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A STUDY OF THE OPINIONS OF MOTHERS WITH CHILDREN TWO TO FIVE YEARS
OF AGE INCLUSIVE IN GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA
REGARDING PRE-SCHOOL CENTERS

by

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Approved by

Bess M. Ross

Adviser

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Professional workers in human development emphasize the value of education in the pre-school years. They consider that the pre-school center, as a complement to the home, enhances the emotional, physical, intellectual, and social growth of a child.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem. It was the purpose of this study (1) to ascertain what mothers of pre-school children, two to five years of age inclusive, within the corporate limits of Greensboro, North Carolina thought about centers for pre-school education and what values they placed upon pre-school learning; (2) to analyze the mothers' opinions of pre-school centers as they relate to their knowledge of and experience with pre-school centers, their needs for pre-school centers, their socio-economic differences, and their child-rearing concepts; (3) to ascertain these mothers' opinions of kindergarten and nursery school as part of the public school system; and (4) to compare the opinions of mothers interviewed with the opinions of school superintendents¹ concerning pre-kindergarten classes as part of the public school system.

Hypotheses of Thesis Problem. Since it is not only undesirable but difficult to consider statement of the problem without considering

¹As reported in random sample of school superintendents in the United States, "Superintendents say 'no' to pre-kindergarten classes," Nations Schools, 53:86, June, 1954.

the hypotheses held in developing the study, working hypotheses in regard to mothers and pre-school education centers follow:

- I. Mothers of pre-school children place a great deal of importance on pre-school learning. Mothers who place a great deal of importance on pre-school learning have favorable opinions regarding pre-schools.
- II. Opinions mothers of pre-school children have toward day care centers, nursery schools, and kindergartens differ.*
 - A. Basic factors involved in the differences of mothers' opinions may be classified as knowledge and use of pre-school centers, needs for pre-school centers, socio-economic differences, and child-rearing concepts.
 1. Knowledge and use of pre-school centers:
 - a. Mothers of pre-school children are ill-informed about nursery school, day care center, and kindergarten facilities available in Greensboro.
 - b. Mothers who have had experience with pre-school groups approve of them.
 - c. Mothers who have watched programs for or about pre-school children on TV have favorable opinions toward pre-schools.
 - d. Mothers who have favorable opinions toward pre-school centers make use of them.
 2. Needs for pre-school centers:
 - a. Mothers of pre-school children who work outside the

* See p. 8 for definitions of day care center, nursery school, and kindergarten.

home send their children to day care centers rather than nursery schools or kindergartens.

- b. Mothers of pre-school children consider day care centers as serving primarily a care-taking function.
- c. Mothers who have recognized problems with their pre-school children have favorable opinions about nursery schools, day care centers, and kindergartens.
- d. The following personal factors are related to differences in opinion.
 - (1) Size of family - mothers of large families do not feel the need for pre-school centers as do mothers of small families.
 - (2) Mother working - mothers who work outside the home have favorable opinions regarding pre-school centers.
 - (3) Housing - Housing affects mothers' opinions concerning pre-school centers; apartment or small house, favorable opinion; large house (over five rooms) unfavorable opinion toward pre-schools.
 - (4) Sibling status - Mothers whose pre-school children are the only child, oldest child, or youngest child have more favorable opinions of pre-school centers than mothers who have middle children.
 - (5) Age of child - Mothers with four and five year old children have more favorable opinions regarding pre-school centers than mothers with two and three year old children.

3. Socio-economic differences:

- a. There is a correlation between the amount of education a mother of a pre-school child had and her opinion of pre-school centers. Mothers with college and high school education have favorable opinions while mothers with grade school education have unfavorable opinions.
- b. Wives of professional and businessmen have more favorable opinions regarding pre-schools than do wives of skilled and unskilled workers.

4. Child rearing concepts:

Mothers with developmental child rearing concepts have more favorable opinions regarding nursery schools, kindergartens, and day care centers than do mothers with traditional child rearing concepts.²

III. Mothers of pre-school children in Greensboro think that kindergarten should be a part of the public school system.

- A. Mothers of pre-school children in Greensboro think that kindergarten should be completely financed by the public school system; that nursery school should be partially financed by the school system (such as physical facilities and part of teacher's salary).
- B. Mothers of pre-school children in Greensboro would vote for \$1 500 000 bond issue to take care of providing building facilities for kindergarten to become part of the public

² Evelyn Millis Duvall, "Conceptions of Parenthood", American Journal of Sociology, 52:195. November, 1946.

school system in Greensboro. They would not vote for a similar bond issue for nursery school.

- C. Mothers of pre-school children in Greensboro would approve an increase in their taxes to take care of operation of kindergarten as part of the public school system. They would not approve an increase in taxes for nursery school.
- D. Mothers of pre-school children have more favorable opinions of pre-kindergarten classes as part of the public school system than do school superintendents.³

Importance of the Study: Three factors give this study importance: (1) the value of pre-school education; (2) the limited pre-school facilities currently available in Greensboro, North Carolina; and (3) the growing need for pre-school centers.

It is assumed that persons in the child development field would agree with the following authorities:

The first five years in the cycle of child development are the most fundamental and the most formative for the simple but sufficient reason that they come first. Their influence upon the years that follow is incalculable.⁴

³Nations Schools, op. cit., p. 86.

⁴Arnold Gesell and Frances Ilg, Child Development, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), p. 62.

Here are the beginnings, the roots, of many things to come. A realization of what has gone before contributes to a deeper, more fundamental understanding of what follows. An understanding of the early years gives deeper, or more significant meaning to the interpretations that bear on life at other periods.⁵

Pre-school education in the city of Greensboro reaches a relatively small number of children. In 1952 there were 471 children in the nursery school and/or kindergarten group,* and 174 children in the separate kindergartens.⁶ A report of attendance for the State of North Carolina indicates a similarly small proportion of pre-school children are attending pre-school centers. 2.4 per cent of the five and six year olds were enrolled in kindergartens in 1950.⁷ Figures for the nursery school and child care center attendance were not available for the state.

Currently in Greensboro, as in many other cities, pre-school centers are not a part of the public school system.

Although great strides were made toward having kindergartens become an integral part of public education during the last twenty years, figures indicate that this educational privilege is one which is at present enjoyed by relatively few children under six years of age.⁸

⁵Dorothy Baruch, Parents and Children Go to School, (Chicago: Scott Foresman Company, 1939), p. viii.

⁶"A Survey of Existing Facilities of Day Nurseries and Kindergartens." Report of Study conducted by the Case Work Division of the Council of Social Agencies in Cooperation with the American Association of University Women, Greensboro, North Carolina, 1952.

⁷United States Census of the Population, Vol. II, Characteristics of the Population United States Bureau of Census, Pt. 33, North Carolina, Chapter C. United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1952, Table 61, pp. 33-184.

⁸"Early Childhood Education," Forty-sixth Yearbook of National Society for the Study of Education, Part II, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), p. 45.

* This figure includes the number of children enrolled in day care centers in Greensboro.

There is a growing need for pre-school centers. Small families often mean that the pre-school child has few or no playmates. Housing is another factor which furthers the need for pre-school groups. There is little play space in the apartment or small home of today. More families are living in individual dwellings. This means that the mother has little relief from the constant care of the pre-schooler. Many employed mothers need to provide a mother substitute for their children.

A great majority of children of working mothers must receive any daytime care that they get either by family work adjustment or care of some relative, friend or neighbor, or of a nursemaid employed by the family or else in a commercially operated home.⁹

The limited number of first-hand experiences available to children in their homes today further emphasizes the need for pre-school educational centers that can provide what the individual home is unable to provide.

We probably can hardly estimate how modern life limits the intellectual development of children by limiting their first hand experiences. Few of the activities related to the daily needs of the child are carried on at home.¹⁰

Leaders in the field of child development see a need for pre-school centers but do mothers recognize the need for and the value of pre-school educational centers? In this study an attempt was made to answer this question, to ascertain the opinions mothers had relative to pre-school learning and pre-school centers.

⁹ Employed Mothers and Child Care, Bulletin of the Women's Bureau, #246, United States Department of Labor, United States Government Printing Office, 1951, p. 6.

¹⁰ Katherine H. Read, The Nursery School, (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1955), p. 36.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

The writer of this thesis would agree with Marjorie M. Green and Elizabeth L. Woods that "The educational objectives should, of course, be the same for any type of program involving young children."¹¹ She would also agree with Mary Dabney Davis that "Kindergarten and nursery school cannot be defined or contrasted solely on the basis of ages of children served."¹² However, since age is an easily determined factor it was chosen as the one to distinguish nursery schools from kindergartens in this study. Group care outside the home was the factor chosen to distinguish day care centers.

Nursery school: An educational center for two, three, and/or four year olds usually meeting for a half-day session.

Kindergarten: An educational center for five year olds usually meeting for a half-day session.

Day care center: A center providing group care for children whose parents cannot care for them at home. Usually it is because the mother is working. Sometimes there are other reasons such as illness of the mother or broken homes. The day care center has a full day session,

¹¹Marjorie M. Green and Elizabeth L. Woods, Nursery School Handbook for Parents and Teachers, (Sierra Madre Community Nursery School Association, 1954), p. 7.

¹²Mary Dabney Davis, Schools for Children Under Six, United States Office of Education Bulletin #5, United States Government Printing Office, 1947, p. 6.

sometimes ten to twelve hours in length.

III. ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE THESIS

The second chapter deals with the review of literature related to the topic of the thesis. Since no research studies were found regarding mothers' opinions of pre-school centers or pre-school education, the review of literature is focused on information found in the literature regarding growth and values of pre-school centers, a report parents in one pre-school center gave when asked why they sent their children to nursery school, and a report of opinion polls regarding kindergarten and nursery school as part of the public school system.

In chapter three data collected by personal interview of seventy-seven mothers of pre-school children may be found. This chapter deals with (1) personal data, the composition of the group that has made the responses found in this study; (2) mothers' regard for pre-school learning, how important mothers consider pre-school learning to be; (3) mothers' knowledge and use of pre-school centers in Greensboro, how well informed are the mothers whose opinions are cited in this study; (4) mothers' opinions regarding pre-school centers and factors related to these opinions, mothers' approval or disapproval of pre-school centers, reasons given, and analysis of related factors; (5) opinions of mothers regarding kindergarten and nursery school as part of the public school system, approval or disapproval of pre-school educational centers as part of the public school system, also comparison of mothers' opinions with school superintendent opinions regarding nursery school as part of the public school system.

Chapter four gives a summary in terms of the hypotheses tested and conclusions that may be drawn from the data collected and analyzed in the study.

Bibliography and appendix may be found following Chapter four.

IV. METHOD OF PROCEDURE

After hypotheses for this study were written, analyzed, and edited they were used to help determine the necessary data to be collected and the method by which such data was to be collected.*¹ The hypotheses were especially helpful in delimiting the study.

The random sample for this study was drawn by the Survey Operations Unit of the University of North Carolina.*² By personal interview in the home it was found that in the 360 homes in the random sample there were eighty-two mothers of children from two to five years of age inclusive.

Seventy-seven mothers of pre-school children were personally interviewed. Interviews ranged in length from twenty minutes to forty-five minutes. A questionnaire was used as a guide.*³ Each question was asked orally by the interviewer with interpretation and further explanation given as needed. Answers were written by the interviewer on the questionnaire. Comments as to circumstances of the interview, general impressions of the home, and opinions of the mother

*¹See hypotheses in appendix.

*²Survey Operations Unit, Institute of Statistics, The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

*³See questionnaire in appendix.

toward pre-school education were noted immediately following the interview in order to clarify or verify responses when needed.

