The Education of Parents of Children of Pre-School Age
through cooperation between the Family and the Teachers of young children

Report of the OMEP Committee of Experts meeting at the Unesco Institute for Education in Hamburg.
Presented by Mme S. Herbinière-Lebert Founder President of OMEP.
Publication of the report was made possible with the financial aid of Unesco.
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This brochure can be obtained from the OMEP Secretariat
in France: Mme Herbinière-Lebert, 134, Bd Berthier, Paris (17e).
Preface

O.M.E.P. (The World Organisation for Early Childhood Education) has among its vital aims, the necessity of making understood, to those who have the responsibility of bringing up children in infancy (i.e. parents, educationalists, doctors, governments, local and national authorities, public and private institutions and even the public) the importance of pre-school and early childhood education and the necessity of giving it to all children.

O.M.E.P. is convinced that the right educational environment during the first few years of life is one of the contributory factors towards a well-balanced adulthood and leads to harmonious development, which in its turn will have an effect on creating nations of peoples able to live in peace together. A really happy childhood, which has satisfied all the fundamental needs of the growing organism, prepares the child more adequately for the stresses and strains of the world of today. In this way good early education contributes greatly in bringing about the necessary moral progress, which must accompany material progress, if mankind is not to perish a victim of the great forces which he has released but not mastered.

One of the causes of the deep unrest of the modern world lies in the contrast between the extreme rapidity of the evolution of the conditions of human life and the slowness — some even say the immobility — of the evolution of Man himself.

Now Man must change to adapt himself to this new situation which makes him at one and the same time powerful and vulnerable because of the interdependence of all the nations. One person’s action in the near future could destroy the planet, but can you change Man? Many studies have proved that formal education is only effective within a range limited by character and aptitudes and by the sum of heredity. The mediocrity of results of formal schooling in all that pertains to moral progress suggests that real education has not hitherto begun early enough.

We are convinced that human growth is not solely absolutely determined by heredity. Certainly the child brings with him a capital of tendencies, aptitudes and predispositions which must always be taken into account, but the latitude for development is great and a well planned education can use them for the best or create circumstances favourable to the development of the best and the blotting out of the others.

Qualities and defects of the personality have the same emotional source; just as the root and the stem come from the same cell and move, the one towards the depths of the earth, the other
towards the light, a tendency can become a vice or a virtue, ac-
cording to circumstances, early influences and education.

One of the aims of the present document is to show the im-
portance of the family atmosphere during the early years of life,
when each day is important, because of the characteristic rapid
development and the great adaptability of the baby.

The terrible and enduring effects on personality caused by
a lack of maternal care and affection in early childhood are
known today. The whole system of creches and day nurseries
must be rethought in the light of these facts. In Nursery Schools
parents and teachers need to cooperate closely so that no harmful
separation from the mother is experienced by the young child
and so that he may enjoy to the full the extended opportunities
that the combination of home and school offers.

Experiences in the early weeks, months and years of life
often tend to determine the child's future attitudes in the diffe-
rent social situations which he will meet in the course of his life.
By the age of formal schooling, the twig is already bent, and the
teachers' influence is limited by a personality whose bases are
already formed. From birth to six or seven years of age, practi-
cally everything is possible and the younger the child, the more
possible it is to influence him, provided we have a profound
knowledge of the human material.

It is time that notice was taken of the possibilities of infancy — « Always being recreated » as the poet says, in order to
create a new humanity.

The little child comes to us ready for the best or the worst,
according to the conditions which are created and the influences
of his environment. His future is in our hands, not only his fu-
ture but indeed the future of the world ; for the humanity of
tomorrow is preparing itself in infancy. Today there is no more
urgent task than this preparation through children, of a world
society more ready to live together in peace.
Introduction

For many years doctors and parents thought that all that was necessary for the well being and development of young children was physical care, i.e. general hygiene, good food, sleep, quiet and so forth.

When the social services were first organised to help the family, they confined their work to advice on hygiene, medical consultation and maternity services. As a result, in the countries where these services have been carried on, great progress has been made even in the poorest social situation. Everywhere where these schemes have been attempted infant mortality has been reduced, but is this sufficient? Too many people, even those who have education, think that food, drink, sleep, cleanliness and a well ordered life are sufficient for the baby. However, the child is not merely a physical animal; from birth he manifests his humanity through an emotional, intellectual and social growth which is closely linked with his physiological development.

His first smile shows from the early weeks that he is a social being and has need of intercourse with those around him. These psychological needs are as important as the others and must, like them, be satisfied so that a physically and mentally balanced personality develops which can later become socially well adjusted.

Education starts in the cradle

Bernard Perez declared more than 60 years ago that education begins in the cradle. Although psychologists have supported and proved him to be right, this idea is still somewhat of a novelty little accepted or understood, not only by parents but by educators. Awareness of physical needs is more easily recognised because the effects of incorrect handling show immediately. In the early years, psychological mishandling could show very much the same symptoms and is often confused with physical illness, while many of the deep disturbances do not manifest themselves in psychological behaviour until much later. This has been really confusing for parents and sometimes the medical profession.

This is why, alongside the great associations which are already in existence and which are concerned with the protection of the child, we have created the "World Organisation for Early Childhood Education" which is concerned with finding the means of developing this early education. It appeals to all who are able, from near or far, to assist, and above all, to the parents who are the first educators of the child. Is the family prepared, not only to understand the importance of its educational role, but to fulfill
it? It is a delicate and difficult task for which it has scarcely been prepared up to the present.

The family has need of help

It is admitted today that the family has need of help. Good sense and traditions are not sufficient; the advice of specialists is necessary, that of doctors and nurses on physical needs, but also psychologists and teachers on the psychic needs which lead up to physical maturity. The cooperation of each and all will be necessary. The fundamental needs of the little child have only been separated to make their study easier, but it should never be forgotten that they are interdependent within the living unit that it represents. It can take many forms, some of which have already been tried: courses, discussions, publications, wireless transmissions, etc. An experiment at a longer range has also been tried in the form of preparing adolescents for marriage and future parenthood.

An effective aid - The Nursery School

Among the means of assistance which can be considered to help the parents of young children to become good educators is one to which one can turn immediately because it exists and has been proved over a long period — this is the Centre for Primary Education, which has various names depending on the country, but it offers, whatever it may be called, assistance of the first importance to the parents of young children (Nursery School).

The object of the meeting of O.M.E.P. experts was to study the various means of parent education through the Nursery School and how the Nursery School staff could contribute to awakening in the parents a sense of responsibility for their children. This led us also to consider the kind of training the Nursery School staff would require if they are to undertake this work.

At the same time, and in the same Institute at Hamburg, other experts, brought together by UNESCO, studied, along the same lines, various other aspects under which the parents' education can be effected. The participation by the two working groups in combined sessions helped to ensure co-ordination. This report gives the results of the work of the experts of O.M.E.P. It is of interest to parents and educators alike. For this reason the author has throughout tried to avoid technical terms in order to try and present a clear picture, within everybody's understanding.

It is quite obvious that each country has developed its own solutions to the problem and while all were of interest it was difficult, if not impossible, to show which was the best. We preferred to present them in their variety: the reader will find occasion for comparison and reflection. Concrete examples, after all, have the value of experience which theories cannot have.

S. Herbinière-Lebert
Founder President of O.M.E.P.
Preliminary information

The present report has been set out by Madame S. Herbinière-Lebert, Founder President of O.M.E.P., Vice-President responsible for relations with UNESCO, in collaboration with members of the International Committee of O.M.E.P.

COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

The International Committee of Experts, membership chosen by the National Committee of O.M.E.P.

Austria : Dr. Baar, Psychologist, Vienna (Austria).
Belgium : Dr. Jadot Decroly, Child Psychiatrist, Director of the Brabant Medico-Pedagogical Clinic.
France : Mme Herbinière-Lebert
Founder President of O.M.E.P.
Mlle Desclaux
Principal of Teachers Training College, Paris.
Mlle Abbadié
Inspectress of Nursery Schools, Paris.

Great Britain : Miss Caine
Adviser on Nursery Education, Birmingham (England).
Norway : Miss Elsa Esp
Child Welfare Inspectress, Oslo (Norway).
Yugoslavia : Mrs. Jelic
Lecturer, Training College for Kindergarten Teachers, Zagreb (Yugoslavia).
Portugal : Dr. Fontes, Director, da Costa Ferreira Institute, Lisbon (Portugal) (who took part in some of the meetings of the Committee of O.M.E.P.).

METHOD OF WORK

A preliminary study was made through a questionnaire addressed to the National Committees of O.M.E.P. or to competent people in various countries.

This questionnaire, drawn up by Dr. Wall of Unesco and Mme Herbinière-Lebert, consisted of two parts:

1 — The one concerns facts : « What exists ? »
2 — The other, suggestions as to : « What one would wish to see organised ». 

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Working Documents

a) The basic report. — A basic report based on a summary of all the replies received by this questionnaire was made by Mme. HERBINIÈRE-LEBERT and distributed to all members of both committees of experts (O.M.E.P., UNESCO) to act as a starting point for the discussion by the working parties.

b) Publications. — A whole series of publications, some having appeared a considerable time ago, were attached to the replies sent in by the various countries or individuals consulted.

These brochures were placed at the disposal of the experts during the whole period of their work. They are now in the keeping of the library of the UNESCO Institute, Hamburg.

We have to thank those people listed below for the additional reports, publications and other material.

Mr. Kornthauer (Austria)
Mlle Claret (Belgium)
Mr. Sigsgaard (Denmark)
Mme Herbinière-Lebert (France)
Miss Caine (Great Britain)
Miss Schill (Sweden)
Mrs. Marinic (Yugoslawia)
Miss Cornish Bowden (Canada)
Mr. Gunnar Dybald (Child Study Association of America)
Miss Pickard (English Committee of O.M.E.P.)
M. Isambert (Ecole des Parents - France)

“Pre-School” Education in the World

(Extract of the basic report)

The theme of our investigation is that the « Nursery School » is one of the best means of helping the parents of young children in educative work. It seemed useful to us to outline here its role and characteristics in the different countries, not only from the replies to the questionnaire but also from those we received as the result of an enquiry at the Congress of O.M.E.P. in Paris in 1949 and carried out for UNESCO on the organisation of preschool education in the world.

We shall not be able to give even a short analysis of the 400 pages here. Nevertheless, it is very interesting to note that the general ideas which came out of it are very near to the conclusions of the much more limited enquiry that we have just carried out.

It can be judged by reference to the statement we made on the subject to the World Assembly of O.M.E.P. at Vienna in 1950 and which has appeared in the report of the congress.
We give here the points which appeared to us to be essential. These are as follows:

**Institutions for early childhood education**

a) Aims of these Centres.

The centres started earliest (the French report gives the date of 1771) were started in answer to the social problem raised by women working outside the home as a result of the beginning (in the early nineteenth century) of the industrial era in which we now live and which was to change the family life so completely in all the regions which changed from rural life.

 Started, at first, in order to replace the absent mothers during the daytime, these centres were, and still remain, social ones for the protection of little children, exclusively reserved in their original state at least, for children of poor families. That is why they are only found in big towns for the most part and in many countries they are not found anywhere else.

 Meanwhile, by degrees, the development of the science of psychology has led to a better knowledge of the little child, for so long not understood, of his deep needs, physical and psychological.

 In order to meet all these needs, these centres, without losing their social character, have become centres of childhood education open to all children, even to those whose mothers are able to look after them.

 That is, in general outline, the development of these « schools » for the little ones; it goes without saying that it is not the same everywhere.

 If the ends are the same, some differences, occasionally of substance, exist in the method of organising these centres which have different names, according to the country, and in each country follow the characteristics of each. Exact comparison between one country and another is not always quoted. On the whole, attendance at these centres (which observe the needs of both the family and the child) is not compulsory.

b) Characters of the Centres.

1) Some with a mainly social bias are open for 10 to 12 hours per day and have the function of replacing the absent mother. Some are seasonal, functioning according to the work being done by the mother at certain periods of the year. They are reserved for the children of working mothers.

2) Others are educational, above all, open for a few days a week. They only take those who are less than 4 years old, in the afternoons. They offer, to all, companions for games, space and equipment for their activities and competent teachers.

3) In certain countries both aspects, social and educational, are combined in the same centre which receives children for a
shorter or a longer period, according to the needs of the family and those of the little ones.

For instance, the children whose mothers work are taken to school at the time of opening of offices and factories. Should it happen to be very early, the children are put to bed again so that they can resume their interrupted sleep. When they wake up they are properly looked after and washed and then get their breakfast. They find there, in so far as it is possible, the maternal care which otherwise they should be lacking. They are also made to have a nap after lunch.

In the same institutions there are children whose mothers stay at home. They of course arrive later only to take part in the games and educational activities which are thus organised for all children.

There is actually no reason for separating the social institution from the one which has an educational character.

