

ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS OF HEAD START TRAINEES TOWARD  
CHILDREN AND SELECTED TRAINING PROCEDURES AS  
REFLECTED IN GROUP DISCUSSIONS

by 149

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

President Johnson's call for a Great Society in his State of the Union Message was the beginning of the formation of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. This act launched the War on Poverty on a national scale. The Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) was established within the Executive Office of the President by the act.

The purpose of the Office of Economic Opportunity was defined in the United States Government Organization Manual of 1965-66 (p. 60):

The purpose of the Office of Economic Opportunity is to strengthen, supplement, and coordinate efforts to further the policy of the United States to 'eliminate the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty in this Nation by opening to everyone the opportunity for education and training, the opportunity to work, and the opportunity to live in decency and dignity'.

By authority of the Economic Opportunity Act, the Office of Economic Opportunity encouraged the setting up of Community Action Programs (CAP) in local communities and provided assistance to them under Title II-A of the act. The purpose of the Community Action Programs was to stimulate and assist urban and rural communities to mobilize their resources to combat poverty.

Because almost every community action program submitted included work with preschool children, and because of the increasing attention paid to the importance of the early years in a child's life, a special committee was established to formulate a comprehensive pro-

gram for young children. On February 19, 1965, this committee, with Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson as honorary chairman, announced special plans for Project Head Start, which were implemented in the summer of 1965. At the present time, summer Head Start programs are continuing, and an increasing number of year-round Head Start programs are being set up in all states. Project Head Start attracted the attention, interest and energies of thousands of local and professional people around the United States. It is probably the most objectively successful of the programs provided by the poverty legislation. Since September of 1965, administration of Head Start programs has been moved to the seven OEO regional offices around the United States in order to increase the efficiency of these programs.

Head Start is only one of the Community Action Programs (CAP). At the outset of the poverty legislation, many local communities were unable to set up coordinated CAPs immediately, which would link different activities and services in an effective attack on poverty. Recognizing the potential loss to the country's children in case of a delay in setting up Community Action Programs, the OEO made it possible for communities to begin with Head Start Child Development Centers. In communities where no CAP existed, a public agency, a private, non-profit organization, or an institution of higher learning were authorized to organize and operate the Head Start program.

Head Start was planned as an enrichment program for preschool age children from economically and culturally disadvantaged backgrounds, to provide them with the preschool experiences they need in order to keep pace with other children once they enter the public school system.

Besides the preschool experiences, Head Start provided diagnostic, remedial, and developmental efforts, including health, social and psychological services. Research had shown great differences in weaknesses and strengths among the poor. Head Start programs were, therefore, tailored to the special needs of local families where the Head Start programs are set up. Nondiscrimination was an absolute essential in the operation of Head Start and other CAP projects.

The planning committee for Head Start described the role of the Child Development Center as follows:

The Child Development Center is both a concept and a community facility. In concept it represents the drawing together of all those resources--family, community and professional--which can contribute to the child's total development. It draws heavily on the professional skills of persons in nutrition, health, education, psychology, social work, and recreation. It recognizes both paid and volunteer non-professionals can make important contributions. Finally, the concept emphasizes the family is fundamental to the child's development. Parents should play an important role in developing policies, will work in the Centers and participate in the programs (OEO, 1965, p. 1).

In the past similar programs have been available to a small number of children whose parents could afford the supplementation which such programs contributed to their own efforts at home. In comparison with other programs for young children, the concept of Child Development Centers took into consideration that young children of the poor had more needs for comprehensive health, medical, psychological and welfare services. Greater emphasis was placed in the area of language development, increasing attention span and concentration, building clear concepts and reasonable generalizations, and capacity to work with symbols. Deprived children needed more first-hand experiences with authority figures in their environment as well as more chances to suc-

ceed in their daily contacts with people and things. Close, continuous relationships with and the full involvement of parents themselves were considered to be even more important at the Child Development Center than it has been in even the best of past preschool education.

The planning committee for Head Start felt that one result of a good child development program would be that children would do better in their initial schooling, provided that teaching approaches were tuned to the age and experience level of the children being served. Although basic human needs of children are the same, children of the poor have missed out on experiences and learning opportunities which are a normal part of the background of the majority of American children. To carry out the Head Start Child Development Center Program as it was conceived, there is a strong need for teachers and staff who understand children of this age, their cultural background, and their peculiar needs.

The teacher and the teacher's aide are considered to be the key adults in the daily lives of young children at Head Start Child Development Centers. The teacher and the aide determine the quality and the success of the new experiences children have at Head Start. It was considered important to make the training of Head Start personnel relevant to the practical and individual application of their training to their work in poverty areas. To accomplish this purpose, OEO granted funds to certain universities in each region to conduct eight-week training sessions in addition to the six-day orientation session funded previously.

In January, 1966, Kansas State University received an OEO grant\* to conduct three eight-week training programs in early child development, beginning in February of 1966. These three training sessions lasted from February until August, involving sixty-two trainees during the three sessions. The training program at Kansas State University, Department of Family and Child Development, included a study of early childhood development and behavior, curriculum and program planning for young children, exploration of the culture of poverty, and a seminar on coordination of community resources for family development. The courses utilized lectures, discussion, guest speakers from many disciplines, supervised participation at the Kansas State University Child Development Laboratory and at the Manhattan Head Start Center, films, and field trips.

The purpose of the training session was to provide a course of study and a range of experiences for people at various educational levels in order to equip them with knowledge and skills for specific jobs connected with Child Development Centers. These jobs ranged from teacher's aide to program administrator.

In addition to the more formal structured teaching experience situations, each week each trainee participated in a completely unstructured discussion group. The participant observer in the group was instructed to explore ideas with the group, rather than to persuade them to a point of view.

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\*OEO Program Number CG-9836 under Title II A of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.

The purpose of the group discussion plan was to discover, interpret, and eventually to make available to the persons involved in the training of Head Start personnel, examples and descriptions of concerns of Head Start trainees. To be able to better prepare the participants for their specific Head Start jobs and to make their training more meaningful, the training staff was interested in getting this information from the trainees themselves.

This report was designed to present parts of the information gathered during the informal, unstructured discussions with groups of trainees continued on a weekly basis throughout the eight-week training sessions.

The objectives of the study were:

1. To summarize opinions or concerns of Head Start trainees toward: child care practices of their childhood and with their own children; observation and participation in groups of children; related classwork and field trips.
2. To discuss implications of this information in regard to future Head Start training programs and curriculum planning.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature has been presented here in two parts. The first part is concerned with attitudes and concerns of parents toward childrearing practices. The studies included are examples of the large number of research reports in the area of childrearing attitudes. They point out the relationship between attitudes and values parents hold and their child care practices. These childrearing practices include not only overt behavior but also expectations for children, feelings about children and interaction with children. This literature was reviewed and included in the report on the assumption that the dynamics of interaction between Head Start staff and Head Start children will also be affected by the attitudes of the staff. The attitudes and value system of the teacher will have a direct bearing on the quality of the experiences children have at the Head Start Child Development Centers.

The second part of the review deals with the limited amount of literature concerning training of staff to work with disadvantaged young children. A majority of this body of knowledge is based on opinion rather than carefully designed scientific research.

#### Childrearing Attitudes

Gildea, Glidewell, and Kantor (1961) recognized that the concept

of attitude was very complex. The authors summarized the methods used in research studies by investigators who attempted to identify dimensions of parental attitudes and correlated these with child behavior. Adler and Levy used case studies. Anthropologist Mead used the method of participant observation in her study of adolescent behavior in primitive societies of Samoa. Controlled laboratory observations of parents and their children were devised by Escalona, Leitch, et al. To survey large samples of parents, the questionnaire method was used by Sears, Maccoby, and Levin. Loewinger developed an instrument based on forced choice between pairs of attitude items. Schaefer and Bell developed the Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI), a checklist of attitude items.

Researchers have attempted to learn about parental attitudes through observing behavior and measuring opinion (Hymes, 1967). The author stated that investigators in the field should recognize that most significant experiences in life have never become areas of research activity. He suggested that researchers guard against the danger that research might tend to concentrate on the measurable and that the measurable might be equated with the meaningful.

White (1964) indicated that throughout childhood, the behavior of parents was a significant feature of the child's environment. Maladjustments resulted in part from one of two extreme deviations in parental attitude: excessive indulgence of childhood tendencies or excessive suppression of these tendencies. The author concluded that parental attitudes were not complete fixtures and that they developed in interaction with each child.

Pursuing the question, "How do parents rear children?", Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (1957) discovered that there was surprisingly little information about what American parents believed or what they did with their youngsters. They defined childrearing as referring to all the interactions between parents and their children. These interactions included the parents' expressions of attitudes, values, interests, and beliefs as well as their caretaking and training behavior.

Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (1957) reported the findings of a study that were based on standardized interviews with 379 mothers of five-year-old children from two suburban towns of a large New England metropolitan area. The authors explored the effects of socioeconomic status and educational background of mothers on child training practices. They found marked differences in the practices and attitudes reported by middle-class and working-class mothers. The middle-class mothers were more permissive and less punitive toward their young children than were working-class mothers.

Bronfenbrenner (1958) attempted to reappraise childrearing in a broader historical perspective. He reported that in the twenty-five year period, 1930-1955, the middle-class parents had a more acceptant, equalitarian relationship with their children. The lower class parent demanded compliance and control in his child. The most striking trend indicated in his review of research was that of the narrowing of the gap between social classes in patterns of childrearing.

Waters and Crandall (1964) employed the direct observation of overt maternal behavior in the home setting of 107 mothers to assess relations between socioeconomic status and childrearing practices

over the last twenty years. The findings of this study revealed that lower socioeconomic level mothers were especially prone to use coercive suggestions and severe penalties with their children. The negative association found between social class position and maternal coerciveness were consistent with other reports of class differences in disciplinary techniques used by American families.

In a continuation of this study, Waters and Crandall (1964) reported the changes in maternal behavior over time. They found that several of the maternal behaviors exhibited curvilinear trends between 1940 and 1960 paralleling changing advice by child care experts during this time. The authors pointed out that the "permissive" era reached a peak in the 1950's. By 1960, the mothers studied were more similar to the 1940 sample. The second trend discovered was a progressive change over time primarily seen in the gradual decrease of coerciveness the mothers employed in their socialization techniques from 1940 through 1950 to 1960.

Gildea, Glidewell, and Kantor (1961) in a series of studies with 830 white mothers in the St. Louis area found that relationships existed between social class and maternal attitudes toward child care. The results of the studies showed significant relationships between social class of the families and the attitudes of the mothers toward childrearing. As expressed by their responses to a seventeen-item questionnaire, mothers of upper-class children were found to be the most lenient in their discipline. Middle-class mothers composed the "in-between" group, and lower-class mothers were the most strict in their discipline. The authors discovered that one found steadily

increasing expression of uncertainty about childrearing practices as one moved down the social class scale. The lower-class mothers saw the greatest need for parental control of children, while the upper-class mothers saw the least need for parental control.

In an experimental study of the facilitory and inhibitory behaviors that lower-class mothers used in the guidance of their children, Connor, Walters, and Zurich (1964) found that although sensitivity of mothers to criticism of child development experts was evident among different social classes, significant differences existed among social classes in patterns of mother-child interaction. Middle-class mothers evidenced a trend toward interfering, criticizing, and structuring a change in activity types of behavior with their children. The lower-class mothers, in contrast, engaged in very little interaction during the time spent with their children.

Katkovsky, Preston, and Crandall (1964) reported that it was generally assumed that the evaluations, aspirations, and attitudes of parents concerning their children were based, to some extent, on their feelings and attitudes about themselves; but that the exact nature of this relation was quite complex and obscure.

Chilman (1965), in considering the childrearing patterns related to emotional health, found that middle-class parents are more apt than the very poor to use practices that are associated with the positive emotional adjustment of the child. The author stated further that the deprivation of the poverty environment played a very important role in the emotional and mental disturbance found in such families. This environment also helped to create the childrearing patterns of poor

families.

In a comparative study of thirty-one families from the clientele of a guidance clinic and twenty-nine families in which the children did not display any adjustment problems Peterson et al. (1967) found that the attitudes of fathers were at least as intimately related as maternal attitudes to the occurrence and form of behavior problems in children.