Information was requested regarding (1) personal data, (2) knowledge and experience the mother had had with pre-school centers or groups, (3) the mother's opinions regarding value, use and support of pre-school centers, and (4) the mother's opinion of pre-school centers as part of the public school system. The majority of questions could be answered by a response of "yes", "no", or "don't know". A response of "depends" was also needed for conditional responses, and even though such a response was not listed on the schedule, interviewees would give this response if they felt the need. Opportunity was provided for the mother interviewed to give reasons for her responses. Three check lists were used, (1) a check list for family income, (2) a check list to indicate the value the mother placed on pre-school learning, and (3) a check list to help indicate the mother's concept of desirable child-rearing practices.*

Three mothers refused to be interviewed: one stated that she was too busy moving; three subsequent dates were made with a second interviewee, with failure each time to find the interviewee at home; the third person who declined to be interviewed was the mother of a child with cerebral palsy and did not wish to discuss activities of pre-school children. One person was in the hospital. Contacts that were made with these persons seem to indicate that they were normal homes of pre-schoolers.

* See questionnaire in appendix.

It can be concluded that information found in this thesis has been collected from a representative sample of mothers of children from two to five years of age in the city of Greensboro.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Educational Index; Child Development Abstracts and Bibliography; Research Relating to Children, Children's Bureau; and the card catalog in the library of the Woman's College of the University of North Carolina were consulted in the search for background material related to this study. Material written prior to 1940 was not consulted unless it contributed directly to the problem at hand.

No research studies were found regarding mothers' opinions of pre-school centers. Few related references to this topic were found. This review thus becomes mainly a review of literature regarding the growth of pre-school centers, values of pre-school education, and opinions toward pre-school education as part of the public school system. It does include a report of reasons why parents in one nursery school sent their children to a pre-school center.

Literature on the growth of pre-school educational centers. In the past, as well as currently, growth of pre-school centers in the United States received its impetus from professional workers, and/or organizations. The origin of centers for pre-school education can be credited to varied adult interests and needs. The reasons for the existence of pre-schools are many: research in child development, training in homemaking, pre-parental education in women's colleges, parent cooperation, private enterprise, teacher training, public schools,

specialized interests, and relief of unemployment and economic stress.¹ Few have been the times that pre-schools have been established for the single purpose of aiding children's development.

In 1888 children did not attend nursery schools in the United States for they were unknown in this country at that time. This was not true for kindergarten. 31 227 children were in attendance at public or private kindergartens. Kindergarten increased in enrollment until 1930 when 777 899 children were reported attending kindergartens. By this time nursery schools had come into the picture. The number of nursery schools increased from three in 1920 to eighty-nine in 1928. Seventeen of these were in public schools.²

The depression caused enrollment of both nursery schools and kindergartens to drop. However, paradoxically, the depression was a help to pre-school children for Works Progress Administration nursery schools were established as part of the Federal Government program, and with them the first large scale grant of public funds was provided for a group program for young children.

Before Works Progress Administration nursery schools had become a thing of the past, World War II created a need for care of pre-school children while their mothers were employed in wartime industry. The Lanham Act provided Federal funds to local communities for pre-school centers.³

¹Catherine Landreth, Education of the Young Child, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1942), pp. 7-12.

²"Early Childhood Education", Forty-sixth Yearbook of National Society for the Study of Education, Part II, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), pp. 45-47.

³"Early Childhood Education," op. cit., p. 45.

Following World War II came the end of Lanham Act nursery schools, and with it came demands upon the public school authorities to continue the program to help meet the peace-time needs for care and education of young children.⁴

Points of view on providing this service which were expressed by boards of education through a sampling of 203 school systems were favorable to the establishment of kindergarten but less favorable with respect to nursery school. This withholding of many school board members was due chiefly to cost of operation.⁵

In 1942, the majority (seventy-seven percent) of the young children two to five years of age, attending schools in cities and towns were enrolled in public school kindergartens. Of the rest, eight per cent were five years old enrolled in primary schools, six per cent were enrolled by denominational groups, five per cent in the Works Progress Administration Federally financed nursery schools and the remaining four per cent in private nursery schools and kindergartens.⁶

Distribution by geographical location showed that the East and West Central and South Atlantic States had the smallest proportions of the two to five year olds in school. In 1942, the largest federally financed Works Progress Administration nursery school enrollments were in the South Atlantic States. The share of public school kindergarten enrollments for these states is small.⁷

⁴Mary Dabney Davis, Schools for Children Under Six, Bulletin #5, United States Office of Education Bulletin #5, United States Government Printing Office, 1947, p. 30.

⁵Loc. cit.

⁶Ibid. p. 23.

⁷Mary Dabney Davis, op. cit., p. 23.

Review of the Literature on the Values of Pre-school Educational Centers. Children have need for warm affectionate contacts with adults. They need the comfort of feeling that they will not be expected to control their own impulses alone and unaided. Each child needs adults who will give him ways of releasing his strong feelings but at the same time will protect him and also other people from consequences of those feelings. Each child needs to like the idea of growing up and of being grown. Children need the opportunity to explore, discover, create and solve problems. They need the kinds of experiences that will heighten their sensitivity, enhance their curiosity, lessen confusion, and promote growth in skills, as well as increase their range of interests.⁸

Good pre-school education helps to ease for the child under five or six some of the strains associated with living and adjusting to our modern civilization.⁹

Dr. Millie C. Almy states that nursery school offers the following to a pre-school child: "safe outlets for imagination, give and take with the child's peers under the guidance of an experienced group, and play space."¹⁰

Marjorie Green believes that, "a good program of nursery education considers the whole child, his physical, mental, and social welfare."¹¹

⁸Mary Elizabeth Keister, "Day Care Centers and Nursery Schools Have the Same Goals", The Child, 15:160, May, 1951.

⁹Ibid, p. 161.

¹⁰Dr. Millie C. Almy, "Is Nursery School the Answer", Woman's Home Companion, 80:18, September, 1953.

¹¹Marjorie Green, op. cit., p. 6.

Good pre-school education can be of value to the family. It was never the intention of advocates of pre-school education that pre-school centers should become home substitutes, or take away any of the functions that rightfully belong to the family. On the contrary, pre-school centers "stabilize, facilitate, and enhance family living."¹² They are but a supplement to the home, that institution which gives stability to our culture.

Dr. M. E. Keister has listed the following values of nursery education as it relates to the families served: improved relationship between mother and child; conservation of the family, when the mother works outside the home; aid in meeting educational needs of parents; an example in child development practices set for parents.¹³

Good pre-school education can benefit the community. Dr. M. E. Keister has listed the following pre-school education experiences which help the community: nursery school centers provide preventive physical and mental health programs for children; the community sees the nursery school in the perspective of family life; nursery centers show to the community enduring values to the child and to the community that arise us to pre-school experience.¹⁴

Literature on the reasons why parents send their children to pre-school centers. Parents were asked when they brought their children to the Broadoaks Pre-school of Whittier College to indicate why they had sent their child to pre-school. The following answers were given in 1938:

¹²Mary Elizabeth Keister, op. cit., p. 161.

¹³Loc. cit.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 162.

For optimum child development

- a. for social adjustment. The largest number of parents sent their children to pre-school for companionship with other children of their own age. The problem is not only one of having peers with whom to play, but a matter of supervised play.
- b. to help overcome problems.
- c. to prevent problems from arising. Some parents come to the pre-school in order to obtain from the workers as realistic picture of their child as is possible.
- d. to relieve home conditions. Occasionally parents realize that there is tension in their home and that the child deserves at least a few hours relief from such an atmosphere.

Other considerations

- a. for parking purposes
- b. for parent education
- c. because parent and child remain better friends when not perpetually together
- d. as a transition to school
- e. they enter their children because they believe the pre-school offers distinct advantages and opportunities for growth.¹⁵

It is probable that two items would be intensified if parents gave their reasons today. Number one: Mothers would send their children for good child care under the supervision of trained adults. There are two million mothers of pre-school children who are working and need to provide care for their pre-schoolers.¹⁶ Adequate mother substitutes are difficult to find, and when found are often not within the financial range that a working mother can afford to pay. Children from three to

¹⁵Dorothy Baruch, op. cit., pp. 17-25.

¹⁶Employed Mothers and Child Care, Bulletin of the Women's Bureau, #246, United States Department of Labor, United States Government Printing Office, 1951, p. 6.

five need to learn how to live with other children. Only a group situation would provide this experience. Number two: Mothers would send their children for social adjustment and opportunities for safe play. Our present living situation is one of small families living in small homes or apartments. Play space is at a premium. Housing alone has intensified the need for pre-school centers where children can enjoy safe play and outlets for their imagination under the guidance of one who understands the growth pattern of children.

Literature on opinions regarding pre-school centers as part of the public school system.

In 1948 the Committee for Part II of the 46th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education wrote,

Educational services should be extended downward to provide for the three-to-five year old children...Boards of education should by law be required to provide school opportunities for all five year old children who apply for admission, and they should be permitted to provide at public expense for all three and four year old children whose parents wish them to attend and who will themselves participate in a parent-education program.¹⁷

A public opinion poll of school superintendents in August, 1945 made by the Nations Schools magazine, revealed the following,

School officials thought nursery schools and kindergartens would probably be among the school services to receive support necessary for their early expansion.¹⁸

A public opinion poll of the general population of Minnesota showed forty-eight per cent in favor of including nursery schools as a regular part of the public schools. Forty-four per cent opposed, and four per cent with no opinion.¹⁹

¹⁷"Early Childhood Education", op. cit., p. 51.

¹⁸Ibid, p. 57.

¹⁹Ibid, p. 57.

The following questions have been raised in opposition to educational services for young children. Bess Goodykoontz, Mary Dabney Davis, and Hazel F. Gabbard have provided the answers given.

1. Are children at 2,3,4,5 years ready for formal education?

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

With the policy of "hands off" until six, the child's haphazard education at home often leaves him unable to make the most of the later educational opportunities which are offered.

2. Do not young children need a home environment for their best environment?

Every child needs a home which can give him the best climate for growing...Unfortunately many homes are unable to supply all the ingredients in the environment necessary for the happiness and stability of the child. The modern nursery school and kindergarten has been established to supplement the home, not to replace it.

Research reveals that young children benefit greatly if they have other children of nearly the same age to play with. The child in the average family of today does not have the benefit of the give and take implicit in the life of the larger families of a former day.

3. Does not public assumption for young children deprive parents of their responsibility and of the benefits they would receive from the total care of their children?

Instead of taking responsibility away from the home and encouraging the mother to shirk, the respite offered by nursery schools and kindergartens more often has been found to increase the parents desire to fulfill his obligations with more competence.

4. Are the costs of nursery school and kindergarten prohibitive?

On an hour-for-hour basis nursery schools have not been found more costly than other educational services serving small groups and requiring expert guidance.

5. Are not children in groups subject to serious health hazards?

It is now well established by the American Academy of Pediatrics that groups of young children in properly supervised nursery schools and kindergartens enjoy good health and can be kept about as free from disease as children of similar ages who are cared for in their homes.

6. Isn't care of young children a welfare function?

Any program which a community offers young children should be planned to provide adequately for the needs of children. Nursery school and kindergarten in public schools have demonstrated in practical ways how a community may bring together services from various community agencies to serve children.²⁰

In contrast to the survey findings of the Nations Schools magazine in 1945, we find superintendents saying "no" to pre-kindergarten classes in 1954. Two-thirds of the nation's school administrators according to random sampling opposed pre-kindergarten classes maintained by the local public school system. Their reasons are listed below:

- a. home atmosphere is needed for pre-school children.
- b. children develop rapidly enough in first grade with the modern equipment and good teaching we have.
- c. modern elementary schools are able to give the child an adequate grasp of study material as well as social conduct.²¹

The report for nursery schools as a part of the public school system, as given by the school superintendents in 1954 is not a positive one. Would parents give a positive or negative report for nursery schools as part of the public school system in 1955? It is a part of this study to provide some answers to this question.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 44-47.

²¹"Superintendents say 'no' to pre-kindergarten classes", Nations Schools, 53:86, June, 1954.

CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION OF DATA

Data were obtained from a random sample of seventy-seven mothers of children two to five years of age inclusive, within the corporate limits of Greensboro, North Carolina.