Early childhood education is necessary for all children whatever the situation of their families may be.

Parents of different social classes meet each other at the Nursery School and one of its merits is that, through sharing common feelings, these parents are frequently brought together in a way which would not be possible otherwise.

4) One of our correspondants in the international enquiry of 1950 told us that, in his country, children's playgrounds were reserved for children of the "privileged classes".

"It is time," he wrote, "that these centres were opened to working class children."

This is exceptional but worth mentioning.

c) Age and Number of Children.

Reception age of children, which varies from 2 and 3 to 6 and 7, according to the country, also varies, even in the same country, according to the purpose envisaged for the centre.

The number of children being looked after by one adult also varies considerably according to the age of the children and the country.

d) Personnel.

As far as the staff is concerned the following factors vary with the country:

— Qualification of the staff.
— Hours of work.
— Length of holidays.
— Salary.
— Number and quality of other people who collaborate with the teaching staff.
e) Responsible Organisations.

Can be national, local; official or private.

f) Number of Centres in Relation to the Infant Population.

Proportions vary from country to country. Certain among them are already well equipped, others have only very few centres of "nursery training" for the young and there are some which have none at all. They will not be listed here for we are not concerned with an order of merit, but to consider facts.

g) How many Children Attend Nursery Schools.

In relation to the possible attendances this number varies greatly. In some countries, fairly small in number, where nursery education has scarcely any hold because they maintain that only the family must carry out these duties until school age, this number is an infinitesimal part of the whole total.

In others, where these centres have been in operation for a long time, attendance, before school age, reaches 60 or 70 %, above all, because of the quality of service and equipment, social as well as educational. To quote only one example — France: it is 30 % between 2 and 4 years of age, 50 % between 4 and 5, 80 % between 5 and 6. On the other hand, attendance in Great Britain is compulsory between 5 and 6 years of age and therefore is 100 %.

S. H.L.
How can Nursery School teachers help parents of young children to carry out their educational responsibilities?
I. Statement of the problem

Pre-school education is a difficult art.

Dr. Fontès says that in order to bring up a child, not only is a great deal of love needed, but also common sense and a certain amount of knowledge that parents rarely possess.

Can one prepare parents for this essential task, and how?

Many ways to educate parents can be envisaged. That which the Committee of Experts puts forward has the advantage of being already in existence and at the disposal of a large number of families. This is the Nursery School, the establishment of pre-school education.

This establishment is not only intended to be of service to children; it offers parents the possibility of cooperating with it in the education of young children; to become aware, through that active cooperation, of their responsibilities; and to acquire the means of assuming them.

The purpose of the present study is therefore twofold:

1. To show parents what are the educational problems which arise already during the first months of the life of a child so that they realise and understand not only the importance but also the difficult nature of such problems.

2. To indicate to parents what help they are entitled to expect, in this respect, from the educators of young children.

We therefore outline briefly the various stages of development of young children whilst limiting ourselves to a concise explanation of the problems they give rise to.

Co-operation between parents and Nursery School.

We thus hope to show to the parents why they need to be helped. We shall afterwards be able to justify the manner in which such help can be given to them.

Before starting the study, the committee of experts attempted a definition of terms that were to be used.

It was felt the term « Education of Parents » for children of pre-school age would put the parents in the passive position of the pupil who receives instruction from a teacher and would lead them to believe that they have everything to learn from the school. This statement neither corresponds to the present position nor
to what is hoped for the future. We replace the term by that of «The co-operation of the parents with the Nursery School». This raises the parents to the level of the teacher and brings them into the educative process.

The Nursery School cannot and does not wish to take the place of the family, however mediocre it may be, which has specific and irreplaceable responsibilities. It can, however, because of its educational nature, awaken the interests of the parents in this side of their children's development, thus enriching the family life of the child. It may still be necessary for the Nursery School to supplement the home in such instances as poor housing, the necessity for the mother to do full-time work outside the home, illness in the home; or social failure, such as alcoholism, imprisonment of one of the parents, etc., but this is not the main work of a Nursery School.

The present study will take account of all these important points.
II. The importance of the first years

From birth to age three.

The essential characteristic of the human being, in the embryonic stage and the first months and years of life, is the extraordinary rapidity of his development.

All the forces that come into play during this pre- or post-natal period leave deep and lasting marks on the child.

In the words of a biologist who is also a practising psychologist, « The organism forgets nothing. »

a) before birth: It is commonly accepted that the mother’s healthy physical condition during pregnancy, and the rest she takes, particularly during the two months prior to delivery, play essential roles in the physical development of the coming child.

But the psychological and physical states are intimately linked; we separate them arbitrarily here only for the convenience of our observations. In actual fact, they never cease to be of mutual influence. The mental state of the future mother is therefore at least equally as important as the state of her physical health. Whether she expects her coming child with joy, resignation or hostility, will have a favorable or detrimental effect on it from the moment of birth.

b) at birth: The attitude of parents to the child at the moment of its birth, depending upon whether it is welcomed as a happy event or an inconvenience; the acceptance of the child for what it is, whether girl or boy, blond or brunette, etc., is sensed by the newborn baby, admittedly not at the conscious level but nevertheless deeply enough to have a strong effect on his being. The behaviour of the mother towards her baby is of the profoundest importance to his present and future emotional life.

The way in which she feeds him, how she holds him in her arms, how she puts him to bed, how she guides his first steps, encourages him to play, protects him, and in general behaves towards him in all the varied aspects of her relations with her child all contribute towards the establishment of that climate of confidence and security that the child needs to develop normally.

c) importance of the family circle: We accept freely the notion that the baby is above all specially linked with his mother. But the behaviour of the father towards him is of almost equal importance. It often happens that the father is the more deeply disappointed when the baby turns out other than what he was hoping it would be: for example, a girl instead of the boy he was
expecting. The way in which he takes the newborn baby in his arms for the first time leaves its traces on the child's mental life. And it can never be repeated often enough that the child needs both his parents.

The family circle is the sum of all its elements, and all members of this group: brothers, sisters and grandparents, in accordance with their behaviour towards the baby, wield an influence that will be either favourable or adverse to his development.

With his first smile, the baby gives proof of his essential nature as a «social being» who needs affectionate ties to those around him, expressed by hugs and laughter, by voice and by gesture, by human contact with the person who takes him in his arms.

He needs also to feel around him the warmth of a united home; for it is not enough that each member of the family love the baby — there must also be harmony between them. While it would seem that the baby in his cradle is unaware of what goes on about him, he is in reality sensitive to cries of rage, to the abruptness of gestures, to his mother’s sadness.

Peace and kindness in the home contribute enormously to the development of a child’s emotional balance.

d) Some important stages: Each stage in the child’s development can give rise to educational errors, for they each present certain problems that should be brought to the attention of parents.

In the Child Welfare clinic, the doctor will have explained the rules of physical hygiene, but rarely is there anyone to tell mothers about the emotional and social needs of newborn babies. We must therefore applaud the creation of centres in which the pediatrician has a training in child psychiatry, such as the post-graduate degree in Pediatrics given by the University of Brussels.

Both the pediatrician and the psychiatrist are necessary when real difficulties arise.

Here we shall only make recommendations that can be followed by parents and educators.

They will in any case be sufficient to enable parents and teachers to avoid many of the difficulties and errors in the early education of children.

e) What is the child’s first education? All education is a release from bondage and is of importance to the whole of the individual, his physical well-being and his emotional life.

Problems of a psychological nature arise from birth and become more and more complex as the child grows.

The aim of pre-school education is to help the baby towards independence, to liberate him from the prison of his cradle and from the dependence on his mother during the period of nursing, whether breast or bottle-fed. He must be helped to become aware
of his own strength and to free himself, by the gradual mastery of his body and his impulses and by the use of his mental faculties, thus giving his developing mental and physical powers the freedom to grow through experience.

Nothing is gained by trying to accelerate the rhythm of this development, whose underlying causes, admittedly very complex, escape us. It is equally useless and occasionally even dangerous to attempt to hold it back because of a desire to keep the child at a stage that should already have been passed.

The child must be permitted the free play of all his natural powers which develop only through use, and it must be understood that there are in all apprenticeships periods of experimentation and hesitation, achievements followed by failures that also have their place in a child's training. An attitude of encouragement that inspires confidence must be adopted towards him. He must pass through all the stages of this development, characterized by abrupt thrusts forward, followed by withdrawals, then by new advances. All are fluctuating stages prey to varying influences: rapid physical growth that slows up the body's other forces, incubation period of an illness, or simply a passing stage of fatigue during which the child seems to be mentally at a standstill, while incomprehensible processes are at work in the depths of the little being in search of a stabilization of his forces. Parents can but observe these manifestations with attentiveness.

*Do not force, do not slow down, do not oppose the natural development, but organize the surroundings of the child so that as soon as a sign of possible progress appears, no occasion will be lost: these are roughly the rules of this first education.*

Finally, parents must not act towards the child as if he were never going to grow up.

Any action taken in cases of difficulty should not be limited to the solution of the immediate problem but should be thought of also in terms of their long-range effects.

**Problems of early childhood**

The emancipation of the child began at birth; it never ceases.

*a) Nursing* keeps the child dependent upon his mother; as vital to him as his mother's milk is his need to feel pressed close to her, in the foetal position that was his first experience during that strange adventure that brought him from nothing into being. That is why bottle feeding can only completely satisfy the child if he is fed while in that same foetal position.

In these moments of bliss when the body is being nourished, many other elements come into play: the warmth of his mother's bosom, the soft pressure of his mother's arms, the looks and smiles they are constantly exchanging, the baby talk to which the infant responds with enchanting coos and gurgles — all that is part of the "emotional" nourishment that is as indispensable
as the other, not only to the happiness of the baby but also to his normal, well-balanced development.

b) Weaning marks a new step along the road to emancipation; it is sometimes overly delayed by too "possessive" mothers enchanted with the idea of motherhood, who dream of a baby who will never grow up.

Certainly this mother-infant tie is wonderful and a source of inexpressible joy. It is truly the only tie that gives to the dedicated human being, no matter what he does, a feeling of being absolutely alone because he pays this price for the privilege of being unique, in believing that another being is his, that he is "he". And this delusion, never expressed, is without doubt the source of many of the educational errors made by parents.

The role of the parents is first that of self-denial, of unselfishness. They must accept, as an indisputable fact, that their child will also be a unique being, who will resemble them only to a degree, sometimes a very faint one that he has the right to be different from them, for nature has made him so; and that they must accept him as he is, help him to become everything that he is.

Weaning is one of the major problems at that age.

It must be done at the right moment unless the parents wish to run the risk, if weaning is held off until too late, of creating in the child an inability to adjust to society, the causes of which can only be attributed to lateness in weaning.

c) Baby eats alone. Here he is seated at table, now being fed porridge with a spoon. In only a few months, the clumsy little hand will want to grasp this utensil so that he too can do "like the others."

Do not hold the baby back from making this new attempt, of such great importance to him, under the pretext that he is very awkward, that he handles himself clumsily, and will never get to the end of it. In the field of education it has often been said that time lost is often time gained, and here is certainly a case in point. Dexterity will come in time, and with it neatness.

But what will the child who has been frustrated in his need for action and liberty do later on? Certain obstinate refusals to eat, when the child is between 4 and 6 years of age, have had as their origin none other than that opposition to a significant manifestation of one of the small child's most profound psychic needs.

d) The child walks. He began at first by holding himself upright, a special victory reserved for his kind, and here he is boldly setting out on the conquest of space holding his exploring little hands before him.

Be careful, fearful mothers; the hour of anguish is upon you; you dread his falls and this first flight from the nest which is, it is true, the prelude to all separations.
Your child must have confidence. Smile when he takes a tumble; you will already have so arranged things that under no circumstances could these falls be dangerous ones. Help him to get started again. The child is much more enterprising when he is reassured beforehand. And there is in him a certain instinctive judgment that permits him to undertake only what is possible for him.

The discovery of the world has begun. It will not stop.

Specialists say that this is the sensory-motor stage. This means that the child, after the first few weeks, never stops making use of his abilities: to move his limbs, to catch his toes or the shining object that is moving, are constantly renewed attempts that announce the coming of that great conquest in which the foregoing are but an apprenticeship: walking.

In addition, this implies that now that all the senses are awakened, the baby is storing away—ceaselessly and without discrimination—the message of things, of light and of sounds, those that come to him in comforting or aggressive shapes, "Be careful, it's prickly!" agreeable or painful sensations of heat, cold, roughness or smoothness, heaviness or lightness, all of which he desires to experience because he is a child of man and one day, to the extent of his discoveries, the world will belong to him.

These explorations are necessary. It is absolutely essential that the child be allowed to make them, without danger of course, but nevertheless with the door left open to some small risk to which no serious consequences are attached, that will be one of the bases of his experience.

