

COMMUNITY NURSERIES

IN

STRATHCLYDE REGION

1989 - 1992

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the development of childcare policy in Britain in the 1990's. It is based on an evaluation of the first phase of Strathclyde Regional Council's policy for developing new types of nursery provision for families with young children. The evaluation is a detailed analytical account of the development of the new provision - community nurseries - from their conception, as described in the Member/Officer Group report **Under Fives** (1985), to a point in time two years after they first opened.

The evaluation employed a range of innovatory procedures over a wide range of issues in order to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the new nurseries and to provide explanations for their successes and failures. Local evaluation groups consisting of nursery staff, parents and other professionals played an invaluable role in maintaining a strong working relationship between the research and nursery staff and families.

The thesis begins by examining the theoretical background to pre-five provision and then sets the context of community nurseries by examining a number of contemporary issues pertinent to the task of adapting current traditions and practices in nursery provision to the diversity of family circumstances in the 1990's.

After describing the main features of the nurseries, the study examines the extent to which the different types of provision were able to target families in greatest need. The data clearly shows that the new provision was more successful than traditional forms of provision such as nursery schools. A systematic means of examining the progress of the nurseries to achieving their aims and objectives was undertaken in which staff in the nurseries took part. The aims and objective of the community nurseries proved to be extremely ambitious. Whilst many of the aims were realised by the end of the study, progress to achieving others was limited. Through intensive interviews with selected personnel, the development of the nurseries over a two year period was monitored focusing of the features, limitations and feelings of those involved - from parents and professionals to administrators and politicians.

The critical issue of 'quality' was closely examined and the new nurseries systematically observed for variations in quality levels over the two years. It is now well known that high quality pre-five provision can have a very positive effect on children's well-being. The study therefore examined the extent to which children benefited from their experience in the new nurseries in terms of their development and their socialisation. The study clearly shows that the community nurseries provided an environment comparable in quality to the best of nursery school provision in Scotland. Not only did the nurseries help specific children showing early signs of socially deviant behaviour to become better adjusted but contributed to the development - intellectual, linguistic, social and physical - of many children.

Other issues examined in the study were partnership with the voluntary sector and co-ordination with other professional agencies with a role to play in supporting families in need. The study highlights the enormous difficulties faced by managers of the community nurseries in translating Regional policy into practical reality. The Heads and staff of the nurseries had to battle with considerable constraints arising both from inadequate accommodation, staff turnover and tortuous bureaucratic procedures. The successes of the nurseries are therefore testament both to the leadership and

determination of their managers and to the commitment and conscientiousness of their staff.

The thesis ends by setting the findings of the evaluation in contemporary thinking on childcare and proposes a way forward for more cohesive services.

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Secondly it is necessary to record the support and advice given to the author by the network of advisory groups which met regularly for the duration of the study. The knowledge and expertise of members of these groups played a significant role in the successful execution of a battery of tasks especially at local level. The author is particularly indebted to the Chair of the groups for the way in which the business was conducted with fairness and integrity. Special appreciation is extended to Professor Kathy Sylva of London University who chaired the main academic committee of the project on which this study is based.

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CHAPTER 1

RATIONALE, THEORY, DESIGN AND PROCESS

1.1 RATIONALE

The primary focus of the study is the social policy of childcare in Britain in the 1990's, with particular reference to the role of local authorities. The basis of the study is an evaluation of new types of provision for under-fives in Strathclyde Region - called community nurseries - following the publication of the Member/Officer Group report **Under Fives** in 1985. The purposes of the evaluation were to identify the strengths and weaknesses of two pilot community nurseries in Strathclyde and to explain the processes by which the aims and objectives were or were not being realised.

The fundamental issues being addressed by the study are:

- **is the concept of a community nursery an appropriate and effective response to changing family needs particularly in areas of social disadvantage?**
- **does the experience of the two pilot community nurseries indicate that the concept is viable?**
- **what contribution does the experience of community nurseries in Strathclyde make to the development of social policy of childcare in Britain in the 1990's?**

The nature of the study was firmly rooted in the spirit of the new pre-five developments by adopting a broad definition of research as systematic investigation of problematic areas but also by involving the participants in the nurseries - staff, parents, voluntary sector representatives and other professionals. The study was designed such that the data and observations could be fed back to them so that the next stage of the innovation could proceed with their knowledge and with the benefit of their contributions. This style of evaluation is described by MacDonald (1977) as democratic.

The design of the present investigation was strongly influenced by the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979) particularly his ecological theory of child development. This perspective regards the social environment as having a powerful influence on the development of young children and requires the researcher to consider the totality of children's lives. In trying to explain how children make progress it is of little use merely to focus specifically on children themselves nor indeed on immediate experiences in the family. It is essential to consider the wider

environmental influences in what Bronfenbrenner sees as 'layers'. These layers range from the immediate environment of the home (the 'microsystem') through the capacity of the parents and professionals to provide a caring environment (the 'mesosystem'); the support network in the neighbourhood (the 'exosystem') to the 'macrosystem' i.e. the values, beliefs and ideology dominant in the culture.

The immediate family or microsystem.

Children live in families with a wide diversity of composition and life-styles. As recent research has shown, we now live in a society where the stable conventional post-war nuclear family consisting of two parents and 2/3 children is rapidly becoming a minority structure. Yet the vast majority of children are still brought up within a family be it nuclear or extended, single parent or re-constructed, well-off or poor. Our legislation, social policies, social services, social institutions are almost all designed with the family in mind. Increasingly the growth in pluralistic life-styles is challenging the nature of our social institutions not least nursery provision. Nevertheless the myriad of day-to-day experiences in the family play a powerful role in shaping each child's development. Indeed as Tizard and Hughes (1984) point out, the family is extremely effective in promoting 'passages of intellectual search'.

The impact of childcare institutions - the mesosystem

Considerable evidence now exists to show that in general good quality nursery experience has a beneficial effect on children's development (e.g. Phillips et al, 1987). Also important is the way parents relate to the nursery. There is a growing realisation that childcare facilities can be a vital resource and support to families with young children particularly during family transition e.g. transition to a single parent family (Swain and Swain, 1982). Swain and Swain also carried out a case study of the impact of childcare on family life using a nursery centre in New Zealand. The majority of parents reported that family problems had been reduced by using the centre and that any social and emotional problems in their children were significantly reduced.

The impact of neighbourhood - the exosystem

Families usually live in separate households which are located in vastly different neighbourhoods and communities. Each neighbourhood has its own characteristics which impinge on the attitudes and behaviour of its inhabitants. Within each neighbourhood there are social networks that impinge on the family. Such networks consist of neighbours, relatives and friends. Rosemergy and Meade (1986) showed that families with young children felt more comfortable with assistance from relatives and friends than they did with help from neighbours or social services because they shared child-rearing values.

Another aspect of the exosystem is the employment pattern in the household. Gottfried and Gottfried (1988) examined a number of longitudinal studies into maternal employment and children's development. The overwhelming finding of the studies was that children of employed mothers do not suffer decrements in

development directly attributable to their mother's employment status but maternal employment per se had some significant direct relationship to the family environment above and beyond social class, family size and marital status:

The impact of beliefs and ideology - the macrosystem.

Underpinning most human behaviour are deep seated notions of right and wrong, good and bad. These notions, which are invariably covert, play a determining role in the choices that we make. A powerful notion on motherhood and childcare in British society is associated with the work of Bowlby (1953). But fortunately more and more parents are coming to realise that maternal deprivation is not so axiomatic in decisions about childcare for children under three. Young children can very effectively form strong and supportive attachments with adults other than the natural mother. However, this realisation does not imply that mothering is not important - clearly that view would be absurd.

Since 1979 however, the ecology of child development has become more sophisticated. In the 1980's attention turned essentially to the 'meso level' i.e. the childcare environment, and issues of quality were raised. The seminal paper by Phillips et al (1987) established a connection between the quality of childcare and children's social and emotional development. As a consequence considerable attention was then given to ascertaining those features of the childcare environment that affected quality, particularly in America (McCartney and Marshall, 1989). As is discussed in Chapter 2, the quality debate is now focused on a tension between the American approach with its roots in the psychology of child development and a European approach with its roots in ideology and social policy (Balageur et al, 1991).

1.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF PRE-FIVE PROVISION

1.21 The theoretical parameters

The theoretical backdrop to pre-school provision in general, and community nurseries in particular, is both complex and extensive. It is complex because it is intricately interwoven with several academic disciplines and it is extensive because the field has received much research attention from a wide variety of domains and individuals (Clark, 1988; Scarr and Eisenberg, 1993).

The principle theoretical strands that inform and shape provision for children under five are:

- **ideology** of childcare provision
- **psychology** of child development, parenting and childcare
- **education** and welfare

Childcare is inextricably bound up with the relief of disadvantage. As such it is immersed in ideology and is a matter of public responsibility.

The key to a just and flourishing society is that everyone should have an equal chance in life, but that people do not start out as equals. It is therefore necessary to redistribute some of society's goods in order to eliminate avoidable disadvantage or to compensate when disadvantage is unavoidable. (Cohen and Fraser, 1991, p ii)

How childcare affects children and families is a critical feature of developmental psychology:

Far from disrupting the family by taking over some of its childcare functions, day care services ought to be seen as providing experiences that complement those obtained at home, with corresponding advantages for child development.
(Schaffer, 1990, p 153)

Equally, the kind of experiences, activities, knowledge and values children are expected to engage with as part of their upbringing and induction into the world are also critical:

But what do we mean by education for under-fives, what form should it take, what methods should be employed, and what role do adults need to adopt?
(David, 1990, p 5)

1.2 2 Ideological aspects

According to Eccleshall (1984) the term ideology has three dominant aspects:

- a **critique** of existing social circumstances
- a **vision** of a better social order
- a **social policy** to create that better order

In relation to **critique**, current pre-five provision is bound up with supply and demand. Survey after survey (e.g. Penn and Scott, 1989) has consistently shown that more parents seek provision for education and care for their children outside the family home and that the current availability of provision is inadequate (Cohen and Fraser, 1991). It is inadequate on three counts: extent of availability; organisation and rationale (Wilkinson and Brady, 1991). Many parents have come to recognise the benefits both to their children and themselves of using pre-five services. This recognition is not the sole prerogative of parents. Many employers now publicly recognise the benefits to their workforce of having nursery facilities available for the use of their employees, though as yet employers are reluctant to commit resources. When last surveyed, only 3% of private employers and 17% of public employers were offering help (Cohen and Fraser,

1991). The CBI has recently pressed the Government to give overt recognition to this need by making adjustments to the tax system such that any expenditure by an individual on pre-five provision would receive tax relief.

But the critique goes further. It emerged from a family survey in Strathclyde conducted by Penn and Scott (1989), that the demand for provision for children under the age of three was about 50% of the parents surveyed. This finding challenges traditional notions of motherhood. There has been a long tradition in Britain that mothers themselves are the best carers of very young children and that there was potential harm in placing the child under three in provision outwith the home (Moss, 1991). This view, however, seems to be waning. The debate is now focused on provision for babies i.e children under the age of one (McGurk, 1993). The traditional concept of mothers as dedicated time serving 'childminders' is fast diminishing largely due to economic conditions in the home; the demand for a skilled workforce and the arguments of the feminist movement (Oakley, 1981; Pascall, 1986). Yet public provision for babies is abysmal.

Provision for children aged 0-5 is also a political matter in that, whilst all major political parties in Britain acknowledge the need for more provision, there is a divergence between the political 'Right' and the political 'Left' on who should have access and how it should be resourced. The **vision** of the political Right is that expansion of provision of suitable education and care for pre-school children should not be a primary matter for the State but a matter between private service providers and individual families. In other words, universality based on choice paid for by the State is not a feature of the thinking of the political 'Right'. Selectivity based on market forces is the essence. There is still a strong underlying current in this thinking that most mothers are best advised to stay at home to look after their children but that highly skilled women with substantial earning power should have workplace nursery facilities available because of the overriding short term needs of the national economy for skilled labour, in contrast to longer term considerations of well being for all citizens, social order and cohesion.

The vision of the political 'Left' is both similar and different. It is similar in that in the short term, availability of provision should be selective; and it is different in that in the longer term, provision for 3 and 4 year olds should be universal and based on choice.

The purpose of a welfare system is to ensure that as far as possible, everyone is able to participate in society, to enjoy its fruits and to realise their own potential.

(Cohen and Fraser, 1991, p ii)

In terms of the selectivity of existing provision, the political 'Left' regards valuable social resources, such as pre-school provision, as being targeted at those families in greatest need i.e. those families where relationships have broken down; where children are maltreated and where children are potentially subject to high levels of stress and economic hardship, though the ultimate vision is of a social order

where those parents who wish provision for their children should have it provided free of charge by public bodies.

Such a clash of views about the desired social order with regard to the bringing up of children inevitably generates different **social policies**.

The social policy of the Conservative Government vis-à-vis children, focuses on the recognition of the need to protect children from exploitation and harm when in the hands of non-parental adults. This policy is manifested in the Children Act (1989). Whilst only certain sections apply to Scotland (because of the Children's Panel system), the Act is fundamentally about child protection and the registration of appropriate suppliers of services. Elaborate procedures have been introduced that are designed to screen out irresponsible adults from taking care of children. However, the Act makes no direct provision for the expansion of service by public bodies, merely the facilitation of expansion in the private sector.

A second feature of current government policy vis-à-vis provision is the encouragement of 'partnership nurseries', involving employers and government departments. This is a direct manifestation of the Government's selectivity policy i.e. availability of pre-five provision for the skilled mother returning to work. One such nursery is about to be opened in Glasgow (GDA, 1993). Employers will be able to 'buy' places for their employees from Partnership Nurseries Ltd.

The position of the Labour Party on provision is now quite clear. It advocates universal provision for those parents who want it for all three and four year olds. However, until such a situation is realisable, selectivity must dominate. This selectivity is based on an analysis of social criteria rather than national economic criteria and has been a basis for directing childcare resources at the most socially needy in society.

It is not surprising therefore that Strathclyde Region with a large Labour majority should adopt a similar stance:

Reducing deprivation on disadvantage and their effects is one of the Regional Council's two top priorities.

(SRC, 1993, p 7)

Provision of pre-five services is regarded by the Regional Council as central to the above policy:

The expansion of pre-five services must also be seen as a priority. Evidence suggests that early education has an important part to play in creating equality of opportunity for all children.

(SRC, 1993, p 36)

But if poverty is to be tackled, though understanding it is problematic (Roll, 1992), parents have to be given opportunities either to work or to seek work, released from the demanding tasks of routine childcare.

We have already noted that child poverty is correlated with mothers not working. This means that if public childcare can be made available for these children, there is scope for a significant reduction in child poverty.

(Cohen and Fraser, 1991, p 115)

Local authorities are faced with a dilemma in the provision of pre-five services. Whilst Strathclyde Region recognises the need to tackle poverty (over 20% of the population in Strathclyde - 25% of children - live at below the poverty level) its admissions policy to pre-five services does not target individual family poverty. It is based on an area approach (i.e. APTs) where poverty in general is acute and where the majority of publicly funded childcare is located.

Such a policy has been reinforced by a number of national reports (DES, 1967; SED, 1971).

Where nursery education can make its major contribution in the field of compensatory education would seem to be in providing intellectual stimulation in a local setting for children whose early experiences have been limited and narrow because of environmental deficiencies.

(SED, 1971, p 6)

Similarly, many writers have echoed the same message (Chazan, 1973; Mortimore and Blackstone, 1982; Osborn and Milbank, 1987).

The current admissions policy for pre-five provision in Strathclyde Region (see Chapter 4) reinforces the notion that publicly funded childcare is based on social pathology i.e provision that attempts to ameliorate the private ills associated with child rearing within the family unit. That there is a need for such amelioration and support is without question. Recent dramatic events in Cleveland (SSSS, 1988), Orkney and elsewhere are testament to what can go wrong within the confines of the family environment. In other words, the targeting process of childcare is heavily bound up with a functionalist perspective of society (Parsons, 1951).

Poverty on the other hand is more often seen as structuralist (Roll, 1992) though parts of the political 'Right' regard poverty more as a feature of individual failure (through laziness etc.) rather than generated by macro and micro fluctuations within a capitalist society (Eccleshall, 1984). However, if poverty in specific families is to be taken on board by public bodies such as local authorities, parents have to be given opportunities to increase the family income by securing paid work. Relief from constant childcare responsibilities (mostly involving women) is therefore paramount. Somehow an admissions policy has to reflect both the functionalist perspective embodied in social pathology and the structuralist perspective that locates family circumstances in more global terms.

The other ideological strand to childcare provision is the feminist perspective (Pascall, 1986). Whilst some fathers (and male partners) are increasingly accepting childcare responsibilities, it is mothers (i.e. women) who still bear the

overwhelming responsibility (Henwood et al, 1987; Wheelock, 1990). The basic argument of the feminists is that there are no *a priori* reasons why only women should carry this overwhelming responsibility other than cultural and ideological reasons. Women have rights and responsibilities just as men do, and as such there should be no structural differences. Provision of childcare it is argued, is therefore critically important to allow women to take a full and equal part in society. Social policy should therefore reflect this vision such as that expounded by Coote et al (1990).

Equal opportunities in education, training and employment are vital to family policy, enabling women to work and earn a living on the same terms as men without disadvantage is a key to their strength and resilience in the family.

(Coote et al, 1990, p 51)

For childcare research, the major political and societal issues revolve around women's participation in society.

(Scarr and Eisenberg, 1993, p 613)

A further ideological dimension to childcare is the issue of child protection. There is conflict on the role of public bodies when families become dysfunctional. To some, the primary concern is the well being of the child and in certain circumstances the role of the State is to remove children from certain critical and dangerous situations. To others, the family unit should be preserved at all costs and that problems arising from family dysfunction should be tackled within the family unit. The key issue here in the present study is the role of the nursery in both identifying specific dangers (e.g. parental violence) and in preventing children from being taken into care.

The community nurseries in Strathclyde were intended to be flexible and locally based, providing an integrated service all day and all year round, targeted at those areas and families in greatest need (Chapter 2). As such they were ideologically conceived, and inevitably were bound to generate conflict with individuals of different ideological persuasion and social systems built on different ideological assumptions.

1.2 3 Psychology of Child Development, Parenting and Childcare

The literature associated with knowledge and theories on child development is vast. Textbooks abound (e.g. Bee, 1989; Fogel and Melson, 1988); books on specific aspects of development are numerous (e.g. McGurk, 1992; Meadows, 1993) and articles in learned journals such as *Child Development* seem endless.

The predominant feature of this literature is the contribution it makes to our understanding of the process by which children develop into adults. A somewhat less obvious, but just as important a feature of this literature, is the knowledge about how to promote such development, though pointers do exist (e.g. Wilkinson and Murphy, 1976).

There is general agreement in the relevant academic community that the pre-school years represent an extremely important period in children's lives. It is during this period that cognition, social skills, language and moral development rapidly move forward such that when children start primary school at the age of five they have acquired the basic structures and procedures for dealing with complex situations and tasks.

It is also widely accepted that this development is strongly influenced by environmental factors particularly if the factors are negative in nature.

One of the most important messages from the recent literature is the interplay of the family environment (Dunn, 1986), the quality of childcare provision and individual differences among children (Scarr and Eisenberg, 1993). The family, for some children, is an effective educational experience (Tizard and Hughes, 1984). Equally it can be a source of trauma, deviance and abuse for others (Mayes et al, 1993).

Recent debate has focused on such childcare as being of risk to the child particularly if the child is under one year of age. A study by Belsky and Rovine (1988) indicated that infants exposed to more than 20 hours of care per week were likely to be rated as insecure if they were boys, had non-responsive mothers, and were rated as difficult by their mothers. Mediating factors were the quality of the care environment and the temperament of the child. This finding was robustly challenged by Clarke-Stewart in 1989 only to be rebutted by Belsky and Braungart in 1991 (McGurk, 1993).

With a contemporary emphasis on social-cognition in developmental psychology, the kind of day-to-day experiences children encounter are crucial. If the social environment in which a child is being brought up is negative, aggressive, uncommunicative and even exploitative, the child will suffer (Scarr, 1992) though for how long is a source of debate (Clarke, 1986).

Another critical feature of contemporary psychology in relation to children is the theoretical debate about exactly how children's thinking develops. This debate is focused between age/stage theories such as that of Piaget and gradualist social mediation theories such as that of Vygotsky (Crain, 1992). Irrespective of the weight of evidence in favour of either theory there is evidence from modern psychology that by the age of five most children are effective thinkers to a degree not fully appreciated. This evidence has been generated by the scientific paradigm of psychology which Walkerdine sees as crucial to the relationship between theory and practice:

In attempting to explain the production of the developmental psychology/child-centred pedagogy couple I have argued that psychology's status as science with particular practices for producing evidence and claims to truth is crucial in understanding the historical construction of the present form of schooling.
(Walkerdine, 1984, p 196)

But the psychology of child development is not the only contribution that modern psychology can make to family well-being. Much has recently been written about the psychology of motherhood (Phoenix et al, 1991) and indeed of fatherhood (Lewis and O'Brien, 1987).

Parenting is a demanding responsibility. For those parents who choose to work outside the home, the stresses and strains of balancing work and family life are considerable. Not enough is known about the psychic costs of lack of family support for such parents. On the other hand, for those parents, principally mothers, who stay at home to look after their small children, the stresses and strains, albeit different, are equally daunting. Depression, isolation, poor self-esteem especially if coupled with economic hardship, can be features associated with motherhood and their consequent effects on marital/partner relationships can be catastrophic.

In psychology, mothers are seen as essential providers of crucial environmental experiences for their children. Central to the analysis is a view of motherhood as an important identity, as an essential stage for development and as ultimate fulfilment for all women (Phoenix et al, 1991). Women's experiences are seen as rooted within the context of their own development and their establishment of adult thinking.

However the emphasis on the psychology of child development in childcare sits uneasily with a feminist analysis of motherhood.

Psychology reproduces ideologies and legitimate current views about motherhood as a well as producing new orthodoxies about the nature of good mothering.

(Woollett and Phoenix, 1991. p 28)

Feminist approaches on the other hand focus on the functions motherhood serves for society and its impact on women's social position. Motherhood is recognised as one of the major institutions which oppress women and prevent them from taking more active control over their own lives. In a study by Boulton (1983) women's experiences with pre-school children were examined. A distinction was drawn between their feelings about looking after children and the meaning and purpose motherhood provides. Roughly half the women had access to childcare facilities and found them of help and support whilst half found childcare provision stressful and a threat to their individuality. Working class women were more inclined to see motherhood as enjoyable and giving them a purpose in life.

Research on fatherhood is relatively sparse and the subject has only recently generated interest (Burman, 1991). A feature of contemporary society is the number of fathers abdicating the family home. In recent years there has been a dramatic rise in the number of lone parent families (Roll, 1992).

But of those fathers still present in the family, there is some evidence in the study that sharing of childcare responsibilities is taking place (Wheelock, 1990). However, it is doubtful whether this increased visibility of fathers in childrearing

represents any evidence of fundamental shifts in the power relations between men and women. (New and David, 1985) Not enough is known, in psychological terms, of men's emotions and feelings in response to being a father with young children.

What seems to be the case is that some men welcome the opportunity to be psychologically closer to their young children as it legitimates a richer expression of their need for affection. The problem preventing a more equal distribution of childcare tasks (e.g. changing nappies, contacting the doctor, preparing food etc.) seems to be bound up with the power domain of mothers. For some mothers, motherhood conveys justification for their very existence. The involvement of men threatens that power base which legitimates that existence. Critical questions have got to be investigated about the reasons why so many fathers have now abdicated their role - a role that has rich potential but whose denial can have disastrous consequences. On the whole, it is males who are the chief perpetrators of crimes against children.

The dominant influences of psychology and indeed psychiatry on the construction of the childcare environment has been to give children a wide range of freedoms with which children can interact with the world, testing out new ideas, learning how to co-operate with others, expressing their imagination and creative talents. Such an approach is often labelled 'child-centred' with its justification stemming all the way back to Rousseau through Isaacs, McMillan and Pestalozzi.

The new community nurseries in Strathclyde were designed to perpetuate this dominant influence by creating a nursery environment consistent with the traditions of child-centred education in Britain.

1.2 4 Education and Welfare

Education is a value-laden activity based on judgements about 'worthwhileness' (Peters, 1966). Values permeate decisions about aims, curriculum, pedagogy and organisation in all educational contexts. As far as education for young children is concerned, Curtis (1986) argues that whilst the broad aims of education are the same for all age groups, it is both the more specific objective and methods of achieving these objective that are unique to each sector of the system. Whilst emphasis may differ from individual to individual and from one professional group to another, there is a broad consensus in Britain that nursery education, in theory at least, is child-centred, with an emphasis on developing children's intellectual, social, emotional, creative, aesthetic and physical abilities in harmony with parents (Curtis, 1986; Watt, 1990). The aims of nursery education are firmly based in promoting children's development, though there is evidence that promotion of home-school relations is becoming more visible (Huang, 1989).

Whilst definition of children's skills and competencies is taken from developmental psychology, there is a current conflict in the underlying theory about the nature of the developmental process. One significant contribution that recent research in developmental psychology has made is the finding that young children can be quite effective thinkers to a degree not previously appreciated. The consequences

of this finding for pre-school education are quite significant because it means that young children can cope (and potentially benefit from) more complex situations and tasks. However this does not mean that the floodgates should be open for a backwash of the national curriculum (curricular guidelines in Scotland) from the primary school to the nursery.

Nursery teachers have translated their overall aims into elaborate activities and procedures that are now part of their craft knowledge. Didactic teaching of pre-school children is rejected in favour of experiential learning and free play.

Many local authorities are now in the business of generating curricular guidelines for children from birth to five, partly as a buttress against what is seen as an intrusion of the rhetoric (e.g. falling standards) and procedures (e.g. national testing) associated with current government thinking. The pedagogy in the nursery school is essentially informal though there is a daily routine ranging from individual activities (e.g. jigsaws, puzzles etc.), small group activities (e.g. water play) to large group activities (e.g. story time). Children are deliberately encouraged to engage as they see fit with a range of materials and activities each one designed to promote particular skills and competencies. The professional commitment to child-centred pedagogy amongst nursery teachers is a powerful force with which to contend. But this does not mean to say that nursery schools should not do more for children:

The informality of the nursery must be preserved - it is just as important for children to develop socially, emotionally and physically as it is to understand the world. On the other hand more structured learning will not necessarily generate more anxiety and tension in children as claimed by some. On the whole, our children both can and want more to do. It is our moral duty to provide children with environments that feed what was referred to earlier in this short paper as avaricious curiosity.

(Wilkinson, 1992, p 8)

How to satisfy this anxiety is now a source of debate. Some argue for a clearer defined curriculum (Watt, 1990) whilst others argue for a more intensive pedagogy where adults and children become more engaged in dialogue. But pre-school provision is not just about the provision of a developmentally appropriate curriculum - other issues such as health and safety including child protection; responsiveness and warm interaction between staff and children, adequate staff training and age-appropriate caregiver-child ratios are equally important. Such considerations have had more expression in establishments such as day nurseries and children's centres as distinct from nursery schools. Day nurseries have traditionally been run by social work departments exclusively for families in acute difficulty. These nurseries have not had the benefit of professional teacher input but have concentrated on supporting the family at a time of crisis. Needless to say such institutions have not had high status nor enjoyed an abundance of resources.

There is a tension between what is regarded as 'education' and what is regarded as 'care' (Gilkes, 1987; David, 1990). Nursery education, whilst child-centred, is inevitably bound up with preparing children for primary school; nursery care on the other hand is more concerned with children's emotional and physical needs. Under the present institutional arrangements these two functions of childcare are carried out by different professional groups - nursery teachers and nursery nurses with very different conditions of service. To resolve the tension David proposes the concept of 'educare'.

The most appropriate idea might be an education system , offering high quality care and education.

(David, 1990, p 5)

In recent years some local authorities have encouraged the setting up of Family Centres as an alternative to day nurseries recognising that children stood a better chance if the mother was involved with childcare (Gibbons, 1990). Strathclyde Region on the other hand took the decision in 1985 to develop integrated provision in the form of community nurseries though such nurseries were not entirely new to Britain (see Chapter 2). Such provision was intended to 'integrate' the best features of nursery schooling with good childcare practices from day nurseries and family centres. That there is a need for such integration has been long argued (Pugh, 1988).

The overall aims of all the nurseries involved in the present study showed a high degree of overlap and were consistent with the best traditions of nursery education in Britain.

1.3 DESIGN, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

1.31 The Design

As stated in Section 1.1, the theoretical justification for the design of the study was taken from the original work of Bronfenbrenner. Given the nature of the new community nurseries, it was deemed appropriate to examine their impact in a broad context and that it was insufficient merely to examine one particular aspect.

Initially, three community nurseries (being the only three such nurseries in the Region's programme) were chosen as the focus of the investigation, but in the end, only two were included in the study (see Chapter 3 and Annex 3). In order to comprehend the effectiveness of these new developments, a comparative case study was undertaken in a conventional nursery school. In no sense was this nursery regarded as a 'control' nursery (as would be required if the study had been firmly located in a psychometric paradigm) but as a sort of benchmark against which judgements about 'quality' could be made.

The justification for choosing a nursery school was to provide a well recognised standard of nursery education against which to 'test' the new community nurseries. The extent to which the new nurseries would match the quality of provision in a

good nursery school would help illuminate the argument about the relationship between the new establishments and the quality of the educational input. The reason for this particular nursery was that it had some similarities to the community nurseries (i.e. work with parents) and was located in an area with similar socio-economic features as one of the community nurseries (i.e. an APT area). All the procedures of the research were conducted in as similar a way as possible in all the nurseries involved in order that a comprehensive comparison could be made across a broad range of criteria. The particular nursery was nominated by officials of Strathclyde Region and its involvement was subject to the willingness of staff to participate.

In hindsight it would also have been appropriate to have included a day nursery as the aims and objectives of the community nurseries were related to those of day nurseries and were more ambitious than the aims of the nursery school. However, resources available to the author were inadequate to undertake in-depth case studies of five establishments and by the time it became apparent that one of the pilot community nurseries would not materialise, it was too late to involve a day nursery. Nevertheless, the depth and breadth of the data from those nurseries which took part in the study were sufficient to allow systematic evaluation of the community nurseries.

Although the case studies extended over three years it was designed to chart the development of the two community nurseries and the nursery school (though, as will be explained in Chapter 3, another nursery school became involved, due to this particular school being partially involved with one of the new community nurseries) over a period of two years from the community nurseries' becoming operational (i.e. first admitting children in the Spring of 1990) to the Spring of 1992.

In essence therefore, the investigation was ecological, longitudinal, democratic and case-study based, though many of the techniques employed were eclectic due to the complexity of the theoretical context.

Clearly there are limitations to case study research in terms of generalisation. Such research does not permit an analysis of trends nor is there any necessary connection with other contexts. What may be the situation in the nurseries in Strathclyde may not be totally replicated elsewhere even within the same Region. However case study research allows an indepth analysis into the processes involved and helps to illuminate future judgements by planners at all levels of the decision-making process. As such, one can learn a great deal from this kind of work. Its general value is to the accumulation of wisdom in a complex social arena.

1.32 The Research Questions

Given the complexity and extensiveness of the theoretical framework of pre-five provision, the research questions were necessarily complex and wide ranging.

The questions were grouped into eight sets:

- ascertainment of whether the new community nurseries would match the needs of families in the chosen locations
- analysis of the targeting of places according to need as expressed in an analysis of applications and admissions
- progress towards achievement of aims and objectives
- the development of the nurseries from conception to effective delivery
- the quality of the nursery environment
- the impact of the nurseries on children's development
- the impact of the nurseries on family perceptions and functioning
- the functioning of inter-agency liaison

Set 1 (Need v. provision)

The four basic questions in this domain were:

- what were the family conditions in the areas in which the nurseries were located?
- how did the areas compare in social and economic terms?
- what childcare arrangements did families use and what were the similarities and differences between families in the different areas?
- to what extent did families express a need for the facilities of the new community nurseries?

Set 2 (Targeting)

Again four questions were posed in this domain. These were:

- did the community nurseries attract applications from families for whom the provision was intended?
- were children from families in greatest need admitted to the nurseries?

- which agencies were most involved in referring children to the new nurseries?
- how did the applications and admissions compare with those to a good nursery school?

Set 3 (Aims and Objectives)

The three basic questions were:

- could the overall aims of the nurseries be expressed in more tangible objectives that were meaningful and visible?
- what progress did the nurseries make over a two year period towards achieving their stated aims and objectives?
- which aims and objectives proved most difficult to achieve in each nursery?

Set 4 (Development of the nurseries)

The three fundamental questions posed here were:

- how was Regional Council policy translated into practical reality - how did the nurseries get established?
- what difficulties were encountered in making the nurseries functional?
- what progress was made to resolving early difficulties at the end of a two year period?

Set 5 (Quality)

The three critical questions were:

- how does the quality of the provision in the community nurseries compare with that in a good conventional nursery school?
- how is the quality of the community nurseries affected by internal and external pressures over a period of time?
- how do staff in the nurseries react to feedback on 'quality' ratings?

Domain 6 (Children's progress)

The five questions were:

- to what extent were the achievement levels of children entering the nurseries comparable between nurseries?

- to what extent were the achievement levels of children leaving the nurseries comparable between nurseries?
- was children's progress generally comparable between nurseries?
- was the overall level of social and emotional behaviour problems similar between nurseries?
- were nurseries successful in reducing the level of social and emotional behavioural problems that gave rise for special concern?

Set 7 (Impact on Families)

The four questions were:

- what were the socio-economic conditions of families using the nurseries and how did they compare between nurseries?
- what was the families' response to the children attending the nurseries?
- what value systems could be detected in shaping attitudes towards childcare?
- did family dynamics change over a short period?

Set 8 (Inter-agency liaison)

Three questions were:

- what value did a range of professionals concerned with pre-five children place on the new community nurseries?
- were the new nurseries able to establish effective inter-agency liaison?
- were children 'at risk' better supported?

1.3 3 Methodology

To answer the above research questions, the **methodology** covered seven main areas:

- survey of families with young children in the catchment area of each nursery (September 1989 - March 1990)
- interviews with key personnel (December 1989 - May 1992)
- monitoring of applications and admissions (January 1990 - December 1992)
- an aims and objectives monitoring exercise (August 1990 - May 1992)

- assessment of the quality of the nursery environment and changes over time (January 1990 - May 1992)
- assessment of children's progress (November 1990 - June 1992)
- assessment of the home environment and changes over time (December 1990 - May 1992)

The survey

Based on samples of families with children under five, a survey was undertaken in the vicinity of each of the three nurseries involved in the study. The purpose of conducting the survey was to gather information on the socio-economic and educational background of families; current trends in childcare arrangements; total family income and the preference for nursery places in the light of Strathclyde's new developments.

A questionnaire was constructed to collect data from families with children under five years of age living in the catchment area of each nursery. The themes of the questionnaire covered the following areas: family composition; educational background; employment patterns; income levels; child care arrangements; and a section dealing with the facilities offered by the new community nurseries. With information from the Chief Executive's office of Strathclyde Regional Council and Health Clinics, upwards of 100 families were sampled in each of the three areas. The results are summarised in Chapter 3, with the detailed results given in Annex 3.

Applications and Admissions

In order to understand how the new community nurseries were meeting the demand for places, a process of monitoring all applications and admissions was instigated for each nursery. In line with Strathclyde Region's policy for admissions described in Chapter 4, all applications were considered by an Admissions Panel. Both the two community nurseries had their own panel for most of the duration of the study whilst admissions to the comparative nursery school were dealt with by an 'area' based panel. In the case of the second nursery school which liaised with one of the community nurseries, it was not until near the end of the evaluation study that applications to this particular nursery were dealt with by an area based admissions panel. The research team had access to all the data passing through the panels and carried out observation of the panels' functioning.

Interviews with key personnel

In depth interviews were conducted with the key actors at various stages of the implementation of the community nursery programme. Four stages were chosen as follows:

- background to the two community nurseries (December, 1989)
- the first six months of running the nurseries (March - August 1990)
- inter-professional liaison (November 1991 - March 1992)
- final stages interviews with selected nursery staff (February - May 1992)

In addition to the above, interviews were conducted with parents and playgroups leaders. A description of the processing of the interview data is given in Chapter 6 and the results in Chapters 6 and 10.

An aims and objectives monitoring exercise

In evaluation studies it is critically important to examine both the extent to which the stated aims and objectives are achieved and the processes involved. It is insufficient merely to state which particular aims and objectives have and have not been realised as little can be learned from such an exercise. An equally crucial aspect is to explain the reasons why a particular innovation has been successful or otherwise.

In one of the community nurseries, because the major source of funding was the Scottish Office (the Urban Renewal Unit), the overall aims of the nursery were pre-specified. With the other community nursery and the two nursery schools, the aims for each nursery had to be articulated by the nursery heads and agreed with those responsible for managing the nurseries. In all cases once the aims were specified, specific objectives were derived from the aims based on '**Domains**' such as children; parents; other agencies; community etc. The process of monitoring progress towards achievement of each objective in each nursery and the outcomes are described in Chapter 5.

Assessment of the quality of the nursery environment

To assess the quality of the internal environment of each nursery and monitor any changes over time it was deemed necessary to use an objective instrument which was both reliable and valid. The instrument chosen was the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale developed by Harms and Clifford in 1980. The instrument is described in Chapter 7.

Assessment of children's progress

Given the absence of a 'control' group in the design of the study (i.e. a matched group of children not experiencing nursery education), the main purposes in

assessing children's developmental progress was first of all to establish the general level of the children in the nurseries; whether children using the nurseries made progress and whether the progress was differential between the different types of provision. However, in 1989, when the evaluation research project was established no objective, quantitative and reliable instruments were available that could allow children's progress for the age range 0-5 years to be monitored over time. Several qualitative instruments were available as well as ones specifically designed for local areas often derived from well known scales such as the Sheridan. Others only covered part of the age range of children in the new nurseries i.e. the Keele Pre-School Assessment Guide.

After consideration of the instruments available it was decided to use the following:

- the Keele Pre-School Assessment Guide for children aged 3-5 years in all the nurseries (Tyler, 1979)
- the Renfrew Scale of Infant Development for children aged 0-2 years in both the community nurseries
- the NFER/Nelson Pre-School Behaviour Checklist as a screening instrument for children with social and emotional difficulties (McGuire and Richman, 1986)

The Keele Pre-School Assessment Guide is founded on a behavioural approach to assessment stemming from the curriculum development movement in Britain in the 1960's and 1970's. It is fundamentally a criterion referenced instrument in which behavioural techniques are evident in the taxonomies that were devised. Based on a psychological taxonomy (scales) of children's abilities (cognition, language, socialisation and physical development) each scale is divided into 6 levels with specific items allocated to each level. The instrument shows how each child progresses and what his/her difficulties are on each scale. However, it differs from psychometric approaches in that it is descriptive and diagnostic, and as such no norms exist. Its advantage is that it is rooted in British nursery school tradition and does not require external expertise (i.e. an educational psychologist) to conduct. Teachers and other pre-five staff can, with a little training undertake the Keele for those children with whom they are familiar. A factor which also influenced the decision to use the Keele was the attitude of nursery staff. They all saw value for their own work in having developmental information, such as that generated by the Keele, available to them. This view was endorsed by each of the local advisory groups (see section 1.4).

As the Renfrew Scale of Infant Development was the only scale that made sense to the staff of the nurseries concerned, and given that it was developed locally in Strathclyde by educational psychologists for use by pre-five staff, it was deemed an appropriate instrument for the purpose of the evaluation. Other scales e.g. the Griffiths Scale of Infant Development, require expertise in psychological testing. The Scale is somewhat more complicated than the Keele as it was based on 9 sub-scales each one with a range of items. In hindsight it would have been better to

have used educational psychologists to generate the data given the small number of children involved.

The Pre-School Behaviour Checklist (PBCL) was designed to help staff working with children in nurseries and group daycare who may be concerned about a child's difficulties. Pre-school experiences that are upsetting or negative for children may affect attitudes and motivation. Thus the PBCL was designed as a screening instrument to help identify children with emotional and behavioural problems by providing a tool for the systematic and objective observation of behaviour. It is readily usable by staff familiar with a group of children. Its reliability and validity have been established by the test designers (McGuire and Richman, 1986).

Given that all the assessments were carried out by nursery staff, caution must be raised in the subsequent interpretation of the data. However, these data were only used to indicate comparative trends in groups of children (i.e. individual differences were not analysed) and as each assessment was doubly checked in each nursery, the data were deemed sufficient for this aspect of the research.

Further details of the assessment instruments are given in Chapter 8.

Assessment of the home environment

One innovation of the study was to identify a small number of families with a child in one of the nurseries who would be willing to participate in the study by allowing the research team access to intimate information about the development of the family, specifically about family dynamics and relationships with the nursery. Two instruments were used for this purpose - the Caldwell Home Inventory for Families of Infants and Toddlers and one specially constructed interview schedule based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of human development. The purpose in using these two instruments was to make assessments of the quality of the home environment vis-à-vis the resources and relationships in evidence in the family at the time the researcher was present in the home and to attempt to detect changes over time. Data from each of the participating families was gathered on three occasions and is analysed in Chapter 9.

1.4 PROCESS, PERSONNEL AND PERSPECTIVE

1.41 Process

One prominent and innovative feature of the study was the extent to which those involved with implementing the community nursery programme were integrated into the evaluation. The first step was to incorporate evaluation work as part of the job remit of each member of staff so that from the outset those applying for posts would know that they would be part of the study. Once the staff of the nurseries had been appointed evaluation induction meetings were held to explain to staff the purpose and design of the evaluation. At these meetings specific

evaluation tasks were identified and subsequently allocated to staff by the Head of Centre. Each member of staff was allocated at least one evaluation task. Such involvement was deemed to be critical not only to engender a spirit of enquiry in staff but to de-mystify the often threatening effects of evaluation. The list of evaluation tasks for nursery staff is given in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 List of Evaluation Tasks for Nursery Staff

Keeping diaries of activities and observations.

Development work - helping to develop (through discussion with researchers and other members of the staff) appropriate monitoring schedules.

Discussing objectives - attending regular meetings on the implementation of the project's aims and helping to record and monitor progress and difficulties.

Providing quantitative and qualitative data on the uptake of the service - the number of admissions, reasons for admission, rate of attendance etc.

Completing schedules on children's development.

Providing background information and monitoring the progress of selected case study families.

Providing general information - being available for interview with the researcher or for brief general discussion and completing short questionnaires.

Informing parents about the role of research in the project.

Being observed.

Evaluation Advisory Group - attending regular meetings to discuss policy and strategy.

Participation in staff development programmes concerned with evaluation.

Participation in 'open review' meetings as appropriate.

In addition to the involvement of all nursery staff, a local evaluation advisory group was established in each area. The groups consisted of the research team with selected nursery staff and representatives of local services liaising with the nursery i.e. Social Work, Voluntary Sector, Psychological Services and Health Visitors as well as Divisional and Regional staff of the Education Department of Strathclyde Regional Council. Initially the groups were chaired by the senior researcher but during the course of the work the chairs were taken over by senior personnel associated with each nursery (see Annex 1 - for full membership of each group).

To enable the groups to function effectively a remit was agreed by each group as follows:

- To act as an interface (point of contact) between the University Research Team and those who are working in and involved with the local nursery project.
- To provide a forum wherein the evaluation plans could be discussed, constructively criticised and a contribution made to the formulation of a format that meets the needs of both the researchers and the community nursery workers.
- To provide a forum for the on-going clarification of difficulties and anxieties that may arise during the course of the evaluation process.
- To respect the fact that documentation shared within the context of the Advisory Group meetings is confidential to the members of that group.
- To be an integral part of the dynamic process of an evolving evaluation process.

The groups met at approximately two monthly intervals throughout the duration of the evaluation and formal minutes were taken. The agenda was compiled by the principal researcher with members adding items as appropriate.

The main purpose of establishing these groups was to act as an interface between the fieldwork (i.e. the implementation of the community nurseries) and the research team. As far as the researchers are aware no equivalent arrangements for conducting the evaluation have been used elsewhere. Inevitably in such an arrangement critical issues had to be tackled. In particular, the issue of confidentiality was problematic. Initially the groups served to guide the researchers so that their plans and procedures for conducting the research would fit in with plans and procedures of the nurseries. However, once the researchers began the process of feeding back information to the advisory groups for comment and amendment (where appropriate), tensions had to be managed within the groups. Such tensions were particularly evident in dealing with sensitive data from the interviews with key personnel (see Chapter 6).

To obtain an overall professional research perspective on the study, a Project Advisory Group was established chaired by a senior academic with a sound reputation in research work with pre-five children. A full list of the membership of this group is given in the Appendix.

1.4 2 Personnel

The research reported in this thesis was primarily conducted by the author. However such extensive investigation could not have been carried out without the assistance of research staff. Three part-time researchers worked on the project at various intervals during the period 1989 to 1992 - Barbara Kelly, Christine Stephen and Jacque Fee. Jacque Fee was primarily responsible for making contact with the case study families and carrying out the first round of interviews with them. She also assisted in the collation of the applications and admissions data reported in Chapter 4 and acted as an observer for the Harms and Clifford assessments of the quality of the nursery environment. Christine Stephen was primarily responsible for the Harms and Clifford ratings, writing reports for the nursery staff and the various advisory groups. She also helped to collate the assessment data on children's progress and in conducting some staff interviews. Barbara Kelly's main tasks were to assist in the construction of the interview schedules and in conducting interviews on the development of the nurseries (reported in Chapter 6) and inter-agency liaison (summarised in Chapter 9). She also collated the data from the aims and objectives review forms provided by nursery staff. These tasks involved writing interim reports for nursery staff and the advisory groups. She also conducted some of the interviews with case study families and helped to analyse the data. In addition to the above, Linda Entwistle helped to undertake the initial survey of families and assisted in the extraction of data from children's files in the nurseries.

The main tasks of the project - theoretical perspective; overall design and choice of methodology; analysis and interpretation of data; managing the research network including liaison with all bodies involved; analysis of the findings; the conclusions and the writing and presentation of the thesis were the sole responsibility of the author.

Chairs of the Advisory Groups

The overall advisory group was chaired by a senior academic **Professor Kathy Sylva**, formerly of Warwick University and latterly of the Institute of Education in the University of London. She has had extensive experience in research work with young children being part of the Oxford Pre-School group led by Jerome Bruner.

The first community nursery evaluation advisory group was chaired by **Dr. Tom Williams**, Senior Educational Psychologist in the Saltcoats area of Ayr Division of Strathclyde Regional Council's Education Department.

The second community nursery evaluation advisory group was chaired by **Eileen McKenna** who is the Strathclyde Regional Adviser of the Scottish Pre-School Play Association, though Eileen did not assume office until half-way through the study.

The chair of the comparative nursery school's evaluation group was chaired by **Moir McLaren**, Acting Development Officer in pre-five services of Glasgow

Division of Strathclyde Regional Council's Education Department and formerly Head of Buchlyvie Nursery School.

A full list of the membership of these groups is shown in Annex 2.

1.4 3 Perspective

When designing an evaluation study the evaluators must face a number of critical issues at the outset. Their plans must be realistic in the context of the resources available, they must establish a working relationship with the innovators but above all they must adopt a stance on the notion of objectivity.

As House (1977) states:

Few concepts have been so confused and have caused so much mischief in educational enquiry.

(House, 1977, p 39)

Complete objectivity is unrealistic in two senses. First of all no evaluator is able to establish 'the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth'. Such an endeavour is impossible to achieve in practical terms. Evaluators cannot be everywhere simultaneously. Secondly, evaluators themselves have values - values that are sometimes deep-seated - which emerge in the choices they make throughout the duration of the study. This does not mean to say that an evaluator should deliberately or in any covert way attempt to impose his/her values on the course of the innovation being evaluated. Such a course of action would invalidate any judgements made by the evaluators. Evaluators must endeavour to use their professional expertise to balance the available evidence and to arrive at carefully considered judgements. This expertise permeates the entire study from design to conclusions where the design of an evaluation study includes qualitative data:

Many people are reluctant to accept or believe qualitative evaluators simply because they are based on only one person's observations. Observations by one person are considered in and of themselves to be subjective and hence illegitimate for public purposes. (House, 1977, p 39)

As House goes on to say the difficulty lies in confusing objectivity with procedures for determining inter-subjectivity. Objectivity in this particular study of community nurseries was seen as the convergence of inter-subjectivity. Where views of those participating were sought the evaluators strived to identify convergence. However, as stated above evaluators are not neutral observers. They have values which will inevitably come into play. A danger, therefore, of using the kind of methodology adopted in this study is that the overt values inherent in the innovation may interact with the covert values of the evaluators. It was deemed essential, therefore, to declare at the outset of the evaluation something about the value position of the evaluators, so that throughout the

duration of the study, should any deviation occur, they could be held to account by the network of advisory groups.

The author of this study was sympathetic to the ideals of the new community nurseries for these reasons:

- they were targeted at the greatest need
- they integrated 'care' and 'education'
- they were designed to respond to the challenge of changing family structures
- they recognised the valuable contribution of a range of personnel including nursery nurses and local parents

Another feature of the study is its 'openness' in the sense that it engaged in regular feedback to all those involved. As well as the network of local advisory groups, '**Open Review**' sessions were held for the general public. At these sessions the evaluators outlined their plans, processes and eventually their results, inviting comment and discussion for all those attending.

All too often evaluation studies are imbalanced in terms of feedback. By their very nature, evaluation work involves the collection of information whether that information be quantitative or qualitative. Evaluation studies must also report back their findings to their funding sources. However, not enough importance is attached to systematic on-going feedback to the participants in the innovation whilst the study is underway. It is insufficient merely to present a report at the end of the study which invariably contributes to the tensions involved in evaluation work.

In this particular study significant importance was attached to providing the network of advisory groups with regular feedback. Not only did this keep the key actors informed but was also of considerable value to the author in the sense that errors and misinterpretations could be amended.

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CHAPTER 2

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The background of this study is the evaluation of new developments in pre-five provision in Strathclyde Region, specifically the first two years of the community nursery programme. The recognition of the need to expand and reform pre-five provision had its origins in the Region's overall social policy outlined in **Social Strategy for the 80's**. One of the main recommendations of the 1985 report was the setting up of a new type of establishment for young children and their families - a nursery that would combine the best practices of child care (hitherto the concern of the Social Work Department) and education (the responsibility of the Education Department).