I. PERSONAL DATA

In this study the personal data obtained about the mother included her age, education, whether or not she worked outside the home, and if so whether or not she was the total breadwinner.

Almost half (forty-seven per cent) of the mothers interviewed were thirty years of age or over. Forty-eight per cent of the mothers attended only high school (ninth through the twelfth grade). The percentage of mothers working outside the home was slightly less (forty-six per cent) than those not working outside the home (fifty-four per cent). Ten per cent of the sample interviewed were total breadwinners. (Table 1)

Age and sibling status were the two items of personal data recorded about the ninety-nine children two to five years of age inclusive in the random sample. Distribution according to ages was fairly even, with the five year olds being represented slightly more than the two, three, and four year olds. When classified according to sibling status, there were more youngest children than only, middle, or oldest children. (Table 2)

Other items of personal data recorded were number of parents in

the home, size of family, occupation of the husband, family income, and housing. Distribution of these personal data was fairly even.

In eighty-eight per cent of the homes represented in the random sample both parents were living in the home (Table 3). In twelve per cent of the homes the father was absent due to divorce, separation or death.

Distribution according to size of family was equal with fifty per cent being large families (three children and over) and fifty per cent being small families (one or two children).

There were more skilled and unskilled workers represented than there were business or professional workers. It follows that there were more low and medium income families represented than high income families.

Forty-eight per cent of the family dwellings were small houses. Distribution between apartments and large houses was divided equally.

Table 1. PERSONAL DATA REGARDING MOTHERS OF PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN
INTERVIEWED BY DISTRIBUTION OF AGE, EDUCATION, JOB LOCATION,
AND RACE.

Personal data regarding mother	Number interviewed	Per cent interviewed
Age of mother		
Eighteen through twenty-four	21	27
Twenty-five through twenty-nine	20	26
Thirty and over	36	47
Education of mother		
Grade school (first through eighth)	20	26
High school (ninth through twelfth)	37	48
Additional training (commercial, nursing, college)	20	26
Job location		
Mothers working outside the home*	33	46
Mothers not working outside the home	44	54
Race		
White	59	77
Negro	18	23

* Includes eight total breadwinners.

Table 2. PERSONAL DATA REGARDING CHILDREN TWO TO FIVE INCLUSIVE OF
MOTHERS INTERVIEWED BY DISTRIBUTION OF AGE AND SIBLING STATUS

Personal data regarding children two to five inclusive of mothers interviewed (ninety-nine in sample)	Per cent in sample
Age of child	
Two years	19
Three years	25
Four years	25
Five years	31
Sibling status	
Only child	15
Youngest child	42
Middle child	21
Oldest child	22

Table 3. PERSONAL DATA OF FAMILIES IN RANDOM SAMPLE BY DISTRIBUTION OF NUMBER OF PARENTS LIVING IN THE HOME, SIZE OF FAMILY, THE OCCUPATION OF THE HUSBAND, FAMILY INCOME, AND HOUSING.

Personal data of families in random sample	Number in sample	Per cent in sample
Number of parents living in the home		
Families with both parents living in the home	68	88
Families with father absent	9	12
Size of family		
Large family (three children or more)	38	50
Small family (one or two children)	39	50
Occupation of husband*		
Unskilled	22	28
Skilled	21	27
Business	17	22
Professional	7	10
Family income		
0 - \$2 999	23	30
\$3 000 - \$4 999	24	31
\$5 000 - and over	17	22
No report	13	17
Housing		
Apartment	20	26
Small house (under six rooms)	37	48
Large house (six rooms and over)	20	26

* Nine husbands absent from the home, one husband ill and unable to work.

II. MOTHERS' REGARD FOR PRE-SCHOOL LEARNING

Mothers interviewed were asked to make a sentence from the phrase, "the first five years of a child's life" by choosing one out of the four possible endings given them in a check list as follows: (1) do not affect the rest of his education, (2) are the most important learning years of his life, (3) are of little importance in his growth and development, (4) are important but not any more important than any other

age in his life.

Summary of the check list indicates that mothers of pre-school children in Greensboro place a great deal of importance on pre-school learning. They responded as follows:

The first five years of a child's life

- 4 do not affect the rest of his education.
- 55 are the most important learning years of his life.
- 1 are of little importance in his growth and development.
- 17 are important but not any more important than any other age of his life.

III. MOTHERS' KNOWLEDGE OF THE PRE-SCHOOL

CENTERS IN GREENSBORO

In order to find out if mothers of pre-school children were well informed as to pre-schools in Greensboro, they were asked to name pre-schools their children could currently attend, and in addition to name any other pre-schools in Greensboro.

If a mother could name a nursery school, kindergarten, and/or day care center her child could currently attend, she was asked the following questions: "(1) how near is it to your home, (2) is transportation provided by the school, (3) could you provide transportation, (4) how much does it cost, (5) what are the hours, (6) is lunch served, (7) what age children attend, (8) how do you enroll your child?"

If the interviewee named additional centers she was asked if she could give answers to the above questions regarding the additional centers mentioned. In most cases, very little information other than name or location could be given for centers that were not available

for the child to currently attend.

The number of pre-school centers mothers named and the accuracy and completeness of the responses given to questions asked has been analyzed. Eighteen mothers knew of no pre-school centers in Greensboro, forty-one reported three pre-schools or less, eighteen reported four or more. No one reported more than seven pre-school centers (Table 4).

Of the eighteen mothers reporting four or more pre-schools, thirteen gave full response to the questions regarding these centers, two gave partial responses, and three reported the name of the center only. This seems to indicate that those who are able to name several pre-school centers in Greensboro are also well informed as to their operation. The partial and complete responses given, in most cases, were fairly accurate.

Table 4. MOTHERS' KNOWLEDGE OF PRE-SCHOOL CENTERS IN GREENSBORO

Number of pre-school centers named	Number of mothers interviewed	Number of mothers giving different amounts of information			
		name only	location only	partial information	complete* information
0	18				
1	13	3	6	3	1
2	13	3	6	2	2
3	15	3		3	9
4	8	3			5
5	7			1	6
6	1			1	
7	2				2
Total	77	12	12	10	25

* Partial and complete information given in response to questions number twelve and thirteen in questionnaire found in appendix.

Knowledge regarding kinds of pre-schools in Greensboro. Forty-six of those interviewed reported fifty-nine nursery schools, thirty-eight reported fifty-one kindergartens, and fifty-four reported sixty-one day care centers. At first glance one would conclude that this representative sample of Greensboro mothers of pre-schoolers was well informed about nursery schools, kindergartens and day care centers. Upon further study one discovers that this is not the case. Nineteen per cent of the sample could give partial or complete responses to questions asked regarding nursery schools; nineteen per cent could give such information regarding kindergartens; and twenty-five per cent could give such information regarding day care centers (Table 5).

Day care centers were reported more often (Table 6) by more mothers, (Table 5) than nursery schools and kindergartens. More complete responses were given in answer to questions regarding day care centers also (Table 5).

Nursery schools that the child could currently attend were reported more times than kindergartens (Table 6) or day care centers. The fact that a mother reported a nursery school the child could attend currently does not indicate that enrollment was assured.

Table 5. NUMBER AND PER CENT OF MOTHERS REPORTING NURSERY SCHOOLS, KINDERGARTENS, AND DAY CARE CENTERS IN GREENSBORO

Kind	Pre-school center child able to attend currently				Other pre-school centers named		Total	
	Name and location only		Partial or complete information		Name and location only			
	Number inter- viewed	Per cent inter- viewed	Number inter- viewed	Per cent inter- viewed	Number inter- viewed	Per cent inter- viewed	Number inter- viewed	Per cent inter- viewed
Nursery school	14	18	15	19	17	22	46	60
Kinder- garten	8	10	15	19	15	19	38	50
Day care center	7	10	19	24	28	36	54	70

Table 6. NUMBER OF TIMES NURSERY SCHOOLS, KINDERGARTENS, AND DAY CARE CENTERS WERE REPORTED BY MOTHERS INTERVIEWED

Kind	Child able to attend currently	Other centers named	Total
Nursery school	37*	22	59
Kindergarten	28	23	51
Day care centers	27	34	61

* Two negro university nursery schools (Bennett and A & T College) were mentioned fourteen times. Woman's College Nursery School was mentioned seven times.

When the centers reported were analyzed according to sponsorship, it was found that church-sponsored kindergartens had been reported most often.

Analysis of different kinds of pre-school centers shows eighteen different kindergartens, fourteen nursery schools, and twenty-nine day care centers were reported. Some centers are a combination of nursery school, kindergarten, and day care center. Elimination of such duplication brings the total of different pre-school centers reported to twenty-nine (Table 7). There were twenty-seven different pre-school centers reported in a survey made in 1952.¹

¹ A Survey of Existing Facilities of Day Nurseries and Kindergartens, op. cit., p. 4.

Table 7. NUMBER OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF PRE-SCHOOL CENTERS REPORTED
BY SPONSORSHIP

Sponsor	Nursery school	Kindergarten	Day care center	Total
College	3	3	0	6
Church	4	9	1	14
Private	5	4	4	13
Public* ¹	2	2	4	8
Total	14	18	9	29 different pre-school centers* ²

*1 Pre-school centers located in a public school or community center.

*2 Eliminating duplication when any one center was a nursery school, kindergarten, and/or day care center.

While individual mothers were not well informed of pre-school centers in Greensboro, as a group those interviewed must have given at least the name of almost every pre-school center in Greensboro.

IV. MOTHERS' USE OF PRE-SCHOOL CENTERS IN GREENSBORO

Mothers were asked if the child was presently attending a pre-school and/or if they planned to send him to one. If the answer was an affirmative one, the mother was asked if the parents had a specific center in mind and if they had tried to place their child. Several mothers reported that their children had attended but were not presently attending pre-schools. Age of child, change of residence, and change in mother's occupation from working outside the home to full time homemaker were the reasons most often given for discontinued use of pre-school centers.

The use made of pre-school centers in Greensboro is limited. Only thirteen out of the ninety-nine children in the sample had had pre-school experience. The number of children that had attended pre-school centers was greater than the number that was presently attending. Greater use had been made of day care centers than of nursery schools or kindergartens (Table 8). This would explain the mothers' ability to report more day care centers more accurately than the other two types of pre-schools (Table 5).

Table 8. NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHO ARE ATTENDING OR HAVE ATTENDED PRE-SCHOOL CENTERS IN GREENSBORO

Sponsor	Nursery school	Kindergarten	Day care center	Total
College	1-attending 1-had attended			2
Church				
Private		2-attending 1-had attended	2-attending 2-had attended	7
Public	1-attending		2-had attended	3
Unknown	*1	*2	1-had attended	1
Total	2-attending 1-had attended	2-attending 1-had attended	2-attending 5-had attended	13

*1 One child had attended nursery school in Chapel Hill.

*2 One child had attended kindergarten in High Point.

The anticipated use of pre-school centers was greater than the present use made of them. Twenty-three mothers planned to send their children to kindergarten, ten to day care centers, and seven to nursery school. Church kindergarten was mentioned most often as the pre-school where the child would be enrolled. Nine out of the twenty-

three mothers reported that they planned to send their children to kindergarten but did not know where. Eight out of ten mothers did not know where they would send their children to a day care center (Table 9). The more frequent reasons given for use of pre-school centers were: nursery school, association with other children; kindergarten, preparation for school, and day care center, care of the child while the mother worked.

Table 9. NUMBER OF MOTHERS WHO PLAN TO SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO PRE-SCHOOL

Sponsor	Nursery school	Kindergarten	Day care center	Total
College	5	1*		6
Church		7		7
Private	1	3*	2	6
Public	1	3		4
Unknown		9	8	17
Total	7	23* 22 different mothers	10	40 39 dif- ferent mothers

* One reported college or private centers.

Only four out of the thirty-nine mothers reporting that they planned to send their children to pre-school centers had enrolled the child. The tendency is to wait until entrance is imminent.