For action and experimentation are vitally necessary to him.

e) The baby speaks. For some time now in his cradle, the baby has been giving proof that he would speak some day by his delight in his glibberish, an imitation of the language he hears around him. Little by little, words can be made out from the jumble of sounds he utters, a few words that his parents have made him repeat again and again; but there still remain all the words he is yet to pronounce, one does not quite know why, and which have very great expressive value according to the tone in which they are spoken, the cries and gestures that accompany them and which sometimes impart an urgent meaning to them.

In a few months, the sense of language is acquired. This has far greater meaning than the acquisition of words—a parrot can also learn words. It is the discovery of the efficiency of language, a method of communication and sometimes of domination over others.

f) The discovery of the "other". This revelation comes a bit before another that occurs between 2 and 3 years of age and which is the awareness of "self" as distinguished from the "others".

The others? He was not aware of them as such. Their appearances during the first months of his life were only responses
to his calls for help. He did not feel that they were distinct from him; they were «he». It was because of those needs that, in a very confused way, he came first of all to awareness of his body. Happiness and sadness gave form to the outlines without however isolating him from the circle in which he was suspended, as was the case during that time when his little life began, during the gestation period which nourished him.

Now the child ceases to identify himself, more or less, as one with the beings and things of his surroundings, in order to establish himself on his own, before them, in that extraordinary equation where his person is an exact counterweight to all the rest.

«I and the World,» the child would say if he knew how to express what he felt.

Why should there be any astonishment at this initial conception of the universe when through a miracle a conscious life was brought into being? The distance cannot be measured between Being and Nothing. The child, in whom a human conscience is being awakened and who has yet to experience anything that could constitute a basis of comparison for him, is entitled to think of himself as a master to whom everything is due. «He is the one who is.»

A little imagination will help us to understand this situation which will never again occur and the remembrance of which is lost to us. Nevertheless we have each of us experienced it. We must not therefore take offense at the egotistical attitudes the child displays when he is about 3 years of age. He is in the process of affirming himself as a new individual, different from all other beings, and who manifests this feeling every day and who is driven by a kind of organic necessity to put himself in opposition to the others. How wrong it would be of us to attribute this to bad will or disobedience!

**Some specific advice**

To resume, here is some specific advice:

Parents should know that:

— during the first two years in the life of a child, they are his natural and irreplaceable educators;
— the younger the child, the more rapid is his growth;
— he is more malleable and impressionable than at any other period of his life;
— their attitude towards him before birth, at birth and in the course of his first two years, has a very great influence on the way he develops;
— the unwanted child, if he is not accepted for what he is, if he is deprived of affection, neglected or ill-treated, develops personality problems and will later on have difficulty in his social relations;
— the child is not a toy, a curiosity; he should be respected and accepted as a personality just beginning to take form;

— the family climate is of great importance; a good family environment where affection and mutual understanding reign, and where tenderness is expressed towards the child by both the father and the mother and by all who surround him, gives the baby that feeling of security indispensable to the development of a well-balanced personality.

As he develops, the child will demonstrate his possession of more and more aptitudes that are perfected through use. Parents should encourage these formative activities, neither attempting to force any premature results, nor wishing to retard the natural rhythm of development. These two opposing attitudes exist together frequently, the one often expressing the desire of the father to see the child progress, the other that of the mother who regrets seeing him grow up.

Parents should allow the child freedom to enjoy his motor and sensory experiences and should permit him to make mistakes and to experience failure — essential conditions of all apprenticeships.

The child who is beginning to walk should not be expected to do so perfectly right from the start, for during a certain time he gropes, falls, and picks himself up; but with every passing day his steps are steadier. To forbid him to walk "because he doesn't know how" would be absurd. Yet that is what many parents do when for example they do not allow the child to eat or dress himself alone "because he is clumsy".

But do they ask themselves at what age should the child do this or that? To this important question, they have no other response but this one: "When the time comes." The child is aware of his own abilities and wants to do just what he is capable of doing.

During his growth, the child will gradually demonstrate certain aptitudes which are the results of the maturing process and which appear more or less early depending on the individual, but always in the same order. All these aptitudes must be allowed expression as soon as the child possesses them, for some are only passing ones and if they are not encouraged at the right moment, an occasion is lost that will never be found again.

Such is, for example, the aptitude for language which is never so large as it is during infancy, to such an extent that children under 5 speak several languages without difficulty or effort, and without accent. This faculty remains the privilege of the first years.

Parents should therefore be attentive to their child's development. But we warn them against erroneous interpretation of by now widespread scientific data concerning weight, height, tests, etc.

There is no such thing as a typical baby; there are only child.
dren, each of whom has his own special characteristics and who, in their development, may diverge from the norm without any necessity for alarm.

What the child needs are informed parents with confidence in themselves precisely because they are informed, and not worried parents!

It is certainly more difficult than one thinks to be good parents, but all healthy and well-balanced parents who get along well with each other can be good parents; it is enough that they understand the real needs of the infant and that they know to which specialists they can turn in case of need. The Nursery School teacher is one of those. With this knowledge, parents have all the necessary elements on hand to be good educators.

From three to seven.

The child has grown, he is beginning to become interested in other children, in the life of the street, in the neighbours. The time is no longer when, clinging to his mother's skirts, he anxiously cried out, when for a brief moment he had lost her from sight,

— « Mama, where are you? »

The situation is reversed now; it is the mother who anxiously calls,

— « Peter, where are you? »

For the child, on whom the outside world makes more and more demands, is full of curiosity.

He is especially interested in everything that moves, in everything that lives, familiar animals and, naturally, other children. He runs to the garden wall to look at them, sometimes climbs over in spite of his having been forbidden to do so, to speak to them.

If he is so fortunate as to have a little brother or sister, he must be allowed to take care of them so that he does not become jealous.

But what he needs most of all is a circle of children of his own age, perhaps even a bit older than he, for he has only one desire: to grow up!

Parents must accept these new needs as legitimate ones. Raising a child, we repeat, is to prepare him to live his own life, each day more independently of ours, until, having in turn become an adult and a parent himself, he discovers in the memories of a happy infancy and childhood the strength of the ties that unite him to his parents, and he then judges to their advantage or disadvantage the extent of their unselfishness.

The Nursery School can offer the child this enlarged circle
that he needs, this little society of his peers where he will be better able to serve his apprenticeship in the domain of social life.

Until now, parents were the only ones responsible for the education of their children. Certainly, they could ask a pediatrician, a psychiatrist or an educator for aid and advice but nobody was able to replace them where the child was concerned.

It is necessary to stress this: no institution, no matter how well organized it is, can possibly benefit the child as much as a very poor, even a mediocre family.

The institution can never be more than a stop-gap to be used when the family, for whatever reason, cannot perform its function.

In the case of very small children, where the mother works long hours outside the home, the Nursery School, as a social service, is a shelter to be used when maternal care is inadequate. It is still necessary in the present condition of society. We accept it for what it is, but without ceasing to insist on the necessity for the child, particularly those below 2 or 3 years of age, to have his mother with him.

It is quite another thing when we consider the Nursery School a place for pre-school education, and it is of this aspect that we speak here. It is the very best kind of help that can be given families when the child reaches the age of 3 and up to the time he enters primary school.

To specify just what we mean, a comparative study of these two essential circles — the family and the Nursery School — will enable us to show how each complements the other and how they can work together.
III. Roles of the family and the Nursery School in pre-school education.

What is the family’s irreplaceable contribution?

The whole of the family forms a living unit, a dynamic cell of varied colouration and with a special aspect, whose attributes reflect those of the larger community to which it belongs.

The family has its potentials, its difficulties, it has rights and obligations towards itself and towards society, in the same measure as society has rights and obligations towards the family.

The solidarity of the family does not exclude solidarity with the community, nor with humanity in general.

The father, mother, children and grandparents constitute the family unit whose soundness depends on the affection that unites its members.

Each member of the family represents the family, and shares with all the other members its joys and sorrows, honour or discredit.

All the interests are shared, and the insincerity of a single member compromises the happiness of all.

It is in effect a society in miniature, of a particular nature it is true, since while all its members are accorded the same emotional importance, all are unequal by virtue of age or responsibility. It is a hierarchical society.

But the family, to which the child at first belongs exclusively, offers the most propitious environment for him to have his first experiences in community living, and is the prelude to social life. The importance of this environment can be estimated if one keeps in mind that personality is determined in the first years by the influences exerted upon it by the child’s surroundings and the emotional climate that they develop around him.

When the child senses a feeling of security in his environment, family life awakens in him a feeling of confidence in the larger communities he will enter later on. It awakens in him that joy in living, normal in the healthy child, and which one day will be one of his best supports when he must confront the difficulties and sorrows that life inevitably brings.

Depending on the « climate » of the family environment, the child’s development will be either harmonious or perturbed, and the influences exerted on him today will mark his childhood, his adolescence and possibly his entire life.

The child, no matter how small, is an active member of the
family. A series of exchanges takes place between him and the
different elements making up the family group in which he plays
an active part.

His successful development depends to a great extent on the
nature of these exchanges, on the emotional overtones which sur-
round the way in which they are effected.

The consequences of the recent wars that deprived so many
children of their natural parents have alas provided a vast and
terrible experience that proved how indispensable the family is
to the well-balanced development of a child.

In the light of this knowledge, there is today a strong
emphasis on supervised placing of children in families rather
than in orphanages.

No matter how fine the institution and how excellent those
who direct it and work in it, it cannot recreate for the child the
special atmosphere of a good family — which is a restricted cir-
cle in which affectionate confidence reigns and where the child
feels himself a cherished element who is really important to all
the others because it is there that he has his place and his rights,
and he feels himself free to experience things without fear and
with the friendly encouragement of those around him.

A great imitator, the child models his behaviour on those he
observes around him, and in particular on the one parent with
whom he identifies himself.

His first social reactions will be the reflections of those of
his family.

A compact family life around him prepares the child to
understand others.

It should not be so closed a circle as to give rise to a kind
of group egotism. On the contrary, its emotional strength should
be such as to awaken in the child, if the family group has adop-
ted a friendly attitude towards everyone, similar attitudes which
will lay the groundwork for strong human friendships.

The family’s role in the formation of the world of tomorrow
is incomparable, for one can say that each individual is the re-
presentative of his own family, whose traditions he continues and
whose emotional tendencies he reproduces.

If we examine in detail what the young child finds at home
and what the school can never offer him, we can say again that
at home he is already making contact with the realities of do-
monic life. In observing his father and mother, he discovers the
respective roles of the man and the woman in the home. If he
accompanies his mother to market, that is the way he learns the
price of things and the value of money and all that it can procure.

The child must in addition manage to get along with those
who are younger and older than he, big brothers or sisters and
adults whose interests are different from his and with whom he
must work out a modus vivendi.

In school, he will find only his equals, which of course pre-
sents certain other advantages.

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At home, there are objects that belong to him personally, and he can say, « my bed... my chair... my toys », while at school he will always have to share with his friends.

At home, he will have many occasions to give as well as to receive, since he possesses things of his own.

The sense of ownership is implanted above all by the family. We know that for the little child, « possession is nine-tenths of the law », since the word « lend » has no meaning as yet.

The child should have already acquired a clear notion of the sense of ownership before he attends school where he will have to share all his possessions with his friends and to leave them behind him when he goes home. If not, conflicts will soon arise which, as a matter of fact, will serve an instructive purpose. If he has brothers and sisters, he learns about « the other sex » at home. The only child learns this at school.

Thus the home provides the child with elements of information and creates a climate that the school cannot bring about.

What the Nursery School offers children.

First of all, the school is a different environment, and a larger one, which holds out for most children the attraction of the unknown, provided however that they have not been stupidly threatened with going to school as punishment for misbehaviour.

To grow up is the desire of all well-balanced children; to behave like big brother who leaves for school every morning is an ideal.

A house of children.

The Nursery School is the only house that is organized for the child. It has furniture and installations geared to the size of the child, material for all his activities, numerous toys, and space for outdoor frolics. The sand lot that satisfies his need to dig and to construct, the wading pond for water games, playground equipment for climbing and jumping, rarely found in the family garden, and often also little plots of ground to cultivate, with all the necessary gardening tools, cages full of birds, or animals to care for.

But more than all that, the child finds a group of other children.

A society of children.

A child who at first is nervous in too large a group of children — we shall see later how to resolve this problem — once acclimatized, establishes new relations with his friends. He realizes little by little that the teacher is not there for him alone, a situation that certain children accept with difficulty, and which leads him to feel isolated from his equals. The responses he receives to his aggressive attempts very quickly put things in their
proper perspective without need of intervention by the teacher. A new step is taken in regard to acceptance of the others. It is in any case an enriching experience, but often a frustrating one as well, particularly so in the case of the only child, or the child who is jealous of a younger brother or sister.

Spontaneous friendships are formed whose emotional power is sometimes surprising. Friends are made earlier in school, and more easily.

