

Model Project
Division of Compensatory Education
ESEA Title I

CHILD-PARENT EDUCATION CENTERS

Chicago, Illinois
ESEA Title I, Activity I

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Local Reporter

Introduction and
Orientation Materials

I. Introduction

ESEA Title I, Model Project.

CHICAGO CHILD-PARENT EDUCATION CENTERS, Chicago Board of Education

The project provides a highly structured, instruction oriented, educational program for about 480 pre-school and kindergarten children, with maximum emphasis on language and reading skills. Parents are closely involved in the activity and spend at least one-half day per week at the center. Parent education is an important component of the program.

There are four centers, each physically liked the others: six mobile units connected by a broadwalk and covered by a roof, located on vacant lots. Four units are used as classrooms, one as an administration room, and one as a parents' room.

The target population is the predominantly black community on Chicago's West Side. The target school sub-district is District 8, which serves a high poverty area with severe problems of high density, crowded schools, severe health problems, high unemployment, high crime rate, low-income level, and sub-standard housing. This area has the most serious educational needs in Chicago: last year, only 8% of the sixth grade students in District 8 were reading at or above grade level.

The Child-Parent Education Centers are designed to reach the child and parent early, develop language skills and self-confidence, and to demonstrate that these children, if given a chance, can meet successfully all the demands of today's technological, urban society.

II. Report

CHICAGO CHILD-PARENT EDUCATION CENTERS, Chicago Board of Education

The stated objectives of this activity are as follows:

1. To involve parents in the initial stages of the educational process for their children.
2. To provide educational experiences and develop verbal skills appropriate to the culture of an industrially-oriented, urban society.
3. To improve the self-concept and raise the operational and motivational level of both parent and child.

As the program has evolved, the objectives have become more specific in the direction of providing a highly structured, instruction oriented, educational program for pre-school children, with maximum emphasis on language and reading skills. A variety of teaching materials and techniques are used, with many newly published books, tapes, film strips, kits, etc. being tested. There is relatively little emphasis on the development of social skills, outdoor play, dramatic play, etc. as are found in a typical, child-development oriented middle-class nursery school.

The "target population" is the predominantly black community on Chicago's west side. Three of the four centers are in sub-district 8, which is characterized as a high-poverty area with the usual additional factors of high density, crowded schools, serious unmet health needs, high unemployment, high crime rate, very low income level, and below standard housing. The fourth center is in sub-district 10, adjacent to District 8, and is in a similar area. This area has perhaps the most serious educational problems in Chicago: last year, only 8% of the sixth grade students in District 8 were achieving at or above grade level. The communities in which the centers are located are West Gar-

field Park (Center #1); the Near West Side (Center #2); and North Lawndale (Centers # 3 and 4). See appended material for a more detailed description of the population characteristics of these neighborhoods.

The project consists of four child-parent education centers, each serving about 120 three, four, and five year old children during the 1967-68 school year. The program became operational in the spring of 1967. The prekindergarten and kindergarten pupils attend half-day sessions five days a week for 40 weeks within the school year and for eight weeks during the summer. Parents (usually mothers) are required to attend at least one half-day session each week.

It is now planned that the children will remain in the centers through the primary grades, entering a regular public school at the fourth grade level. The basic idea is a five year (age three through eight) continuous development instructional program with maximum emphasis on individualized programming and language development.

Each center is physically like the others -- six mobile units raised from the ground, connected by a broadwalk and covered by a roof -- located on vacant lots. The general surroundings of the centers are also similar: dilapidated housing, boarded-up buildings and vacant land, mixed industrial, retail, and residential usage. The public schools are very large, some new and others very old and out-dated. Most are crowded, with playgrounds covered by mobile units. Broken windows are a common sight.

The mobile units are used because of severe crowding in the school district(s) served. In fact, District 8 has had, until recently, no in-school space for Project Head Start ^{during the school year} and no rentable space that met city-code requirements. There are now only two-half day school-year Head Start classes in the entire district. Some of the staff has suggested that perhaps the use of mobile units has had the advantage of increasing parental and community acceptance of the program because they are disassociated from the regular schools, which have had serious problems. The mobile units are steel, light-tan, air-conditioned, separate buildings, nicely panelled on the interior and capable of being moved without much difficulty to other sites as needed.

Community residents were involved in the program from the start and assisted in finding sites for the centers. It was originally planned that all centers would be in District 8, but only three sites could be found; thus the placement of Center #4 just over the border into District 10.