V. MOTHERS' OPINIONS REGARDING PRE-SCHOOL CENTERS

In order to ascertain a mother's opinion toward pre-school centers she was asked the following questions regarding the value, use and financial support of pre-schools: *1 (1) Do you think nursery school helps a child? kindergarten? Day care center? (2) Would you like your child to attend nursery school? Kindergarten? Day care center? (3) Is your child presently attending a pre-school? Has attended? Do you plan to send him? (4) Do you know of a nursery school that your child could attend now? Kindergarten? Day care center? (5) Do you think a child should go to school before the first grade? (6) Should nursery school be part of the public school system? Kindergarten? (7) Would you vote for a \$1 500 000 bond issue to provide building space for kindergarten as a part of the public school system in Greensboro? An additional \$1 500 000 for nursery school? Would you approve an increase in your taxes so that \$400 000 would be provided annually to operate kindergarten as part of the public school system in Greensboro? An additional \$400 000 for nursery school?*2 (8) When a mother of a pre-schooler works outside the home, who should care for her child? Should she send the child to a pre-school center? Should she have someone come into the home?

It may be concluded from analysis of mothers' responses to the above questions that mothers' opinions toward kindergartens are more

*1 See questions 2,3,6,7,9,10,12,14 in questionnaire in appendix for exact wording used in interview.

*2 Figures from Greensboro Board of Education Office, Mr. Weaver, Superintendent of Instruction, Greensboro Public Schools estimating.

favorable than toward nursery schools or day care centers (Table 10).

The number of mothers who thought nursery school, kindergarten, and/or day care centers to be helpful to pre-school children was larger than the number of mothers who would like their children to attend pre-school centers (Table 10).

Table 10. OPINIONS OF MOTHERS OF PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN REGARDING VALUE OF PRE-SCHOOL CENTERS

Response of mothers*	Number of mothers responding				Per cent mothers with "yes" responses
	Yes	No	Depends	Don't know	
Pre-school center does help a child					
nursery school	52	2	8	14	68
kindergarten	59	3	4	11	78
day care center	35	7	14	31	44
I would like my child to attend					
nursery school	27	29	13	8	35
kindergarten	47	14	14	2	61
day care center	21	22	23	11	27
When the mother works outside the home, the preferable arrangement for care of the pre-school child should be:					
send to pre-school center	31	21	22	3	40
someone come in the home	21	31	22	3	27

* Questions 2,3,14 in questionnaire in appendix.

Reasons given by mothers for their opinions regarding value of nursery schools. Mothers were asked to give reasons for their responses to the questions, "Do you think nursery school helps a child? Kindergarten? Day care center?" and "Would you like your child to attend nursery school? Kindergarten? Day care center?" The reasons mothers give for the first question are not different from the reasons given for the second question.*

Social adjustment was the factor in the nursery school experience that mothers mentioned most often (32 times) in answer to the question, "Do you think nursery school helps a child?" Companionship, information gained, preparation for school, and being away from parents were other reasons given by the mothers interviewed. Negative answers seemed to center about the thought that the child should be in the home (Table 11).

Reasons given by mothers for their opinions regarding value of kindergartens. Preparation for school was given most often (34 times) as the reason why mothers considered kindergarten to be helpful to a child. Learning to play with other children was mentioned twenty-one times, and learning ABC's, games, etc. was mentioned sixteen times. Reasons given for negative responses to the question, "Do you think kindergarten helps a child?" were: (1) can learn as much at home, (2) they go to school enough as it is (Table 12).

Reasons given by mothers for their opinions regarding value of day care centers. Even though the question asked was, "Do you think a day care center helps a child?" twelve mothers answered the question as though it had been, "Do you think a day care center helps a mother?"

* See Tables 9 through 18.

Table 11. REASONS GIVEN BY MOTHERS FOR THEIR OPINIONS REGARDING VALUE
OF NURSERY SCHOOLS

Opinion of mother	Reason given by mother	Number of times mentioned
Nursery school helps a child	Learn to play with other children	32
	Companionship	12
	Learn a lot	15
	Adjustment to routines, preparation for school	7
	Being away from parent	9
	Supervision	
	health, good diet, habits	5
	under trained personnel	2
Nursery school does not help a child	Improvement in child's development	5
	Do not approve, too young	1
	Not a whole lot, child should be at home	1
It depends on circumstances whether nursery school helps a child or not	On parents	
	ability of parents to cope with age	1
	how mother feels about the child	1
	On child	
	if shy, helps him meet others	1
	On certain conditions	
	if no playmates	2
There are advantages and disadvantages to nursery school	surroundings	2
	It helps a child to get along with other children, to be away from parents, but is not like home atmosphere	1
	Playing with other children, yes, large group, no	1
	Playing with other children, yes, but it tends to make them nervous	1

Table 12. REASONS GIVEN BY MOTHERS FOR THEIR OPINIONS REGARDING VALUE OF KINDERGARTENS

Opinion of mother	Reason given by mother	Number of times mentioned
Kindergarten helps a child	Preparation for school	34
	Learn things (ABC's, games, etc.)	16
	Help to first grade teachers	2
	Learn to play with other children	21
	Companionship	10
	Being away from parent	5
	Discipline, supervision	5
	Aid to parents	2
	Health	
	regular care, hours sleep, meals	2
Kindergarten does not help a child	aid to good mental health	6
	Can learn as much at home	1
	Makes them feel as though they've been going to school all their lives	1
	Will be bored with school later	1
It depends on circumstances whether kindergarten helps or not	On mother	
	how mother feels about children	1
	some mothers don't take time	1
	On child	
	if shy, preparation to meet others	1
	according to child's temperament	2
	"if up in their mind"	1
	On playmates	
	depends on whether child has playmates	2
	On length of time child has to go not for more than one year	1
	5 year old gets more from it	1
I don't know whether kindergarten would be helpful or not	Have had no experience with kindergarten	2

Mothers seemed to recognize the place of the day care center in providing care of pre-school children while the mother is working outside the home. Learning to play with other children was mentioned ten times, information learned seven times, and good care six times as the reason mothers considered day care centers to be of value. (Table 13).

Reasons given by mothers for their opinions regarding whether or not they would send their children to nursery school. Mothers mentioned learning to play with other children and companionship more often than they mentioned any other reasons why they wanted their children to attend nursery school. Eight mothers giving negative responses stated that nursery school was not needed for their children. In two cases this was due to the child being beyond nursery school age (five years of age). Conditional responses seemed to indicate finances to be of importance in deciding to send or not to send a child to nursery school (Table 14).

Reasons given by mothers for their opinions regarding whether or not they would send their children to kindergarten. Preparation for school, association with other children, companionship, information learned, and being away from the parents were mentioned as reasons why parents would send their children to kindergarten. "No need" seemed to be the reason for negative response to the question, "Would you like your child to attend kindergarten?" Finances and proximity of the kindergarten were given as reasons for conditional responses (Table 15).

Reasons given by mothers for their opinions regarding whether or not they would send their children to day care centers. More conditional responses were given to the question, "Would you like your child to attend a day care center?" than were negative or positive responses.

Table 13. REASONS GIVEN BY MOTHERS FOR THEIR OPINIONS REGARDING VALUE OF DAY CARE CENTERS

Opinion of mother	Reason given by mother	Number of times mentioned
Day care center helps a child	Learn to play with other children	10
	Companionship	3
	Learn a lot	7
	Preparation for school	3
	Being away from parents	2
	Supervision	
	health, good care	6
	supervision, more professional	3
	attention, someone takes time to give child attention, mothers don't	3
Day care center does not help a child	Child exposed to colds, etc.	2
	Child apart from family	1
	Child better off at home	1
	Child got tired out trying to keep up with older children	1
	Poor supervision	1
It depends on circumstances whether or not day care center helps a child	On the day care center	
	who takes care of them	2
	if run correctly	2
	On whether or not mother has to work	6
	On whether mother works, but mother should be at home	2
	On whether parents can afford it	2
I don't know whether it helps or not	Have had no experience with day care center	2
	Don't know, but better than leaving them at home if you work	1
Day care center helps a mother	Mother working	
	mother not depriving child while working	5
	know where they are	4
	cheaper than help in the house	3

Table 14. REASONS GIVEN BY MOTHERS FOR THEIR OPINIONS REGARDING
WHETHER OR NOT THEY WOULD SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO NURSERY
SCHOOL

Opinion of mother	Reason given by mother	Number of times mentioned
I would like my child to attend nursery school	Learn to play with other children	7
	Companionship	5
	Preparation for school	3
	Learn a lot	3
	Being away from parent	3
	Would give child feeling of importance ("his" school)	1
	Child would get good care, know where she is	1
I would not like my child to attend nursery school	Not needed	8
	Child should be at home	3
	Can't pay so much	1
It depends on circumstances whether or not I would like my child to attend nursery school	On finances	7
	On availability of nursery school, if one close	2
	On companionship	
	at time wonder about my child always playing with older children	1
	On care needed	
	if I were working, I'd like him to attend nursery school	2
	On child	
	if thought he'd stay as soon as three want to send him	2
		1

Table 15. REASONS GIVEN BY MOTHERS FOR THEIR OPINIONS REGARDING
WHETHER OR NOT THEY WOULD SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO KINDERGARTEN

Opinion of mother	Reason given by mother	Number of times mentioned
I would like my child to attend kindergarten	Preparation for school	12
	Learn a lot	6
	Association with other children	7
	Companionship	6
	Being away from parent	4
	Improvement in child's development	
	a little shy	1
	nervous child, and he needs it	1
I would not like my child to attend kindergarten	Not needed	5
	In school so much longer	1
It depends on circumstances whether or not I would like my child to attend kindergarten	On finances	6
	On availability, if one close	4
	On child	
	if special interest needs to be developed	1
	if thought he'd stay, get used to school	1

Two reasons were given for the conditional responses, (1) if the mother worked outside the home, (2) if the day care center was near. "No need" was given as the reason for more negative responses than any other. Mother working, association with other children, and preparation for school were given as the reasons for positive responses (Table 16).

Table 16. REASONS GIVEN BY MOTHERS FOR THEIR OPINIONS REGARDING WHETHER OR NOT THEY WOULD SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO DAY CARE CENTERS

Opinion of mother	Reason given by mother	Number of times mentioned
I would like my child to attend day care center	Association with other children	2
	School preparation	1
	Mother working, child being taken care of	2
	Mother plans to work, child would be taken care of	2
I would not like my child to attend day care center	No need	4
	Too limited facilities	1
	Exposed to so many things (diseases)	1
	First grade is early enough	1
	Have no money, no car available	1
	Child should be at home	1
It depends on circumstances whether or not I would like my child to attend day care center	On whether mother worked	16
	On availability, if one close	1
	On finances	5
	On the child, whether he's ready for it	1

How favorable each mother's opinion was of pre-school centers.

In order to see just how favorable each mother's opinion of pre-school centers was, a scale was set up by the investigator for the eight questions used in ascertaining the mother's opinion of pre-school centers.¹ Affirmative answers to questions two and three were given a point value of two each because these questions asked each mother directly the value she placed on pre-school centers. Conditional responses to questions two and three were given a point value of one each. Affirmative answers to each part of the questions asked regarding use and financial support were given a point value of one. It was the purpose of these questions² to determine if the actions of each mother interviewed would support her opinion as stated in questions two and three.

Affirmative answers for all eight questions totalled thirty-four points. A point score of seventeen or less was assumed to indicate an unfavorable opinion; a point score of eighteen or more was assumed to indicate a favorable opinion. By this method of scoring, forty-three mothers (fifty-six per cent) had unfavorable opinions toward pre-school centers. Thirty-four (forty-four per cent) had favorable opinions (Table 17). For the remainder of this thesis this score will be referred to as the "opinion score."

¹Questions 2,3,6,7,9,10,12,14 in questionnaire in appendix.

