appropriate.

(2) Categorisation of Services

We have noted earlier (Chapter 5) that the evolution of services for young children in Australia had been something of an "historical accident". The services came into being out of various initiatives, from the community and/or from governments, at some point of time, as a response to certain events or "problems". The most significant division has been between services perceived as "care" and those perceived as "education", leading to services being provided under various auspices and ostensibly for different families and children.

In the early 1970s the Commonwealth Government attempted to resolve that issue by implementing services for young children which were to be a

> ... recognition of the fact that the care and development of children are inextricably related, especially in the early years, and that no rigid distinction should be made between educating children and caring for them (Ministerial Statement, 19-9-74, The Children's Commission, AGPS, Canberra).

However, since then, the division between "care" and "education" has persisted, and within each group new categories of services have emerged. Yet, the information we received from the providers of services seemed to indicate that the categories were evident more in their bureaucratic classification than in the programmes the centres offered. The nature of the content of programmes often depended on the discretion and initiative of the centre's director and on the director's perception of children's needs.

At the same time, the proliferation of service types and the accompanying continuation of funding categories, each with its limitations and constraints, worked against the flexibility of services and their ability to meet the needs of parents and children that many providers of services would have liked to achieve. Some pre-school directors felt they were in danger of losing their funding if they operated for more than eight hours a day, and if they did extend the

hours they did not have the guarantee of obtaining long day care funding. On the other hand, long day care centres were seen to cater for the needs of working parents but only for the children from 0 to 5 years. Care for the school children in those families was not automatically included in a long day care or in a multi-purpose service.

On the other hand, the needs of families could not be satisfactorily fitted into the categories of pre-schools, long day care, or occasional care. Rather, what parents seemed to need was a full day or full week care, with variations for shift work, or irregular work (now increasingly common, especially in jobs occupied by women). Other parents required regular part-time care.

For children, it was the content of programmes and the environment the services provided that were of importance. And while the content of programmes was largely determined by the providers of services, the constraints of the types of service and the assumptions of what kind of function each type of service were to provide were undoubtedly inhibiting factors in giving the children the quality of programme and the environment they needed.

It was the experience of service providers in our sample that rules and regulations under which children's services operated were certainly complex and were applied (or enforced) by many authorities — Commonwealth, State, Local. The authorities seemed to act with little co-ordination, often inhibiting one another, at times negating one another. Apart from the overall effect such a situation must undoubtedly have had on the parents and children who used the services and the problems it created for the providers of services and their supporting committees, the complexity of the system, both in the allocation of funds and in the regulations, would have undoubtedly contributed to the cost of services. The difficulties encountered by community groups in setting up services and in their operation suggest that there were considerable costs — direct and others that were not always obvious — that could have been reduced.

We have noted that it was the policy of the present Commonwealth Government to seek "agreements with States and Territory administrations on an overall planned distribution of capital and recurrent contributions..." (Social Security Bulletin, July 1982). This policy, if implemented, should go some way towards lessening some of the problems reported to us by parents and service providers. However, in order to make the maximum use of available

and possibly increased resources for child care, and in order to provide a more flexible structure of child care services which would better meet the needs of parents and children, the Commonwealth and State governments would need to come to an agreement on the basis of policy and on their respective roles under such policy. Following on from such an agreement, some rationalisation of funding and administrative arrangements would be critical to the efficient and effective functioning of the children's services system.

There now appear some signs of progress in that direction. For example, since the time of our interviews (1982) two major changes have taken place in the provision of children's services in New South Wales. First, funds for the establishment of child care services are now allocated by the State government in conjunction with the Commonwealth government according to a planning model rather than a submission model. Second, the Commonwealth and State governments are to jointly fund multi-purpose centres, each with places for 40 children and providing a full range of services: long day care, full day care, sessional pre-school, occasional care, etc.

Examination of these changes is obviously beyond the scope of this monograph. This task and a comparative analysis of developments in the other States has now been undertaken as part of the next stage of our research programme, which entails a wider scope for the study of the emerging child welfare system in Australia. At this stage, we can only say that the issues and basic questions that have been identified in our study need careful consideration by policy-makers if the problems encountered in the past are not to occur again.

Clearly, the provision of universal children's services, available to all families and at all times or for all reasons for which they might need them is a matter for policy decision. However, the findings of our study suggest that recognition of universal need for children's services alone might not necessarily be sufficient to ensure equitable access to families and children who need them because access is determined by many factors that occur at the operational level, e.g. location, cost, availability of places, and the providers' perceptions of parents' and childrens' needs. Thus, for example, placing children's services in disadvantaged areas will not necessarily ensure priority of access to disadvantaged families and their children. In order to ensure an equitable system of service provision, these factors, too, need to be recognised and appropriate measures taken to overcome the inequities of access. If the recognition of these issues took place, the positive aspects of children's services as a form of social parenthood would have a better chance of coming to fruition.

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