#### Training Teachers and Staff for Disadvantaged Children

In a study of parent attitudes Hereford (1963) assessed the group discussion method as an agent of change. He reported that, although group discussions of hundreds of parents were led by a non-professional leader, group discussions proved to be a powerful method for changing attitudes and behavior in the area of parent-child relations. The project, carried out in Austin, Texas, over a four-year period, was planned to evaluate effectiveness, economic feasibility, practicality, and community acceptance of such a project. No plan of study, no agenda, no textbook was used. Hundreds of parents from all socioeconomic levels were tested. Nearly one-third of the group felt that their own behavior or attitude was the cause of their child-rearing difficulties. The parents involved in the group discussions discovered that basic cause of childrearing problems was multifaceted.

Reissman (1962), Goldberg (1964), Passow (1963), and Deutsch (1964) have all recognized the real need for specialized teacher education programs directed toward preparing teachers and administrators for working with underprivileged children.

Deutsch (1964) viewed preschool programs as means of accommodating between the school, the child, and his family. The author

stated recently that the differences in the interaction among the child, the school, and the community were determined, among other things, by attitudes toward education, stability of community, by social class and ethnic membership of family, and sex of child.

Bloom, Davis, and Hess (1965) pointed out that research on attitudes of teachers toward disadvantaged children generally showed more negative evaluations of these children than of middle-class children. The authors stated that when the negative attitudes of individuals were translated into institutional practices in schools or social welfare agencies, that the Negro suffered most.

In training teachers for the schools in big cities, Rivlin (1962) outlined a variety of desired modifications in existing modes of teacher preparation for large city schools. He placed major stress on the importance of the laboratory experiences, starting with observation, leading to limited participation, then to student teaching, and finally, to independent responsibility for instruction.

Goldberg (1964) considered developing emotional closeness toward the children of the poor as a most important part of the teaching style of teachers for disadvantaged children. She stated that a considerable portion of teaching style derived from attitudes and values. Teachers of disadvantaged children needed, in addition to cognitive learnings, experiences through which to come emotionally close to the feelings, the anxieties, the aspirations of slum children, and in the process to examine their own feelings and reactions.

In a preliminary study to investigate the socioeconomic background and values of teachers, Noll and Noll (1965) reported that

potential teachers came from all levels of society. Results of instruments used to measure attitudes and values of teachers failed to reveal any consistent relationship with socioeconomic class.

In July, 1965, a conference of directors of NDEA Institutes for Teachers of Disadvantaged Youth was held at the University of Wisconsin. The topic of the conference was "Preparing Teachers of Disadvantaged Young Children." The type of disadvantaged population, curriculum design, and methods of training teachers varied in the Institutes. However, some common concerns and implications emerged from the conference for teacher and staff training of disadvantaged children and their families.

Ponder and Schneider (1966) reported that basic to their teacher training program at the Institute of Developmental Studies at the Department of Psychiatry, New York Medical College, was the use of seminars, lectures, and discussions which were led by the research staff, the supervisory and coordinating staff, and guest lecturers. Demonstrations of both tested and untested teaching techniques of early childhood enrichment programs for disadvantaged children were conducted by both teachers in training and other staff members. The authors found that discussions of the demonstrations helped to clarify understanding and potential application of the techniques.

Gilkeson (1966) of Bank Street College stated that they have learned from their Institute program that it is threatening for teachers to try out new ways. She discovered that some of their teachers in training learned a lot about what not to do by watching teaching models. In seminars, participants were analytically critical of what they saw.

At times, when the Institute staff thought the trainees had a great deal of insight, they discovered that when the trainees operated, they used the very same methods of teaching of which they were critical. The Institute staff was confronted with the problem of how to integrate the experiences of the trainees when they tried to build a new model for behaving for these teachers.

Apple (1966) reported the results of an attitude test developed and administered the first day of training at San Diego State College NDEA Institute to their sixty enrollees. They found that the attitudes of the sixty enrollees ran the gamut from the ultra-conservative to those of persons ready to make drastic changes. The findings of the experiences of the Institute staff during the training of teachers for disadvantaged children showed that teachers were resisting studying or changing themselves; participants did not know how to meet individual differences or provide individualized instruction to students; they tended to stereotype the disadvantaged youngsters instead of analyzing the various types of disadvantages. Enrollees in the training program became familiar with the generalizations in the lectures and the literature quickly, but it was difficult for them to identify the details of what may be meant by such a phrase as "learning to learn." The author concluded that their Institute staff found they must teach participants more educational psychology.

One of the techniques utilized by the NDEA Institute at the University of Florida (Cooper, 1966) was practicum experience reports that were being written and discussed in small groups of participants in an effort to create an awareness of the participants' own frame of

reference. These reports and discussions were reported to have been instrumental in creating an awareness that no one was really "known" when he was seen externally in terms of one's own frame of reference.

Beard (1966) stated that at the two-week session in the Institute at Washburn University of Topeka, despite the physical evidence of their own participants, human relations had nothing to do with the fact that half the participants were Negro and half were white. The more important differences were found in personality structure of the individual persons. The author suggested that training institutions needed to think in terms of the personality structure that was needed by a person working with children from deprived areas, and in terms of the personality structure of the child who lived in that area.

Brady (1966) reported that one major objective of the Institute at San Fernando Valley State College was to challenge the established and familiar ways of thinking on the part of each participant so as to permit him to re-examine his assumptions regarding the education of young children and their parents. The author indicated that the teachers at their Institute also presented a considerable range of experience and sophistication. This diversity extended to their beliefs about what constituted good experience for young children. The participants in training have been discovered to be re-examining attitudes and values they had held for a long time and this was found to be a painful process. Brady (1966) suggested that there was a hazard in observation experiences if participants became too preoccupied with "how to" instead of "what for" and "why." She speculated that perhaps a training institute's time would be better spent re-examining and reflecting upon experiences

which the participants bring with them. They could describe the experiences anecdotally and analyze procedures and behavior in order that insights and skills might be developed.

Golden (1960) stated that in order to understand a child's strengths and how to develop them, teachers should be initially trained to work with normal children. The author believed that teachers trained in the field of early childhood education were geared to understand progress and development when it was not expressed in symbols.

Korekheff (1964) explored the idea that to the extent social classes were subcultures, people in different classes perceived, judged, valued, interpreted, and understood things quite differently. Their language was different, to a degree, as was their logic, motivation, and morality. He concluded that failure either to recognize or to deal effectively with this cultural difference could lead to discouraging results.

Head Start teacher and staff training sessions have been conducted and are being conducted at designated institutions in each GEO region. There are no systematic studies of opinions and feelings of Head Start trainees toward child care practices and principles. The writer sought to present background information, synthesis of the opinions, and feelings toward child care principles and practices of Head Start trainees through a descriptive study unique in choice of methodology.

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

#### Subjects

All of the sixty-two trainees during the three eight-week Head Start Training sessions were chosen as subjects. Trainees were assigned by the project director to participate in weekly one-hour discussion groups with five to seven trainees in each group.

There were four discussion groups in each of the first two training sessions with two discussion groups during the summer training session. The trainees were assigned to groups selectively by the project director in order to make possible the widest variety with respect to race, sex, educational background, and teaching experience.

The participants were contacted by the project director for specific times for individual interviews by participant observers. During one of the early class periods, all of the subjects were informed about the purpose of the groups, the names of the members and the participant observer of each group, as well as of the time and place of the weekly meetings.

#### Instruments

Informal group discussion once a week for eight weeks was chosen as the most effective means of collecting information from the trainees regarding their perceptions and concerns during training. Similar to

Hereford's (1963) groups, no plan of study, no agenda, and no textbook were used during these group discussions. By sharing experiences and ideas, members of the group reached their own solutions for the topics and problems they discussed. Each trainee was free to accept or reject what was offered in the group, to choose as he pleased among the ideas presented. In an atmosphere of freedom and shared responsibility for the functioning of the group, the participants could express their fears, hopes, discuss their criticisms and worries, and relate their experiences to a group who were interested and empathetic because all the trainees were in the same situation. The group members became involved intellectually as well as emotionally.

Each trainee was asked to fill out an information checklist (See Appendix, p. 87) at the beginning of each session. The items included were designed to obtain factual data on family background factors such as marital status, residence, age, number of children, educational background, work experience, present employment, participation in community activities, interests, and hobbies.

Each participant observer had individual interviews with the members of her group before group meetings started. The purpose of the individual interviews was to get to know the group members personally and to establish rapport with each member before group meetings began. The interviewer decided upon the questions that were asked. Most of the questions were chosen to promote acquaintance of the group member and participant observer. Interviews were conducted informally.

During the training session, trainees were given the Adjective Check List by Harrison G. Gough (1965). At the end of each training

session, participants evaluated the Head Start Training Session experiences by means of a check list and statements to which the trainees responded, prepared by the Department of Family and Child Development. However, only information from the personal data sheet and from the group discussions was utilized in this report.

#### Collection of Data

The informal discussion groups met at a designated hour and place once a week throughout each eight weeks' training session. Purpose of the weekly meeting was to obtain trainees' comments and expressions of feeling concerning their on-going training experiences in a college setting.

A staff member of the Department of Family and Child Development was assigned to each discussion group. Although staff members serving as participant observers were not related to the classroom teaching of the trainees, they participated in some of the field trips and attended lectures by guest speakers along with the trainees. Participant observers remained with their specific groups throughout the session. The function of the participant observer was to facilitate sharing of experiences in the discussion groups noting them for later debriefing.

Conservation and utilization of the weekly discussions were attempted by means of: (1) debriefing, (2) coding and filing, and (3) data summarization and training program evaluation.

Debriefing. The debriefing process was found to be an effective method whereby the project director with the participant observer summarized the topics, events and observations which occurred in the

group discussion. The project director and the participant observer attempted to understand and interpret the feelings of the group members and the group as a whole and not only the words and ideas expressed in the group discussion.

Each participant observer was debriefed as soon as possible after the group discussion by the project director or another staff member. Information from the debriefing was recorded on dictating equipment. Multiple copies were made of the dictated material so that the same material could be further processed.

In the debriefing session there was first a discussion of the climate which prevailed in the group. Then there was a report on each individual in the group and his participation. If possible his major concern for the hour was pointed out. Finally, there was a recapitulation of the content of the discussion according to topics touched upon by various group members.

The debriefing process was found to be a procedure for collecting and presenting in an orderly fashion the variety of data observed and reported in these informal group discussions which, consequently, made the coding of this material easier. The typed copies of debriefing proceedings were coded according to eight topics and twenty-one subtopics pertaining to training experiences and opinions of the trainees. (See Appendix, p. 90).

One of the strengths of the debriefing process was that the participant observer could attempt to interpret the level of feeling with which a topic was discussed while the project director could summarize and dictate it. One of the possible weaknesses of the process

would be observer bias and the danger that the variety and the emphasis of the group's concerns were strained through the selective perception of the participant observer.

Coding and filing. After the recorded material was typed, it was coded according to eight general topics and subtopics (see Appendix, p. 90). These topics pertained to the trainees' reactions to the training session experiences and group interaction.

This report was concerned with only one major topic "Child-rearing Practices" and one subheading of the second major topic, "Head Start Training Programs," which dealt with observation of children in various groups.

The coded material was filed according to (1) topics, (2) statements of individuals, and (3) group climate.

Discussion groups were conducted very informally. The project leader had explained the purposes of the group discussions at the beginning of training. The trainees had been told that what they said in the group discussions would help the training staff evaluate and change or modify the training session experiences. These informal group meetings seemed to be meaningful encounters for all those who took part. This sort of freedom in the group meetings made it difficult to follow a particular topic through a developmental sequence. The topics discussed in each group were sometimes similar but more often totally different from other groups meeting concurrently. The entries on the topic "Childrearing Practices" and "Head Start Training Program" were summarized in this report according to individual groups without any editing on the part of the investigator. An effort was made to present

the concerns and feelings of trainees as they were revealed in the group discussions.

The following summaries do not present a picture of development of ideas of the participating Head Start trainees. Comments were not always identified with the name of the participant who made them. Some comments came early in the eight-week session, others later. Some groups spent the early days of the session talking about their concerns reported here and then moved on to other items of interest during the last part of the training session.