²Questions 6,7,8,10,12,14 in questionnaire in appendix.

Table 17. OPINION SCORES OF SEVENTY-SEVEN MOTHERS INTERVIEWED
REGARDING PRE-SCHOOL CENTERS*

Opinion	Number mothers reporting	Per cent mothers reporting
<u>Unfavorable</u>		
Very unfavorable (0-8 pts.)	10	13
Unfavorable (9-17 pts.)	<u>33</u>	<u>42</u>
Total unfavorable	43	53
<u>Favorable</u>		
Favorable (18-25 pts.)	29	38
Very favorable (26-34 pts.)	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>
Total favorable	34	44

Perfect point score: 34 points

* See p. 44 for method of determining opinion score.

VI. FACTORS RELATED TO MOTHERS' OPINIONS
REGARDING PRE-SCHOOL CENTERS

Knowledge of pre-school centers in Greensboro. Since it was found that those who were able to name several pre-school centers in Greensboro were also well informed as to their operation, the number of pre-school centers reported by those interviewed was used as the measure of their knowledge of pre-school centers.*

Mothers who were well informed of pre-school centers in Greensboro had favorable opinions toward pre-school centers in general. Those who were not informed had unfavorable opinions (Table 18). Seventy-two per cent of the mothers who gave information about four or more pre-school centers in Greensboro had favorable opinions toward pre-school centers in general. Forty-three per cent of those who gave information about three or less pre-school centers had favorable opinions, and twenty-seven per cent who were not informed of such centers had favorable opinions.

* See Table 4 for detailed information regarding mothers' knowledge of pre-school centers in Greensboro.

Table 18. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTHERS' OPINIONS OF PRE-SCHOOL CENTERS
AND THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF PRE-SCHOOL CENTERS IN GREENSBORO

Knowledge of pre-school centers in Greensboro	Number mothers interviewed	Number mothers favorable opinion	Per cent favorable opinion	Average opinion score*
Well informed (could name 4 or more pre- school centers)	18	13	72	18.7
Somewhat informed (could name one, two, or three pre- school centers)	41	18	43	15.9
Not informed (could name no pre-school centers)	18	5	27	15.0

* See p. 44 for method of determining opinion score.

Experience with pre-school groups. Questions regarding each mother's experience with pre-school centers as a child, her observation of pre-school centers in operation, her observation of pre-school groups on TV, and her child's experience with pre-school centers were used to determine how well acquainted each mother was with pre-school groups. Three questions with a total affirmative point value of six points* were asked to gain this information.

Since the scores ranged from zero through five, scores of three

* One question had four parts, the other two had one part each, totaling six parts or a total possible affirmative score of 6.

or more were assumed to indicate that mothers were well acquainted with pre-school groups, scores of two or less were assumed to indicate that mothers were not well acquainted with pre-school groups.

Of the fifteen mothers well acquainted with pre-school groups, (three point score or more), eighty-seven per cent had favorable opinions of pre-school centers. Of the sixty-one mothers who were not well acquainted with pre-school groups, thirty-three per cent had favorable opinions (Table 19).

There seems to be a definite correlation between the experience score and the opinion score as used in this study. The more experience mothers have had with pre-school groups, the more favorable are their opinions toward pre-school centers.

Influence of TV programs for or about pre-school children. TV programs for or about pre-school children showed little significant influence on mothers' opinions toward pre-school centers. Mothers who had watched TV programs had only slightly more favorable opinions toward pre-school centers than those who had not watched such programs. Forty-four per cent of the thirty-eight mothers who had seen programs for or about pre-school children had favorable opinions toward pre-school centers. Forty-six per cent of the thirty-nine mothers who had not seen pre-school programs had favorable opinions. Those who had watched TV programs for or about pre-school children had an average opinion score of 16.6, those who had not watched such programs had an average opinion score of 13.3.*

*See p. 44 for method of determining opinion score.

Table 19. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTHERS' OPINIONS OF PRE-SCHOOL CENTERS
AND THEIR EXPERIENCE WITH PRE-SCHOOL GROUPS

Mothers' experience with pre-school centers	Number mothers interviewed	Number mothers favorable opinions	Per cent favorable opinions	Average opinion score* ¹
Well acquainted (pt score-5)* ²	2	2	100	25.0
Fairly well acquainted (pt score-3,4)	13	11	85	22.0
Slightly acquainted (pt score-1,2)	41	16	43	15.1
Not acquainted (pt score-0)	21	8	24	14.3

*1 See p. 44 for method of determining opinion score.

*2 Point score determined by adding all affirmative answers to questions 4,5 and 10A in questionnaire, (see appendix). Highest possible score: 6.

Need for pre-school centers.

A. Mother working. Mothers who work outside the home have more favorable opinions about pre-school centers than those who do not work outside the home. In this study nineteen (fifty-seven per cent) of the thirty-three mothers who were working outside the home had favorable opinions toward pre-school centers. Fourteen (thirty-two per cent) of the forty-four mothers who were not working outside the home had favorable opinions. Five (sixty-two per cent) of the eight mothers who were total breadwinners had favorable opinions (Table 20).

Table 20. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTHERS' OPINIONS OF PRE-SCHOOL CENTERS AND MOTHERS WORKING OUTSIDE THE HOME

Mother's occupation	Number mothers interviewed	Number mothers favorable opinions	Per cent favorable opinions	Average opinion score* ¹
Not working outside home	44	14	32	15.2
Working outside home* ²	33	19	57	16.5
Total breadwinners	8	5	62	18.0

*¹ Includes total breadwinners.

*² See p. 44 for method of determining opinion score.

B. Recognized problems. Problems were not always stated as "problems" by the interviewee due to the fact that a direct question regarding recognized problems was not asked of them. Problems that mothers did recognize were reported as response to three questions, "Would you like your child to attend nursery school? Would you like

your child to attend kindergarten? Would you like your child to attend day care center?" In response to the "why" asked following each interrogation, problems, if recognized, were reported. Thirty problems were mentioned by twenty-two mothers; eleven times the need to learn how to play with other children was mentioned; eight times the need to become independent of parents; five times the need for companionship; three times the need for good care of the child; and three times help with a specific problem in the child's development were mentioned respectively.

Thirteen (sixty per cent) of the twenty-two mothers reporting problems had favorable opinions toward pre-school centers. Twenty-one (thirty-eight per cent) of the fifty-five mothers reporting no problems had favorable opinions (Table 21). Those mothers who reported recognized problems with their pre-school children had more favorable opinions toward pre-school centers than did those who reported no recognized problems.

C. Housing. Among personal data collected by the investigator were three classifications of housing; apartment, small house, which was defined as having five rooms or less, and large house, having over five rooms.

Those mothers who were living in large houses had slightly more favorable opinions than those living in apartments or small houses (Table 22).

Table 21. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTHERS' OPINIONS OF PRE-SCHOOL CENTERS
AND NUMBER OF RECOGNIZED PROBLEMS REPORTED

Number recognized problems	Number mothers interviewed	Number mothers favorable opinions	Per cent favorable opinions	Average opinion score* ¹
3	1* ²	0	0	16.0
2	6	5	83	21.3
1	15	8	50	17.9
<u>0</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>38</u>	15.0
Total 30	22	13	60	

*¹ One person with an opinion score of 16 out of possible 34 point score (unfavorable)

*² See p. 44 for method of determining opinion score.

Table 22. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTHERS' OPINIONS OF PRE-SCHOOL CENTERS
AND HOUSING

Housing classification	Number mothers interviewed	Number mothers favorable opinions	Per cent favorable opinions	Average opinion score*
Apartment	20	10	50	17.6
Small house (five rooms or less)	37	12	32	14.6
Large house (over five rooms)	20	13	65	18.8

* See p. 44 for method of determining opinion score.

D. Make-up of family.

1. Size of family: While more mothers of small families report favorable opinions than mothers of large families, the difference in average opinion scores of the two groups is very slight. Forty-eight per cent of the mothers having one or two children had favorable opinions toward pre-school centers while thirty-five per cent of the mothers having three or more children reported favorable opinions (Table 23). The size of the family does not seem to be a significant factor in determination of opinions toward pre-school centers.

2. Sibling status: Mothers with pre-school children who are middle children have less favorable opinions toward pre-school centers than do mothers of only, youngest, and oldest children. Sixty per cent of the mothers with only children had favorable opinions toward pre-school centers, forty per cent of mothers with younger children, thirty-five per cent of mothers with middle children and thirty-six per cent of mothers with older children had favorable opinions (Table 23).

3. Age of child: Mothers of two and three year olds were compared with mothers of four and five year olds to see if the age of the child made a difference in mothers' opinions toward pre-school centers. The fifteen mothers who had children in both the two and three year age group and the four and five year age group were not included in this comparison. Age of the child did not seem a significant factor related to mothers' opinions regarding pre-school centers.

4. Age of mother: In this study forty-seven per cent of the mothers were over thirty, twenty-six were twenty-six to twenty-nine years of age inclusive and twenty-seven from eighteen to twenty-four inclusive.

Table 23. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTHERS' OPINIONS OF PRE-SCHOOL CENTERS
AND THE MAKE-UP OF THE FAMILY

Size of family	Number mothers interviewed	Number mothers favorable opinions	Per cent favorable opinions	Average opinion score* ¹
Small family* ²	39	19	48	17.4
Large family	38	13	35	16.0
Sibling status				
Only child	15	9	60	18.5
Youngest child	42	17	40	15.3
Middle child	20	7	35	13.9
Oldest child	22	8	36	16.9
Age of child				
2 and 3 year olds	25	14	56	17.4
4 and 5 year olds	37	18	58	16.5
Age of mother				
18 - 24	21	7	33	14.8
26 - 29	20	9	45	15.2
30 - over	36	18	50	17.5

*¹ See p. 44 for method of determining opinion score.

*² Small family - two children or less.

Mothers over thirty had more favorable opinions of pre-school centers than did those in the other age groups. The youngest group of mothers of pre-school children had the lowest percentage of favorable opinions and the lowest opinion scores.

Socio-economic differences.

A. Family income. In order to secure information regarding family income a check list with \$1 000.00 divisions was used.* Thirteen mothers (seventeen per cent) did not know the amount of the family income as their husbands handled the family finances. There were no refusals to indicate family income.

In this study there were a few more mothers in the low (0-\$1 999) and medium (\$3 000-\$4 999) income brackets than in the high income bracket (\$5 000 and over). Ten mothers in each income bracket and four in the group reporting unknown income had favorable opinions toward pre-school centers. The greatest percentage and the highest average opinion score was found to be reported in the group with income of \$5 000.00 or more (Table 24). It can be concluded that mothers in the high income bracket (\$5 000 or more) had more favorable opinions toward pre-school centers than did mothers in the low, medium, and no report brackets.

* Question 16 - questionnaire in appendix.

Table 24. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTHERS' OPINIONS OF PRE-SCHOOL CENTERS AND FAMILY INCOME

Family income	Number mothers interviewed	Number mothers favorable opinions	Per cent favorable opinions	Average opinion score* ¹
Low (0-\$2 999)	23	10	43	16.2
Medium (\$3 000- \$4 999)	24	10	42	13.9
High (\$5 000-Over)	17	10	45	18.6
No report* ²	13	4	30	14.3

*¹ See p.44 for method of determining opinion score.

*² No report - family income unknown.

B. Education of mother. For purposes of analysis education of mothers has been divided into three categories: grade school, from first to eighth grade, inclusive; high school, from ninth grade to twelfth grade inclusive; and additional training including commercial, nursing, and college. Fourteen high school graduates and four college graduates were interviewed.

A greater percentage of mothers with grade school education (forty per cent) had favorable opinions toward pre-school centers than did mothers with high school education (thirty-two per cent). However, mothers with high school education had a higher average opinion score,*

* See p. 44 for method of determining opinion score.

indicating that they had more favorable opinions, than did the mothers having a grade school education. A greater percentage of mothers with additional training after high school had higher opinion scores than either of the other two classifications (Table 25). This would seem to indicate that mothers with higher education had more favorable opinions of pre-school centers than did those with lesser education.