Each center is set-up the same way. Four units are used for classrooms (as the program expands into the primary grades, more classroom-units will be added); one for a parents' room, equipped with modern homemaking appliances as well as comfortable couches and chairs; and one unit is the administration center. The administration unit has been partitioned into offices, with space for the principal, adjustment-teacher, clerk, etc. Each unit has its own bathroom and heating/cooling facilities. An outstanding feature of all the centers is the cheerful, colorful, imaginative use of children's art, instructional materials, photographs, etc to create immensely appealing interiors.

Almost all of the children in the program are Negro, except for the 35 or so children of Spanish-speaking background in Center #2. The principals are all white. The staff in each center is integrated, including some Spanish-speaking personnel in Center #2.

ANNING

According to Dr. Sullivan, the District Superintendent of District 8, one of the origins of the program was a concern for increasing attendance in District 8. She found that various "gimmicks" -- rewards for good attendance, etc. -- were successful with children in grades 4 and over, but not with the younger children. Those in the primary grades must be gotten off to school by their parents -- and so the principal motivation must come from the home. In their investigation of the attendance problem, the District 8 staff found that many parents discounted the value of primary education ("It really doesn't make much difference if he goes or not, does it?" one mother asked.)

Dr. Sullivan and her associates, therefore, decided that a program which would start with the pre-school child and involve the mothers would develop early attitudes toward the importance of primary education and regular attendance. It was decided to set up the four centers, each with its own principal. Being such small units, the principals assigned were just the top four principals on the to-be-assigned list.

They were given the basic philosophy of the program: stress on language development (speaking, listening, acting on spoken instructions, reading readiness) and given an approximation of the staff and budget that would be available to them. Within this framework, however, they were given complete freedom to develop the individual programs as they determined were best suited to the needs of the children and their own personalities and methods of operating.

As nearly as I can determine, the planning for the program began in the fall of 1966. The principals were hired in January - February of 1967. Due (I suspect) to inadvertant circumstances, the centers did not actually become operational until May of 1967. During this time, the principals hired staff (visiting teachers who applied for positions); visited "just about every pre-school and nursery school in Chicago;" became familiar with the Bereiter program and read all possible materials on pre-school education. Mrs. Gordon of Center #3 went to New York University and met with Dr. Godkin and Dr. Deutsch and studied their ideas and programs. Each principal stressed that this pre-service time was of immense importance!

Each principal also stressed the great value of the freedom they were given to develop their own programs, within the basic framework. It was a lot of work, but it accounts in part for the success of the program and the enthusiasm of the staff.

Modifications have been continual. Starting with programs designed by the individual principals, changes, additions, and new directions have been possible at any time necessary. Since the program is so flexible, and so small, it seems that continual adaptation to newly perceived needs and problems is no problem. For example, as new materials have become available and tested, their adoption has introduced modification into the educational program. Since the parents' activities evolved from the interests and needs of the parents, these have also changed during the time of the program's operation.

A general staffing and cost summary follows on the next page. Funds come entirely from ESEA Title I. The per pupil cost does not include the capital investment. In the General Information section of the Appendix, a more specific breakdown of the expenses is contained in a copy of the initial application.

General staffing and Cost Summary

Staffing, Each Cluster, first year.

(Local salary schedule would apply)

1 Principal (all were first-year principals right off the list)
4 Primary Teachers
1 Parent Teacher
4 Teacher aides
1 Health aide
1 School community representative
 $\frac{1}{2}$ Adjustment teacher
 $\frac{1}{4}$ Teacher-Nurse
 $\frac{1}{4}$ Social worker
1 School clerk

NOTE: As planned, each cluster (with the possible exception of Cluster #2 which has a very small site) will add one mobile unit each year for the next three years, in order to continue bringing in a new group of three's each fall as they expand to add a Primary one, then Primary two, and finally Primary three group. This of course, would increase staffing and other costs.

Budget for 4 Clusters, 1967-68 - \$605,000

Total Enrollment - 458

Cost per pupil - \$1320.00

Mobile Unit cost

Per unit, \$8,593. Six mobiles per center first year = \$51,558/Center
Total for four centers = \$206,232

Costs will of course vary according to whether there is space already available in local public schools, the availability of public or private land--and the consequent rental costs--for the installation of mobile units, the size of the installations (some economies of scale will result from larger installations), etc.

