

CONCERNING THIS ISSUE

This issue of Educational Perspectives focuses on early childhood education and on issues regarding the provision of quality care for young children.

Current research indicates the importance of the early years and suggests the powerful impact of early influences on the subsequent development of the child. In spite of the significance of this period of development, the field of early childhood education has only received state and national attention since the early 1960s. A great deal remains to be done, both in terms of commitment and action, if all of the children in our nation are to have the opportunity to develop their fullest potential.

We explore, in this issue, two areas related to provision of quality care for young children. First, the status of state and national systems for support and coordination of child care services. Second, contributions of teacher education programs to the training of teachers who can facilitate positive growth and development in young children.

The introductory article, written by Dr. Marilyn Smith, Executive Director of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, puts the issues in national perspective by pointing out some of the current needs and problems in the provision of child care services and some of the directions that we must move to better meet the needs of young children and their families.

Dr. C. Ray Williams, Chairman of Early and Middle Childhood Education at the Ohio State University and former Director of the Child Development Associate Consortium, examines the social context of early childhood education and

raises important questions and issues which must be addressed in educating teachers who can meet the challenge of preparing young children to live in a rapidly-changing world.

The next two articles bring the issues closer to home and look at the status of child care services in Hawaii. Dr. Marion Kagan summarizes the scope of services provided through some of the major agencies and organizations mandated to meet the needs of Hawaii's young children. Sally Hood describes current child care legislation in Hawaii and how it may impact on the provision and coordination of services for children.

General agreement exists in the field of early childhood education that the skills and personal qualities of the teacher are essential to the growth and development of the young child in a school setting. The second section of this issue considers some of the programs presently functioning in Hawaii for the professional development of teachers of young children. The articles by Feeney, Fargo and Jackson, on early childhood teacher education at the University of Hawaii, describe efforts to develop a humanistic, interdisciplinary program designed to *educate the whole teacher to educate the whole child*. Daria Flores describes an innovative national program designed to prepare a new category of child care worker — the Child Development Associate — and how this program is being implemented in Hawaii.

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