Table 25. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTHERS' OPINIONS OF PRE-SCHOOL CENTERS AND EDUCATION OF THE MOTHER

Mothers' education	Number mothers interviewed	Number mothers favorable opinions	Per cent favorable opinions	Average opinion score
Grade school (first to eighth inclusive)	20	8	40	12.8
High school (ninth to twelfth inclusive)	37	12	32	16.6
Additional training (including com- mercial, nursing, college)	20	14	70	19.9

C. Occupation of husband. Occupations of the husband have been divided into five classifications in this study. In most cases the occupation of the husband fell clearly into one of the five classifications. However, there was one instance in classifying skilled and unskilled workers that the investigator used income as the determining factor. Eight husbands were factory workers. Five of these men were in the low income bracket and three in the medium income bracket. Since the inves-

tigator did not know the nature of the specific job of the textile worker, she placed those with low income in the unskilled occupation classification and those with medium income in the skilled occupation classification. Ten wives reported no occupations for husbands. Nine of these were widowed, separated, or divorced. The husband of one was unable to work due to illness.

The greatest percentage of favorable opinions of pre-school centers was found among women whose husbands were businessmen. The highest opinion score was found among those whose husbands were professional men. Few women whose husbands had unskilled occupations had favorable opinions toward pre-school centers. The average opinion score for this group was also less than the other occupational groups (Table 26).

It may be concluded that wives of business and professional men have more favorable opinions toward pre-school centers than do wives of skilled and unskilled workers.

Child rearing concepts: Evelyn Duvall classified parents who believe that a good child respects property, is religious, obeys and respects adults, works well, keeps himself clean and neat, and pleases adults as traditional parents. She classified parents who believe that a good child is healthy and well, is eager to learn, loves and confides in parents, shares and cooperates with others, grows as a person, and fits into the family program as being developmental parents.¹ Since

¹Evelyn Millis Duvall, "Conceptions of Parenthood," American Journal of Sociology, 52:195, November, 1946.

Table 26. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTHERS' OPINIONS OF PRE-SCHOOL CENTERS
AND OCCUPATION OF HUSBAND

Occupational classification	Number mothers interviewed	Number mothers favorable opinions	Per cent favorable opinion	Average opinion score* ¹
Unskilled	22	7	32	14.0
Skilled	21	8	33	15.2
Business	17	11	65	18.6
Professional	7	4	57	20.1
Husband not contributing to income* ²	10	4	40	15.7

*1 Illness, widowed, divorced, separated.

*2 See p. 44 for explanation of method of determining opinion score.

belief stimulates practice, it is likely that parents with traditional beliefs about a good child will use traditional child rearing practices, parents with developmental beliefs will use developmental child rearing practices.

The developmental approach is often used in pre-school centers directed by trained personnel due to the fact that professional leaders in pre-school education consider the developmental approach in teaching to be beneficial to the pre-school child. Two questions are therefore raised, "Do parents with traditional beliefs have less favorable opinions of pre-school centers than do developmental mothers? Is the mother's child rearing concept a significant factor related to her opinion regarding pre-school centers?"

Mothers were given a check list based on categories used in a study by Evelyn Duvall regarding concepts traditional and developmental parents had of a good child.² Each individual was requested to check the five phrases she considered best described a good child.*

In this study a scale of five points was assumed to indicate mothers with traditional concepts. Mothers who checked two traditional and three developmental statements or vice versa have been omitted in the comparison of opinions toward pre-school centers and child rearing concepts since their concepts did not seem to be distinctly traditional or developmental. Mothers who checked four or five traditional phrases in the check list were considered to have traditional concepts of

²Duvall, op. cit., p. 195.

* See check list in questionnaire in appendix.

child rearing practices. Likewise, mothers who checked four or five developmental phrases in the check list were considered to have developmental concepts of child-rearing practices.

By this method of classification sixteen mothers (twenty-one per cent) had developmental concepts. Eleven mothers (fourteen per cent) had traditional concepts of a good child. The average opinion score for traditional mothers was 15.5, for developmental mothers, 19.2. Four mothers (thirty-six per cent) with traditional concepts had favorable opinions of pre-school centers. Nine mothers with developmental concepts (fifty-six per cent) had favorable opinions. It may be concluded that a greater number of developmental mothers had more favorable opinions toward pre-school centers than did traditional mothers.

VII. MOTHERS' OPINIONS OF KINDERGARTEN AND NURSERY SCHOOL AS PART OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

What age children should start to school. In answer to the question, "Do you think a child should go to school before the first grade?" forty-six per cent responded affirmatively, five per cent gave a conditional response, thirty-five per cent gave a negative response, and fourteen per cent did not know (Table 27).

"At what age?" was asked following the above question.

In Greensboro a child becoming six years of age after October 15 must wait until the next school year before entering first grade. The largest number (thirty-one) of mothers reported five years as the desirable age for a child to start to school. Of this number, four mentioned that their children's birthday came after October 15 and that they did not think it desirable for the child to have to wait the

full school year before entering. Therefore, they stated that five years was the desirable age for a child to start to school.

Comments when given with negative responses were as follows: child will be bored with school later on, two responses; child is not ready, six responses; pre-school not needed, one response; not to public school, three responses.

Conditional responses were as follows: depends on child, thirteen responses; depends on birthday of the child, two responses; and location of pre-school center, one response.

Table 27. MOTHERS' OPINIONS REGARDING THE AGE A CHILD SHOULD START TO SCHOOL

Age child should start to school	Number of mothers responding	Per cent mothers responding
3 yrs	1	1
4 yrs	4	5
5 yrs	31	40
Depends	4	5
Don't know	10	14
Not before first grade	27	35

Mothers' opinions about kindergarten as part of the public school system.

Kindergarten as part of the public school system has the approval of more than twice as many mothers in this study as does nursery school as part of the public school system. Fifty-nine mothers (seventy-nine

per cent) thought that kindergarten should be part of the public school system. Twenty-seven mothers (thirty-five per cent) thought that nursery school should be part of the public school system (Table 28). One half day session was approved by the majority of mothers for both kindergarten and nursery school.

Table 28. MOTHERS' OPINIONS REGARDING PRE-SCHOOL CENTERS AS PART OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Mothers' opinion	Number responding				Per cent favorable response	Number responding		
	Yes	No	Don't know	Depends		Length of session Half day	Whole day	Depends
Kindergarten should be part of public school system	57	9	7	4	79	49	7	5
Nursery school should be part of public school system	26	44	5	1	35	18	4	5

Mothers were not requested to give reasons why they would approve or disapprove of pre-school centers as part of the public school system. However, comments, when given, do provide explanation for the mother's response. The reason most often mentioned for approval of kindergarten as part of the public school system was the child's sixth birthday coming soon after October 15. Mothers would like their children to start to school at the age of five when that is the case. Help for working mothers was mentioned next in frequency, thus placing a care taking function on kindergarten (Table 29).

Mothers want children to have an equal opportunity but questioned whether kindergarten should be compulsory. Eight mothers responded that they thought parents should have the right to decide whether or not to send the child to kindergarten.

Supervised play was mentioned as the reason for approval of kindergarten as part of the public school system by two mothers.

Table 29. REASONS GIVEN BY MOTHERS FOR THEIR OPINIONS OF KINDERGARTEN AS PART OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Number of times mentioned	Reasons given by mother	Response	Length of session
6	Child's sixth birthday comes after October 15	Yes	Half day
4	Help for working mothers	Yes	Half day
4	Every child should have equal opportunity	Yes	Half day
4	If not compulsory	Depends	Half day
4	Should not be compulsory	No	Half day
3	Length of day better judged by someone else	Yes	Depends
2	Supervised play	Yes	Half day
2	According to job of mother	Yes	Depends
1	Learn ABC's	Yes	Half day
1	For mother's sake	Yes	Whole day
1	For people working	Yes	Whole day
1	If had, would approve	Don't know	Half day

Mothers' opinions about nursery school as part of the public school system. Comments regarding nursery school as part of the public school system indicate that mothers consider that nursery school would be helpful in providing care for children of mothers who work outside the home (Table 30). Such comments followed negative as well as positive responses to the question, "Should nursery school be a part of the public school system?"

As with kindergartens, mothers want children to have equal opportunity but desire that parents be able to make the decision as to when the child should go to nursery school.

The most frequent comment following negative responses was that the child was too young to be away from the home.

Table 30. REASONS GIVEN BY MOTHERS FOR THEIR OPINIONS OF NURSERY
SCHOOL AS PART OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Number of times mentioned	Reasons given by mother	Response	Length of session
4	Mother working-care of children	Yes	Depends-according to working hours of mother
3	Too young	No	No comment
3	Should not be compulsory	No	No comment
2	Would help prepare for school	Yes	Half day
2	Supervised play	Yes	Half day
2	No, but help for working mothers	No	No comment
1	Would be good for mother when worked	Yes	Half day
1	Nice help to mothers when worked	Yes	Whole day
1	All have opportunity	Yes	Whole day
1	If not compulsory	Depends	Half day
1	Would give the mother time	Yes	Depends
1	Special classes only	No	No comment
1	Too bored with school later	No	No comment
1	Not practical	No	No comment

Mothers' opinions regarding financing of pre-schools as part of the public school system.

A. Opinions regarding financing of kindergarten as part of the public school system. Mothers were asked two questions in regard to financing kindergarten as part of the public school system; "If part of the school system, should kindergarten be completely financed by the school district? Should kindergarten be partially financed by the school district?"

A greater percentage of mothers approved partial financing of kindergarten as part of the public school system than approved complete financing by the public school system (Table 31). Four mothers gave responses of "don't know" and one mother did not think that kindergarten should be financed by the public school system in any way.

B. Opinions regarding financing of nursery school as part of the public school system. Two questions were asked regarding financing of nursery schools as part of the public school system.* More than five times as many mothers approved of partial financing of nursery schools as part of the public school system than approved of complete financing of such nursery schools. Sixteen mothers did not think that nursery schools should be financed by the school district in any way.

C. Opinions regarding payment of fees by parents. If a favorable response was given by the interviewee to partial financing by the school district of kindergarten and/or nursery school, she was

* See question eight of questionnaire in appendix.

subsequently asked, "Should parents pay a fee to take care of the balance of the kindergarten expenses?" and/or "the balance of nursery school expenses?" Eighty-five per cent giving a favorable response to partial financing by the public school system of kindergarten thought parents should pay a fee to cover the balance of expenses. Ninety per cent who approved of partial financing of nursery school by the public school system thought parents should pay a fee to cover the balance of expenses. There were no negative responses to the questions regarding parents paying a fee. Those that were not positive were "don't know" responses.

In answer to the question, "What should the fee that the parents pay cover?" over half (fifty-eight per cent or twenty-six mothers) of the mothers who thought parents should pay a fee stated that they did not know and that the fee should be determined by the school. Twenty-four per cent (eleven mothers) thought that the fee should cover maintenance and operation expenses peculiar to the pre-school center, such as books, play equipment, and additional maid service. Fifteen per cent (seven mothers) thought that the fee should cover the teachers' salaries or a portion thereof.

Financial support mothers would give pre-school centers as part of the public school system.

In the State of North Carolina financing the day to day operation of public schools cannot be done by bond issue. Money can be raised, however, by bond issue for construction of public school buildings.* It is for this reason that two questions were asked the

* North Carolina State Law

Table 31. MOTHERS' OPINIONS REGARDING FINANCING OF PRE-SCHOOLS AS
PART OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Mother's opinion	Number responses (77 mothers in sample)			Per cent mothers with favorable responses
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Kindergarten should be completely financed by public school system	27	46* ¹	4	35
Kindergarten should be partially financed by public school system	45	28* ¹	4	57
Nursery school should be completely financed by public school system	9	66* ²	2	12
Nursery school should be partially financed by public school system	50	25* ²	2	65
Parents should pay a fee to cover balance of expenses of kindergarten	39		6	85* ³
Parents should pay a fee to cover balance of expenses of nursery school	45		5	90* ⁴

*¹ One mother thought that kindergarten should not be financed by the public school system in any way.