STAFFING

The duties of the principal, primary teachers, adjustment teacher, teacher-nurse, social worker, and school clerk are self-evident. Local salary schedules would apply, as would local qualification requirements.

The parent teacher is a regular certified teacher in home economics and teaches these skills to the parents in the parents' room.

The teacher aides must be at least high school graduates, be between the ages of 21 and 55, and are presently paid \$358 per month. The Board of Education is presently working on a salary schedule for these aides which would include regular increments.

The School Community Representative must meet the same standards as the teacher aide, and is paid the same salary, but in addition she must come from the local community and is selected by the principal. She serves as a liaison between the school and the community.

The health aide must be either a licensed practical nurse or have two years of college. She receives intensive in-service training. Her job is to assist the teacher-nurse (who is only $\frac{1}{4}$ time at each center). The starting salary is \$376 per month, and as with the teacher aide program, a schedule is being developed to include regular increments.

The teacher aides work right along side the teachers and are considered an invaluable part of the program. Parents sometimes assist in the classrooms, and thus would have contact with the teacher aides, but the aides are primarily engaged in work with the children.

In addition to parents of the children in the centers, there has been little use of outside volunteers. Center #4 has five regular volunteers from a suburban community, enlisted by the principal. The regular program is so well-staffed, and outside specialists are brought into to talk to the children and parents from time to time, so it would not seem to lend itself easily to an outside volunteer program.

PRE AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING

The "pre-service" training primarily involved the principals and was of an informal nature: they sought out the people, field experiences, and literature they felt would be helpful. The staff had virtually no pre-service training in this type of program. Only one teacher had worked with pre-school age children before.

In-service training has been rather extensive, however. Staff has become trained in the Bereiter method, for example. Teachers have sought -- on their own time and at their own expense -- in-service experiences. A very important feature of the program is that the professional staff is paid to stay after the end of the normal school day (3:15 p.m.) until 4:30 p.m. three days a week. All principals felt that this time was of great value in training, evaluating, planning, etc.

Operation of Project

While it is very important to remember that each of the four centers is free within broad limits, to develop its own program, there are certain common features. The Appendix contains a brief description of each individual center and a collection of materials from the center which reveal more concretely and directly than anything I could write exactly what goes on and the spirit in which the activities are planned and carried out. Some of the materials include class schedules, forms used for projects and children, children's art work, parents' newsletters and activities, newspaper articles, photographs, etc. While it is bulky, I strongly suggest that glancing through the appended material will give a reader a vivid and lively understanding of all facets of the program. The general statement which follows, then, is simply a quote from the Project Application, Part II, Question 13,

"C. Program

"Class size of approximately 15 and special staffing, as well as special educational procedures and programs are provided. Classes extend beyond the regular school year for eight weeks into the summer and include guided trips throughout the Chicago area. Important goals of the program aim at a strong school start for the children and improved parent understanding of and participation in the education of their children.

Staff includes appropriate preschool and kindergarten teachers, and... (personnel as listed on page 6).

The program utilizes the findings of Piaget, Bruner, and others. All four centers have involved the parents of the children by developing programs for the parents which are tailored to their needs and have involved them also in the education of their children. The specifics of the organization and program vary from one center to another. For example, one center groups the children on a vertical age basis; thus in each class there are some 3-year olds, 4-year olds, and 5-year olds. In the other three centers, grouping basically is done on a chronological age basis. In one center, parents spend part of one day in the classrooms in which their children are enrolled, working with the children and the teacher..." [End Bd. of Ed. quote]

One essential element in the functioning of the program is the possibility for the teacher and other staff to give each child considerable individual attention. The adjustment teachers explained how a teacher will refer children to them who seem to have learning and/or behavior problems, and the adjustment teachers can spend time alone with the children, giving tests, talking, doing classwork, etc. Two children who

had been rejected by the local public school (which is not required to accept children prior to age seven) were referred to one of the centers for kindergarten, where they flourished.

Problems affecting the children and the family are immediately followed up on. The teacher-nurse and health aide see that necessary immunizations and medical care are provided. The social worker assists the families in appropriate ways. The School Community Representative continually works to bring the school and the family into closer communication and cooperation.

The educational program includes massive concentration on language development, through a great variety of materials and experiences. However, it did not appear that the normal needs for play and fun were being ignored. The units had toys, including some marvelous stuffed integrated dolls, such as beads, blocks, puzzles, etc. Creative activities are certainly not ignored: children's artwork abounds.