In order to understand the functioning and impact of these new community nurseries, the Region proposed a major evaluation project running parallel with the community nursery programme. Given that the Region's policy on pre-five provision was far reaching and controversial the need for evaluation in this field was critical.

The Region therefore commissioned research from the Department of Education, University of Glasgow, under the direction of the author. Given the independent nature of an academic institution becoming involved in the implementation of an important and controversial policy; a policy under scrutiny both nationally and internationally such a step was both bold and challenging.

With a 3-year longitudinal design, the study began functioning in the summer of 1989. It was concerned with monitoring the setting up, operation and impact of the new community nurseries over a two year period. Due to difficulties with accommodation, the first community nursery only started admitting children in March 1990. Data gathering was, therefore, planned to terminate in March 1992, though, as it transpired some data collection continued until June 1992.

The study was seen by the author both as an evaluation and a research study in the sense that not only were familiar evaluative techniques and procedures to be used to monitor progress, but also research was planned to form a part of the overall strategy by exploring new areas of concern, for example, the impact of the new nurseries on family life.

An essential purpose of evaluation is to help in decision-making. It can help different people to make different kinds of decisions. An evaluation study is able to chart and illuminate the process by which a particular innovation is successful or otherwise in achieving its overall aims and objectives. It can also offer explanations for success and failures such that policy makers at whatever level can be better informed when planning the way ahead. Evaluation can be used internally by those who work on a project to help their short and medium term decision-making on the basis of evidence, not guesswork. Regular reviewing allows one to look at how the objectives of a project are being implemented. It can be used by the project and its supervisors to consider what is successful in the project and what needs revision. Sometimes this will mean looking again at the original objectives of the project to see if these were realistic or whether they need to be changed in the light of experience.

However, using familiar evaluation techniques does not necessarily allow the exploration of potentially very important areas of concern where knowledge of a specific domain from existing literature is limited. Thus the study was designed to investigate a number of issues that would cast more light on the original aims of the community nurseries. Specific research areas were defined, mostly concerning the impact of the nurseries on the social dynamics of the families involved. Such a strategy would strengthen the generalisability of the findings of the study.

2.2 POLICY ISSUES IN PRE-FIVE PROVISION IN STRATHCLYDE

As stated in the previous section, Strathclyde Region's pre-five policy in 1985 was heralded for its far-sightedness by a wide range of observers (e.g. Riley, 1989). It highlighted the idiosyncrasy, muddle and desperation in the pre-five sector. At last, here was a potential opportunity to find solutions to problems that hitherto prevented progress.

The principal problems addressed in **Under Fives** were as follows:

- extent of provision
- co-ordination
- partnership with the voluntary sector
- staffing duality
- targeting of provision
- low status of provision

2.2.1 Extent of Provision

It is widely recognised that in the UK there is insufficient pre-five provision to meet the need for places. The position in Strathclyde is not greatly different from the national pattern (see Section 2.5). Places are in short supply. In 1987, 29.9% of 3- and 4-year olds and 1.3% of 0-4 year olds in Strathclyde Region attended either nursery school (or class) or day nursery (or family centre or children's centre) respectively. By 1990 these figures had risen marginally to 31.4% and 1.8% respectively. (see Table 2.1)

In 1991, Strathclyde catered for 22,832 pre-five children in 289 establishments. (See Table 2.2.)

Table 2.1 Changes in children attending local authority pre-five services in Strathclyde (1987 - 1990)

	Nursery Schools/Classes		Day Nurseries	
	1987	1990	1987	1990
Number	17,440	19,184	2,260	2,720
%*	29.9	31.1	1.3	1.8

Source: Scottish Office Statistical Bulletins: No. 6/A2/1988 and Edn/A2/1992/11.

* Note: For nursery schools and classes the percentage is calculated on the basis of 3- and 4- year olds; for day nurseries it is calculated on the basis of 0-4 year olds.

Table 2.2 Children attending local authority pre-five establishments in Strathclyde in 1991

Day Nurseries	1773
Family Centres	993
Children's Centres	825
Community Nurseries	475
Nursery Schools/Classes	18,786

Source: Pamphlet produced by the Communications Unit, SRC Education Department 1992.

Much of the existing provision caters for 3- and 4-year olds. There is very little provision for the under-threes. For example, only 274 children aged two or under were in education authority nursery schools (or classes) in 1991 throughout the whole of Scotland. These data are in marked contrast to many other European countries where provision for under-threes is well established, clearly reflecting both public and private attitudes towards child-rearing.

Unless there is a change in central government policy, a major expansion of the pre-five service in Strathclyde is outwith the financial resources of the Region. The 1985 report rightly recognised that:

It would be unrealistic of the Council to plan a major expansion of services or to adopt a policy of providing universal and free day care and pre-school education in the short-term. In the long-term provision for all pre-school children should be the objective of the Council and should involve the voluntary sector.
(SRC, 1985, p 27)

In order to undertake a gradual expansion of the service, the Member/Officer Group recommended that -

Future developments should be financed either through the Urban Programme or the redistribution of resources from some existing pre-five services.
(SRC, 1985, p 27)

Since 1985, however, the Region has been involved in a major school closure programme in response to the declining pupil population. This programme has allowed additional resources to be channelled to the task of expanding the pre-five provision under the scheme termed **Adapting to Change**. Indeed one of the community nurseries which featured in the present report has been financed from this source. Thus the number of children under the age of five in Strathclyde having access to local authority provision is slowly rising. Indeed the Region's draft review of childcare services in response to the Children Act (1989) indicates that the number of children attending pre-five establishments had risen to 25,084 in 1992.

2.2 2 Co-ordination

Historically, pre-five services in the public domain have been provided by a number of agencies:

- local authority Social Work Departments (Social Services Departments in

England and Wales) providing day nurseries, family centres and children's centres

- local authority Education Departments providing nursery schools and classes
- the voluntary sector (e.g. SPPA, Stepping Stones, One-Plus to name but three) providing playgroups, drop-in centres and creches.

Although these different types of provision were targeted at different groups, inevitably a hierarchy of the perceptions of the value of these types of provision has emerged. Nursery schools are seen by many, staff and parents alike, as the best service available whilst day nurseries are seen as a very limited and potentially stigmatising service to families in difficulty. With such an array of provision being resourced by different agencies, the service was regarded as unnecessarily complex:

It is my belief from long experience that parents would prefer a more straightforward service and that the term nursery should mean what the parent wants; not what the department has decreed.

(Councillor Stewart, SRC, 1985 p 3).

Given the duality of management responsibilities and the complexity of the service the Region's Member/Officer Group recommended 'the most appropriate means of achieving the kind of united and integrated pre-five service which evidence has shown to be necessary'. The report recommended the full integration of management responsibilities:

Pre-Five Services in Strathclyde should be unified and vested in one department, the Education Department.

(SRC, 1985, p 24)

The Education Department should encourage and supervise these services from a new unit - the 'Pre-Five Unit' to be based at headquarters.

(SRC, 1985, p 24)

The new Pre-Five Unit as part of the Education Department had the responsibility of implementing the Region's policy on pre-fives in terms of managing and supervising all pre-five establishments resourced by the Region. Thus responsibility for day nurseries, family centres and children's centres was transferred from the Social Work Department to the Education Department.

However, the 1985 report did not spell out in any detail how the Pre-Five Unit should function in its management and supervising role. Demarcation of responsibility boundaries were not addressed leaving uncertainties about the locus of decision-making within the Region's Education Department, specifically the distribution of responsibility between staff at headquarters (i.e. Region) and staff in the different area-based Divisions.

Whilst there will be a strong central direction from the new Pre-Five Unit, there will also be a considerable reliance on staffing resources at divisional level and it is nevertheless felt that they should be supported by the creation of a new post at divisional level. This 'Divisional Pre-Five Officer', would co-

ordinate and manage pre-five services at divisional level and offer support to senior staff in the development and integration of existing pre-five provision. (SRC, 1985, p 23)

In the view of the obvious requirement for central control and direction of the new unit particularly in the early stages of development, it is recommended that pre-five divisional staff should report direct to the Depute Director and Assistant Director at Headquarters. (SRC, 1985, p 23)

Such an arrangement imposed considerable difficulties both for divisional staff and for unit staff in the sense that Divisional Education Officers, hitherto responsible for educational institutions in their area, were left in an ambiguous management role vis-a-vis pre-five provision. Similarly unit staff had to function without clarification of their powers.

The issues were addressed in a subsequent report on the management of the Region's Education Department by the Institute of Local Government Studies (INLOGOV) in the University of Birmingham (1989). This report recommended a major re-organisation of the Education Department, the effects of which, if implemented, would result in the transfer of administrative responsibilities for pre-fives from the Pre-Five Unit to the Divisions and the disbanding of the Unit itself. Many of the report's recommendations were accepted by the Region and the Pre-Five Unit was disbanded in 1989, though co-ordination of the pre-five services remained with the Education Department. Inevitably such a change had an effect on the delivery of the services. Uncertainties were temporarily exacerbated and as a consequence, the impetus of the community nursery programme was undermined.

2.2 3 Staffing Duality

The vast majority of professional staff in the direct provision of pre-five services are either nursery nurse trained (a 2 year course) or have teacher training (a 4 year course). Apart from vastly different remuneration levels, there are also differences in conditions of service, which in reality depends on the type of institution worked in. This resulted in significant status differentials between the two professional groups despite the fact that there is a substantial overlap in their day-to-day responsibilities. Furthermore promotion prospects differed widely given the small number of day nurseries and the rule that only teachers could be appointed heads of nursery schools and classes. Although the 1985 report did not address all these issues it did recognise that in the development of new services the head of centre should be appointed on administrative conditions of service and need not necessarily be a teacher, though teachers should be appointed to day nurseries etc.

Total resolution of professional duality was clearly beyond the powers of the Region in the short-term and depended to a large extent on the training institutions. If the training of nursery nurses could be improved then there would be less justification in maintaining the differential.

However, the 1985 report did recognise that -

**there will be a change in roles required for teachers and nursery nurses through development of a team approach and this would argue for early implementation of comprehensive staff development and training.
(SRC, 1985, p 38)**

2.2 4 Targeting of Provision

A major policy issue for any local authority is the substantial number of young children living in poverty. It is well recognised that Strathclyde Region is at the deep-end of this social evil. The Region is faced with poverty levels which not only permeate all aspects of life of the citizens living in the Region but have a powerful effect on the delivery of all public services. In a recent survey (Penn and Scott, 1989) of 1000 families in Strathclyde it was found that 28% of families had incomes below recognised poverty thresholds and that one in three children under five lived on the margins. There is convincing evidence now available to show that pre-five provision can have long-term positive effects (e.g. Berruta - Clement et al, 1984) on a range of social and economic criteria.

Ever since the establishment of regional authorities in Scotland in 1975, Strathclyde Region has consistently adopted a policy of positive discrimination in favour of the disadvantaged. Its two major policy statements, **Multiple Deprivation** (1976) and **Social Strategy for the 80's** (1983), have guided the nature and extent of those services for which it is responsible. Quite rightly the Regional Council therefore agreed in 1983 to invest energy and resources into the pre-school domain.

However, given the fact that places are in short supply, allocation of places had to be selective. In line with the Council's overall policy, the targeting of places, was aimed at both selected geographic areas and specific families within these areas suffering disadvantage. The location of new provision was, therefore, targeted at areas of need whilst access to the provision was regulated through a regional admissions policy. Essentially this policy published in April 1989 categorised all applications for a place on the basis of social and geographic criteria. Four categories were used in the original policy:

Category 1 admissions with highest priority were:

child abuse referral; referral for children 'at risk' from family breakdown; referrals for children with special educational needs and referrals from a doctor or a health visitor.

Category 2 admissions were:

children from single parent families; ethnic minority children where English was not the first language; children from families under stress (e.g. large families, disability) and children who would narrowly miss admission to the local primary school because of date of birth.

Category 3 admissions were:

local children within the catchment area; children with working parents who live outside the catchment area but who worked locally and children whose names had been on the waiting list for a long time.

Category 4 admissions with lowest priority were:

children outwith the catchment area.

Decisions on admission were to be taken by an area **Admissions Panel** consisting of the heads of the nurseries and representatives of all the relevant agencies (social work, health, and psychological services). Analysis of the functioning of the admissions procedures to the community nurseries appears in Chapter 4.

2.2 5 Partnership with the Voluntary Sector

Partly because of the shortage of local authority provision, the voluntary sector has for many years provided pre-school services such as playgroups, mother and toddler groups, family centres and parent support groups. In 1990 there were 684 playgroups in Strathclyde providing 16,611 places. (Scottish Office **Statistical Bulletin**: Edn/A2/1992/11). However it would appear that this is an underestimate when compared to data supplied by SPPA (**Facts and Figures**, 1990).

Given the relatively low cost of voluntary sector provision, both central and local government attach considerable importance to this form of provision. For example, the SRC report **Under Fives** reinforced the view that the voluntary sector should be regarded as an integral part of pre-five services capable of enhancing and complementing the Council's direct provision. Future plans for the development of services or the redeployment of resources were intended to have the full involvement of SPPA. The 1985 report recommended that:

The Pre-Five Unit should establish and maintain close working relationships with SPPA. (SRC, 1985, p 50)

One of the two pilot community nurseries featured in this investigation attempted to implement this policy by working in close partnership with the voluntary sector (see Chapters 5 and 6).

2.2 6 Status of pre-five provision

Despite the fact that pre-five places being in big demand and that the early years are deemed by psychologists to be vitally important, it seems incredible that the status of this sector of public services is so low. There are a number reasons for this. There is no obligation on the part of central government (or indeed local government) to make provision available, though since 1945 there has been statutory duty on education authorities in Scotland to make adequate provision for nursery education but, because of other demands on resources, successive governments have been unwilling to let education authorities carry out this duty. Remuneration levels of the largest professional group working with pre-fives (i.e. nursery nurses) are exceedingly low. After 7 years of service the salary of a nursery nurse is less than £10,000 (as at 30.06.92) and conditions of service especially in day nurseries can be strenuous. Nursery nursing is now one of the few low paid female professional occupations. In recent years a number of attempts have been made to raise the status of the pre-five sector, the most notable being that of Strathclyde Region.

2.3 COMMUNITY NURSERIES

2.3 1 Background

The idea of a community nursery is not new. Pugh (1988) reports that the first nursery centre combining full day care with nursery education opened in Coventry in 1971. Some of the issues arising from these early developments are outlined by Ferri et al (1981) and graphically illustrated by Gilkes (1987) who documented her experience of setting up and running the Kirkby Nursery Centre in Sutton-In-Ashfield. However it was not until 1983 that a realistic working model began to appear with the opening of the Pen Green Centre in Corby. The centre was jointly managed by the LEA and SSD to provide a comprehensive service for parents and

their children from birth to 5 years. It was open all day and for 50 weeks a year. However, Pugh (1988) identified a number of specific problems arising from the development of combined or community nurseries. They are:

- admissions policies with different criteria for admission which mean that 'social service' children may have to pay for their day place, whilst the 'education' children are admitted free;
- staffing, where nursery teachers and nursery officers who are apparently doing very similar jobs are unequally rewarded - teachers being paid up to a third more than nursery officers, and enjoying 12 rather than for or five weeks' holiday;
- lack of training and support for staff, who are likely to find themselves working in a very different situation to that for which they were initially trained - working with the whole family, and with other professionals;
- management of centres, where the head is often left to translate the theory of co-ordination into practice, with lack of clear directives and confusion between departments; or where two separate heads (one appointed by education and one by social services) attempt to provide a co-ordinated service;
- skills required by heads in managing a diverse team and becoming clear about different roles and responsibilities, and in coping with the sense of isolation and stress felt by being neither part of education nor social services;
- building inadequately designed and with too little space for their flexible, community-based role.

All of these issues are highly pertinent to the development of community nurseries in Strathclyde.

2.3 2 The Community Nursery Model in Strathclyde

The SRC report **Under Fives** endorsed the concept of a community nursery referred to by Penn as:

the flagships of the Council's philosophy on pre-fives. (Penn, 1985, p 40)

It was intended that the new nurseries would offer high quality pre-school provision that would:

- be open 8 a.m to 6 p.m., Monday - Friday for 52 weeks per year
- take children from birth to five years on a flexible basis to suit the needs of families based on the Region's admissions policy
- employ all staff (teachers and nursery nurses) on the same conditions of service
- employ local experienced childcarers not necessarily professionally qualified

- be managed by a head not necessarily a teacher
- work with all the relevant agencies concerned with children, including the voluntary sector

Inevitably such radical proposals (the first such proposals to appear in Scotland) generated a heated debate. Criticism and resistance abounded not least from the teaching establishment particularly the Educational Institute for Scotland (EIS) which regarded these new nurseries as demoting teachers and diluting traditional nursery education. As Penn (1988, p 120) stated:

What is at issue is the hegemony of nursery education and its supremacy and discreteness as a service to young children.

She went on to state that the new nurseries

are seen to be doubly threatening because they demand that formal teaching skills be re-evaluated and further suggest that nursery schooling itself may no longer be the most appropriate service to meet tomorrow's needs.
(Penn, 1988, p 120)

Sullivan, the then assistant secretary of the EIS, is reported in the Press 1989 as saying that as a trade union, the institute could not accept conditions which would entail teachers working longer hours for less pay and with shorter holidays.

The Region had no intention of yielding. Despite considerable public pressure and personal attacks on the Head of the Pre-Five Unit, the Region began planning for six community nurseries in 1988/9, though as it turned out by the end of 1990 only two had materialised.

However it was never the Regional Council's intention to convert all its existing nurseries overnight:

While the Member Officer Group consider the 'community nursery' concept reflects the kind of integrated and flexible service which they would like to see developed, it is the group's recommendation that the conversion of existing nurseries into 'community nurseries' should be introduced on a gradual progressive basis rather than seeking immediate conversion of all nurseries in Strathclyde.
(SRC, 1985, p 29)

Concurrent with these developments the Region commissioned an extensive consultation of families with pre-five children. The aim of the survey was to provide a view of the circumstances, priorities and preferences of the consumers of pre-five services. One thousand families were contacted using a one-in-ten sample of all families with children under five, in 29 postcode sectors. One of the main findings from the survey (Penn and Scott, 1989) is that parents expressed a clear preference for flexible local services over an extended form of nursery education, though out of existing types of provision, nursery schooling was the most popular.

The Region took this finding as vindication for its policy of developing community nurseries and as stated earlier two such pilot nurseries were established in 1990: Three Towns Community Nursery in Ayrshire serving the towns of Saltcoats, Ardrossan and Stevenston and Jigsaw Community Nursery in Dunbartonshire serving the area of Muirhead and South Strathkelvin.

These new establishments have got to be seen in the context of a multiplicity of pre-five services and current trends elsewhere to meet changing family needs. Whilst Strathclyde Region is the only local authority in Britain to bite the 'integration bullet', other local authorities have attempted to develop similar flexible provision in the form of family centres, children's centres and combined centres etc.(Ferri,1981).

Family centres are for families in need. Their common aims are to strengthen such families in the care of their children.
(Cannan, 1992, p 24)

Family centres aim to provide community-based facilities, such as counselling, welfare rights, keep fit etc. and daycare, primarily for families in difficulty. They are run by social work departments and voluntary child welfare organisations. Many family centres have developed from day nurseries and children's homes. As such there is a danger that users or potential users will see themselves as negatively labelled and hence stigmatised, resulting in a loss of pride amongst their neighbours and friends. Not until social work adopts a broader remit, viz. crisis work being part of a general community development, will this danger and hence limitation be removed. Only then will family centres be able to move out of their narrow association with families who do not cope to become as some aim to do, general services for families at a neighbourhood level i.e. the social action aspect of social work becoming as important as the policing aspect.

By locating the development of community nurseries in the Education Department, Strathclyde Region is attempting to overcome some of the above difficulties but at the same time is setting up a stringent gateway for access to the new nurseries through the admissions policy.

2.4 CRITICAL ISSUES IN THE PRE-FIVE NATIONAL DEBATE

In a wider context at least four critical issues can be identified:

- . extent of provision in relation to provision in other EC member states
- . the co-ordination of services
- . the quality of provision
- . curriculum

2.4 1 Extent of provision compared to other European countries

The most recent comparative study to provide information on publicly funded pre-school provision in EC member states is that conducted by Moss (1990). The data in Table 2.3 show the relative provision in the twelve member states in 1988/9.

Table 2.3: Places in publicly funded childcare services as % of all children in the age group

	Date to which data refer	For children under 3	For children from 3 to compulsory school age	Age when compulsory schooling begins
Germany	1987	3	65-70	6-7 years
France	1988	20	95+	6 years
Italy	1986	5	85+	6 years
Netherlands	1989	2	50-55	5 years
Belgium	1988	20	95+	6 years
Luxembourg	1989	2	55-60	5 years
United Kingdom	1988	2	35-40	5 years
Ireland	1988	2	55	6 years
Denmark	1989	48	85	7 years
Greece	1988	4	65-70	5 1/2 years
Portugal	1988	6	35	6 years
Spain	1988	?	65-70	6 years

Source: Moss, P. (1990) *Childcare in the European Communities 1985-1990*, EC.

The UK ranks with Portugal as being the worst provider of all EC States. When UK statistics are put alongside those of France, it is quite clear that Britain is appallingly poorly provided. Britain is out of line with other Member States.

This issue is intensely ideological. Successive Conservative governments in the UK (though the Labour governments of the 1970's are not exempt) have consistently refused to allocate substantially more public funds to expand pre-five provision, despite all the wealth of evidence for the very significant benefits - economic, social and psychological - of such services (Berruta-Clement, 1984). Only recently has the Labour Party committed itself to universal provision for all 3- and 4-year olds, subject to parental wishes.

Cohen (1988) in her study of services and policies for childcare and equal opportunities in the UK gave a clear lead and called for the establishment of a national policy and programme:

A coherent and comprehensive national policy is required for childcare provision for all children. A primary objective should be that of meeting the needs of both parents and children through good quality free or low-cost services in which care for

working parents and the stimulation of learning and development are in general seen as common rather than specialised functions.
(Cohen, 1988, p 113)

In her recommendations she stressed that at a national level there should be a lead department responsible for the implementation of this policy.

But the national UK picture remains bleak. Despite the fact that there has been a 30% increase in the total number of 3 and 4-year old children (measured in full-time equivalent terms) since 1981, Table 2.4 clearly shows that this increase has taken place only for four-year olds.

Table 2.4 Children (% of age group) in local authority nursery schools in Scotland 1981 - 1991

	1981	1984	1987	1990	1991
2-year olds	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
3-year olds	19.5	17.4	18.1	18.5	18.9
4-year olds	36.1	39.2	43.3	47.3	48.7

Source: Scottish Office Statistical Bulletin: Edn/A2/1992/11.

Until a future UK government is prepared to commit more public money to this area the extent to which any local authority can itself expand provision for young children living within its boundaries is extremely limited.

Conservative ideology leads its advocates to find solutions to the problem of insufficient provision through the private and voluntary sectors. Whilst successive Conservative governments throughout the 1980's and 1990's have been hamstrung by their 'new right' policies on the family, they have tried to encourage the private sector both directly and indirectly in terms of more independent nurseries and through workplace nurseries for organisations wishing to attract professional women back into the labour market after childbirth. In part the Children Act (1989) is a deliberate attempt to facilitate these developments.

2.4 2 Co-ordination of services

Given the duality of responsibility between Departments of Education and Social Work and the extent of the voluntary sector, most recent writers on pre-fives have recognised that co-ordination of services is a critical issue (Pugh, 1988; Watt, 1990). The House of Commons Select Committee on Education, Science and Arts addressed the issue in its report **Educational Provision for the Under Fives** (1988).

The report examined the arguments for integrating all pre-five services in one local authority department but dismissed these arguments in favour of joint provision and recommended:

Local authorities without joint arrangements between education and social services for the co-ordination of the under fives provision should move speedily to develop such arrangements.

(House of Commons, 1988, p xliv)

The Committee was significantly influenced by the views of Directors of Social Services in that 'integration' could cut off access to vital support services for families in difficulty. The report saw the way forward for solving the administrative duality was for improvement in the relationship between services and more efficient co-ordination. Unfortunately, the report gave no indication as to how relationships might be improved or how co-ordination might become more efficient. Such platitudes are no substitute for David's stones when faced with Goliath!

These issues were again addressed by central government in the Rumbold report (1990). The report stated:

We believe that the achievement of better local co-ordination would be greatly helped if central government gave a clear lead, setting a national framework within which local development would take place.

(DES, 1990, p 29)

To date, no such lead has been forthcoming. However, when considering the issue of integrated and co-ordinated provision in terms of combined centres the report was more optimistic and it urged those contemplating such developments to address the critical issues at the outset:

the pattern of co-ordination should take full account of local needs and opportunities, and should be supported by local policies and management structures. (DES. 1990, p 30)

However, the report stopped short of recommending the expansion of integrated provision. Strathclyde, it seems, is the only local authority in Britain to take this step at the highest level of local government decision-making.

2.4 3 The 'Quality' Debate

Those involved in offering services to young children and their parents aim to make the best use of the resources available to them to offer care and education to children. Within these services, however, a great range of styles of provision and standards of provision exist. While it may be relatively straightforward to examine the numbers of children catered for, the time which the service is available for etc., looking beyond this data to the nature of the child's experience of the service is a much more challenging, though no less necessary, task.

Increasingly those concerned with the provision of pre-five services are conscious of the need to examine the quality of the service offered, particularly as it impinges on the child. The remit of the Rumbold Committee was to consider the quality of the educational experience offered to children. The Committee considered the needs of young children, outlined a suitable curriculum and ways of implementing the curriculum. They also attended to the recording of children's progress, the need to review the provision and the education, training and support

available for adults working with pre-fives. All of these aspects influence the quality of the child's experience. The report of the Committee urges an increased concern with the quality of provision and the ways in which improvements in quality can be achieved and monitored.

At a National Children's Bureau seminar focusing on quality provision for under threes in 1990 three aspects of quality were addressed, the quality of relationships between adults and children, the quality of space, equipment and resources and the quality of learning experiences for the child. Ghedini (1990) referred to a quality day nursery as one which includes basic and precise guidelines covering (amongst other things) the continuous training of personnel, a good structural organisation and regular and specific contacts with families and the community. Another contributor, Calder (1990) referred to the good quality care offered in Sweden and the detailed guidelines specified for this provision e.g. referring to the nature of the physical environment (furnishings, arrangement of activities, outdoor space available) and to the group size and staff ratios.

Academic researchers have increasingly turned their attention to the quality of provision when examining the developmental effects of different forms of child-care. Moss and Melhuish (1991) reviewing evidence on a wide range of factors impinging on the day care experience of young children point out that -

The emphasis now is on gaining understanding, both of theoretical and practical value, of conditions and factors in day care which enhance children's well-being.
(Moss and Melhuish, 1991, p 131)

Writing on educational aspects of day care Sylva (1991) states -

overall the evidence for beneficial effects of pre-school experience for three-to-five year olds on later educational achievement and social adjustment appears to be strong, but the quality of provision will be vital.
(Sylva, 1991, p 119)

Clearly, therefore, an important consideration in examining 'quality' is the relationship between children's development and the nature of the provision. A study of McCartney (1984) on the effects of the quality of day care on language development demonstrated that language development was poorest in centres which were considered to have a low quality of care (a central feature of the quality measure being the degree of verbal responsiveness). Carew (1980) also found that the responsiveness of caregivers (a quality factor) was related to the cognitive and language development of children, with greater responsiveness correlating with increased development.

Turning to social development, research again suggests that this is influenced by the quality of care offered. Phillips et al (1987) examined the influence of variations in the quality of childcare provision on children's social development, controlling for other sources of influence such as age, length of experience of a particular childcare environment and family background. They conclude that their results call attention to the critical need to take into account variation in quality when child care is studied.

In reviewing American literature, Clarke-Stewart (1991) identifies several indicators of quality that impinge on children's development. These are: a well organised and stimulating physical environment; a responsive and trained care-giver; a balanced curriculum; relatively small groups of children and relatively generous adult-child ratios.

Howes (1991) argues that results from a number of studies suggest that when caregivers demonstrate increased sensitivity, contingency and responsiveness towards children then there are positive affects on developmental patterns. She goes on to describe characteristics of child-care environments that favour sensitive, contingent and responsive adult/child interactions. These characteristics include fewer children per adult, adults working shorter hours with fewer housekeeping demands in the child-care environment and being in appropriate environments for child-care. Those care-givers with increased training in child development were also likely to be more sensitive and responsive. The child's security of attachment to the care-giver, peer interactions and social competence are all influenced by the nature of the adult/child interaction. The characteristics of an environment that facilitates this beneficial, responsive style of interaction can then be considered indicators of quality.

But children themselves are not the only group to be considered in the 'quality' debate. Quite rightly Balageur et al (1992) in their EC paper 'Quality in Services for Young Children' identify two further perspectives when considering quality: parents and professionals. To quote from Balageur et al -

Parents are not a homogeneous group. Although they may have common interests, they are as individual as their children. A parent may have different criteria from professionals. For example she may consider maintaining family income as a priority for family stability and therefore seek daycare - whereas professionals may argue that other forms of care are more appropriate for her child. Parents from a black community may feel strongly that white professionals do not fully understand the pressures and oppressions that their children experience. A parent might have a decided view about gender - about the right way to bring up boys and girls - which conflicts with professional opinion. There may be differences about discipline and if and how children should be punished. Professionals sometimes argue that by virtue of their training and experience they have the best interests of the child at heart, and are in a better position to judge than parents what is best.

(Balageur et al, 1992, p 6)

Just as important as the attitude and belief system of parents is the professional perspective of the care-givers - teachers and nursery nurses - in the nursery.

A further area of concern in the quality debate focuses on the tension between promoting quality and monitoring quality. Both Clarke-Stewart (1991) and Harms and Clifford (1980) have argued in favour of setting and monitoring minimum standards as indicators of quality, whereas on the other hand, Balageur et al (1992) have argued in favour of promoting quality:

Our broader aim is to engender discussion and provide a focus for debating high quality services, to look at what we might try to achieve to put our beliefs and our values about children into practice.

(Balageur et al, 1992, p 8)

However, it is clear that in evaluating the pre-five provision which is the focus of this study, assessment of the quality of the services offered was a necessity. It was necessary to examine quality and to do so by means of an objective tool which could be applied, with reliability and validity, to the community nurseries and the traditional nursery schools. Assessing quality in public services is now a major issue. In recent years British governments have attempted to improve the delivery

of public services by an emphasis in quality rather than quantity. Value for money is now a fashionable slogan. However, not only have criteria to be established in the light of the service being provided but the means of measuring and monitoring these criteria have also to be formulated. There are usually two approaches to this issue. Either one can adopt a **qualitative** approach using the subjective judgments of experts or one can adopt a **quantitative** approach based on specific instruments. The former approach has the advantage of being more comprehensive, relevant and subtle but time consuming and open to bias and dispute. The latter is more restricted and inflexible but offers more objectivity and rigour. In the context of the research study and with these limitations in mind it was decided to adopt a quantitative approach (Harms and Clifford, 1980). A quality measure with established validity, reliability and general applicability was therefore, sought and used. Details are given in Chapter 7. It was not the function of the evaluation to promote quality but to assess to what extent new forms of provision could establish a high quality service and maintain it.

2.4 4 Curriculum

The fourth clearly identifiable field in the current pre-five debate is the subject of the 'curriculum' which to many in the pre-five domain is a mystical and confusing concept. However, if we take as our starting point a definition of curriculum as a planned, purposeful and often sequenced series of activities and experiences designed to promote children's learning, some of the mystic embedded in the term itself may be dispelled. But this is not to denounce the complexity of the concept.

Critical questions that follow from this rather simple definition are:

- who has or should have responsibility for planning the curriculum and on what basis does this planning take place?
- what are the purposes embedded in different kinds of activities?
- what priority ought to be given to the different activities?
- how is the effectiveness of children's experiences assessed?

Until now the responsibility for the defining the curriculum for 3 and 4 year olds in nursery schools and classes has been with the teaching profession - the traditional craft knowledge of teachers being handed down through training and experience.

However, whether this is right and proper that this investment of responsibility in the teaching profession should continue is now under consideration. The 5-14 Programme in Scotland and similar developments in England and Wales, whilst not specifically targeted at the pre-five sector, undoubtedly will have an impact.

Both the House of Commons Select Committee report on the under-fives and the Rumbold report make substantial reference to curriculum issues. The former recognised that the impact of national curriculum in primary schools may result in pressure for young children to start on formal learning too early. However, the report firmly reinforced the view that nursery teachers should be paramount:

they are the only members of the teaching profession who from their first day as a probationer must be seen as a team leader working with other professionals.
(House of Commons, 1988, p xxiii)

More recently the Rumbold report also reinforced the position of nursery teachers:

educators should guard against pressures which might lead them to over-concentration on formal teaching and upon the attainment of a specific set of targets. (DES, 1990, p 9)

Responsibility for the pre-school curriculum will, it seems, remain the prime responsibility of the teachers. It is, therefore, up to local authorities and the training institutions to chart the way forward. But not everyone is happy with the current situation.

Watt (1990) articulates some of the criticisms of the current nursery curriculum:

In the 1960's and 1970's there were strong criticisms, particularly from those involved in the compensatory movement in the United States that the conventional play-based curriculum did not present enough challenge and did not exploit the potential of many children from disadvantaged backgrounds. (Watt, 1990 p 79)

Taking these views with the evidence from modern psychological research, a strong case can be made for more structured learning.

As Wilkinson (1992) states:

The informality of the nursery must be preserved - it is just as important for children to develop socially, emotionally and physically as it is to understand the world. On the other hand more structured learning will not necessarily generate more anxiety and tension in children as claimed by some. On the whole, our children both can and want to do more. It is our moral duty to provide children with environments that feed (their) avaricious curiosity. (Wilkinson, 1992, p 8)

It is the work of Tizard and Hughes (1984) in their much quoted book **Young Children Learning** and the re-discovery of the work of Vygotsky that have fuelled these arguments.

The central issue within the curriculum debate on purposes and priorities is the role of play - in particular, 'free play'. No one aware of the needs of young children can deny that play is important but whether periods of so-called free play in the nursery curriculum are so sacrosanct is open to question.

Free play is a phenomenon of the British nursery school and is virtually unknown in such countries as say China (Huang, 1989) where formal lessons are part of the daily routine. A body of professional opinion is now emerging that takes the view that nurseries ought to take more seriously what Tizard and Hughes (1984) call 'passages of intellectual search' and demote the emphasis on free play.

Other contemporary curriculum issues such as gender, race, health and hygiene etc. are equally important matters in shaping the attitudes, awareness and behaviour of young children (Penn, 1992). There is now evidence to show that children under five are picking up alarming attitudes to other races (Alhibaj, 1987). However, the situation with gender is less clear cut, the contemporary evidence being that boys, at least in formal school achievement terms, are now performing at a significantly

lower level than girls (see Scottish Office **Statistical Bulletin** Edn/ E2/1992/5). Many nurseries include **race** and **gender** issues as part of curriculum planning as it is in the pre-school stage that education can play a critical role.

However, the critical issue facing the new community nurseries is whether they can innovate with curricular matters whilst at the same time maintaining the quality of provision offered in more conventional nurseries.

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CHAPTER 3

THE NURSERIES: LOCATION, PROVISION AND FAMILIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

It was originally intended that the evaluation research would take place in three community nurseries and one nursery school; the community nurseries being the first three such nurseries in Strathclyde following the 1985 report **Under Fives**.

The community nurseries were:

- Three Towns Community Nursery in Saltcoats, Ayrshire
- Jigsaw Community Nursery in Muirhead, Dunbartonshire
- Hozier Community Nursery in Uddingston, Lanarkshire

Unfortunately due to planning delays uncertainties about the future and community conflict regarding the most appropriate form of pre-five resource, Hozier nursery was dropped from the research in the Spring of 1990. A description of the situation is given in Annex 3 which casts light on some of the critical issues in developing new initiatives.

In addition to the above, a comparative nursery school was chosen as a benchmark against which aspects of the new community nurseries could be evaluated. The school chosen was

- Buchlyvie Nursery School in Easterhouse, Glasgow

This purpose built nursery was one proposed by staff of the then Pre-Five Unit of Strathclyde Regional Council both for being an example of a good conventional nursery school in terms of curriculum content, organisation, relations with parents and external agency co-operation and for being located in an 'Area of Priority Treatment' (SRC,1976). Once it was established that the nursery staff would co-operate fully with the research team, the principal researcher agreed to its inclusion in the study.

3.2 LOCATIONS

Three Towns Community Nursery

'Three Towns' refers to the towns of Saltcoats, Stevenston and Ardrossan located on the Ayrshire coast opposite the island of Arran. Whilst each of the towns has its own individual identity, the whole district is one of contrast - some areas being relatively well to do with others suffering from acute socio-economic problems. Many traditional industries have declined and unemployment in the area is high. Within the three towns there are four Areas of Priority Treatment: Ardeer (Stevenston), Ardrossan Central, Hayocks (Stevenston) and Saltcoats South. Annex 3 provides statistical information on the number and situation of children aged 0-4 in the two electoral districts in which the three towns are located.

The Chief Executive's Office of Strathclyde Regional Council provided the research team with data on families in each of the four APTs. Table 3.1 shows the **number** of single parent households in 1989 and Table 3.2 shows the **increase** on single parent households over the period 1987-1989.

Table 3.1 Household Composition in the APTs in the Three Towns area of Ayrshire, 1989

APTs	No. of Households with 0-4 year olds	Two Parent Households with 0-4 year olds		Single Parent Households with 0-4 year olds	
		No	%	No	%
Ardeer	121	62	51	59	49
Haycocks	267	184	70	83	30
Saltcoats South	390	270	69	120	31
Ardrossan Central	235	183	78	52	22

Table 3.2 Changes in Households in the APTs in the Three Towns area of Ayrshire 1987/9

APT	No of Households with 0-4 year olds	% increase	No of single parent households with 0-4 year olds	% increase
Ardeer	+ 18	17.5	+ 26	78.8
Hayocks	+ 87	48.3	+ 34	69.4
Saltcoats South	+136	53.5	+ 45	60.0
Ardrossan Central	+ 75	46.9	+ 17	48.6

By any standards the data in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 are alarming. Just about half of all the families with children under school age living in the Ardeer district of Stevenston are single parent households. **This is more than three times the national average.** Furthermore there had been an 70% increase in single parents in the years 1987-9. Whilst the percent of single parent households in the other three APT areas is not so acute, the levels are still more than double the national average and here again significant increases had taken place over the period 1987-9. **Clearly these areas were in dire need of childcare facilities.**

In 1987 only 16% of the under-five population in Saltcoats and Ardrossan attended any local authority provision. Within the Three Towns there were no full-day childcare facilities and no facility which offered a 'one door' service incorporating flexible full-time or part-time care with an educational and care component. The area had been identified as having a higher than average incidence of deviance, child abuse (all categories including incest) and a significant number of identified behavioural and developmental difficulties yet no specialist services were available to offer intensive support work to families with pre-five children. In 1987/88 a total of 36 children under the age of 5 were referred to the Social Work Departments District Admissions and Support unit as requiring residential care.

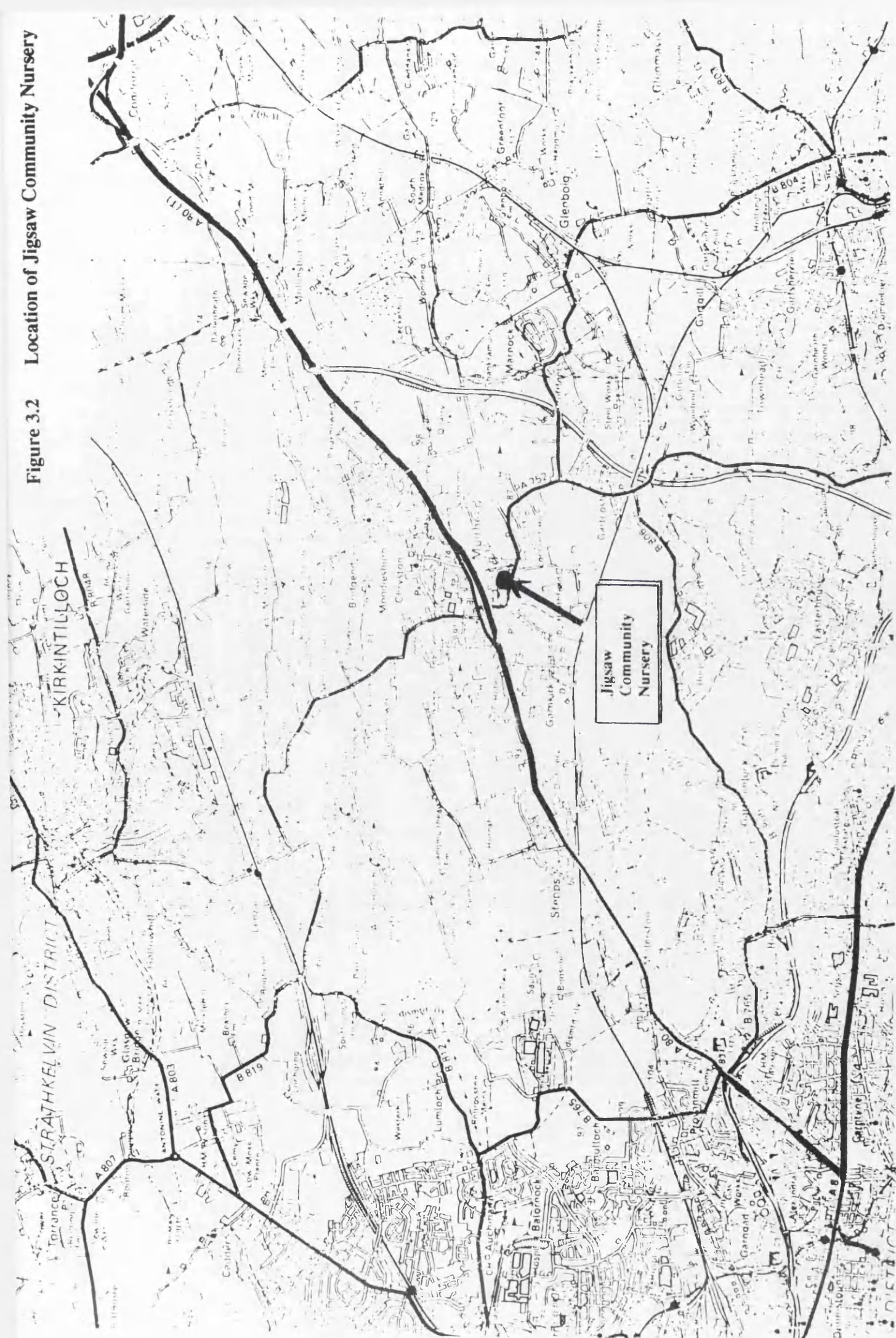
Existing provision in the area consisted of a nursery school (Springvale) and two nursery classes attached to local primary schools (Hayocks and Stanley). In all cases provision mainly consisted of 5 half-day sessions per week.

The community nursery is located in the extensive grounds of Springvale Nursery School in the seaside town of Saltcoats (see Figure 3.1). The nursery was designed to operate on two sites: a converted janitor's house adjacent to the nursery school (the school originally being a local hospital) and a small local community centre (the Caley Centre). Unfortunately, insufficient funds were available at the outset to establish a purpose built-nursery. As will become evident in subsequent chapters, this fact created major problems for all concerned not the least the Head of Centre.

Due to extended delays in converting the accommodation from a large near derelict house on the Springvale campus to a nursery, temporary accommodation had to be found. For the first year of the community nursery project, therefore the children were accommodated in the community wing of a local primary school (Mayfield). The Caley Centre also proved to be grossly inadequate for pre-school children so accommodation was made available at one of the local secondary schools (Auchenharvie). Clearly both locations were far from ideal. Furthermore, it soon became apparent that the planned accommodation at Springvale campus was inadequate for all the children the project was intended to cater for.

In the summer of 1991 once the Janitor's house at the Springvale campus was compete, only the children previously housed at Mayfield were transferred. At roughly the same time it was planned to transfer the pre-five children in Auchenharvie Secondary School to surplus accommodation in another primary school (Glencairn). However, further difficulties beset these plans. Not only were staff and some members of the Glencairn School Board antagonistic to the presence of disadvantaged children in 'their' school, the building was eventually deemed to be a fire risk for young children by the Firemaster. The necessary resources required to rectify these fire hazards were unforthcoming from both central and local government. Thus, this part of the nursery had to remain in the local secondary school which by any criteria was clearly far from ideal. **Therefore, at the outset the Three Towns Community Nursery was beset with major complications vis-a-vis accommodation.** This had a major impact on the extent to which the nursery was able to meet all its aims and objectives (see Chapter 5).

Figure 3.2 Location of Jigsaw Community Nursery



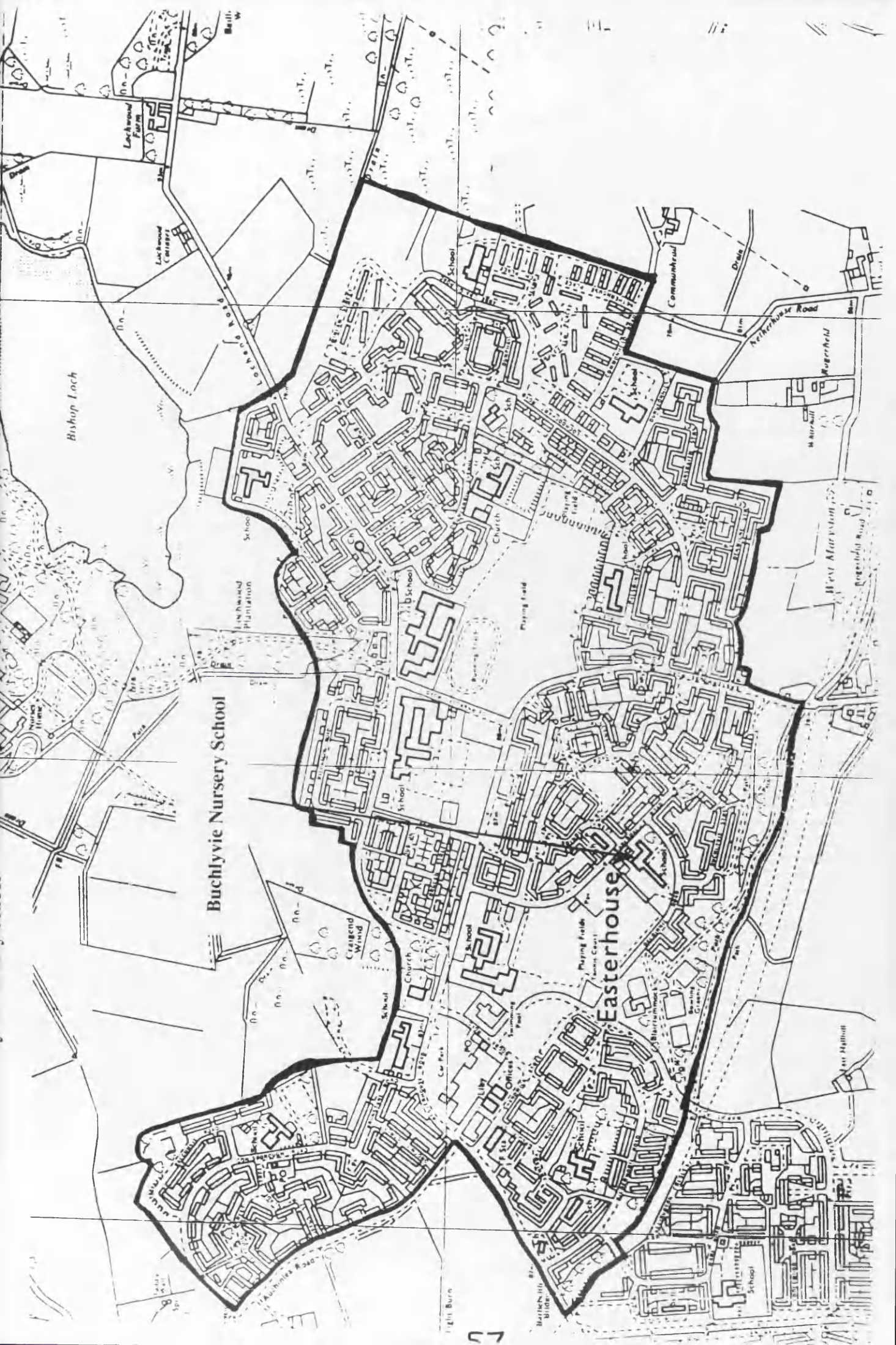
Jigsaw Community Nursery

Jigsaw Community Nursery is located in Muirhead, East Dunbartonshire and serves the area of South Strathkelvin (see Figure 3.2). The area consists of a number of villages within commuting distance of Glasgow. Although most of the catchment area is reasonably comfortable in socio-economic terms, there are a number of pockets where social problems are acute.

The location was chosen because there were no existing local authority pre-five services in the area, the provision that did exist consisted of twelve of playgroups run by SPPA and six mother/toddler groups. While the Pre-Five Unit was making plans for community nurseries during 1988/89 the Link-Up Group covering the Muirhead area carried out a survey looking at the childcare needs of parents. They identified the pressing needs as being: before- and after-school care; the provision of a creche; and a nursery school. Following this survey, the Link-Up groups submitted a proposal (October 1988) for the establishment of a family centre to be located in a surplus secondary school (St. Barbara's). The application was rejected by the Region in February 1989. By this time the Pre-Five Unit was anticipating that it would obtain funding for an alternative plan, a community nursery at St. Barbara's. This influenced the decision with regard to Link-Up's proposals although this was not communicated to the group. The voluntary sector later heard of the Pre-Five Unit's plans in an informal way when they learned of a budget entry relating to a nursery at St. Barbara's later in 1989 the Regional Council eventually approved the plans for a community nursery in St. Barbara's with funding from the Adapting to Change Scheme (a scheme for re-allocating resources generated from the school closure programme).