*² Sixteen mothers thought that nursery school should not be financed by the public school system in any way.

*³ Per cent of mothers with favorable responses to partially financing kindergarten by the public school system.

*⁴ Per cent of mothers with favorable responses to partially financing nursery school by the public school system.

mothers interviewed regarding the financial support they would give pre-school centers as part of the public school system, i.e. "Would you vote for a \$1 500 000 bond issue to provide building space for kindergarten as part of the public school system in Greensboro?" and "would you approve an increase in your taxes so that \$400 000 would be provided annually to operate kindergarten as part of the public school system in Greensboro?"*¹ Two similar questions were asked in regard to financial support mothers would give nursery schools as part of the public school system in Greensboro.*²

A greater number of mothers would vote for a bond issue than would approve an increase in their taxes. This fact may show that they did not appreciate the relationship between a bond issue and increased taxes. Mothers responded that they would give more financial support for kindergarten than they would give nursery school as part of the public school system in Greensboro (Table 32).

Comments were not requested but when given were somewhat indicative of thoughts behind stated responses. Three mothers (ten per cent) stated that if it would help working mothers they would vote for a bond issue for nursery school. Two comments were mentioned in regard to increased taxes; if the increase was not too much, five responses (five per cent), and if it would help the children, seven responses (ten per cent).

*¹ Figures from Greensboro Board of Education Office, Mr. Weaver, Superintendent of Instruction, Greensboro Public Schools, estimating.

*² Question nine in questionnaire in appendix.

Table 32. FINANCIAL SUPPORT MOTHERS WOULD GIVE PRE-SCHOOL CENTERS
AS PART OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN GREENSBORO

Support mother would give	Number responding				Per cent favorable responses
	Yes	No	Depends	Don't know	
Would vote for a \$1 500 000 bond issue to provide building space for kinder- garten as part of public school system in Greensboro	59	10	1	7	77
Would vote for an ad- ditional \$1 500 000 bond issue for nursery school in Greensboro	33	37	0	7	43
Would approve an increase in taxes so that \$400 000 would be provided annually to operate kindergarten as part of public school system in Greensboro	45	22	0	10	57
Would approve an increase in taxes to provide an ad- ditional \$400 000 annually for operation of nursery school as part of public school system in Greensboro	25	42	0	10	32

Comparison of mothers' and school superintendents' opinions of
pre-kindergarten classes as part of the public school system.

An article in the Nations Schools magazine entitled, "Superin-
tendents Say 'No' to Pre-kindergarten Classes"³ is of interest in this

³Nations Schools, 53:86, June 1954, "Two thirds of the Nation's
school administrators, according to random sampling conducted by Nations
Schools magazine, opposed pre-kindergarten classes maintained by the
local public school system."

study of mothers' opinions of pre-school centers. The question was raised by the investigator, "If superintendents say 'no' to pre-kindergarten classes, what do mothers say regarding such classes?" Comparison of the findings of this study with the report given in the Nations Schools magazine seems to indicate that mothers of pre-school children in Greensboro (thirty-five per cent) have only slightly more favorable opinions of nursery schools as part of the public school system than do school superintendents (thirty-three per cent). School administrators are more willing to completely finance pre-kindergarten classes than are mothers of pre-school children. The majority of mothers feel that parents should be responsible for at least partial financing of the pre-kindergarten classes. Twelve per cent of the mothers felt that nursery school should not be financed by the public school system in any way (Table 33).

Table 33. COMPARISON OF MOTHERS' OPINIONS AND SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS' OPINIONS OF PRE-KINDERGARTEN CLASSES AS PART OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Opinion	Per cent favorable response of those who approved pre-kindergarten classes as part of the public school system	
	Mothers	Superintendents
Nursery school should be a part of public school system*1	35	33
Nursery school should be completely financed by the public school system	15*2	59
Nursery school should be partially financed by public school system	73*2	41

*1 Question asked school superintendents read, "Do you favor nursery school or pre-kindergarten classes maintained by the local public school system?" Question was re-worded in this study because it was feared that the interviewee would misunderstand the question.

*2 Eight per cent responded negatively to nursery school being financed by the public school system. Four per cent gave "don't know" responses.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY OF DATA

Personal interviews were conducted with seventy-seven mothers of children aged two to five years inclusive within the city of Greensboro, North Carolina in order to ascertain their opinions regarding the value, use, and financial support of pre-school centers, i.e., nursery schools, kindergartens, and day care centers. There were ninety-nine children in the random sample interviewed.

I. PERSONAL DATA

Personal data in the random sample interviewed were fairly evenly distributed. The sample as a whole tended to be made up of slightly more mothers who were thirty years of age and over, whose husbands were skilled or unskilled workers, whose family income was in the low (0-\$2 999) or medium (\$3 000-\$4 999) income bracket, and who lived in small houses (under six rooms).

Forty-eight per cent of the mothers had attended high school only (ninth through twelfth grade).

Forty-six per cent were working mothers. Ten per cent of those interviewed were total breadwinners. Sixteen per cent of mothers with pre-school children in the United States are working outside the home.¹

¹"Employed Mothers and Child Care, Bulletin of the Women's Bureau," #246, United States Department of Labor, United States Government Printing Office, 1951, p. 6.

There was an equal distribution of small and large families represented in this random sample. There were thirty-eight large families (three children or more) and thirty-nine small families (one or two children).

When classified according to sibling status, there were more youngest children than only, middle or oldest children.

II. COMPARISON OF THE STATED WORKING HYPOTHESES AND THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- A. Hypothesis: Mothers of pre-school children place a great deal of importance on pre-school learning.

Findings of Study: Mothers interviewed have a high regard for the learning which takes place the first five years of a child's life. Seventy per cent of those interviewed considered the first five years to be the most important learning years of life.

Hypothesis: Mothers who place a great deal of importance on pre-school learning have favorable opinions regarding pre-schools.

Findings of Study: This hypothesis does not seem to be true.

Seventy per cent of those interviewed considered the first five years to be the most important learning years of life. Only forty-four per cent of those interviewed had favorable opinions concerning pre-school centers.

- B. Hypothesis: Opinions mothers of pre-school children have concerning day care centers, nursery schools, and kindergartens differ.*

* See p. for definitions of day care center, nursery school and kindergarten.

Findings of Study: Mothers' opinions of kindergartens were more favorable than of nursery schools and day care centers. Mothers considered kindergarten more helpful to the child than they did nursery school and day care centers. More mothers wanted their children to attend and planned to send their children to kindergarten than to nursery school or day care center.

- C. Hypothesis: Basic factors involved in the differences in mothers opinions may be classified as knowledge and use of pre-school centers, needs for pre-school centers, socio-economic differences, and child-rearing concepts.

Findings of Study: Mothers who were well informed of pre-school centers in Greensboro, who had had experience with pre-school groups, who had recognized problems with their pre-school children, who were educated beyond high school, whose husbands were in business or in the professions, and/or who had a developmental concept of child rearing practices had the more favorable opinions concerning pre-school centers.

1. Hypotheses and findings of study regarding knowledge and use of pre-school centers:

- a. Hypothesis: Mothers of pre-school children are ill-informed about nursery school, day care center, and kindergarten facilities available in Greensboro.

Findings of Study: Mothers are not well informed of pre-school facilities in Greensboro. One-fourth of those interviewed knew of no pre-school centers. Less than half of the interviewees could give partial or complete answers to questions asked regarding pre-school centers that they had named.

Those who were able to name several pre-school centers in Greensboro were also informed as to their operation.

Mothers are better informed of day care centers than of nursery schools or kindergartens.

When analyzed according to sponsorship, church sponsored kindergartens are best known.

- b. Hypothesis: Mothers who have had experience with pre-school groups approve of them.

Findings of Study: The more experience the mothers had with pre-school groups, the more favorable were their opinions concerning pre-school centers.

- c. Hypothesis: Mothers who have watched programs for or about pre-school children on TV have favorable opinions toward pre-schools.

Findings of Study: This hypothesis does not seem to be true. Knowledge of TV programs for or about pre-school children did not seem to make a significant difference in mothers' opinions of pre-school centers.

- d. Hypothesis: Mothers who have favorable opinions toward pre-school centers make use of them.

Findings of Study: This hypothesis does not seem to be true. Forty-four per cent of the mothers interviewed favored pre-school centers while only seventeen per cent made use of pre-school centers.

The anticipated use of pre-school centers was greater than the present use of them. Mothers of thirteen per cent of the children represented in this sample reported that

their children were attending or had attended pre-schools in Greensboro. Mothers of forty per cent of the children indicated that they planned to send their children. This would seem to indicate that the hypothesis is true. However, only four out of thirty-nine mothers reporting that they planned to send their children to pre-school centers had enrolled the child. Knowing that several pre-school centers in Greensboro have a waiting list of applicants, one would wonder if the mothers in this study will actually use pre-school centers as they at present anticipate.

2. Hypotheses and findings of the study regarding needs for pre-school centers:

- a. Hypothesis: Mothers of pre-school children who work outside the home send their children to day care centers rather than nursery schools or kindergartens.

Findings of Study: In every case reported, pre-school children of mothers interviewed who were attending a pre-school center while the mother worked outside the home were attending a day care center.

- b. Hypothesis: Mothers of pre-school children consider day care centers as serving primarily a care-taking function.

Findings of Study: This hypothesis is not totally true. Mothers seemed to recognize the place of the day care center in providing care of pre-school children while the mother is working outside the home, but learning to play with other children and companionship were factors of importance to mothers when considering day care centers.

- c. Hypothesis: Mothers who have recognized problems with their pre-school children have favorable opinions about nursery schools, day care centers, and kindergartens.

Findings of Study: Those mothers who reported recognized problems with their pre-school children had more favorable opinions toward pre-school centers than did those who reported no recognized problems.

- d. The following personal factors are related to differences in mothers' opinions concerning pre-school centers:

- (1) Hypothesis: Mothers of large families do not feel the need for pre-school centers as do mothers of small families.

Findings of Study: While more mothers of small families report favorable opinions than mothers of large families, the difference in average opinion scores* of the two groups is very slight. This hypothesis does not seem to be true.

- (2) Hypothesis: Mothers who work outside the home have favorable opinions regarding pre-school centers.

Findings of Study: Mothers who work outside the home have more favorable opinions about pre-school centers than those who do not work outside the home.

- (3) Hypothesis: Housing affects mothers' opinions concerning pre-school centers: apartment or small house, favorable

* Opinion score measures how favorable the opinions of a mother is. See p. 44 for method of determining score.

opinion; large house (over five rooms) unfavorable opinion concerning pre-schools.

Findings of Study: Those mothers who were living in large houses had slightly more favorable opinions than those living in apartments or in small houses. The above hypothesis does not seem to be true.

- (4) Hypothesis: Mothers whose pre-school children are the only child, oldest child, or youngest child have more favorable opinions of pre-school centers than mothers who have middle children.

Findings of Study: Mothers with pre-school children who are middle children have less favorable opinions of pre-school centers than do mothers of only, youngest, and oldest children.

- (5) Hypothesis: Mothers with four and five year old children have more favorable opinions regarding pre-school centers than mothers of two and three year old children.

Findings of Study: Age of the child did not seem to be a significant factor related to mothers' opinions regarding pre-school centers.

e. Socio-economic differences as factors related to mothers' opinions:

- (1) Hypothesis: There is a correlation between the amount of education a mother of a pre-school child has and her opinion of pre-school centers. Mothers with college and high school education have favorable opinions while mothers with grade school education have unfavorable opinions.

Findings of Study: Mothers with higher education did seem to have more favorable opinions of pre-school centers than did those with lesser education.

