

FINAL REPORT
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background Information
Meeting of August 29, 1988
Meeting of October 28, 1988
Meeting of December 15, 1988
Materials Received
Conclusions and Recommendations

AVAILABILITY OF MINUTES

Copies of the minutes of the meetings of the Study Committee
are available from the Legislative Service Bureau.

F I N A L R E P O R T

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE

January 1989

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Early Childhood Education Study Committee was established by the Legislative Council and in anticipation of the implementation in 1992 of all-day, everyday kindergarten was directed to explore additional care and activities needed by young children in the school environment, including recreation, child care, health education, developmental activities, latch-key programs, and pre-kindergarten needs. The Study Committee findings are intended to complement a Department of Education study which is limited to kindergarten education and the Study Committee was designated to receive and consider preliminary findings of a Legislative Fiscal Bureau study of kindergarten space needs. The Study Committee was instructed to include a long-range plan in the final report.

The Study Committee was initially granted two meeting days and a third was approved upon the request of the Study Committee. These meetings were held on August 29, October 28, and December 15, 1988.

Members of the Study Committee were:

Senator Charles Bruner, Ames, Co-Chairperson
Representative Mary Neuhauser, Iowa City, Co-Chairperson
Senator Pat Deluhery, Davenport
Senator John W. Jensen, Plainfield
Senator Jim Lind, Waterloo
Senator Jean Lloyd-Jones, Iowa City
Representative Gene Blanshan, Scranton
Representative Ron J. Corbett, Cedar Rapids
Representative Jack Hatch, Des Moines
Representative Raymond Lageshulte, Waverly

Meeting of August 29, 1988

At its first meeting, the Study Committee heard invited testimony from Ms. Barbara Willer of the National Association for the Education of Young Children who visited under the auspices of the National Conference of State Legislatures. Ms. Willer discussed societal needs for the future, indicating that rapid changes necessitate the adoption of "developmentally appropriate practices" or "DAP" for the education of children.

Ms. Willer's extensive discussion regarding developmentally appropriate practices with Committee members can be summarized with the following four recommendations:

1. Teacher preparation and training should emphasize the human development stages of younger children.
2. Class sizes should be small and a class should include more than one teacher.
3. Parental involvement in a child's education should be emphasized and enhanced.
4. Evaluation of children should be individualized and standardized testing should be de-emphasized.

The Committee invited a panel of Iowa experts in early childhood education to react to Ms. Willer's presentation and comment on potential impact on at-risk children contained in Senate Files 2192 and 2295 which were enacted in the 1988 Session of the General Assembly. The reaction panel included Dr. Reid Zehrbach, Supervisor of Early Childhood Education for the Grant Wood Area Education Agency; Ms. Ann Thompson, Administrator of the Division of Children, Youth, and Families of the Department of Human Rights; and Ms. Carol Alexander Phillips, a program specialist with the Department of Education.

While many of the reaction panel comments were in agreement with Ms. Willer's presentation, additional recommendations and comments included:

1. Recognition of change in family structures and the resulting increase in reliance on schools to provide educational activities traditionally considered family responsibilities.
2. Agreement that while labeling is negative, it is unavoidable. Consequently, a sunset should be placed on the allowable duration of a label before it is deleted or reconsidered.
3. Recognition that a large number of children live at poverty or near-poor income levels which places these children at-risk of failure.
4. Cautions about the potential for unproductive subjectivity resulting from the individual emphasis of DAP and a resulting recommendation to develop family support systems to identify children in need of additional attention, such as Minnesota's Family Development Program.

Committee discussion addressed distinctions between the school system and child day care providers, including pay disparities between teachers; education disparities between children with a quality pre-school education and children who did not have such an experience; growth in demand for school-age child care; and

questions regarding the need for different licensure standards which only apply to school-operated child care than to others. Other discussion referred to lack of cooperation and resulting fragmentation of service delivery between schools and private child day care providers.

Meeting of October 28, 1988

The second meeting included invited testimony from Dr. Judy Finkelstein, Price Laboratory School and the Regents' Center for Early Developmental Education at the University of Northern Iowa; Ms. Karen Thelin and Ms. Agnes Kovacs, Iowa Child Care Alliance; Mr. Roger Wendt, Sioux City Community Schools; Ms. Joen Blanchfield, Greene Community Elementary School; Mr. Mike Stapleton, Boys and Girls Club of Des Moines and Mr. Kevin Koester, Community Education Director for Ankeny schools; Mr. Richard Roach and Ms. Collette Wiarda, CAL Community School District; and Ms. Colleen Reisener, Waterloo Head Start Program and Head Start Directors Association.