As in any nursery school, the 2½ hour school day includes time for play, snack, songs, stories, etc. Unlike the usual nursery school, it also includes a considerable amount of time on the language development programs as described in the sections on the individual centers and as suggested by the list of materials which follows on the next page.

The atmosphere in the classrooms is one of purposeful activity, lively bright children, involved, interested teachers. The children are talkative, delighted to greet visitors, and (having been visited often) quite unselfconscious about the presence of visitors. The few "discipline problems" which I noticed were handled with kindness and poise by the teachers.

A partial list of materials used in some or all of the centers,
in addition to the usual nursery school toys and books.

Matrix Board - developed by Dr. Lasar Godkin, Appleton Century Crofts

Language Lotto - also developed by Dr. Godkin

"First Talking Alphabet Box" and Reading Development Program of
Scott Foresman.

Bereiter from Teaching Disadvantaged Children in the Preschool by
Carl Bereiter and Siegfried Englemann.

Frostig Visual Perception Program

Science Research Associates math tapes. Also SPA tests--Primary Profile

Greater Cleveland math materials for kindergarten.

KELP test (Kindergarten Evaluation of Learning Potential), McGraw-Hill.

Listening carrels with earphones so that children can carry out
instructions in work books provided by a variety of taped materials.

DISTAR program - Directed Instruction for Reading

Sequential Science Program, developed by American Association for
the Advancement of Science, published by XEROX.

Language Master

Montessori materials

"Modified Bereiter Approach"

(There are many more materials. The important point is that the
teachers and principals have been given almost complete freedom in
the selection of materials and sufficient funds to purchase materials
they have found useful or think have potential.)

PARENTS' ⁻¹²⁻ PROGRAM

Since one of the main purposes of the project has been to gain parental involvement in the early childhood education of their children, there has been an intense program of parent education and activity. (Again, a reading of the Newsletters, flyers announcing meetings, etc. will give a very convincing picture of this effort--found in the Appendix.)

As mentioned earlier, the parents' unit is fully equipped with modern homemaking equipment: stove, refrigerator, sink, washer, dryer, sewing machines. A home-economics teacher is there full-time to give instruction. In addition, the room is used as a meeting room and social room. Mothers (and fathers) pursue projects of their own interest. Younger children often accompany their mothers. The parents' rooms at the time of my visits seemed in active use and the atmosphere very friendly and warm.

The parents' program has several basic purposes: (1) to develop a positive identification with the school; (2) to reducing the isolation of the parents often characteristic of these neighborhoods and provide a social center; (3) to instruct parents in ways that they can use to carry on the child's education in the home, using common household objects as instructional materials; (4) to help parents develop community leadership skills; (5) to help parents learn effective ways of dealing with problems of their everyday lives: negligent landlords, inadequate city services, etc. A program to teach typing was begun but it seemed that vocational skills could be better taught elsewhere.

The home economics instruction has had a mixed reception. Sewing seems to have been the biggest success. The parents (fathers too!) made clothes for mothers and daughters, and a fashion show in which these clothes were modelled was a great success.

The purpose of the cooking equipment was to instruct mother's in how to prepare a balanced, tasty and inexpensive meal. You will note that the parents' newsletters often contain recipes for such dishes. However, it was not highly praised by the principals and one principal quoted a mother as saying, "I cook seven days a week, three meals a day. Why should I come here and cook?"

I heard no one praise the washer and dryer equipment. Practically none of the homes have this equipment, and those that do know how to use it. Most of the mothers use the laundromats, which they know how to do. It was not a purpose of the project to have the mothers bring laundry from home to wash at school.

Since this equipment is very costly, it would be well to consider its potential value very carefully. The sewing machines were a great hit, though.

While all of the principals were enthusiastic about parental involvement, none felt completely satisfied with the nature of the program. To me, this recognition is a reflection of the strength and sensitivity of this staff, since this is a delicate and difficult issue.

Concern was expressed about the mandatory requirement of parental participation. For working mothers this presented sometimes insurmountable difficulties. Yet, without the mothers involved, the program loses a most valuable component. Not all the parents come anyway. However, if it were not mandatory, perhaps mothers who do now come would find it tempting to stay at home because of shyness, inertia, or what not. No child has been put out of the program because his mother hasn't come. It has created a minor morale problem for some of the other mothers who see that Mrs. Jones doesn't do her part.