The ties that are created depend already on sex: little girls like to look after small children — a first manifestation of the maternal instinct — but boys prefer friends of their own sex and are already dominated by the bigger boys or by those who show leadership qualities.

Groups are formed spontaneously, first for games, later for working together. A first notion of the idea of cooperation and its advantages begins to take shape in the course of working together.

The feeling of solidarity is awakened: all the children receive the same benefits, the toy damaged by one deprives all the others, or the continuity of a particular theatrical game is broken because Peter, who was to play the wolf, is ill and will not be coming.

Acquiring a knowledge of the structure of social life is facilitated by the child's presence in a society of equals, an ideal society it is true, for there is a teacher to keep order, maintain peace and see that justice is done. Because of this, is it not then more educational?

The child discovers there the value of cleanliness, order and care, of helpfulness and courtesy, the efficacy of perseverance; he learns to respect everything that lives; develops a taste for beauty; his judgment ripens when he compares the results of his own undertakings with those obtained by his friends; their example provides him with a stimulation that he misses at home where he cannot compare himself to everyone.

He becomes aware of his own powers, but also of their relativity. Unceasingly, he sees success just beyond his reach and he will try to attain it not in a spirit of rivalry, but for the joy of overcoming an obstacle.

He learns the true meaning of liberty, which is mastery of himself and respect for the liberty of others.

He discovers also that in order to be liked he must be « likable ». In this environment affection is not something due him; it must be earned if it is to be given him, and it depends on whether he behaves well or badly towards others. Moreover, he can work out his aggressions in school without the feelings of guilt that would overcome him at home.

Jealousy — that unhappy aspect of egotism — becomes tempered, since the child must always feel he is a valued member of his group and is thus obliged to admit that his friends have the same rights as he and that he shares them with them.

To summarize: he is no longer alone, the focus of interest
of the family group. This loss of "royalty" is compensated for by the charms of friendship whose collective power seems to strengthen him.

Consciously or not, the "class" has a personality of its own which is not entirely the sum of the individuals composing it but something else again; it possesses something resembling a sort of collective soul which confers on him a certain prestige.

The child willingly says, "my class" and "my teacher" as if he were saying "my mother" and "my house."

It is good that this is so.

This feeling of belonging to a family, to a community, is an important factor of security for the individual and a good basis for the development of a well-balanced personality.

The child's personality, that becomes more and more pronounced every day, develops side by side with other different personalities whose existence he must take into account. Man is not made to live alone in the desert but together with others of his kind. To be able to adapt is one of the great laws of life; to adapt to others is a necessity for harmonious social life.

The only child, for example, needs the Nursery School much more than the others. A spoiled child, he therefore meets with his friends' resistance and opposition to his demands, and little by little his behaviour becomes less aggressive, less self-centred. In the case of a too pampered, too aggressive child, life in a community of children of his own age has the great advantage of teaching him to defend himself.

Community life requires that a balance of power be reached, which in school occurs without undue shocks owing to the presence of an alert teacher who moderates the greedy, encourages the timid, calms the violent, gives confidence to the weak; in other words, who harmonizes the life of this little world in miniature, already swept by all the passions of mankind but which the teacher can direct into healthy channels by the delicacy with which she controls this experience in community living. It is also an occasion for mutual enrichment. The child finds in it innumerable suggestions for his undertakings and his games.

**Specialized teachers.**

Finally, the little child finds specialized teachers in school; that is, adults who are not his parents but who, like them, are interested in him, ready to love and to protect him.

They are not attempting to replace the mother; they are and must be something else; the child himself expects them to be different.

He says, "my teacher," but he knows that he shares her with many children, and that to a certain extent she always remains a stranger since he does not find her in his familiar home circle.

It is perhaps one of the teacher's marks of prestige that the child knows nothing of her life outside the Nursery School. We
know of a case where a little girl cried tears of disappointment when she learned that her teacher lived in a house like her own.

This sense of being out of one’s element, if it does not «shock» the child too much at the beginning, without doubt has certain advantages. It opens his horizons to those «other places» about which he will go on dreaming until the moment comes when the individual stabilizes himself at the start of his professional life, marriage, etc. And those who are poets continue to dream of them throughout their lives.

The child should come to understand and accept, from the beginning, that the teacher belongs to everybody. But the teacher will see to it that each child feels that she knows him through and through, and above all, understands him.

The child has a right to a response to each appeal he makes, even if it is only a glance or a smile.

Alertness is, for the teacher, a cardinal virtue; she must possess the gift of being everywhere at the same time.

She must be able to see everything and perhaps be everywhere at the same time. That is the way it is. At least, the child thinks so.

She knows everything and can do everything — this is still another belief that should be broken down very gradually, carefully, so as not to make the child lose confidence, but in order to bring him to face the realities he must confront with courage while he is growing up.

At school, the child is on his own for he must depend on his own abilities; mama is not there to take off his coat or to wash his hands. He acts on his own, proud to have arrived at the stage of being able to manage things, discreetly helped when necessary — and only in cases where the difficulties are too great — by the teacher, or even better, by one of the older children. But help is not given to him unless he asks for it, and not always even then.

He establishes his own rhythm of activity, for he knows that he is not disturbing anyone. Here he is in his own element and adults are there only for him; he knows perfectly well that he is not in their way, that they have not «something else to do,» as mama sometimes says.

Everything he does is play and work at the same time. His need for action is satisfied by the many possibilities for action that are offered him during the day by educational toys designed for him, or by the plain, every-day occurrences of his life in school.

Reassured by the faithful presence of the teacher, he is not afraid to undertake something he would not have dared to try at home, mainly because at home he would not have had the opportunity to receive suggestions such as are made to him by his teachers or by his friends in school, nor without doubt would there be the means to carry them out.

He is also confident that what he does will be appreciated; the teacher is always there to judge, approve and help.
She is at his complete disposal, but — it is equally true — she is also entirely at the disposal of the others.

And if she likes children — if not, would she have chosen to spend her life with them? — she often understands them even better than their mothers because she has the psychological training that parents do not always have, and she remains more acutely perceptive than they.

She is less demanding than those whose egos make tyrants of them toward their children, less adoring than those who are enslaved by their despotic children, because she can compare the individual child to many other children and discover the real worth of each. The teacher is more even-tempered because nothing surprises her; she is not shocked by the behaviour of children since she is prepared for it; she creates a peaceful atmosphere around them which affords each the opportunity to develop a well-balanced personality.

Because it is her role to be patient, she has the time to wait for the child to make his own experiments; and because she is competent and knows her profession, she organizes his surroundings in such a way that he finds ample means of satisfying his curiosity; tools and equipment for him to build things; ways in which he can express himself, from just playing to designing, making music, theatrical games, marionettes: installations which permit him to imitate grown-up activities: a set of small tools for carpentry, domestic equipment for cooking, washing and ironing; a baby to dress, feed and take for a walk; gardens to cultivate; little animals to care for; a make-believe shop, a doctor’s office; a telephone operator’s switchboard, etc.; not to speak of raw materials, for little hands that want to be kept busy, to be transformed into thousands of useful objects: masks, doll’s clothing, toys or playhouses where the child can install himself and make believe that he is serving lunch, receiving friends, etc.

And where is the teacher all this time? Does anyone care?

The child knows that she is there and ready to come to his aid, but he enjoys acting as if he has no need of her, to prove himself to her as he proves himself to himself.

A desire to exceed himself is constantly present within him.

Is that not the most powerful incentive to all progress? Let us only hope that each of us keeps until the end of our days this magnificent desire of the very small child to be bigger each day than he was the day before, constantly to be improving and always to be going further and further ahead!

Parents who perhaps will read these lines will understand why a Nursery School can contribute so much to your children without in any way diminishing what only you can give them.

But the Nursery School could not possibly act on its own, and these two worlds, home and Nursery School, so different in aspect, must not remain ignorant of each other. For above all, the continuity of the child’s life must be preserved, and in pas-
sing from the home to the school, the small child must not be subjected to any emotional disruption.

These two worlds in which the child expands, while distinct, are held together by his delicate charm. We owe this little child the establishment of a very close cooperation between the teacher and his parents.

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Before touching on this important question, let us specify the services that the Nursery School can offer to the parents themselves.

What the Nursery School offers all parents

For children below three years of age

For the first two or three years of his life, only the child's parents can be his teachers. From this point of view, they are irreplaceable. This holds true not only for the mother, but also the father. What then can teachers do to help them?

In the Nursery Schools, they are entrusted with children of 2 or 3 up to 6 or 7. But they must not restrict their interest and their knowledge to just this particular period of childhood. The child is not born the day he is registered in one of these establishments, and he will not cease to «be» when he leaves it.

It is necessary for the teacher to know the nature of the child's development from birth, therefore, and the psychological stages of his development by the time he reaches school age, in order to understand this intermediate age — sometimes called «second infancy» — which is reached when the child is ready for Nursery School.

Teachers generally acquire this knowledge in professional teachers' training schools; it enables them to help parents, not only with regard to the education of Nursery School children, but also prepares them for everything concerning primary education which begins in the cradle.

The teacher can therefore on occasions be of help to parents of a child too young for Nursery School if they have already been brought into contact with the school through the attendance there of an older child.

She can not only draw the attention of the parents to the importance of the very first years in a small child's development and their influence on the formation of his future personality; to the importance of the family environment and the educational errors to avoid; but she can also counsel them in certain cases and advise them of the existence of specialists or specialized bodies, or suggest psychiatric consultations that might be helpful to them in solving difficult problems. The more confidence the family has in the teacher, the greater will be the value of her counsel.
For children from 3 to 7

The Nursery School offers mothers the following:

— a few hours of peace during which, freed from the monopoly of the child, they can once again take stock of themselves and either attend to their household tasks or take care of other members of the family; take up some professional responsibility to which every woman has the right; or simply devote herself to her own personal improvement or to other aspects of her personality; for to be a mother does not dispense her from being a woman, a citizen or a key person in the community.

Pleasure is heightened when one is reunited after a separation, and harmony is easier to attain when one is not obliged to be constantly together during every moment of the day.

There are mothers who are worn out by their baby’s vigour which seems to become even more overpowering when the mothers are weaker.

The school helps to maintain an even emotional balance of the mother-child couple. Both are the beneficiaries. The Nursery School prepares them:

— for the inevitable separation that must one day take place and that mothers must expect and accept with good grace;

— for a better understanding of their children.

There are some who may be astonished to read that the school can help the father and mother to understand their child. It is a fact however that once removed from their influence, the child can better show what he is when he finds himself among his friends, where he does not feel himself under observation.

It is there that his parents should come to observe him, without themselves being seen by him, and they will discover that he is at times quite different from what they believed.

For many, this will be a revelation.

Too pampered at home where all effort is spared him, all initiatives are rendered useless, the child does not have the means to develop all his potentialities. At school, where everything is organized to encourage him to display all of his abilities, he has the opportunity to learn what they are and to reveal them to others. Parents thus see what he is capable of doing, and learn what interests him.

A child who is timid because at home his family lives in constant fear of illness or accident and thinks that by tending to his every need all effort is avoided, may discover that at school he is a leader full of initiative.

And this other child, self-willed, capricious because everyone around gives in to him, who makes a game out of obliging people to satisfy his every whim, becomes a model of kindness towards his friends, since from the very beginning they reacted against his customary attitudes, and as he is intelligent, he soon understood the rules of the game.

But, to educate a child, is it not necessary first fully to understand him?
Would the parents understand, if the teacher did not tell them, the importance of their own behaviour towards the child? The teacher discovers that this little boy is greatly upset by a family quarrel, already forgotten by the parents, but which the child has taken seriously, even tragically; or that this child is miserable because of the fuss made over his newborn baby brother to whom mother is paying greater attention; jealous and worried, he tries, by behaving as he did when a baby, to recover the exclusive status he once occupied in his mother’s life and finds himself rebuffed with: «No, no, I can’t hold you in my arms, you’re too big!»

The teacher makes it very clear to the parents just what her true role is: not that of a substitute parent but an aid to the parents to help them to understand their educational responsibilities. She explains why they should not seek to throw a false light on the place of the school in their child’s life by saying, for example, to a rebellious child: «You’ll see! I’ll tell your teacher about this!», thus using the school to cover up their own failure to maintain discipline.

Together with the parents, the teacher tries to solve the problems that come up — as they always do — at home, sometimes in school, which have their origins in the family.

She helps them to understand that the child, however small, has a right to be respected, not only because of his helplessness but because of what he will become some day.

To respect the child does not imply giving in to his fancies; the «little King» does not exist who is not also a tyrant. It means simply that one must admit the child has a right to his own life, which is different from our own, and that although his interests, his inquisitiveness and his needs are not ours, they must all be satisfied, and that the family circle must expand to make room for the child with his personal rhythm of life and his particular emotional drives.