Dr. Finkelstein described the progress and status of the Regents' Center for Early Developmental Education recently established at the University of Northern Iowa. She outlined the developmental education practices used at the Price Laboratory School where the Regents' Center is located; discussed research regarding kindergarten practices in Iowa schools; contrasted developmentally appropriate practices with the academic education model; described research findings of the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation of Ysilanti, MI, which support developmentally appropriate practices; and made the following policy recommendations:

1. Require special training for K-3 teachers in developmentally appropriate practices for early childhood education.
2. Require elementary principals to be trained in developmentally appropriate practices for early childhood education.
3. Provide full-day, everyday kindergarten for at-risk children.
4. For four-and five-year-old age groups, limit class sizes to no more than 15 children to one instructor.
5. Provide adequate space, both in size and flexibility, for early childhood education.
6. Improve cooperation between and within governmental agencies.

Ms. Thelin and Ms. Kovacs described the assumptions which are the basis of the private provider of preschool programs and child

association which they represent. They next discussed the Association's concerns, ranging from lack of consistency between public schools and private providers to public costs and economic impact of providing child care through the public schools. Recommendations included placing responsibility for developing prekindergarten programs at the local level, creating a statewide resource center, mandating that all prekindergarten programs meet the state child day care standards under chapter 237A, and completing a statewide survey of all those interested in children to gauge understanding and support for additional care for young children in the public schools.

Mr. Wendt discussed the Sioux City School District's experience in operating all-day, everyday kindergartens which he stated has beneficial effects on the achievement of at-risk and other children surpassing the benefits of half-day programs. He warned that there are large drawbacks to all-day, everyday kindergarten programs, primarily in the expense of making space available and equipping the classrooms. It was pointed out in discussion that the current school aid formula assumes schools operate full-day kindergartens, but others expressed the opinion that as most schools do not actually operate full-day kindergartens, additional money would be needed to require it statewide.

Ms. Blanchfield described her district's all-day, alternate day kindergarten and prekindergarten program which has been in operation for 19 years. Her presentation included a videotape and handouts. In her view, all-day kindergarten benefits children by improving attendance patterns and increasing time available for developmental learning. She indicated that in the Greene district, prekindergarten is funded from the savings in busing expenses resulting from operating the full day kindergarten three days per week and noted that the prekindergarten program would have to be eliminated if full-day, everyday kindergarten is mandated, due to space limitations.

Mr. Koester described the community assessment process used by the Ankeny schools in determining the need for after-school child care that would be operated by an independent nonprofit contractor. Mr. Stapleton described the financial and program aspects of the program as operated by the Boys and Girls Club, and indicated in response to a question that fees are on a sliding scale, with the higher fees providing the means to subsidize low income participants.

Mr. Roach and Ms. Wiarda described the CAL school district's prekindergarten program which has been in existence for thirteen years. They highlighted the steady increase in standardized test scores since the program's inception. The program is financed by a special district enrichment tax which had been approved by the district's taxpayers.

Ms. Colleen Reisener discussed the Head Start program in the state, indicating that approximately 3500 children are being

served, with 65% qualifying due to low income and 35% qualifying due to a special need. In response to questions, Ms. Reisener indicated that due to funding limitations, the program concentrates on four-year-olds instead of both three and four-year-olds and that not all of the eligible four-year-olds can be served. She estimated that approximately 19 percent of the eligible children in the state are currently being served.

Meeting of December 15, 1988

The Committee heard invited testimony from Ms. Alice Wisner of the Legislative Fiscal Bureau; Ms. Chris Louscher, Autism Task Force of Iowa; Ms. Twyla Young, Iowa Youth 2000 Task Force; Senator Bruner, Iowa Business Council Subcommittee on the Development and Education of At-Risk Youth; and discussed the proposed recommendations of the Co-Chairpersons before voting on final recommendations.

Ms. Wisner distributed a draft report of a survey of school districts regarding pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, available space, and other issues. With 80% of the state's 433 school districts responding by the meeting date, 196 indicated their ability to meet the space requirements of an all-day, everyday kindergarten mandate and 154 indicated the space requirement could not be met. The common barriers listed were funding, space, teachers/staff, materials and equipment, and transportation.

Ms. Louscher described the background behind the development of the Autism Task Force of Iowa and delivered a number of recommendations for legislative action affecting autism. Included are the establishment of a state-wide networking and information clearing house system, extended school year education programs, extended school day education programs, increased recreational opportunities, inclusion of autistic children in state case management requirements, efforts for early identification and education programs for autistic children, and increased training of instructors for autistic children. Ms. Louscher stated that the Autism Task Force estimates that approximately 800 children in kindergarten through 12th grade have autisms and that the Department of Education has identified approximately 200 children.