Ideally, of course, the parents' program should have such intrinsic appeal that the parents would want to come. It seems though that a large majority of the parents are pleased with the program, have a great deal of control over the program, and participate regularly and happily. There is this natural concern about the parents who do not come, who do not contribute, who do not participate -- but this is a problem which concerns just about every organization, PTA, or church group I've heard of.

One suggestion made for handling the parents who work is that social-workers and School Community REpresentatives be hired who could work in the evenings and on Saturdays. A drawback to this idea is that many of the parents -- and the social workers -- are afraid to come out to meetings at night, and Saturdays for the working mother are important days for shopping, doing errands, and just plain resting.

EVALUATION

Since the program has been operational for only a little over one year, there is very little -- that is to say, none -- written hard data on evaluation. The application states: "Pre and post standardized tests of reading readiness and non-standardized tests of readiness when appropriate, will be administered. Interviews with such personnel as parent-coordinators, psychologists, and health personnel as well as surveys of teacher judgments and parent reactions will be included in the evaluation."

Just about all of the children were given a test upon entry, usually the SPA Primary Profile and the Draw-a-Man tests. During the year, the kindergarten children were given one form of the Metropolitan Reading Readiness test which will be administered again in the fall. The program is deemed successful because it just is -- and it really is!

Certainly the attendance records have been an indication of high success, ranging from 85 - 92%, which for young children for whom school attendance is certainly not compulsory, is very high. The high rate of retention of the children is another indicator of success. Except for Center #4, a high-transiency area of very poor housing, the other centers have lost very few students -- and in fact consider the existence of the center as a factor in reducing transiency!

Morale among the staff is high. The children are doing things that my own 3½ year old and 5½ year old cannot do (and they are bright!). Evaluation at this point is very subjective...which is an understatement.

FACTORS LEADING TO SUCCESS

Again and again I heard the principals and staff say, "This is a program that just can't fail. It has built-in success!" I believe it. Remember that the principals, while remarkable and special people, were simply the first four on the top of the list. They were not carefully culled from hundreds of applicants and selected for their special ability to carry out this program.

Some of the teachers were chosen by the principals from those who applied to teach at the centers. Others were simply assigned from the central office. They received no special pre-service training.

The message here is this: the program, the staffing, the freedom, the individualization of the centers, the money for materials, the facilities -- all of these pre-determine success. All of these factors can lead an UNselected staff into a successful program! So often, a program succeeds because (sometimes much later) someone discovers that a magical personality, a person of rare training, a blue ribbon staff, etc. were responsible.

Another obvious reason for the success of this program is that it is no salvage operation. These are little children, unspoiled, fresh, ready for a school experience with no unhappy past experiences to undo.

Every principal, every teacher had the sincere, firm conviction that they were dealing with a "normal population" of children -- as bright, as average, as slow; as handicapped or physically gifted as people everywhere. They were NOT dealing with "slum" kids, hopeless kids, kids with a predetermined future of menial or unemployment. This seemed so important, the belief of the staff in the children.

Specific factors singled out by the principals for praise were:

1. Freedom given to the principals to develop own programs;
2. After-school teacher-principal evaluation and planning time;
3. Starting with a small program; they felt it could be expanded but that it would be an advantage to start small;
4. Small teacher-pupil ratio;
5. Planning period for principals;
6. Competition with other public schools in the area and with each other.

It would seem that there is operating here a continual factor of success stimulating further success: a teacher finds that a program is successful with one or more children; the children are stimulated by the success and are optimistic and motivated to succeed in their next task; the teacher believes in their ability to succeed; and they do. ETC ETC. It works.

A big factor in the success of the program has been the support of the parents. The staff feels this support as providing critical emotional support, and it again supplies the staff with continued enthusiasm and optimism.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGE IN PROGRAM

In addition to the suggestions for reconsideration of some aspects of the parents' program (covered in the section on the parents' program) the principals had some other specific ideas. Some of the following ideas were mentioned by all of the principals, others by just one or two. Any administrator contemplating implementing this program should at least take these suggestions into account.