It is not enough, when one knows that a child is on the way, to install a crib; he must some day be able to escape from it. In other words, as soon as he begins to walk, a special corner of the house must be reserved for him alone, a place where he can feel that he is master and be responsible for the things that belong to him. He should be free to make use of it as he wishes, and little by little, so as to be sure of finding his possessions again, he will become accustomed to putting things properly away.

What should one think of bad behaviour traits in children, i.e. disobedience?

No matter how small the child, his private domain is vitally necessary to him. It would not be advisable suddenly to disturb him there.

The child is completely removed from the cares that beset adults. His is a world apart from them. Why then should there be any surprise at his refusal to obey orders that he neither anticipates nor understands?

There he was on his travels, together with his model train
shooting out cloudy jets of steam, and — all of a sudden — now he must go to wash his hands? Why?

Let us put ourselves in the place of a child at play who’s heedlessly interrupted. Playing is a very serious thing for him, at times even a solemn thing, and yet — here come grown-ups who, without any understanding, upset everything with their untimely demands!

Would you accept being interrupted in the midst of work by an incomprehensible command directed at you, ordering you to go someplace where you yourself have no desire whatsoever to go?

Just as we adults resent being ordered around without justification, we also do not have the right to order the child around as we wish. And yet, how many parents who love their children deeply act like this towards them?

This is what we meant when we wrote that the child has the right to be respected.

Be patient, kind mothers, and take the time to explain to your child just what it is you want of him. Be tactful in making the transition between the imaginary world in which he is living and yours to which you want to bring him.

If you always approach him with the same good humour, and take the same precautions each time, you can be confident that your child will quickly understand that he must obey you.

And you will then be more than justified in being resolute when your child is naughty.

This does not in any way mean that the family must submit itself to all the whims of the child — but what he is thinking, what he is feeling, and what he is, must all be taken into consideration; and since he cannot adapt himself to us, because he is smaller, and he cannot imagine what it is that we are, it is up to us to adapt ourselves to him and to understand his needs.

Obviously this is just one example, and we do not wish to imply that the entire responsibility for their children's behaviour traits such as lies, temper tantrums, jealousy and disobedience — so disturbing to parents — are often only a result of the parents' inadequacies.

The teacher will help the parents to find solutions to these little difficulties and — even better — show them how they can be prevented from occurring.

The Nursery School cooperates with parents in supervising the child's health

It is strongly recommended that the child’s growth and the circumstances of his development be recorded from birth.

This idea has been adopted in many countries and takes the form of a health record in which are recorded details about the family, the child’s growth, his illnesses, the age at which he had his first tooth, walked, spoke, etc. This record, begun by the nurses responsible for the infant’s care while in the nursing stage, is kept up to date by the Nursery School.
This is standard practice by now in many countries. In Norway, the record is filled in as time goes on by the teacher. In Portugal, it remains in the hands of the doctor. In France, the social worker is responsible for its maintenance. In England, teachers take the oath of professional secrecy as do doctors and social workers.

But the practice of giving the parents an information questionnaire to fill out is not yet fully accepted everywhere, nor has agreement been reached as to the most propitious moment for it to be filled in. Experience will prove what is the best time.

But in any event, the greatest discretion must be observed by personnel responsible for obtaining this information, and professional secrecy as in Great Britain should be the rule for teachers.

This measure will undoubtedly help to reassure families who are always a bit suspicious of this kind of investigation. It is nevertheless not only a key to understanding the child and his family environment; it is also a means of making the parents aware of the importance of every factor in the child’s development. That is why we hope that the use of a health record, or information sheet, will become more and more widespread.

Finally, when serious difficulties arise in the family, the school can offer the parents a neutral environment where problems can more easily be brought into the open and solved. It goes without saying that the school must be very careful indeed in respect to the advice it offers, and should advise families to get help from the appropriate specialist such as the psychiatrist, psychologist, etc.

**Early identification of problems in development**

This again is a very important area in which the Nursery School can render great service to families.

A daily witness of the life of children, the teacher can recognize — because of her vast experience — problems in development that sometimes escape parents who either are less well-informed or who refuse to recognize the signs of trouble when they first occur.

Whether it is a matter of a slight physical malformation, motor or sensory deficiencies (i.e. a child who sees badly, hears badly, has difficulty with language), or — and these things happen — of a more or less slightly arrested mental development, the teacher can identify these deficiencies very early and alert the families so that they can observe their child’s behaviour. She will invite them, if necessary, to consult the specialist who alone is qualified to give a valid diagnosis. The essential thing is that appropriate treatment be given, and the earlier it is begun the more efficacious it will be.

In this way, the Nursery School can carry out its function as a centre of vigilance where any anomalies in the physical or mental development of the young children in its care can be immediately identified. We stress: identification — that is to say, a first indication, a warning — nothing more. But that is already a great deal.
The teacher will also be of service to parents in calming their fears, so easily raised, by explaining to them that since the young child is so pliable, rapid treatment is almost always crowned with success; or by forcing them to become objective if, blinded by love, they refuse to admit to themselves that there could possibly be anything wrong with their child.

**Role of the Nursery School in the case of handicapped children**

There could be many reasons for a disturbance in the physical or mental development of the young child; the need for early identification and early treatment cannot be stressed strongly enough.

These troubles could be physical, emotional, sensory or mental: motor retard, underdeveloped sensory capacities, language difficulty, emotional maladjustment, mental deficiency, etc.

Sometimes these problems can be treated at home, with the child continuing to enjoy the benefits of the presence around him of a circle of normal children in an ordinary school; this is the solution that should be sought to the extent that it is possible. The placing of a pre-school age child in a special school should be done only in very exceptional cases.

Separation from the family group gives rise to serious emotional problems which might reduce to nothing the effects of treatment in a specialized institution.

The psychiatrist will therefore have to advise the family on the course to be followed.

He will often feel it necessary to ask the school to organize its services in such a way that handicapped children can be received without disturbing the other children, and without their being disturbed in turn by the others.

Since in a given school community there would never be more than a few such cases, the solution should be easily found by the teachers.

A still closer cooperation will be established between them and the psychiatrist or appropriate specialist over the question of the psycho-pedagogic therapy to be instituted in the school and at home.

The teacher will have still another role to play by permitting the parents to observe certain re-education exercises given at school that will then be taught them so that they can deal with each particular case: children who have difficulty in hearing, with language or pronunciation, or who require exercises in mental orthopedics as well as corrective gymnastics or motor education.

Thus, on all levels, the Nursery School, with understanding, competence and affection, relates its activities to those of the parents in order to secure for young children the surroundings and the care they require.
What parents contribute to the school

We have described in some detail the services the Nursery School can render parents and children, but have teachers anything to learn from parents?

It would be fallacious to believe that parents know nothing because they have not obtained their knowledge from books.

Parents' intuition and their love for the child enable them to understand many things that escape the notice of others. And there are excellent parents who, right from the start, understand how they should behave with their child.

Close contact with the families can be profitable also to the teachers themselves.

a) knowledge of the child:

Teachers learn right at the beginning that there always remains a little bit of the unknown in the child if they do not know what his life is like at home.

Living habitually in an environment of children could in the long run blunt their sensitivity, impose upon them perhaps a certain rigidity of method, the very routine of their profession being a contributing factor. An interview with the parents restores to the child, whom they are accustomed to see in the midst of a group, a distinctive character, whose nature might possibly escape them; it keeps them from making inaccurate generalizations, makes them recognize the individual characteristics of each child and enriches their knowledge of the child, of everything that is confided to them about the family and the way in which it behaves.

b) active cooperation:

If the parents have fully understood the importance of their role in the education of the small child, they will give the teachers active cooperation so that the educational activity of the school will be completed and reinforced by this close cooperation.

This should not be limited to cooperation only with teachers. It is necessary first that parents take an interest in their child's education to such an extent that they feel the need for an improvement in pre-school education as a whole, since that is the period of life that has the greatest impact on the formation of the child's personality. It is necessary therefore not only that they exert pressure on the legislators to enlarge the school system and increase the equipment of pre-school establishments, but that they also ally themselves with the educators to improve the quality of the school system and the services it offers.

Parents are the basic social force in the fight for the organization of a Nursery School system that corresponds to the needs of the child and the family, for it is the parents who are the most vitally interested. Are they not moreover mainly responsible for the happiness of future generations?
SCHOOL ASSISTANTS

Domestic staff

No matter how competent and experienced the teacher may be, she needs the help of others to accomplish her task.

Because they are present every day, let us speak first of the domestic staff responsible for material care, the preparation of meals, etc.

They also exert influence on the child through their behaviour towards him and their conduct in general.

We shall say it once again: everything has an effect on the child when he is at that "receptive" age of pre-school childhood; by virtue of the prestige in which they are held by the child, adults, no matter who they are, influence the child, in either a negative or a positive way, depending on who they are.

Domestic personnel should be able to cooperate with the teachers in the same spirit of love and respect for the little child, and it is not surprising that some specialized training is being envisaged for them so that they do not unwittingly destroy the educational influences exerted by the school.

Child specialists

But we wish above all to speak of child specialists: the school doctor and the school social worker, then the psychologist and the psychiatrist.

The Doctor

In most countries having an organized pre-school system, the doctor pays regular visits to the schools to inspect the health of the children and their physiological development.

But is he truly equipped to cooperate with the teachers, to understand the complex problems that are more pedagogical than medical in nature and which nevertheless have an influence on physical health?

We put the question here and we will take it up again further on.

The Medical Social Worker

She is known by different names in different countries: school nurse in Belgium, school health assistant in France, social worker in other countries. Sometimes she has an office in the school, which is all to the good.

Her medico-social training enables her to be an invaluable aid to both the doctor and the teacher at the same time. She knows the family’s problems and acts as a liaison agent between it and the school in everything that concerns the child’s health and the family’s problems. She can assist the family by aiding the mother when she brings a child in for medical consultation:
she helps the shy mother to explain things to the doctor; she gives her suggestions as to how to give the treatment prescribed; she will even replace the mother in case of necessity.

But what must be avoided is the taking away from the parents of all their responsibilities. In all circumstances, the rule is always: help the parents in difficulty, but maintain or develop their interest in their children’s problems and avoid substituting herself for them except in exceptional instances.

Everything that will be done to enable her to cooperate more competently with the teacher will have our approval.

**The Psychologist and the Child Psychiatrist**

also are the school’s indispensable collaborators. It is to them that an appeal must be made in delicate cases.

The confidence placed by the parents in the teacher to whom they entrust their most precious blessing gives them reassurance when the teacher must obtain their agreement to consult either of these specialists.

Without her, parents would perhaps hesitate to take such a step, first because they might be unaware that they needed their help, or because they would perhaps not know where to look for them, and finally because it might appear to them that taking the initiative of submitting their child to a medical or psychological test would seem a little as if they were placing too great an importance on the little irregularity, often unnoticed, that has been pointed out to them. How many would prefer to keep their illusions, saying, « It will disappear when he grows up! » Unfortunately, it does not disappear and one must act.

**What a good Nursery School should be**

Given the foregoing as an outline of the advantages of the Nursery School, and of the cooperation of the family with the school, the following points were raised in this connection during our research:

1) the conditions that the school must fulfill in order to exercise its educational function with regard to children and with their parents.

We must therefore point out some of the problems that will have to be studied, for they are not yet solved and the questions are but barely outlined. The O.M.E.P. will undoubtedly devote itself to this new study:

a) **How frequently should the child attend Nursery School and what should be the duration of his stay there when he is 3, 4, 5, or 6 years old?**

Gesell has supplied answers to this question, but because the conditions of observation are different it is our opinion that his views should be re-examined. We would remind the reader that we are not dealing here with the
problem of children who require Nursery School services for the entire day because their mothers are working outside the home. For those children, the Nursery School which takes the place of the absent family remains a necessity for the entire day.

b) How large should the group of children be to which a young child could attach himself, according to age?

c) What should be the size of the group entrusted to a teacher, according to age?

d) How large should the schoolrooms be, and how should they be arranged so that the child does not feel lost; so that to some degree he can recapture some of the intimacy of the home?

In a Nursery School in England

Cook's assistant and a nursery boy peeling apples for dinner.
The school kitchen is an important part of the nursery and children are welcomed. Here a great deal is learnt and a good relationship established between all types of staff and the children.

(Given by Miss Caine)
Up to the present time, the solution to this problem has been sought only by taking into consideration the amount of air per cubic foot, but there are many emotional factors which also come into play here and which have at least equal importance.

2) methods of securing this indispensable cooperation.

3) prerequisites for teachers' training so that they are truly prepared for this collaboration with the parents.

In a Nursery School in England

Children and cook are fast friends and the children gain experiences which happen naturally in the good home and are more difficult to achieve in nurseries.

This need is fully realized and the kitchen staff are usually delighted to give this important contribution to life in the Nursery School.

Much is learnt here, which will stay with the child. The sympathetic and patient attitude of the cook and the concentration of the children should be noted. Boxes are provided for standing on.