Buchlyvie Nursery School

This purpose-built nursery school is located in Easterhouse which is a large inter-wars housing scheme (population 45,000) on the outskirts of Glasgow (see Figure 3.3). The whole area is considered to be an APT with acute socio-economic problems, thus attracting additional resources from the local authorities. There are several pre-school facilities in the area.



Buchlyvie Nursery School

Easterhouse

Bishop Loch

Craigend Wind

Light Burn

Muirfield

Rugby Road

West Maryville

Rugby Road

3.3 PROVISION

Three Towns Community Nursery

The community nursery was set up as an Urban Aid project. Its funding was approved by the Urban Renewal Unit of the Scottish Office with a grant for four years from the operational date of the project i.e. August 1989. The Scottish Office had previously rejected an application for a Family Centre in 1986/87 and requested that the application was re-worked. Consequently the local Link-Up Group worked with the Region's Education Department staff and submitted the application for the current project in the financial year 1988/89. Approval was given in November, 1988, but it was not until nine months later that the project became operational with the appointment of the Head of Centre. As it had taken almost five years to reach this stage, many of the children of interested parents had moved on to primary schools.

In line with the proposals detailed in **Under-Fives**, it had been planned that the project would link into existing local pre-five provision, particularly Springvale Nursery School in Saltcoats. This 80 full-time equivalent (FTE) place nursery school offers part-time places to children in the Saltcoats and Ardrossan areas. Although there were initial negotiations to integrate the nursery school fully with the project, this proved not possible and the nursery school continued to operate on a school-term basis with traditional part-time attendance patterns. Staff in the nursery school continued to have nursery school Conditions of Service. However, the school is seen as a constituent part of the project and the Head Teacher was a member of the Senior Management team along with the Head and Depute of the project. The intended management structure and staffing levels are shown in Figure 3.4.

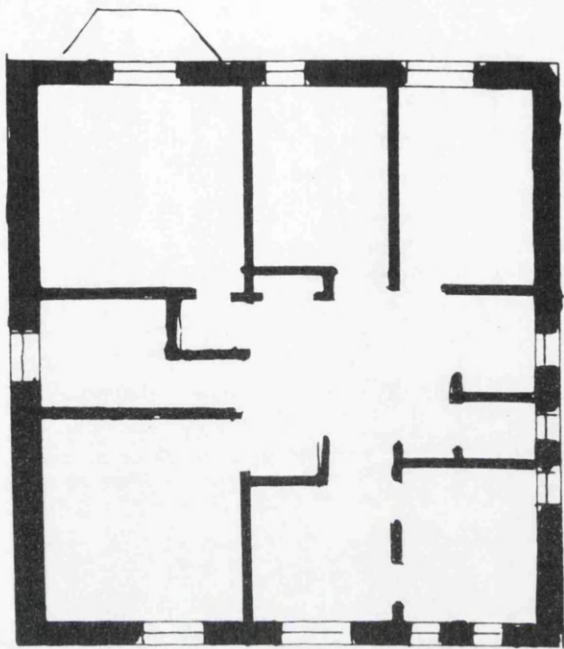
DEPUTY HEAD OF CENTRE

Service	Pre-Five Unit 3-5	Pre-Five Support Unit 0-2	Outreach Pre-Five Unit 3-5	Family Unit	Pre-Five Unit 0-2	Curriculum Development and training
Time	52 weeks 8 am - 6 pm	52 weeks, times variable 10 FTE per session	52 weeks, 8 am - 6 pm 24 FTE per session	52 weeks 9 am - 5 pm	52 weeks 8 am - 6 pm 15 FTE	52 weeks
Staff	1 pre-5 officer	1 pre-5 worker Sessional budget for creche workers (2 FTE pre-5 workers)	1 senior pre-5 officer (2) 2 pre-5 workers	1 senior pre-5(3) 1 pre-5 officer 2 pre-5 workers 1 P/E health visitor (Health Board employee)	1 pre-5 officer 4 pre-5 workers	1 pre-5 officer (2)
Locations	Springvale Campus (extension to existing buildings)	Ardeer Community Ho. Ardrossan Community Ho. - Book in Creches Playgroups throughout the area, operating from Caley Centre	Caley Centre, Stevenston	ground floor of detached home on Springvale Campus	extension to family unit on Springvale Campus	to provide curriculum development to a wide range of services e.g 0-2 unit at Springvale and the outreach services
Comments	It is planned to augment this facility by bringing the existing 80 FTE nursery school into this project managed by the Head of Centre on 52 week operation	It is estimated that 10 sessions per week could be run. Parents will use 'book in' creches to take up appointments, leisure or educational opportunities	General Administrative, cleaning and catering staff as appropriate	Professional links to social work area team will be provided		

1. This model assumes the Head of Centre has an educational background, and the Depute a social work background. It could be reversed with a reversal of responsibilities.
2. staff employed in this category will have teaching qualifications.
3. Staff employed in this category will have social work qualifications (CQSW).

Figure 3.5: Layout of 3-Towns Community Nursery (0-5 Unit and Family Centre)

FAMILY CENTRE



0-5 UNIT

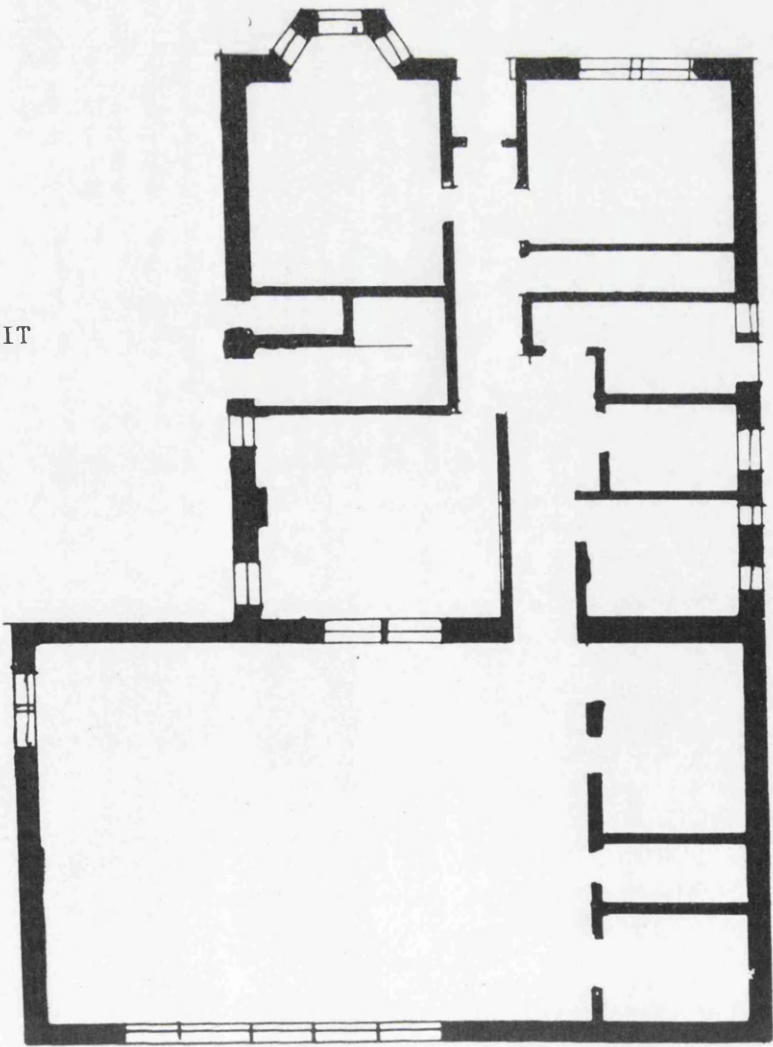
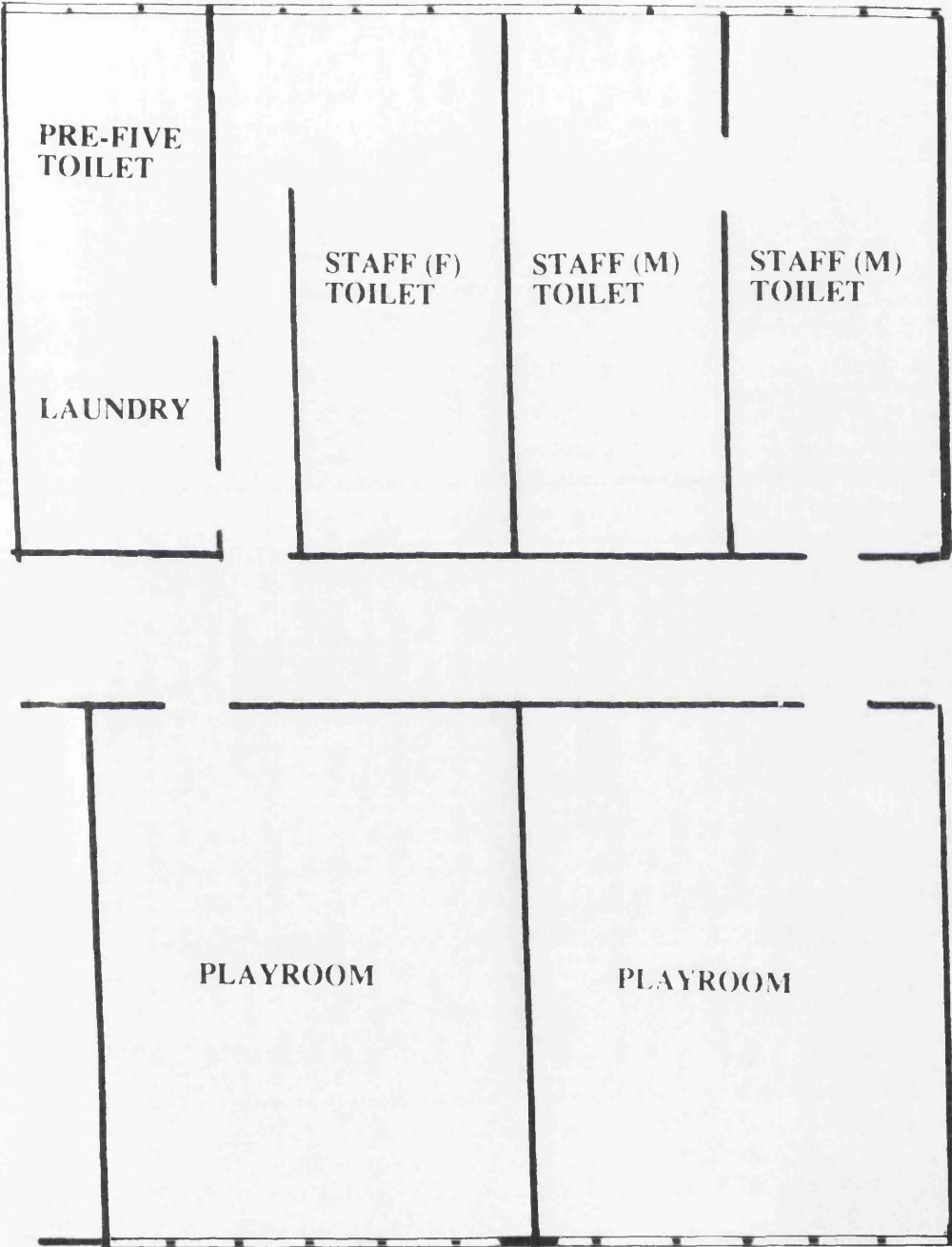


Figure 3.6: Layout of 3-Towns Community Nursery (3-5 Unit)



The Three Towns community nursery was designed to offer the following services:

- a Nursery Centre (0-5 years) offering 35 FTE places open 52 weeks of the year, 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. Monday - Friday and based at the Janitor's House, Springvale Nursery Campus.
- a Nursery Centre (3-5 years) offering 24 FTE places, open 52 weeks of the year, 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. Monday - Friday and based at the Caley Centre, Stevenston.
- a Family Centre - offering intensive support to families, open 52 weeks of the year and based at Janitor's House, Springvale Nursery Campus.
- creche provision - based in Community Houses in Ardeer, Ardrossan and Saltcoats on a sessional basis to allow parents to pursue leisure and educational opportunities.
- a Nursery School - continuation of existing provision but places were to be allocated through an area based Admissions Panel.

The 0-5 Unit and the Family Centre were finally established in the janitor's house in the Autumn of 1990. This accommodation was a two storey building with facilities for children on the ground floor and the Family Centre on the upper floor. See Figure 3.5 for a layout of the floors. A layout of the 3-5 Unit and Auchenhavie Secondary School is given in Figure 3.6.

The management team consisting of the Head of Centre, Depute Head of Centre, Headteacher of Springvale Nursery School and 3 Senior Pre-Five Workers reported directly to the Education Officer in Ayr Division of the Education Department of the Regional Council, though day-to-day matters were later channelled through the Adviser and the Pre-Fives Development Officer. The nursery also had an Advisory Group with a broad representation of the local community and chaired by a local Elected Member of Strathclyde Regional Council. The evaluators were members of this group for the duration of the study. (See Annex 3 for the membership list).

Jigsaw Community Nursery

With finance from the school closure programme to convert St. Barbara's secondary school, Jigsaw Community Nursery came into being early in 1990. A layout of the nursery is shown in Figure 3.7. In partnership with the voluntary sector the provision was planned to provide several kinds of activities:

Day Care Services for children under 5

7.30 - 8.00 a.m. - 6.00 - 6.30 p.m., 52 weeks per year

0-3 years	10 FTE places
	- Number of roll would be higher due to flexible use of places

3-5 years	50 FTE places
	- Number on roll would be higher due to flexible use of places

Messy/physical play area

Messy/physical play area

- area to be timetabled for use by all sections of the nursery

Community activities

Playgroup 3-5 years, 10 sessions per week

Toddlergroup 0-3 years
Childminders drop-in
Toy library
Bulk buy
Creche
Drop-in Community Cafe

Out-of-school care

A small out-of-school care facility would be available for families using the nursery.

A feature of Jigsaw Community nursery is the soft play area which is well equipped with large soft play materials. This area is also used by the playgroup which is located within the nursery campus. Another feature was an enclosed outdoor play area with a hard rubber surface which was overlooked by the cafe.

In addition to the above the nursery runs an after-school care scheme for up to 25 children.

Staff of the nursery consisted of Head, Depute and five nursery assistants. Day to day running of the nursery was the direct responsibility of the Head of Centre though the strategic planning was undertaken by a Planning Group which consisted of Voluntary Sector representatives, representatives of other agencies and nursery staff. The evaluators attended meetings of the Group. (See Annex 3 for the membership list.)

Buchlyvie Nursery School

The layout of this purpose built nursery school is shown in Figure 3.8. The nursery is well equipped with play areas, kitchen, office accommodation and toilets. It catered for 120 3-5 year olds in two part-time sessions of 60 children, each of 3 hours, five days per week. The staff consisted of a Headteacher, an assistant teacher and four nursery assistants.

Figure 3.7 Layout of Jigsaw Community Nursery

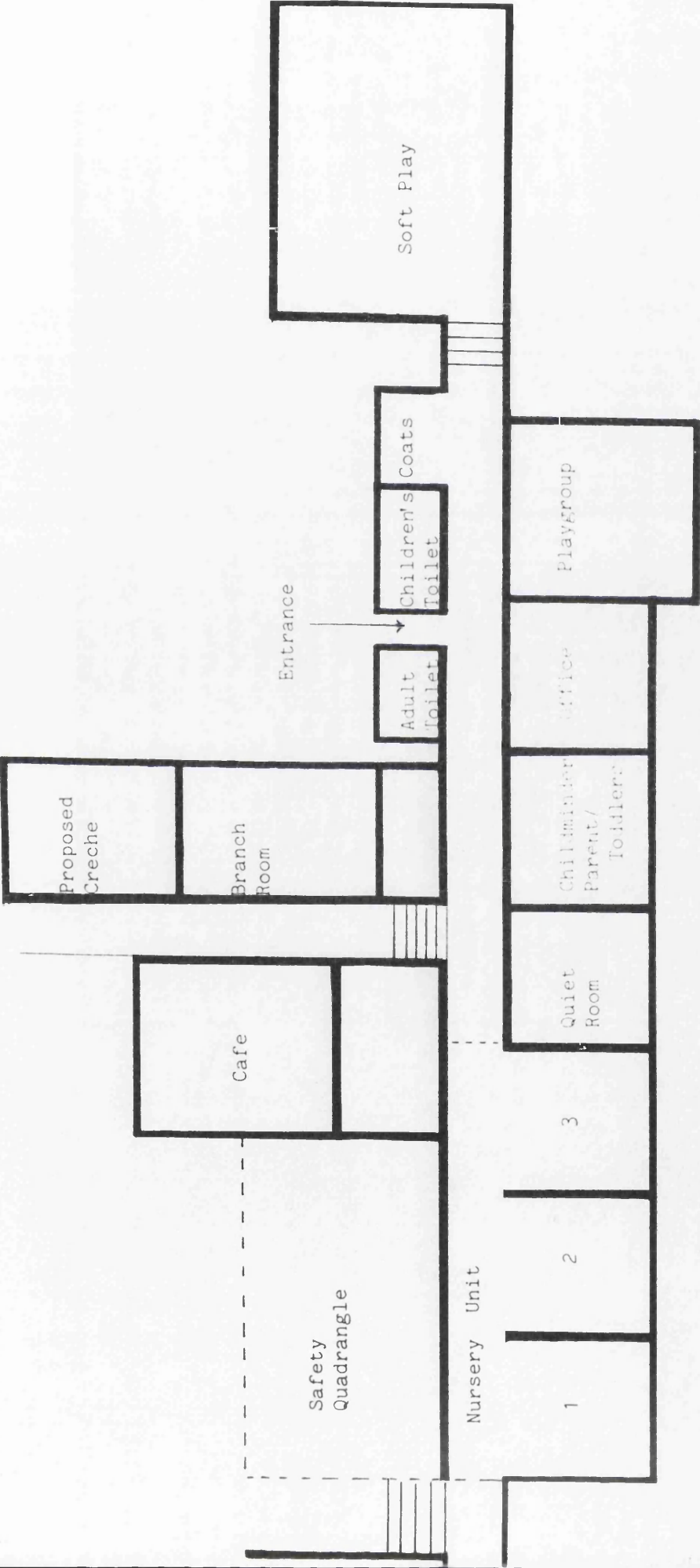
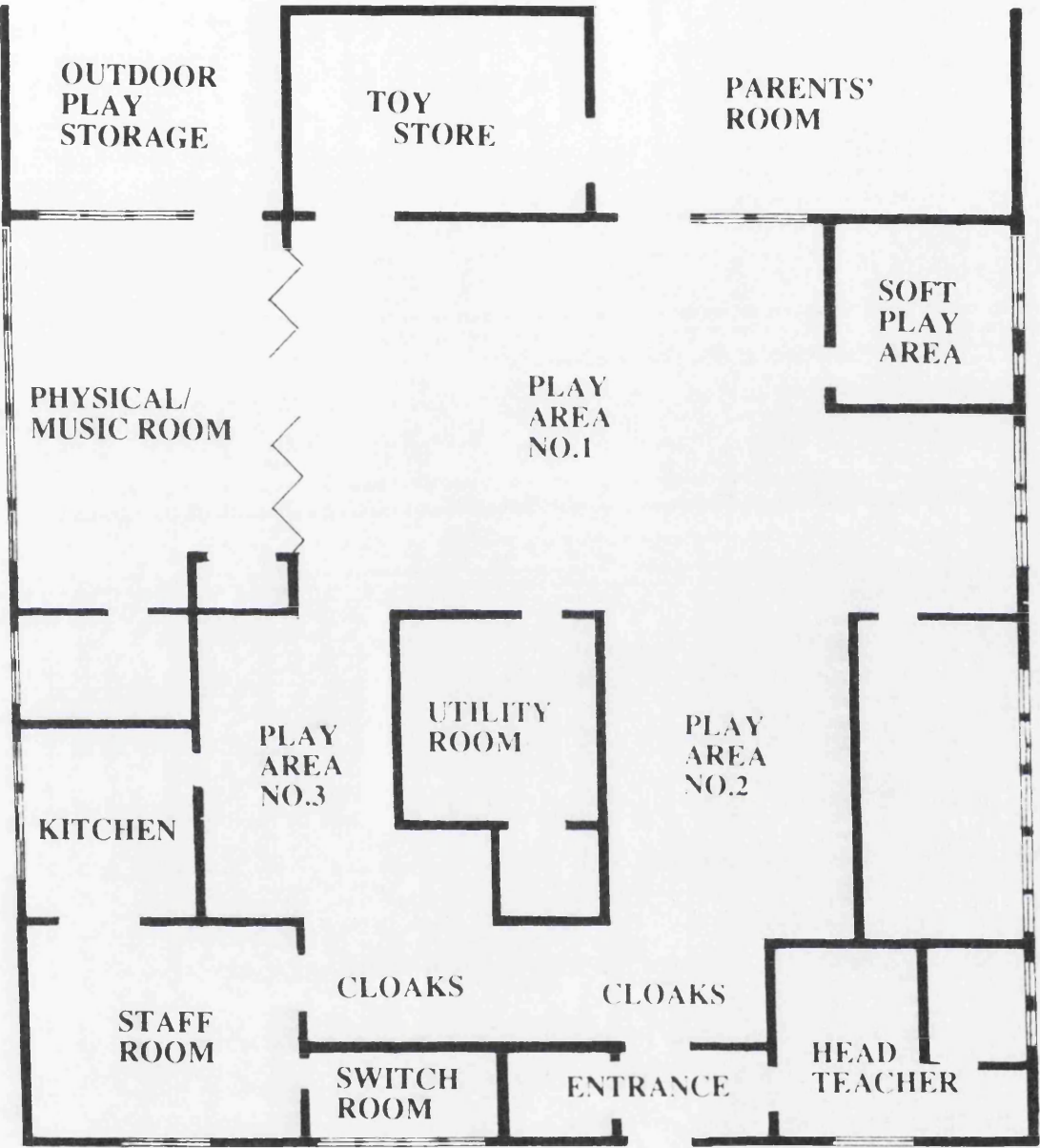


Figure 3.8 Layout of Buchlyvie Nursery School



3.4 FAMILIES

As outlined in Chapter 2, a survey was conducted in the catchment areas of each of the nurseries involved in the study: Three Towns, Jigsaw and Buchlyvie. The purpose in conducting the interview-based survey was to establish comparative data between the three locations in the following categories:

- family structure and socio-economic indicators such as employment patterns, education of parents; income level etc.
- childcare arrangements for children under 5
- attitude towards the new community nursery provision

A copy of the interview schedule is given in Annex 3. The interviews were conducted by an experienced interviewer well known to one of the research team.

Sampling

The surveys were based on a 20% sample of households in each area with children under five. The Three Towns sample of households was chosen from the four APT areas: Ardeer, Hayocks, Saltcoats South and Ardrossan Central. Lists of households were supplied by the Chief Executive's Office of Strathclyde Regional Council based on the Voluntary Population Survey of 1988. Every fifth household on the list was selected giving a sample total of 100 families in the Three Towns area of Ayrshire.

The sample for South Strathkelvin was obtained by sending letters from the local GP to all families with children under five in the villages covered by the Health Clinic in Muirhead (The Chief Executive's Office was unable to provide the appropriate list due to staffing difficulties and officials of the Greater Glasgow Health Board refused to co-operate). The letter asked for families to volunteer their co-operation with the survey by returning a slip to the Health Clinic. Sixty-five families agreed to participate.

At Buchlyvie the sample was chosen by the Health Visitor providing a 20% sample from her lists of families with children under five in the area of Easterhouse covered by the nursery school. Seventy-four families agreed to participate.

An interviewer visited each family in the three locations over a period of six months in 1989. The vast majority of families agreed to be interviewed when approached on the doorstep by the interviewer. In nearly all cases the respondent was the child's mother.

The Main Results

Tables 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 summarise the main findings of the surveys with full statistical information appearing in Annex 3. A number of similarities and differences between the areas are apparent. In terms of family structure, (Table 3.3) the 3-Towns area of Ayrshire and Easterhouse are very similar. In both areas the proportion of lone mothers was **double** the national average and mothers tended to be younger than in South Strathkelvin. Clearly 3-Towns and Easterhouse are suf-

fering from acute disadvantage; at least half of the families were in very difficult financial circumstances i.e. less than 100 per week. Also in both areas, mothers tended to have less education after leaving school and cited lack of childcare facilities as preventing them from seeking work.

Table 3.3 Summary of Family Structure and Socio-Economic Indicators (%)

	3-TOWNS	S. STRATHKELVIN	EASTERHOUSE
Mothers aged 28 or less	60	23	69
Mothers as lone parents	35	6	43
Mothers not working	71	60	88
Mothers with husband/partner not working	15	14	24
Working mothers working full-time	12	17	3
Husbands/partners in SES groups IIIB - V	66	73	97
Mothers in SES groups IIIB - V	86	75	79
Non-working mothers' citing pregnancy as the reason for stopping work	63	64	46
Mothers who preferred not to work	17	14	3
Mothers who gave reason for not working as lack of childcare	41	26	44
Mothers who left school at 16 or before	56	72	86
Mothers who had no education after leaving school	58	32	47
Families with an income of less than 100	49	26	65

With regard to child care arrangements (Table 3.4), again 3-Towns and Easterhouse are similar with nearly half of the families not using any form of pre-school provision, though in Easterhouse more families used local authority nursery schools due to the greater availability of such provision in Easterhouse. Nevertheless the vast majority of mothers in all three areas reported the available childcare facilities as inadequate for their needs. With regard to casual help with childcare, there was a greater tendency in South Strathkelvin to use neighbours whereas in 3-Towns more families used other relatives to help.

Table 3.4 Summary of Childcare Arrangements (%)

	3-TOWNS	S. STRATHKELVIN	EASTERHOUSE
Families who did not use any form of pre-school provision	43	29	49
Families who had a child at a local authority nursery school or class	16	12	31
Of mothers using childcare, those who reported high level of satisfaction with local authority nursery school or class	28	17	58
Mothers who reported current childcare services inadequate	81	97	74
Of mothers using childcare, those who cited social benefits for their child	74	76	89
Of mothers using childcare, those who cited benefit to the mother by allowing a break	60	59	89
Families with relatives who helped with child care	69	58	45
Families with neighbours who helped with childcare	20	38	20
Families reporting no expenditure on childcare outside the home	69	18	58

In terms of new developments in Strathclyde (Table 3.5) despite extensive publicity, the majority of mothers in 3-Towns were unaware of the new community nursery in 1989. Whereas in South Strathkelvin, only one in ten of mothers were not aware of Jigsaw. In all areas nearly half of the mothers reported the desirability of provision for children under three whereas more than three quarters wanted provision for 3-5 year olds. Also in all areas mothers wanted more creches, especially in Easterhouse.

Table 3.5 Summary of Response to New Developments in Strathclyde (%)

	3-TOWNS	S. STRATHKELVIN	EASTERHOUSE
Mothers unaware of new developments	63	15	63
Mothers preferring the new provision for under 3's	41	N/A	46
Mothers preferring the new provision for under 5's	86	75 - P/T 38 - F/T	86
Mothers who reported creche facilities desirable	69	66	81
Mothers who reported not enough done to help mothers	75	75	90

The data from 3-Towns were further analysed for possible relationships between family circumstances and childcare arrangements. Using the χ^2 technique the following statistically significant findings emerged:

- Having relatives who help with childcare increased the likelihood of mothers both working (in particular shift work) and wanting work or further education.
- Mothers who left school at 16 or before tended not to use neighbours for childcare but preferred creches.
- If the mother was a lone parent she was more likely to be dissatisfied with current provision.
- For mothers who work, the reasons for the choice of childcare provision was to allow them to work. Those working full-time or on shifts find the present services inadequate.
- Greater dissatisfaction with services was expressed by mothers with a working partner.
- Where mothers see the present services as inadequate the greatest demand is for provision for under-threes.
- Demand for services for 3-5 year olds is greater for women who want to work.
- Mothers in smaller families want more provision for their 3-5 year olds.

CHAPTER 4

APPLICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

4.1 THE ADMISSIONS POLICY

This chapter will examine the operation of Strathclyde Region's admission policy in relation to the nurseries described in Chapter 3. The basis of that policy was outlined in the Region's report *Under Fives* (1985):

It is recommended that there should be a common set of priority admissions in all establishments. These should include:

- (a) children at risk from family breakdown or where admission would prevent an inappropriate reception into care,**
- (b) children from single parent families with priority given to those in a household of 1 adult only,**
- (c) mentally or handicapped children who would benefit from integration with other children - including those with speech problems,**
- (d) children who narrowly miss the annual intake at school,**
- (e) children referred as a priority by the Social Work Department, Child Guidance Service or the Health Boards. This might include for example children of primary school age or children from families with illness - in both cases only a temporary attendance would be required.**

These criteria should govern all admissions and within all areas an Admissions Panel should be established to allocate full day places and to review current provision and practice in the light of the needs of families.

Admissions Panels should cover areas containing a natural grouping of communities and typically would contain 4,000 pre-five children. Boundaries should if possible, be co-terminus with the operational boundaries of other agencies and the PCO.

The Admissions Panels should be chaired by an officer for the Pre-Five Unit and consist of an officer in charge of a day nursery or children's centre, head teachers, the pre-school community organiser, and SPPA area organiser, a representative of local Social Work area team, a health visitor or community nursing officer from any other appropriate locally based pre-five institution.

Admissions Panels should meet at least bi-monthly and would be responsible for actively targeting services to those in need and to be aware of the needs with the community so that they can encourage the uptake and development of appropriate services.

The recommendations were different in several respects from the previous policy of admitting mostly 4-year old children to nursery school on an annual basis. Although the recommendations (adopted as policy in 1987) continued the targeting of provision at those families in greatest need, they instituted a democratic process of admission panels whereby places were to be allocated all year round. Undoubtedly this policy was appropriate to the areas served by the Three Towns Community Nursery and by Buchlyvie Nursery School where social problems were most extensive.

4.2 ADMISSION PANELS

Admission panels were set up in the two community nurseries in 1990 initially to consider applications and to allocate places to the nurseries. However, in the Three Towns, an **area** admissions panel was only set up in 1992 following a regional directive to cover the two nursery classes and the nursery school in the area, which hitherto had operated a different procedure for allocating places. In line with the policy of the former education authority and based on a categorisation of need, admission to the nursery school and classes took place at the discretion of the Headteacher and was conducted on an annual basis with room for some exceptional admissions as recommended by other professional groups - largely health visitors. In the case of Springvale Nursery School this policy was somewhat different from the Region's policy of all-year round admissions based on an admissions panel. Buchlyvie Nursery School participated in an area-based admissions panel (Easterhouse) along with other nurseries in the area.

Composition of the panels consisted of the nursery Head(s) of Centre, representatives of all relevant agencies - psychological services, health visitors, social work and the Pre-School Community Organiser. The two community nursery panels considered each application according to the criteria outlined in the Region's Revised Standard Circular 3a, (see Annex 4.1). In the case of Easterhouse only full-time applications were considered by the panel, all others being directed to the Headteacher for consideration.

Applications were of three types:

- a **direct** application from a parent
- an application from a parent **supported** by a professional agency
- a **referred** application from a professional agency on behalf of a parent.

The three nurseries participating in the study operated different patterns for dealing with applications. In order to understand these differences, the research team gathered information from three sources:

- interviews with a representative sample of panel members
- direct observation of the functioning of each panel
- scrutiny of the minutes of panel meetings.
- interviews with selected nursery staff (see Chapter 6)

3-Towns Admission Panel

A brief summary of the **interviews** conducted with a sample of Panel members is given below. A more extensive analysis (with supporting quotations from the interviews) is given in Annex 10.

Respondents described the process of referral to the community nursery as 'formal' and following Strathclyde Region's system of categorising applications. All those referring were required to complete a standard form and such referrals were described as 'inter-agency' referrals. Health visitors also made 'supported applications' i.e. in support of applications made by parents though they often confused inter-agency referrals with supported applications. Some referrers also sat on the admissions panel.

Processes of referral to **existing** pre-five provision came into line with regional policy following the establishment of an area admissions panel some two years after the appointment of the community nursery Head. Prior to the advent of the admissions panel, local nursery schools and classes did not fully adopt the regional policy, a situation which was encouraged by a lack of demand for places by social workers in particular. None of the social workers who were interviewed had ever made a direct referral to a local nursery school or class. This is not to say that referrals were not made by other social workers but that the incidence of referral to the nursery school was much lower than with the community nursery (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2). A local system had developed based on the policy of the former education authority which favoured a quota allocation of places to children referred by health visitors and psychological services with the remaining places allocated once a year to applications made by parents. The local system was seen by some as discouraging many of the most needy families from applying for a place.

Health visitors reported the greatest numbers of referrals to the community nursery since it opened, with limited success in gaining places (less than one in five of these referrals were placed). Social workers and psychological services (whose referrals have automatic priority) had a much lower rate of referral but all referrals from these sources had been successful.

Interviewees identified the community nursery as different from other provision though some felt the two forms may become partly interchangeable over time. Social workers tended to view the community nursery as a 'social work resource', never referring cases to other pre-five resources. Health visitors and the Reporter to the Children's Panel shared this perspective - seeing the community nursery as a resource for children with more severe social and developmental problems. Provision of additional staff (within nursery schools) for children with special needs distinguished the nursery school from the community nursery for children with fairly severe handicap or impairment. The characterisation of the community nursery as a social work resource was seen as stigmatising both the resource and the children attending.

All respondents with the exception of the health visitors thought the system was appropriate and given the limited number of places available - fair. Although health visitors recognised the need for prioritisation given limited places, they did not find the current system effective in achieving that aim. One particular problem for health visitors was the confidentiality of information. It was felt that divulging information on inter-agency referrals was a breach of confidentiality. Their perspective reflects their wider remit, (i.e. in terms of involvement with 'normal' and disadvantaged children) and their definition of their role as preventative.

All interviewees felt there were insufficient nursery places to meet demand. Though the educational psychologist and all social workers felt there were probably sufficient places to meet demand for high priority cases.

Panel Meetings

Two meetings were **observed** by separate members of the research team. A summary of each evaluator's notes is given below.

Meeting 1 (07.08.90)

Six members of the admissions panel attended the meeting. There was one absence with apology and one without. Documents had been circulated prior to the meeting. The meeting began at 9.30 a.m. with the Head of Centre in the chair.

Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting were dealt with first. Confirmation of the admissions category for the August applications (18) then took place. The meeting then took decisions on the allocation of places and finished its business at 10.25 a.m.

The evaluator noted the following issues:

- difficulties with inter-agency referrals e.g. in one case no parental application form subsequent to referral had been submitted, in other words, the referrer had not ensured that the parent had completed the application form and thus comprehensive information was not available to the panel to allow it to make a balanced decision
- inability of the nursery project to respond to a temporary crisis in a family i.e. serious injury
- lack of challenge to a decision to categorise a child as a Category 3 application when that child is in foster care from outwith the 3-Towns area i.e. **present** family context was the exclusive consideration, not the totality of the child's social circumstances. The child in question was subsequently admitted to the nursery school from the nursery project's waiting list
- the questionable adequacy of information on the application/referral forms
- concern over the confidentiality of child abuse cases. The chairperson ensured that discussion re child abuse cases was confined to the need for placement rather than the circumstances of the abuse
- priority admission to Category 1 and 2 applications meant that any Category 3 and 4 children were rejected outright. At the first admission panel on 06.02.90 it had been agreed that until the project was fully operational only Category 1 and 2 children would be considered for admission. This was because the nurseries were still based in temporary accommodation and no one expected the renovation to the permanent accommodation to take so long. This raised critical questions about the perceived imposition of the admissions policy by some panel members on the 3-Towns project. Exclusive admission of Category 1 and 2 children undoubtedly aligned the project closer to the 'day nursery' model of pre-five provision i.e. a provision catering for individual families in stress

- the meeting was run **efficiently** (albeit 15 minutes late in starting). Favouritism on admissions and professional 'cosiness' were not in evidence.

Meeting 2 (04.09.90)

Eight members attended the meeting; three were representatives for other members who could not attend. Apologies were received from those absent. Documents were circulated before the meeting which commenced at 9.30 a.m. The Depute Head of Centre took the chair.

Matters arising from the minutes of the August panel were dealt with first; confirmation of the admissions category followed. As the nursery was full, allocations were only made to the waiting list. It was decided to make an emergency admission, with the intention of reviewing the circumstances at the next admissions panel. The meeting closed at 10.45 a.m.

The evaluator noted the following issues:

- category 3 applications were automatically disregarded as being impossible to place (see previous meeting).
- breakdown of communication between the Nursery Project and Springvale Nursery School. The Acting Head of the Nursery School had filled six of the eight places to which staff of the project believed they could make recommendations from their waiting list.
- some applications had to be deferred because of lack of feedback for a supported application, regardless of urgency of the home situation. The panel had decided at a previous meeting that **all** supported applications had to be treated in this way to ensure confirmation of any stressful situation indicated by the parent.
- the main part of the meeting ended and the PSCO left but the Depute Head of Centre and the remaining panel members wanted to continue with the matter of children on the project's waiting list who could possibly be allocated places at Springvale Nursery School. The Acting Head considered the five cases proposed but would only give a definite 'yes' to one. She stressed that she was waiting for feedback that afternoon from placements she had offered. However, she would not disclose the admission categories for any of these placements.
- the main part of the 3-Towns Pre-Five Project and Springvale Nursery School did not appear to be integrating their attack on **their** community's pre-five care issue. There appeared to be a lack of trust between the two.
- the meeting ran smoothly and all those present made some contribution where they felt it appropriate. No one challenged the admission categories suggested by the Chair and it was not clear whether this was because some of those in a deputising role were not fully aware of the categorising policy or because the cases were fairly run of the mill and no actual placements were made.

Some of the above difficulties were addressed at a special review meeting of the panel. The Head of Centre put forward a number of suggestions for improving the way the panel functioned which were discussed at the panel review meeting on 15.11.90. The principal recommendations were:

- all pre-five provision in the area should adhere to Revised Circular 3A and operate via an area admissions panel
- new referral form to be used to give clearer information
- category 1 children be more evenly spread
- consider accepting Category 3 children from the APTs
- better information should be sent to health visitors and to social workers after a child has been admitted

From September 1991, the Heads of the nursery classes in the 3-Towns attended the admissions panel as observers. However it was not until August 1992 that the first meeting of the Area Admissions Panel took place.

Jigsaw Admissions Panel

A brief summary of the **interviews** conducted with a sample of panel members is given below. A more extensive analysis with supporting quotations from the interviews is given in Annex 10.

All respondents (except the Reporter) were in a position to make direct referrals to Jigsaw using a standard 'inter-agency' referral form. However, this particular system was actively avoided by the local Social Work Department and health visitors. The Senior Social Worker preferred where possible to avoid the stigma and formality of this process by advising parents to apply independently and then formally **supporting** their applications. Where the situation required an inter-agency referral (i.e. where children were seriously at risk or parental motivation to apply was lacking) she prefaced the referral with informal discussion with the Head of Jigsaw. Health visitors always made use of supported applications, emphasising the benefits of parental involvement in gaining a nursery place and their wish not to be identified locally as a very direct means of acquiring places - thus avoiding undue pressure from parents. (Children identified by health visitors as seriously at risk were automatically referred to the Social Work Department).

Overall, the process of referral was a formal one but professionals adapted the system to avoid stigma and encourage parental involvement. In view of the demographic nature of the area this system seemed to work effectively in that no evidence came to light of a child in desperate circumstances (e.g. 'at risk') not being allocated a place in the nursery. All applications were considered by the nursery's admission panel which met once a month.

Recommendation to other pre-five provision involved either seeking a place in a local playgroup or in provision outside the area. Both these options presented difficulties whether in terms of parental motivation to attend (playgroups) or because of lengthy delays and the need to transport the child.

Respondents were asked how many children they had recommended to the community nursery since it opened. Health visitors made the greatest number of supported applications but were unable to give accurate figures on the total number so far. The Senior Social Worker had made one inter-agency referral and a number of

supported applications though again figures given were 'guesstimates'. The Educational Psychologist had made one inter-agency referral. Health visitors, being able to refer directly, meant that the need to refer to psychological services for placement outside the area was no longer necessary. Health visitors believed they had been largely successful in placing children (though their information was impressionistic) but that success had begun to diminish as the nursery filled up. The Senior Social Worker had been successful in placing all children she supported.

Respondents were asked to describe the type of child they tended to recommend to Jigsaw. Health visitors felt children typically fell into two groups; those who showed some significant developmental delay or immaturity and those whose family circumstances were stressful. Social Work recommendations included both children seriously at risk of neglect or injury and those showing behavioural problems. The Educational Psychologist tended to refer children with behavioural or learning difficulties. From a more detached perspective, the Area Reporter described children attending the community nursery as a condition of a Supervision Order as those who had special or developmental needs and/or whose family circumstances were problematic.

Referral to provision outside the area had almost ceased since the opening of Jigsaw. Only the Educational Psychologist still referred elsewhere and then only those children whose extra special needs (e.g. children with certain severe and profound handicaps) could not be met in the community nursery. Previously, use of outside nursery provision by social work or health visitors had been confined to children with relatively serious problems but these children's needs were now effectively met by Jigsaw.

Health visitors and social workers saw nursery places outside the area as offering a very similar service to the community nursery. The Educational Psychologist and Area Reporter (who had more extensive experience of pre-five provision outside the area) felt Jigsaw was a unique resource offering more to children and families than any traditional resources. None of the respondents felt that playgroups and the community nursery could be seen as interchangeable resources. Generally, playgroups were identified as resources for younger children, perhaps from families where there were no serious difficulties except social isolation.

Respondents were asked if they found the community nursery's admission's system appropriate and fair. All thought the system was both fair and appropriate given the limited number of places available. Ideally though, all wanted to change the system but change was seen as dependent upon the provision of more places. Some respondents felt the category system had very negative implications for children, families, community relations and the image of the community nursery.

All respondents felt there were insufficient places to meet local demand. The Reporter, Senior Social Worker and Educational Psychologist felt there were probably enough community nursery places to meet their demand from high priority cases but not more general demand. Health visitors, with their higher rate of referral, their tendency to refer more families in less serious circumstances and closer links with families of pre-schoolers were clear about the shortage of places and local resentment of the category system. Likewise, playgroups were described as over-subscribed. All had waiting lists and, inevitably for some children, no pre-school resource was available locally.

Panel Meetings

Two meetings of the Panel were allocated by separate members of the research team. A summary of each evaluator's notes is given below:

Meeting 1 (03.09.90)

Four members attended the meeting including the Head of Centre (chairperson) and Depute of the nursery. An apology was received from the Educational Psychologist. The list of applications was circulated before the meeting commenced at 1.45 p.m.

Matters arising from the minutes of August panel were dealt with. These confirmed the action taken regarding placements subsequent to the panel. The Head of Centre asked the panel if they were happy with the format of details on new applications i.e. name and address, date of birth and proposed category. The Social Worker stated that it would be helpful to know which agency had referred or supported the application. It was agreed to include that information in future.

The confirmation of the admission category for the September applications then took place. The meeting closed at 3 p.m.

The evaluator noted the following issues:

- this particular panel meeting was not representative of the agencies involved e.g. there was no health visitor, educational psychologist nor anyone from the voluntary sector,
- as panel members were not in receipt of copies of the application forms, the Head of Centre read out information from the forms inviting further information from panel members.
- not everyone on the panel was fully conversant with the Region's Revised Circular 3A e.g. social work referrals fell under Category 1 and there was no Category 5. As such some panel members felt that there was little scope for changing/challenging the admissions policy .
- no decisions were made on the allocation of places, it being the practice to admit Category 1 and Category 2 children before the next meeting of the panel where possible at the discretion of the Head of Centre. The minutes of admission panel contain an 'action taken' column which could be questioned by panel members, if appropriate. Children on the waiting list were not regularly deferred to a future panel for a review of their case. In some respects this may be seen as the panel delegating decision-making powers to the nursery management.
- there were three 'review of category' cases and three after school care applications which were dealt with in a similar fashion.
- it could be expected that voluntary sector would have some input on the admission panel especially when the voluntary sector was central to the project's identity. However, the voluntary sector decided at an early stage not to be involved with admissions.

- the evaluator noted that it may have been helpful to the panel if copies of the application forms had been circulated. This would have put them in a better position to assess the home circumstances and allocate an appropriate category. Normally, however, a list of applications was circulated to all panel members at least a week before the meeting.

Meeting 2 (28.11.90)

Five members attended the meeting with one apology from the PSCO.

The Head of Centre, as chairperson, opened the meeting by informing the meeting of the action taken on admissions to the nursery unit since the last meeting of the panel. Discussion then took place on short-term placements in the nursery unit.

A list of current applications had been circulated to panel members prior to the meeting. The list indicated a provisional admission category for each child. The chairperson spoke to each application in turn and categories were confirmed by the panel.

The Social Worker raised the case of a family living outside the catchment area of the nursery. She intimated that there was a suspicion of incest in the family and that there was a long-term contagious illness in the family. The pre-school child in question had been referred to hospital on 13 occasions under suspicion of abuse and there were now 18 professionals involved with the family. It was agreed that the social worker should submit a referred application to the next meeting of the panel for the child to be considered for admission to the nursery.

The evaluator noted the following issues:

- the effective and extensive input of the representatives of other agencies to the discussion of each application. The social worker and the health visitor's contributions to the meeting were critically important. Should, for some reason, neither of these agencies be present at a panel meeting, valuable information would be omitted in the allocation of admission categories.
- the informal style of the meeting was conducive to participation by panel members.

Easterhouse Admissions Panel

As stated previously, Buchlyvie Nursery School is part of the area-based Easterhouse Admissions Panel which considers applications for **full-time** places in a variety of establishments - one family centre, one day centre, 3 nursery schools and one nursery class. Such applications are pooled and admissions distributed across the available places. All applications for **part-time** places were considered by the Head of each nursery on a regular basis.

Consideration of applications for full-time places is subject to the regional admissions policy. Cases of abuse and severe neglect are automatically assigned to category 1 and always involve social work input. Children with special educational needs are also automatically assigned to this category, though the child's presenting of problems may be of a different nature. Assignment of applications to other categories reflect situations of varying degrees of difficulty for the child or family, the lower categories indicating least priority.

A brief summary of **interviews** conducted with a sample of panel members is given below. A more extensive analysis with supporting quotations from the interviews is given in Annex 10.

Of those interviewed only the Social Worker made direct referrals to the nursery and other local resources. Health visitors made use of the system of supported applications, referring more serious cases (e.g. where a child is being abused or neglected) directly to the social work department. The Educational Psychologist accepted referrals **from** the nursery but had no role in directing cases for placement there. The Reporter's role (as legal adviser to the children's hearing system) did not involve direct referral of children to any pre-five resource but attendance at these might be a condition of a Supervision Order placed on a child by the Children's Panel. In such circumstances the Order becomes the responsibility of the Social Work Department.

At the time of interview, processes of referral to Buchlyvie were largely informal, except in cases allocated via the admissions panel. Parents were required to complete application forms supplied by the nursery school, but for social workers and health visitors no system of formally recording a referral was in operation. Referrals from the nursery to psychological services was a more formal process supplemented by less formal liaison.

In addition to Buchlyvie, Easterhouse has a wide range of pre-five resources: creches, playgroups, the family centre, a day nursery and other nursery schools. The social worker and health visitor had different patterns and rates of referral to these resources which reflected their characterisation of each resource. The selection of appropriate resources depended on factors presented by the child and family concerned.

Two respondents felt that all of the regional resources were inter-changeable in terms of the care and stimulation offered to the child. The level of support offered to families and the flexibility or number of hours of care offered to the child were factors which determined the selection process, with cases presenting higher levels of domestic difficulty seen as best matched to family centres and day nurseries which could offer more support, flexibility and longer hours. Respondents were asked whether there were sufficient places available for children on their caseloads. Both the Health Visitor and Social Worker felt that there were sufficient places for 3-5 year olds in nursery schools but a shortage of day nursery and family centre places. The Reporter felt there were enough places in all resources to meet demand arising from Children's Panel cases but was unsure about more general demand. The Educational Psychologist (with no direct role in referring children) felt that more places were probably needed across all pre-five resources.

Respondents were asked whether all local pre-five resources operated the Region's admissions policy and if they did, whether or not they felt the system was fair and appropriate. All respondents confirmed that all resources used the admissions system and all felt that it was both fair and appropriate if there were insufficient places to meet demand. All agreed though that ideally every pre-five child should have access to a nursery place.

Panel Meeting

One meeting of the Easterhouse Admissions Panel was observed by one of the evaluators in December 1990. The following is a brief summary:

Eleven individuals attended the admission panel. Those attending represented the full range of pre-five services (excluding voluntary) in the area. There was one social worker in attendance. The meeting was chaired by the Pre-School Community Organiser (PSCO).

Papers provided for the meeting included a full list of children requiring places and those who had been successfully placed since the last meeting.

Matters arising from the previous meeting were discussed. Discussions centred on children who had been allocated full-time places focusing on their progress so far, level of attendance so far and important social background factors.

The chair proposed children for full-time placement who had been referred to the admissions panel. Sources of referral seemed to be Social Work, Health Visitors, Heads of Pre-five services and Psychological Services. No children were placed immediately from the existing list during this meeting.

Those attending the meeting reviewed the position of their own service in terms of full-time places available, the number of children they considered required full-time places from amongst their own current part-time attenders or arising from direct approaches by parents.

The evaluator noted the following issues:

- two points emerged from observation of the meeting which highlight the existence of underlying processes in what appeared to be a group decision-making panel. First, although the meeting appeared to be structured in order to allow the proposal of full-time places and the offer of places from the Heads of services, this did not seem to be the full picture. The Heads of services appeared to act autonomously outside the context of the panel to allocate full-time places. It seemed this process ran counter to and undermined the purpose of the panel which was to pool and **then** allocate places **after** discussion. Heads of services appeared to provide places at their own discretion, albeit on an emergency basis, as well as from the pool. This makes the process of prioritising cases through the panel difficult to assess.
- second, discussion of cases highlighted confusion over the processes of assigning cases to particular categories; Categories 2 and 3 seemed to offer quite a lot of leeway in terms of interpretation.
- the structure and objectives of the panel were subsequently raised with the Chairperson and the Nursery Head. The Chairperson acknowledged that Heads did continue to act autonomously in providing full-time places and made the following observations about the functioning of the admissions panel:
 - (1) In comparison to other local panels the panel under discussion was poorly organised on a practical basis. It had been agreed at the outset that a comprehensive list of children referred be generated and updated regularly. This system had never operated efficiently and hence the panel never became a true decision-making group.