If the participant observer had interpreted the feeling with which a comment was said or had related the implication of a comment, these were included in the summaries where applicable. An effort was also made to indicate changes over time in opinions and thoughts of some groups if the participant observer talked about it during debriefing.

The attempt to summarize quite similar or at times greatly diverse opinions on child care and childrearing of Head Start trainees in informal group discussions was made to give the reader clues to the feelings and skills of these trainees in areas where they expressed anxieties or strengths. Training institutions must be aware of such opinions in order to plan more effectively for training of future Head Start personnel.

#### Observation Facilities

Head Start trainees spent a substantial portion of their time observing and participating in the Kansas State University Child Development Laboratory and at the Manhattan Head Start Child Development Center. The purpose of the Kansas State University Child Development Laboratory

is to serve as an observation and training laboratory for university students. The teachers and the student teachers at the university laboratory planned experiences, chose equipment and materials and used guidance techniques that helped children to question, explore, and in general led them to problem solving activities.

The children were encouraged to express their feelings in the group and were given constructive outlets to handle these good or bad feelings. A quite flexible schedule was followed by the teachers who were willing to modify even this schedule according to the needs of the children. This led to a great deal of what was called "incidental teaching" and went many times unrecognized as such by the trainees in the beginning of the training session.

On February 1, 1966, there were ten children between the ages of 3 years, 3 months and 3 years, 9 months in the upstairs, four-room area of the university laboratory. In the downstairs playrooms there were twelve children between the ages 3 years, 9 months and 4 years, 3 months. The outside play area was relatively small for the number of children and adult observers at the laboratory. Each of the two groups of children had a head teacher with two to three assisting student teachers in each group. About five regular university students observed during each session. In addition to these student-observers, there were three to four Head Start trainees assigned to observe or participate alternately with each group of children. The facility in use at the time of the training session was small and many times seemed too full of people.

The purpose of the Head Start Child Development Center in Manhattan was to give to children of deprived families special exper-

iences and opportunities that would make them more competent in dealing with formal learning situations the following year. In general, the emphasis of the Head Start Center program was to provide for disadvantaged children what typical middle-class American parents provided for their children at home. Language and concept development, opportunities for successful undertakings, and provision of medical care for the children were stressed, along with the active involvement of parents in the total program.

The age range of children at the Head Start Center was from 4 years, 3 months to 5 years, 3 months. There were fifteen children in one large room divided into play areas which the teachers were able to supervise with ease. The adults included a head teacher in each group, a low-income aide, and mother-volunteers as well as other volunteers from the community at large. In addition, there were two to four trainees observing and assisting at each session. The trainees at the Head Start Center were more often called on for specific help than they were when at the university laboratory. This was due, in part, to the presence of student teachers at the university laboratory.

A more structured teaching program was followed at the Head Start Center. This was correlated to the difference in the philosophy of the teachers, to the variation in space, to the difference in age of the children, and to the necessity of involving more untrained people in the program.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Description of Trainees

Study of the records revealed that there was great variation in many ways among the sixty-two trainees who took part in the training sessions at Kansas State University. (See Appendix, pp. 83-86 for information concerning variation among trainees enrolled in separate sessions.) Out of this number seven were males. The age range, in years, was nineteen to sixty-nine. The average age of the sixty-two trainees was 34.6 years. The median age of all participants was 35.5 years.

Of the trainees thirty-two were Caucasian; twenty-three were Negro; six were Mexican-American; and one was American Indian. Trainees came from nine different states in the region: Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wyoming. The participants were discouraged from commuting to the training sessions because of the time and effort involved. A majority of the group went home over the week-ends. They could choose to live off campus; however, most of them stayed in the university housing as a group. The trainees themselves said that staying in the dormitory as a group promoted cohesiveness and free exchange of ideas with fellow trainees and university students during the training sessions.

At time of training, thirty trainees were married; seventeen

were single; eleven were divorced; three were separated; and one trainee was a widow. The number of children per trainee ranged from none to nine children. There were 144 children among forty-one parent-trainees. Ten trainees had five or more children. Those with minor children had left them under the care of spouses, older siblings, relatives, or neighbors.

Education of trainees ranged from sixth grade through post-graduate work. Of the sixty-two trainees, twelve were college graduates while two trainees had received advanced graduate degrees; twenty-three had finished one to three years of college; sixteen had graduated from high school; eight had completed one to three years of high school; and one had sixth grade education. In addition to high school or college training, many trainees had acquired some type of vocational training, such as nursing, cosmetology, or business training.

Work experience with children also varied. Twenty-nine trainees had some previous teaching experience either at preschool, elementary school, junior or senior high school level, while thirty-three had no previous teaching experience. A number of trainees had taught at church nursery or Sunday schools. Forty-nine trainees were returning to employment in a Community Action Agency. Thirteen were not employed by a Community Action Agency nor by Head Start delegate agencies in their communities.

Each trainee underwent a medical examination at the Kansas State University Student Health Center or by his own doctor at home before or shortly after he came to the training session.

## Summaries of Individual Group Discussions

Group A

Group A consisted of six members, one male and five females. The ages of group members ranged from nineteen to sixty-nine. There was one Negro and one Mexican-American in the group besides the four Anglo members. Two of the group members were not employed. The other four were employed in their communities: one as a Head Start teacher, one as a teacher's aide, another as Head Start program coordinator, and one as an extension worker in a Community Action Agency. One member of the group had completed college; two had some college. Two members had graduated from high school and one had two years of high school.

Two or three members of Group A tended to dominate the discussions. These members were the ones who most often reacted to the topics of discussion on child care and childrearing practices. All the reactions were illustrated with examples of the participants' own childrearing techniques and experiences with their own children. Discussions were for the most part centered around everyday experiences with children, recollections of their own childhood, and observations at the university child development laboratory and the Head Start Center. Although experiences brought to the discussion group were evaluated in light of some of the classroom knowledge the trainees were getting during the week, most of the comments were related to general concepts and knowledge of childrearing from the trainees' own background. Factual knowledge occupied a secondary position in the discussions. It would be correct to generalize that the nature of the discussions described here would apply to all the other group discussion which will be summarized in the

study.

The members of Group A who had children revealed that although they were in an intensive child development training program, much of what they were learning in many ways repeated what they had already known in a common sense sort of way for a long time. It was interesting to note, however, that the member of the group who made and supported the above statement was also the one who very insistently said that she considered herself a "modern mother" having raised her children by recent theories of child development in the "modern way." She did not specify what the "modern way" was. Another member of the group who had previously taken one course in child development, believed that she had better rapport and understanding with her children as a result of this one course. She quickly added that, even before then, she never had any "real" problems with her children. This young woman was sorry that her husband did not understand, appreciate, or see the value in some of the things his wife was trying to do with their children, such as fingerprinting at home. Her solution to avoid conflict with her husband over these things was to plan these activities out of his sight and to keep the clutter away in the basement, because her husband wanted order in the house. She verbalized the concern of the other group members in this area. She wished her husband had the chance to talk about child development practices and principles with a group of other men and women so he might gain an understanding of what his wife was doing with their children and why these things were useful.

The group members discussed theories of childrearing as they developed through the years. There was disagreement among the members

on whether childrearing theories had changed drastically within the past thirty years. The youngest member of the group stated that there had been a definite change, while the oldest member did not think that the philosophy of childrearing had changed to any great extent since she took a child development course in 1930. She said that even in 1930 she had been exposed to the basic theory of using a little "psychology" on children.

One of the topics that the group discussed extensively was the resourcefulness of children. The group members' general feeling was that children's physical and mental resourcefulness was underestimated by adults when they were children. However, the group members felt that sometimes a child attempted daring things in appropriate places which upset adults even though the child knew he could handle the situation. Therefore, parents should talk to children about what activities would be dangerous in certain situations and with certain people. From this topic, the group went into a discussion of the fact that young children needed preparation for moving from one environment where certain things were accepted into another environment where these things were not accepted. The type of preparation needed was not discussed nor elaborated upon.

In close connection with resourcefulness, creativity of children was discussed extensively. The general feeling in the group was that, when the members were children, they were very creative in their play and invented many kinds of games and playthings using their own ingenuity although their material resources were very limited. In a way, lack of materials spurred their imagination, whereas now children have to have

toys and equipment in nursery school and at home. One of the members suggested that children learned creativity from "models" and that anything such as T.V. and comic books could give children ideas about toys they could make and these helped them envision different themes and materials for dramatic play. Another participant added that usually these creative ideas did not occur to a child alone but happened with a group of other children who could "hatch up" creative ideas among themselves. Trainees stated that besides T.V. and comic books, parents and other individuals in the life of children were used as models for role playing situations.

On the topic of how and when children should understand right from wrong, the group members were quite perplexed. They agreed, for example, that there was not as much pressure on young people to smoke now as there had been in the past, that perhaps it was just as acceptable not to smoke today as it was to smoke. They viewed the government publications and extensive publicity as being very effective on young people. There was some discussion on who should decide whether or not young people should smoke. One group member stated that young people should decide this themselves. The male member of the group who had six children of his own implied that parents have some responsibility in helping direct this decision if they know that it is not a wise decision for youngsters to make. No definite conclusion was reached by the group. This topic appeared to be a real problem which they were exploring.

The attitude was expressed that some adults and teachers are better able or have a natural ability to control and establish rapport

with children. Some of the members reported that there were particular teachers who seemed to be able to get better discipline from children. This was particularly true in elementary school and in high school. The group members believed that this natural ability to establish control over children was immediately perceived by the children and they responded better to such individuals. The trainees' attitude implied that people are born with this ability and children have an innate ability to sense this in an adult. Their idea of discipline seemed to be the ability to stop undesirable behavior by whatever means were necessary.

Any outwardly aggressive or unusual behavior attracted the attention of the participants when they were at the university laboratory. Participants generalized quite extensively and exhaustively on the causes of unacceptable behavior of the so-called "problem children." They created from very little objective information imaginary environments in which children might have been reared. For example, aggressive behavior might have been copied from parents who were "rebels" themselves. The trainees were quite indignant toward the mother of one of the children and attributed his aggressive behavior to his mother who seemed as if she did not know her child. In some cases a child's aggressive behavior was thought to be a result of his being an only child, which deprived him of the experience of learning to relate to other children in a family. They seemed quick to label children and parents and then to attempt to find single causes for behavior.

The group members agreed that the presence or absence of even one aggressive child affected the attitudes of the other children and

noted the relaxed and calm atmosphere on a particular day at the university laboratory when an especially active child was absent. Children selected for observation by the trainees tended to be those who had extremes of behavior, and the participants' reasoning for this was that by observing such children and understanding them, they could detect and understand behavior of other problem children. However, one participant chose a "good kid" to observe, because he felt each child was unique and interesting in his own way and in his own right.

One of the trainees suggested that a good way to handle aggressive children was rewarding their acceptable behavior and ignoring their bad behavior. Other group members disagreed, stating that violent temper tantrums should not go undisciplined or unpunished. The group members seemed to feel that sometimes a little "back of the hand" was necessary.

One participant, who was observing a child whom she called aggressive at the university laboratory thought he needed praise for the things which he was doing correctly. She felt that he constantly got attention for his bad behavior which just reinforced this behavior; whereas, she pointed out, if he were praised this might reinforce and encourage good behavior. This trainee was also concerned about children who did not seem to be part of the group and who spent much of their time in activities by themselves. She believed that children of this type needed more social activities in groups and more of this kind of activity needed to be planned so they might learn to become more of a part of the child development group.

Group members were concerned that there seemed to be none of the

"problems and rambunctious behavior" among the children in another city day care center that there seemed to be at the university laboratory. Freedom of movement and individual initiative of children engaging in activities was considered to be noisy and confusing by the group members. At the day care center, the children seemed to move from one activity to another in a very orderly fashion. The trainees valued the apparent order and quietness of this day care center. Although the children at the day care center were chosen in the same way as they were for the university laboratory, one group member thought that there was a very great difference in the manner in which the children responded to the daily situation in each place. The example given by this group member was that the paintings of the children at the day care center seemed to have more form and that they were done with more ease and in a more relaxed fashion. She stated that the children at the university laboratory simply slopped paint onto the paper without form and with a great deal of emotion. The trainee could see no worthwhile tangible meaning or value in simply "slopping paint." It was difficult for them to understand how such activities might quite appropriately meet the needs of children.