1. Specific in-service, and pre-service training in pre-school education should be provided for all of the staff. They (and this includes the principals) need both university and field experience in educating children of this age.
2. Ample time must be allowed for planning.
3. A full-time research director should have been built-into the program. Much valuable base-line information is forever lost. Possibilities for controlled comparisons ^{among} ~~between~~ centers and between centers and public schools could have been designed. Intensive parental attitude surveys, etc. could and should have been carried out. In the long run, evaluation of this program will be unnecessarily difficult because it does not have this research orientation.
4. Permanent buildings would be better, or space in a school:
 - a. The impermanence of the mobiles leads to community worry that the program will be withdrawn.
 - b. It is hard to maintain security with six doors to guard. Sometimes drunks wander into the center.
 - c. Moving among the buildings in the wintertime is a problem-- involves getting all dressed up for a ten-foot walk.

5. Window treatment of the mobile units must be improved: hardware screens must be provided. Many of the windows have been broken and are boarded up. From the inside, these have been handled imaginatively: between the boards and an interior glass, pictures or other displays have been placed, giving a pleasant effect. Light would even be better, though.
6. The centers should have names! One principal, who personally wanted the center named in honor of Milton Olive, Medal of Honor winner from Chicago, held a contest among his parents who wanted the school named in honor of Nat King Cole. It is still called Child-Parent Education # x.
7. Each center should have a separate budget, not be tied to an all inclusive budget. Planning and purchasing could be managed much more easily.
8. Additional aid must be given to the receiving schools when these children leave the centers. The gains they will have made must not be lost. In-service training in the receiving schools and articulation between them and the centers must be achieved.
9. It seems obvious and essential that some communication be established between this program and the local Head Start programs, which have had doubtful success. At least, some interesting comparative studies could be made.
10. Much more dissemination is needed. Very few Chicago school personnel are aware of this project, let alone the general public and university people.
11. It is possible that after the centers are underway, they would not each require a separate principal; though perhaps the guidance of a separate principal has been a key success factor. Hard to know.

Impressions. Center #1. Wayne Hoffman, principal

Wayne Hoffman, who opened the first center, is slight, young, boyish, and beaming from ear-to-ear as he shows off his school. He took us first to the parents' room, which was marvelously full of people, clutter, action. Some ladies were taking sewing lessons and busy at the machines. Others were talking in the reading corner with toddlers playing at their feet. (Hoffman pointed out one little fellow and said, "Just look at Anthony there. When he first started coming, he was a baby in arms. I brought a playpen from home so he'd have a place to play and sleep while his mother was here, and now he's almost ready for one of our classes!")

The room was obviously heavily used. Hoffman pointed out two lamps decorated with colored glass that had been made by one of the fathers. He has some fathers who come every day and who, in fact, have arranged their job schedules in order to do this. There is great concern about what would happen if, after the initial funding period is up, the program is discontinued. The fathers have seriously discussed trying to buy the school themselves!

Hoffman told of his experience the day before. "I was at the stove preparing apple pancakes," he said, "and wearing a frilly apron when twenty teachers in an in-service program at the Pirie School popped in. They were quite surprised." He thought a little. "I really should get a barbeque apron," he concluded. How many schools can boast of a man principal who makes apple pancakes for a parents' breakfast party?

His school had more of the usual nursery school equipment in evidence—a frog, Harry the Dirty Dog, paintings, blocks, beads, etc. in addition to the language materials.

His is also a very stable, though low-income community. He has lost only 5 of the original number of children and has had 92% attendance during the year. Considering the usual colds and contagious diseases that thin the ranks of the average nursery school every winter, this is a startling record.

As can be seen by the materials in the Appendix about Center #1, there is great rapport with the parents. Hoffman told of the day following the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King. He had previously agreed to a visit of about twenty League of Women Voters from the all-white suburb of Elmhurst, about 25 miles outside of Chicago. A group of the center mothers were having a meeting in the parents' room. He was moving, slightly frantically it seemed, from his office to the parents' room, meeting with each group, when he decided that the best thing to do under the circumstances would be to have a joint memorial service to Dr. King.

The service was hastily arranged, and very moving. One of the Elmhurst ladies never stopped crying. Just as the service was winding up, an unruly group of high school students moved perilously near to the center. (Many Negro high school students simply left school that day. There was a lot of aimless activity, marching, sporadic violence, culminating over the weekend in the devastating West Side riots.)

One of black fathers helped a group of Elmhurst ladies to their nearby car and out of the area in a hurry. The other car was too far down the street. So these fathers drove the LWW ladies all the way home to Elmhurst in their own cars, drove back to Chicago and got the ladies' cars and delivered them back to Elmhurst -- two long round trips. "I guess none of us will forget that day," Hoffman said, who had been hit in the cheek by a flying rock during the general melee.