- (2) The continued autonomous practice of Heads in placing children was not a conscious act of sabotage but more a failure to break old habits and adopt a new system.
- interestingly, the Acting Nursery Head saw the panel as a supportive **forum for discussion** - in particular for examination of reasons for allocating full-time places.
 - the chairperson felt that when the admission panel system ran efficiently it was of great benefit particularly in assuring the rapid placement of urgent cases which might otherwise slip through the net. The existence of panels clearly allows both a full exchange of information and exerts a pressure on Heads to justify their decisions and actions. It is possible also that these panels aid community relations in that parents feel their case is most likely to be given full and unbiased consideration in a group decision-making context.

The functioning of admissions panels remains vague. Although attempts to implement them reflect the region's pre-five policy only guidelines for their operation exist at present. They are not a statutory requirement and remain optional.

4.3 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF APPLICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

Statistical information was gathered on applications and admissions to the nurseries which in the case of the two community nurseries was obtained from documents circulated to members of the admission panels. With the nursery schools, data was obtained from the headteachers' records.

The data consisted of a breakdown of **applications** and **admissions** in terms of family circumstances, admission category assigned by the admission panels (where appropriate) and children's ages and are given in Tables 4.1 to 4.4. A summary of the data is given in Table 4.5.

Table 4.1 APPLICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS TO 3-TOWNS TO DECEMBER 1991

Referrals	Family Situation	Admissions Category				Area	Child's Age																		
		Social Work	Psychological	Health	Self		Single Parent	Partner	Respondent Works	Partner Works	Non-APT	APT 1	APT 2	APT 3	APT 4	Under One	One	Two	Three	Four					
APPLICATIONS (N=416)		45	10	31	267	208	142	81	90		84	179	80	00	61	163	48	33	30	83	14	56	137	105	41
ADMISSIONS (N=101)		33	06	17	45	65	34	16	16		61	39	01	00		40	14	12	09	32	01	09	36	40	15

- Notes (a) APT areas a 1 Ardeer 2 Ardrossan Central 3 Hayocks 4 Saltcoats South
- (b) The 4 admissions categories were amended to 5 bands at the end of 1991. Bands 1 and 2 were equivalent to category 1 on the previous system.

Table 4.2 APPLICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS TO SPRINGVALE NURSERY SCHOOL (AUGUST 1990)

Referrals	Family Situation	Admissions Category	Area	Child's Age
APPLICATIONS (N=180)	Social Work	Category 1	Area 1	All 3.7 - 4.5 at
	Psychological	Category 2	Area 2 Ardrossan	Aug. 1990, pre-school
	Health (1)	Category 3	Area 3	Year
	Self	Category 4	Saltcoats	
	3-Towns Project	Info. not available	Non-APT	
	Single			
	Partner			
	Not with Parent			
	Info. not available (2)			
	Mother Works			
ADMISSIONS (N=160)	Father Works	Category 1	Area 1	All 3.7 - 4.5 at
	Info. not available	Category 2	Area 2 Ardrossan	Aug. 1990, pre-school
		Category 3	Area 3	Year
		Category 4	Saltcoats	
		Info. not available	Non-APT	

Notes (1) Health Visitor referrals re Springvale are informal contacts about a child, not formal supported applications.
(2) Fifteen places were kept vacant at the beginning of the year for subsequent allocation to priority families.

Table 4.4. APPLICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS TO BUCHLYVIE NURSERY SCHOOL (AUGUST 1990)

Table 4.5 Summary of Applications and Admissions to the Nurseries

	3-Towns		Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
	3-5 and 0-5 Units	Springvale Nursery School		
% of applications admitted	25	92	27	59
% of applications inter-agency referrals	21	15	14	5
% of admissions inter-agency referrals	55	16	33	4
For inter-agency referral, % of applications from Social Work	52	0	3	3
For inter-agency referral, % of admissions from Social Work	59	0	9	3
% of applications from single parents	50	21	15	32
% of admissions for single parents	64	23	33	31
% of applications being cases of acute need (i.e Category 1)	20	3	11	5
% of admissions being cases of acute need	64	3	31	4
% of applications for Category 3 and 4 children	19	49	47	56
% of admissions for Category 3	1	46	0	44
% of applications from APTs	47	40	0	83
% of admissions from APTs	66	44	0	90
% of applications for children 0-3	50	0	52	2
% of admissions for children 0-3	46	0	42	2

Summary of main findings

- Although the community nurseries attracted many applications only a **quarter** could be accepted
- The community nurseries admitted up to **three times** more children with inter-agency involvement than nursery schools.
- Of the inter-agency referrals to 3-Towns (0-5 and 3-5 units) more than **half** of applications and admissions came from **Social Work**.
- Two-thirds of admissions to 3-Towns and one-third of admissions to the other nurseries were for children from **single parent families**.
- The community nurseries admitted up to **twenty times** the number of children with acute **need** compared to the nursery schools.
- **Two-thirds** of admissions to the community nurseries (3-Towns) were for families in **APTs**.
- Approximately **half** of applications and admissions for the community nurseries were for children **under three**.

CHAPTER 5

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES: A FORMATIVE EVALUATION

5.1 METHODOLOGY

Seen in general terms, the evaluation of the community nursery projects was designed to provide a detailed record of each project's development from the planning stages through a period of time not less than two years after the nurseries first admitted children. This involved systematic monitoring at a number of inter-related levels on a longitudinal basis, for example progress towards the achievement of the aims and objectives; families' perceptions of the value and impact of nursery experience; the interaction of nursery experience and family support; professional perceptions of appropriate and effective nursery experience; the nursery as a caring stimulating and (to some extent compensatory) environment; specific and general responses to innovation and the impact on the community nurseries of various political pressures (Weiss, 1975). In order to carry out such an in-depth **formative** evaluation, three discrete task areas were identified and ran concurrently. These were: the articulation of the aims and objectives of the community nurseries in relation to those of the comparative nursery school, generation of staff perceptions about progress towards achieving the aims and objectives and periodic feedback to and negotiation with those concerned.

5.1 1 Recording the implementation of the aims and objectives

The job of assessing the development and 'success' of the community nursery could not be carried out effectively without developing a system whereby the aims of each project were clearly articulated and then defined in terms which would allow systematic monitoring of progress (or lack of) towards their achievement. This constituted a major part of both the **formative** and **summative** evaluation (King, 1987).

Frequently the aims of innovative projects such as the community nurseries are generated by external bodies, though usually in consultation with key professionals. Ultimately though, their development and realisation become the responsibility of professionals in the field - in this instance management and staff of the community nurseries. Experience repeatedly demonstrates that there is often a considerable discrepancy (generated by unforeseen constraints of real situations) between the broadly formulated aims of planners and their actual realisation in operational terms. Where no attempt is made to detail the process of working towards objectives - in particular where and how obstacles arise and how they are dealt with - funding bodies and future planners remain unclear as to which factors affected the success or failure of a project. Those working to develop a project in the field can suffer frustration and loss of morale if they have no systematic record of attempts to meet objectives and some means whereby their experience can be seen to have an impact both on the direction of work and on the planning of future projects.

In the context of the community nurseries the clarification, recording and monitoring of aims had two explicit purposes; first, to allow the opportunity for those working in the field to define a series of overall aims which, whilst being based on aims identified in the pre-operational phase, would fit the demands of the real working situation; and second to allow a realistic appraisal of the process involved in achieving these aims set within a broad understanding of the contextual dynamics of each project.

This part of the evaluation more than any other required a high degree of co-operation and involvement between project and evaluation staff. Problems inherent in this type of approach which relate to 'openness' and 'conflict' were encountered and successfully resolved. In the early stages the purpose of the evaluation of aims was explained clearly to staff and they were invited to express their feelings and thoughts openly. Project leaders readily accepted a responsibility to create and foster an ethos that encouraged openness. Given the quality of information provided in each location it seems that this condition was met. Staff were also prepared for conflict which would inevitably arise given the involvement of a number of individuals whose perceptions and roles differed. Where conflict arose, its resolution was part of a creative process. The evaluators provided both a forum for discussion and acted as facilitators in reaching resolutions. The data emerging from the aims and objectives exercise provide a realistic knowledge base on the evolution of each project.

Although all staff appointed to the new community nurseries had involvement in evaluation processes as part of their job remit (see Figure 2.1), only senior staff had had some previous experience of these processes. In order to prepare staff for the contribution expected of them, training and familiarisation sessions were organised where all proposed evaluation activities were explained and staff were given the opportunity to examine and try out any recording processes which required their direct input. The processes of interpreting and monitoring aims was designed to involve all staff. Before the actual recording process began, staff were nominated to take responsibility for producing the written record sheets. A timetable for production of records was agreed upon and a series of meetings planned to allow evaluators and project staff to discuss the content of the completed records. The community nurseries produced formal record sheets (See Annex 5) monitoring aims and objectives over 4-6 monthly periods from the Spring of 1990 to the Summer of 1992. The comparative nursery school produced three record sheets covering longer time periods in each, a decision which reflected both its established status and its adherence to school terms. Overall, the comparative nursery school experienced fewer problems and exhibited less change than the new and developing provisions. This is only to be expected given the stable nature of such provision. Also systems based on the plan-act-reflect cycle already existed in the nursery school context making the process of evaluation already familiar. However nursery school staff were prepared in the same way as the community nursery staff for the monitoring of aims.

5.1 2 Identifying Aims and Objectives

Each of the community nurseries was set up with broadly similar aims in mind. A statement of these aims appeared in requests for funding for both projects. As is common in the planning stages of new projects, aims were broad and vague. In the Three Towns, the nursery and family centre were both set up with the very broad functions of attempting to provide all day, all year flexible care for children 0-5 and to prevent reception of children into care.

It is known that the more general, abstract and distant the goal statement, the more ambivalent the success or failure of an initiative tends to be (Ballard and Mudd, 1964). Vaguely defined aims create difficulty rationalising the ongoing development of a project as it responds to pressures, constraints and unforeseen demands. The first step in defining aims then was to establish clearly each project's distinct areas of activity with a view to articulating overall aims in each area. These different areas of activity were labelled **Domains**. Initiating the process of identifying domains and related aims required discussion sessions between project staff and the evaluators.

Early discussion produced a list of 'overall' aims in each project with subsequent discussion organising each aim under **domains** and elaborating each aim by producing a series of related **objectives**. The task of developing objectives for each overall aim was guided by a series of principles: each objective had to meet a list of 'working' criteria which would help to guarantee their relevance in providing concrete and meaningful ways to assess the assessment of the overall 'aims'. The criteria for each objective were that it must be:

- feasible,
- specific,
- consistent with the overall aim;
- visible
- accessible.

The final criteria of accessibility requires further discussion. As was described earlier, the process of recording aims and objectives did not provide the sole means of assessment applied to the project but represented the greatest area of 'collaborative; work between the evaluators and staff. In terms of 'accessibility', data from the aims and objectives record sheets were designed to allow staff an area of focus where they would be able to make clear judgements regarding the level of success achieved. The data was not designed to provide hard evidence of success or failure. Other measures of a non collaborative nature were implemented to provide concrete objective measures of the quality of each provision. In the context of aims and objectives recording 'accessibility' of objectives referred to the extent to which an objective was accessible to staff's immediate experience of and perception as a means of judging the degree to which they had adhered to the overall aim.

The series of discussions devoted to developing domains, aims and objectives resulted in aims and objectives record sheets reflecting the different, though similar, concerns of each project. Each record sheet provided the following information: listed objectives and notes on progress in achieving each objective, comments on progress and notes on plans and future action for that objective. The blank record sheets for each project appear in Annex 5. Figure 5.1 shows the timetable for the completion of the Aims and Objectives Record Sheet for each nursery.

Meetings between evaluators and staff took place to coincide with completion of record sheets where discussion took place on the nature of problems and staff's perceived levels of success in meeting objectives. In each occasion discussion lasted approximately two hours. Staff made good use of the opportunity to analyse problems and reported that they found the process very useful.

Figure 5.1 Time periods for monitoring the progress in achieving the aims and objectives of each nursery

NURSERY	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 4
Three Towns Community Nursery				
0-5 Unit	Jan. - March '91	April - August '91	Sept. - Dec. '91	Jan. - March '92
3-5 Unit	Jan. - March '91	April - August '91	Sept. - Dec. '91	Jan. - March '92
Springvale Nursery School	Jan. - May '91	Aug. '91 - May '92	--	--
Jigsaw Community Nursery	Jan. - March '91	April - August '91	Sept. - Dec. '91	Jan. - March '92
Buchlyvie Nursery School	Jan. - June '91	Aug. - Dec. '91	Jan. - June '92	--

5.2 3-TOWNS COMMUNITY NURSERY

5.2 1 Aims and Objectives

The overall aims of the 3-Towns Community nursery were stipulated in the original Urban Aid application submitted to the Urban Renewal Unit of the Scottish Office in 1987. In the application, ten aims were identified. These are listed in Figure 5.2. To implement these aims three 'units' were set up - the 3-5 Unit; the 0-5 Unit and the Family Centre.

Both nursery units in the Three Towns Community Nursery identified the same domains, overall aims, and related objectives. In the course of the evaluation, they reported very similar problems, faced almost identical obstacles and achieved greatest success in the same areas. For this reason and largely to avoid repetition, the details of the processes involved in meeting objectives is recorded in full only in relation to the 3-5 Unit. Discussion of the 0-5 Unit covers only domains rather than each discrete objective. Figure 5.3 shows the aims and objectives for the 3-5 Unit.

Figure 5.2 The overall Aims and Objectives of the 3-Towns Community Nursery

- To provide a fully integrated, flexible, extended day provision for 0-5's.
- To reduce the number of behavioural and developmental difficulties in children 0-5.
- To have a positive effect on the development of children under the age of 3.
- To ensure a variety of education programmes particularly in respect of the extended day.
- To improve the quality of provision in local playgroups and mother and toddler groups through access to support and advice from project staff.
- To reduce the number of 0-5's received into care and assist in more successful rehabilitation of children from care back home.
- To succeed in enabling referred families to develop self-esteem and an ability to cope within their family unit and their own individual environment.
- To enable single parents to secure employment (when available).
- To encourage the uptake of recreational and educational activities by parents from APT's.
- To increase the uptake of preschool provision by making transport available.

Figure 5.3 Aims and Objectives for the 3-5 Unit in the Three Towns Community Nursery.

DOMAIN	AIMS	OBJECTIVES
Children	<p>To provide an environment which meets the social and emotional needs of children.</p> <p>To provide a secure caring environment.</p> <p>To provide a high quality curriculum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for each child to have a positive caring relationship with at least one adult in the centre. - for each child to feel safe and secure - to operate a keyworker system - to respond to a child's needs - to provide a balanced range of activities/learning situations for each child. - to stimulate and stretch children -intellectually,emotionally, socially and physically. - to allocate a programme of work with both individual children and groups of children.
Parents	<p>To involve parents in the centre at a level at which they feel comfortable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to keep parents informed about their children. - to encourage parents to participate in the centre. - to encourage parents to meet other parents. - to encourage parents to support their child as a resource. - to work with parents on decision-making
Staff	<p>To work effectively as a team within the centre.</p> <p>To participate in staff development and training programmes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to hold regular staff meetings. - to conduct joint work with families. - to participate in supervision sessions with Project leader. - to hold discussions on workload management. - all staff to attend appropriate external courses - all staff to participate in internal supervision. - all staff to attend 'ad hoc' seminars, meetings etc.
Inter-Unit Co-operation	<p>To work effectively with other units of the Project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all staff to participate in regular staff meetings with other units. - to communicate and share information units. - to share resources with other units.
Community	<p>To arrange transport as required.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to ascertain the need for transport. - to provide transport.
Other Agencies	<p>To work effectively with both voluntary and professional support services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to work with other agencies when a child is taken into care - to assist in treating acute behavioural problems in children. - to monitor acute family issues and alert other agencies in case of serious problem.

5.2 2 The 3-5 Unit

Domain: Children

In the domain 'children', three aims were identified:

- **to provide an environment which meets the social and emotional needs of children,**
- **to provide a secure and caring environment and**
- **to provide a high quality curriculum.**

These aims generated a number of related objectives. Discussion on progress in achieving each of these objectives gave clear indication of the extent to which the overall aim was being achieved, the nature of obstacles preventing its achievement and methods used to overcome obstacles. Each of the objectives is discussed before considering changes over each of the four recording periods.

Aim: To provide an environment which meets the social and emotional needs of children

Staff identified two objectives within this aim:

- for each child to have a positive caring relationship with at least one adult in the centre
- for each child to feel safe and secure.

The first recording (**Time 1**) indicated difficulties in achieving both these objectives. Attempts to provide one-to-one care via a regular keyworker system, although helped by an initially low staff/child ratio, was hampered by the severe behavioural problems presented by some children. In a group of twelve, there were three children with severe behavioural problems manifested by shouting, swearing, biting and throwing equipment and furniture around the room, one child having been previously excluded from a local nursery class because of anti-social behaviour. The other two children had been admitted through parental applications with no mention of severe behavioural problems. Their demands on staff time prevented a balanced staff input across the child group. In response, staff planned more opportunities for informal group contact and for each child to have at least five minutes of exclusive staff attention per day. For '**each child to feel safe and secure**' staff identified the need for quiet areas where children could meet and have relaxed, close contact with an adult. Lack of appropriate accommodation prevented the full realisation of this objective with little space available for quiet areas. Also a number of children were afraid of their more aggressive peers and plans were made to split the children into two separate groups. This had disadvantages for both the staff and child group in terms of access to material and play space but staff responded to their own perception of the highest priority - ensuring that vulnerable children did not feel threatened.

By the time of the second recording (**Time 2**), staff began to report success in providing children with positive caring relationships with the keyworker. Staff skills had begun to develop particularly in controlling the behavioural difficulties presented by some children and in matching children with appropriate keyworkers. Allocation of time to individual children had proved more difficult to achieve than anticipated, but the decision to provide 'some time on a weekly basis' rather than five minutes per day had proved effective in contributing to positive relationships. At this stage future plans included developing 'a positive style of interaction between staff and children at all times' and 'more vigilance in the observation of children's needs'. With support from the Depute, the staff group were encouraged to promote positive behaviour in the groups as a whole, using behaviour modifica-

tion techniques geared to the individual children presenting difficulties. The staff also had support from Psychological Services and were praised for their systematic and comprehensive approach.

Also at **Time 2** staff reported considerable progress in 'helping each child to feel safe and secure'. Provision of quiet areas remained hampered by lack of good accommodation by the splitting of the child group had proved remarkable effective in creating a more relaxed atmosphere. Developing staff skills also allowed early detection and prevention of explosive situations protecting more timid children from those who were acting out emotional difficulties. By the third recording (**Time 3**) staff felt both the objectives in this overall aim had been met. A general development in staff skills was expected over the final recording period which would further enhance provision. Given that no change in accommodation was imminent, the constraints imposed by lack of space were not expected to be resolved but development was as expected in 'positive caring relationships' though staff changes caused some short term disruption. The lack of a permanent quiet area had become more apparent though, especially for full-time children needing sleep or rest after lunch. There were plans to look at the organisation and use of space again in an attempt to satisfy conflicting needs for rest and play. In the final stages, fundamental issues of lack of appropriate space hampered the full realisation of the 'safe and secure' objective; leaving the often conflicting needs of some children unmet. The situation was exacerbated for full-time children whose arguably greater need for structured rest time could not be planned effectively without causing disruption to free play time for other children.

The second aim identified in the 'children' domain was **to provide a secure and caring environment**. Again staff identified two objectives related to this aim:

- to operate a keyworker system and
- to respond to each child's needs.

There was some degree of overlap with the previous aim, but staff identified different aspects of the keyworker role in the context of this aim, and highlighted the needs of individual children as opposed to the needs of the child group. At **Time 1**, developing an effective keyworker system was seen as generally problematic and hampered by a number of factors: the lack of time to keep adequate records, lack of contact with parents and poor input from other agencies involved with the child and family. Even in these early stages, staff instability was recognised as a problem and the existence of temporary staff inhibited the development of a good keyworker system. The objective 'Responding to a child's needs' offered more immediate success with staff's ability to identify needs developing through experience and effective teamwork. Future plans in the early stages involved ensuring better contact between staff and parents and between staff and other agencies. In the context of responding to needs, staff planned to improve their observation and identification of children's needs.

At **Time 2** setbacks were clearly identified in the development of the keyworker system. Changes in senior and other staff halted progress in this area with longer term staff highlighting a lack of understanding on the new senior's part of how the keyworker system operated, and temporary staff's inability to provide the necessary continuity. No progress had been made at this point in parent contact or in liaison with other agencies. Lack of a parent's room contributed to lack of contact. At this point staff were informed that plans to move to permanent accommodation had been abandoned. (See Chapter 3) This lowered staff morale, making the constraints of temporary accommodation all the more obvious and difficult to accept on a long term basis.

Staff felt that their ability to respond to each child's needs had also failed to progress and that often they met the parent's needs not the child's e.g. some children did not cope well with full-time places, when such an arrangement was designed to suit the parent. Future plans in both objectives involved attempting once again to improve contact between parents and staff and between staff and other agencies and to assess the needs of whole families without giving priority to parental needs.

The recording at **Time 3** showed little progress towards either objective. Staff changes, the presence of short term temporary staff and staff absence through illness caused considerable disruption to the keyworker system and in staff's ability to respond to children's needs. Coping with this disruption had become an objective in its own right with future plans designed to involve 'minimising stress to vulnerable children and families during this difficult phase'. In the final assessment of these objectives (**Time 4**) staff felt they were only partly met. Staff stability at all levels seemed crucial to the development of the service and the progression towards the stipulated aims.

The third aim identified in this domain was **to provide a high quality curriculum**. Staff produced three objectives under the general aim :

- to provide a balanced range of activities/learning situations for each child
- to stimulate and stretch children intellectually emotionally, socially and physically
- to allocate staff a programme of work with both individuals and groups of children.

The first objective was difficult to achieve; at **Time 1**, staff reported that providing a balanced range of activities proved difficult given restrictions imposed by poor accommodation and demands made by behaviourally disordered children. Some of the brighter children remained 'unchallenged and unstretched', attributable to lack of experience in the staff group and, again, to the overwhelming demands of some children. Individual and group programmes proved very difficult to initiate due to lack of staff experience, and lack of input from the curriculum development officer (CDO). (By the second recording the CDO was employed in another capacity elsewhere in the project and other factors mentioned earlier worked against the detailed planning and structuring involved in creating individual and group programmes.) By **Time 2**, some general progress had occurred but the developing problem of staff instability and related staff shortages had prevented any significant improvement. Lack of sufficient staff training and experience emerged clearly as a major problem in the context of these objectives. Plans for further action were repetitive with the need for staff development in curricular areas gaining a higher profile. Staff in the 3-5 Unit were aware of the lack of stimulation received by most children in their family home. In particular, they were concerned at the children's limited expressive language and limited vocabulary. On one occasion a trip to a local farm was arranged and a theme was planned around this visit. Building on the visit, the aim was to promote language and increase children's vocabulary. Throughout the visit staff constantly spoke with children, and photographs were taken of events throughout the day. These photographs were later used for recall and extension of language. The outing had been a very pleasurable and positive experience for children and staff, and significant learning outcomes were achieved.

Later recordings (**Time 3** and **Time 4**) showed staff attempting and partially succeeding in providing a wider range of activities and in developing more general structure to activities, particularly in group contexts. Individual plans and the development of groups did not materialise but staff demands for more training began to be met. Part of the challenge in meeting the objectives for curriculum

development lay in the identification of staff needs. The need for training guidance and support was very clear in the middle stages and had only begun to be met to a limited extent by the end of the recording period.

Domain: Parents

The overall aims in this domain was defined as **to involve parents in the centre at a level at which they felt comfortable**. Staff produced four related objectives:

- to keep parents informed about their children
- to encourage parents to participate in the centre
- to encourage parents to meet other parents
- to work with parents on decision-making

At the end of **Time 1** parental involvement seemed promising, with users' groups and informal events fairly well attended. Parents, however, chose not to make formal use of a visiting system offered by staff. A system of regular reviews for children and families was planned. By **Time 2**, problems in parent/unit contact had begun to emerge. Contact was difficult to achieve due in the main to the system of transporting children to and from the unit. Regular reviews did not take place as planned, there had been no unit group meetings (due to staff difficulties) and no fund-raising events. Very few parents visited the unit. The Christmas party was an exception, with most parents attending. Plans for the future involved the provision of more informal events and the re-establishment of the unit group. Recordings at **Time 4** showed further deterioration in achieving objectives; there was little contact between staff and parents and reviews were very limited, no social events had taken place and no unit group meetings. Obstacles acknowledged earlier proved very resistant to change: the transport system, staff shortages, lack of parental motivation and the lack of space and facilities for parent's use. Although future plans were made, they reiterated earlier unmet plans and there was little indication that the situation could change.

Domain: Staff

Here the two overall aims were: **to work effectively as a team and participate in staff development and training programmes**. Staff identified seven objectives:

- to hold regular staff meetings
- to conduct joint work with families
- to participate in supervision sessions with the project leader
- to hold discussion on workload management
- to attend appropriate external courses
- to participate in internal supervision
- to attend ad hoc seminars and meetings

In the early stages, staff reported some success in the first four objectives; by **Time 2** staff meetings were held on a fairly regular basis and a co-ordinated approach to work seemed to develop well. However, problems were identified in relation to part-time staff who lost out on opportunities for supervision and attendance at meetings, courses, seminars etc. There were general difficulties in providing regular supervision sessions. Future plans were to continue along the same lines, attempting to ensure even attendance at external courses. By **Time 3**, problems emerged related again to staff changes and shortages; staff meeting were frequently cancelled and staff supervision was very irregular. Uncertainties also arose in conducting joint work with other agencies. Staff reported that social work involvement with some families was very vague and that social workers expecta-

tions of the project were unclear. (See Chapter 10) The recording at **Time 4** offered much the same picture, with some disruption to team meetings and supervision, some difficulty in developing liaison with other agencies and difficulty in allowing part-time staff access to meetings and training opportunities. Plans and future action at this point indicated that once again some problems were very resistant to resolution, in particular, ensuring the continuity of staff meetings and supervision sessions. **The disruption to the staff group, of changes in senior posts in particular, and the difficulty of organising time away from children worked against good communication, planning and continuity in staff supervision, training and development.**

Domain: Inter-unit co-operation

Under this domain the overall aim was **'to work effectively with other units of the project'**. Staff identified three objectives:

- to participate in regular staff meetings with other units
- to communicate and share resources with other units

In general, records indicate that throughout the evaluation period there was little opportunity for staff planning meetings, though senior staff met regularly. Staff of the separate units would only get together on in-service days when all three centres were closed. Such 'days' took place and had been held every two months from July 1990. All units tended to operate independently and staff did not necessarily know what was happening in other centres. Although future plans involved setting up joint staff meetings, these did not materialise. Plans to appoint the CDO as 'link person' failed when the CDO was appointed as Acting Senior in the 0-5 Unit.

Domain: Community

Staff identified **'to arrange transport as required'**, as the overall aim, Objectives were to

- ascertain the need for transport;
- to provide transport.

In the early stages, all children requiring transport received it. Staff noted the negative implications of transport itself 'due to the fact that so many children came to the centre, contact with parents has been particularly inhibited.' Increasing demands for transport required the system to change from individual collection of children to collection at a central point. In later stages staff reported that the whole system of transport had been 'tightened up' but that problems arose when parents failed to appear at the central point to collect children. By **Time 4**, the transport issue had become more problematic. Parents continued to demand transport when the bus was full and staff had had to transport children in their own cars when the bus required servicing. They felt a transport users meeting was required since parents seemed to have difficulty in understanding the system of allocation for transport places. Future plans 'to provide transport for all attenders requiring it' seemed unrealistic given the limited transport available.

Domain: Other Agencies

Staff identified the overall aim as **'to work effectively with both voluntary and professional supportive services.** The three related objectives were:

- to work with other agencies when a child is taken into care
- to assist in treating acute behavioural problems in children and
- to monitor acute family issues and alert other agencies in case of serious problems

Early problems in this domain included difficulties in gaining the contact and co-operation of other agencies and failure to develop common objectives for joint work. Staff were generally more confused over their role in all three objectives and little support was given from social workers and health visitors in particular in clarifying an appropriate plan of action. Future plans for all three objectives involved attempting to secure the necessary co-operation of outside agencies. Since progress was made by the second recording with slightly better contact and unit staff taking a higher profile in reviews held by other agencies. At both **Time 3** and **Time 4**, improvement had slowed and the liaison remained at an unsatisfactory level despite attempts to hold joint meetings to clarify mutual objectives for co-operative work.

Progress Chart

Following discussion at the aims and objectives review meeting, judgements were made by the evaluators regarding the progress towards achieving each objective based on staff perceptions of progress. Figure 5.4 summarises staff perceptions of the achievement of objectives over the four time periods.

Overall, staff felt they had been unprepared for the level of behavioural problems exhibited by children. The early stages had proved very difficult with poor accommodation and lack of experience in staff compounding problems. The development of a behavioural modification programme took precedence over curriculum development since planned activities proved impossible without some control over behaviour. The domains 'children', 'parents' and 'staff' showed a peak achievement level at **Time 2**. After this point, the loss of the original senior and other staff changes and absences began to have a negative impact. Greater achievement in some objectives occurred at **Time 4** but this was only apparent in areas where staff gained expertise in the early stages i.e. **'in providing positive caring relationships', 'having children feel safe and secure' and 'help treating behavioural problems'**. The progress chart shows a general positive movement but suggests that some objectives will respond only to fundamental change i.e. better accommodation creating conditions which will foster greater stability in the staff groups and intensive staff supervision and development.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES PROGRESS CHART

STAFF PERCEPTIONS

AIM	OBJECTIVE	TIME 1	TIME 2	TIME 3	TIME 4
CHILDREN					
Securing/Caring Environment	1. Keyworker system				
	2. Respond to child's needs				
High Quality Curriculum	1. Balanced range of activities				
	2. Stimulate and stretch				
	3. Programmes of work				
Social and Emotional	1. Positive caring relationship				
	2. Feeling safe and secure				
PARENTS					
Involve at a comfortable level	1. Inform about children				
	2. Encourage participation				
	3. Parents meeting each other				
	4. Joint work on decision-making				
STAFF					
Work effectively as a team	1. Regular staff meetings				
	2. Joint work with families				
	3. Supervision sessions				
	4. Discussion on workload				
Development training	5. External courses				
	6. Internal supervision				
	7. Ad hoc seminars				
INTER-UNIT CO-OPERATION					
Work effectively with other units	1. Regular staff meetings				
	2. Communicate and share				
	3. Share resources				
COMMUNITY					
Arrange transport	1. Ascertain transport needs				
	2. Provide transport				
OTHER AGENCIES					
Work effectively with other agencies	1. When a child is taken into care				
	2. Help treat behavioural problems				
	3. Monitor acute family issues; respond to crises and prevent reception into care				

TIME PERIODS —
TIME 1 January — March 1991
TIME 2 April—August 1991
TIME 3 September—December 1991
TIME 4 January—March 1992

KEY TO PROGRESS —
 None or very limited
 Some
 Good
 Very good

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES PROGRESS CHART

STAFF PERCEPTIONS

AIM	OBJECTIVE	TIME 1	TIME 2	TIME 3	TIME 4
CHILDREN					
Securing/Caring Environment	1. Keyworker system				
	2. Respond to child's needs				
High Quality Curriculum	1. Balanced range of activities				
	2. Stimulate and stretch				
	3. Programmes of work				
Social and Emotional	1. Positive caring relationship				
	2. Feeling safe and secure				
PARENTS					
Involve at a comfortable level	1. Inform about children				
	2. Encourage participation				
	3. Parents meeting each other				
	4. Joint work on decision-making				
STAFF					
Work effectively as a team	1. Regular staff meetings				
	2. Joint work with families				
	3. Supervision sessions				
	4. Discussion on workload				
Development training	5. External courses				
	6. Internal supervision				
	7. Ad hoc seminars				
INTER-UNIT CO-OPERATION					
Work effectively with other units	1. Regular staff meetings				
	2. Communicate and share				
	3. Share resources				
COMMUNITY					
Arrange transport	1. Ascertain transport needs				
	2. Provide transport				
OTHER AGENCIES					
Work effectively with other agencies	1. When a child is taken into care				
	2. Help treat behavioural problems				
	3. Monitor acute family issues; respond to crises and prevent reception into care				

TIME PERIODS —
TIME 1 January — March 1991
TIME 2 April—August 1991
TIME 3 September—December 1991
TIME 4 January—March 1992

KEY TO PROGRESS —
 None or very limited
 Some
 Good
 Very good

5.2 3 The 0-5 Unit

This unit identified the same overall aims and related objectives as the 3-5 Unit, although the provision catered for some younger children. The 0-5 Unit offered part- or full-time places for approximately 40 children in two separate rooms - one room for 3-5 year olds and the other for 0-3 year olds. A support room provided a play area for both age groups.

Evaluator's judgements on reported staff perceptions of progress in achieving the aims and objectives are shown in Figure 5.5.

Domain: Children

Of the three aims identified in this domain the experience was very similar to that recorded by the 3-5 Unit; despite a move to permanent accommodation. As Figure 5.5 indicates, however, staff reported greater overall success by **Time 4**. Although behavioural difficulties were not as severe as in the 3-5, a behavioural modification programme was implemented by **Time 2** and contributed to improvement in children's behaviour. Staff found early difficulties in developing a curriculum to suit a wider age range. They also felt the staff/child ratio was too high to allow good staff input to individual children and groups. The loss of the senior inhibited the development of the keyworker system, though this was established by **Time 4** despite the fact that no senior had been appointed. Lack of space hindered the full achievement of a number of objectives, in particular responding to a child's needs and promoting feelings of safety and security. No space could be permanently allocated for rest time and, as in the 0-5 Unit conflicting needs for rest and activity were left unmet during certain periods of the day. This was particularly noticeable in the baby room where the need for rest was critical. Difficulties in providing the opportunity for rest tended to disrupt the entire child group. By **Time 4** the unit had had only partial success in meeting children's needs for stimulation and structural learning. Although they succeeded in providing a balance range of activities, they felt some children were left unchallenged and unstretched. They had slightly more success in providing individual and group programmes of work, though this was by no means complete. Overall staff in this unit identified 2 major causes for difficulties in achieving these objectives: lack of appropriate accommodation and staff mobility.

Domain: Parents

Once again the 0-5 Unit experienced the same difficulties as the 3-5 Unit in achieving objectives in the parent domain. Efforts to inform parents about children had most success and by **Time 4** staff had begun to carry out home visits. Encouraging parental involvement had been only partially successful and parents groups and joint decision-making had ceased completely given the loss of the senior. Staff found the transport system, lack of separate accommodation for parents use, lack of parental motivation and lack of staff all prevented these objectives being met. No plans existed to correct the situation as staff had decided to wait until a new senior was appointed.

Domain: Staff

Again problems here mirrored those in the 3-5 Unit. Staff had to overcome a number of difficulties in order to hold regular staff meetings and achieved only some success in meeting this objective. In the absence of a senior, supervision sessions were non-existent in the early stages and still only occurred irregularly by **Time 4**.

The Head of Centre had assumed the senior's role but was not able to offer the same input as a unit senior. Staff experienced difficulties in gaining access to external courses and felt that this was partly due to the fact that despite greater staff numbers, the community nursery was allocated the same number of places as nursery schools. Normal practice was to nominate staff for any Division course for which notification had been received and nominations were sent but only one place was normally allocated to the project as a whole.

Domain: Inter-unit Co-operation

In the early and middle stages of the evaluation, the 0-5 Unit identified some problems in their co-operation with family centre staff. As intimated in Chapter 3, the Family Centre was closed half way through the recording period in response to the loss of senior staff. A number of children attending the unit had parents attending the family centre but joint objectives were never clearly established (see 5.24 below). Progress recorded in this domain may well reflect the closure of the family centre rather than the genuine resolution of a problem. In relation to the 3-5 Unit, the experience of the 0-5 Unit was very similar. There was very little contact reported between the units throughout the evaluation period and co-operation objectives seem too vague in retrospect. The objectives themselves were expected to change given plans for the new CDO to develop curriculum and resources for both units.

Domain: Community

Again, the 0-5 Unit experienced the same problems as the 3-5 Unit. Transport needs were satisfied as far as possible using central pick-up points. This arrangement did satisfy the need and wishes of all parents but the objective was achieved as far as constraints of staff time and available transport would allow. Overall though, the 0-5 Unit seemed to have fewer difficulties in this area.

Domain: Other Agencies

The progress recorded here largely reflected development in unit staff skills and experience and their preparedness to initiate and maintain contact with other agencies. There were still serious problems recorded at **Time 4** in gaining the co-operation of social workers and health visitors in particular.

5.2 4 The Family Centre

The Family Centre was intended to function as part of a network of professional agencies involved in joint work to provide support to families with children identified as requiring help to sustain the family unit. The need for such a resource in the 3-Towns area was clearly justified by the high number of children identified as being at risk. Use of the Centre was not restricted to families with children under five nor to families with a child in the nursery. The staffing consisted of a Senior Family Support Worker, two Family Support Workers and one seconded health visitor working as part of the team. Unfortunately the Centre was unable to function at the end of the first year of the community nursery's existence due to difficulties in replacing the senior who left to return to Social Work in a different area. The aims and objective of the Centre are specified in Figure 5.6. For reasons just stated there was only opportunity for one aims and objectives review period.

Domain: Children

As shown in Figure 5.6 two aims and five objectives were identified in this domain. At the end of the first year staff reported progress towards meeting the first three objectives i.e. those concerned with rehabilitation of children from residential care. Staff had attended case conferences organised by the Social work Department and every involved family had attended at least one session in the Centre.

With regard to preventing children being taken into care staff reported difficulties in working with the local social workers particularly in obtaining a swift response from a social worker when a child was showing evidence of injury. Difficulties were also reported in planning an appropriate support package for families largely due to changes in accommodation and loss of a member of staff. Progress was therefore very limited in meeting this aim.

Domain: Parents

Three aims and eight objectives were identified by staff for work with parents (see Figure 5.6). In the Spring of 1991 staff reported that ten parents were attending the Centre regularly; that five were engaged in planned practical activities and that seven parents attended the Unit meetings. However staff also reported some resistance on the part of some parents to participate in planned activities. Most parents had also been involved in individual sessions to help them adopt acceptable child-rearing practices. Unfortunately shortly after these sessions had to cease due to staffing problems as indicated earlier. In addition, a small number of parents had undertaken a variety of educational activities e.g typing, adult literacy etc.

Domain: Staff

Two aims and seven objectives were identified. With most of the objectives progress was slow though a number of supervision sessions with the Head of Centre were held during the first year. Holding regular staff meetings proved difficult as did regular participation in staff development activities, staff feeling that their training needs were neglected due to other priorities in the nursery.

Domain: Community

The main achievement at the end of the first year was providing information and encouragement to local parents to participate in Further Education courses. Yet there again, progress was limited largely due to staff not being fully aware of exactly what community based resources were available.

Transport also proved difficult, the nursery's minibus not being readily available for transporting families using the Family Centre.

Domain: Other agencies

Initially the team were optimistic about joint work with other agencies. However this optimism soon turned to disappointment due to lack of response and co-operation by staff in the other relevant agencies. There was considerable confusion about the roles and responsibilities of the family centre staff vis-a-vis the local social work teams and health visitors (see Chapter 10). Although staff were initially invited to participate in review procedures for 'referral' families the invita-

tions stopped early in 1991. Although this was a very serious problem at the time little progress could be made, because of the difficulties in obtaining appropriately trained staff for the Family Centre.

Clearly the Family Centre has been disappointing, especially as the need for family support in the 3-Towns area was (and continues to be) so great. Work of the kind envisaged at the Centre was one of the features which distinguished the community nursery from conventional nursery schools. It is a great pity that staffing difficulties interfered with the realisation of these ideals.

**Figure 5.6 Aims and Objectives for the Family Centre
(3-Towns Community Nursery)**

DOMAIN	AIMS	OBJECTIVES
Children	To assist in rehabilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to hold regular review meetings/ case conferences - to hold individual sessions with the child - to hold family group sessions - to identify children 'at risk' - to provide family support
	To prevent reception into care	
Parents	To involve parents in the Centre at a level at which they feel comfortable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to encourage parents to attend the Centre - to work with individual parents on practical day-to-day activities - to work with parents in the Unit group - to help referred parents become more supportive of their child - to have frequent contact with referred parents - to hold regular review meetings/case conferences
	To work with referred families to help them achieve acceptable child-rearing practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to raise parents self-image and self-confidence - to encourage parents to participate in educational activities
	To work with parents to help them realise greater potential	
Staff	To work effectively as a team within the Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to hold regular staff meetings - to conduct joint work with families - to participate in supervision sessions with projectleader - to hold discussions on workload management
	To participate in staff develop-ments and training programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all staff attend external courses - all staff to participate in internal supervision - all staff to attend 'ad hoc' seminars, meetings etc.
Community	To link referred families into appropriate community-based resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to inform parents of local opportunities
	To arrange transport as required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to ascertain the need for transport - to provide transport
Other Agencies	To develop strategies for joint work with other relevant agencies and supportive services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to participate in joint work - to participate in joint training - to participate in regular review procedures
Inter-Unit Co-operation	To work effectively with other project units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to participate in regular staff meetings with other units - to communicate and share information with other units - to share resources

5.2 5 Springvale Nursery School

As indicated in Chapter 3, Springvale Nursery School formed part of the 3-Towns Community Nursery though in a somewhat uncertain position vis-a-vis the operation of the community nursery. Rather than convert and expand Springvale Nursery School into a community nursery itself the decision had been taken at the outset by the Regional Council to retain the identity of the nursery school and create additional resources on the same campus as the nursery school (viz the 0-5 Unit and the Family Centre) basically with a separate management structure.

Thus Springvale continued to operate as a conventional nursery school along the lines of the comparative nursery school i.e. Buchlyvie in Easterhouse. Not unexpectedly therefore the aims identified by the staff in Springvale were similar to those identified by staff in Buchlyvie Nursery School (see Section 5.4). These aims and objectives are specified in Figure 5.7.

Figure 5.7 Aims and Objectives of Springvale Nursery School

DOMAIN	AIMS	OBJECTIVES
Children	To provide an exciting, carefully structured environment which fosters the individual acquisition of skills and knowledge giving each child the opportunity to develop the vital qualities of self-esteem, confidence and a positive self-image	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- helping each child to form relationships with adults and other children- helping each child to adjust to and feel happy and settled in the nursery- providing opportunities for sharing group work- taking time to listen and respond to every child (developing a positive self-image)- encouraging each child to be aware of what his/her body can do- providing a wide range of activities to develop gross and fine motor skills- making each child aware of the need for person/group safety, personal hygiene and healthy eating- making available human and material resources which will stimulate each child's cognitive development- taking every opportunity to develop sensory awareness- giving each child opportunities to develop talking and listening skills- providing an interesting, stimulating theme related environment which encourages speech, the learning of new words in the right context and group discussion
	To be aware of each child's needs, interests and stage of development	
	To develop an integrated nursery experience which involves and supports parents in the education and care of their children, complementing and giving an added dimension of the home experience	
Parents	To provide a welcoming comfortable atmosphere to parents and visitors in the nursery where learning is an enjoyable experience for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- sharing information - a two-way process- discussing child's progress- inviting parents to work in the units- organising activities - educational and recreational- providing creche facilities, if possible- involving parents in helping with outings, fund-raising etc.

DOMAIN AIMS

OBJECTIVES

Local Community To form good relationships with local community

- promoting community event and services
- providing nursery services for families in the community
- visiting and inviting visits from people in the community

Outside Agencies To liaise effectively with outside agencies

- combining our expertise to develop programmes for special needs children
- inviting agencies to visit and develop links

Staff To promote harmony and team work in the nursery

- realising and respecting individual members aptitudes, experiences and expertise
- participating in curriculum development
- and a continuous process of planning, preparing, implementing and evaluating
- exchanging relevant information about individual children
- providing and participating in staff development and training
- ensuring there is time and space to talk, listen, share problems and laugh together

As with the other locations, staff in the nursery were asked to review progress towards achieving their aims and objectives at periodic intervals. Due to difficulties in arranging sufficient time for all staff to meet with the researchers only two review meetings took place during the period of the evaluation. As the findings from this exercise at Springvale Nursery School were very similar to those at Buchlyvie Nursery School they are not reported as fully as with other nurseries.

Domain: Children

Staff identified eleven objectives for promoting children's development (see Figure 5.7). Staff saw their primary task as providing a child-centred environment with carefully planned activities designed to meet each child's needs. In general staff were satisfied with their progress towards achieving their objectives. In dealing with social and emotional behaviour problems, the nursery was organised in such a way that difficult children were dispersed throughout the different groups in the nursery to avoid overloading any particular staff member. Early intervention usually overcame any behavioural difficulties.

Domain: Parents

Five objectives were identified in this domain (see Figure 5.7). Again staff reported considerable progress towards achieving these objectives by the end of the recording period. Parents were invited to the school for an informal visit to keep informed about their child's progress. Induction meetings were held at the

beginning of the school year. Other activities for parents included a book sale; cake decoration demonstration and a sponsored bean-bag throw. Parents also organised and supervised a creche on a rota basis.

Domain: Local Community

Three objectives were identified in this domain (see Figure 5.7). During the year various visits were organised both by people coming to the nursery (e.g. postman) and by children going out on visits (e.g. local farm). Various evening and day events were also organised e.g. for the elderly.

Domain: Other Agencies

Three objectives were identified in this domain with regard to psychological services. The nursery was visited each month by the Senior Educational Psychologist to discuss specific children with special educational needs. Other professionals in regular contact were speech therapist, physiotherapist and the home visitor. However, staff found that children with social work involvement presented problems in that social workers were reluctant to discuss cases or give information to the nursery staff. Staff saw the need for more discussion with outside agencies.

Domain: Staff

Five objectives were identified in this domain. During the period of the evaluation staff attended several in-service courses both internal to the nursery; divisional courses and joint courses with other parts of the 3-Towns project. Team planning took place regularly and duties were well delegated to all staff. All in all the staff group were reasonably satisfied with the harmony and team work in the nursery.

5.2.6 Summary

Overall, in both the Three Towns nursery units, despite the considerable difficulties with accommodation and staffing a number of successes in implementing aims and objectives were achieved as shown in Figures 5.4 and 5.5. By the Spring of 1992, in the 'children' domain 'very good' or 'good' progress was achieved in six out of seven objectives for the 0-5 Unit. The 3-5 Unit was less successful with only three out of seven objectives at the 'good' or 'very good' level. However, this unit did face great difficulty in the early stages with high levels of serious behavioural disorders in the children admitted. Staff in the 3-5 Unit reported a greater level of success in the parent domain with some progress in all four objectives. The 0-5 Unit had less success, with none or very limited progress in two out of the four objectives identified. In the staff domain, success was even across both units with 'some' or 'good' progress across all seven objectives. Inter-unit co-operation showed a similar profile as did working effectively with other agencies. The apparent success of the latter aim was related to staff skills and initiative and did not reflect the poor level of co-operation offered by other agencies. The issue of transport was apparently satisfactorily dealt with by the 0-5 Unit whilst the 3-5 Unit reported only some or good progress across the two related objectives. The 3-5 Unit had experienced more problems in this area particularly dissatisfaction on the part of parents.

With regard to Springvale Nursery School where the aims and objectives were less ambitious than those of the community nursery, there is no doubt that the nursery was highly successful in deploying practices and procedures designed to stimulate each child's development. Staff were good at what nursery staff had been trained to do.

Interview material from staff of the Three Towns Community Nursery provided personal perspectives on the areas covered by the record sheets. (See Chapter 6) The data confirmed the very damaging impact of poor accommodation in the early stages of the project. Problems created by poor facilities compounded and exacerbated the problems created by high numbers of children with pressing emotional and social needs. Interviews with referring agents confirmed the identification of Three Towns as a resource for needy children. (See Chapter 10) This identification (compared with the failure of agencies to use other, albeit limited, resources) ensured that the project began with a very unbalanced child group. The presence of unqualified staff and a staff group who as a whole had little previous experience of caring for damaged children meant that the project faced an enormous challenge, and one which was expected to be met under very unsatisfactory conditions. It is clear that some early staff found the situation unacceptable and the resultant high turnover had a negative impact on achieving objectives. Despite these problems, staff did report success and saw this reflected in the children they cared for. The overall success of the project could have been more apparent and objectives more quickly and easily achieved had issues of accommodation and staffing been resolved, and the project given more external support in the early stages from the Region's divisional staff.

5.3 JIGSAW COMMUNITY NURSERY

5.3.1 Aims and Objectives

In 1988, Dunbarton Division Education Department put forward a bid to the Region for finance from the 'Adapting to Change' fund to expand provision for pre-fives in Dunbartonshire. Initially a number of nursery classes and a family centre were proposed. However, no action was taken until 1989 when the proposals were rejected by the Region as not being appropriate for the Region's new pre-five policy. Instead the idea of a community nursery along the lines outlined in the Region's report **Under Fives**, (1985) emerged at a Pre-Five Unit and Divisional Development Officer's seminar later that year.

The area around Chryston was identified as having no local authority pre-five provision. The only provision in the area was organised by the Voluntary Sector - SPPA playgroups and mother/toddler groups. A local Link-Up group carried out a survey of childcare needs in the area identifying demand for before and after-school care, creche and nursery provision. Attempts were made to establish a partnership between the voluntary sector and local authority sector in developing a community nursery with shared accommodation and management. As a result of this partnership, Jigsaw Community Nursery emerged as a unique resource. Its aims and objectives reflect somewhat different, though in some instances comparable aims to the Three Towns Community Nursery. The aims, identified after discussion between staff, voluntary sector representatives and evaluators, are shown in Figure 5.8. In contrast to the 3-Towns Community Nursery where the aims were pre-specified (a requirement of the Scottish Office for projects seeking Urban Aid Funding), the aims for Jigsaw had to be articulated after the appointment of the Head of Centre.