As the session progressed, the participant observer detected a definite change in the attitudes of the participants in that they were beginning to view the university child development laboratory situation and the behavior of the children there with more understanding and insight. It appeared that the trainees in this group were becoming less defensive in their behavior and opinions while they were re-evaluating their attitudes about problem children. At the end of the session, the

group's participant observer reported that members had begun to discover some cause and effect relationships and had gained insight into the validity of some of the factual concepts in child development.

#### Group B

Members of group B were made up of five females and one male. The youngest group member was twenty-three; the oldest member was thirty-eight. Two of the group members were Negro and the remaining four members were white. Four members had completed their Bachelor's degrees; one member had completed grammar school; and one had completed high school. Three of the trainees in the group were Kansas residents. Three trainees were from Colorado, Missouri and South Dakota, respectively. Of this group of six, only one member was not employed by CAP or Head Start. Three of the trainees had no previous teaching experience.

There were strong disagreements among the members of this group during the weekly group discussions. However, they shared their ideas and experiences openly and expressed a great deal of empathy toward each other. The participant observer introduced some of the topics by direct questioning. She shared many of her own experiences with her son which facilitated open discussion about children.

Coloring books were considered to be useful for children, especially for poverty area children, because children learned from them what certain objects looked like, their color, and shape. According to the group, coloring books alone were not good sources of creative experience for children; but accompanied by free drawing and painting, the pictures in a coloring book helped acquaint children with concrete concepts. One mother reported that it was through such a coloring book

experience that her ten-year-old son recently gained the concept of grass being green. A suggestion was made that children needed help in expanding their ideas and horizons as they participated in creative experiences. Group members thought that stimulation should be given to children by adults in the form of hanging pictures on the walls, introducing objects into the preschool environment and into the home, and making overt attempts to question the children on what they are painting and conversing with them while they are painting. One of the group members pointed out that one reason why teachers gave mimeographed pictures to the children to color was that materials and supplies were not always available in abundance to let children create with a variety of materials.

Going to church was reported to be a good family experience by one woman in the group. She told the group that her children had an opportunity to choose whether they wanted to stay at the church nursery and play or attend the church service. She said that even the youngest one of her children preferred to go to the church service instead of staying in the nursery. She mentioned that sometimes they got restless but they enjoyed the singing. An unmarried college graduate stated that when he was a child, he never enjoyed Sunday school because they merely colored religious pictures. The general feeling of the group was that church should be a pleasant experience for children.

Group members felt that a justification for having middle-class children in a group of children from more deprived homes would be their influence in the use of "excuse me" and "thank you." They said that, after all, poverty area children would be growing up in a middle-class

world, so they agreed that deprived children needed to learn some middle-class conventions.

The response of the group members to a question about their general reactions to the university laboratory was quite positive. The members made some comments about the amount and kinds of equipment which were available and commented with praise on the great deal of understanding which the laboratory school teachers seemed to have for the children.

One group member admitted that one could only learn so much from observing at the child development laboratory and that they needed to be actively involved in the activities with the children. The group members reported that when they were asked by the nursery school teacher to read a story to the children or to supervise some activity or play area, they were at first reluctant and hesitant but they felt relaxed and pleased as soon as they got positive reactions from the children. They admitted that sometimes they were at a loss when children confronted them with a question or comment which they did not know how to deal with. One Negro trainee reported her discomfort when a four-year-old child crawled on her lap while she was reading a story to the group of children there and said, "You are so black and your teeth are so white." The adults observed that an honest comment, non-reinforcement, an acceptance of the matter-of-fact attitude of the child, eased a situation such as this and that these situations usually resolved themselves.

The members of this group were bothered because the teachers at the university laboratory did not insist that the children put away all of the materials and equipment with which they played. They were con-

cerned about the fact that, from their point of view, the teachers were unconcerned about whether the children helped or not.

Almost all of the members in the group were concerned about what they termed aggressive behavior of specific children at the university laboratory. Their attitude was not one of criticism but of questioning about how to handle such cases of aggressiveness. They felt that these children were not getting the guidance they needed at the laboratory, either because teachers did not have enough time to spend individually with each child, or when they did, the trainees thought there was not much strict enforcement of discipline with the children. They said that since there would be times when not enough adults could be on hand in a nursery school situation, the group members thought that children should be "taught" that they cannot have their way all the time, and that they would have to learn to respond to "no." It sounded as if the adults in the group expected children to restrain themselves like adults and wanted to see adult responses in these children. The group members were critical of the university laboratory staff working with the children, because they did not threaten the children with loss of the privilege of using play equipment when they misused it. Group members stated that children should understand the consequences to others when they use equipment incorrectly. They seemed to feel that there was one "right way" to deal with a particular behavior in all children.

The attitude was expressed that juice time might be used as a time for socialization and that it should be a more orderly time than it was at the university laboratory. One suggestion made by the group members was that this time could be used for discussing rule infractions

with the children. Group members agreed that allowing children to pour their own juice for second helpings just took too much time and that the "mechanics" of it would make it unrealistic to apply in a Head Start school situation. Anything that added any bit of "confusion" was to be avoided, seemed to be the general reaction. However, one group member who was from a Head Start center in Colorado said that children in their Head Start program last summer had a pint of milk each and that they poured what they wanted into their glasses themselves. The group members seemed to feel that learning could take place only in an ordered, scheduled situation in which children responded in a set manner and preferably as a group.

The pros and cons of a two-day activity versus one-day projects such as a cookie-baking project at the university laboratory were discussed. One member considered this type of a project worthwhile in terms of the concepts of texture, shapes which the children would be able to experience as well as seeing, feeling and tasting the end-product. Some members objected to the sanitary aspects and prohibitive ordinances in their Head Start areas involved in such a cooking project. One member pointed out that schools had an added responsibility for the children because people usually expected other folks to take better care of their children than they, the parents, took themselves. Another group member stated that Head Start children were from poverty areas anyway where germs were plentiful and implied that one or two more germs would not make much difference.

#### Group C

There were six members in group C: five females and one male.

Four members were Negro and two were white. The youngest group member was twenty; the oldest, sixty-one. The age and experience range in the group showed up most clearly in the various disagreements between the oldest and youngest member of the group. Of the six group members, only one was a college graduate and he also had a graduate degree. Two members had one to three years of college work; one member had completed high school; one member had one year of high school; and one member had two years of high school. Two members of the group were already employed, one as Head Start program supervisor and the other as a CAP staff aide. The remaining four members were not employed as yet, including the group member who held a Master's degree. One group member was from Montana, while all the other members were from different cities in Kansas.

The importance of talking with one's own children and making conscious efforts to discipline them was emphasized by the group members. The attitude was expressed that one should take the responsibility of punishing his child when neighbors complained about the child's behavior, or when he lied, or when he was suspected of lying. It was considered best to punish a child when he was suspected of lying just in case, so if it was truly a lie, it would not go unpunished. One mother in the group said that her parents trusted her, even though she herself knew that she was lying sometimes. Because her parents trusted her unconditionally, she did not feel like lying as much as she would have if they had not trusted her. Another mother in the group said that on the basis of what a neighbor said she had whipped her children. Then she realized that this was unfair and she decided to take the word of her children rather than that of her neighbor.

On the topic of handling aggressive behavior toward adults a mother said that when her child hit her, she ignored the act and after a while her child forgot what he had done. She felt that this was an acceptable way of handling his behavior. Another mother said that when a nursery school child kicked the teacher, he should be kicked in return or be spanked. The other members of the group disagreed with her, telling her that ignoring the child's behavior would be the best policy. However, one young girl in the group said teen-agers and young children alike expected their parents to yell at them when they did something wrong, that they were thus assured that their parents cared for them and loved them. One mother stated that strictness did not work with preschool children, and parents could be effective without being strict. The word "strict" was never defined.

The attitude of some mothers whom the trainees felt were over-anxious to leave their children for somebody else to take care of was criticized severely by the group members. They could not understand why some mothers would say that they were "fed-up" with their children. Two members of the group strongly believed that sending one's children to nursery school was a means of escape for that mother from her mothering responsibilities. Their position seemed to be that if a mother were not employed outside the home, she should stay home with her children instead of sending them to nursery school until they were ready for school. At the same time, a grandmother in the group disagreed with these members' ideas and suggested that nursery school and kindergartens were good opportunities for children, places where they could be taken care of in a beneficial way.

One comparison the group members made between the poverty areas and the middle-class neighborhoods was that many of the nursery schools or elementary schools in poverty areas could not put play equipment outside in the school yards because of the vandalism of teen-agers in these areas. They felt this would be a big problem they would have to face in their jobs. One group member explained that the parks and recreation areas in poverty areas were far away from where great numbers of children lived, therefore, the young people seemed to get their excitement out of vandalism.

In a discussion of the Kansas State University Child Development Laboratory, one of the trainees wondered whether the teachers there were not acting "too good" with the children because of the observers sitting around the room. The other members disagreed with that idea saying that all nursery school teachers owed good treatment to the children and their parents.

Although the length of the observation periods was considered to be too long or even unnecessary by some members, others appreciated the opportunity and chance to observe children in a variety of situations. The group was in agreement that part-time participation at the Head Start Center was of far more value than observation at the university laboratory. The trainees in this group thought the Head Start Center offered them a much more real situation, more closely related to the kinds of places where they would be working after training. The more structured program of the Head Start Center was very effective from the group members' point of view.

One of the differences the group members found between the Head

Start Center and the university laboratory was that there was more need of a one-to-one relationship between adults and children at the Head Start Center. While participating at the Head Start Center, the group members found that many of the Head Start children did not know how to do some of the things which the university laboratory children could easily do. It was reported that the Head Start children were more dependent and they needed more direction and guidance by adults; that they were more responsive to music and finger play activities than the university laboratory children were. Group members also mentioned that the Head Start children were orderly and behaved "nicely" and cleaned up after themselves. They felt this was another important difference between the university laboratory children and the Head Start children. The group members found active participation at the university laboratory and the Head Start Center very gratifying.

The trainees in this group seemed to appreciate the orderliness of the day care center they visited on a field trip as compared to the "unorderliness" of the university laboratory. They commented that the children at the day care center waited at the table as the teacher poured their juice, waited until all the juice was poured before drinking what was in front of them, waited around the table until everyone was finished, and then sat quietly around the table as the teacher prepared the samples of soapsuds for water play. There was a general feeling of order to the whole series of activities they observed at the day care center. The group members were critical of the way these things were done at the university laboratory where, in their opinion, the children ran to the juice table, hovered over the cookies or the

juice while it was being poured, gulped it down, and ran to play without waiting for the other children to finish. They felt that the teacher never seemed to follow through or do anything with any order attached to it.

Except for one member in the group, trainees were determined that the university laboratory was entirely undisciplined. The day care centers the group members visited on a field trip were termed "well disciplined," because the children there did not fight and were not "mean" like some of the children at the university laboratory. This again underscores the idea of order and schedule and a definite plan of action as desirable in a preschool situation.\* One group member stated that she liked the university laboratory better because there seemed to be more "life" there. She was glad children could be allowed to "follow out their own inclinations."

A point of concern to the group was the time or occasion that children should be given choices of activities they would take part in during the nursery school day and when such choices should be denied to them. They discussed whether or not a child would have the choice in kindergarten of being in a story circle or choosing to remain outside the story circle. The male member of the group who had six years of teaching experience said that in kindergarten children were assigned

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\*At one of the day care centers which the writer visited with the trainees, no fighting or aggressive expression on the part of the children was allowed. If the children had such tendencies and were persistent in repeating unacceptable behavior they were warned, and if the children kept on with their unapproved behavior, they were literally strapped to a "thinking-chair" until they felt ready to join the group.

places and were expected to remain at those assigned seats during story time. He suggested that the ability to listen was something to be taught to children and visual aids should be provided for children to help them learn how to listen.

#### Group D

There were only five members in group D: four Negro and one white member. All of the members of this group were females. The ages of group members ranged from twenty-three to forty-one. Two of the Negro women in the group had completed college. Two members had one and two years of college, respectively. The fifth group member had completed high school. Of the group members, only one was employed as a Head Start teacher. Four members were not employed at the time of training. Three group members were residents of Kansas; the other two members were from Colorado and Missouri.