Impressions. Center #2. Helen Brennan, principal

The principal of Center #2 is a sweet-faced, young woman whose background is psychology. She radiates a calm happiness which kind of permeates the whole center. As she talked about the program and the children, as she showed us around the mobiles and introduced us to parents, children and staff, her involvement and enthusiasm for one and all was contagious.

Her children are about 30% from Spanish-speaking homes, the only center with such a high concentration. Some of the staff is Spanish-speaking. The staff is well-integrated, in fact, adding an excitement of diversity seldom found in slum schools.

Quite a few of the children come from Precious Blood, a parochial school in the neighborhood. She has been working closely with personnel from Precious Blood. While this is a poor community, it has really quite a stable population. As with the other centers, the natural boundaries are District 8 -- no particular school attendance area.

When the children in the immediate vicinity leave the center, they will attend the King School just down the street. She has already entered into a friendly competition with the principal of King: when the evaluation is made at the end of the third grade, King doesn't want to be left too far behind! Naturally, much can be attributed to the extra staffing and materials, but still... This kind of impact on the local public schools is most important.

Miss Brennan is very enthusiastic about the parents' program. She has become involved in helping families with problems of rent, relief, etc. She feels that the center itself is a stabilizing influence: people decide not to move because it would mean leaving the center. She works hard on family development, helping families to find effective

ways to solving their own problems through available local public and private agencies.

Perhaps because the principal is such a warm, feminine person, this center is characterized by gay, ruffly curtains (made by the parents), including some with children's artwork sewn onto them. There are window boxes attached to the outside walls with petunias. ("We didn't realize petunias needed so much sun," Miss Brennan said sadly. "Try impatiens," I advised.)

The specific learning and reading programs are described generally elsewhere. The rooms were colorful; children's art, pictures, words-words-words. The children were bright, active, talkative, involved.

In addition to the learning atmosphere, I came away from this center with a sense of its being an oasis, a haven of calm, beauty, optimism, peace, growth, love, and happiness. The visitor finds that she, like the staff, seems to walking about two feet off the ground.

Impressions. Center # 3. Debra Gordon, Principal

Mrs. Gordon is a handsome, dark-haired, direct, no-nonsense woman with a strong sense of purpose and well-defined theoretical frame of reference. She traveled to New York University in the beginning phases of this program and worked with Godkin and Deutsch. She is still working with them, and finds their approach and materials of immense value.

She use a "Modified Bereiter Approach," but actually is very eclectic in her use of materials and techniques. She uses the same format in content programs (going to the zoo, for instance) as in the language program.

She feels strongly that every activity must have a cognitive goal. Language development is all important. She feels that even in the short year since they've been underway, there are marked signs of success. She overheard one child say, in a friendly not sassy manner, "SPEAK UP, Mother, I can't hear you!" Another time a child said, "Mother, it's an apple, not a apple." Remember. These are three and four year olds.

With her stress on the cognitive goal for every activity, she told a story (with a twinkle, but she was almost serious) of seeing a teacher with a group of children outside playing. She said, "I asked the teacher, 'why?'" The teacher answered, "Because it's such a nice day." It was a lovely day, Mrs. Gordon said, "But I asked, 'what is the cognitive goal of this activity?'"

Her parents' program, described in detail in the Appendix section on Center #3, stresses home instruction. The parents meet in groups in the homes of one another. She wants them to learn how to use the common objects in homes as tools with which to teach the children to learn about texture, size, shape, position, etc.

She has quite a stable community, has lost during the year about 1/6 of the original group and has had an attendance of about 85%--not bad.

While her parents' program emphasizes helping parents to assume their expected responsibilities, she has implemented a high protein snack program which has proved highly successful. The afternoon I visited, the children had -- about 2:15 p.m. -- a "snack" of tuna fish sandwiches, grapes and milk. She has found that they are very hungry for this food.

A highlight of the visit to Center #3 was a demonstration of the Bereiter method. I had expected something much harsher, more demanding, more stressful for the children. The children, hastily gathered for the demonstration, were the youngest group -- three's about to be four's.

The teacher, small, brunette, very intense, held up a plate and asked in an extra loud voice, "What is this?" The children chorused, with perfect enunciation, "That is a plate." Pointing to each child in turn (and the tempo is very quick), the teacher asked, "Tell me what it is NOT."

Quickly, the children answered: "It is not food." "It is not a necklace." "It is not a cookie." (One child interjected, "But it's the same shape as a cookie.") (This is called the 'identity statement'.)