Figure 5.8 The Aims and Objectives of Jigsaw Community Nursery

DOMAIN	AIMS	OBJECTIVES
Children and Parents	<p>To provide an integrated centre for pre-five children and their families in line with regional policy within the geographical area of Strathkelvin offering flexible, high quality care and education for 2-5 year olds with the nursery unit</p> <p>To participate in inter-agency care plans for families with pre-school children where appropriate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to provide for children's social, emotional, physical and intellectual development by providing a high quality curriculum - to provide secure and caring environment which meets the individual needs of all - to promote parenting skills through individual and group situations - to provide opportunities for parents to be involved in the work of the nursery unit - to provide opportunities for social interaction - to encourage parents to pursue recreational, educational and employment opportunities - to participate in case conferences and review meetings - to maintain on-going links with other professionals
Support Services	To further the partnership with the voluntary sector, in particular SPPA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to work with the voluntary sector by making premises available for voluntary pre-five groups, by participating in joint decision making about the community nursery i.e. the Executive and by operating in the development of creches and other projects where appropriate
Local Community	<p>To make the community aware of what the community nursery is in the range of services offered</p> <p>To develop the nursery as a community resource within the area.</p> <p>To monitor and develop links with other agencies providing pre-five services</p> <p>To give parents and other adults the opportunity to take part in adult education and/or recreational activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to inform the local community about the community nursery - to encourage local people to come to the community nursery e.g. cafe - to promote feedback about the running of the community nursery e.g. user's meetings - to provide information about available resources - to encourage the use of the premises by other groups - to develop the cafe as a resource - to investigate home visiting schemes and to determine the need for such schemes in the area - to be aware of other developments in pre-five service in the area - to provide creche facilities as required - to provide courses as appropriate - to provide opportunities for informal social contact amongst parents and other adults

DOMAIN	AIMS	OBJECTIVES
After-School Care	To provide limited after-school care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to provide long-term after-school care until 6 p.m. for a maximum of 26 children aged 5-12 - to provide a secure environment for children in after school care - to provide activities appropriate to each child's needs
Voluntary Sector	<p>To provide a choice of high quality pre-school provision for 0-5 year olds and their families, based on parental involvement</p> <p>To further the partnership with the Nursery Unit.</p> <p>To make the local community aware of what the Community Nursery is in the range of services offered.</p> <p>To develop the Community Nursery as a community resource within the area.</p> <p>To provide opportunities for training for parents, voluntary workers and employees</p> <p>To provide continual development for pre-school children through learning through play.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to provide playgroups, parent/toddler groups - childminders drop-in and support services e.g. SPPA Branch, toy library and stock shop - to be involved in an interchange of personnel as appropriate - to inform the community about the community nursery by means of Branch Meetings, Fieldworker Link-Up Group etc. - to encourage local people to make use of the Community Nursery by means of the Cafe, toy library, stock shop, soft play area, meeting rooms - to offer training courses on committee work, adult communication, play, and other appropriate subjects e.g. safety and health - to provide training and support from SPPA via the Fieldworker - to provide information about local resources and support pre-school issues

As Figure 5.8 indicates, Jigsaw had a wider involvement with the local community, than the Three Towns nursery aiming to become a community resource offering a cafe, creche facilities, after-school care and opportunities for adult education and recreation. It also aimed to further its partnership with the SPPA, making premises available for pre-five groups, forming a joint executive committee and co-operating in the development of new initiatives. These fourteen aims were then analysed further by the Nursery Head and voluntary sector representatives in order to generate specific objectives.

5.3.2 The Nursery Unit

Domain: Children

The aims and objectives for Jigsaw's nursery unit were similar to those identified in Three Towns. One overall aim in the 'children' domain was identified as - **to provide an integrated centre for pre-five children and their families offering flexible high quality care and education for 2-5 year olds.**

Under this overall aim the nursery identified two objectives relating directly to the care and stimulation of children. These were:

- to provide for children's social, emotional physical and intellectual development by providing a high quality curriculum.
- to provide a secure, caring environment which meets the individual needs of all children.

In the early stages staff reported difficulties in planning the curriculum. Their early experience demonstrated the need for the allocation of more time to be given to planning and the development of 'more structured input'. More time was successfully devoted to this area and by **Time 2** a 'somewhat more structured daily programme' began to emerge. All staff were involved in planning meetings but some lacked relevant experience in this area. They continued to report some difficulty, especially in finding time to evaluate the usefulness of particular themes and pieces of work. Around this point in the recording process, the nursery unit was assessed by the inspectors from the Region's Quality Assurance Unit. Informal discussion between members of this team and the evaluators revealed limitations in the provision of appropriate curriculum experiences for the children in the nursery unit. Their findings reflected independent measures carried out by the evaluation team. Although the inspectors' findings and the Harms and Clifford profile (see Chapter 7) had a negative impact on staff morale, more time and effort was given to developing the curriculum and a consultancy programme instituted with Jordanhill College of Education. By **Time 4** it was found to be functioning well with individual work programmes in operation. The second objective presented fewer problems. A keyworker system was established very quickly and flexibility in meeting childrens' individual and group needs was well developed by **Time 2**. Staff identified no significant problems in this area and they considered that this objective had been successfully met by **Time 3**.

Domain: Parents

Four objectives were identified in this area:

- to promote parenting skills through individual and group sessions

In the early stages staff reported difficulty in finding time to work with parents. Review meeting and parent's discussion group were established to pin-point areas of need. One-to-one work proved difficult to initiate again because of time constraints. Open University courses were planned. By **Time 2** concrete plans for educational courses were made and discussion with individual parents had become more frequent. There were plans to develop parent groups and a resource library. However, **Time 3** saw little progress in achieving plans from earlier recordings. Staff energies were directed towards dealing with parents' difficulties with children as they arose on a one-to-one basis. Open University courses were delayed. The situation was largely a result of insufficient staff time and resources to devote to wider 'parenting' issues. By **Time 4** progress was obvious; Open University courses had been provided and proved successful. Staff felt that demand for individual work for parents took precedence over group work and although groups were established further development in this area reflected a reassessment of need; 'plans are to continue developing by targeting individual parents arranging times for them to come into the nursery unit to work with their child; have visits by keyworkers etc.'

- to provide opportunities for parents to be involved in the work of the nursery

This area proved fairly difficult to develop and again staff and time constraints prevented good progress in achieving this objective. Open nights were successful throughout the recording period, but other forms of involvement remained rudimentary e.g. parent's presence in the nursery during the settling in period. By **Time 4** staff had decided to offer parents the opportunity to discuss the kind of input they would like in the nursery. Future plans would reflect the outcome of these discussions.

- to provide opportunities for social interaction

This objective was easily met with parents eager to be involved in the various social events organised by Jigsaw. By **Time 4**, a parent's group was well established and had begun to respond to plans to allow that group to organise independent social events, helping to take pressure off staff.

- to encourage parents to pursue recreational, educational and employment opportunities

In the early stages, securing a nursery place allowed parents to pursue opportunities. **Time 2** noted difficulties in offering the necessary flexibility in child care to allow parent's pursuits. **Time 3** saw the objective only partially met but plans to enlist the help of 'Launchpad' and the District Council to provide mobile creche facilities were likely to help expand opportunities for parents.

Domain: Other Agencies

The overall aim was: **to participate in inter-agency care plans for families with preschool children where appropriate.** Two objectives were identified:

- to participate in case conferences and review meetings.

This objective was fairly easily achieved. Professionals involved in referring children to the nursery were aware of the resource before it opened. A successful co-operative system developed quickly involving the Head and Deputy in most early case conferences and reviews. By the final stages, keyworker staff were attending reviews and some reviews were held at Jigsaw.

- to maintain ongoing links with other professionals with reference to families requiring support.

A good network of links was established in the early stages which was enhanced by the development of an admissions panel by the development of an admissions panel including representatives of a number of outside agencies. Informal meetings also took place and by **Time 3** links were widening to include local primary schools, a language unit and a community dentist. By **Time 4** closer links with the local primary schools had developed with regular meetings planned on curriculum development and information sharing.

In the context of the nursery unit, staff found development stages easier to negotiate than the Three Towns community nursery. They had fewer accommodation problems and less staff turnover. They did share some of the Three Towns problems in lack of staff skills and experience and these were reflected in delays in developing good curricular input. However, delays were also attributable in part to early attempts to involve the whole staff group in curriculum development. Using this approach, only one hour per fortnight was available for planning. After the poor external assessment of curriculum, the system was changed and the teacher

worked on curriculum development independently. Though she would have preferred not to 'impose this on staff without consultation' and staff disliked this approach, it had considerable positive impact on the service offered.

In the 'caring' context, success was evident in the early stages and staff did not find the large numbers of children attending a problem. They also, despite the transport system, formed effective formal and informal links with parents. Work with other agencies was also more successful than in Three Towns. Staff found other agencies appreciative of the nursery, co-operative and helpful and this is confirmed by interview material from both staff and outside agencies.

Domain: Support Services

Jigsaw's other areas of concern - the support services - had a number of domains (see Table 5 and 6). The first of these was the Voluntary Sector. The overall aim here was **to further the partnership with the voluntary sector, in particular SPPA**. Three objectives were identified under this aim:

- to make premises available for voluntary pre-five groups

All of the voluntary groups involved were established in four rooms in the accommodation prior to the opening of Jigsaw Community Nursery. SPPA Branch, Toy Library Stock Shop and the Link-up Group shared use of the room, the Parent/Toddler Group and the childminders shared another room and the Playgroup used the other two rooms. Nursery staff found that contact was limited with these groups and over time a common community nursery identity did not develop as expected. There seemed to be little real basis for communication, though some ongoing voluntary use of the soft play room did occur. By **Time 4** the SPPA Branch members with its associated services and the Link-Up Group reported dissatisfaction with their allotted accommodation as it was increasingly used for other purposes. They were currently seeking alternative accommodation.

- to further joint decision-making about the community nursery

Ironically this objective proved most difficult of all to achieve. The interview data reported in Chapter 6 gives full accounts of the problems which arose in this area. Although in the planning stages, joint decision-making worked well, when the nursery was operational, the role of the SPPA and Link-Up in a decision-making context proved difficult to define. Attempts to establish an acceptable role for SPPA and Link-Up gave rise to conflict and hostility between the nursery management and voluntary sector representatives. Stalemate was reached by **Time 3** but by **Time 4** some progress was detectable in the formation of a new 'forum' group. Overall though progress was slow and disappointing.

- to co-operate in the development of creches and other projects as appropriate.

In the early stages book-in creches were piloted and seemed well received by the playgroups and others. Playleaders were employed as creche workers and three creches were established and fully booked every week. By **Time 4** this objective had been met despite the loss of the 'outreach' worker responsible for its development.

Domain: The local community

The local community was identified as a domain with the overall aim: **to make the local community aware of what the community nursery is and the range of services offered.** Jigsaw used posters, hand-outs, local newspapers and set up a User's group in the early stages to advertise the resource. The best methods and good timing of advertising emerged over time. By **Time 2** a regular newsletter and handbook was produced and by **Time 4** there were plans to distribute the newsletter (which was well received) via local newsagents. Staff felt this objective was met by **Time 4**.

Under to develop the community nursery as a community resource, staff identified seven related objectives:

- to encourage local people to come to the cafe

In the early stages the cafe was fairly well used by parents with children attending various groups and a limited number of other community members. There were difficulties in formulating a non-smoking policy and the cafe was less well attended during holiday periods. Plans to encourage wider use were difficult to formulate and at **Time 4** use remained fairly restricted to users of the building.

- to promote feedback about the running of the community nursery through the User's Group

A User's Group was established in the early stages as a 'general information sharing base for all interested groups'. Attendance at this group diminished somewhat by **Time 2** as the nursery became established. This group was not easy to promote and this may have been due to tensions developing between nursery management and voluntary sector representatives on the original planning group. By **Time 4** further attempts had been made to encourage this group but there were more problems in determining what sort of information the group required. Future plans involved some clarification of the group's remit.

- to provide opportunity for individual social contact amongst parents and other adults.

Although staff hoped to provide a number of opportunities for social contact, these were limited, (though very successful) to occasional open nights.

- to provide information about available resources

A resource library was developed and effective links established with the SDC outreach worker. By **Time 3** collaborative courses were run and well received. Future plans involved updating existing information.

- to encourage the use of premises by other groups

All pre-five groups made regular use of the soft play area and cafe. By **Time 2** individual families were able to book the soft play area. By **Time 4**, staff felt this objective had been only partially met since use of premises by other established groups had been very limited. Future plans included identifying and offering use to wider groups.

- to identify home visiting schemes and to determine the need for such schemes in the area.

In the early stages little was done to investigate this scheme. The outreach worker failed to develop the scheme and by **Time 3** and **4** (after the outreach worker had left) the scheme had been dropped in favour of specific home-visiting carried out by keyworker staff.

The remaining two objectives: 'to provide creche facilities' and 'to be aware of developments in pre-five services in the area' were both achieved quite readily with few problems.

Domain: After School Care

The final domain, **after-school care**, had one overall aim **to provide limited after-school care**. Staff identified 3 objectives:

- to provide long term after school care until 6 p.m. for a maximum of 26 children age 5-12 years

In the early stages, problems over accommodation and staff's limited experience meant that the full complement of children couldn't be taken. Plans to utilise other rooms and the Head of Centre's supervision of staff allowed greater numbers of children to attend. By **Time 3** and **4**, the after care unit was full with a number of children on the waiting list. The other objectives were:

- to provide a secure environment
- to provide activities appropriate to each child's needs

This objective was gradually met over time as staff gained skill and experience in catering for a wide age range. Minor problems remained at **Time 4** in staff's handling of difficult children but this was expected to improve over time.

Jigsaw's aims and objectives progress charts (see Figures 5.9 and 5.10) indicate a good level of success in all areas of concern. In the nursery unit, final recordings indicate good or very good progress in all objectives and this is supported by data from other assessment procedures. Progress was also marked in support services/voluntary sector with only two objectives proving somewhat resistant - the development of Home Visiting schemes and the establishment of acceptable terms for joint decision-making between the nursery management and voluntary sector representatives.

































5.3 3 Voluntary Sector

To a large extent the voluntary sector provision in the area of South Strathkelvin remained unaffected by the presence of the community nursery. Although an attempt was made by the outreach worker of the nursery to contact the local playgroups etc. no clear vision of how the community nursery would act as a local resource for voluntary groups emerged. However, there was no evidence to indicate that the community nursery had a negative effect on the playgroups - demand for any form of provision was high so no competition developed.

Where overlap took place it was in the use of the well-equipped soft play area in the nursery and the book-in creche facility. One of the local playgroups made frequent use of this soft play resource but others found that, for geographical reasons, use of the soft play area was not feasible. Another use made of the community nursery was the stock shop located in the Branch room, one of the rooms in the nursery (see Figure 3.7).

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES PROGRESS CHART

STAFF PERCEPTIONS

AIM	OBJECTIVE	TIME 1	TIME 2	TIME 3	TIME 4
CHILDREN					
High quality flexible care for 2—5 year olds	1. Secure, caring environment				
Meeting children's social, emotional, intellectual and physical needs	1. High quality curriculum				
PARENTS					
An integrated centre for children and families	1. Promote parenting skills				
	2. Involvement in nursery				
	3. Opportunities for social interaction				
	4. Encourage pursuit of recreational, educational and employment opportunities				
OTHER AGENCIES					
Participate in inter-agency care plans	1. Participate in case conferences and reviews				
	2. Maintain ongoing links with other professionals				

TIME PERIODS —
TIME 1 January — March 1991
TIME 2 April—August 1991
TIME 3 September—December 1991
TIME 4 January—March 1992

KEY TO PROGRESS —
 None or very limited
 Some
 Good
 Very good

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES PROGRESS CHART

STAFF PERCEPTIONS

AIM	OBJECTIVE	TIME 1	TIME 2	TIME 3	TIME 4
VOLUNTARY SECTOR					
Further partnership with the voluntary sector	1. Make premises available	●	●	●	●
	2. Establish joint decision making	●	●	●	●
	3. Co-operate in the development of creches etc	●	●	●	●
LOCAL COMMUNITY					
Make the local community aware of the nursery and range of services	1. Provide information — posters, news sheets	●	●	●	●
COMMUNITY RESOURCE					
Develop the nursery as a community resource	1. Encourage locals to come e.g. cafe	●	●	●	●
	2. Gain feed-back — user's meeting	●	●	●	●
	3. Provide opportunities for informal social contact	●	●	●	●
	4. Give information on available resources	●	●	●	●
	5. Encourage use of premises by other groups	●	●	●	●
	6. Develop cafe	●	●	●	●
	7. Determine need for Home-Visiting	●	●	●	●
	8. Provide creche facilities	●	●	●	●
OTHER AGENCIES					
Monitor and develop links with other pre-five agencies	1. Be aware of developments in pre-five services locally	●	●	●	●
AFTER SCHOOL CARE					
Provide limited after school care	1. Provide long-term care 'till 6 p.m. for 5—12 year olds	●	●	●	●
	2. Provide a secure environment	●	●	●	●
	3. Provide appropriate activities	●	●	●	●
PARENTS AND OTHER ADULTS					
Provide opportunity for adult education/recreation	1. Provide appropriate courses	●	●	●	●

TIME PERIODS — TIME 1 January — March 1991
 TIME 2 April—August 1991
 TIME 3 September—December 1991
 TIME 4 January—March 1992

KEY TO PROGRESS —

- None or very limited
- Some
- Good
- Very good

However, the use of the Branch room itself became a source of conflict. The SPPA representatives were under the impression that this room was predominantly to be used by them. When other meetings, not involving the Voluntary Sector, were scheduled to take place in the room a degree of resentment built up.

But as stated earlier (Section 5.3 2) a trusting partnership between the Voluntary Sector representatives and the management of the community nursery was difficult to achieve once the nursery had been set up. This matter is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

Of the six aims identified by the Voluntary Sector representative (see Figure 5.8) progress was made on only three of these. The others i.e. partnership, the nursery as a community resource and joint training remained stubborn to progress for the duration of the study.

5.4 BUCHLYVIE NURSERY SCHOOL

5.4 1 Aims and Objectives

As was indicated in the introduction to this chapter, the comparative nursery school undertook the same process of identifying and monitoring aims and objectives as the new community nurseries. The process was designed not only to allow some comparison of the perceived purpose of each service but also look at the type of issues which were considered to be 'problematic' in all three contexts. Compared to the new nurseries, staff in the established nursery school had more familiarity with the concepts of stating and maintaining objectives and although the system which they described as the 'plan-act-reflect' cycle had a somewhat different recording format it was easily adapted to the system required for the evaluation. As a result the process of identifying aims and related objectives was more easily achieved in the nursery school context. Overall, there were more objectives identified under each domain and aim, particularly in the curriculum area. Record Sheets differed from both community nurseries in providing more detailed and focused objectives in the early stages. They also tended to indicate fewer problem areas. Where these occurred, they seemed generally more amenable to resolution. Interviews conducted in the early stages of the evaluation suggested that few of the problems, (particular those relating to staff skills and experience or lack of appropriate accommodation) encountered by the new projects were reflected in the nursery school. Moreover, there were few significant changes over the evaluation period. Figure 5.11 below shows the Domains, Aims and Objectives identified by staff in the nursery school.

Figure 5.11 Aims and Objectives of Buchlyvie Nursery School

DOMAIN	AIMS	OBJECTIVES
Parent, Child and Nursery School	To develop the partnership of home, school and community by sharing the parent’s interest in their child	<p>To encourage the parents to be involved with their child in the playroom and home</p> <p>To encourage parents to contribute to the assessment of their child’s progress by sharing assessment information</p> <p>To help parents to develop realistic expectations of their children</p> <p>To provide a safe stimulating environment where children can be whilst parents either work or have free time</p>
Children	To provide a caring, safe, stimulating environment where the child can develop at his own rate in the speicific areas of social, emotional, physical and intellectual and language development	<p>To help in the development of co-ordination and motor skills (fine and gross) in individual and group contexts through participation in physical activities</p> <p>To develop manipulatory skills through using a variety of materials</p> <p>To encourage healthy habits in terms of personal safety and hygiene</p> <p>To help the child form relationships with adults and other children</p> <p>To prepare the child to cope with school</p> <p>To provide situations where the child can be part of a group</p> <p>To encourage the child to explore, express and control his/her emotions both in the individual and group situation and to develop self-confidence and self-esteem</p> <p>To help the child develop concern for others and their feelings</p> <p>To develop speech, understanding, listening skills and vocabulary by combining actions and works, joining in discussion and using the immediate environment of the nursery plus themes to stimulate talk</p> <p>To stimulate the cognitive development of the child to encourage greater sensory awareness and heightened perception through questioning, exploration, comparison classification and aesthetic appreciation</p>

DOMAIN	AIMS	OBJECTIVES
Staff	To work as a team while respecting individual members special abilities and aptitudes	<p>To participate in and to provide staff development and training</p> <p>To participate in curriculum development and planning</p> <p>To exchange relevant information about individual children</p> <p>To supervise training for students</p>
Outside Agencies	To liaise effectively with outside agencies	<p>To liaise with other agencies in order to develop strategies for working with referred children and their families</p> <p>To develop links with all relevant agencies, groups or organisations within the community</p>
Special Needs	To identify and meet special needs in children	<p>To identify through assessment and observation those children who present special needs</p> <p>To cater for children's special needs within the nursery and/or engage the help of outside agencies</p>
Parents and the Community	To facilitate and encourage the uptake of recreational and educational activities to parents and other adults	<p>To offer adult education/recreation activities to parents and the wider community</p> <p>To promote community events and services</p> <p>To act as an information resource within the community</p> <p>To support parents and toddler groups for families with children 0-3 years</p>

5.4 2 Achieving the aims and objectives

Domain: Children

Staff identified one overriding aim in this domain: **to provide a caring, safe, stimulating environment where the child can develop at his own rate in the specific areas of social, emotional, physical, intellectual and language development.** This aim generated a number of objectives under the heading Emotional, two of which were expressed as:

- to encourage the child to explore, express and control emotions in the individual and group situation and to develop self confidence and self esteem
- to help the child develop concern for others and their feelings.

Both these aims and related objectives reflected staff's long term understanding and well established goals for children's emotional development. The record sheet listed a number of areas and contexts where both objectives were represented in elements of play and in staff/child relationships e.g 'children must have opportunities to carry on their own games where interaction with others is unnecessary and is not interpreted by others using the same materials.'

The balanced emotional development of children both as individuals and as members of a co-operative group was considered to be an essential backdrop to other more structured aspects of the nursery experience. None of the staff reported difficulties in meeting these particular objectives though as a group, the children showed less emotional disturbance than children in the 3-5 Unit, 3-Towns (37%) during the early stages. Staff did, however, give more one-to-one attention (including behaviour modification techniques) to children requiring greater input. In the Aims and Objectives Progress Chart (see Figure 5.12), achievement of both 'emotional' objectives was rated 'very good' across all three time periods.

Three objectives were identified in relation to children's social development:

- to help the child form relationships with adults and other children
- to prepare the child to cope with school
- to provide situations where the child could be part of a group.

Again staff identified no particular problems in meeting these objectives. They ensured that children were provided with positive models of child/child and child/adult interaction and felt that the structured free play time worked successfully towards achieving 'social' objectives. 'Preparation of the child for school' was identified as causing some problems; at the time of the first recording a nursery/primary liaison pre-entry programme had begun to be planned in response to staff's identification of a lack of consistency in liaison and initial reception of children to school. Problems were tackled via a committee and a standard approach with improved nursery/school liaison well developed by **Time 3**.

The language and intellectual development aspect gave rise to two fairly condensed objectives:

- language: to develop speech understanding, listening skills and vocabulary by continuing action and words, joining in discussion and using the immediate environment of the nursery plus themes to stimulate talk
- intellectual development: to stimulate the cognitive development of the child to encourage greater sensory awareness and heightened perception through questioning exploration, comparison, classification and aesthetic appreciation.

The density and detail of these objectives reflects the nursery school's commitment to curriculum development. Again, no particular problems were identified which might reflect those experienced in the new community nurseries i.e. staff saw themselves as having appropriate and adequate skills to develop and maintain a good curriculum. It seems the basic structure and content of the curriculum were long-standing and any adjustments were 'fine-tuning' to suit current child groups, stages of development and ability. In the community nurseries, the process of developing the structure of a good curriculum had proved problematic. In both innovative settings lack of staff stability and lack of sufficient time for staff group discussion (and in Three Towns in particular, the loss of senior staff in the early stages) had disrupted the development of good curriculum planning. In the nursery

school, few of these constraints were present but staff's own critical perception of the general quality of their curriculum indicated both the difficulties involved in developing a good curriculum and the need for ongoing improvement. The Aims and Objectives record sheet indicates movement from 'good' to 'very good' from **Time 1 to Time 3**.

Under physical development the objective stated was: to help in the development of co-ordination and motor skills in individual and group contexts through participation in physical activities.

Although staff identified no major problems in meeting this objective two areas which reflected problems encountered in Three Towns and were seen as being in need of improvement. The space available in the nursery was somewhat restricted and this had a negative impact on the duration if not the availability of gross motor play. Although opportunities for this type of play were adequate staff felt that, ideally, more time ought to have been devoted to it, especially where the use of large pieces of equipment was involved. Over **Time 1** and **Time 2** arranging safe outdoor play was problematic. The outdoor play area was continually vandalised and little could be done to keep the area in good order. However, a number of outdoor trips were organised each term, allowing children opportunities for some outside activities. By **Time 3** the general condition of the outside play area had improved, a result of joint action between the nursery and local groups.

Staff also reported in the early stages that they felt unable to offer sufficiently imaginative music and drama and were keen to have more training in these areas. By **Time 3** a number of staff had received such training and felt able to improve these aspects of the curriculum. Plans to develop a more imaginative use of soft play resources were also realised with maths and sorting activities incorporated into activities in this area.

Overall in the '**Children**' domain Buchlyvie experienced few serious problems. Systems for planning, monitoring and developing curriculum were well established before the evaluation began and although these areas were not perceived as ideal, continued child assessment and opportunities for staff discussion and regular in-service training allowed change and progress to take place. There were some restrictions on activity imposed by the layout of the nursery; lack of space and poor maintenance of the 'vandalised' yard. These were resolved to some extent by engaging the help of community groups and tighter planning of daily schedules of activity.

Domain: Staff

The overall aim in this domain was identified as:

- **to work as a team whilst respecting individual members special abilities and aptitudes**

Specific objectives for the aim were

- **to participate in curriculum development and planning**

The record sheets state that clear outlines for curriculum development existed and were a whole staff task. Interview data confirms the team approach and careful planning of yearly themes using the 'plan-act-reflect' cycle. This system worked well supplemented by staff's good research into new ideas and the regular acquisition of new materials and resources. Staff reported satisfaction with the system and felt that adequate time for planning and discussion allowed good development

and adjustment of themes. The situation contrasts directly with both community nurseries highlighting the basic need for adequate staff planning opportunities and discussion time.

- to participate in and to provide staff development and training

Divisional in-service training seemed adequate to meet staff needs and a wide variety of subjects were covered by the in-service programme during the evaluation period. Expansion of opportunities by Time 3 ensured an even greater training input. Staff felt this objective was very efficiently met by the end of the recording time.

- to exchange relevant information about children

This area did prove problematic during the evaluation period. A union ban on nursery nurses completing written records on children prevented the continuation of a system developed by staff whereby written assessments were kept and also given to parents on children's progress. By **Time 3** there were plans to revert to this system as soon as possible, and in addition to provide primary schools with booklets on individual children's progress.

In the interim period verbal reports had been given to parents and any written records completed by the nursery Head and teacher. The situation had proved less satisfactory than providing written reports which parents in particular seemed to appreciate.

With the exception of problems created by the ban on written reports, the aims and objectives in the domain were both clearly established and routinely 'achieved'. Staff morale seemed consistently high throughout the evaluation period and they appeared to work well as a team with a shared focus on improvement and progress.

Domain: Parents, Child and Nursery School

Staff identified the following overall aim in this domain: **to develop the partnership of home, school and community by sharing the parents interest in their child.**

A number of objectives were identified:

- to encourage parents to be involved with their child in the playroom and at home.

Again this area seemed well developed at the outset of the evaluation and continued to develop well throughout the period despite a strike by community education workers which prevented the delivery of O.U. study packs on the pre-school child. By **Time 3** courses were well established and attended. Staff felt they had effectively achieved the objective of heightening parental involvement with children at home and in the playroom.

- to encourage parents to contribute to the assessment of their child's progress

Again this objective was effectively met with staff available to discuss children's progress with parents on a one-to-one basis and regular provision of open days.

- to help parents develop realistic expectations of their child.

This objective is closely related to the second objective but in practice focused in developing opportunities for parental consultation with nursery staff, particularly where home circumstances were difficult and, where there were short term crises affecting parents and children. The nursery seemed to deal well with the need for parental support and was successful in engaging help from other agencies.

Domain: Parents and the Community

The following overall aim was identified: **to facilitate and encourage the uptake of recreational and educational activities by parents and other adults.**

Objectives identified were closely related to each other:

- to offer adult education/recreation to parents and the wider community
- to promote community events and services
- to act as an information resource
- to support parent and toddler groups.

Over the evaluation period, education and recreation for adults expanded in Buchlyvie (despite problems associated with availability of educational material). By **Time 3**, daily classes and drop-in facilities were provided and well attended. Promoting community events and services remained somewhat below the 'very good' standard but the objective was consistently met at an acceptable level. The general information provided by the nursery also developed well throughout the period and by **Time 3** was rated as 'very good'. The continuing support of a mother/toddler group proved slightly more problematic. Although the group had gone fairly well it needed more direct input and support than staff could offer. By **Time 3**, demand had increased and two new groups had emerged but with only two mornings covered by staff and external workers. The nursery negotiated successfully for more SPPA support and workers for the mother/toddler group.

Domain: Outside Agencies

Staff identified two objectives under the overall aim of **liaising effectively with outside agencies**, these were:

- to liaise with other agencies in order to develop strategies for working with referred children and their families
- to develop links with all relevant agencies, groups or organisations within the community.

At the beginning of the evaluation staff felt liaison and links were both well established. Some difficulty in knowing when to refer children to the Social Work Department had presented problems. Staff felt the need for more referral communication with social workers but found this persistently difficult to achieve. Otherwise liaison and co-operative work with children and families was successful with progress charts indicating general links to be very good throughout the period of evaluation and liaison to be consistently rated as 'good' across all three time periods.

Progress Chart

The aims and objectives progress chart (see Figure 5.12) for the comparative nursery indicated a consistently higher degree of perceived success in achieving objectives than in either of the new community nurseries. Undoubtedly, this is due in part to the established status of the nursery. Perceived success though seems to reflect the existence of good planning, a stable and appropriately skilled staff group, good relations with parents and community and few problems in attracting support and involvement from external agencies. Interview material supports the aims and objectives material in finding staff morale as high, with no indication of serious difficulties in dealing with either the day-to-day running of the nursery or in handling unusual or crisis situations. None of the major issues raised in the community nurseries contexts - poor accommodation, poor staff skills, staff instability, poor liaison with outside agencies, a lack of parental involvement, lack of external support and lack of time for staff planning - emerged over the evaluation period in Buchlyvie.

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AIMS AND OBJECTIVES PROGRESS CHART

STAFF PERCEPTIONS

AIM	OBJECTIVE	TIME 1	TIME 2	TIME 3
CHILDREN: to provide a safe, caring stimulating environment Emotional Social Intellectual and Language Physical Special needs	1. Explore, express, control			
	2. Concern for others			
	3. Form relationships			
	4. Be part of a group			
	5. Prepare for school			
	6. Stimulation through questioning, explanation and comparison etc.			
	7. Develop speech through listening, discussion etc.			
	8. Develop co-ordination and motor skills through activity			
	9. Encourage healthy habits			
	10. Identify these			
	11. Cater for needs and engage outside help if necessary			
STAFF: to work effectively as a team Training and Development Curriculum Children Students	1. Provide development and training			
	2. All participate in development and planning of curriculum			
	3. Exchange information			
	4. Supervise training for students			
PARENTS, CHILD AND NURSERY: to develop a partnership of home and school	1. Encourage parent's involvement with child at nursery and home			
	2. Encourage parents to contribute to assessments and realistic expectations of child			
PARENTS AND COMMUNITY: to encourage uptake of activities by parents and others	1. Offer adult education			
	2. Promote community events and services			
	3. Act as an information resource			
	4. Support parent and toddler groups			
OUTSIDE AGENCIES: to liaise effectively with other agencies and organisations	1. Develop joint strategies for working with referred children			
	2. Develop links with all relevant agencies, organisations within the community			

TIME PERIODS — TIME 1 January — June 1991

TIME 2 August — December 1991

TIME 3 January — June 1992

KEY TO PROGRESS —

- None or very limited
- Some
- Good
- Very good

CHAPTER 6

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NURSERIES

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The research team charted the progress of the two community nurseries from their planning in 1989 through to the Spring of 1992. The basis of this was taken both from **interviews** conducted with staff, administrators, parents and regional politicians and from **minutes** of Advisory/Planning Group meetings. The interviews explored the perceptions of selected participants with regard to specific issues pertaining to the development of the nurseries. Such ethnographic procedures allowed the researchers access to a realistic analysis of the process whereby the nurseries evolved and is well rooted in evaluation theory (see Fetterman and Pitman, 1986).

Interviews were conducted by members of the research team on 3 occasions:

- establishing the community nurseries (late 1989 - mid 1990)
- the early stages of operation (late 1990 - early 1991)
- the nurseries two years on (Spring, 1992)

With regard to the comparative nursery school, interviews with staff were only conducted on one occasion as the school was not in a rapidly developing phase of its existence. The school itself was purpose-built in 1970 and the staff had built up a well established routine.

The **procedure** for conducting the interviews was identical throughout. In all cases the researcher recorded the responses of the person interviewed, transcribed the responses and submitted the typed responses to the interviewee for amendment of factual inaccuracies. This was a lengthy process but resulted in an accurate data base for analysis. Interviewees were asked to be as honest and open as possible given the assurance of confidentiality. Inevitably a number of difficulties arose in handling this confidential information given the existence of local Evaluation Advisory Groups and the open democratic style of the study. In reporting the data no individual was identified by name, only by role (e.g. Pre-Five Worker). In most cases this was unproblematical. However, where the role was occupied by only one person (e.g. Head of Centre) this clearly created tension when selected critical quotations were made available in the feedback process to the advisory groups. In view of this, the local evaluation advisory groups agreed that for the duration of the study only summaries of the interviews be made available so that confidentiality would not be indirectly breached for the duration of the study.

It was clear from the interviews that translating the Region's pre-five policy into practice proved more problematic than anticipated. Events in the early planning and implementation phase played a large part in determining how the nurseries developed and thus affected achievement of particular aims and objectives. Therefore data from the early stages interviews are extensively reported in the text with summaries for the second two phases. The full reports of all the interviews appear in Annex 6, though detailed aspects of the final interviews are included in the text.

6.2 ESTABLISHING THE COMMUNITY NURSERIES

As outlined in Chapter 3, considerable time elapsed, particularly in the Three Towns project, from conception to realisation. With both community nurseries this was a critical phase. Not only were the nurseries deemed to be the **flagships of the Region's pre-five policy** and were under intense pressure to deliver, but being in the vanguard of a radical policy, they faced considerable hurdles which were both higher and more numerous than expected.

THREE TOWNS COMMUNITY NURSERY

A number of key individuals involved in the setting up of the Three Towns Community Nursery project were interviewed in the autumn of 1989.

Those interviewed were:

Head of Springvale Nursery School
Regional Development Officer (Pre-Five), SRC
Divisional Development Officer (Pre-Five), Ayr Division, SRC
Local Regional Councillor
Two parents

Respondents were asked for their views on the following themes:

- history of the project
- respondent's role in the establishment of the project
- aims, objectives and difficulties

History of the Project

Respondents were asked when the project was first put forward as an idea; who was responsible for it and what were their roles in relation to its development.

The discussion of the history of the project begins with the Head of the Springvale Nursery.

I felt that the nursery's part-time only provision did not adequately reflect the needs of the community. The staff here were aware of the families needing extra support both through liaison with S.W.'s and through direct experience of parents whose children attended the school. I was aware that these families needed another base. A flat became available on the campus. This was to be a resource for families with Social Work and teaching input and including outreach facilities. I formed a group to discuss this new facility; (a psychologist, Primary Head, S.W. Pre-school Community Organiser and Curriculum Adviser.) It was put forward as a proposal to Urban Aid through the existing Development Officer who took up post after the plans had been developed. The plans were immediately rejected on the basis that they were not innovative. (Head of Springvale Nursery School).

Three projects were originally put forward for Urban Aid Funding from the 3-Towns area. However all three were rejected by the Region. The rejection of the proposals was partly influenced by new policy emerging from the Pre-Five Unit. The Regional Development Officer with responsibility for overseeing Urban Aid proposals was directed to help develop proposals which would reflect the new community nursery model. His remit included the Three Towns proposal but his involvement in the early stages was more intensive than anticipated given the lack of experience of the Divisional Development Officer in post at the time in preparing Urban Aid proposals.

The proposal to adapt Springvale Nursery to the new model involved the Regional Development Officer in lengthy debate and negotiation with the Scottish Office to promote the ideology and rationale of the community nursery model. When this was finally accepted, a proposal emerged - a product of discussion and negotiation within a group composed of the Regional Development Officer, Divisional Development Officer, Head of Springvale Nursery and others involved in submitting the proposal. It was agreed at this stage that Springvale Nursery would form the core of the new project with a family centre on the campus.

Although this new proposal was accepted, objections began to emerge when new conditions of service for staff were discussed. At this point the Divisional Development Officer left and the Regional Development Officer continued negotiations alone until a new development officer was appointed.

Objections emerged when the issue of staffing was looked at. Some staff here were to be on integrated conditions. The Divisional Education Officer went to talk to Springvale staff and to offer conditions to those who would be working within the new model. Not all staff would be involved but the staff group reaction was divided. Objections began to emerge from that point, both from within the nursery and from local link-up groups. It became obvious that the nursery couldn't be included in the new model. (Regional Development Officer).

Besides objections to new conditions of service for teachers and nursery nurses, local parent groups expressed fears that by changing the nursery its educational ethos would be destroyed, converting the existing service to a day nursery for very needy children, and that fewer part-time places would be on offer to children in the immediate locale. Local parents lobbied the Regional Council and their objections combined with those of the Head and staff of the nursery resulted in the exclusion of the nursery from the community nursery plans.

Clearly, this was a period of considerable tension in the history of the project. On the one hand, there was an effective, locally-mounted campaign to retain the essential nature of Springvale Nursery School; whilst on the other hand, there was pressure from the Pre-Five Unit to implement the policy of the Regional Council as described in the Member/Officer Group Report of 1985. In such a tense political situation, the role of the Regional Development Officer was crucial. When asked about his reactions to events at that time, and in particular about the support he received from the Pre-Five Unit, it became clear that the lack of clarity in his responsibilities strengthened the hand of the local campaign leaders.

At times I felt I had the rug pulled from under my feet there was a general lack of clarity about my role and level of responsibility. (Regional Development Officer)

The Divisional Development Officer, appointed after the final submission had been accepted, faced a situation which had become extremely complex and conflict ridden.

The Pre-Five Unit tried to link its integration policy into the existing situation but the nursery rejected the imposition of new conditions of service. In the face of protest from the nursery Head, the union and local parents, the Region backed off. When I came into post this was partly history. I was perplexed to find that the local Link-up group had taken on board a lot of reservations about the effect the project would have on the existing nursery school. I had to face unravelling all of this and looking at new proposals, costs and objectives to get the thing off the ground. (Divisional Development Officer)

Objections by parents and nursery school staff had a powerful impact on the direction finally taken by the new project. By refusing to accept conditions associated with the Region's integration policy, the aim of the new project - to create a community nursery involving existing traditional services - was changed. The new project became an independent resource, providing a new style of care alongside existing traditional facilities. From a policy development viewpoint, the Three Towns project cannot be seen to demonstrate the viability of creating community nurseries from existing sources other than to highlight the difficulties of attempting to impose change on traditional institutions.

Parents and one of the councillors gave different accounts of the starting point of the Three Towns project. The councillor stated that the parents in the Stevenston Link-up group were responsible for initiating demand for more resources and made no mention of the role of the Nursery Head in this. Of the parents interviewed only one identified the Head of the nursery as the instigator of the original Urban Aid proposal, the other naming the Divisional Development Officer in post at the time of the original proposal.

Respondents' roles in the establishment of the Project

Our respondents were asked about their role in the project's development. The nursery school Head felt that her role as a member of the consultative group was "nominal", since the nursery had been excluded as a base for the new project. The Divisional Development Officer entered a situation which was already subject to conflicts and difficulties:

My own practice may actually be a problem here. For some people I suppose I lack credibility. I'd no experience of nursery education. I had to work on resolving certain issues. I felt I had satisfied the needs of the parents and the nursery school but they didn't think so. (Divisional Development Officer)

The answers given by parents on their role in the development of the project highlight a conflict of interests which developed between the Stevenston parent group and those from Saltcoats and Ardrossan. The parent from Stevenston was asked about her role in the project's development:

I organised a survey of local opinion on the pre-five services in Stevenston. But for a year afterwards there was no information on how the proposal was going, despite the positive response to it here. (Parent)

The Saltcoats parent's response, however, reflects the opposition to the project in that area; she saw her role as having become one of opposing detrimental change, not of fighting for more pre-five resources. Although she had originally supported the demand for more pre-five care in the area:

We were angry and felt the proposed changes would be bad for the school. We got a petition together. Different Link-up groups then became antagonistic to one another. Stevenston parents thought we were acting against their interests. But we wanted to protect what we had. (Parent)

Despite the oppositional and conflicting forces arising from different groups and individuals with an interest in the Three Towns project, all came together to form one consultative group. Respondents were asked about the functions of that group. First, who selected its members? There was no clear cut view of how the group was started though it was in fact at the initiative of the Pre-Five Unit. The Councillor believed that Link-up parents had selected group members. The parents themselves, however, believed the group had been formed by the Divisional Development Officer and the Regional Development Officer, as did the Head of the nursery.

The Divisional Development Officer said:

In a sense the group members were self-selected. The Pre-Five representative and I sent out invitations to individuals who'd shown an interest at other stages of the proposal - all accepted. (Divisional Development Officer)

The Divisional Development Officer's comment on the purpose of that group seemed optimistic given its membership:

To continue the notion of building the project from a corporate view, to allow a flow of information and to ensure that different organisations and interests had a chance to share in planning. (Divisional Development Officer)

All respondents agreed in principle with the development officer's notions of the purpose of the consultative group. But their comments on their own roles in that group and on aspects of its functioning indicate that conflicts which existed prior to its inception continued both overtly and covertly within that group.

I am really a mediator. I am there to show council commitment to the pre-fives. The Saltcoats and Ardrossan parent groups are really very articulate. They don't represent the majority of families. I am there to represent the majority. (Councillor)

I was providing information and carrying out a lot of the work put forward by that group. There's a big problem of contrasting ideologies in that group. Basically, some have an allegiance to Education. Not everyone is working towards the same ends. I don't mean they are acting consciously to undermine the project, but their commitment is conditional. The project represents a political upheaval which was and is a nightmare. (Divisional Development Officer)

In addition to the conflicting interests within the consultative group which centred on the nature of the new resource and its impact on traditional services, parents' comments highlighted yet another difficulty; this centred on authority within the group and the real impact which community members may have on local government projects.

I do not feel the group listens and acts on the advice of parent representatives. My comments are not recognised. This could be to do with the fact that two men are in charge. I don't know if they understand the position of women and mothers very well at all. (Parent)

Subsequently the chair was transferred to a female Councillor.

Aims, Objectives and difficulties

Respondents were asked to comment on the level of local pre-five provision and to consider the objectives of the new project in the light of their understanding of local needs. All respondents felt that Stevenston and Ardrossan had little to offer pre-five children but that Saltcoats was better off with a higher proportion of children attending nursery or playgroup. No all-day care existed though, which allowed mothers to work full-time. Focusing the project on children and families with the greatest need seemed appropriate to all respondents but again criticism of objectives arose indirectly from the belief that existing services would be detrimentally effected by the existence of the project.

I can't fault the objectives but we do need to protect the existing nursery. We don't want that diluted or full of a lot of very up-tight children. (Parent)

Respondents were asked to comment on admissions policy to the project. They felt the admissions policy would serve to highlight the lack of pre-five services generally in that it would leave the vast majority of Three Towns children without nursery experience - given that the new project would only provide a very limited number of places. As far as the contents of admissions policy were concerned, the issue of working mothers was raised by both a parent and the councillor.

I would like to change all of it. (Admissions policy). I believe that working mothers ought to have special priorities, not just women who might benefit if they had a job. (Parent)

I feel the whole admissions policy needs looking at again. Some families slip through. Its open to abuse and it is abused. Parental needs, particularly the needs of working mothers, have to be looked at again. A.P.T. areas don't always make much sense. We need to look again at demarcation lines in the Three Towns area. (Councillor)

All respondents felt that demand for places would quickly outstrip the new resource and some expected an angry response from the community over this.

When asked about difficulties experienced in getting the project underway, the practical problems of finance and accommodation were seen as causing the greatest problems. The location of the project outside the area of greatest need (Stevenston) was seen as a major problem by one parent. Only the councillor felt the political problems surrounding the project would create long term difficulties.

The political problems created by the EIS over conditions of service and related to that the management structure of the project, including as it does the Head of the original nursery, could make things fraught. I am aware we haven't made things easy for them. I feel main line educators haven't been helpful either. (Councillor)

Critical issues emerging from the interviews

- Confirmation of the need for flexible, specialised and (to some extent) compensatory care in the area.
- Identification of deep-rooted resistance to change in traditional pre-five services.
- Demonstration of the power of local individuals and groups to hinder the implementation of new policy.
- Identification of the management difficulties faced by regional officials in implementing Council policies.
- Confirmation of the great need felt by all members of the community for pre-five services.
- Indication of the potential for resentment and conflict over the admission policy which given the limitations of the resources provided would fail to cater for mothers who were already working.
- Limitation to co-operation between different types of pre-five provision with separate management structures.

JIGSAW COMMUNITY NURSERY

The Evaluation Advisory Group for Jigsaw Nursery nominated eight key individuals for interview about the establishment of the nursery from its inception to the admission of children in July 1990.

Those interviewed were:

Community Development Worker (Head of Centre from May 1990)
Divisional Pre-Five Development Officer, Dunbarton Division, SRC
Regional Pre-Five Development Officer, Pre-Five Unit, SRC
Education Officer, Dunbarton Division, SRC
Local Regional Councillor
SPPA Divisional Co-ordinator, Dunbarton
Two Link-Up Group representatives

All the interviews with the exception of the Education Officer, were completed during May and June 1990. The interview with the Education Officer was conducted during February 1991.

History of the Nursery

The first attempt at establishing a partnership between the voluntary sector and local authority staff was at a meeting in August 1989 when an SRC Regional and representative attended a Link-Up meeting to outline their plans for a 60 place community nursery, taking children from 0-5 years and offering extended day provision all year, at St. Barbara's. There was considerable ill-feeling expressed at this meeting with the voluntary sector representatives feeling that their plans had been usurped and that their existing use of St. Barbara's was threatened.

I went to meet the Link-Up group, they had heard of plans for a nursery in the building. The voluntary sector had a feeling of resentment and I was met with a barrage of questions.
(Regional Development Officer)

It was a very stormy meeting, it appeared that the Region were steam-rolling the project through and paying lip-service to voluntary sector involvement. (Divisional Co-ordinator)

A joint initiative was decided on and a planning group emerged consisting of a regional development officer, a divisional development officer, 2 Link-Up representatives, and a SPPA representative. The regional councillor, an educational psychologist and the pre-school community organiser were members of the group.

The Planning Group was an integral part of the way the nursery was to be set up, giving an earlier involvement for the community than they might otherwise have had.
(Education Officer)

The Divisional Architects and Related Services (DARS) in Dunbartonshire produced plans for the community nursery consisting of three nursery rooms; a baby room; a staff room; a creche room and a drop-in/cafe space. There was no initial capital budget allowance, only an allowance for staff costs. Even the amount allowed was insufficient for the numbers of staff necessary to maintain the appropriate ratios for sixty 0-5 year old children. As a consequence the Planning Group was forced to modify the plans to offer provision for forty 2-5 year olds. The arrangements for after-school care and running a creche have also had to be modified at present.

There is no reason not to take babies - other than financial constraints. (Community Development Worker)

There was only provision for staffing. There was no money for a baby room. (Divisional Development Officer)

Funding for the alteration of the premises and the purchasing of equipment was only obtained after the voluntary sector lobbied the local regional councillor.

The voluntary sector did a lot of lobbying, in fact the project wouldn't be there if it hadn't been for them.
(Regional Development Officer)

The revenue position was O.K. but there was no capital budget provision - this was a real problem. (Regional Councillor)

Respondent's roles in the establishment of the Nursery

Poor lines of communication and confusion over decision-making powers were a source of tension and confusion during the planning stage. The involvement of regional and divisional staff and services led to confusion at times over policy-making and operational decision making. The planning of the community nursery continued against a background of change for both the regional and divisional staff following on the decision to implement INLOGOV recommendations.

Personally I felt constrained as I didn't have control of the operational side. (Regional Development Officer)

The nursery was to be a Divisional Unit but the Pre-Five Unit were doing the co-ordinating. The Pre-Five Unit were the policy-making body but also making decisions regarding the operation of the community nursery.
(Divisional Development Officer)

The voluntary sector felt that, while they were listened to and their contributions valued in the Planning Group, the conclusions reached by the group were not necessarily acted upon thereafter. The confusion over the ability of the Planning Group to make decisions and have them implemented gave rise to a great amount of ill-feeling amongst the voluntary sector representatives. Voluntary sector representatives felt a considerable degree of commitment to the community nursery proposals and to the existing services which they provided and they were very unhappy when plans were frustrated. The on-going debate about the conversion of the creche room, with agreement apparently being reached between the Division and the planning group but the builder's plans not reflecting this agreement, illustrates this problem.