(Given by Miss Caine)
What remains for us is to indicate how this desired liaison should be established between specialists in the sciences of children and the school, and between the various bodies that concern themselves with children, school and parents.

In a Nursery School in England

Another example of learning from cook. To work alongside a skilled craftsman is one of the best ways of learning and both, child and cook, seem to be gaining satisfaction from their companionship.

Even Dolly is tolerated in the kitchen where a high standard of cleanliness does not mean a lack of human values.

(Given by Miss Caine)
IV. Cooperation between the family and the Nursery School

Cooperation between the family and the school, while useful for children of all ages, is indispensable for the child of preschool age, which is the period during which he is responding actively to all the influences exerted by his environment; the defence mechanisms he will bring into play during his infancy can become ingrained and form patterns of reaction that might be favourable or adverse.

Education is an impregnation that takes place every moment of the day. It is not communicated through the teaching of precepts but by action and by example.

Every adult who lives with a child exercises on him an influence that is either good or bad, but never insignificant.

That of the parents takes on greater or less proportions and is more or less powerful in accordance with the degree to which the child has a feeling of complete confidence in them. Whether they wish it or not, parents are the educators of their children and no one is qualified to take this role away from them. The teacher can only complete the family's educational action.

« Family and school » together should cooperate in such a way that the child feels this accord among those at whose sides he is going to live. This harmony is indispensable. At the mercy of discordant influences, pulled in opposite directions, the child cannot find his equilibrium. Uniformity of action on the part of his parents and teachers will ensure that coherence of their conduct which is so reassuring to him.

To provide for this uniformity of action, parents should get to know the school environment thoroughly, and teachers in their turn should familiarize themselves with the family environment.

It is indispensable for the teacher to be on good terms with the family, that she be welcomed into it if necessary, so that friendly relations can be established between them.

Practical means of parent-teacher cooperation

Individual Methods

Day to day opportunities.

Overwhelming evidence from the research seemed to show that the best means of building up good relationships between home and Nursery School were the informal talks between the teaching staff and the parents which take place daily when the parents come to the Nursery School with their children in the
morning or collect them in the afternoon; especially where this was the accepted procedure in the Nursery School. In this way, parents and teachers get to know each other and both become accustomed to discussing the progress of the children either in private, or with two or three parents with similar interests. This has the merit of being the most natural way, but is sometimes overlooked because of a wrong attitude on the part of the staff, or if there is not sufficient staff to spare the time.

**Introduction of the New Child and Parents to the Nursery School.**

A particularly valuable opportunity for establishing a good understanding, from the very start, is the method of gradual introduction of the new child to the Nursery School. The mother and child are invited to attend the Nursery School for a trial period, of a few hours a day, the length of time needed depending

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**In a Nursery School in England**

A mother brings her family to see if they can be admitted to the Nursery School. There are long waiting lists but children of large families are admitted as soon as possible.

It is interesting to note the attitudes of the children at different ages.

(Given by Miss Caine)
upon the readiness of the child to accept the whole of the Nursery School day by himself. In this way, the mother can observe for herself the climate of the Nursery School, the approach of the staff to the children, the use of play materials and the social routine of meals, sleep, toileting, etc. She learns the names of the staff and can talk about them all to her child and husband. She is stimulated to ask questions, and indirectly may learn a great deal and be helped in her management of the child at home. She gains confidence in the staff and is probably ready to discuss with them her worries and ambitions far sooner than if she is separated from her child for the whole day from the start. She is likely to be far less worried by the situation. At the same time, the staff can become familiar with the child and his personal habits before

In a Nursery School in England

Saying Good-bye to Mummy and Baby-sister.

There is no sense of hurry on these occasions and parents are welcomed into the Nursery School.

This scene is often watched by other children and a sense of good human relationships is learnt.

Mothers are encouraged to learn that even the Nursery School cannot replace the love and affection found in the home, which is so necessary to the child's well-being.

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(Given by Miss Caine)
he is left completely with them and will have a good insight into the parent-child relationship. Any major disturbance will be recognized and in due course any necessary advice will be given when the mother shows readiness to receive it. With skilful handling, the transition from home to school is made a happy and easy one, the over-anxious mother reassured and helped to release her child without worries, while the mother who finds her duties as a parent difficult, and therefore is desirous of shedding them as quickly as possible, is helped to realize her importance to her child and to become interested in him as a person. The advantage to the child is obvious and the strain so often inflicted on him is removed.

In a Nursery School in England

New mothers are asked to stay some hours every day in the Nursery School until the child has made friends with others and is prepared to be left on his own.

The mother becomes familiar with the whole working of the nursery and has many opportunities of talking to the staff and discussing her problems. It takes time to build up the mutual understanding and friendship which is necessary if the home and nursery are to work together for the benefit of the child. Babies are welcomed and are enjoyed by the other children.

The adult in the photo is a nursery assistant and not a trained teacher.

(Given by Miss Caine)
Parents in the School.

Following this introduction, it is up to the teachers to establish as many contacts as possible with the parents. They are greatly helped in this if small waiting rooms for parents are provided in the Nursery School. A Nursery School in Vienna was quoted in this respect. Perhaps a few comfortable chairs and a low table placed in the entrance hall would help, equipped with examples of the children’s work and appropriate magazines and photographs to start discussion. If suitable glazing is provided, parents can watch their children at play with others unobserved and so see their own children in a new light. This must be handled with great discretion by the staff, and will not be necessary in all instances. This will give rise to opportunities for discussion with the teachers leading to a deeper understanding of the needs of growing children. The parents can then take a real interest in the work done by their children and will appreciate more fully the effort that has gone into it. The role of

In a Nursery School in Zagreb (Yugoslavia)

At a small kindergarten exhibition, little Darko’s young teacher shows his mother all the material necessary for his education.

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« teacher » and « parent » becomes more closely linked so that both can undertake each other’s work when necessary.

Parents helping the School.

Many parents who have time and skill are often ready to give invaluable assistance when they understand that this would be appreciated, and if handled skillfully by the teachers great benefits result to all concerned, if it is done voluntarily. This includes the repairing and making of toys, helping with Christmas and other parties, nursery sewing, gardening, etc. Such mutual

In a Nursery School in Zagreb (Yugoslavia)

Parents come to the kindergarten every day and see their children’s daily accomplishments. Mothers like to understand their children and want to avail themselves of the teacher’s help. This mother is saying: « Look at this picture! My Myrko has drawn it! ». 

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help fosters good feeling and the Nursery School becomes part of the community life of the parents. Parents make new friends and acquaintances and in fact can teach one another new skills and share experiences, which is the most natural form of adult education, especially if wisely led by the teachers. Young mothers who have never been taught to sew and make children's frocks, etc., will often be stimulated to learn from another mother, when they would be too shy to go to a class.

In a Nursery School in Zagreb (Yugoslavia)

Marijan's mother is a frequent visitor to the kindergarten where she learns how to play with her child and what her needs are. This is a harmonious trio: mother-child-teacher.
More formal methods of parent education

Discussion Groups

From time to time, through her individual contact with parents, the Principal may feel that there is an opportunity for the provision of a group discussion on a topic of interest to several parents, which may lead to regular meetings. The conduct of these meetings is a matter of great discussion but the group of O.M.E.P. experts feel the advice given by John Burton to be helpful.

John Burton, in the booklet « Group Discussion in Educational, Social and Working Life » (published by the Central Council for Health Education, Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London W.C. 1) says:

« The knowledge and experience which people have is generally far greater than experts give them credit for. From experience with parents in medical situations the simple questions, « How are you feeding your baby? » or « How are you going to deal with Jimmy’s backwardness at school? » will in a vast majority of cases bring out a fund of information and opinion, most of which indicates a lively interest and a satisfactory way of handling the situation. The information, however, is generally not presented in the logical way that experts have been trained to find acceptable and appears in bits and pieces like confetti. For this reason it is often undervalued. But this is the nature of most people’s knowledge, and the job of the educationalist is not to criticize the native gifts of the students, but to use them and devise methods suited to their development. »

Parents and teachers should meet as equals and care be taken that neither should dominate the proceedings. To be of use, the groups should be small, so that parents are not over-awed and every opinion can be heard. The points for discussion can be proposed by them or suggested by circumstances or simply chosen by the teachers from concrete situations. Occasionally a specialist such as the doctor, psychologist, etc., can be invited, and if possible the social worker and others closely connected with the work of the school should be frequent members of the group. Films can be used to start discussion, and it is hoped that in addition to those already available, many more will soon be devoted to real situations which parents of young children encounter, especially if they are lively and provocative and lead to a satisfactory solution. Photographs selected to start discussion are also helpful, and perhaps most important of all, a little light refreshment which always creates the right atmosphere for good discussion.

These meetings are of course voluntary, though it may be thought wise to invite parents in specially selected groups, so that a shy one will come with a friend, and an aggressive one is not allowed to dominate the discussion. In every case, the parents are encouraged to say what they think. They often know more than is generally thought, and to give expression to their knowledge is the first step towards putting it into practice. Remarks
made by parents often carry great weight, for the others may recognize their own thoughts and observations and anxieties. It is a form of mutual education, and the discovery that others have the same problems leads to a lessening of tensions and may contribute to a fuller family life. The spirit of positive and constructive remarks should be encouraged rather than destructive criticism.

All manner of topics will arise, from the choice of Christmas presents for children, the place of the child in the family and leisure time activities of the family, and the relationship of husband and wife to each other and their child.

In a Nursery School in England

Fathers are always welcomed, and this one is a great supporter of the Nursery School. When he has time he often stays and helps with some job which needs a man's strength or advice.

He has also learnt a great deal about his son's need for play and independence and they are building up a sound basis of mutual trust and understanding.
Organized Talks for Parents

Another type of parent education is the large meeting for all parents (sometimes arranged for parents of several schools) when the parents are addressed directly by an expert in some aspect of Parentcraft. This is a direct teaching method and has its place as such, especially if the topics chosen are of general interest to parents and the atmosphere of the meeting such as to encourage questions from the audience.

A comparison of these methods

Each is valuable. Some parents find it easier to take an active part in a small group, will be more willing to come to an intimate meeting and to voice their opinions in an informal atmosphere, while others may be more self-conscious and would prefer a lecture given to a larger group when the shy ones will feel inconspicuous. It may be best, therefore, to include both, which, linked with the day to day contacts, provide many opportunities for parent education.

Some special difficulties

Will the Parents Come?

Many reports submitted to the experts in Hamburg show that it is sometimes difficult to get the parents to come, especially in industrial areas where parents have little free time, are tired, or have no one with whom to leave the children. This in itself would provide a point for discussion, and ways and means found for providing release for over-burdened parents through voluntary help. It is nearly always the same ones who do not come, and they are often those in the greatest need of help. It is sometimes difficult to arouse the intellectual interest of tired, indifferent or unintelligent people, and in one of the areas of a great industrial country ingenious teachers have found a solution. They organize parties which have proved most popular in the town. The school acts as host, but the parents organize the party, bring something of their own making and provide a part of all that is required. On this day, teachers and parents come together for entertainment, creating a happy atmosphere which does much to break down the barrier between them. This requires great skill on the part of the teachers, a devotion to their work and a faith that through this very indirect approach, not only will parents find a more desirable way of enjoying themselves than usual, but a relationship between School and Home will be built up which will lead to a happier home life. Children's parties can also be arranged.

This suggestion, while it has proved helpful in some instances, will not necessarily be appropriate in every case, but we are indicating everything which has been done in the realm with which we are concerned.
The Parents who do not Come.

As these are the real problem parents as a rule, in need of the greatest help, they should not be given up. In addition to day to day contact, liaison might be attempted in the home if approached with care and tact. Help from other sources — school nurse, health visitor and other workers may be enlisted — but this will be discussed later on.

The education of the public

All the methods dealt with so far are directed to those who know of the Nursery School and the services that it can give to the family, but this aspect of nursery work is too little known. If in some countries the Nursery School is well known and widely used, there are others where it needs to be made known either because it is not known at all, or because false ideas are held about it. Sometimes advantage can be taken of large shows, i.e. commercial fairs and exhibitions, etc., when a reserved space can be provided for « Childhod », for an exhibition of games and educational material and also for children's handiwork and art. Beautiful exhibitions, changed regularly, in shops on busy thoroughfares are already organized in some countries and attract public attention.

Some countries arrange Nursery Schools in action in big annual fairs. We ought to point out that the children are not worried at all by the coming and going of visitors who look through the windows at them. They are so occupied with their activities that they do not even think about them. But the astonishment of the grown-ups shows that the child is still, for too many, an unknown person and the Nursery School is not appreciated.

Numerous publications already exist to deal with the various questions put by the parents about their children. It would, however, be a very good thing if the popular press were used to awaken public interest in the problems of young children and attract the attention of parents to their responsibilities and the means of assuming them.

Films, radio and, better still, television, can make the parents aware of these fresh ideas. At the same time, as feelings of responsibility are awakened, parents can also be made aware of the help that can be given in facing these responsibilities; the remedy would be worse than the disease if it only awakened anxiety and concern.