The members of the group were talkative and willing to share their experiences and feelings with each other. Although one member of the group dominated most of the group discussions, the other group members seemed free to interrupt her and disagree with her. Toward the end of the session, all of the members were participating actively in the group discussions.

A mother asked the group whether they were familiar with Dr. Spock. She jokingly commented that she heard he was married but did not have children of his own. The group members were all familiar with Dr. Spock's Baby and Child Care. Some members insisted that, although their doctors sometimes prescribed the book for them, they still raised their children according to their common sense. Some members used the

book often and referred to it in problem situations, implying that it was used in place of going to a doctor. They did not cite any examples of what these problem situations were.

On the topic of some of their childrearing practices, the mothers in the group discussed what they felt was the right thing to do when they realized it was mealtime, and their children were playing with other children in the backyard. One mother suggested that although it might be considered cruel, she sent her child's friends home. Another mother said when her son asked his friends in, she served them, but she had a talk with her son afterwards and told him not to do this again. Others agreed that they would handle similar cases in this latter way, also.

A young mother told of her enjoyment and her children's enjoyment in attending church on Sundays. This had been a family practice with them ever since the children were babies. The same woman mentioned to the group that her two-year-old had mumps, and she was giving him baby aspirin and was putting sardines on the swollen portions of the child's face to cure the mumps. The group leader could not obtain information on the function of the sardines in the curing of mumps, but, the Negro women in the group seemed to know exactly what this young mother was talking about.

A quiet, young Negro woman in the group asked the group members if they had the same experience with their children as she and her mother were having with her teen-age sister who was constantly withdrawing from guests and family activities. The sister was always wanting to be by herself reading or resting in her room. A mother with two teen-age

daughters commented that withdrawal among teen-agers was a common thing and quite normal unless it went too far and became a constant habit. She said that it usually leveled off in time. She advised that if it did not, the teen-ager's family should do something about the situation, because constant withdrawal could have some very serious effects on the child. She did not elaborate on how to intervene in such a situation and what exactly to do in such a case.

When group members were discussing the equipment and play things in the university laboratory, a group member said that she certainly did not have as much equipment and toys for her children as the children at the laboratory have. She seemed to say that her own children developed satisfactorily, and she could not understand why the child development people believed all these things were necessary.

One of the group members stated that children were flexible and it was not difficult for them to adjust to different kinds of situations. It would be easy for children to follow instructions at the Head Start Centers even though most of those children would be from low-income backgrounds. Another member who lived in the poverty area of her city commented that children of low-income families had more problems and more varied types of problems than other children. According to her, these children were really problem children; therefore, their behavior was less predictable than the behavior of children of middle-class families. The women in the group believed that, in general, a child's behavior outside the home reflected the "real teaching" he received at home. Within the homes children behave in ways much less acceptable than they do outside the home.

Group members occasionally complained about the crowded conditions at the university laboratory and of the length of the observations they had to make there. In general, group members did not think that children gave much attention to the observing adults; it was the adults, they said, who would react differently if there were fewer of them at the crowded rooms. The most active member of the group stated that the trainees ought to be participating with the children or they ought to have more definite assignments of things to do at the university laboratory. It was hard for her to believe that they needed to do as much observing and for as long periods of time as they were doing.

Toward the end of the training session, the members of this group were beginning to notice the differences in the emotional, social, and physical maturity levels of the three- and four-year-olds as they continued observations at the university laboratory. One group member stated that long and steady observation aided them in concentrating on different aspects of child behavior and development separately. Then, they could tie the knowledge gained from observations together with the facts they were learning in the classroom.

Group members felt a great need for more background information about the children they were observing. They wanted to understand the reasons why some children behaved the way they did. They thought they could do this better if they knew more about a child's home and family background.

Much of the attention of the trainees in this group was focused on one child at the university laboratory. He was from Israel and had just come to this country. The first two years of his life had been

spent in the Kibbutz. The discussions in this group were first centered on the child, then, group members started generalizing about his mother and father, the Kibbutz, Jewish people in general, and the treatment of the Jews by the Germans. One woman in the group suggested that this child always did what his friend did instead of initiating any play activity on his own. Other group members disagreed and said the boy was able to play by himself and even knock other children down. They speculated that this child might be using his language difficulty to his advantage, as a weapon against discipline. He seemed to hear only those things he wanted to hear.

The Jewish boy's vigorous energy and aggressiveness was termed as a "destructive drive" by one woman in the group. She suggested that he was probably very smart and might be a scientist someday. Another member said he might become a good athlete because of all his energy and "all-boy" nature.

The trainees in the group thought that this child needed quite a bit of discipline and pointed out that probably, in the Kibbutz, there was very little discipline and people did things for the children all the time. This is another example of generalizing broadly from very little evidence.

The mother of this particular child was observed to be nervous when she brought the child to the university laboratory. The possible reason for her nervousness was thought to be the transition she was going through since she came to the United States and had to care for her own children. The group members guessed that the reason this boy turned to the male Head Start trainees for help and guidance when they

were at the laboratory was probably because of the type of family he was reared in where the father was the important figure in the family. In another situation they speculated that a child turned to the male teacher because there was no man in the family. There was a great tendency to attempt to tie large blocks of behavior to a simple single cause. One member commented that this boy was certainly a "different child." It was almost as if she were unable to accept the difference of this child from the other children in the university laboratory.

All of the members in the group were concerned that they would be working with children very different from those they were observing at the university laboratory. They felt that the children at the laboratory did not seem very interested in the equipment which was provided for them. One of the ladies in the group pointed out that when any new item was brought into the daily lives of the Head Start children, it would be a new experience which they had never had before. Therefore, Head Start children would likely be a bit more orderly in approaching these new experiences. All of the women were quite concerned that the children at the laboratory were of a different socioeconomic level than the children with whom they would be working. The group members appeared to be anxious about transferring the kinds of learning experiences they were having into the situations where they would be working.

#### Group E

Of the six members of group E, only one member was a male. The age range, in years, was twenty-one to fifty-seven. Two group members had nine children each. The oldest member had completed college; three

members had some college work; one member had three years of high school; one member had sixth grade education. Three group members were from Colorado; two were from Kansas; and one was from North Dakota.

The members of this group were personally involved in the on-going process of training. They had a questioning and analytical approach to the topics they brought to the discussion group. They were openly evaluating their attitudes as the training continued.

The participants in this group were quite anxious about the right way to approach children at home and at the university laboratory. A mother of nine children said that she tried the "positive approach" in talking with her children when she was home one week-end during the training session. She was "shocked" to discover that what she was learning during the training session worked in real life. When her son tried to go somewhere when she was home that week-end, she wanted him to stay so she could talk with him. She reported that she made a conscious effort to put her request in a positive question by asking, "Don't you think that you'd like to stay home and talk to your mother for a while?" She reported that he stayed and talked with her. Ordinarily, she would have told him, "No, you can't go, you have to stay home." And, she added, they usually had a fight about it when she approached him this way.

The young man in the group said that the positive approach was one of the biggest revelations to him as far as working with nursery school children was concerned. He said that the children responded more willingly to positive direction than to being stopped by adults and told "No." He reported that restriction of their abilities was

rejected by the children. The group members admitted that it was much easier to say to a child, "Don't do that," than it was to think about how one would and could direct the child in a positive fashion and help him think about possible choices of action.

The need of adults to be needed while working with children was dramatically illustrated and analyzed by the group members. The topic was brought to the group discussion when one member mentioned that they were more actively involved and much happier at the Head Start Center than they were at the university laboratory. One of the mothers in the group verbalized the other members' feelings by saying that the real difference was in the attitudes of the trainees themselves, not between the Head Start Center and the university laboratory. The trainees felt that they played a vital role at the Head Start Center and they did not feel necessary at the university laboratory. She went on to explain that people tend to enjoy more the places where they felt they were really needed. Partly for this reason, some of the trainees wanted to observe and participate every day for a full week at either the university laboratory or the Head Start Center, because they thought it might be disturbing to the children to have different adults participating each day. They wondered if there was any value in this in building up a relationship with a child.

As this topic was tossed around, the group members seemed to find their own answers to these questions. One thoughtful mother, who also had nine children, said that after talking with some of the other trainees, they decided together perhaps it was the adult ego which needed this day to day contact with a child in order that the child

might become somewhat dependent on the adult. She also said this might be the adult's need to be needed rather than the child's need to have a continuous relationship with one adult for several days. Perhaps it did not make as much difference to the children, and maybe they could learn to expect a rotation of adults, and children could adjust to this better than adults could.

The group members later decided that the observation and participation dispersed through the training period was a good plan for illustrating classroom teaching. Through their observations at the university laboratory and at the Head Start Center they could better understand the things studied in class. This dispersion would provide better assimilation of the learning experiences of the training session. They decided there were valid reasons for those in charge of the training session to arrange it that way.

A particular incident illustrated the dependency which some of the trainees encouraged in the university laboratory situation. The male member of the group identified himself strongly with a three-year-old boy at the university laboratory, whom he mentioned he would like to take home with him. The supervisor at the laboratory noticed that this child was spending most of his time with this participant-observer-trainee. One day the child was told that Mr. X (the trainee) could not play with him, because he had something else to do. The young man was hurt when he was confronted with this remark. He felt that the child was taken away from him. He reported to the group that the particular three-year-old was a "loner" anyway and that he wanted to be around adults more than children of his age group. In response to his state-

ment, one of the mothers in the group said that the child's identification with adults was possibly because his language was not as developed as it might be. Adults were probably more patient and willing to stop and listen to him. She stated that children needed to interact with other children and not simply with the adults in a nursery school situation.

One of the female members of the group told the others that she noticed that the university laboratory children responded more positively and readily to what men said than to what women said to them. She wondered whether it was because many children at home had been exposed to an authoritarian pattern of discipline administered by their fathers, so they were more likely to respond to what the father said than to what the mother said. Then even when the children were in different situations, they automatically paid more attention to what men said and suggested to them.

The male member of group E commented that it was a mistake to have outside water play, or any water play, at the university laboratory, because the only thing the children did with the water was "to splash around, and there were too many kids for that kind of stuff." In opposition to this statement, another group member stated that she and other observers with her noticed that the children who played the longest at the water play table were the three children who, during the first part of that morning, had the most fights. They were pleasantly surprised that these three children played peacefully around the same water pan for over fifteen minutes. The group members who were there were able to observe that the different media used at the university

laboratory were not simply for activities to fill up time, but a way to help children to come to terms with their environment and with each other. They were surprised at the many ways in which the children could use boxes, hay, or even water.

The same young man who criticized the water play, thought that there was entirely too much tension at the playground at the university laboratory, which he thought resulted from the fact that children were bored with the same play equipment and the same activity schedule every day. He said that he observed the children seemed to need some change in pace or some new things instead of the same routine every day. One woman pointed out that children liked to repeat things just for the fun of it. As an example, she said that she was watching a three-year-old girl who told her she was digging the ground for a worm. When the child found the worm, she continued with her digging; the "find" made little difference to her. The teacher standing by pointed out to the trainee that for children at this age the process was far more important than the product. The group member related the incident to the group trying to emphasize that things were different from a child's point of view, and that adults sometimes perceived children's activities from their own adult standards.

The members of this group were highly critical of the means of disciplining the children at the university laboratory. They resented the seemingly "uncontrolled, unstructured" atmosphere of the school. The crowded conditions in the building and the playground irritated the adults. They appreciated the roominess, the structure, and the "better controlled" conditions of the Head Start Center.

In one of the meetings, the adults in the group discussed the fact that the children at the university laboratory were probably quite different, as far as family backgrounds were concerned, from the children in Head Start. They speculated that it was likely the Head Start children were from more authoritarian homes and had less well-educated parents. They reached the conclusion that it was necessary to handle the children from different backgrounds in different ways, and one could not handle every child in exactly the same way.

As the training session progressed, the members of this group appreciated the opportunity to observe and relate their learnings in class to the university laboratory situation. They enjoyed the incidental teaching and learning that was taking place at the laboratory. They began to identify the problems and the organization and planning they would have to do in any nursery school situation.