There is mistrust there, we have minuted the Education Officer's agreement (i.e. to a creche room) and we are in the process of writing to ask what has gone wrong.
(Link-Up Representative)

Members of the Planning Group felt that the Education Officer didn't always pass on the changes from the planning group to the architects, therefore, the plans for the building work were not always what was expected. (Divisional Development Office)

The Planning Group thinks it has made a decision and then discovers it has been over-ruled. (Co-ordinator)

It is difficult to work up an idea in an open way in a tight time-scale and feed back the ideas. It is difficult to communicate properly about translating ideas into reality.
(Education Officer)

Voluntary sector representatives felt frustrated by the bureaucracy of the Region and Division while at the same time recognising the constraints that individuals work under.

They listen and say they will act and then do what they want to do in 9 cases out of 10 but people we speak to have other bosses and have to report back to them. (Link-Up Representative)

The allocation of new rooms to the various groups already using the building and the positioning of the community nursery rooms previously used by the playgroup lead to insecurity among the voluntary sector users. They were unhappy about the possibility that the rooms allocated to them might be used for other community nursery activities when not being used by play-group etc. and they lacked confidence in the assurances which they received about the ownership of the new rooms. There is still some anxiety among voluntary sector representatives that the nursery is a discrete unit, between double doors, and that it will be isolated from the other groups and seen as having priority in the community nursery.

The SPPA were troubled over their branch room, they wanted rights over it and didn't trust assurances that they would be included or given space. (Community Development Worker)

The main one (difficulty) is the continued use of rooms and rights to them, what will happen if e.g. playgroup don't want to have other things on in their room when they are not there. (Divisional Co-ordinator)

There will always need to be a head who respects the voluntary sector and makes it part of the project and wants to avoid second class provision for the playgroup. (Link-Up Representative)

The voluntary sector members took an active part in the selection of nursery staff and they all felt that their involvement in the selection process has been very valuable in ensuring the future success of the project, arguing for the selection of staff who would be respected by the local community and welcomed by those running the voluntary sector part of the nursery.

without the voluntary sector at the interviews they might have chosen a person who wasn't respected locally. (Link-Up Representative)

If the Region appointed themselves and appointed internally we would have someone who played their tune and the success and outcome would be different. (Link-Up Representative)

Aims and objectives difficulties

The Head of Centre and Depute Head of Centre were in post in mid-May and the majority of staff were in post at the beginning of June. The admission of the first group of children to the nursery was delayed due to building works but the first children attended from 2 July. Children continued to be admitted over the summer.

The provision being offered by the community nursery was not the same as that suggested in the original plan. Babies (0-2 years) were not to be admitted and the degree of before and after-school care was unclear. All members of the Planning Group interviewed expressed disappointment at the failure to offer provision over a wide range of childcare needs. The regional and divisional staff wanted the nursery to meet the needs of the community and felt that they were providing a valuable community resource.

There is a need for voluntary sector playgroups plus flexible day care. The Jigsaw nursery's aims are to meet community needs. (Divisional Development Officer)

The most important aim for me is to combine traditional education and care in one establishment.
(Divisional Development Officer)

I saw Jigsaw as a vanguard. It is the beginning of integrated provision and working to show how nurseries can operate in an integrated way. (Regional Development Officer)

It will have a direct benefit to parents. It creates opportunities for parents. There is a clear benefit to children as they are getting earlier access. The voluntary sector are getting access to a richer mix of groups by being part of a bigger grouping, they can capitalise on each other's resources and ideas. It is a very attractive provision. (Education Officer)

There was a feeling among the voluntary sector representatives that the resources being offered did not have the mix of provision that the community wanted. They were concerned principally with the lack of after-school care and creche provision.

We wanted higher priority for before and after-school care and creche provision. (Divisional Co-ordinator)

Without a creche the project falls short and room for after-school care is needed. (Link-Up Representative)

The type of nursery facility being offered may also have been a disappointment to the community. Some of these interviewed felt that local parents want traditional nursery classes and that they wanted their children to be 'taught'.

A lot of people want straight nursery classes at schools.
(Link-Up Representative)

there are waiting lists of parents looking for additional nursery school provision. They want their children taught.
(Community Development Worker)

On admission of children to the nursery, the region's admissions policy was being adhered to, administered by an admissions panel consisting of nursery staff and other professionals but without voluntary sector representation. Most of those interviewed felt that the admissions policy was in need of some 'fine-tuning' and a degree of flexibility which could make it appropriate to the circumstances of particular projects.

I would like to see it (i.e. the admissions policy) refined and practical guidelines to staff on how to operate e.g. single parent families are not always worse off than two parent families.
(Divisional Development Officer)

I think the policy is too strict, too black and white.
(Divisional Co-ordinator)

The policy aims to be consistent, it is as good as you are going to get but it is difficult to satisfy demand when demand is so high.
(Education Officer)

The voluntary sector members of the group felt that there was a danger of the nursery being labelled as a place where only those families with problems can get a place and that this might result in families not wishing their children to attend the nursery.

If the nursery is seen as a dumping ground (that people don't care for children are in the categories for admission) people won't want places. (Divisional Co-ordinator)

A further element in the community reaction to the admissions procedure was the feeling that 'average', two-parent families were unlikely to benefit from the new nursery places and this had fuelled some resentment.

Ordinary people feel that they don't have a chance!
(Link-Up Representative)

There are mixed feelings among many that it (Jigsaw Nursery) should be there for all mums and they ask why they are penalised because they stay at home and feel that their children need nursery school too. (Link-Up Representative)

Discussions were then underway about the future nature of the voluntary sector's involvement in the running of the community nursery. There was agreement among all those interviewed that some continuation of the partnership was necessary, perhaps by setting up a user's group and an advisory group representing local interests.

We want structures to allow continued input at two levels - as a users group and as representatives (SPPA, Link-Up) on an advisory group about the nursery and pre-fives in general.
(Divisional Development Officer)

Everyone emphasised the importance of voluntary sector involvement and advice. It was acknowledged that they had the necessary local knowledge and that without their past involvement and their continuing involvement in the planning and development of the nursery it could not reflect community interests. The good relationships which had been built up between individuals were very important for the development of the project and had had spin-offs into other areas e.g. the improved relationship between the Division and SPPA.

There is a greater trust between Pre-Five management, Division and SPPA. (Divisional Development Officer)

There have definitely been benefits with much frank exchange of ideas. (Divisional Co-ordinator)

We have had battles but on the whole it has been a good team.
(Link-Up Representative)

It was a view common to all the members interviewed that the combination of voluntary sector pressure and the political powers of the local councillor had been instrumental in getting the resources essential to make the project a reality.

If it hadn't been for (the Regional Councillor) the project wouldn't have got off the ground. (Link-Up Representative)

The voluntary sector has helped to get money released and lobbied local councillors. (Community Development Worker)

The voluntary sector has played a critical role.
(Divisional Development Officer)

The voluntary sector representatives considered that their contribution to the community nursery was their provision of a playgroup, mother/toddler group, toy library and stock shop. They were unsure as to the benefits that inclusion in the nursery could offer them while the divisional staff saw inclusion as allowing access to the soft-play room, use of the mini-bus, use of video equipment, advice and help with training. It was generally agreed that the greatest contribution so far by all had been their time during the planning stage. This had taken a great deal of time, sometimes to the detriment of their other responsibilities.

There was a general feeling of optimism about the future of the project (with one dissenting voice).

It is really great, I'm very optimistic. It will be a great resource.
(Regional Development Officer)

This optimism was qualified on the part of the voluntary sector representatives who felt that much depended on the particular staff involved with the nursery and on the degree to which creche and before- and after-school care could be provided in the future.

It will definitely be beneficial because it has a good staff and someone good at the top. Jigsaw has a lot going for it in the staff running it. (Link-Up Representative)

I think the Head of Centre should be a committed person and know about the voluntary sector plus the issues over pre-five education. (Link-Up Representative)

One voluntary sector representative felt particularly disappointed that the numbers being catered for in the nursery unit were reduced from the initial 60 to 40 and that while resources had been won for the nursery unit they had not been so successful in providing creche facilities and before- and after-school care.

All the effort/time/resources are being pushed into the nursery and everything else in the project is being downgraded. The numbers it is catering for are reduced too.
(Divisional Co-ordinator)

Everyone felt that important lessons had been learned in this project that would be of use in any similar future venture. Setting up clear lines of communication and clarifying who had decision-making powers would avoid many frustrations as would making explicit the powers of the Planning Group. The appointment of a co-ordinator with responsibility solely for the project was also advocated as good future practice. All were agreed that a slower pace of development and more generous and assured funding, particularly for capital expenditure were necessary for the satisfactory establishment of a community nursery.

One of the difficulties was getting information. Communication was very bad. We operated on 'hear-say' and 'back-door' information to start with.
(Divisional Co-ordinator)

The biggest obstacle was the lack of original planning and thinking through in detail and costing the budget. I can say this with hind-sight.(Regional Development Officer)

Critical issues arising from the interviews

Conflict between the Voluntary Sector representatives and Regional officials

A background of mistrust and ill-feeling developed when the Link-Up Group's proposal was rejected, without explanation, to be followed by the Region's proposal for a community nursery. The voluntary sector heard about the community nursery proposals by 'back door' information and felt that they were being ignored or usurped. This feeling of mistrust was fuelled again when there were future breakdowns in communications between the planning group and the Education Officer. The playgroup and SPPA branch room workers felt threatened by the need to change rooms and this coupled with the previous mistrust and ill-feeling towards the Division and Region lead to further defensive behaviour such as the debate over 'rights over rooms'. The amount of frustration and disappointment felt by the voluntary sector representatives should not be under-estimated. It is perhaps a tribute to their commitment that they remained in the Planning Group despite its problems.

Conflict between the different levels of decision-making

Difficulties in resourcing region policy and procedure for obtaining finance fuelled poor communications between the regional staff, divisional staff and planning group (including the voluntary sector) was a source of confusion, delay and ill-feeling. The regional staff were making proposals as to the nature of the community nursery but the divisional staff had to make the operational decisions. The role of the planning group (whether it was a decision-making body or had only an advisory role) was also unclear and the source of further confusion. The translation of ideas discussed at the planning group into concrete plans, such as an instruction to builders had to go through divisional pre-five staff and architectural staff leading to delay and sometimes to the final plans for action not being as the planning group envisaged.

It emerged in the course of the interviews that the role of the Planning Group was not clearly defined in advance. The Divisional perspective appears to be that this group was essentially consultative, and was a way of getting early community involvement. Those more actively involved in the group, particularly the voluntary sector, saw the group as an opportunity for them to make decisions (re an executive role) rather than merely influence them or comment on them.

The secondment of the Community Development Worker and the Divisional Development Officer to work on the community nursery project was very beneficial. The secondment of a number of the divisional staff from the initial stages would have avoided much of the confusion, delay and misunderstanding.

Resources

The initial finance proposed for the community nursery was only for staffing costs and made no allowance for spending on necessary conversions and supplying of equipment. This was a source of much frustration to the planning group and it is the opinion of many that without intervention from the local regional councillor the project would have foundered due to lack of funds. Lack of finance has led to curtailment of the initial plans for the project and this in turn has led to disappointment that the project as it now stands is not the comprehensive resource originally envisaged by the planning team in general, and the voluntary sector in particular.

6.3 EARLY STAGES OF OPERATION

3-TOWNS COMMUNITY NURSERY

The following summary is drawn from the interviews with the management (Head and Depute) and staff (the Senior and one Pre-Five Worker from each unit) working in the 3-Towns community nursery after the project had been operational for approximately six months (i.e. October,1990). A full report of the interviews is given in Annex 6.

The interviews covered at the following areas; the structure and content of the services offered (aims and objectives), quality of staff skills, staff and staff/management relations; needs and characteristics of children and families using the services; general management issues; the quality of links with parents and, levels of success.

Accommodation

At the time of the interviews all units were operating in unsatisfactory, temporary accommodation which greatly restricted their mode of operation and, in the case of the 0-5 unit, adversely effected staff morale. As well as failing to provide a permanent base with adequate space and storage, respondents highlighted inconvenient location, poor condition of and access to toilets and the lack of drop-in parent facilities.

Quality of Work and Staff Skills

Both the Head and Depute and staff in all units, including the Family Centre, felt that staff had gaps in their training and experience which meant that they did not have the full range of skills and knowledge demanded for work in a community nursery e.g. staff with education orientated experience may not have experience of social work reporting while those used to working with parents may not feel confident in drawing up a curriculum. Unqualified staff in the nursery units were at a particular disadvantage.

Staff wanted to have more training and training tailored to their particular needs at an appropriate time. While there was a programme of in-service training staff did not want to have to wait for training which might help them with problems they were already tackling e.g. child abuse. It was suggested that more training, early in the project before children were admitted would have been more advantageous.

The Head and Depute were generally disappointed by the level of skills and expertise offered by staff. They felt that besides extra training staff were urgently in need of more direct one to one supervision.

Contact with parents

This issue pertains only to the nursery units. As many children arrived and left the units by unit or Social Work transport contact with many parents was minimal.

The existing accommodation for the nursery units and the Family Centre did not allow for the setting up of adult groups.

Management

The Head and Depute's style of management was commented upon in interviews with some staff feeling threatened or undervalued. The initial high expectation of management were also commented on with some staff feeling that these expectations were unrealistically high. The nursery units each felt they were compared (unfavourably) with the other and at the time of the interviews there was little useful contact between the family centre and one nursery unit and a poor relationship with the other nursery unit. The Head and Depute were conscious of staff's negative reaction to criticism and its consequences in terms of staff/management relations and staff morale. However they felt their criticism (and support) were necessary and justified.

Rating Success

Both Head and Depute felt that the success of the project so far was very limited. The Head in particular was concerned about the future viability of the project, even if poor accommodation could be improved. She was particularly concerned about the lack of skills throughout the project.

Staff were generally more optimistic - they felt that, allowing for the difficulties of accommodation, the newness of the project etc., they were beginning to meet their objectives although they were not satisfied that all the aims were being achieved or could be achieved in the circumstances. The need for more time to get to know the children and establish the staff team was considered to limit the amount of success that could be expected.

All staff expected to be increasingly successful at meeting their aims and objectives and improving the quality of their work in the future.

JIGSAW COMMUNITY NURSERY

Interviews with staff of the community nursery and members of the voluntary sector involved in the nursery were carried out during Spring 1991. All the voluntary sector representatives interviewed had been members of the Planning Group and were now members of the Community Nursery Executive Group. Interviewees were asked to reflect on their experience of the first six months of the operation of Jigsaw Community Nursery. Interviews covered all aspects of the community nursery, the nursery unit, voluntary sector activities, outreach work and after-school care. A full report of the interviews is given in Annex 6.

Provision in the Early Stages

The Nursery Unit

The nursery unit had staff in post early in June 1990 and took in children gradually over the summer. Forty full-time equivalent places were available. Six children had full-time places in the early stages with other children being offered either a morning or afternoon place for at least 2 days, and up to 5 days per week. The hours of attendance had changed over the early stages. Staff were in attendance from 8 a.m. but children usually arrived at around 9 a.m. Children with morning places left at 11.30 a.m. unless they stayed for lunch in which case they left at about 12.30 p.m. Children with afternoon places arrived at 1 p.m. and originally

left at 4 p.m. although this was later changed to 3.30 p.m. Full-time children could be offered places from 8 a.m.-5.30 p.m. although the hours were more usually 8 or 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Care was available until 5.30 p.m. as required.

The daily routine consisted of a period of free play until 10.30 a.m., followed by small group time and a period when all the children are involved together, often in music and movement, until 11.30 a.m. when preparations for lunch begin and children with morning places leave. After lunch those full-time children who need it have a rest and at 1 p.m. the afternoon children arrive and the morning pattern of free-play and small and large group activities is repeated.

Outreach Work

Outreach work in the early stages had consisted of setting up and supporting the cafe at the community nursery, visiting other pre-school provision in the area and running 2 creches in community halls. During the early stages the outreach worker was also required to drive the mini-bus regularly as were the Head and Deputy Head, taking time from their managerial and supervisory roles. The outreach worker had also to offer assistance in the nursery unit e.g. during staff absences and assist in after-school care one evening per week (or more to cover staff absences). The outreach work included encouraging playgroups and mother and toddler groups to use the soft play area available in the community nursery and organising transport, where possible, for groups to get to the soft-play area. The group of volunteers who run the cafe was supported by the outreach worker.

After-school care

After-school care began in September 1990 with 2 part-time workers. Although a ratio of 1:13 is possible, numbers have been restricted so far due to the room space available. Sixteen primary 1-7 children were attending.

Voluntary Sector Services

A playgroup operates from the community nursery building. There are 14 places available for each of the five sessions with children attending for two or three sessions per week. The playgroup is run by its own committee and is part of SPPA. Also part of SPPA and run by an independent committee is the Mother and Toddler group which operates for three sessions a week in the community nursery building.

The SPPA Branch Room is part of the community nursery and offers accommodation for the fieldworker, training sessions, branch meetings and the weekly SPPA Stock Shop and Toy Library. This room can be used for meetings by other parts of the community nursery when not being used by SPPA. The local Link-Up group also meets in the Branch Room.

A child-minder's drop-in group, a small independent group, is housed in the community nursery.

Summary of Critical Issues arising from the Interviews at Jigsaw

The over-riding impression arising from a review of the interviews asking voluntary sector representatives and community nursery staff and management for their perspective on the early stages of the nursery's operation was one of optimism, co-operation and a desire to succeed despite initial problems. A number of issues emerged, however, as obstacles for the future.

Staffing

The need for more staff in the nursery unit was raised by management, staff and the voluntary sector. The physical nature of the building with three distinct playrooms with no opportunity for easy visual supervision between them necessitated a higher staff presence. It was argued that increasing staff levels would also allow the Depute Head to play a more active management role, give scope for further curriculum development and improve the provision of case reviews. Increased staff levels would, then, lead to improvements in the quality of the service provided by the nursery unit.

Outreach Service

The outreach service was considered to have developed more slowly than expected and not to have developed in the directions anticipated by others. The voluntary sector were unsure as to the need for an outreach service aimed at pre-school providers. While the setting up of satellite creches was welcomed, the further style and pace of development was unclear. Outreach to individual families had not been addressed. The lack of clarity over the role for the outreach service remains to be resolved and the nature of local demand for the service established.

The 'Executive Group' and Partnership with the Voluntary Sector

The original planning group for Jigsaw saw its task complete when the nursery had been established. However to continue the spirit of partnership between the voluntary sector and the nursery management, it was seen as essential that some local decision-making body be established, preferably with executive powers.

The function of the 'Executive Group' gave rise to concern during the early stages. The role of the group, whether it had decision-making powers or was an advisory body, was not clear. The Executive Group was attempting to establish its remit but more progress was needed. The servicing of the group was also undecided and the relationship between the community nursery management team and the Executive Group required clarification. Although there were no problems during the early stages that the voluntary sector felt had to be tackled formally through the Executive they were keen to have their role in the management of the community nursery clearly defined. The original aims of Jigsaw (see Chapter 5) clearly identified the need for partnership with the Voluntary Sector, in particular SPPA, in joint decision-making about the community nursery. Although aspects of the partnership operated satisfactorily this rested in no small part on the relationships involved. Formalising and recording the remit of the Executive and the roles of the members was advocated for the future.

6.4 THE NURSERIES TWO YEARS ON

THREE TOWNS COMMUNITY NURSERY

A final round of interviews with staff at Three Towns Community Nursery was conducted between February and April 1992.

Interviews were conducted with:

Head of Centre

A Former Senior Pre-Five Officer

Two Qualified Pre-Five Workers

Two Unqualified Pre-Five Workers

A full account of the interviews is given in Annex 6.

In view of the critical situation in the Family Centre, interviews were also conducted with three parents who had used the centre.

At the outset, the nursery consisted of three separate units; the 0-5 Unit (admitting children from 0-5 years), the 3-5 Unit (admitting children from 3-5 years) and the Family Centre, all operating from temporary accommodation. At the time of the final stages interviews, the Family Centre had effectively closed due in the main to the loss of its Senior. The Head of Centre, who had been dissatisfied with the development of this service, took the opportunity to reconsider its remit and reduced the service to one half day drop-in facilities, deploying remaining staff within the project. Of the remaining nursery units, the 3-5 Unit was still in temporary accommodation with little hope of a permanent base. The offer of accommodation in a local primary school was withdrawn. The 0-5 Unit was operating from permanent accommodation in the Springvale Campus.

Staff turnover meant that consistency was lost to some extent across both interview phases - the Depute Head had left over a year before the final round of interviews. One unqualified pre-five worker from the 0-5 Unit and one qualified worker from the 3-5 Unit who had given earlier interviews were interviewed again in the final stages. The remaining pre-five workers were selected for interview on the basis of length of service. The senior of the 3-5 Unit had left to take up another post but, since the move was recent, she was followed up for interview. The 0-5 Unit had no senior at the time of interview.

• The structure and content of services offered

The interviewees were asked if they were generally satisfied with the structure and content of each service offered.

0-5 Unit

Given the level of dissatisfaction reported by the Head of Centre in the early stages interviews, staff seemed to have made progress despite the loss of a senior member of staff.

I'm not yet satisfied but this has definitely improved and staff are doing a better job. There's no senior though and I'm having to run the nursery. However, we've got a well established team without a leader.

(Head of Centre)

It's not particularly satisfactory but a lot of that has to do with the fact that we don't have a senior. I think there could be improvements in every area but accommodation is very bad and has a negative effect in most things.

(Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

No, the staffing levels are far too low and everything else is affected by that, particularly the children with special needs. We have nine of these children at the moment and their individual needs are not being met.

(Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

3-5 Unit

Different problems had affected this unit in the early stages. The Head of Centre saw this unit as offering a better standard in care and curriculum but staff had lacked appropriate experience in dealing with behavioural problems - a significant feature of children attending in the early months. The Head felt staff had progressed well but that the unit (and staff development) had suffered when the original senior left.

Staff there made a lot of progress under the original senior. When she left things slipped back again. Again, leadership instability (amongst other things) hasn't allowed staff to develop to their full potential.

(Head of Centre)

None of the respondents felt their previous training and experience had prepared them fully for work in their nursery unit. They shared the views of staff in the 0-5 Unit, finding liaison work involving direct contact with the Social Work Department difficult. Other areas of work were better known - direct work with children and (to some extent) curriculum development. In-service training had proved helpful.

For the curriculum side and work with parents I was prepared for that but I'd no experience in working with other agencies e.g. social work, this has definitely presented difficulties.

(Former Senior)

The Family Centre

In the early stages, the Head of Centre identified the family centre as the unit which deviated most from original objectives and this was largely as a consequence of lack of appropriate accommodation. In permanent accommodation, the service had begun to develop more in line with original aims (ie. for group work). The loss of the senior, however, highlighted the failure of the service to meet management expectations for a broader based remit and less intensive casework. Remaining staff were unable to cope with client demands (basically for one-to-one support and counselling) and the service was radically reduced. Long term plans involved changing (and clarifying) the centre's remit.

The service is greatly reduced with only one day a week drop-in facilities offered. There's no senior and the centre as it stands doesn't offer intensive support to families.
(Head of Centre)

Outreach

Similarly, the development of outreach work came to a halt in July 1991 when the deputy, who had responsibility for that part of the service left. Further development was planned when a new deputy was in post.

We haven't been able to provide creche facilities as planned although accommodation has been found to extend the existing service to Haycocks and Ardeer. A new creche worker training course was completed as planned. We haven't been able to offer any support to playgroups or mother and toddler groups.
(Head of Centre)

• Accommodation and Resources

The nature of accommodation had caused serious problems for practice since the project began. At the time of interview only the 0-5 unit and the family centre had moved to permanent accommodation, but even here inadequacies continued to have a negative impact on quality and organisation of the service, limiting the number of extended day places and opportunities for parental involvement.

0-5 Unit

Accommodation isn't adequate here and as a consequence the number of extended day places has been limited. Space is very limited; there's no quiet room, no storage space, no parent's room and toilet facilities.
(Head of Centre)

3-5 Unit

The situation was similar in this unit, still in temporary accommodation and likely to remain so for the duration of the project. Plans to move the unit to permanent accommodation in a local primary school had fallen through and no other suitable accommodation could be found.

The offer and subsequent withdrawal of extra accommodation within the school and the loss of promised permanent accommodation had lowered staff morale considerably, making restrictions imposed by poor accommodation more difficult to tolerate.

It's definitely inadequate and we've now lost both the option of permanent accommodation and extra space at Auchenharvie. This has certainly lowered staff morale. Space is far too limited for children.
(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

Family Centre

Permanent accommodation for the Family Centre had proved adequate but at the time of interview was underused. Fire safety regulations prevented use of the extra space by nursery units.

Outreach

The search for accommodation for outreach work had proved difficult and most of the available buildings had proved unsuitable.

The development of outreach work has been hindered by the poor state of repair of the buildings on offer and the firemaster's imposition of regulations governing accommodation used by pre-fives.

(Head of Centre)

- **Quality of Work and Staff Relations**

0-5 Unit

In the early stages the Head was very critical of this unit. She was disappointed by the quality of the work and although improvements had begun, she remained dissatisfied, finding work far below her own standards and expectations. At the time of the final interview, she still found standards of work below her expectations but acknowledged the difficulties facing the staff in trying to improve their standards - not least of which was the lack of a unit senior.

Although the quality of work has much improved it still doesn't meet expectations. The high number of category 1 children makes things difficult. Staff have had to try to balance social and emotional needs against the need to provide a decent curriculum. In many instances striking this balance is impossible - the children's social and emotional needs are overwhelming.

(Head of Centre)

When asked about staff reaction to conditions of service, both felt conditions were generally acceptable. One stated that she found the extended service more than justified given families needs for support.

I feel the salary is low but the hours acceptable. Obviously nursery schools have much larger holidays but I feel children and families do need the holiday support offered by the community nursery.

(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

3-5 Unit

Staff skills in this unit also remained below the Head's expectations, although this unit held the edge in practice terms for some time, at the time of interview the head felt both nursery units were roughly equal.

Again, this is much improved but it still doesn't meet my expectations. I feel the quality of the work was better than in the 0-5 unit but now both units work on a par.

(Head of Centre)

The Family Centre

There was no definable work going on at the time of interview.

Outreach

Quality didn't yet meet expectations and the Head hoped that the new Depute and new Curriculum Development Officer (both posts had recently been filled) would bring new ideas and new development to this area of work.

The project had experienced a very high degree of instability at all levels. Appointment of new staff was a slow process and a number of posts (in particular the senior in the 0-5 unit) were left unfilled for months. Undoubtedly this had a detrimental effect in a number of areas and contributed to the difficulties in resolving problems identified in the early stages. Staff turnover may also have been symptomatic of these problems, creating a vicious circle which proved difficult to break. The Head of Centre identified a number of factors which she believed contributed to the high rate of staff turnover including accommodation problems and her own management style.

Some staff never intended to stay with the project long term. Others reacted to accommodation difficulties, lack of job security and my particular style of management. Some were wrongly appointed.
(Head of Centre)

• Staff and Staff Management

Staff instability was reflected in staff/staff and staff/management relations.

0-5 Unit

Here the Head felt staff had been reluctant to accept her authority and style of management, a problem identified in the early stages which had been exacerbated for some time by her having taken over the senior's role. She also found that delegation of responsibility was difficult to achieve and in some instances seemed to be actively undermined by uncooperative staff.

It's been a very difficult two years because of changes in senior staff and my higher profile there. I think they accept now that I know what I'm talking about but its been a long process to achieve that. The process of delegation doesn't work effectively yet but I think we're making some progress.
(Head of Centre)

3-5 Unit

This unit, which had managed to resolve staff problems to a significant degree, had undergone a change of senior some months prior to the interview. Staff relations had suffered as a consequence, and the Head felt that relations with the new senior were not good.

Although the original Depute was their line manager, some staff still come to me identifying me as the boss and using that to their advantage. I don't think relations with the new senior are particularly good. There have been difficulties because of changes in staff. I think staff were very disappointed when the original senior left.

(Head of Centre)

Staff instability (which was as much a function of reallocation of staff to 'acting' posts or posts in other parts of the project as staff leaving) had a negative impact on staff relations. Respondents reported an erosion of the good team relations and morale which had developed in the early stages. They also identified the new senior management style as problematic in terms of providing good team relations.

Relations are quite good. We used to have a wonderful team but it's not like that now. The new senior did rubbish everything in the early stages but its better now. The mix of personalities is not so good though.

(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

Outreach

Staff relations seemed good in this area both amongst staff and between the former deputy and staff. The appointment of the new Depute would mean building new (and hopefully) equally effective relationships.

Relations were good before the original Depute left. The new Depute has yet to build up relationships. Some of the staff seem to work together on a regular basis, others never seem to meet but they seem to get on and they've developed an informal network for distributing work amongst themselves. They are a resourceful group but I'm not sure whether they see themselves as part of the project.

(Head of Centre)

The Head of Centre was asked to describe her relationship with the recently appointed Depute, who had only been in post for four months. She found that the lengthy wait for the appointment of the new Depute had effected her way of working, making it difficult to readjust to delegating part of her decision-making role. She also felt that the new Depute was less effective than the former, but acknowledged the difficulties inherent in that role.

I found it hard to change my ways. The Depute's role is very difficult so I suppose its hard for both of us to adjust. (Head of Centre)

However by April 1992 the new Depute had recruited 14 potential creche workers and arranged training for them. She was also actively involved with other outreach workers from both Social Work and Education and had identified premises to establish two new creches.

She was also asked to comment on her relationship with the Head of Springvale nursery. In the early stages the relationship between the project and the existing Springvale nursery school had been difficult and the joint management systems slow to develop. The Head felt relations had become generally more positive though this may have been a function of fewer opportunities for conflict.

Since the loss of the Depute and the head of the family centre in summer 1991, the joint management system disappeared and the project management team with it. There have been fewer demands on the head of Springvale and fewer opportunities for conflict. I think though that she has become more positive.
(Head of Centre)

- **Children and Families**

Staff were asked whether or not they believed the needs of children and families were being adequately met in the context of each part of the service. The comments echoed those made in the early stages, though improvements in staff skills imply that better all round service had developed.

3-5 Unit

In this unit, where behavioural problems had been a major issue for staff in the early stages, the Head felt children presented the same general needs though showed somewhat lower levels of behavioural disorder.

Children's needs have changed in that behavioural difficulties are far less of an issue. Its now at a level that I would have expected to see in the early stages.
(Head of Centre)

Staff were asked if they found that children's presenting needs had changed since the project's early stages. All agreed that the child group had changed in that they tended to show less extreme behavioural disorder. This they attributed both to changes in children and to greater staff skill in handling behavioural problems.

I think the child group is quite different now. Some of the very difficult children have left and staff find difficult behaviour easier to manage now. So on the whole they are a more easily managed group.
(Former Senior)

0-5 Unit

This unit shared the trend towards fewer behavioural problems but current children seem to exhibit signs of even more poverty and neglect than earlier groups.

Again, children are showing the same general patterns in terms of presenting needs but they aren't showing the same high levels of behaviour problems. There does seem to be more evidence of extreme poverty and neglect.
(Head of Centre)

Staff felt that children's needs were still only partly met in this unit. Those who presented fewer problems and who required more challenging experiences tended to lose out while staff concentrated their energies on dealing with those who presented greatest demands.

Staff have come a long way in terms of developing their skill and experience. They are more aware of children's needs and how to plan for them. Some definitely get a very good service but others don't - particularly those who don't present very ob-

vious problems. They are not being stretched. Also full-time children lose out at the end of the day in terms of staff attention - staffing levels are low then and staff need to clear up and prepare for the following day.

(Head of Centre)

Family Centre

Here the pattern of needs seemed to fluctuate with families going through good and bad periods and requiring different levels and kinds of support.

Some families have moved on, some have improved and some are going through difficulties. Many of the families have had crises periods resulting in children being placed in care. One mother freed her child for adoption.

(Head of Centre)

Given the curtailment of the family centre's service, the needs of families were obviously not being met. The decision to restrict the service had been essential given the lack of appropriate staff and the lack of involvement and co-operation on the part of social workers. Although the service was much needed, the Head was clear that its future development in particular required a different remit and clearer basis for joint work.

Children and family's needs are not being met here at the moment. I did take the decision to restrict the service but I wasn't happy with that decision. Social workers weren't doing their share of contract based work. Next time we have to establish that on a much clearer basis. We've had no luck in appointing new staff so far.

(Head of Centre)

The initial work that had been undertaken in the Centre was much appreciated by the parents involved. In talking about staff of the centre parents said:

They were great. They helped me in trying to stop drinking.
(Parent)

They come out if I'm feeling really down. We just sit and chat.
(Parent)

They have tried to help me cope with access visits to my children. I felt that I couldn't go. I was so embarrassed. I felt the foster parents were watching me all the time. (Parent)

At first I thought I couldn't handle the other women crying but I seemed to cope. I found giving support helped me as well.
(Parent)

• Outreach

Outreach work had also been curtailed by the loss of the Depute, and by budget and accommodation difficulties. Identified local needs for creche and other services had gone (at least partly) unmet. Despite the appointment of a new deputy the service remained curtailed because of difficulties in finding appropriate accommodation.

The Head was asked to comment on the effectiveness of current admissions procedure. Before the opening of the project local pre-five provision had failed to adopt Strathclyde Region's category system for allocation of nursery places. The project's strict adherence to the category system and the establishment of a joint admissions panel for all local regional pre-five resources had gone some way to improving the effectiveness of procedure in ensuring that most needy children had priority in allocated places. The Head still found that there were discrepancies between admission procedure for the project and those for other provision which tended to undermine the effectiveness of the category system.

One of the major changes has been that all nursery schools must now take 3 year olds and admissions are taken all year round rather than just once in August. The system is still not the same for the community nursery and nursery schools; the admissions panel bands all community nursery applications but the Heads of nursery schools band all their applications except bands one and two. Things are better but still not completely satisfactory. We need more support from Division in implementing policy.
(Head of Centre)

Parental Contact and Involvement

Staff were asked whether parental involvement in the nursery and parent/staff contact was adequate. They found the situation regarding parent contact still unsatisfactory and largely unchanged since the early stages. It continued to reflect problems of no appropriate accommodation for parent groups, the distancing effects of the child transport system and lack of parental motivation towards involvement. Only the review system and the required presence of parents during children's settling in periods allowed contact between staff and parents. The comments apply to both nursery units.

We have the review system and parents are in the nursery for settling in periods but otherwise the situation is unsatisfactory. There's no parent's room and little can be offered directly to those in difficulty.
(Head of Centre)

Contact between staff and parents was seen by both respondents to be inadequate, and this they felt was largely a by-product of the transport system. Lack of parental motivation to become involved, the loss of the family centre and the inability of staff to sustain parent groups were seen also contributory factors poor staff/parent contact.

Contact isn't adequate and I think that's mainly due to the need to transport children. To provide more for parents, staff would have to work overtime but even then, I don't think parents are motivated to get involved.
(Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

However one parent clearly valued the contact:

They encouraged me to train as a childminder. (Parent)

Management

The Head was asked how effective her own management of the project had been, Her responsibilities had been effected by the loss of the Depute and this post was left unfilled for almost five months. The 3-5 Unit (prior to the loss of its senior) had begun to function well and management was generally effective given the senior's increased skill in her management role. The 0-5 Unit presented more of a problem. When a senior was in post, she handled the delegation process badly including relations between the staff and the Head. Later the absence of a senior had meant a more direct management role in the unit for the Head. This has presented problems with increased responsibility for the staff group.

The delegation process didn't work well in this unit mainly because of the senior's poor handling of her role. The lack of a senior meant that staff had to cope with more responsibility. Delegation works a lot better now.
(Head of Centre)

Management support structures had proved only minimally effective, showing little change since the early stages of the project.

The development officer's post was vacant for a year. An education officer has taken over this role in relation to the project but contact is minimal. People have dropped out of the Advisory Group and generally, although that group is sympathetic to the project, except for councillors, it has no real clout. (Head of Centre)

Asked whether she felt adequately supported by Divisional and Regional staff in her management role, she felt that generally the support had been inadequate.

I'd say in general, 'no' but at particular points of the project's development I have been offered support.
(Head of Centre)

Respondents were asked to describe current relations between staff and the Head of the project. Both were critical of the Head's style of management, finding her attitude towards staff poor, her expectations of staff unrealistic and support of staff minimal. They attributed staff instability in part to the Head's management style.

Staff/Head relations are not particularly good and I think a lot of staff have left because of their dislike of the Head's attitude to them. She is very direct. I didn't mind that but others resented it. She tends not to listen to staff, is very stubborn and knows she is always right.
(Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

Relations were difficult at first though people did become less frightened of her. They never forgot her harsh criticism of their work in the early stages and resentment over that is still there. Staff felt she was very hard.
(Former Senior)

Success

Respondents were asked how successful they considered the project to be, bearing in mind its aims and objectives. Despite the Head's continuing dissatisfaction with the quality of work, she felt both nursery units had become 'quite successful' and would become more so given time.

We are running at full capacity and aiming to meet all needs. Staff's confidence and competence have increased. I feel both units are already quite successful and potentially very successful. (Head of Centre)

The family centre she saw as successfully meeting needs and its closure as unfortunate, but providing opportunity for change.

It was meeting needs and was successful. Its closure was extremely unfortunate but it was certainly time to take stock and make some changes. (Head of Centre)

Outreach work she also considered successful in so far as it offered training and employment to local people. To meet its original aims though this service would have to expand providing more creches and more staff to run them. It would also have to offer more involvement to local voluntary groups.

Future plans for each part of the service had been drawn up. In the 0-5 nursery, the eventual appointment of a senior and the input of the new curriculum development officer was expected to raise standards. The 3-5 unit was to convert to offering only sessional places (as in traditional nursery schools) which the Head felt would allow further improvements in the standards of care and curriculum offered. The service offered by the family centre had been reviewed and a clearer remit drawn up but difficulties in trying to appoint a senior had prevented any further developments. In the outreach context, plans for expansion existed and given the appointment of the new deputy and curriculum development officer, these should be realised over the next year.

In summing up the development of the 3-Towns Project, the Head highlighted what she described as the project's inherent problems arising in the main from an over-ambitious remit and poor planning and funding. Although the project had been successful in some areas, she felt the price for that success had been very high.

I feel the project was over ambitious and inadequately planned and funded. As a result, everyone employed has suffered either professionally or personally. The project is stigmatised in the area and this is largely due to the negative attitude of health visitors. Staff have worked very hard and those who've remained have learned a lot. Unqualified staff have gained in confidence. I've given them scope for development in the keyworker system and through delegation of responsibilities which they wouldn't have got in a more traditional set-up. In some ways we've been very successful but that's in spite of big problems. (Head of Centre)

Other staff respondents felt the service offered by their unit was basically good and that resources including staff quality and quantity fell significantly short of the projects ambitious remit. One respondent felt staff required special training to prepare them for work with children and families experiencing social and/or emotional difficulties and for liaison with the Social Work Department and other agencies.

I feel that structure should have been a lot more carefully matched to resources at the planning stages. I also feel that staff need special training to work in community nurseries - training that would acquaint them with the needs of category one children and prepare them for report writing and liaising with social workers. Staff have got to be a lot more flexible here than in nursery schools and classes.

(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

I feel we've been very successful and the difference in children is amazing. Parents have appreciated the service. Not having suitable permanent accommodation has been the biggest obstacle to overcome.

(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

Both pre-five workers felt the success of their unit would be greatly enhanced by providing suitable permanent accommodation, preferably custom built.

A purpose built building - I think that would more or less solve all our problems.

(Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

I'd like to see a new custom built building for the nursery with outside professionals coming in to help with staff development.

(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

The parents who used the Family Centre also spoke highly of its value:

I never expected it would be so helpful. Staff are more friendly and supportive than I thought they would be and a lot more concerned about me. (Parent)

In organising access and encouraging me to visit the children daily. This was hard because I was ill and had to travel. (Parent)

The Centre also helped parents to cope better with their children:

It's been helpful in relating to (X), particularly in understanding her and getting her co-operation. (Parent)

The nursery has helped. (X) was wild. Now she's completely different. (Parent)

Interview with a local Regional Councillor

In order to add the perceptions of a local politician familiar with the work of the nursery an interview was conducted in July 1992.

When asked about the main achievements of the nursery the following were cited:

- the number of children who had been involved
- training for creche workers
- staff development
- adoption of an area admissions panel

When asked about the main shortcomings the following emerged:

- difficulties with accommodation
- lack of provision for the Stevenston area
- nursery staff having to deal with problems outwith their educational/caring role
- lack of continuity of senior staff
- lack of space for parents

The councillor was under the impression that the time taken to progress the nursery was very frustrating for all concerned and that the lack of priority given to the project was of serious concern.

When asked to nominate reasons for the difficulties the following emerged:

- the original brief from the Region was not sufficiently well thought through with regard to accommodation, staffing levels and impact on other nursery provision
- there was a lack of co-operation at Divisional level

However, there was no blame for staff. The Elected Member was of the view that those staff who remained in post deserved a 'gold star'

These points will be taken up further in Chapter 11.

JIGSAW COMMUNITY NURSERY

The final round of interviews was conducted in Jigsaw Community Nursery over the period March - April 1992. Those interviewed were:

Head of Centre

Voluntary Sector Representative

Two Pre-Five workers

After-School Care worker

A high staff turnover since the first interviews were conducted in early 1991 meant that continuity was lost to some extent; the Depute Head and Outreach Worker had left to take up new posts and amongst the nursery staff only two pre-five workers (though not those who had given interviews earlier) had remained in post since the nursery opened. These pre-five workers were selected for final interviews on the basis of their length of service.

At the time of the interviews the community nursery offered (or accommodated) the following range of services: the nursery unit (for children 2-5 years), an after-care service, an outreach service (though outreach worker's post was vacant and the development work in the area apart from provision of community creches had all but ceased) and a range of voluntary services - Chryston playgroup, a mother and toddler group (at that point named Jigsaw Mother and Toddler group), a childminder's group, the SPPA 'Branch', toy library, stock shop and cafe.

Although the interview schedules for all respondents cover the same basic themes respondents held different perspectives in line with their particular roles in the community nursery and had access to different types of information. These differences were reflected in the questions put to different respondents. For example, the Head of Centre and the Voluntary Sector Representative were able to answer questions on the nature and effectiveness of the overall management of Jigsaw, whereas pre-five workers, with limited access to the decision making processes of management groups, gave their views on the effectiveness of management as it applied in the nursery context. The interviews examined (a) the structure, content and day-to-day organisation of the various aspects of the community nursery; (b) accommodation and resources; (c) the effectiveness of admissions procedures in allocating places to children most likely to benefit; (d) meeting the needs of service users; (e) effectiveness of management policy and practice; (f) co-operative work with other agencies; and finally (g) evaluation of success in achieving the aims and objectives. A full report of the interviews is given in Annex 6.

• Provision

The Head of Centre was asked to give an overview of provision describing the service offered and commenting on any deviation from the original aims of the provision at Jigsaw.

The Nursery Unit

The Head of Centre reported that this part of the service was functioning as had been intended providing flexible extended day care for 2-5 year olds and offering 40 equivalent full-time places. (The decision to abandon provision for under 2's had been taken before the nursery became operational.)

The Head of Centre, pre-five and after school workers were asked to consider whether or not the structure and content of organisation in the nursery unit (e.g. the nature of curriculum, planning, care and management of children etc.) was satisfactory. All respondents found the structure and content of nursery organisation basically satisfactory with some minor difficulties as yet unresolved. They acknowledged the need for ongoing development and improvement. The loss of the Depute created some difficulties, particularly in maintaining effective communication with the Head of Centre, but staff felt able to maintain a satisfactory service until a new Depute was appointed. (A full year elapsed before a new Depute was appointed.)

Yes, I'm satisfied. We've had to start from scratch and that's presented difficulties, but I believe we are providing a good service. Its development is ongoing, obviously.
(Head of Centre)

The curriculum is fine but daily planning is currently a bit haywire and needs to be revised. It's difficult to fit planning into the working day given the limited number of staff available for nursery work.
(Pre-Five Worker)

• Outreach work

This part of the service had proved difficult to develop so much so that the Head had decided not to fill the vacant outreach worker's post as before but to reallocate resources elsewhere. The original aims for outreach work had proved too vague to allow an effective operational base and the service had met with a number of obstacles: e.g. difficulties in determining local need for a home visiting scheme and overlap in the role of the outreach worker and that of the SPPA. Generally she was dissatisfied with the previous content of outreach work but was unable to give a precise description of plans for this area of work in the future.

We haven't met our original objectives here. It was very hard to agree on a definition of appropriate outreach work and many obstacles existed to prevent its development. The job is vacant and I'm thinking of using the resources quite differently - for example, to provide escort for transport and to develop further creche facilities.
(Head of Centre)

After-school care

This service had met its original aim to provide after school care for a maximum of 26 children.

Voluntary sector partnership

Jigsaw's aim was not only to provide voluntary and non-voluntary pre-five services identified overall as the community nursery, but also to develop a co-operative and productive relationship between the two types of service with shared overall management. The Head of Centre reported that although sharing of accommodation and (to some extent) resources had been successful at a purely practical level, the development of common interest and identity and an effective management partnership had proved very difficult.

This is largely due to SPPA representatives having a different perspective of the community nursery from myself which causes conflict and at times very strained relations between myself and the voluntary sector representatives. Hopefully this will improved through time.
(Head of Centre)

• Voluntary Sector Services

Again, respondents (in this case the Head of Centre and the voluntary sector representative) found the structure, content and day to day organisation of provision were of a good overall standard.

The playgroups and mother and toddler groups are very well run. I also feel the SPPA area organiser does a very good job.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

• Accommodation and Resources

All respondents were asked to comment on the adequacy of current accommodation and resources in each aspect of the community nursery.

The Nursery Unit

All found nursery accommodation basically adequate with some identifying the generous amount of space available as a problem contributing to some extent to difficulties in managing children. Further problems were identified in relation to layout, staff accommodation and toilet facilities.

Despite problems in accommodation, all respondents felt the nursery was well resourced at least in terms of materials. (Staffing levels are considered in a later section.)

Afterschool care

All respondents identified the same problem in relation to accommodation for the after school care service i.e. too little space originally allocated and difficulty in supervising children when arrangements were made for wider use of existing space by this service.

The voluntary sector representative expressed reservations over the wider use of accommodation by children, questioning their lack of supervision. In contrast to the experience of the Head of Centre, she found that some parents shared her concerns over lack of supervision.

The after school care worker reported little difficulty with the current arrangements. She felt that children were quite safe playing alone in small mixed age groups since their activities were clearly structured and adequately monitored.

I feel current arrangements are satisfactory. I organise groups so that older and younger children can play together for short periods of time. This means they are not confined to one small room. They have the use of the pitch outside and the gym. The after-school care room is very good and we have use of a changing room. Resources are very good on the whole.
(After School Care Worker)

Voluntary sector

The Head of Centre and voluntary sector representative were asked to comment on accommodation and resources allocated to the voluntary sector. The Head of Centre felt voluntary sector accommodation was adequate. The voluntary sector representative felt that the playgroup had lost both indoor accommodation and access to outdoor play. Since Jigsaw opened this was balanced by shared use of the new soft play area. She also felt the new Branch room, though more comfortable than previous accommodation, offered the SPPA far less control over access and activities given that the room was also used by the Head of Centre for a variety of reasons.

Although voluntary sector funding is quite separate to that of the nursery unit, some sharing of resources did take place. The nursery unit made use of the voluntary sector's toy library and stock shop and the SPPA Branch had access to the telephone in the nursery, the office resources and other equipment.

• Standard and Quality of the Work done by Staff

Respondent's were asked to comment on the standard and quality of the work done in each area of the project.

Nursery Unit

In the context of the nursery unit, the Head of Centre felt staff's work had attained a satisfactory standard. The voluntary sector representative (although she held a positive view of nursery staff) felt her current knowledge of the quality of work done in the nursery was somewhat limited and this reflected wider difficulties in communication between the voluntary sector and the Head of Centre. Considerable turnover had taken place in the staff group since the opening of Jigsaw and although the voluntary sector had been involved in the appointment and induction of the original staff group, they had had no such involvement with staff appointed subsequently.

As far as we know the work they do is fine but there's been a good deal of staff instability and a breakdown in communication between the Voluntary Sector and the Head of Centre. We have not been involved in appointing or contributing to the induction of new staff. As a result there's been a lack of continuity from our point of view and we are less aware of the qualities and experiences of new staff. (Voluntary Sector Representative)

Outreach

The lack of a current outreach worker precluded comment on the quality of work done in this area.

After-school care

The Head of Centre was satisfied that after school care staff had made good progress (again despite staff turnover) and that they currently provided good quality care. She did, however have some concerns over their ability to handle some difficult children without experience or appropriate training.

Again the voluntary sector representative felt she had insufficient knowledge of the day to day working of the after school care service to allow her to comment fully on the quality of work done. She did, however hold a largely positive view of the service.

Voluntary sector

Both felt that work by the voluntary sector, in particular, playleaders and creche workers was of a good standard.

• Staff Relations

Nursery and After-school care

All respondents were asked to comment on the nature of staff relations (i.e. staff/staff, staff/management, staff/management/voluntary sector) both across and within the various services offered. Nursery staff and the after school care worker reported good and effective team relations within the nursery and after school care service though in the latter, staff turnover had proved problematic in forming good relations.

These respondents also reported good relations between staff groups and management i.e. the Head of Centre and the former Depute.

Relations are fine. The Heads very approachable and supportive and knows how to listen. (Pre-Five Worker)

Nursery, after-school care and voluntary sector

Nursery and after school care staff were asked about their relations with voluntary sector personnel. Contact between these two groups was fairly limited and only one of the pre-five workers felt able to comment and only on working with creche workers. She reported that nursery staff and creche workers got on well. The after school care worker felt there had been some difficulty in relations between nursery management and the SPPA members of Jigsaw's Planning Group but that this had been overcome.

**I think there may have been problems between the voluntary sector and the nursery over responsibility for setting up the project and how things are run. But that could possibly be water under the bridge - I'm not sure.
(After School Care Worker)**

. Management perspectives on staff relations

The Head of Centre's positive comments on staff relations and on her own relationship with staff reflected those of the staff group. However, she felt her level of contact with staff had deteriorated since the Depute left.