It is certain that the audio-visual aids already mentioned are excellent for a widespread campaign among the public, where there are future as well as actual parents, about what the Nursery School can do for their children and for them.

Films showing the equipment at these small schools and the daily activities of the young children using actual materials, are particularly useful. Television can also use films, but it can also give « live » presentation of the various methods Nursery Schools
use in cooperating with families in the education of young children and showing the parents how to run the family so that its atmosphere is « Educational ». Radio, which has its programmes of discussion between specialists or talks on parenthood, can also join in this campaign of information on behalf of the Nursery School, giving full details and publicity to exhibitions or meetings in the area.

School and home

In this way, home and school merge and become more like each other. The child has found at school new activities, educational materials, raw material to shape and transform. The parents gradually try to put at the disposal of the child, if not all the material, at least some, so that he can make again, if he wishes to, what he has learned, for this is satisfying.

In large towns where staffing is difficult and because one cannot ask too much of the teacher, the social worker can help by visiting the home — whether because of the child’s absence or some difficulty or illness — to invite the mother to come and have a chat with the teacher. For family problems must be taken out of the family and onto the neutral ground of the school.

The Parents of « the Different Child ».

Not only can parents whose children attend a Nursery School learn to see their child in perspective and in relation to other children through their own observation and the help of the trained staff, but the parents of a child handicapped either physically or emotionally (though Nursery Schools are not Special Schools) are helped to face their problem realistically. They can then make the most of help from other sources — such as clinics, and centres specializing in their problem. Other parents, too, by their spontaneous sympathy help to support the parents of the difficult child, and if wisely led by the trained staff, a more tolerant attitude towards handicapped children is adopted, and a deeper understanding of their needs is gained. This is an important contribution to community life.

In concluding this evidence on the practical methods available to Nursery Schools for fostering parent-teacher collaboration, the experts wish to stress once more the importance of this for the child.

Day to Day Opportunities for Collaboration between School and Family.

Collaboration between school and family, useful for all ages, is indispensable for the « pre-school » age where the child submits without resistance to all influences in his environment. Education is an influence at work every minute of the day. It is not carried on through teaching principles but through influence and example. Every adult who lives with a child exercises either a good or a bad influence on him but never no influence at all. The parents’
influence is the greatest because of the special relationship. Whether they like it or not, they are, for their children, educators and no one can relieve them of this function. The teacher will only be able to add to the education of the family.

Family and School should cooperate in such a way that the child feels agreement between those among whom he is going to live. Subjected to discordant influences, pulled in different directions, the child can find no balance. Unity of action by parents and teachers assures the coherence of their conduct which is so reassuring to him. To ensure this unity of action, the parents must be familiar with the school environment and the teachers, for their part, must get to know about life in the families. It is essential that the teacher should be on good terms with families and that she should be welcome in the home in order to establish friendly relations with them.
V. Training of teachers and cooperation with other services

Training of Teachers.

In the previous chapter on practical methods of parent-teacher cooperation, constant reference was made to the need for skill on the part of the teacher. The experts discussed the training of teachers in relation to their responsibility in this respect, and how best to prepare them for sharing with parents the successful rearing of children. This task is by no means easy, and a teacher trained in child psychology and class management only, who is perhaps herself unmarried, young and inexperienced, may find herself out of her depth when face to face with parents. It was felt that so far in many countries very little guidance — either theoretical or practical — had been given to teachers in the past. As a result, many wrong attitudes have been adopted, possibly in self defence. Evidence showed that in some instances, teachers took a superior attitude towards parents and adopted a dictatorial and censorious outlook towards them; others patently felt insecure, and in consequence were reluctant to have any parent organizations, as they feared that parents would wish to run the school. These same people showed eagerness for parents to understand the work of the school and the basic principles for which it stood. It was quite obvious that teachers need a great deal of help if they are to undertake this work in addition to other school responsibilities. It would seem, however, that heads of small Nursery Schools found it easier in some respects, possibly because of the smaller numbers of parents, and because the Nursery School and home are more alike and share the same problems.

Evidence showed that there are two distinct trends of thought on the training and preparation of young teachers:

a) The theory that sound practical experience (under guidance) of young children and their families in real life situations before selection for theoretical professional training at a Teachers’ Training College is of great value and allows the student to be certain that she wishes to be a teacher, and makes certain she uses her college training to the best advantage, as well as allowing the selectors to be more certain of the abilities of the candidate;

b) the theory that the general cultural background of the students should be safeguarded, the girl encouraged to stay at
school for as long as possible before entering Training College. Two concrete examples may be of value here:

In the Scandinavian countries, the prospective teacher must, before entering a Teachers’ Training College, have a practical knowledge of children which allows their aptitude, psychological maturity and their physical and mental health to be assessed. Planned courses are arranged for them for the two years between leaving school and entering college at the age of 20. These courses include practical work in children’s homes, domestic training, or working in families as “Home Helps”. In this way they gain practical experience and learn to be at ease with adults and children. The course in Training College lasts two years.

2. In some countries, as in France, for instance, selection by

**In the Teachers’ Training College, Paris**

*Students and professor in the laboratory.*
examination takes place earlier and the successful candidates spend four years in Training College. There, in company with other types of future teachers, the Nursery Teacher students receive a general education which is compulsory. A general course on child psychology is given to all students at this time, as well as practical training throughout the four years — only at the end of the course must the student select the type of school she wishes to teach in, and throughout her professional career she may change to teaching older children. She completes her practical training under the guidance of the qualified headmistress of the Nursery School.

Both types of training have their supporters, and perhaps a combination of both would be ideal, but the resulting long period of training would prove too expensive for most countries. The panel is not in the position to recommend one scheme as preferable to the other, but the advantages of both must be discussed. The teacher of young children should be intelligent, sympathetic
In the Teachers' Training College, Paris

A student teacher shows how she tells a story to a group of children
The professor comments on her performance.
and understanding towards children and parents, capable of making wise judgments, and mature enough to form good relationships with other adults. She needs also for her own development, a good cultural background and liberal education, so she will be likely to retain a lively responsive attitude to her work. She will be greatly helped in her difficult task if she has good practical experience behind her, in possibly a wider field than the Nursery School alone, so that she knows young children in their own homes.

(We refer the reader to the report of a Committee of WHO and UNESCO Experts, «Mental Health and the Nursery School», published by Unesco in 1953).

**Content of the Training College Curriculum.**

a) The Nursery School teacher requires a good general education, at least on the level of that of her colleagues who intend to teach older children. In addition, she needs (as do her colleagues) the tools of her profession — knowledge of child growth and development, how to supply the needs of the growing

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In the Teachers' Training College, Paris

A student looking through a microscope.
organism, and particularly how learning takes place. She needs to have opportunities for gaining an insight into sociology, and how to conduct discussion groups.

b) It has been suggested that the study of family group psychology should be included in the programme of studies as well as practical knowledge of family relationships, society and the laws which govern them.

c) Students might find it helpful to have some opportunities to attend meetings of parents and teachers and to observe the techniques of the various types of parental education.

d) It was felt that it might be helpful if the training of teachers and social workers might be brought closer together, so that the student teachers could sometimes accompany the trained social worker on home visits, while the social workers gained a deeper insight into the work of the teachers.

e) It was felt too that there was room for closer liaison between Training Colleges and the work of Child Guidance Clinics, so that the students would have more than a theoretical knowledge of the work of their colleagues in the field of mental health.

In fact, the training of teachers needs to be as wide as possible so that the maximum use of other services can be made, and a real feeling of team work between the various departments engendered. This is important for both children and parents, who may become bewildered by all the various departments to which they can be referred.

These demands on teacher training, which are justified in view of the important role which is given to them, must correspond to a salary at least equivalent to that paid to teachers of children of compulsory school age.

The recommendations have already been formulated in the General Assembly Report of O.M.E.P. at Copenhagen in August, 1954. They reaffirm:

— the value of early education.
— the importance of the pre-school institution in the help it brings to the family, and the type of education offered.
— the value of the teacher charged with such a complex, difficult and responsible task.

The Further Training of Teachers.

The training of teachers cannot be regarded as complete when the student leaves college armed with a certificate. From time to time, she will need opportunities for deepening and extending her knowledge as her experience increases, for refreshment and for keeping up to date. As she becomes more mature and experienced she needs more advanced information and a chance to come out of her school and discuss with colleagues the problems which face her.

Teachers often find themselves in the position of counsellor to those who seek advice in delicate situations where wisdom, insight and maturity are needed. But this comes largely with
years, and at the same time children love to be with young people. The reasonable solution seems to be young teachers and experienced Heads, one of whose jobs will be the guidance and training of her young staff.

*Role of the Head Mistress*

*Role of the Head Mistress.*

These considerations explain the interest of the Head Mistress of every Nursery School. She is the experienced person who, by the daily example she sets, the way in which she welcomes the parents and gets along with them, the solutions she offers in difficult situations, can assure this complement to formal training that is needed by teachers at the beginning of their service.

*The Specialized Inspector.*

In countries where specially selected and qualified women are appointed as Inspectors or advisers, the Head Mistress can be helped in her work. The inspector will arrange courses for teachers, and can be invited to the parent-teacher groups, as «specialist». She can often act as a liaison between the various departments and be instrumental in drawing them together.
VI. The training of nursery assistants and domestics

Those who help with the running of the school also need to be carefully selected on personality grounds, and those who come into direct contact with the children will need specially planned courses in the needs of young children, so that every member of

In a Nursery School in England

The Superintendent (Head of the Nursery School) and the school nurse having an informal chat and laugh in the Nursery School. The nurse visits frequently and sees individually any child the Superintendent suggests in addition to performing routine examinations.

There should be time for the nurse to take part in the general life of the Nursery School and to watch the play of the children and to talk over any points of interest with the Superintendent.
the staff can work as a unified team and fulfill her function efficiently. It is through his contact with the adults round him that the child forms his attitude to life, while his parents form their opinion of the school by the impression they make of the people who run it.

The School Nurse.

The teacher and the school nurse (in Nursery Schools that are fortunate enough to have one) will need to work very closely and sympathetically together. Each should have some knowledge of the function of the other, and be ready to share their responsibilities. The school nurse is the valuable link between the school and the doctor, and safeguards the physical needs and health of the children.

In a Nursery School in England

The Superintendent and Nurse take every opportunity of discussing their mutual work. Both can contribute more if they have an understanding of each other’s work, and the children benefit from this cooperation.
The School Doctor and the Child Psychiatrist.

Most countries have instituted health services for the children in Nursery Schools. It is most effective when the school doctor is not a visitor but an integral part of the School team, and if possible the local «clinic» doctor too, so that the parents and children are familiar with him. Too many people giving advice may confuse both the child and parent, and the valuable personal relationship can be lost.

The committee also discussed the question of whether the school doctor should also have a private practice, so that he can be familiar with the families who use the Nursery School. This is fraught with administrative difficulties, and while they thought it an advantage they felt it to be beyond the scope of the discussion. For simplifying the situation for parents it would be best, but perhaps possible only in small communities.

More difficult to draw into the nursery circle are the psychiatrist and psychologist whose field is necessarily a large one, but children will need to be referred from time to time and close contact over the treatment given and advice to parents will be necessary, so no conflicting counsel is given.

The school is the meeting place of all the specialists — school doctors, psychologists, school nurses, teachers and parents. Sometimes these services operate without sufficient cooperation, and to prevent this each specialist and each service must know its limitations, and respect each others contribution. The training of teachers, nurses, and specialists will include information aimed at improving a reasonable cooperation which will assure them their full value.
VII. Liaison between the various child welfare services

There are many different services and agencies in various countries that devote themselves to helping parents to bring up young children. But families are not always aware of their existence.

Nor, as it sometimes happens, is there always sufficient co-ordination between them.

Liaison must be established, not only between parents, teachers and the various specialists whose cooperation is essential to them, but among all the existing bodies whose aim is to help parents and children.

The teacher, and above all the school social worker, can enable the Nursery School to assume this important role of information and liaison agency.

The school is the meeting place for parents and all the specialists: pediatricians and psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and teachers, the latter two serving as intermediaries and sources of information.

The school must be able to provide parents with information on the provisions of social welfare legislation for parents and children, and all the ways in which this aid can be obtained, medico-psychological or psychiatric consultations, agencies that will send children to summer camps, special establishments for handicapped children, family welfare services, etc.

But each specialist and each service should know its own limitations, what it can or cannot do, and how to go about finding the appropriate specialist and the qualified agency.

The training courses given to teachers and social workers, as well as to other specialists, will offer the kind of instruction from which will not fail to come that cooperation which will guarantee the efficient use of the services.
VIII. Influence of economic and social conditions

Despite the fact that the expert committee cannot have any effect on the economic and social conditions existing in national communities, it nevertheless considers it necessary to make some reference to the fact that it does not underestimate the importance of these factors.