It was evident from the discussions of the members of group E that the attitudes and ideas of the trainees slowly changed during the training session, from open resistance to training experiences to acceptance and learning from them. Some of the group members recalled at the third group meeting that when they first started observing at the university laboratory, they rejected much of what they observed. One of the youngest members of the group mentioned that, to begin with, she had rejected many of the things she was observing at the university laboratory partly because she was going to work with Head Start children and not middle-class children. She said that she did not approve of the way the children were disciplined at the university laboratory. However, she said, she had changed her mind since the beginning of the

session. She noticed that it was at the university laboratory that the trainees had the time to observe and come to conclusions about why some of the things were being practiced there. She said that they were too involved in doing things at the Head Start Center to have enough time to sit back and watch the children.

#### Group F

Seven trainees made up group F. One group member was male; six members were female. Of the group, two members were college graduates. One of them had completed his graduate degree. Three members had some college work; one member had completed high school; one member had completed eighth grade. Four women were employed as teacher aides; one woman was a staff aide; one member was employed as a Head Start teacher. The male member of the group was a Head Start program director and the superintendent of schools in his county. The discussions of group F on childrearing were not as long or as detailed as discussions in other groups.

At one group discussion, it was pointed out that adults demanded a great many more things of children who were big for their ages. The group members stated that there was a demand by adults on the children for conformity to certain levels of performance when adults believed children to be at a certain level of social or physical performance.

The trainees in group F disagreed on the kind and means of discipline at the university laboratory. One group member stated that there was absolutely no discipline at the laboratory. To illustrate what she meant by undisciplined behavior, she gave the example of children running around as they pleased and refusing to do what adults

told them to do. Some trainees in the group stood firmly on the need for more strict discipline at the university laboratory. A young group member, defending the situation at the laboratory, stated that their pattern of discipline was good. She said children from middle-class homes needed a very different approach than children from deprived homes. Agreeing with her, another group member said that there was enough discipline at the laboratory although things were not necessarily run with "an iron hand." She viewed the orderly behavior of the Head Start children as a reflection of what happened to them at home. She speculated that Head Start children might simply be afraid to "act out" because of some of the treatment they received at home. She did not specify what this "treatment" was.

Most of the members of this group viewed the children at the Head Start Center to be much better behaved, well-mannered, and better disciplined than the children at the university laboratory. They approved of the more structured nursery school and day care center situations which they observed on field trips.

#### Group G

All seven members of group G were females. The age range, in years, was from twenty-three to forty-nine. Of the seven group members, five women were white; one member was American Indian; and one member was Mexican-American. The youngest member of the group had a college degree in child development. Three women had some college work. Two group members had completed high school, and one woman had two years of high school. Two members were from Kansas; three were from Colorado; one member was from Missouri; and one member was from Wyoming.

The racial and cultural backgrounds represented in this group contributed much to the exchange of different ideas and background experiences. There was often overt resentment and guilt feelings expressed in reaction to the developmental approach to childrearing the trainees were exposed to during the training session.

The members of group G discussed most often their experiences and attitudes concerning the university child development laboratory and the Head Start Center rather than their experiences with their own children or experiences of their own childhood.

The group members questioned the large number of adults and observers at the university laboratory. They wondered about the effect of the overcrowded conditions on the children. They speculated that the large number of adults might make children feel bound in. The participant observer wondered if the group members were projecting their own feelings of boredom and irritation in this situation.

The general climate in the group was one of frustration. The group members expressed feelings of insecurity about their observations and participation at the university laboratory situation where their roles were less clearly defined for them. They interpreted the concept of participation at the laboratory as to be actively doing something. They did not seem to interpret it as simply interacting with children.

Some of the trainees in this group played along with the children, adding to their excitement over Batman themes when the teachers were trying to curb the overemphasis on Batman. One trainee, who was reminded not to reinforce or encourage children's role playing of Batman

and Robin, was upset emotionally. She told the group she did not understand why she should not actively play with the children on this theme.

The group members expressed feelings of ambiguity in what the training instructors meant by being creative in their work with children. They failed to understand the real meaning of creativity and of allowing children to set the pace for their creativity and for their imaginative play, rather than to have this activity structured by adults. Therefore, they tended to make imaginative play far more exciting and aggressive than children planned it to be.

The trainees in group G expressed anxiety over children's getting messy with the paints or their splashing of paint intentionally or by mistake over each other and over the adults around them. One of the women was very surprised that a child, whose white sweater was streaked by a friend's paint brush, was not bothered about the paint on her sweater. The group member was more disturbed about it than the child. She said she was worried about the clean-up job the child's mother would have.

A middle-aged group member said she became openly angry at a child who "calmly" splashed paint on her when she suggested that he get off his tricycle before he continued painting. She explained that she showed her anger and was unable to cope with the situation. She expressed guilt and came to the group for assurance and information on what she should have done in this situation. She mentioned that she "pinned" him down and told him she did not like paint on her dress, when she really felt like punishing him physically. Most of the other trainees in the group said that they were not given enough authority

to correct the children at the university laboratory. They did not describe what kind of authority they expected to be given. There was little attempt to understand the feelings of the child in this situation, nor of ways in which the child's feelings could be handled.

While criticizing the lack of firmness with the children at the university laboratory, the trainees commented on the firmer discipline practiced at the Head Start Center. They found that the limits to which children could go were much narrower. They regarded this type of discipline as more favorable and acceptable to them.

The group members stated that their degree of participation was more clearly defined in terms of doing things at the Head Start Center, rather than simply being near children as at the university laboratory. They enjoyed the specificity of their participation at the Head Start so much that one member suggested that they ought to spend very little time at the university laboratory and spend most of their time at the Head Start Center, because this would be the type of situation they would be in when they went back to their Head Start jobs. They felt that the university laboratory observation was unnecessary as far as they were concerned, because their anticipated work situation would not be like the one at the laboratory.

One of the trainees reported to the group on a Head Start child who played very calmly and quietly in the housekeeping corner, became very aggressive in the block area, knocked down the blocks of other children, and hit them. In interpreting the behavior of this child in two different situations, the group member was convinced that the trainees should do a lot more study of background and home situation of

the Head Start children. She believed that some of the Head Start children had real problems. She found it difficult to believe that a child who had no problems could behave so differently in two different situations. She concluded that this child she was observing needed some professional help.

Another group member reported observing and timing a child at the Head Start Center who rocked for twenty minutes on a rocking horse. She had difficulty believing what she observed. The length of time this particular child sat rocking surprised her a great deal. The common idea was that this was the child's way of taking out his frustrations. It seemed during the training session and at the discussion group, that some of the Head Start trainees were looking for problems in the Head Start children rather than seeing that some children gave themselves to activities in which they were quite interested for a longer period of time than adults realize.

The group members speculated that Head Start children probably needed a one-to-one relationship with adults. They felt that the children at the university laboratory did not seem to need this high proportion of adults.

#### Group H

Five of the members of this group were females and one member was a male. The oldest member of the group was fifty-seven and the two youngest members were nineteen years old. None of the group members had completed college. Four members had some college work, all less than two years. One member had completed high school and one member had two years of high school. There was one Negro and one

Mexican-American in the group. Four group members were from Colorado; one was from Kansas; one was from Missouri. Only two members had previous teaching experience.

The only topic mentioned in this group about their own child-rearing practices was that one member wanted to do the spanking herself when her own children needed it. She did not want to give permission to others to hit her children, because when she did that once, they hit harder than she had intended for her child to be hit.

On the topic of disciplining other people's children, one of the group members, who was an elementary school teacher, said that she used a fly swatter to threaten her students. Another teacher friend of hers, she told the group, had a butter paddle which she used to keep her students in line. Objecting to these methods, a mother in the group stated that such threats were not necessary if one was firm. She said that a person could calm a child down just with a look sometimes.

There was a lot of resentment by the majority of the group members concerning the university laboratory experience. Their chief concern was that there was no discipline at the school. They thought the children were not learning anything and there was too much individual and group freedom given them. One of the group members related an incident when the teacher had followed a "stubborn" child around the playground to have him put his paint brush away. The trainee concluded that the teacher should have shown the child who was "boss" in such situations and she should have made him come to her and commanded him to do as she wanted him to do.

The university laboratory children's very matter-of-fact atti-

tude toward the two horses brought to the nursery school for the children to ride surprised the trainees very much. Group members said that they had expected more overt expressions of excitement to be shown toward the horses.

The members of group H were uninhibited in the expression of their frustrated feelings. They were able to discuss them freely in the small discussion group. In comparison to their negative feelings toward the university laboratory, the group members liked the more group-oriented activities of the children at the Head Start Center. They approved of the more structured approach to working with children at the Head Start Center. They thought that the Head Start children were learning better because of these two facts. A group member interpreted the purpose of a Head Start Center to prepare children to enter formal schooling. In public schools children sat in groups and did things in groups, therefore, she justified teaching group-oriented behavior to children while they were still in Head Start. She believed that this would give deprived children a "real head start" in things they would learn in elementary school.

One of the trainees in this group related an experience she had at the Head Start Center when a child kicked her once. The trainee ignored this act at the time it happened. She said that he knew it had hurt her, so there was no need to "nag" at him or say anything to him about it. She stated that if adults ignored things they do not want children to do, the children would cease to do them. She thought that nagging produced just the opposite of what is expected of the child. She mentioned that she later built a very close relationship

with this child. As was true with the other trainees, having such success experiences with children at Head Start built up the self-assurance and confidence of this trainee. There seemed to be no concept, again, of the feeling which might have prompted this action on the part of the child. The generalization was if one ignores an act, the child will stop. There seemed to be no importance attached to why a child behaved in a particular fashion.

At the beginning of the training session, all of the group members thought they should do their field work more exclusively at the Head Start Center rather than having so much to do at the university child development laboratory. They felt that it would be to their advantage to work exclusively at the Head Start Center and with Head Start children, because they would be actually working in this type situation as they moved back into their own communities.

Toward the end of the session, one member made the comment that maybe each circumstance should be interpreted in the light of a great deal of previous experience and knowledge of each child. Similarly, some of the trainees who were, in the beginning, structured and firm in their opinions as to what constituted discipline with children, particularly with children at the university laboratory, began to modify their attitudes toward the end of the training. Through class discussions and further observations, they seemed to become more flexible in their opinions.

#### Group J

Groups J and K met together for some of their discussions during the summer. The accounts of their separate group meetings will be pre-

sented first and then their combined attitudes at their joint meetings.

All the members of Group J were females. The ages of trainees ranged from twenty-two to forty-six. Of the six group members, two had completed high school; three had some college work; and one had a Bachelor's degree. Two members of this group were residents of Kansas. Four group members were residents of Missouri. Two group members were employed as social coordinators for Head Start. Two members were employed as Head Start teachers, and one group member was employed as a teacher's aide. One group member was not employed at time of training.

Before the training session took its full course, during the first week, one of the trainees stated that she was getting tired of doing preparatory reading about children. She was anxious to go to the university child development laboratory, because she always held the view that "seeing was believing." The training experience became more real to the group after they began observing at the university laboratory and Head Start Center. They made comments about things they did not like at both places. Most of their criticisms were of an objective and impersonal nature, such as the danger of pinning name tags on children with pins, a tire full of sand which was too small to accommodate the number of children, or the floor fan which they considered a safety hazard to the children. However, the group members were also aware of some of the positive aspects about the university laboratory, such as the effectiveness of the positive approach used with the children and the wonders of water play which they had never realized before.

The consensus of the group was that the visits to the Head Start Center and the university laboratory had been sporadic. Because of the

number of field trips and special speakers, some group members thought they did not go to the university laboratory as many times as they needed to go to observe or finish up assignments. One member complained about the heat and did not want to go and observe at the university laboratory for this reason. They were all concerned about not having had time to complete observation assignment sheets.

At the university laboratory, some members enjoyed participating in the water play with children, and one of them even let a child wash her face and hands. The response of one of the group members to this fact was that she would not have let the child wash her face. She said that she would have refused the child's request and would have explained to the child that they were not to take baths in public places. The remainder of the group members also indicated that they would not have allowed any child to wash them either. The group leader speculated that the women who would have told the child "no" in this case would have done so because they did not want to get dirty or wet.