The children were asked about opposites. In response to questions, after being handed two plastic boxes, a child answered, "This container is heavy. This container is light." "What are they NOT?" asked the teacher. "This container is NOT heavy. This container is NOT light," answered the child correctly. Still a quick tempo, a warm tone.

They were asked about position (prepositions). "Put the carrot under the plate," directed the teacher. The child did. "Put the carrot over the plate." "Put the carrot so it is NOT over the plate." (The child set it along side of the plate.)

When I got home, my own 3½ year old couldn't answer any of those

Impressions. Center #4. John McGovern, principal

John McGovern is a big, sturdy, warm man, wearing shirt-sleeves and welcoming us with hamburgers and cokes brought in from a local store. He is a soft-spoken, tough-minded man who will be moving to become principal of a large (2,200 children) elementary school in the neighborhood in the fall. He is the only principal who will not be returning to the centers in the fall. (While it is true that the principals are so important to the success of the centers, in this case I can only be pleased that Herzl will be getting such a fine principal. Center #4 is running well. McGovern says, "It could run itself." He has given a great deal to the center and it is appropriate that he will now bring his strength to a large, difficult school.)

This center has perhaps the most fully developed continuous development program of all. As McGovern put it, "We have divided the children into groups of the mature, the more mature, and the very mature." Age is not a factor. When the Primary One unit opens in the fall, children who are ready for that program will be placed in it, regardless of age.

A major problem for this center is the transiency of the families. Only 50% of the original group is still there. Although it is so close to Center #3, the area south of Roosevelt Road seems to be quite much more of a high-transiency, generally less stable character.

This factor presents real problems to the whole program. While it is true that the children need such a program desperately, it is also true that the main value of the program will be for those children who are able to stay with it for the full five years. An in-and-out

situation for the children may not prove to have lasting benefits; and certainly, it will be very difficult to "prove" or evaluate the benefits at all if the children evaluated at the completion of the five years are not those who began.

McGovern is very sensitive to the needs of the parents, and would want many more social workers who could get out into the homes of the families and help with the serious problems of family disorganization which exist. He is very concerned about the families they do not reach, the children who do not come, who cannot be recruited.

His program stresses oral language development = the Bereiter and Engleman and the DISTAR program. He has found the SRA Short Test of Education Ability to be useful.

As a resident of the suburb of Riverside, he has interested five ladies from that community to come to the center weekly as volunteers. He would like to see a program that could involve a mix of children-- by race and class. It would seem that the ESEA Title I guidelines would not permit this, but he believes that the poor children and the middle-income children would have much to give one another.

Again, another unique center. This time a strong, masculine principal with a magnetic personality (the "pied piper" someone called him) who drew children to him like iron filings as we moved around the units. He will be missed.

Parade. July 3, 1968. 2:45 p.m. Child-Parent Center #3.

Children came out of the four mobile units and stood wiggling, whispering and fidgeting. Each child and teacher wore a red, white, and blue hat and carried a small flag.

They formed into a line, teachers shepherding the children who were wandering and eager to get started. A teacher led the parade, wearing a large sign on her bosom saying "CHILD-PARENT CENTER #3 (these units must get names!). Behind her were two Neighborhood Youth Corps boys with drums.

Down the street they strutted, children waving flags and singing "My Country 'Tis of Thee," drummers drumming, neighbors watching.

As we watched them go, each of us had our private thoughts. The street down which they marched so proudly had been badly damaged during the April riots. Vacant lots, boarded buildings, sagging houses, ugly factories surrounded us. No trees. No grass. ("Land of the pilgrims' pride")

They are small, these children. Their shining eyes, chirping voices, happy smiles show that they have faith in their country, faith in their school, faith in themselves. And hope. ("Sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing")

They marched down one of the worst streets in Chicago, one of the worst streets in the country, a street torn three months ago by anger, hate, despair, death and destruction. Little has been done to end the anger, hate, despair or destruction. ("Land where our fathers died")

Thus far, their school has kept faith with these children. Summer lies ahead. Summer on Chicago's West Side -- full of unknown dangers

and, perhaps, unexpected joys. The little Child-Parent Center, those bright-faced children, those determined teachers with such respect for their children and their work -- here perhaps is a promise to the future. Here perhaps is a glimpse of what could be. ("From every mountain side, let freedom ring.")

Possibly the best Fourth of July parade I've ever seen.