Even if all the desired objectives outlined in this study were to be attained, it would still not necessarily follow that success would be assured, for this first and foremost depends on social and economic conditions which have a profound influence on the family situation. These factors are above all:

**Housing**

In addition to the standard hygienic requirements that we already know about,

a) Housing must be planned to meet the requirements of families with children of various ages.

It goes without saying that cramped lodgings, the imposed cohabitation of too many people with very different interests, the absence of comfort which makes housework so difficult and the task of mothers so onerous, are detrimental to the family's peace of mind and provoke serious family problems which in turn make very profound impressions on a young child.

b) The surroundings also must be fit for children's activities: there should be sufficient play space, grassy areas, etc.

**Mothers' working conditions**

This is a very important problem which must be considered, not only from the point of view of the child who has a right to his mother during the first months of his life, but also from the point of view of the woman herself who, in spite of being a mother, maintains her right to a professional life.

These two points of view must be kept in mind, and they are not irreconcilable.

In some countries, there is abundant social legislation which puts the importance of the mother in its proper context by granting the family allowances in proportion to the number and age of the children, and which consequently enables mothers to bring up their children.

The concept of "maternity as a social function" has been formulated wherein provision would be made for the mother to
be remunerated for her services as a mother, on condition that she devotes herself entirely to her child during his first two years.

Intermediate measures have been taken in some countries to enable the mother to attend to her child without interrupting her professional life.

Under this system, creches were installed in some large factories and the mothers have the right to time off, several times a day, to nurse or to stay with their children. Results have shown that the feeling of security mothers experience because of these moments with their babies contributes to greater industry at their tasks, with a corresponding increase in production that more than compensates for the time spent with the children.

A number of administrations have organized themselves along similar lines and the formula is tending to become ever more widely accepted.

Moreover, it would seem that the child does not suffer from his mother's absence for part of the day if there is a suitable replacement, on condition however that his mother comes to him regularly every day to lovingly tend to his needs.

Let us add here that it is only after about the eighth month — that is, at the moment when his emotional needs have become entirely conscious — that the baby runs the risk of suffering from his mother's absence.

In certain countries, mothers work only half-time and factories, offices and administrations must conform to this system which, it is reported, is well accepted.

This arrangement, besides maintaining the family's prerogatives, offers the further advantage of permitting the woman to continue to devote herself on a part-time basis to a professional life to which she may have become greatly attached.

Temporary aid can also be given mothers in exceptional circumstances; aid at home when the mother is in difficulty: sickness, repeated pregnancies, birth of a new baby, etc.

All these measures of aid to mothers should be taken into consideration and expanded.

**Curses of society: destroyers of family life**

**Alcoholism**, which in some countries is reaching disquieting proportions, is not a problem to be solved just by education; it has its sources in slums, inadequate housing, too many night-clubs, too great a facility offered for the sale of spirits and its manufacture for home consumption.

Principal cause of mental illness and poverty, alcoholism wreaks havoc on the health of the individual and his offspring; it destroys the peace and happiness of the family. There is no need to belabour this point any further.

**Poverty**, which prevents the individual from living a normal life and whose causes must be eliminated by every means possible.

In this area, the Nursery School, whose social welfare role
must not be forgotten, in many ways alleviates the insolvent condition of the family. Its aid, added to that offered by social legislation governing the protection of mothers and children (family allowances, salary for the mother at home, etc.) is not negligible.

But it is to be hoped that this aid will one day become unnecessary, for it is required only when adequate social and family organization is lacking.

On the contrary, we would wish for material conditions for the family sufficient to enable it to fulfill its role.

The Nursery School’s only desire is to be able to help.
IX. Conclusions

It is time to bring to a conclusion this study whose aim is to make teachers of young children aware of the full scope of their responsibilities, and to inform parents who are alerted to the difficulties of their educational task of the help that can be given them through the Nursery School.

Parents and teachers share the responsibilities of pre-school education.

While parents are and remain irreplaceable, and can seek counsel only from pediatricians and psychiatrists during the child’s first two years, they can and must, as soon as the child reaches the age of 3, look upon the teachers in pre-school education establishments as their indispensable collaborators.

Only the family can satisfy certain deep needs of the little child, but the school offers its particular responses to new needs that cannot be satisfied by the family.

The parents should consider the child’s desire for larger and different surroundings as a normal first stage in his social development.

But they should not, for this reason, relinquish their authority and their responsibilities.

It is as collaborators that the school welcomes them; the Nursery School’s desire is to provide the child with an intermediate environment between that offered by the family and later on by the school in which the child will have to live when he reaches school age. It will help the parents to make the family environment, to a certain degree, an extension of the school environment so that the continuity of the child’s life will be preserved.

This liaison is one of the essential conditions of the child’s growing awareness of his relation to society, and for this to be accomplished he needs to sense a deep and affectionate understanding between his parents, and between them and his teachers.

The younger the child, the more carefully and scrupulously he should be raised, and parents and teachers, together responsible for his education, should whenever necessary make use of the services of specialists in areas where they are not competent themselves.

The teacher, aided by her invaluable collaborator, the social worker, is the natural liaison agent between these specialists and parents, and the school is their meeting place.

These specialists, together with the teachers, must constitute a true team each of whose members knows that he is cooperating
towards the same end: the well-balanced development of a little child.

The Nursery School, a primary education establishment, must be at the service of families and open to all children.

There is no question of making attendance compulsory. The child should be able to be brought there when he wishes, and to remain there for as long as it is of benefit to him; the duration varies according to age and circumstances.

The welfare of the child must be the only factor in the family’s decision, and the school should be ready to submit to these conditions.

But parents should understand the nature of the school’s potential contribution to their child and the aid that it can give them without in any way robbing them of their privileges.

Parents, do not reject this ally — the teacher — who is offered to you and whom you will find ready to welcome you and your child to those dwellings for little children that are true “houses of happiness” for the children.

She will help you to better understand your child, will put you in contact with other parents and with child specialists who are also your allies in this great undertaking, the most beautiful there is: to help a little child to grow up in happiness and contentment.
X. Desiderata

Because of the proven value of primary education establishments in encouraging cooperation with families in the education of young children, the international committee of experts has put forward certain recommendations that are being submitted to the responsible authorities in different countries. The committee wishes to see rapid action taken on them since it is of vital importance that the felicitous development of young children, the hope of the world, be assured:

1) the organization of Nursery Schools

— that the number of these establishments be sufficiently great to satisfy the needs of all families;
— that each establishment receive only a limited number of children:
  a) in order to spare young children the disadvantages of too large numbers;
  b) to preserve the spirit of a family atmosphere for them;
  c) to keep them in close proximity to their families by confining admissions to children from a given area.
— that construction, installations and materials for schools be designed for children from 3 to 6, and with the view of facilitating the cooperation of parents with the school (see the Report of Group 4 of the course in pre-school education given at the Unesco Institute for Education at Hamburg, January 1953);
— that the younger the children, the smaller the group to be entrusted to a teacher: from 15 to 25 children according to age are indicated as maximum figures;
— that every establishment of any importance have a social worker attached to it who can work together with the teachers.

2) Conditions of recruitment and training of teaching personnel

— that Nursery School teachers be screened at the beginning of their training so that they enter this profession only if their aptitudes and personality give proof of their abilities and if no indications to the contrary are demonstrated (character defects, difficulties in making contact with children or adults, latent presence of adolescent traits, maladjustment, uneven temper, nervous fatigue, etc.).
Many solutions are proposed that can be resumed as follows:

a) *period of practice with children* in various institutions or homes before entering professional teachers' training school. Advantage: older age of the student and confirmed aptitudes.

b) *short probationary period* at the beginning of professional training.

c) *more advanced level of general culture* acquired together with wide and diversified practical training in the education of pre-school and school-age children.

d) *provisional choice of orientation upon leaving teachers’ training school*: directed either towards the Nursery School or the primary school.

e) *professional training* continued in the Nursery School under the supervision of a specialized educator — the Principal — in such establishment.

f) *Definite appointments made on the directorial level of the school* — that is, after at least five years of practice as a teacher in a Nursery School.

g) more or less closely related *combined forms* of the above-mentioned programmes.

**NOTA**: We would stress here the value of an overall training that prepares teachers for both categories of pre-school and primary school establishments.

Apart from the fact that it justifies putting these two categories of personnel on an equal level with regard to salary, and ensures equally competent staff for both kinds of establishments, it enables each teacher to understand the problems of childhood at different ages and keeps them from the dangers of too limited a specialization.

To know what the baby was, and what the school-age child will be, helps the teachers to understand the difficult period of early childhood from 2 to 6 or 7, during which period the nursing stage is left behind and the child is ready to enter the world of school.

3) The programme of teachers’ training schools

The experts all recommend:

— that a good cultural level be established to facilitate the understanding of psychological problems and the scientific bases of the pedagogical sciences; that practical training be completed by training in social work to enable teachers to understand family problems, to know what social legislation exists to help children and parents, what services and specialists are available upon whom they can call, so that she can work together with the parents not only in relation to the children entrusted to her (from 2 to 6 or 7) but with regard to everything that can interest the children, small or large, who live at home.

— that the attention of future teachers be drawn to all the
disturbances in physical and mental development so that they can identify them as early as possible and thus in good time call for the help of the particular specialist qualified to give the appropriate treatment.

— that facilities be offered teachers to keep abreast of progress in the medico-social and psychological sciences which are the bases of their pedagogy, so that they can always be able to provide assistance to the families.

— that it be possible for teachers, after three or five years of practice, to take courses or do probationary work in the field of human relations, since a certain maturity and personal experience in this domain are the necessary prerequisites for that cooperation with the families that justifies the existence of the primary education establishment.

This would be one of the best ways of training future principals who would then serve as guides and examples for young teachers at the beginning of their service, whose training cannot be considered as terminated after only two or three years in a teachers' training institution.

— that specialized inspectress be responsible for the teaching personnel so that they help the teachers to perfect themselves and to bring out in them all the special initiatives of value in the matter that concerns us today: the education of parents.

4) Morale and the financial situation of teachers

Granted that the role the teacher of young children can play is an important one, it is indispensable that:

— good people be attracted to the profession, and that the working conditions provide for:

a) salaries at least equal to those of teachers in compulsory schools;

b) reduction in the number of working hours (corresponding to the number of hours worked by teachers in primary schools);

c) selection and training that justify these demands (i.e. of a level at least equal to those required of teachers in primary schools).

These conditions will help to establish the prestige of teachers of young children and to lessen that prejudice often held by the general public, and sometimes by the families themselves, which prevents them from giving their full respect to teaching personnel unless they are dealing with knowledge imparted from books — without understanding that greater pedagogical skills are called for when dealing with very small children.

Thus, the confidence of the parents in the Nursery School teacher will be even greater when they are brought to a greater recognition of the competence of the teachers. It is up to teachers to establish easy contact with the parents, without shyness, no
matter what their milieu and no matter how ill informed they may be.

5) School assistants

a) Domestic staff:

One should not underestimate their importance, since they too have a role to play with the child and the families, to whom they are often closer than the teacher.

It is advisable that the domestic staff be chosen by the Principal and trained by her; they must know that they also contribute in the carrying out of the educational task, and that they should behave in such a way that the teachers’ influence is not destroyed but enhanced.

b) School medical service:

— that every establishment of pre-school education have a doctor assigned to it. He should not be just a simple visitor but a true collaborator.

It is advisable that:

1) complementary training be given him that will permit him to understand the psychological problems of the family and the child;

2) that he maintain his private clientele so that he can preserve his contact with the families and thus avoid the disadvantages, already noted, of too rigid specialization.

c) The social worker or the school nurse:

She is the technical assistant of the doctor whom she helps in his school visits, the various vaccinations that he gives at school, and is at the same time an aid to the teacher in the establishment of information cards, or the health record where details of the child’s weight, measurements, various examinations, liaison between the family and the school, relations of the family with other bodies responsible for helping it, are all listed.

She is a part of the team of technicians that helps the teacher in her work with the children and the parents.

Her social work training should be completed by psychopedagogical training that will enable her to take her place as a member of the team along with the teachers.

We also recommend that:

— the doctor and the social worker be given the responsibility not only of an establishment for young children, but of neighbouring primary schools so that they can get to know all the children of one family and can follow the development of the youngsters during the entire period of their school lives.

— a psychologist, or even a child psychiatrist, be « on call » to a group of schools to help parents and teachers understand difficult cases (mental retard, character defects, etc.) and to give appropriate advice.
To resume: we recommend that the training of teachers, technicians and specialists prepare them to work together with parents in this crucial education of young children where teamwork is a basic requirement.

— that the financial and spiritual conditions be favourable, permitting them to give all their efficiency to the common effort;

— that strict liaison be established between all the medico-psychological, social and educational services so that they can be truly at the service of families and teachers.
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