Ms. Young's report on the Youth 2000 Task Force included recommendations to strongly invest in education by providing matching grants for local school districts who provide instruction and human resource personnel to meet the training needs of at-risk and non-college bound students. She stressed targeting the needs of at-risk children, with special emphasis upon family-centered approaches in which parents learn along with their children.

Senator Bruner presented policy recommendations developed by the Iowa Business Council Welfare Reform Study Subcommittee on Development and Education of At-Risk Youth. With approximately 10% of all children in the state living in families receiving public

assistance, the recommendations included development of family support programs for families with children from birth to six years of age; consideration of Minnesota's Early Childhood Family Education program, Missouri's Parent's as Teachers program, and Maryland's Family Support Centers program for adaptation into Iowa; and inclusion of business community representatives into planning and support of at-risk youth employment programs.

Materials Received

The following materials were received by Study Committee members and placed on file with the Legislative Service Bureau:

1. A copy of Senate File 2192, an Act to establish a child development coordinating council for the promotion of child development services to certain at-risk children and to prescribe its duties, enacted in the 1988 Session.
2. A copy of Senate File 2295, an Act relating to the development of programs for the identification, educational methods, and staff qualifications for at-risk children, enacted in the 1988 Session.
3. A position statement adopted in November, 1987 by the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education entitled: "Unacceptable Trends in Kindergarten Entry and Placement".
4. Two position statements of the National Association for the Education of Young Children published in the September, 1986 issue of Young Children entitled: "Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children From Birth Through Age 8" and "Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Programs for 4 and 5-Year-Olds".
5. An article distributed via the ED-LINE computer network dated April 20, 1988, entitled "NAESP [National Association of Elementary School Principals] Establishes Group to Work on Kindergarten Reform".
6. A listing prepared by the Co-Chairpersons in August, 1988 entitled "Early Childhood Education Study Committee Issues for Consideration".
7. An undated executive summary of a report prepared by the Sub-Committee on the Educationally Disadvantaged of the Committee for Economic Development entitled "Children in Need: Investment Strategies for the Educationally Disadvantaged".
8. Testimony of Mr. Lawrence J. Schweinhart of the High Scope Educational Research Foundation before the Education Committee of the National Conference of State Legislatures on December 3, 1987 entitled: "At-Risk Youth: Closing the Achievement Gap with Early Childhood Education".

9. Regular mailings, minutes, and meeting notices supplied by the Child Development Coordinating Council.

10. A monograph prepared by the Council of Chief State School Officers in 1987 entitled "Elements of a Model State Statute to Provide Educational Entitlements for At-Risk Students".

11. The Iowa Prekindergarten/Kindergarten Task Force Report subcommittee to the State Board of Education in October, 1987.

12. A summary of legislation enacted by the 72nd Iowa General Assembly, 1988 session prepared by the Iowa Association of School Boards.

13. A publication prepared by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development in 1988 entitled: "A Resource Guide to Public School Early Childhood Programs".

14. A copy of proposed federal legislation, S. 1885, a bill to provide for a federal program for the improvement of child care, and for other purposes, popularly known as the "ABC" bill.

15. A report published by the RAND Corporation in March, 1988, entitled "The Education and Human Resources Program".

16. An "emerging issues" report of the Midwestern Legislative Conference of the Council of State Governments published August, 1988 entitled "Child Care: Investment in the Future".

17. An update on the status of activities required of the Department of Education under Senate File 2295 prepared by Gail M. Sullivan of the Department of Education and distributed in October, 1988.

18. A status report on the kindergarten/prekindergarten survey prepared by Alice Wisner of the Legislative Fiscal Bureau and distributed in October, 1988.

19. A position statement and proposal prepared by the Iowa Child Care Alliance and distributed in October, 1988.

20. A description of the Sioux City Community Schools All Day Kindergarten Project distributed in October, 1988.

21. A description of the Greene Community School District's all-day kindergarten and all-day prekindergarten programs distributed in October, 1988.