- (2) Hypothesis: Wives of professional and businessmen have more favorable opinions regarding pre-schools than do wives of skilled and unskilled workers.

Findings of Study: When analyzed according to occupations of husbands, the greatest percentage of favorable opinions of pre-school centers was found among women whose husbands were businessmen. The highest opinion score* was found among those whose husbands were professional men. Few women whose husbands had unskilled occupations had favorable opinions concerning pre-school centers. The average opinion score of this group was also less than the occupational groups.

- f. Child rearing concepts as factors related to mothers' opinions:

Hypothesis: Mothers with developmental child rearing concepts have more favorable opinions regarding nursery schools, kindergartens and day care centers than do mothers with traditional child rearing concepts.

Findings of Study: A greater number of developmental mothers

* Opinion score measures how favorable the opinion of a mother is. See p. 44 for method of determining score.

had more favorable opinions of pre-school centers than did traditional mothers.

- D. Hypothesis: Mothers of pre-school children in Greensboro think that kindergarten should be a part of the public school system.

Findings of Study: Over seventy-five per cent of the mothers interviewed thought kindergarten should be part of the public school system. More than twice as many mothers approved of kindergarten as part of the public school system than approved of nursery school as part of the public school system. A half day session was approved by the majority of mothers for both kindergarten and nursery school.

Mothers' comments regarding kindergarten and nursery school as part of the public school system indicate that mothers want children to have an equal opportunity to attend a pre-school center but desire that parents be able to make the decision as to when the child be enrolled in kindergarten or nursery school. They want pre-school centers available but attendance not compulsory.

1. Hypothesis: Mothers of pre-school children in Greensboro think that kindergarten should be completely financed by the public school system; that nursery school should be partially financed by the school system (such as physical facilities and part of teacher's salary).

Findings of Study: Mothers approved of partial financing of kindergarten and nursery school as part of the public school system more than they approved of complete financing.

Over eighty-five per cent of the mothers giving a favorable response to partial financing of kindergarten or nursery school

by the public school system thought that parents should pay a fee.

The majority of mothers giving a favorable response to parents paying a fee indicated that the school administrators should determine the fee that the parents should pay.

2. Hypothesis: Mothers of pre-school children in Greensboro would vote for \$1 500 000 bond issue to take care of providing building facilities for kindergarten to become part of the public school system in Greensboro. They would not vote for a similar bond issue for nursery school.

Findings of Study: Seventy-seven per cent of the mothers interviewed would vote for a \$1 500 000 bond issue to take care of providing building facilities for kindergarten to become part of the public school system in Greensboro. Only forty-three per cent would vote for a similar bond issue for nursery school.

3. Hypothesis: Mothers of pre-school children in Greensboro would approve an increase in their taxes to take care of operation of kindergarten as part of the public school system. They would not approve an increase in taxes for nursery school.

Findings of Study: Fifty-seven per cent of the mothers interviewed would approve an increase in their taxes to take care of operation of kindergarten as part of the public school system. Thirty-two per cent would approve an increase in taxes for nursery school.

A greater number of mothers would vote for a bond issue than would approve an increase in taxes. This seems to show that they did not understand the relationship between a bond issue and increased taxes.

4. Hypothesis: Mothers of pre-school children have more favorable opinions of pre-kindergarten classes as part of the public school system than do school superintendents.*

Findings of Study: Mothers of pre-school children in Greensboro have only slightly more favorable opinions of nursery schools as part of the public school system than do school superintendents. School administrators who approve of them are more willing to completely finance pre-kindergarten classes than are mothers of pre-school children in Greensboro.

* As reported in random sample of school superintendents in the United States, "Superintendents say 'no' to pre-kindergarten classes," Nations Schools, 53:86, June, 1954.

CONCLUSIONS

While mothers regard for pre-school learning seems to be high, their present lack of knowledge and use of pre-school centers in Greensboro would seem to indicate that they do not consider pre-school centers important in aiding the pre-school child's learning.

Mothers' anticipated use of pre-school centers was greater than the present use of them. However, only ten per cent of those who anticipated sending their children to pre-school centers had enrolled the child. Knowing that several pre-school centers in Greensboro have a waiting list of applicants, one would wonder if the mothers in this study will actually use pre-school centers as they at present anticipate.

Greater use has been made of day care centers than of nursery schools or kindergartens. Of the thirteen children who had had pre-school experience seven had attended day care centers.

Less than half of the mothers interviewed (forty-four per cent) had favorable opinions of pre-school centers. However, mothers' opinions regarding pre-school centers were neither very favorable or very unfavorable.

As a group, mothers in the higher socio-economic level have more favorable opinions regarding pre-school centers than do those in the medium and low socio-economic levels.

Mothers who are well-informed about pre-school centers in Greensboro, who have had experience with pre-school groups, who have recognized problems with their pre-school children, and who have developmental concepts of child rearing practices have the more favorable opinions

toward pre-school centers. The above factors with the exception of those who have had experience with day care centers are found more frequently among the mothers in the high socio-economic level than among the mothers in the low and medium socio-economic level. Mothers in the low socio-economic level who were working outside the home had had experience with day care centers.

Mothers' opinions of kindergartens were more favorable than of nursery schools and day care centers.

Reasons most often given by mothers for their opinions regarding pre-school centers were as follows: nursery school, social adjustment; kindergarten, preparation for school; day care center, care of the child while the mother is working outside the home.

Reasons most often given by mothers for their opinions regarding whether or not they would send their children to pre-schools were as follows: nursery school, learning to play with other children and companionship; kindergarten, preparation for school; day care center, association with other children. When asked if the mother would like to send her child to day care center, the answer most often given was a conditional one, "If I were working outside the home."

Thirty-one out of the seventy-seven mothers interviewed reported that they considered five years to be the desirable age for the child to start to school.

Three-fourths of the mothers interviewed in this study thought that kindergarten should be a part of the public school system. The majority (fifty-seven per cent) did not think that nursery school should be a part of the public school system, however.

Mothers' comments regarding kindergarten and nursery school as part of the public school system indicate that mothers want children to have an equal opportunity to attend a pre-school center but desire that parents be able to make the decision as to when the child be enrolled in kindergarten or nursery school. They want pre-school centers available but attendance not compulsory.

Mothers approve of partial financing of kindergarten and nursery school as part of the public school system more than they approve of complete financing.

Over eighty-five per cent of the mothers giving a favorable response to partial financing of kindergarten or nursery school by the public school system thought that parents should pay a fee.

The majority of mothers giving a favorable response to parents paying a fee indicated that the school administrators should determine the fee that the parents should pay.

A greater number of mothers would vote for a bond issue than would approve an increase in taxes. This seems to show that they did not understand the relationship between a bond issue and increased taxes. More mothers responded that they would give financial support to kindergarten than would give financial support to nursery school as part of the public school system.

Mothers of pre-school children in Greensboro have only slightly more favorable opinions of nursery schools as part of the public school system than do school superintendents. School administrators who approve of them are more willing to completely finance pre-kindergarten classes than are mothers of pre-school children in Greensboro.

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"Superintendents Say 'No' to Pre-kindergarten Classes",
Nations Schools, 53:86, June, 1954.

APPENDIX

School of Home Economics
The Woman's College, University of North Carolina

Date _____

1. Do you have a child/children between the ages of 2-5?

What ages? _____

Child Status: only child _____
 Youngest _____
 Middle child _____
 Oldest _____

Size of family: No. of children _____ No. of parents _____

Does your child have any playmates living near? Y ___ N ___

Are they his or her age: (pre-school) Y ___ N ___

Is the arrangement satisfactory? Y ___ N ___ Why, Why not?

2. Do you think nursery school helps a child? Y ___ N ___ DK ___ In what ways?

Do you think kindergarten helps a child: Y ___ N ___ DK ___ In what ways?

Do you think day care center helps a child? Y ___ N ___ DK ___ In what ways?

3. Would you like your child to attend nursery school? Y ___ N ___ DK ___

Why, why not?

Would you like your child to attend kindergarten? Y ___ N ___ DK ___

Why, why not?

Would you like your child to attend day care center? Y ___ N ___ DK ___

Why, why not?

4. Have you observed in operation, NS ___ K'G ___ DCC ___?

Did you attend NS ___ K'G ___ DCC ___?

5. Have you watched any TV programs for or about pre-school children?

Y ___ N ___

Which ones? _____

6. Do you think a child should go to school before the first grade?

Y N DK At what age?

7. Should kindergarten be a part of the public school system? Y N DK

If yes, how long a session? $\frac{1}{2}$ day whole day

Should nursery school be a part of the public school system? Y N DK

If yes, how long a session? $\frac{1}{2}$ day whole day

8. If part of the school system:

Should kindergarten be completely financed by the school district?

Y N DK Should nursery school? Y N DK

Should kindergarten be partially financed by the school district?

Y N DK Should nursery school? Y N DK

Should parents pay a fee to take care of the balance of kindergarten expenses? Y N DK Balance of nursery school? Y N DK

What should fee parents pay cover?

Physical facilities (room, heat, light) Y N

Teacher's salary Y N

Total

One-half

Less than one-half

Maintenance and operation expenses Y N
(such as books, play equipment,
additional maid service)

9. Would you vote for a \$1 500 000 bond issue to provide building space for kindergarten as part of the public school system? Y N DK

Would you vote for an additional \$1 500 000 bond issue for nursery school? Y N DK

Would you approve an increase in your taxes so that \$400 000 would be provided annually to operate kindergarten as part of the public school system in Greensboro? Y N DK

Would you approve an increase in taxes to provide an additional \$400 000 annually for operation of nursery school as part of the public school system? Y N DK

10. Child attending NS ___ K'G ___ DCC ___ Plan to send NS ___ K'G ___ DCC ___

Where? (specific center) _____

Have you tried to place him? _____

11. Personal data: Occupation: Husband _____ wife _____

Education: Gr.Sch. _____ H.S. _____ College _____

Age of mother: Under 18 ___ 18-25 ___ 25-30 ___ Over 30 ___

12. Do you know of a nursery school that your child could attend now?

Name of nursery school _____

Do you know of a kindergarten that your child could attend now?

Name of kindergarten _____

Do you know of a day care center that your child could attend now?

Name of day care center _____

How near is it to your home?

Nursery
School

Kinder-
garten

Day Care
Center

Within walking distance (min)

Bus ride (min)

Car ride (min)

Is transportation provided by the
school?

Could you provide transportation?

How much does it cost?

What are the hours?

Is lunch served?

What age children attend?

How do you enroll your child?

13. Do you know of any other NS ___ K'G ___ DCC ___ in Greensboro? Y ___ N ___

Name or names _____

14. If the mother of a pre-schooler works outside the home, who should care for her child?

Send child outside home? Where?

Have someone in? Who?

Would age of child make a difference in arrangement made Y N DK

Age 2
3
4
5

If you work, who attends to your child?

What do you like about the arrangement?

Are you the breadwinner in your family? Y N

15. Person interviewed:

Housing: Apartment size

House size

Address:

Other comments:

Of interviewee:

Of interviewer:

Please check amount closest to your family income.

\$1 000 - \$1 999	_____	\$4 000 - \$4 999	_____
\$2 000 - \$2 999	_____	\$5 000 - \$5 999	_____
\$3 000 - \$3 999	_____	\$6 000 or over	_____

Please answer the following questions.

Check the phrase that best completes the following sentence. Check only one.

The first five years of a child's life;

- _____ do not affect the rest of his education.
- _____ are the most important learning years of his life.
- _____ are of little importance in his growth and development.
- _____ are important but not any more important than any other age of his life.

Check below five things you consider best describe a good child.

A good child: (check five you consider most important)

- _____ respects property
- _____ is healthy and well
- _____ is religious
- _____ is eager to learn
- _____ obeys and respects adults
- _____ works well
- _____ loves and confides in parents
- _____ keeps himself clean and neat
- _____ shares and cooperates with others
- _____ grows as a person
- _____ fits into the family program
- _____ pleases adults