The group members made some general comments about their university laboratory experiences. The trainees felt that some of the books they were reading to the children were too advanced from their point of view. They suggested more adult structuring and more turn taking at the water play table, because whoever came to the table first tended to dominate the situation.

When the university laboratory children went on a field trip to buy a fish and paid for it as a group, the group members were impressed. They said it was a good learning experience for the children to purchase something and to pay for it. It was observed by the group members

that one child stomped his feet and cried, because the teachers would not buy him what he wanted on the field trip. One participant thought this was a good experience for the child. She said that he probably got everything at home, sometimes perhaps before he asked for it. She implied that children should not have everything they needed or have things before they need them. It made children expect this type of reward outside the home and they become frustrated when they do not get their way.

When the trainees in this group were discussing the field trip on which the university laboratory children bought a goldfish, they wondered if it was a good idea to buy goldfish on the same day fish was served for lunch at the nursery school. One woman stated that the children were not old enough to connect a live fish with the fish they ate. So, she thought, it should not bother the children as much as it bothered adults.

The group members noticed that the children at the Head Start Center were allowed to make a choice between activities they wanted to engage in, and only one or two children could do a given thing at a given time.

On a Head Start Center field trip, the Head Start trainees were at a loss trying to establish rapport with the mother of a Head Start child who was the only mother who accompanied the trainees and the children. It was distinctly a disturbing experience for the group members, who found it very difficult to talk with this mother or to react to her comments and actions in an open-minded, accepting manner. They felt guilty over not being able to make this mother feel a part of the group

and attributed their failure to a lack of understanding or acceptance of her standards and values. The group members felt a definite barrier between themselves and this particular mother. One member summed up the feelings of the group by saying, "We're at a loss for words as to what to say to these people."

The group members considered it the duty of the Head Start teacher or the laboratory teacher to know a lot of background information about the children they worked with. They felt that they, as trainees, needed to know more about these children so they could accept their ways and understand their actions. One trainee made the generalization that many of the Head Start children had characteristics of the middle-class three- and four-year-olds but she did not specify what these characteristics were.

#### Group K

Of the seven members of group K, one was a male and six were females. The age range, in years, was from twenty-three to forty-four. One group member had completed college; five members had some college; one member had completed high school. Five of the group members were employed as Head Start teachers; one member was a teacher's aide; one member was employed as a family counselor. Five trainees came from Missouri and there was one member each from Oklahoma and Kansas.

The members of group K decided that just observing the equipment and seeing the methods of working with children at the university laboratory was enough for the part of their training related to the nursery school in a university setting. The group members did not think they should spend as much time observing at the university

laboratory or the Head Start Center as they were assigned. One member flatly stated that the time she spent at the university laboratory or the Head Start Center as a helper or an aide was time wasted. She would rather go on to something more. She did not specify what this "more" was. On the other hand, some of the group members said that they had not had a chance to lead any activities at the university laboratory. One of the trainees who was going to be a Head Start program director did not think that Head Start or nursery school observations would be of any profit to him, because he would not work directly with children. The other adults who were assigned to a play area at the university laboratory on a certain day were disappointed because none of the children played in the area as they anticipated.

A group member observed that there were too many adults at the Head Start Center while she was observing one day. She felt that this was not to the advantage of the children there. The children preferred adults to play with them rather than playing with other children. She stated that adults should observe more instead of entering into children's activities too much.

Those trainees who had a chance to read or sing with the children seemed to get a lot of satisfaction out of these experiences. Many of them were surprised to find out that children wanted a particular book or story to be read to them over and over again without tiring of it.

#### Joint meetings of groups J and K

It was observed that the presence of a state child welfare office representative at the Head Start Center made the Head Start teacher nervous. The trainees thought that the children definitely

felt the teacher's nervousness and even commented on their teacher's having missed a verse in a song because of this.

The group members, as a whole, felt that contrary to the comments of a speaker they had in class, there was no appreciable difference in the manners, style of eating, requests for second helping, or desire for desserts of Head Start children as compared with middle-class children. The group members concluded that many middle-class families had the same characteristics as low-income families did in their eating habits. The speaker had mentioned that low-income group children seldom used silverware, seldom ate together as a family, and seldom had company for dinner.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

A descriptive study of opinions on childrearing practices and selected Head Start training procedures was made. The subjects were sixty-two Head Start trainees who participated in one of the three training sessions at Kansas State University from February 1, 1966, to August 5, 1966. Personal background data sheets were reviewed to obtain family and personal information on each trainee. Proceedings of informal group discussions were used as means of collecting data. Each of the ten groups was composed of five to seven members and met at least seven times during an eight-week period.

Of the trainees, seven were males; thirty-two were Anglo, twenty-three were Negro, six were Mexican-American, and one was American Indian. Forty-six were or had been married at the time of training and the number of children of parent-trainees ranged from none to nine children. Ages of trainees ranged from nineteen to sixty-nine; educational level ranged from sixth grade education through graduate education; twelve had earned college degrees and two had earned graduate degrees. The most common pre-training job experience was public school teaching, twenty-nine had such experience. Forty-nine planned to return to Head Start and CAP related jobs. Nine states were represented during the training sessions.

This report was not planned to present developmental changes,

but rather to set forth opinions and concerns of the trainees on selected topics. Those who plan curricula for training sessions must be aware of such feelings in order to plan for relevant subject matter content and effective teaching methods.

Although the same type of group discussion method was employed, the difference of the purpose of the group discussions for the Kansas State University Head Start training program and the lack of any testing made it impossible to observe any trend of relationship between group discussions and attitude change of trainees as Hereford (1963) reported. The purpose of the methodology chosen for the research project at Kansas State University was in accordance with Hymes' (1967) statement that most meaningful experiences in life and of people were not always those which were measurable.

The trainees at the Kansas State University Head Start staff training sessions presented a considerable range of experience and backgrounds as well as a wide variety of aptitudes and skills. This diversity, in accordance with Brady's (1966) findings, was reflected in their opinions and beliefs about what constituted good experiences for young children. The kinds of opinions expressed in the group discussions and the values which trainees brought to the training sessions gave credence to Kerckhoff's (1964) statement that people in different subcultures perceived, judged, valued, interpreted, and understood things quite differently. He also indicated that failure to recognize these differences could lead to discouraging results.

A variety of opinions concerning childrearing practices was discussed by the trainees. They tended to view the action of children from

the standpoint of adult motivation rather than judging actions in terms of the child and his feelings and needs. Trainees were perplexed about why children behaved as they did, why they failed to be bored with repetitious activity, and why they seemed not bothered by the large number of adults around them. There was little regard for children's feelings. Behavior was judged almost solely in terms of overt action.

There was a tendency on the part of trainees to generalize broadly from very little evidence; to label behavior and then attempt to find a specific reason for action. There was a resistance to the idea of multiple causes of behavior and individual differences in reaction to given stimuli. Even with quite limited information any problem which they observed was specifically related to supposed home situation or parent behavior. The children selected for observation at either the Head Start Center or the Kansas State University Child Development Laboratory were more often than not children who were considered to be examples of extremes of behavior such as those who were too quiet or too aggressive. A number of trainees strongly identified with the children whom they chose for observation.

Opinions concerning discipline, order, schedule, and control were expressed with frequency. For the most part, trainees had difficulty in adjusting to the developmental philosophy and the unstructured program of the university laboratory. They felt uneasy with what they considered a lack of discipline, too much freedom, lack of a definite structure. A majority of the trainees worried about themselves and the children getting messy with paints or getting wet and dirty during water play.

They enjoyed structure in which there were more group-oriented activities, more rigid limits, and a greater use of control. In such a situation it was considered easier to predict what would happen next.

A number of the trainees, however, appreciated the variety of experiences, the media and equipment available for the children, the spontaneity of the daily program, and the understanding the teachers had for the children. The effectiveness of the positive guidance of children and the incidental teaching and learning that took place were pleasant discoveries for some of the trainees who had never been exposed to these concepts before or had never seen them work in practical situations.

Related to this were recurring opinions concerning child aggression and how to handle it. They were not tolerant of aggressive feelings in children and reacted with anger and frustration when confronted with such behavior by the children. Aggression was not regarded as normal in children and it was labeled as problem behavior in most cases. Adults in the groups expected children to obey teachers and other adults working with them and to be punished for unacceptable behavior. Some of the trainees suggested ignoring unacceptable behavior. Some implied that a threat, an angry look, or physical punishment were necessary means to combat such behavior.

A problem faced by the trainees was their inability to deal with abstract ideas and see relationships between the new and the familiar. They had difficulty integrating the experiences of the training session into a meaningful whole.

There were some major concerns related to the training session itself: (1) lack of information on the children they were observing;

(2) disagreement with and resistance to the necessity of observation; (3) lack of opportunity for real participation with children; (4) too little emphasis on application of training to own Head Start situations.

The necessity to have background information about children was discussed by many group members. They felt that teachers and other individuals working with children needed to know about the child's home background, his family life as well as have first-hand experience with the child himself. They felt that information available to them was inadequate to make the observation-participation sessions as meaningful to them as they might otherwise have been.

In general, there was a feeling of resistance toward the amount of observation which was scheduled, particularly in the university laboratory. Some trainees felt any observation at all was almost a waste of time. They wanted to be doing things. The trainees experienced irritation because of the lack of the specificity of their roles and assignments during observation periods.

Generally, the trainees considered themselves "good with children" and seemed resentful of any action or instruction that would redirect or attempt to modify their involvement with the children.

A third criticism was the lack of active participation with the children. They wanted to do things for the children and found it difficult to understand that anything other than this could be in the least helpful. From this concern there emerged specific discussion and insight into the need for adults to be needed which accounted for some of their uneasiness in the role of observer.

Trainees experienced uncertainties about how to apply their

learning to their own Head Start situations. They emphasized that children from different socioeconomic backgrounds needed different kinds of discipline, while some stated that children from lower-class backgrounds had characteristics and traits similar to middle-class children. Trainees felt that more restraint and control should be used with lower-class children than was necessary with middle-class children. They commented that some of the things they were learning at the training sessions would be impractical applied to the Head Start situations where they would be working.

The trainees seemed to be of the opinion that since the problems of poverty children were different from those of non-poverty children, there could be no valid learning experience for the training participants that did not center on disadvantaged children. They found it difficult to make application of general principles of child development to both the university laboratory and the Head Start Center situation in Manhattan.

A more intimate knowledge and appreciation of the people who come to short training courses would make the teaching of the college training staff more relevant. It is important to be sensitive to what trainees bring with them in terms of personal experiences, attitudes, and beliefs about development of young children and about healthy child-rearing practices. Trainees must be enabled to see new meanings, to re-evaluate their practices and to make additions to what they already know without feeling threatened and defensive in the process of learning. Whatever can be done to help staff members become more aware of the background and needs of each individual trainee will likely make the training

period more effective.

Training staff can be sensitized to the discovery of the capabilities and level of understanding of trainees by consciously listening to the manner in which questions are asked and conclusions are drawn, and by observing the style of observation and participation of trainees.

The opinions voiced by the trainees underscore the idea that short-term training can be only partially effective at best. Training must deal not only with facts and methods but also with attitudes and feelings. Formal training spaced over a longer period of time which would allow for periods of assimilation, trying out of ideas, working through feelings should be explored. This might also allay, in part, anxiety of the trainees about the application of what they were learning in a job situation. In addition, such a plan would enhance the trainees' feeling of confidence in themselves and in their worth as individuals as they performed effectively in their own jobs.

The concerns of the participants also point up the importance of constant feed-back from the trainees regarding what they are doing. The observation and participation must be made more meaningful through a greater amount of time devoted to evaluating the things which were seen or heard. A major portion of the program could well be devoted to this. Short, clearly defined observation periods, follow-up discussions, carefully designed observation guide sheets could help trainees profit more fully from observations. Giving training-in-observation from an observation booth (Cooper, 1966) could be an effective means of providing immediate reinforcement of valid observations and, in the same manner, a means of correction of incorrect perceptions. Concepts were

difficult for trainees to grasp just as making meaningful generalizations from these concepts were hard to comprehend. More guidance on the learning of concepts and drawing simple hypotheses from these would help the adults-in-training to be more capable of dealing with abstractions which were hard for them to understand.