22. A description of the CAL Community School District's pre-kindergarten program distributed in October, 1988.

23. A description of Ankeny's school-community "latchkey program" partnership distributed in October, 1988.

24. A listing of recommendations prepared by the Iowa Head Start Director's Association distributed in October, 1988.
25. A copy of the Department of Human Services Child Day Care Centers and Preschools Licensing Standards and Procedures manual.
26. A copy of the Legislative Fiscal Bureau survey instrument regarding prekindergarten and kindergarten programs in the state.
27. A report on proposals submitted for child development grants prepared by Carol Alexander Phillips of the Child Development Coordinating Council and the Department of Education.
28. Proposed Committee recommendations prepared by the Co-Chairpersons.
29. A packet of reading materials on state programs for birth through three initiatives.
30. Recommendations for early learning programs prepared by Dr. Judy Finkelstein, Acting Director of the Regents' Center for Early Developmental Education.
31. Policy recommendations approved by the Iowa Business Council Welfare Reform Committee Subcommittee on the Development and Education of At-Risk Youth chaired by Senator Bruner and distributed December, 1988.
32. Recommendations for legislative response prepared by the Iowa Youth 2000 Task Force distributed December, 1988.
33. The report of the Iowa Task Force on Autism dated October, 1988 entitled: "Iowans With Autism: Responding to the Need".
34. A copy of a memo to Dr. Finkelstein regarding the Regents' Center for Early Childhood Development Education's Recommendations prepared by Dianne Draper, Head of Iowa State University's Child Development Department.
35. A draft report from the Legislative Fiscal Bureau's kindergarten/prekindergarten survey.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Early Childhood Education Study Committee during its meeting of December 15, 1988, approved the following recommendations to the Legislative Council:

Two decades ago, a family with primary school-age children typically had one parent working outside the home and one parent either serving as a full-time homemaker or working only as a supplement to her homemaking responsibilities. Today, many two-parent families require two full-time jobs to be economically self-sufficient, and single-parent families are much more common.

These changes place new responsibilities upon schools and child care providers to focus upon child development rather than a narrowly academic role and to exercise community leadership in promoting parent teacher relationships in educating children. Much more is known today than was known two decades ago about how young children learn, and this knowledge must be reflected in early elementary curricula and teacher education. To achieve these ends and improve the educational and developmental opportunities of Iowa's young children, including children with developmental disabilities or other special needs, the Study Committee recommends the following:

1. Adopt as a long-term public policy goal, that all school districts establish an all-day, everyday kindergarten program, make available before-school and after-school child care, and to interested families provide a prekindergarten program staffed by certified teachers.

2. Allow school districts in lieu of all-day, everyday kindergarten, to instead provide either or both of the following:

- a. A prekindergarten developmental program.

- b. A before-school and after-school program for K-3 school children.

The programs must meet applicable program standards established by the Department of Human Services for child care centers and utilize existing funding streams to the extent possible to provide subsidies to low-income families at least as generous as those provided by DHS child care programs.

3. Establish standards for maximum class sizes and maximum student/teacher and teacher-aide ratios for the first four years of elementary education (K-3).

4. Obtain input at the local level regarding early childhood education and child care needs. Require local school districts to assemble a committee to review the need for prekindergarten child care, before-school child care, after-school child care, and care during school holidays and vacations. The committee responsibilities would include making recommendations regarding the establishment of child care programs and curricula to the local school board with a requirement that the report be filed with the State Board of Education. A committee would include representatives of local business, service organizations, educators, parents, private child care providers, AEAs, school boards, community education advisory boards, and persons knowledgeable about developmentally appropriate learning.

5. Direct the Department of Education, in cooperation with the Child Development Coordinating Council, the Department of Human Services, the State Board of Regents' Center for Early Developmental Education, and AEAs, to:

a. Develop model materials to assist school districts in fashioning before-school and after-school programs for elementary school children.

b. Develop model materials to assist school districts offering half-day kindergarten to provide child care services which complement the half-day kindergarten program.

c. Develop model materials to assist school districts to develop appropriate curricula for all-day kindergarten programs and before-school and after-school child care to complement the programs.

d. Provide technical assistance to communities for programming with existing community child care providers. Sufficiently intense services to positively impact the education and development of at-risk children and their families should be provided.

e. Develop curricular and instructional materials for pre-K-3 instructors, employing developmentally appropriate practices and incorporating parental involvement.

f. Develop a statewide network which utilizes existing program models to provide the technical support necessary to assist school districts in implementing these recommendations. Implementing new programming will require new skills for many teaching and administrative staff members and new operating procedures for working with community agencies. Districts will need consistent and coordinated support in staff development, program development, and program implementation. Some increased coordination will be needed with staff at the state level, but it would be most effective to place support staff for these programs at the AEA level.

g. Disseminate alternative teaching approaches including collaborative teaching, cooperative techniques, and alternative dispute resolution training with emphasis on practices applicable to pre-K-3.

h. Develop new early childhood development certification criteria for teachers, principals, professional child care providers, and administrators.

6. Endorse the recommendation of the State Board of Regents' Center for Early Developmental Education to create a new certification for teachers and administrators who work with children ages 0 through 8 (pre-K-3).

7. Study for possible applicability to Iowa, Missouri's Parents as Teachers Program and Minnesota's Family-Centered Early Childhood Program.

8. Support increased funding for the grants administered by the Child Development Coordinating Council.

9. Direct the Department of Human Services to purchase child care based on enrollment rather than attendance, subject to adequate oversight.