She was also generally satisfied with her relations with the voluntary sector i.e. creche workers, playleaders etc. but reported difficulty in developing an effective joint management relationship with SPPA Branch members.

The voluntary sector representative shared the views of the Head of Centre, finding relationships generally good between the voluntary sector services and Head of Centre but difficulty in developing effective joint management.

We feel the Head of Centre has generally good relations with the playgroup and the mother/toddler group. But the relationship between the SPPA Branch and the Head of Centre has proved to be somewhat volatile. We find that there's a distinct lack of communication on her part and we feel somewhat uncomfortable with the relationship as it stands.
(Voluntary Sector representative)

• Management Style and Effectiveness

The nature of the difficulties experienced by the voluntary sector and the Head of Centre emerged more clearly when respondents were asked to comment on the effectiveness of Jigsaw's immediate management - that of the Head of Centre and the Depute - and that of the joint management between the voluntary sector and nursery management staff.

The Head of Centre felt that her own management (and that of her Depute) of the nursery was effective.

From a staff perspective, management did seem very effective, with only minor problems reported concerning the absence of a Depute and some lack of clarity in communication with the former Depute while she was in post. The Voluntary Sector representative shared the view of staff in finding the immediate management of the nursery effective.

Only the Head of Centre and the voluntary sector representative were asked to comment on committee level management and this produced less general satisfaction. Problems had developed between SPPA representatives, nursery management and regional administrative staff (development officers) after the opening of Jigsaw which related to changes in the nature and extent of the voluntary sector's management role.

In the beginning SPPA had a very large role. We appeared to have a say in the Jigsaw planning group. We were involved in architectural plans, ordering of equipment and in the appointment of staff. After Jigsaw opened, the planning group became the steering group and it is its own role in this group which has caused problems. We've never been told we cannot have a role - it's just been quietly eroded. We always assumed that the Region had a remit for us in Jigsaw's running and development. This hasn't proved to be the case.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

Long term plans for the original joint planning group had involved the transition of an interim steering group to an executive management group, but there had been debate over the executive group's final remit. Voluntary sector members had been informed by the Divisional Education Officer that their role could only involve day-to-day issues in the sharing of facilities and did not involve strategic decision making or the challenging of regional policy. In other words, the Division would not sanction the establishment of the proposed Executive Group. Instead an advisory forum was set up. The voluntary sector refused to accept the limitation of their management role and debate was ongoing at the time of interview. The difficulty in developing an acceptable management partnership structure had eroded communication between the voluntary sector and the Head of Centre and was clearly a source of concern.

The Head of Centre described the success of the 'transitional' management group as limited, agreeing that it had suffered from protracted debate over the relative powers of the voluntary sector and nursery management staff.

This group has only had limited success as a management body. Its fallen victim to many conflicts. Support from Development Officers has been limited but that reflects the limitations of their role.

(Head of Centre)

Overall, voluntary sector representatives felt that they were no longer effective in contributing to the running of Jigsaw Community Nursery. The group which had begun as a partnership in the planning stages of the provision had failed to develop a joint management perspective or clear plans for the practical management of joint provision.

The atmosphere between nursery management and the voluntary sector is not good and this is partly due to lack of communication and consultation. Our role is unclear and we are not sure what the new partnership means.

(Voluntary Sector Representative)

Children and Families

• Effectiveness of Admissions Procedure and Banding System

All respondents were asked whether they felt the admission procedure had proved effective in allocating nursery places to children and families who would benefit most. Views were mixed on the general effectiveness of the category banding system, with respondents highlighting its limitations and negative community reaction. The Head of Centre felt the system was definitely unpopular in the community, giving rise to resentment and gossip which tended to reflect the nursery's limitations as a resource for 'ordinary' working parents.

Both pre-five workers agreed with the Head of Centre in finding the admissions' procedure effective in allocating place to needy children. They disagreed, however, on the effects of this system on the social mix of children attending; one pre-five worker felt the nursery had a good mix of children (in terms of admission categories), while with the other was aware of a lack of balance in the child group, with the system discriminating against the ordinary child and family.

Obviously we can only allocate places to those who apply. I think parents find it very difficult to accept the admissions priority and there's a lot of gossip locally about who does and doesn't get a place. For the more needy children, the system probably does work, but we can offer little to ordinary working parents.
(Head of Centre)

In contrast, the after school worker was dissatisfied with the effectiveness of the admissions' procedures finding that it failed to select the most needy children - both for the nursery and for the after school care.

The Voluntary Sector representative felt unable to comment on this aspect of Jigsaw. She was, however, asked to comment on a local response to the community nursery in terms of demand for places and use of resources. She found demand for nursery places and playgroup places constant but felt response to other resources was variable and generally limited to parents of children attending services rather than other members of local communities.

• Effectiveness of Jigsaw in meeting children's and parent's needs

Respondents were asked to consider whether or not the needs of children (and parents) were being adequately met in each part of the community nursery. The Head of Centre felt needs were being met in the nursery, after school care and in voluntary services, but not in outreach work. In general, her views were reflected by pre-five workers and the after school care worker though they identified a lack of home visiting for some nursery attenders and slow identification and intervention in language difficulties as areas where improvement was needed.

In general, the Voluntary Sector Representatives views reflected those of other respondents in finding the needs of those attending adequately met in the nursery and in playgroups. She felt though that After School Care offered inadequate supervision of children, little before school care and an inadequate pick-up system. Outreach work also presented problems, since the demand for this type of input still needs clarification.

• Contact and Involvement with Parents

The Head of Centre, nursery and after school care workers were asked if they felt that contact between staff and parents was adequate. Despite the tendency for bussing-in children preventing contact with parents. All respondents found parent/staff contact generally adequate. At a one-to-one level, the review system ensured some contact with other less formal contact provided by fund-raising, a regular newsletter and open evenings.

I feel its adequate though there's a bit of a parental motivation problem. There's fairly good involvement in open evenings and fund-raising and we have a regular newsletter. At an individual level we have regular reviews where parents and staff can discuss children's progress.
(Pre-Five Worker)

None of these respondents reported any significant problems between staff and parents either in the nursery or in after school care. Relations appeared to be good.

- **Success**

Those interviewed were asked how successful they considered each part of Jigsaw to be, bearing in mind the project's original aims and objectives.

The nursery unit

Both respondents felt the nursery was successful but the Voluntary Sector Representative would like to have seen more provision for 0-2 year olds and for children with special needs.

We assume they are successful but would like to have seen more places for 0-2 year olds and more provision for children with special needs. obviously they'd need more staff for this.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

We've come on by leaps and bounds. We are still moving on but I feel we are successfully meeting our aims now. More staff training on different aspects of curriculum e.g. music and movement and ideally a very stable staff group.
(Pre-Five Worker)

Outreach

Although outreach work had faced a number of problems the Head of Centre still felt it had some very successful areas - in particular the development of creches, the cafe and good relationships with playgroups. The voluntary sector representative felt that to be successful the remit for this area had to be clarified.

After-school care

The voluntary sector representative felt after school care still had a number of inadequacies i.e. too few places offered, an inadequate pick-up system and very little before school care. The Head of Centre thought this service was successful as it stood though one of the pre-five workers saw a need for expansion.

It has become very successful but its taken a lot of work to build. Another full-time staff member would allow us to do a lot more.
(Pre-Five Worker)

Jigsaw Community Nursery and the Voluntary Sector

One of the aims of Jigsaw community nursery in relation to the voluntary sector was to develop the nursery as a community resource and to provide a choice of high quality pre-school provision. Prior to establishment of the community nursery a number of playgroups and parent/toddler groups existed in the area, one of which was located in the same building as the nursery unit. As the community nursery developed it was hoped that the nursery would act as a support to the network of playgroups etc. both directly through the physical resources in the nursery unit (i.e. soft play area) and through the outreach worker.

The Jigsaw Community Nursery was unique so far in the development of the community nursery model in that it represents a joint venture between the area's voluntary pre-five services and the Regional Council. Jigsaw Community Nursery aimed to provide not only nursery provision but voluntary services in the same location; playgroups, creche facilities, toy library, cafeteria, etc. The Chryston playgroup had previously operated from the accommodation which was now adapted and re-furnished and housed the community nursery. The playgroup formed part of the services identified as the community nursery. Given (a) the involvement of the voluntary sector in helping to promote the community nursery, (b) the previous absence of any regional pre-five resource in the local community and (c) the prior dependence of the local community on well-developed voluntary pre-five resources, (i.e. largely playgroups) it seemed appropriate to include the views of playgroup users and organisers in the evaluation of the Jigsaw project.

Interviews were conducted with four playleaders and two helpers (mothers who were members of playgroup committees and took turns of duty at the playgroup) in two locations at Chryston playgroup and at Mount Ellen playgroup which operates from Mount Ellen hall. (Mount Ellen is approximately one mile away from the community nursery.) The content of the interviews reflected some themes emerging in interviews already conducted within the community nursery; questions explored the ideology, organisation and practice of the playgroups and in the case of Chryston playgroup, the nature of the relationship between the playgroup and the nursery in the community nursery context. Interviews also included some general comparison of the ideology and practice of playgroups and traditional nurseries; views on possible behavioural and social differences between children attending the playgroups and the community nursery; the nature of local pre-five services; liaison with other agencies and some other general issues relating to playgroups and to the community nursery.

It had been hoped to undertake assessments of children in the playgroups using the PBCL (see Chapter 8) but for a number of reasons this was not thought desirable by the local evaluation advisory group.

The following is a summary of the main points emerging from the interviews. A full account of the interviews is given in Annex 6.

- Playgroups comprised the main pre-five resource in Jigsaw Community Nursery's catchment area. Both Mount Ellen and Chryston playgroups were well attended and had waiting lists. They report little formal liaison with other agencies either during playleader training or in their day to day functioning.
- The structure and content of both groups was similar though the number of weekly sessions differed.
- Respondents identified three broad aims for playgroups which reflected those of traditional nursery schools. However, playgroups had a different approach to educating children. They saw themselves as facilitating learning through play whilst nurseries were seen as educating children directly.
- Discipline within the groups was identified as actually or potentially problematic. Some respondents felt that playleaders lacked authority and were hampered by the presence of parents in imposing their own standards of control.

- Respondents felt that social, emotional or developmental problems were very rare in children attending the groups. (This would have been open to verification if the PBCL had been used as planned.) None had experience of such children and could only speculate on an appropriate course of action should a child present serious problems.
- Considering differences between playgroups and nursery schools, all respondents emphasised the comparatively structured nature of nursery provision and its emphasis on learning as opposed to play. However, given the choice, the majority of respondents would choose to send their children to nursery rather than playgroup. The choice reflected a belief in the superior educational input and pre-school preparation of nurseries.
- All respondents felt that more pre-five resources were needed locally. The community nursery, though described as good, was seen as a special resource for children with extraordinary needs offering little to ordinary children or to working mothers.
- Contact between the playgroups and Jigsaw Community Nursery was limited. The playgroups maintained a separate identity and did not feel part of Jigsaw.

BUCHLYVIE NURSERY SCHOOL

Buchlyvie Nursery School was chosen to represent the traditional nursery school model in the comparative evaluation of community nursery provision. Buchlyvie was being studied alongside the innovative community nursery models to allow some comparison of the two systems.

As part of the evaluation, interviews were conducted with key individuals. The following paper looks at interview material provided by staff at Buchlyvie. It focusses on the following broad areas: the history and background of the nursery, the kind of community it serves, its ethos, purpose and relationship to child, parent and community; admissions procedure management and organisation; design, content and purpose of assessment and curriculum; liaison with other agencies and opinions on the future direction of nursery provision.

Those interviewed were:

Acting Head Teacher

Assistant Teacher

First Assistant Nursery Nurse

Nursery Nurse

Parent

The following is an account of the interviews.

Background and Admissions Procedure

The Service

Buchlyvie Nursery School is a purpose built, single tier nursery near the centre of Easterhouse, a post-war housing scheme with a population similar to Perth (i.e. approx. 45,000). Buchlyvie nursery has served the Easterhouse community for 20 years. It currently provides for 120 children, 100 on a part-time basis and 20 full-time. Staffing consists of the nursery head teacher, an assistant teacher and five nursery nurses. Demand for places fluctuates with factors affecting the local population (e.g. available housing, number of pre-school children). When demand for places is high, a place sharing scheme allows more children to attend on a part-time/part-week basis. At the moment demand for places is constant, although 10% of children from outwith the immediate APT are attending. This is in keeping with the admissions policy (Revised Circular 3A) and includes children on a place-sharing basis. A number of children attending have special needs, such as general developmental delays or more specific problems e.g. Downs's Syndrome.

Admissions

Most children attending Buchlyvie do so as a result of direct requests by parents. Some are referred by outside agencies - social work, health and psychological services but these are a minority. Full-time places are allocated to children in particularly difficult circumstances. An admission panel decides on priority cases and the Head Teacher may offer full-time places on an emergency basis. The nursery is required to operate the current admissions policy (3A) which allocates nursery places on a basis of greatest need. Interviewees felt that the admissions policy was

a fair one but that, when demand for places was high, children from less needy backgrounds lost the opportunity of a place. They also felt the system was open to abuse.

The admission policy created some tension in the community, given that parents were prepared to give false information to gain a place for their child.

Since people are aware of the priorities, they know how to increase their chances of getting places - unfairly, by supplying false information. (Head Teacher)

The parent interviewed felt that the priority system was somewhat unfair, favouring some families who had self-inflicted problems:

For people who have genuine problems, the system is fair. But I resent it that an alcoholic could get a place before me. That's a self-inflicted problem and yet they are given more freedom and consideration. People use the system for their advantage. (Parent)

This interviewee also felt that offering places to children outside the immediate areas was wrong, though the availability of places might reflect lethargy or a lack of information on the part of local parents.

There's some talk of families from outside the area getting places. I don't know why. Maybe people in the area didn't put their names on the list soon enough, but it does seem unfair. There must be more priority cases around here. I feel people from outside the area shouldn't be sending their kids here. (Parent)

Abuse of the admissions system highlights the importance of the nursery as a community resource and even in an area which is relatively well supplied with pre-five provision, competition for places still encourages subterfuge on the part of some parents.

Changes over Time

Since the nursery first opened there have been some radical changes in the organisation and practice associated in particular with changes in leadership. The longest serving staff member interviewed (8 years) identified greatest change with a change in Head Teacher approximately seven years ago. This Head moved the nursery towards more tightly structured organisation and developed the teamwork approach which underlies the organisation of the nursery today.

Nursery organisation and ways of working have changed radically. It was (the new Head) who began these changes. Before everything was much more loosely organised. For example, although we had authority over themes for the children, it was entirely up to you how you organised it. There was far less discussion on work and less staff development. (First Assistant Nursery Nurse)

This respondent appreciated the changes and viewed them positively -

Now we know what we are aiming for and things are much more tightly planned. (First Assistant Nursery Nurse)

Other interviewees who had worked for shorter periods of time in the nursery highlighted greater parental involvement as the major change in the nursery's organisation and practice over the years. The nursery has a Parent's Room which was added to the nursery in 1984 as part of an Urban Aid project. The project was mainlined in 1989 and has enhanced the attempt to foster greater parental involvement generally in the work of the nursery.

Buchlyvie's recent history suggests enthusiastic leadership with a tendency to encourage change and innovation, backed by a staff group who seem willing to support progressive change.

Staffing ratios and the nursery environment

All respondents felt that the staff/child ratio (i.e. of staff who had direct contact with children) was too low. There were a number of reasons given for needing more staff; the level of problematic behaviour presented by children, the particular demands made by children with special needs and the need for staff time with parent groups. There was also a general feeling that all children would benefit from more staff time and attention, particularly on a one-to-one basis.

No, staffing isn't really adequate to meet the needs of the nursery - especially if you want to work with parents. If children aren't to lose out when that's going on, we could really do with more staff cover. Also, I think it might be nice to have the opportunity to work with children in very small groups. (Nursery Nurse)

All respondents felt that the nursery is currently well resourced but that this could be in part attributed to good management of funds. There were, however, general complaints about the suitability of the building in providing a pleasant and healthy environment for children and staff. Although the nursery had been custom built all respondents felt its size and layout imposed limitation on certain activities, particularly those requiring quiet and minimal distraction.

The nursery is open plan and although this works well, we could do with more quiet areas for work with individual children. (First Assistant Nursery Nurse)

We could do with more quiet areas for staff to plan activities and for some one-to-one work with children. (Nursery Nurse)

The design of the building was seen as restricting daylight and all respondents complained about the poor level of natural light in all rooms. They also found the temperature extremely difficult to control (either too hot or too cold). The outside play area was considered generally too small and restricting for large groups of children.

Although staff were critical of the building it seems in fairly good order. Good equipment and children's art work contribute to a pleasing environment and a layout which seems largely sympathetic to most activities and the general needs of young children.

Ethos and Purpose of the Nursery

Respondents were asked to describe the main purpose of the nursery both in terms of the child and the parents/community. In terms of the child, answers showed a high degree of consistency across respondents, reflecting common elements in the training of nursery nurses and teachers. All interviewees felt that the purpose of the nursery was to provide stimulation for children (via structured activities and free play) which would encourage their optimum development physically, intellectually, socially and emotionally. All respondents also mentioned the importance of the child's happiness and security in a learning environment.

The nursery aims to provide the child with stimulating activities so that they grow intellectually, socially and emotionally. It also aims to provide an environment where each child feels secure and happy. (Nursery Nurse)

Our purpose is to provide a stimulating and caring environment to foster the child's development of physical social, cognitive and language skills and to provide an atmosphere that will contribute to their emotional well-being. (Teacher)

The parent interviewee's ideas on the purpose of the nursery, though perhaps not representative of parents at large, emphasised the educational role of the nursery:

It's there to provide kids with discipline and education. It prepares them for school, broadening their horizons and giving them the experiences they might not get at home. (Parent)

In terms of parents and community respondents felt the nursery could have a very broad influence and aimed to offer parents more than a short break from child care.

It provides an opportunity for parents and other adults to develop new skills and to meet socially. (Head Teacher)

It provides some limited opportunity for parents to find employment; the parent's room offers opportunities for education, recreation and socialising. (Teacher)

The parent interviewee felt Buchlyvie was quite different (and superior) to other local nurseries in the level and style of resources it provided for parents.

As nurseries go Buchlyvie is terrific for parents. They don't just shut you off in a room with a mother/toddler group. They provide outings for mothers and the nursery staff keep the children. It also provides educational opportunities, Open University classes, sewing classes etc. (Parent)

The nursery is situated in an APT (Area of Priority Treatment) area where poverty and social problems are prevalent. In this kind of situation, the nursery might be expected to adopt a compensatory role, attempting to provide experiences for both children and parents which might lessen the impact of material and social deprivation. Although staff agreed that Easterhouse was an area of high unemployment, with a large proportion of single parent families and a high incidence of alcohol and drug related social problems, most felt that to describe their role as 'compensatory' was misleading - at both an ethical and practical level.

I feel you can't afford to adopt a missionary attitude here. We will never succeed in compensating for what we feel is lacking for the children and parents. We try to focus on existing strengths and skills in families and adopt a more complementary, as opposed to compensatory role. (Head Teacher)

Staff were keen that their role in the community shouldn't be perceived as 'patronising' or attempting to impose 'preferred' roles on parents and children. But the role of the nursery was nevertheless to some extent compensatory especially in the case of children who presented developmental, social and emotional problems. Interviewees felt that between 15% and 30% of all children showed marked difficulties associated with some or all of the areas mentioned. Also assessment procedures in the nursery were designed to allow a process of individually tailored teaching and care to emerge for children who demonstrate a need for extra input. High parental involvement allowed staff to act on information provided by parents on their circumstances which in turn allowed more appropriate handling of individual children and better support for parents. Information from case study families suggested that the attitude adopted by the nursery was not seen as patronising or imposing but as helpful and caring, particularly where a child demonstrated clear problems or where a parent was experiencing personal difficulties. Staff valued parental input at all levels and all interviewees reported that staff/parent involvement was generally a positive experience for both.

Organisation and Roles

Interviewees were asked to describe their roles and to comment on the organisation of the nursery. Comments on roles highlighted differences in areas of practical responsibility but emphasised their role as part of a team. The overall organisation of the nursery was described by all respondents as following a teamwork rather than a hierarchical approach.

Organisation reflects a teamwork approach. Each individual makes a valuable contribution. Their suggestions are taken on board. What happens in terms of curriculum is the result of group planning and discussion. (Head Teacher)

Although all respondents felt that a teamwork approach characterised the organisation of the nursery the teacher pointed out that although 'teamwork' might describe the overall approach it might also reflect variations in degree depending on the individual in charge and the roles of the other staff involved - in particular whether they are teachers or nursery nurses.

I've worked here under two acting heads. They managed things slightly differently. I'd say at the moment management is more 'top down' than before. On the face of it a teamwork approach predominates and in general this is the case. But I'm given a pre-planned schedule. I'd like more opportunity to try out my own way of working. (Teacher)

Respondents were asked why they thought the nursery was organised along these lines. The teamwork approach wasn't thought to be typical of nurseries but was viewed positively by staff.

I feel if we didn't follow this approach it would cause friction and resentment. (Nursery Nurse)

Feeling valued as staff members makes for better working relationships and higher morale. (Head Teacher)

Commenting on differences in roles and perspectives between teachers and nursery nurses, respondents emphasised complementary rather than conflicting aspects of training and practice.

Nursery nurse training emphasises the caring aspects although we accept the value of activities. Teachers are a lot more educationally oriented but everyone brings unique skills and experiences to the team. In some places teachers are resented but that's not the case here. In general, I feel it would be better if nursery nurse training would allow them the opportunity to be head of a nursery - but there are opportunities for that in day nurseries.

(First Assistant Nursery Nurse)

Both nursery nurses felt that the training they had experienced could be greatly improved allowing them perhaps an equal professional status to teachers in the nursery school context. It seems though that in Buchlyvie little conflict existed between staff with different roles. Neither nursery nurse felt teachers imposed their views and both felt that they had sufficient and appropriate influence over how the nursery operated. There was some frustration over poor training and career opportunities in the nursery school context but, as one respondent pointed out, greater career opportunities exist for nursery nurses in other contexts.

Curriculum and Assessment

The organisation of the nursery was reflected in the development of the curriculum. All staff contributed to this at various levels with the Head providing an outline and staff - through regular discussion - developing and composing it and altering content and emphasis depending on how it functioned in the nursery.

The curriculum operated on the basis of a written plan. It provided for one and a half hours free play to half an hour of group time and a whole group singing time. Five different activity areas operate at free play time. Staff worked on a five weekly rota basis in each area. For group time, (1:10) one staff member took responsibility for a series of 'lessons' e.g. early writing skills. The content and structure of all aspects of the curriculum were negotiated within the staff group. Curriculum content was influenced by external and internal factors, the needs and interests of the child, staff development, in service training and relations with outside agencies including educational advisors, psychologists and primary school teachers.

Assessments and curriculum development were major issues in Buchlyvie and the Acting Head and psychologist from the local child guidance clinic had worked specifically on liaison processes so that assessment was meaningful in the light of the experience given via the curriculum. The current NALGO embargo on nursery nurses carrying out written assessments and record keeping had curtailed the development of assessment procedures to some extent but the staff had devised their own assessment schedule. The schedule was derived from 'the Sheridan' but incorporated staff's own experience. The schedule was designed to be completed by all key staff members (responsible for groups of 20 children). The teacher assessed language separately if children appeared to have special needs. Staff agreed that the purpose of assessment was mainly to highlight

weaknesses in the curriculum or developmental delays in children who would then be given extra help. The curriculum could be adjusted to fit children's needs more accurately on the basis of the assessments.

The assessment process involved discussion with parents. The parent interviewed appreciated both the information provided via assessment and the way in which that information was given to parents:

They do a really brilliant assessment of each child. I was invited to the nursery and given tea while the Head Teacher and I discussed Johnny's progress - especially how he'd come on in talking to adults. (Parent)

Future Direction of Nursery Provision

All respondents were familiar with Strathclyde Region's policy in developing the community nursery model. They were asked to give their reactions to proposed changes and to say whether they generally, agreed or disagreed.

Most respondents agreed at a theoretical level with the idea of the community nursery model but saw practical difficulties in setting it up.

I believe the public wants the community nursery model. I feel very positive toward the idea in theory. I feel though these projects should be started as separate pilot ventures rather than attempting to attach them to existing services. (Head Teacher)

I agree with the general idea if it could be certain that that adequate resources could be provided - staff, money and space. To change policy without changing resources could be ludicrous. (Teacher)

Respondents were asked how they might react if Buchlyvie were to become a community nursery. Again, although the model was acceptable to some extent in theory, the notion of Buchlyvie becoming a community nursery highlighted the negative feelings which all staff had about change in this direction, regardless of their current role - teacher or nursery nurse.

I'd disagree with a proposal which might detrimentally effect nursery schools and my teaching role and I feel that might be bound to happen. Giving priority to 3-5s is my concern. The two types of service should co-exist I'd resist the erosion of the nursery school ethos. (Teacher)

I'm not sure if I would react favourably. I think staff would have to be offered much better conditions in terms of money and career prospects than they have at present. (Nursery Nurse)

The biggest majority wouldn't want it. Although we are carers, we also provide education. Caring for very young children would definitely shift emphasis of our work and most staff here prefer working with the 3-5 year age group. (First Assistant Nursery Nurse)

Buchlyvie's staff comments reflected wider reaction to the Community Nursery model echoing general resistance to changing the nature of current provision. Proposed changes are viewed as potentially detrimental to a successful if limited pre-school system. The comments of the parent interviewee displayed a somewhat cynical attitude towards parents who might welcome the community nursery:

Oh yes, they would love that here. Somewhere to dump kids all day. I feel the service would be used for all the wrong reasons. (Parent)

Although this respondent felt the community nursery might benefit a few very needy parents, particularly in allowing them to work, she felt that the children involved would not benefit.

I don't think any baby would benefit from extended care in a nursery. I would never use it unless I was in dire straits. I was in a day nursery myself as a child and I don't have good memories of it. (Parent)

Describing her ideal nursery service she favoured flexibility within the existing service provided:

I feel the Head should be able to use her personal discretion about longer hours or different hours for different children. I've no personal complaints about how the nursery operates. It suits me and my child very well. (Parent)

Buchlyvie nursery represented the traditional nursery model in the evaluation. The nursery had been open for 20 years and in that time had undergone radical changes in organisation associated with changes in leadership. Change had been in the direction of a teamwork approach amongst staff and away from a more hierarchical arrangement. The teamwork approach was reflected in curriculum development and the development and application of assessment procedures. Both were well developed but assessment was curtailed by the NALGO directive preventing nursery nurses from completing written reviews on children. Staff reported that as a consequence of the teamwork approach, morale was high and staff/staff relations good. Although nursery nurses felt that their training and career prospects were limited (compared to teachers) in the nursery school context, they did not feel that this situation caused conflict between themselves and teaching staff in Buchlyvie.

In general, the nursery displayed an open attitude to change and innovation within the existing structure - for example, in developing a high level of parental involvement and providing additional resources for adults in the community. Attitudes towards current proposed changes in pre-five policy were more defensive. Although respondents accepted the idea of the community nursery model at a theoretical level, they felt the benefits both to community and staff of the existing service would be eroded under the new system particularly if current services were adapted to suit the new model rather than providing new resources.

The parent interviewee felt the need for extended hours in nursery provision was confined to very few families. In a sense though, the Easterhouse area already had resources which reflected the community nursery model, albeit not under one roof - i.e. day nurseries, nursery schools and a family centre. Data from other sources (i.e. case study families) gave a generally favourable reaction to Buchlyvie with few demands or suggestions for change (see Chapter 9).

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CHAPTER 7

ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF THE NURSERY ENVIRONMENT

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Given the limitations of using a quantitative approach to the assessment of quality as outlined in Chapter 1, the quality of pre-five provision in each of the nurseries involved with the study was assessed using an instrument which was both reliable and valid. The instrument chosen was the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (Harms and Clifford, 1980). The Scale gives an overall picture of the surroundings that have been created for all those who share a nursery setting and is relatively straightforward to use. Observers spend a full session in a given nursery setting and 'rate' the environment using the specified sub-scales. A profile can then be drawn which is a pictorial presentation of the ratings arrived at by the observers. If observations are carried out at successive intervals and the different profiles compared, it is possible to monitor changes in quality over time.

In the context of the community nursery programme and the criticisms surrounding the concept of a community nursery, a number of crucial questions were addressed by the evaluation:

- how does the quality of the provision in the community nurseries compare with that in a good conventional well established nursery school?
- how is the quality of the community nurseries affected by internal and external pressures?
- how do staff in the nurseries react to feedback of 'quality' ratings?

Answers to these questions will help to illuminate the debate on whether the new nurseries are diluting the educational content traditionally found in good nursery schools and classes.

7.2 THE EARLY CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENT RATING SCALE

The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale was developed by Harms and Clifford (1980) to give **an overall picture of the surroundings that have been created for the children and adults who share an early childhood setting.** Environment as it is used in this context refers to the physical environment, the care routines, the learning experiences the daily programmes and interactions with adults that a child experiences within some pre-five provision. The needs of adults working in that provision are also examined and account is taken of the level of parental involvement with the child-care environment.

The Harms and Clifford Scale consists of seven subscales which look at particular areas of provision:

- personal care routines for children
- furnishings and display for children
- language/reasoning experiences

- fine/gross motor activities
- creative activities
- social development
- adult needs

For the purposes of this evaluation an extra dimension was developed by the research team and added to those on the Harms and Clifford Scale, using the same scaling methods. This extra dimension is concerned with the operation and extent of **curriculum plans** and the way in which these plans are developed.

The ratings on any one subscale or dimension are derived from the ratings on a number of separate items that pertain to that dimension. For example, the rating on the **personal care routines** dimension is the sum of ratings on 5 separate items:

greeting/departing; meals/snacks; nap/rest; diapering/toileting; personal grooming

Each item is rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (inadequate provision) to 7 (excellent provision). The points on the scale are clearly and closely defined so that observation of the provision will readily result in one or other rating being decided upon. For instance, for a rating of 5 (good) on the room arrangement item there must be

three or more interest centres defined and conveniently equipped (Example - water provided, shelving adequate). Quiet and noisy areas separated. Appropriate play space provided in each centre (Example - rug or table are out of flow of traffic). Easy visual supervision of centres.

Alternative scales are offered on some items for environments intended for infants and toddlers.

After summing the item ratings given on any one dimension a profile is drawn charting the rating given on that occasion for all the sub-scales or dimensions. This profile can later be used again to record further ratings.

Validity and Reliability

The Harms and Clifford rating scale has been subjected to two forms of validity testing. Firstly, independent experts rated each item in the scale for its importance to child-care provision. Secondly, the scale was applied to pre-five provision of varying quality by trainers familiar with the environments and by expert observers. When ratings on the scale made by expert observers were compared with the trainer's ratings on 18 playrooms, a rank order correlation of 0.74 was obtained. The results on both these tests support the validity of the scale, i.e. the scale does indeed measure variations in the quality of the environment for the child. Further tests were carried out to examine the reliability of the scale, i.e. its ability to produce consistent results. Inter-rater reliability was examined for the results obtained across playrooms ($r = 0.88$) and on individual items ($r = 0.93$). The internal consistency of the scale was also examined (standard alpha = 0.86). The results on

these tests suggest that the scale can be used consistently across environments. Time did not permit the research team to assess the validity or reliability of the additional dimension in curricular plans.

Applying the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale

Before commencing on observations in the nurseries involved, two researchers trained in the use of the scale at a separate nursery school in Strathclyde Region. The researchers familiarised themselves with the scale and through repeated observations, comparing ratings and calculating coefficients of agreement reached a high degree of statistically significant inter-rater agreement ($r = 0.70$ to 0.93 , with a mean of 0.81)

Each nursery in the study was rated on three separate occasions. On each occasion the item ratings were summed to obtain dimension ratings which were then converted to a visual profile of the quality of each nursery. This profile, with an accompanying report was shared with the Head of Centre of each nursery. The staff in each location were given the opportunity to discuss the profile with the researchers and to make a written response if they wished to do so. The profiles were also discussed at the aims and objectives review meetings. (see Chapter 5)

Appointments were made in advance for the visits to complete the assessments. Of the three ratings made of each nursery, two were completed by two researchers as a check on inter-rater reliability. The researchers watched a whole 'session' at each location, either the morning or afternoon, playroom time and the lunch period which followed or preceded the playroom observations. The nursery school did not offer lunch to the children but snacks were offered during the course of the playroom session. The researchers moved around the playroom or playrooms and the toilet facilities. Where separate provision is offered for children of different ages the environments were rated separately. Thus the Baby Room and the 3-5 year olds room at Springvale Campus of 3-Towns Community Nursery were rated separately and a profile drawn for each. The researchers aimed to observe the environment, not interact with it, and as such avoided involvement in conversations or activities.

For some items it was necessary to ask questions about aspects of provision not readily observed. The researchers took the opportunity to question nursery Heads after completing the observation period.

The profiles drawn for each location are shown later in this chapter. An examples of a report fed back to the nurseries is provided in Annex 7.

7.3 EARLY CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENT PROFILES

3-TOWNS COMMUNITY NURSERY

The Harms and Clifford Scale was used in the two separate units of the Three Towns Community Nursery and Springvale Nursery School on three separate occasions:

- | | | |
|----------|---|--------------|
| 3-5 Unit | • | March 1991 |
| | • | October 1991 |
| | • | April 1992 |

- 0-5 Unit • February 1991
- September 1991
- April 1992

Springvale Nursery School:

- March 1991
- October 1991
- May 1992

3-5 Unit

The profiles (Figure 7.1) obtained from the ratings in March and October 1991 are similar in shape although the October 1991 profile is generally below that for March on the dimensions referring to particular kinds of curricular activities. The profile drawn from the third set of ratings fluctuates around the previous two profiles. Provision is generally just above the mid-points on the scales although the ratings on some dimensions are at the mid-point.

The three profiles reveal a continuing weakness on the **personal care** dimension and a strength in the **furnishings and display** dimension. The nursery has inconvenient adult-size toilet facilities and poor rest accommodation but is well provided with furniture and basic equipment and produces good child related displays. **Curriculum plans** were well rated, particularly in October 1991 and April 1992 though ratings on the specific kinds of curriculum activities are not areas of strength. Language and reasoning experiences were below the midpoint on the scale on the first two occasions when observations were made but rose considerably on the third rating, perhaps reflecting changes in staff and thus changes in practice as well as greater staff experience.

With regard to overall fluctuation, identifiable deterioration in quality took place between the first and second ratings. The period of deterioration i.e March to October 1991 reflected a time of considerable tension amongst staff concerned with the acute accommodation problems. It was also a time of several staff changes. However some retrieval in quality had occurred by the time of the third assessment largely due to the outstanding efforts of staff.

0-5 Unit

The quality of provision in the Baby Room (for children up to approximately 2 1/2 years) was generally about the mid-point on the scales (see Figure 7.2) and clearly reflected the difficult conditions under which staff had to work. Over the period clear improvements took place in the last three dimensions i.e. social development, adult needs and curriculum planning, reflecting the hard work invested by staff over this time. The **curriculum plans** dimension is the area of greatest strength in April 1992, contrasting with the much lower rating on this dimension in September 1991. The other consistent area of strength was that of provision for **adult needs**, reflecting the good space for a staff room, adult meeting facilities (if the family centre space was used) and the adult training and development opportunities available. Parental involvement were also well rated. **Furnishings and display** were

consistently given good ratings (reflecting perhaps the newly equipped nature of the provision). The dimensions relating to specific curricular areas were rated near the mid-point of the scale. Producing appropriate activities for very young children was challenging, particularly when space was limited and staff had to gain appropriate experience.

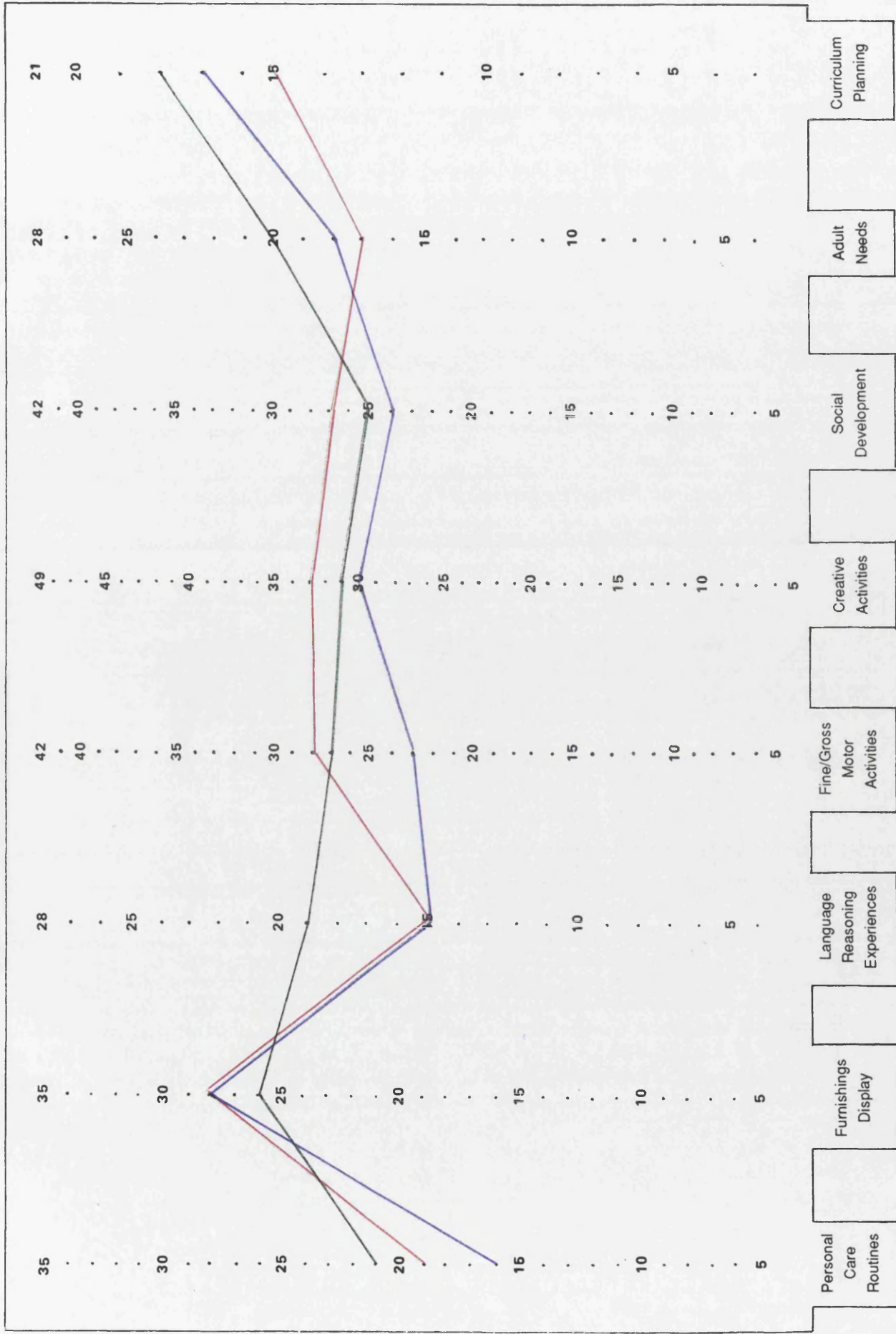
For the room with children 3 - 5 years, the profiles (see Figure 7.3) for March 1991 and October 1991 showed generally similar patterns with strengths in **furnishings and display** and **curriculum plans** and an area of weakness in **fine and gross motor activities**. The profile obtained in April 1992 was above the two previous profiles showing a general improvement in the quality of provision, most noticeably on the personal care routines, the fine and gross motor activities and social development dimensions. While for five of the eight dimensions the first two profiles showed the nursery near or below the mid-point, the final profile showed the nursery rating well on all dimensions. Such changes arose from modified practice and programmes in the nursery and the greater experience of staff.

Although the profiles showed no deterioration in quality over the study period, it was clear that all the upheavals and uncertainties pertaining to the nursery interfered with staff's ability to provide a high quality environment particularly in the early stages of the nursery. However, by the summer of 1992 identifiable improvement in the provision for 3-5 year olds was clearly in evidence.

Harms and Clifford Profiles on Quality of Provision
at 3-Towns Community Nursery (3-5 Unit)

1st March 1991 2nd September 1991 3rd May 1992

Dates of Rating



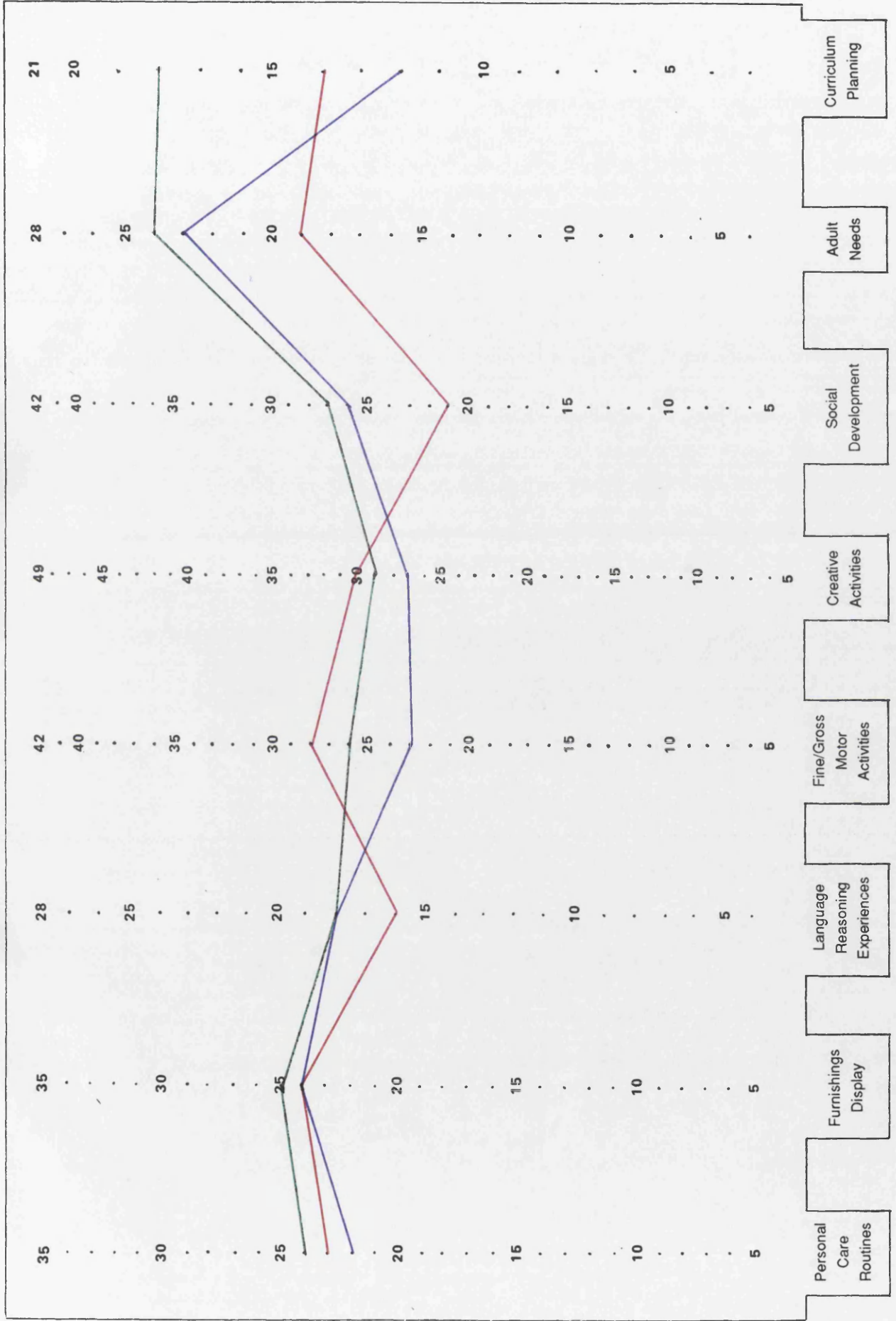
Harms and Clifford Profiles on Quality of Provision at 3-Towns Community Nursery (0-5 Unit; Baby room)

1st February 1991

2nd September 1991

3rd April 1992

Dates of Rating



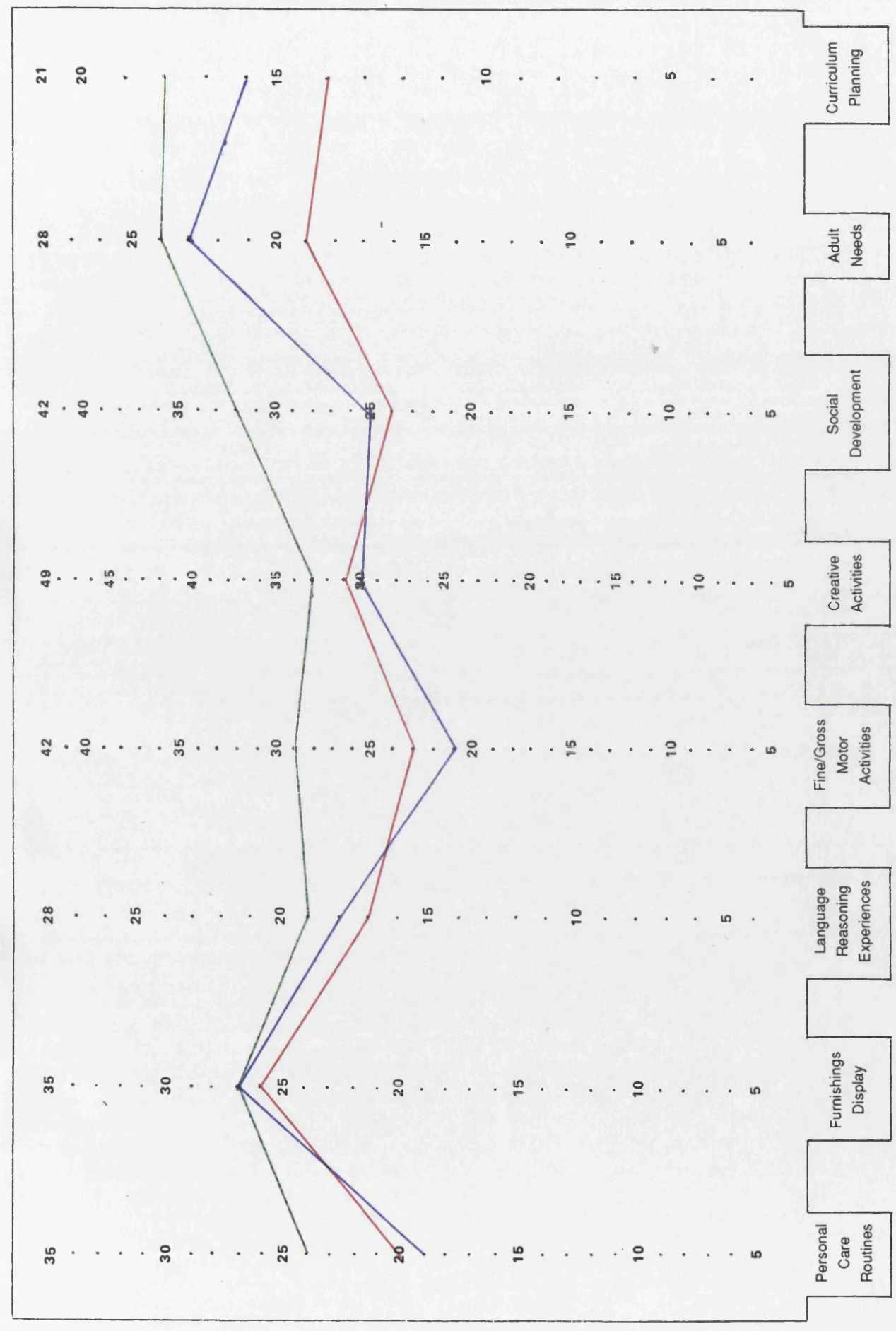
1st March 1991

2nd September 1991

3rd April 1992

Harms and Clifford Profiles on Quality of Provision at 3-Towns Community Nursery (0-5 Unit; 3-5 room)

Dates of Rating



SPRINGVALE NURSERY SCHOOL

Two separate playrooms were rated at Springvale Nursery School, one a playroom for 20 children and the other a playroom for 30 children. Both of these rooms catered for children in the year before they began primary school. Figures 7.4 and 7.5 show the profiles obtained respectively.

Both rooms were well rated on the Harms and Clifford Scale on each occasion with the only exception relating to **personal care routines**. Both rooms were consistently rated very highly on the **curriculum development/plans** dimension, reflecting the established educational orientation of the nursery. The high rating on provision for **adult needs** reflected largely the good provision for an adult personal area and meeting area (a reflection of the physical resources available) and the consistently well rated opportunities for professional development, including good resource materials being available to staff. Both rooms were rated less well, particularly on the initial rating, on the **personal care routines** dimension. The items on this dimension relating to nap/rest and personal grooming in particular were not rated well but it is possible to argue that when children are attending for half-day sessions only and when they are older pre-schoolers then the need for rest provision and attention to teeth cleaning etc. is much reduced. In providing a scale that aims to cover all types of pre-five provision there will be some items that are more or less appropriate to individual circumstances. The ratings on the personal care routines were, however, improved over time e.g. by changes in the way in which snacks were provided.