Provision of an appropriate behavior model would be necessary whether the trainees accepted, rejected, or criticized what they were reading, hearing and seeing. It would be important for training staff to begin on the level of experience where these adults are and provide further experience in addition to what is there.

There should be follow-up work with these trainees when they are in their work situations after training. Periodic staff visits to the trainees' Head Start Centers would provide reinforcement for continued learning on the job. In addition there would be opportunities for the trainees and the staff member to discuss problems and creative activities in each trainee's Head Start Center. This would be another means of obtaining information for improvement of training session curricula.

Research must concern itself with the adaptation which college staff might make in order to work effectively with adults from varying backgrounds and educational levels. This involves an appraisal of personality characteristics of effective teachers for such adults and consideration of the philosophy and means of teaching these types of people on a college campus.

Research important to training institutions may involve consideration of the necessary skills of the training staff; the amount of theoretical knowledge and field experiences which the training staff

expects the trainees to assimilate; and effective methods of on-going evaluation of the training process.

Attention could also be focused on the motivations and characteristics of the types of persons who are interested in Head Start jobs: the adjustments they have to make from previous work situations; and the relationship of various backgrounds to effectiveness in a Head Start center.

Action research should be concerned with further communication and interaction among training centers which could result in developing varied and creative approaches to the training of adults. This is an area in which there is much to learn.

Research topics suggested as possibilities for training institutions serve to indicate the variety of issues that might be explored. This report is only a head start on what is to come.

## APPENDIX

TABLE 1

COMPARISON OF TRAINING SESSIONS I, II, III  
SEX OF HEAD START TRAINEES

| Sex of Trainees | Session I | Session II | Session III |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Male            | 3         | 3          | 1           |
| Female          | 20        | 23         | 12          |
| Total Trainees  | 23        | 26         | 13          |

TABLE 2

COMPARISON OF TRAINING SESSIONS I, II, III  
AGE IN YEARS OF HEAD START TRAINEES

|             | Session I | Session II | Session III |
|-------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Average Age | 35.2      | 33.5       | 36.08       |
| Median Age  | 36.0      | 29.5       | 38.0        |

TABLE 3

COMPARISON OF TRAINING SESSIONS I, II, III  
ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF HEAD START TRAINEES

| Ethnic Background   | Session I | Session II | Session III |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Negro               | 13        | 9          | 1           |
| Anglo               | 9         | 11         | 12          |
| Mexican-American    | 1         | 5          | -           |
| American Indian     | -         | 1          | -           |
| Total, all Trainees | 23        | 26         | 13          |

TABLE 4

COMPARISON OF TRAINING SESSIONS I, II, III  
RESIDENT STATES OF TRAINEES

| State               | Session I | Session II | Session III |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Colorado            | 3         | 12         | -           |
| Idaho               | -         | 1          | -           |
| Kansas              | 15        | 8          | 3           |
| Missouri            | 3         | 3          | 9           |
| Montana             | 1         | -          | -           |
| North Dakota        | -         | 1          | -           |
| Oklahoma            | -         | -          | 1           |
| South Dakota        | 1         | -          | -           |
| Wyoming             | -         | 1          | -           |
| Total, all Trainees | 23        | 26         | 13          |

TABLE 5

COMPARISON OF TRAINING SESSIONS I, II, III  
MARITAL STATUS OF HEAD START TRAINEES

| Marital Status      | Session I | Session II | Session III |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Married             | 7         | 13         | 10          |
| Single              | 8         | 8          | 1           |
| Divorced            | 5         | 4          | 2           |
| Separated           | 2         | 1          | -           |
| Widowed             | 1         | -          | -           |
| Total, all Trainees | 23        | 26         | 13          |

TABLE 6

COMPARISON OF TRAINING SESSIONS I, II, III  
NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER TRAINEE

| Number of Children  | Session I |          | Session II |          | Session III |          |
|---------------------|-----------|----------|------------|----------|-------------|----------|
|                     | Trainee   | Children | Trainee    | Children | Trainee     | Children |
| With one child      | 1         | 1        | 3          | 3        | 2           | 2        |
| With two children   | 3         | 6        | 4          | 8        | 3           | 6        |
| With three children | 5         | 15       | 2          | 6        | 2           | 6        |
| With four children  | 2         | 8        | 3          | 12       | 1           | 4        |
| With five children  | 1         | 5        | 1          | 5        | 2           | 10       |
| With six children   | 1         | 6        | 0          | 0        | 0           | 0        |
| With seven children | 1         | 7        | 0          | 0        | 0           | 0        |
| With eight children | 0         | 0        | 0          | 0        | 2           | 16       |
| With nine children  | 0         | 0        | 2          | 18       | 0           | 0        |
| Totals              | 14        | 48       | 15         | 52       | 12          | 44       |

TABLE 7

COMPARISON OF TRAINING SESSIONS I, II, III  
EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF TRAINEES

| Amount of Schooling    | Session I | Session II | Session III |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Elementary school only | 0         | 1          | 0           |
| High school, 1-3 years | 4         | 4          | 0           |
| High school graduate   | 6         | 6          | 4           |
| College, 1-3 years     | 5         | 11         | 7           |
| College graduate       | 7         | 3          | 2           |
| Advanced degree        | 1         | 1          | 0           |
| Total, all Trainees    | 23        | 26         | 13          |

TABLE 8

COMPARISON OF TRAINING SESSIONS I, II, III  
CAP OR HEAD START POSITIONS HELD BY TRAINEES

| Position            | Session I | Session II | Session III |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| None indicated      | 11        | 1          | 1           |
| Director            | 1         | 4          | 0           |
| Coordinator         | 1         | 0          | 2           |
| Teacher             | 5         | 4          | 7           |
| Teacher's Aide      | 2         | 12         | 2           |
| Staff Aide          | 3         | 4          | 0           |
| Family Counselor    | 0         | 1          | 1           |
| Total, all Trainees | 23        | 26         | 13          |

Training Session Early Childhood Development

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_  
                    day        month                year

Father's Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Check one: Married \_\_\_\_\_ Divorced \_\_\_\_\_ Widow \_\_\_\_\_

Single \_\_\_\_\_ Separated \_\_\_\_\_

Ages of Children: Boys \_\_\_\_\_

Girls \_\_\_\_\_

Education:

\_\_\_\_\_ Some school

\_\_\_\_\_ Finished 3rd grade

\_\_\_\_\_ Finished 8th or 7th grade (grammar school)

\_\_\_\_\_ 1, 2, or 3 years high school

\_\_\_\_\_ Graduated from high school; date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 1, 2, or 3 years college

\_\_\_\_\_ Graduated from college; date \_\_\_\_\_

Major \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Some graduate work; date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Completed graduate degree; date \_\_\_\_\_

Degree \_\_\_\_\_ Major \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Business College

\_\_\_\_\_ Nurses Training

\_\_\_\_\_ Nurses' Aid

\_\_\_\_\_ Beauty School

\_\_\_\_\_ Other; What? \_\_\_\_\_

Your work (before coming to Manhattan): \_\_\_\_\_

Husband's work: \_\_\_\_\_

Work experience: (Start with first job to present)

Employed

| Year                | Job   |
|---------------------|-------|
| From _____ to _____ | _____ |
| From _____ to _____ | _____ |
| From _____ to _____ | _____ |
| From _____ to _____ | _____ |
| From _____ to _____ | _____ |

Volunteer (Start with first job to present)

|                     |       |
|---------------------|-------|
| From _____ to _____ | _____ |
| From _____ to _____ | _____ |
| From _____ to _____ | _____ |
| From _____ to _____ | _____ |
| From _____ to _____ | _____ |

Connection with Child Development Centers or CAP: (Tell what job you have had or will have. Tell how you became involved in the Training Session.)

Hobbies or special interests:

Have you seen a good movie lately? \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Or read a good book? \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Or seen a good TV program? \_\_\_\_\_ What? \_\_\_\_\_

Or had a good conversation with a friend? \_\_\_\_\_ Why do you define it  
as good? \_\_\_\_\_

Or completed a job you had to do? \_\_\_\_\_ What? \_\_\_\_\_

Or discovered a new idea? \_\_\_\_\_ What? \_\_\_\_\_

Or been creative in any way? \_\_\_\_\_ How? \_\_\_\_\_

HEAD START TRAINING SESSION

CODE SHEET FOR DISCUSSION TOPICS\*

- I. Childrearing practices
  - A. With own children
  - B. Own childhood
  - C. As related to socioeconomic level
  - D. Other
- II. Head Start training program
  - A. Academic concerns
    - 1. Observation
      - a. KSU Nursery School
      - b. Head Start Nursery School
    - 2. Class work, assignments
    - 3. Field trips
    - 4. Speakers, films and other resources
  - B. Administrative concerns
    - 1. College credit
    - 2. Payment, obtaining checks
  - C. Evaluation
    - 1. Tests, quizzes
    - 2. Over-all evaluation of participation
- III. Employment
  - A. Past
  - B. Future
    - 1. Head Start programs
      - a. Working with children

- b. Working with adults (co-workers)
- c. Working with parents
- d. Other

2. Other employment plans, possibilities

IV. Group interaction

- A. Head Start group
- B. Other groups

V. Extra-class experiences

- A. Dormitory
- B. Week-end plans
- C. Student Health and other campus agencies and activities
- D. References to family and home (personal)
- E. Other

VI. Reactions to selected conditions

- A. Poverty
  - 1. Own condition of poverty
  - 2. Feelings, attitudes towards others' poverty
- B. Prejudices
  - 1. Own experiences with prejudice, segregation
  - 2. Feelings, attitudes toward prejudice, others' experiences

VII. Effect of Head Start participation

- A. Impact on home
  - 1. Present impact
  - 2. Future expectations
- B. Own attitudes, changed or not
- C. Other

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ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS OF HEAD START TRAINEES TOWARD  
CHILDREN AND SELECTED TRAINING PROCEDURES AS  
REFLECTED IN GROUP DISCUSSIONS

by

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B. S., Texas Technological College, 1966

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Family and Child Development

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
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The purpose of this study was the exploration of the opinions and concerns of Head Start trainees toward child care practices and selected training procedures. Subjects were sixty-two participants of three eight-week training sessions conducted by the Department of Family and Child Development in the College of Home Economics at Kansas State University. These training sessions were funded through the Office of Economic Opportunity for the spring and summer of 1966.

The objectives were (1) to summarize opinions or concerns of Head Start trainees toward: child care practices of their childhood and with their own children; observation and participation in groups of children; related classwork and field trips; (2) to discuss implications of this information in regard to future Head Start training programs and curriculum planning.

Background information about trainees was obtained from personal data checklists. Proceedings of informal group discussions were used as means of collecting other data. Each of the ten groups was composed of five to seven members and met seven times during an eight-week period with a participant-observer.

These subjects, seven males and fifty-five females, represented diverse marital, racial, educational, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Almost half of the trainees had some public school teaching experience; forty-nine were returning to Head Start or CaP related jobs.

Trainees tended to view the action of children from the standpoint of adult motivation rather than judging actions in terms of the child and his feelings and needs. They were inclined to generalize broadly from very little evidence; to label behavior and then attempt

to find a specific reason for such action. There was a resistance to the idea of multiple causes of behavior and individual differences in reaction to given stimuli. Aggression was regarded as undesirable behavior in children and was labeled as problem behavior in most cases. Adults in the groups expected children to obey teachers and other adults working with them and to be punished for unacceptable behavior.

Adults felt more secure in child care situations where group-oriented activities, rigid limits, and greater use of adult control were exercised and rejected those which were less structured, more child-centered, and developmental. They generally preferred active participation with children as opposed to simple interaction and observation during training assignments.

Informal group discussions provided trainees a chance to freely express feelings and frustrations and aided them in possibly integrating training session experiences. In addition to making certain data available, it was felt that the group discussions were an integral part of the total training process.

The implications pointed up the need for training staff to understand the values and opinions of adults who come to CEO training sessions. More time could be profitably spent in preparation for and evaluation of observation of children scheduled in various settings. Periods of academic study interspersed with on-the-job experiences were suggested as a more meaningful method of training. Suggestions for research in the optimum preparation of staff for Head Start child development centers were presented.