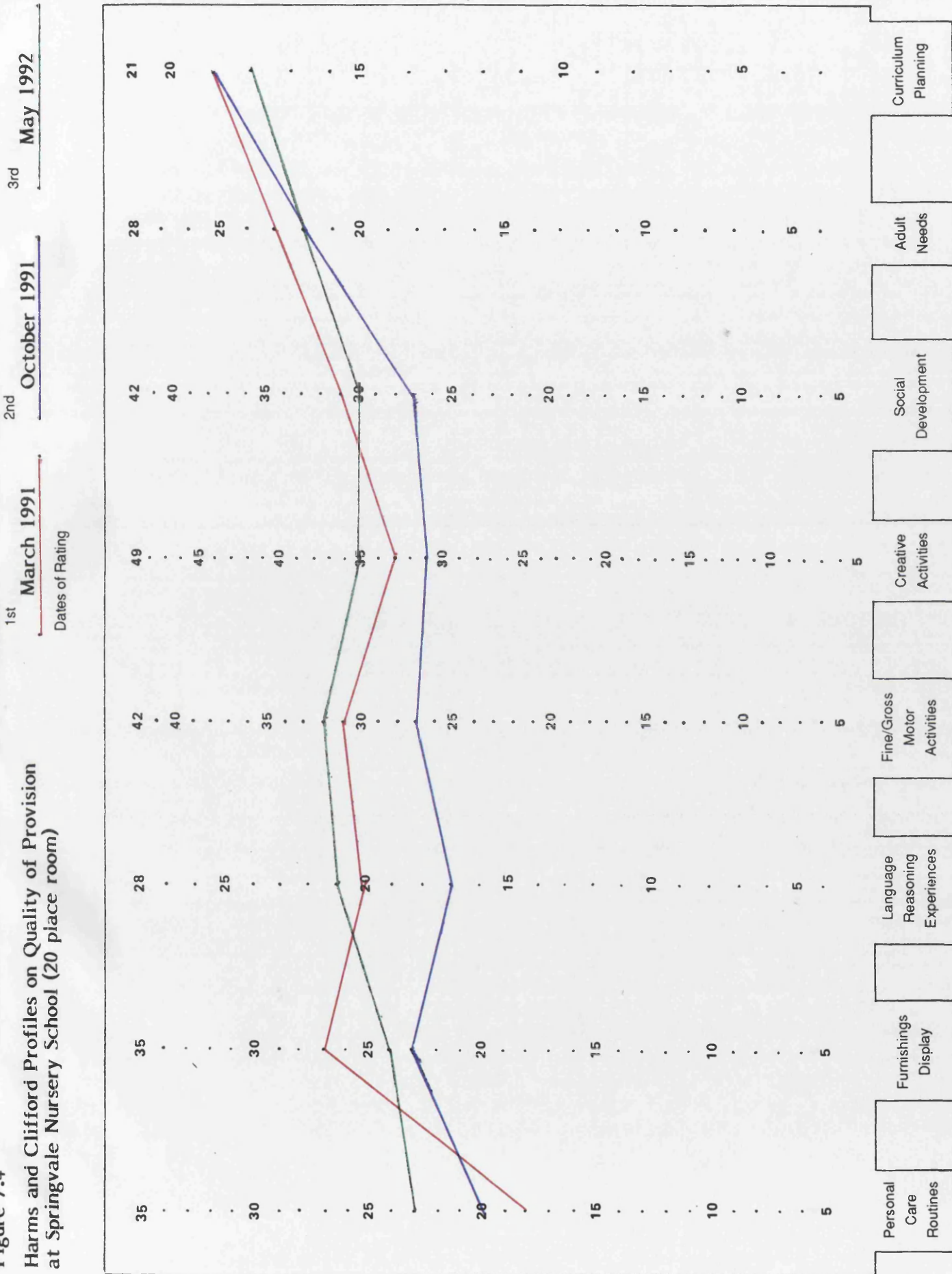
The 20 place rooms showed particularly good rating on provision for **adult needs**, **curriculum development/plans** and **fine and gross motor activities**. Language and reasoning experiences were also well provided for, particularly, in the first and third ratings. The nursery had an ample supply of fine motor activity equipment and shared access to indoor and outdoor physical play space and equipment. The ratings obtained in March 1991 and May 1992 were similar while those for October 1991 were generally lower, reflecting different demands on staff, and priorities of staff during the school year.

For the 30 place room, the October 1991 rating was again generally lower than the other two ratings but all reflected an environment that was offering high quality provision. As well as noticeable strengths in the provision for **adult needs** and **curriculum plans**, as mentioned above, **social development** was particularly well provided for and there was a peak in provision for **language and reasoning** experiences in the final rating. Although these dimensions may be somewhat more highly rated than others all areas are very well rated.

Clearly the quality of the environment in Springvale nursery school was very good although this was partly due to features of the building and the well established traditions in the school, the procedures and practices of staff and the Headteacher are highly commendable.

Figure 1.4

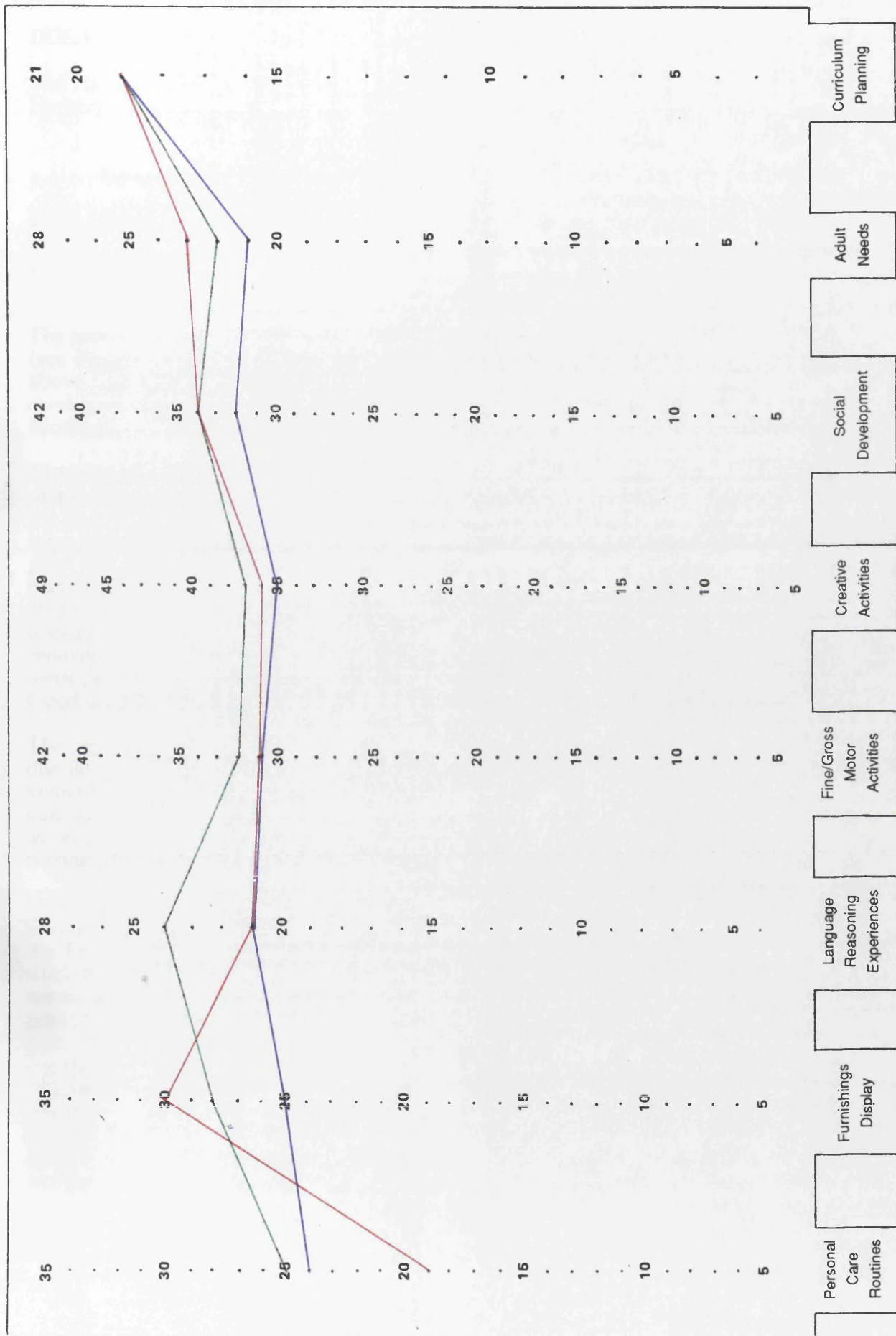
Harms and Clifford Profiles on Quality of Provision at Springvale Nursery School (20 place room)



Harms and Clifford Profiles on Quality of Provision at Springvale Nursery School (30 place room)

1st March 1991 2nd October 1991 3rd May 1992

Dates of Rating



JIGSAW COMMUNITY NURSERY

The Harms and Clifford Scale was used in the nursery room at Jigsaw Community Nursery on three separate occasions:

- January 1991
- September 1991
- May 1992

The profiles drawn on each occasion show ratings on each of the seven dimensions (see Figure 7.6). The provision at Jigsaw has always been at the mid-point or above mid-point on each of the scales applied on every occasion assessments were conducted though the first set of ratings were relatively worse than on subsequent occasions.

Examination of the profiles reveals consistently good ratings for **furnishings and display, fine and gross motor activities** and **creative activities** (particularly in the two later profiles). The furnishings provided at Jigsaw for routine care, learning activities and relaxation are good and the rooms available are arranged to offer good space for specific activities. The lack of easy visual supervision across the playrooms is a weakness identified in this dimension. The display materials were also consistently well rated. The consistently high rating on the furnishings and display dimension must to some extent reflect the position of Jigsaw as a newly renovated environment. Jigsaw Community nursery is well provided with equipment designed to promote children's fine motor skills and their gross motor skills. Good outdoor and indoor space is available for physical play.

The **personal care routines** dimension remained as an area of relative weakness, due in part to factors relating to the physical nature of the premises e.g. the inconvenient toilet facilities as well as practice adopted to cope with the particular circumstances e.g. a member of staff was not consistently available to greet children as they arrived over an extended period and staff resources did not allow for one member of staff just to attend to greetings for that period.

Over the period during which the ratings were taking place the profiles obtained have reflected an improvement in ratings on most dimensions particularly between the first and second ratings. Ratings on four dimensions improved considerably since the first occasion, i.e. **language and reasoning** experiences, **social development, provision for adult needs** and **curriculum** planning. While the improved provision for adult needs reflects in part some physical adaptations to the environment, the changes in other ratings largely reflected changes in practice, some arising specifically from feedback of the results of the first Harms and Clifford rating and others arising from the staff group's growing experience and awareness. Another reason was connected with the pilot inspection of Jigsaw by the Region's Quality Assurance Unit, the process of which was a source of concern to nursery staff. However, it is important to note that during the period of study, no deterioration of the scales was observed.

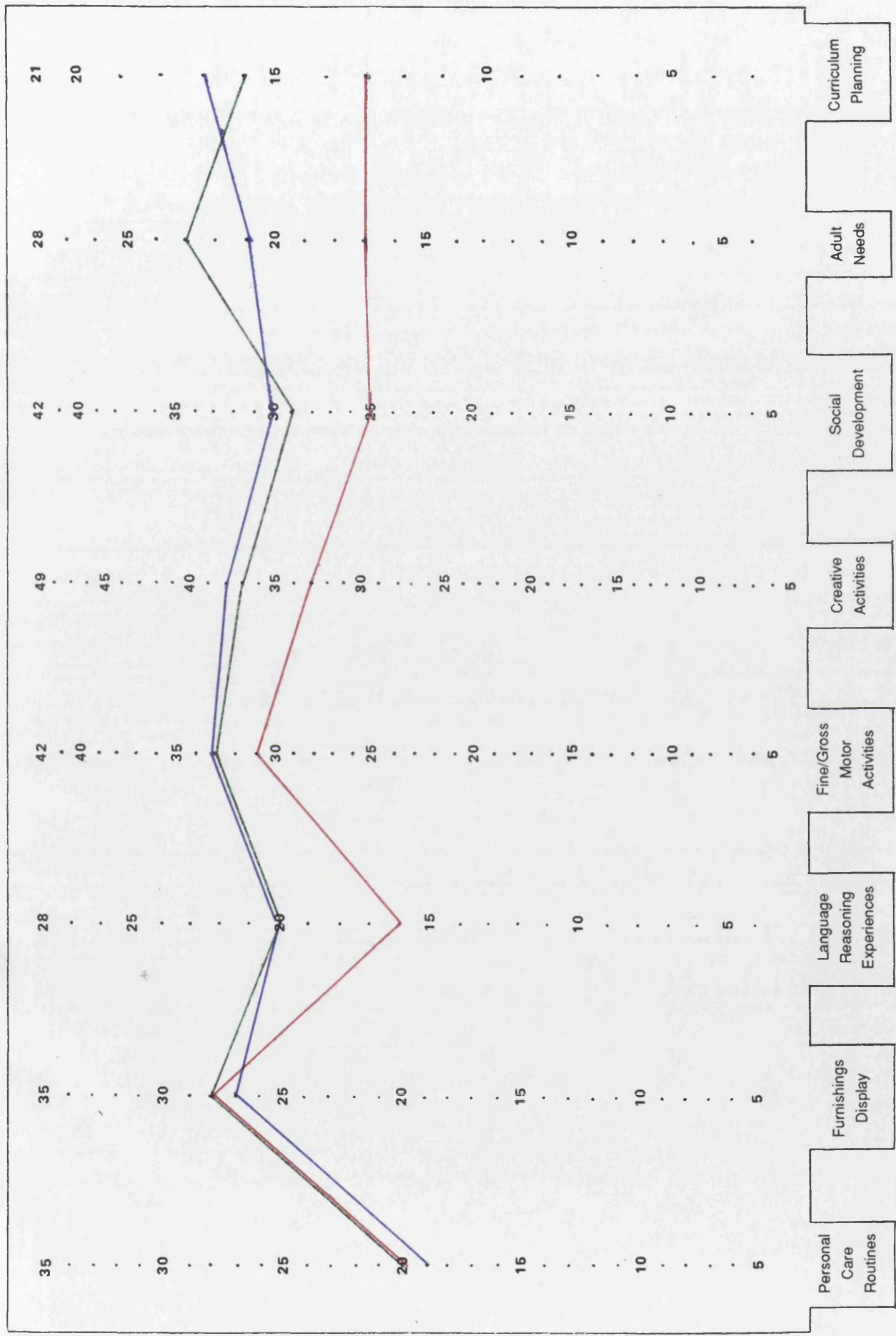
Harms and Clifford Profiles on Quality of Provision at Jigsaw Community Nursery

1st January 1991

2nd September 1991

3rd May 1992

Dates of Rating



BUCHLYVIE NURSERY SCHOOL

The Harms and Clifford Scale was used in Buchlyvie Nursery School on three separate occasions:

- January 1991
- October 1991
- May 1992

The profiles drawn on each occasion for (Figure 7.7) reveal an environment that is rated at or above the mid-point on all dimensions. The **furnishings and display** dimension and the **provision for adult needs** were particularly well rated on each occasion. The profiles suggested that the environment which children experienced at Buchlyvie Nursery School was of overall good quality with some areas of high quality provision; thus confirming the judgement of all experts when selecting this nursery school for this particular study.

The ratings on the **personal care routines** dimension were limited by the lack of specific provision for children to sleep and the implications of there being only one staff member available to supervise lunch-time. Only a minority of children at Buchlyvie had full-time places and all were over three years of age. In these circumstances it is possible to argue that provision for sleeping is not a priority. The lower rating on the **curriculum development and plans** dimensions in autumn 1991 reflected the annual plan at Buchlyvie, in that specific themes are not operated at the beginning of the school year when the bulk of new new children are admitted. (This is in contrast to the community nurseries where there is no bulk intake, all children are admitted all year round). As an alternative to specific themes, basic skills, environment orientation and personal relationships are established.

The third profile obtained was generally at a higher level than the previous two with further improvements in the provision for **adult needs** (noticeably the involvement of parents) and a considerable rise in the quality of **language and reasoning** experiences provided. The provision for **fine and gross motor** activities was also rated more highly in summer 1992. This reflected a change in the activities and materials provided, with more opportunities for developing the use of language and reasoning concepts in particular.

One of the reasons for selecting Buchlyvie Nursery School was the high quality of the service provided as judged by advisers and administrators familiar with the nursery. Clearly the profiles substantiate these judgements about Buchlyvie, though this is not to say that improvement in quality is no longer possible.

Harms and Clifford Profiles on Quality of Provision
at Buchlyvie Nursery School

January 1991

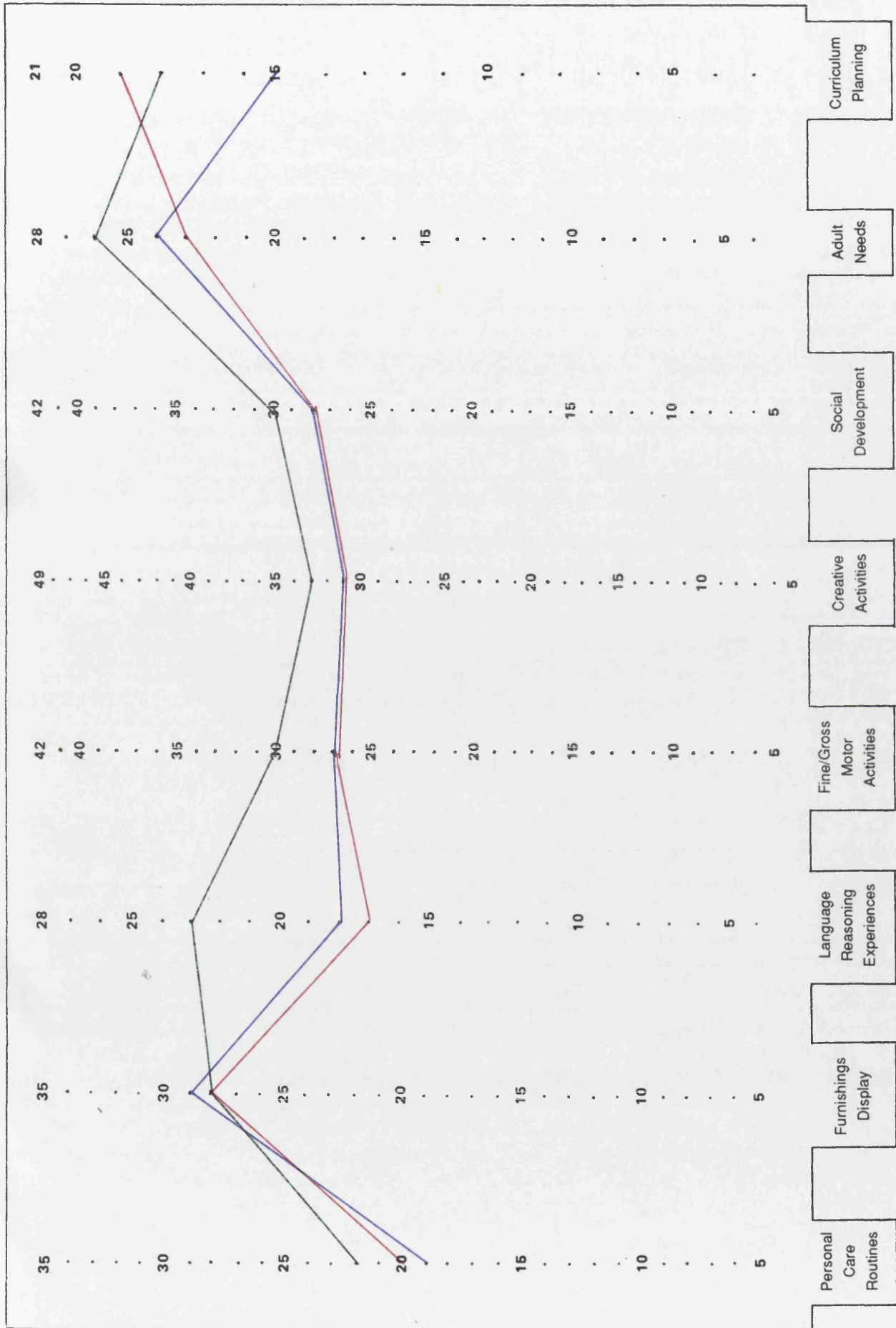
October 1991

April 1992

370

151

Dates of Rating



7.4 COMPARISON OF QUALITY

Figures 7.8, 7.9 and 7.10 show the profiles for each nursery environment at each observation period i.e. early 1991, autumn 1991 and summer 1992. Comparative data are also shown in Table 7.1, giving the total quality ratings summed across all dimensions on each occasion.

Table 7.1: Early Childhood Environment Ratings Scale: Total Ratings

	Early 1991	Autumn 1991	Summer 1992
Jigsaw Community Nursery	183	205	206
3-Towns Community Nursery			
3-5 Unit	183	171	187
0-5 Unit: Baby Room	175	175	191
0-5 Unit: 3-5 Room	174	179	206
Springvale Nursery School			
20 place room	202	185	206
30 place room	203	208	221
Buchlyvie Nursery School	192	191	210

A number of changes in the overall pattern of the profiles obtained at each occasion are noteworthy. The spread between the highest profile and the lowest was reduced over the time period and the profiles had all moved further into the adequate to excellent range by the third observation period. There was also less fluctuation in the profile for each nursery as the time period proceeded. These changes will be attributable to changes in nursery practice over time and, in part, to the impact of the ratings themselves and subsequent discussions acting as a development tool. Having been made aware of previous ratings staff attempted to improve subsequent ratings in so far as circumstances permitted. Two peaks in all the profiles are obvious, more especially in the Autumn 1991 observations. One was for the **furnishings and display** dimension reflecting the good standard of furnishing provided at all locations and the other was for the **adult needs** dimension, covering both staff development needs and parental involvement. Both of these areas were influenced by the shared ethos of community nursery provision and regional practice. The furnishings dimension ratings changed little over the three observations as with the exception of display, these items were constrained by the physical setting and budgetary constraints.

Looking at the profiles obtained in early 1991 the environment included in the project as a point of comparison (where there was no change in the provision), that is, Buchlyvie Nursery School was rated around the middle of the range on the Harms and Clifford scale. Buchlyvie was generally below the quality provided at Springvale Nursery School and above that at the 3-Towns Community Nursery. (It should be noted that Buchlyvie Nursery School admitted children from 3-5 years

into one unit while at Springvale Nursery School only the rooms for 4-5 year olds were rated as only 4-5 year olds attended the nursery at the beginning of the project). The Jigsaw Community nursery ratings fluctuated around the Buchlyvie ratings being above on some dimensions and below on others.

In Autumn 1991 Jigsaw Nursery and one of the two rooms at Springvale Nursery were generally above the level of quality observed at Buchlyvie while the other Springvale Nursery room was similar in quality of provision to Buchlyvie on six of the dimensions. The provision at each of the units comprising the 3-Towns Community Nursery was near that of Buchlyvie or lower. The 3-Towns Community Nursery did experience a range of organisation and staffing problems and changes including the loss of key personnel which should be considered when examining the ratings obtained. Staff shortages were chronic at Jigsaw too with a number of temporary appointments and the loss of a key member of staff early in 1992. Staffing at Springvale and Buchlyvie nurseries was more stable.

The profiles obtained in Summer 1992 show Buchlyvie, Jigsaw, both rooms at Springvale Nursery and the 3-5 room at 3-Towns fluctuating around each other, all providing high quality environments. The environment at the 3-5 Unit and in the Baby Room of the 0-5 Unit (3-Towns) were both well rated too but neither were as good as the other five locations except for the dimension reflecting curriculum plans and development, which was a common practice across the 3-Towns project and for the adult needs dimension in the Baby Room where practice and accommodation were shared with the 3-5 year olds room.

In conclusion, although there were differences between the nurseries in the general level of quality, they all provided high quality environments, as defined by the Harms and Clifford scale. Also each environment had improved in quality between the first and last observation period. Although individual strengths and weaknesses were identified, focusing attention on these has contributed to the improvement of quality over time though there were other factors which also influenced the ability to make improvements and the effectiveness of attempts to change. In terms of the need to take account of the quality of provision set out in the first part of this chapter the nurseries under examination were providing good quality environments with all the implications for children's development. The particular strengths and weakness of any one nursery will in turn have more specific implications for children and parents.

References

- Harms, T. and Clifford, R. M. (1980) **Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale**, New York: Teachers' College Press.

Harms and Clifford Profiles (Spring 1991)

- Buchlyvie Nursery School
- Jigsaw Community Nursery
- 3-Towns Community Nursery (0-5 Unit, Baby Room)
- 3-Towns Community Nursery (0-5 Unit, 3-5 Room)
- 3-Towns Community Nursery (3-5 Unit)

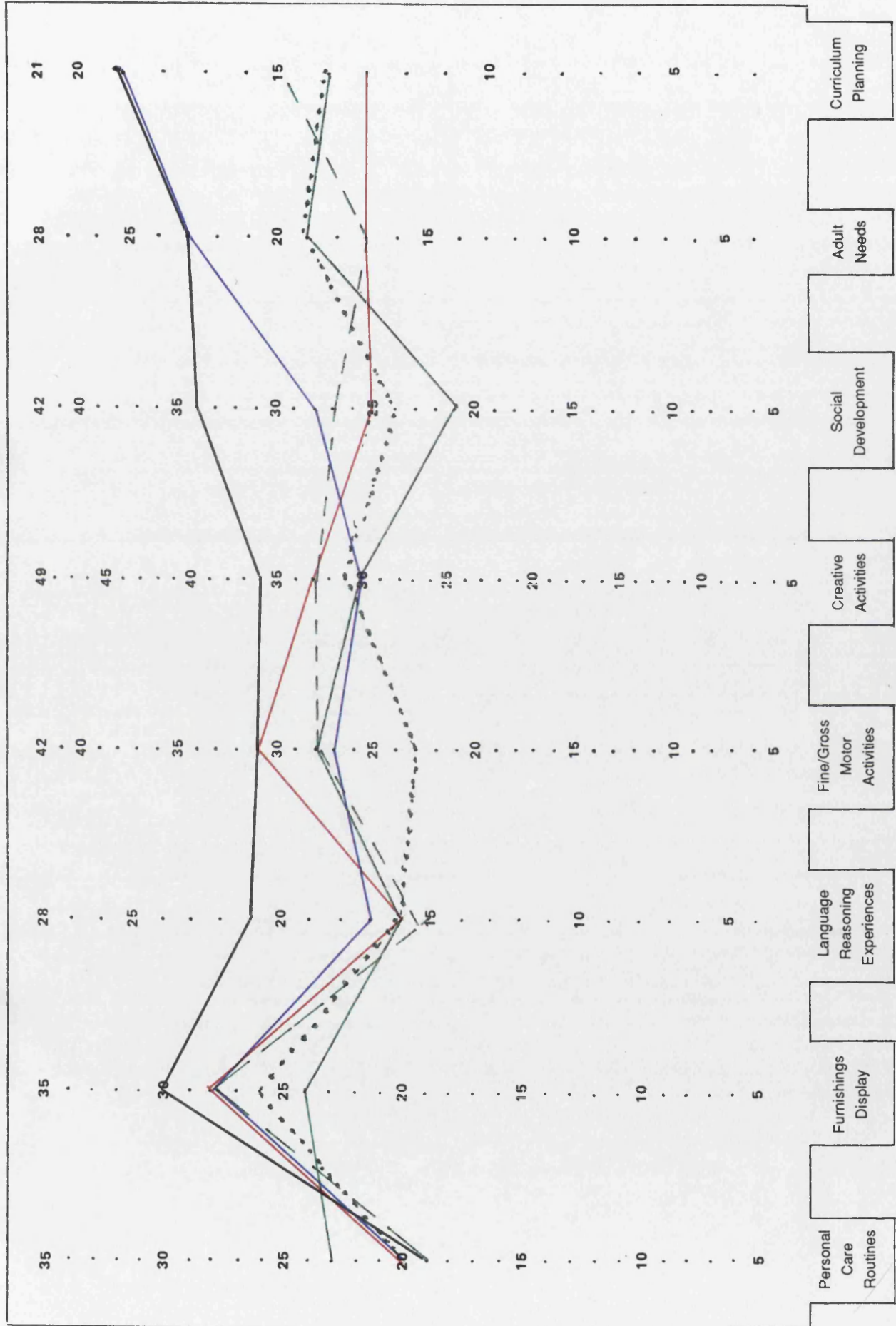


Figure 7.9

Harms and Clifford Profile (Autumn 1991)

- Springvale Nursery School
- Buchlyvie Nursery School
- Jigsaw Community Nursery
- 3-Towns Community Nursery (0-5 Unit, Baby Room)
- 3-Towns Community Nursery (0-5 Unit, 3-5 Room)
- 3-Towns Community Nursery (3-5 Unit)

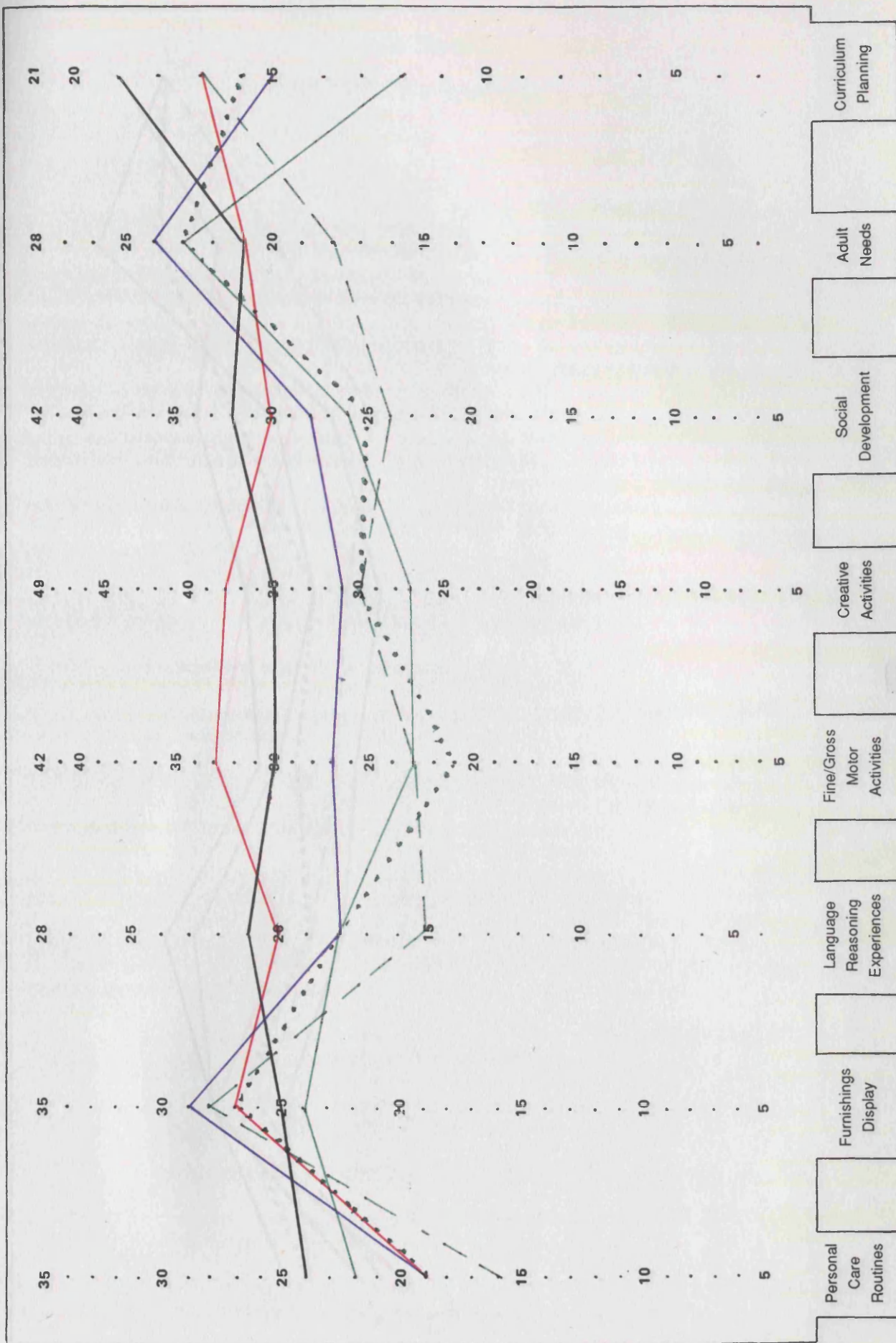
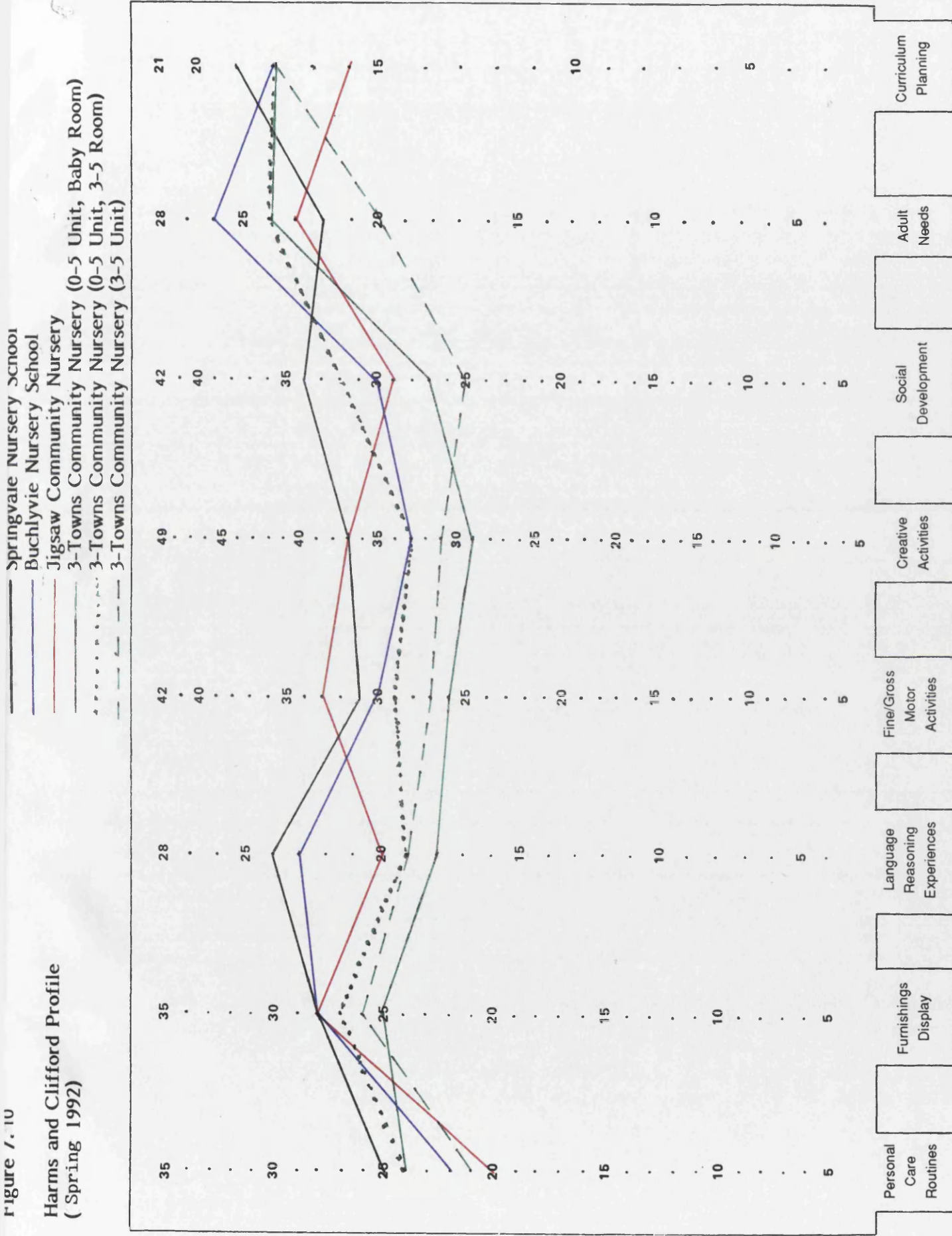


Figure 1.10

Harms and Clifford Profile
(Spring 1992)



CHAPTER 8

CHILDREN'S PROGRESS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Before the age of five children develop very rapidly. They develop physically and mentally in response both to internal maturation processes and by interaction with the external world. They also mature emotionally and gain knowledge, skills and concepts which structure their thinking. In the very early stages physical development is monitored by the Health Service, primarily through regular developmental checks carried out by health visitors. Any concern about physical development e.g. walking, would result in specialist assistance from an appropriate service e.g. physiotherapy. The development of children's social skills and their emotional maturity is an area of particular concern to those working with pre-five children. The establishment of a secure and caring environment where children can grow socially and emotionally is an objective common to all nurseries. Nurseries also aim to provide conditions in which young children can explore, acquire new knowledge and skills as well as new ways of thinking and communicating. Indeed modern psychological knowledge on children's development provides convincing evidence that children acquire competences and abilities hitherto not fully realised (Wilkinson, 1992).

In line with the aims of those working with young children the assessment of children's progress in this study focused on two distinct aspects:

- social and emotional behaviour
- developmental progress in cognition, language, socialisation and physical skills

The forms of assessment used, the assessment periods, the children assessed and the results obtained are discussed below. In each nursery the same instruments were used by staff familiar to the children.

As the design of the study did not include a control group (i.e. a non-nursery group) it was not possible to attribute any progress in causal terms specifically to the nursery experience. However, the purpose of this aspect of the study was to ascertain whether the progress being made by children in the community nurseries was comparable to that of children in a good conventional nursery school. Crucial questions posed of the data were:

- to what extent were the achievement levels of children **entering** the nurseries comparable between nurseries?
- to what extent were the achievement levels of children **leaving** the nurseries comparable between nurseries?
- was children's progress generally comparable between nurseries?
- was the overall level of **social and emotional behaviour problems** similar between nurseries?
- were nurseries successful in reducing the level of social and emotional behavioural problems that gave rise for special concern?

8.2 THE FORMS OF ASSESSMENT

8.2 1 Assessing Social and Emotional Behaviour

The Pre-School Behaviour Checklist (PBCL) was selected as a means of screening children's social and emotional behavioural problems in each nursery (McGuire and Richman, 1988). The PBCL was designed specifically for use by those working with children in nurseries as an instrument to identify children with emotional and behavioural problems in a systematic and objective manner. The 22 item checklist allows staff to rate a range of behaviours, describing the frequency with which a behaviour occurs or the severity of the incidents. Figure 8.1 shows examples of items from the PBCL.

Figure 8.1 Examples of items from the Pre-School Behaviour Checklist

Item 10

Doesn't have temper tantrums	.....
Sometimes has temper tantrums (lasting usually a few minutes)	.....
Has frequent (at least daily) or very long tantrums, with screaming, kicking or complete loss of control	.....

Item 19

Very emotionally withdrawn from staff	.....
Somewhat withdrawn from all staff or responsive only one particular adult	.....
Can be responsive to all staff	.....

The PBCL yields a score for each child. On the basis of research carried out by the designers of the instrument, a cut-off point of 12 has been set as a critical level. A child with a score of 12 or above has a degree of social and emotional behavioural problems which is a cause for concern and likely to require special attention often with the involvement of psychological services.

In the current study of community nurseries the PBCL scores were used to give a measure of the number of children in any one nursery who have social and emotional behaviour problems which require particular attention by staff. For each nursery the percentage of children being rated as above the cut-off point was recorded in each of the four assessment periods. Monitoring the percentage of children with social and emotional behaviour disturbances provided a measure of the amount of staff time required by particular children, the necessary focus of attention of staff and the distress of children attending the nursery. An environment offering appropriate care and developmental support to children with behavioural problems would expect to see a decline over time in the percentage being rated as above the cut-off point.

During each assessment period a PBCL was completed for each child attending the nursery. The checklist was completed by a member of staff (both teachers and nursery nurses) who knew the child well (usually a keyworker) though in Buchlyvie Nursery School, due to an industrial dispute with the Regional Council on the duties of nursery nurses, NNEB trained staff verbally assessed each child in the presence of a member of the research team. The completed check-lists were scored and the number above the cut-off point obtained. Although selected as a research tool the PBCL was used by staff in their work with children and parents and all the completed checklists were available to nursery staff after scoring. Appropriate training was provided by the research team for those staff involved in completing the check-lists before the assessment periods commenced.

8.2 2 Assessing children's development

After consultation with nursery staff, development officers and psychological services and the local evaluation advisory groups, two instruments were chosen to assess development, one being appropriate for children 3-5 years old and the other for children from birth to around 3 years. The Keele Pre-School Assessment Guide (Tyler, 1979) was chosen for the older children and the Revised Child Development Charts, produced by Renfrew Division Child Guidance Service, for the younger children. Children at Springvale Nursery School, the 3-5 Unit in 3-Towns Community Nursery and Buchlyvie Nursery School were assessed using the Keele Pre-School Assessment Guide while at the 0-5 Unit in 3-Towns and Jigsaw Community Nursery staff used their discretion as to which instrument to use for any particular child aged between two and a half years and three and a half years.

The **Keele Pre-School Assessment Guide** examines four aspects of development: language, cognition, physical skills and socialisation, relevant for a child approaching the age of formal education. A number of specific features of development are charted for each of these aspects as shown in Figure 8.2. Development in each aspect is charted by assigning the child to one of five levels of achievement. Children may be recorded as being at one particular level on say **language** but at a different level of development for **cognition** and yet another level for **socialisation**. The level of development was ascribed following the child's performance on set tasks, and observations by staff, as specified in the Keele Guide. Staff in post in each nursery at the start of the research were given appropriate training in the use of the Keele and the recording of the child's responses. However, training for new staff was not given which proved to be a problem in 3-Towns Community Nursery where all the keyworkers participated in conducting the assessments. In the nursery schools and Jigsaw Community Nursery staff with a teaching qualification conducted the assessments for each child, whilst in 3-Towns the assessments were conducted by the keyworkers none of whom had a teaching qualification. The completed Keele records were passed to the researchers after each assessment period but were subsequently available for use in each nursery, for example, in their discussions with parents.

Figure 8.2 Keele Pre-School Assessment Guide

Aspect of Development	Specific Features Assessed	Criteria for index category
Language	Language use Speech Vocabulary Comprehension	Highest level achieved in 3 out of any 4 features
Cognition	Space and Time Objects Sorting Memory Number Problem Solving	Highest level achieved in 4 out of any 6 features
Physical Skills	Drawing and writing Manipulation Co-ordination	Highest level achieved in 2 out of any 3 features
Socialization	Self-help Play patterns	Highest level achieved in both features

With the Keele a child’s development is recorded on a circular chart. In order to translate this graphic representation into one suitable for the analysis of group results, an **index** of development was constructed. This index categorised the development pattern into a four digit index representing the child’s current level of development in all four areas under consideration. The summary index was used by the researchers who were concerned with developmental progress within and across the nurseries while the individual charts were used by some nurseries in their strategic planning of appropriate activities and experiences for individual children.

The Renfrew Revised Child Development Chart was developed locally for use with children under the age of 3. It uses seven domains of development (see Figure 8.3). The physical development questions concentrate on the acquisition of skills which show evidence of developing control and variety in physical actions. The social development charts concentrate on the recording of social skills and actions. The language charts and concept chart examine cognitive development as appropriate for a young child. Each chart consists of a varying number of questions about what a child can do. Each question requires a ‘yes’, ‘sometimes’ or ‘no’ answer. For each question an age is given as a guide as to when a child might be expected to have acquired that particular skill. A child was categorised as performing at, above or below their chronological age by inspecting the ages associated with questions that were answered ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Their developmental age was taken to be the highest age for which the majority of questions received a ‘yes’ answer.

Figure 8.3 Renfrew Revised Child Development Charts

Development Domains	
Gross Motor Movements	
Eye-Hand Co-ordination	
Language	- Comprehension - Expression
Social Skills	
Self-Help Skills	- Eating - Dressing - Toileting
Concept Development	

As with the Keele the Renfrew Charts produce essentially graphic results. The charts obtained for each child were categorised by the researchers into an index which recorded for each area of development whether a child was at or above the age level suggested for their chronological age or was performing at a level below that expected by their age. This categorisation allowed comparisons to be made across groups of children although the individual charts were always available to nursery staff as and when required. As with the other assessment tools employed, staff were given training before using the Renfrew Charts.

8.3 THE ASSESSMENT PERIODS

It was originally intended that children’s progress be monitored, on a six monthly basis, over a two year period starting from the opening of the community nurseries in 1990. Four assessment periods were therefore set during the course of the research. However due to delays for various reasons, the time interval between the first and second assessments was reduced to three months. Nursery staff were asked to carry out assessments over a number of weeks, the precise timing being at the discretion of the staff. Whilst it was the intention of the researchers that assessment should be undertaken in all the nurseries simultaneously, there were circumstances pertaining to each nursery which prevented this on all occasions. Table 8.4 gives the period during which assessment was carried out in each nursery for each of the four occasions.

Figure 8.4 Assessment Periods in Each Nursery

Nursery	Assessment Periods			
	T1	T2	T3	T4
3-Towns Community Nursery				
0-5 Unit	Jan-Feb '91	May-Jul '91	Nov '91	May-Jun '92
3-5 Unit	Feb-Mar '91	May-Jul '91	Nov-Dec '91	June '92
Springvale Nursery School	Mar '91	June '91	Nov '91	May '92
Jigsaw Community Nursery	Nov '90 - Jan '91	Jun-Aug '91	Nov '91 - Jan '92	May -Jun '92
Buchlyvie Nursery School	Nov '90	May '91	Nov '91	May -Jun '92

8.4 THE SAMPLE OF CHILDREN ASSESSED

In any longitudinal study of child care some children will leave before the study is completed. The current project was no exception to this with children moving on to school or leaving for alternative services. The researchers aimed to record the development of all children attending the community nurseries during each assessment period. Children who were persistently absent during the assessment period and the very small number of children who were unwilling or unable to co-operate with the assessments were, of necessity, omitted. In the final assessment period it was not possible, due to circumstances in the community nurseries, to complete Keele assessments on all the children attending. Assessments were, therefore, undertaken in such a way as to maximise the amount of data available to the researchers but minimise the amount of staff time required.

In both community nurseries all 3 and 4 year olds children entering the nurseries in 1990 and 1991 were assessed on the Keele. At the beginning of the research children at Springvale Nursery School attended for one year only (their immediate pre-school year). Although the nursery subsequently began to admit three year olds, the majority of assessments were based on children in their pre-school year producing two separate year groups each assessed twice. Due to the length of time required to complete each child's assessment on the Keele and the large number of children attending the nursery schools, not all were assessed. A sample of approximately one in four of the total number of relevant children was assessed, covering both morning and afternoon placements. The sample was chosen to be representative of the intake in terms of age, gender and admission category. In Buchlyvie Nursery School the sample was selected as being representative of children at Buchlyvie. Buchlyvie Nursery School admits children for up to two years. As the children were aged 3 and 4 years when first assessed some left for school after the first two assessments periods but were replaced in the sample by children admitted in August 1991. Tables 8.1 and 8.2 record the numbers of children assessed at each period in each nursery for Keele and Renfrew Scales.

Table 8.1 Number of Children Assessed on the Keele in each nursery

3-Towns:

0-5 Unit

cohort	Assessment Points			
	T1	T2	T3	T4
1	23	17	11	9
2		12	10	9
3			16	13
Totals	23	29	37	31

3-5 Unit

cohort	T1	T2	T3	T4
1	16	16	8	8
2		20	10	9
3			12	0
Totals	16	36	30	17

Springvale Nursery School

cohort	T1	T2	T3	T4
1	31	31		
2			32	32
Totals	31	31	32	32

Jigsaw

cohort	T1	T2	T3	T4
1	48	44	14	0
2		18	17	0
3			31	21
Totals	48	62	62	21

Buchlyvie Nursery School

cohort	T1	T2	T3	T4
1	29	29	11	10
2			18	17
Totals	29	29	29	27

Note: Children were grouped into 'cohorts' to the nursery on the basis of time periods between assessments July 1990 - June 1992.

Table 8.2 Number of children assessed on the Renfrew

3-Towns: 0-5 Unit		Assessment Points			
cohort	T1	T2	T3	T4	
1	11	6	2	0	
2		9	6	5	
3			11	10	
Totals	11	15	19	15	
Jigsaw					
cohort	T1	T2	T3	T4	
1	14	12	1	0	
2		4	1	0	
3			1	6	
Totals	14	16	3	6	

The sample of children assessed on the Renfrew also included all children with special educational needs. It should also be noted that all those children under three admitted to the 3-Towns nursery were referrals from other agencies.

8.5 RESULTS

8.5 1 Social and Emotional Behaviour (PBCL)

Table 8.3 shows the percentage of children in each nursery with a score of 12 or more, which is the cut-off point above which scores indicate that a child has behavioural problems requiring further attention.

Table 8.3 Pre-School Behaviour Checklist: Percentage of children at or above the cut-off point in each nursery

		Assessment points			
		T1	T2	T3	T4
3-Towns Community Nursery					
0-5 Unit		18.9	23.1	25.5	14.6
3-5 unit		37.5	13.9	33.0	11.1
Springvale Nursery School		-	1.7	12.5	3.1
Jigsaw Community Nursery		8.8	9.3	10.5	4.3
Buchlyvie Nursery School		11.0	11.1	8.0	4.0

Note: No data on the PBCL was available from Springvale Nursery School at T1 due to the effects of the industrial dispute.

The first point to note about the data in Table 8.3 is the high proportion of children in the two nursery units of 3-Towns Community Nursery who were displaying acute social and emotional behaviour. This was particularly marked in the 3-5 Unit on the first occasion when the assessments were conducted - about 40% of the children were giving cause for concern, some very seriously so. There was a wide range in the degree of social and emotional disturbance found among the children of the different constituent parts of the 3-Towns Community Nursery. The 0-5 Unit had a high proportion of children with emotional and behavioural problems requiring attention during the first three assessment periods and a declining, but still sizeable, proportion in the final period. A very low incidence of problems was recorded at Springvale Nursery School at the end of the first year of research. With the new intake of children in (Autumn 1991) the proportion scoring above the cut-off point rose sharply falling to a lower level by Summer 1992. The reduction at the end of the research clearly shows the value of nursery experience for children with social and emotional behaviour problems. The most dramatic result given in Table 8.3 however is the reduction in the numbers of children with social and emotional problems at the 3-Towns 3-5 Unit. The figures given reflect the largely annual intake pattern and demonstrate the policy of the Unit and the determination of staff to help such children. The substantial reduction achieved each year is remarkable and is perhaps the strongest feature of the nursery's first two years of existence.

The relatively low incidence of children with social and emotional problems at Jigsaw may be a reflection of the area in which the nursery is located (see Chapter 3).

The position at Buchlyvie Nursery School is comparable to that at Jigsaw despite the very different areas in which the two nurseries are located. This is partly explained by the fact that other agencies did not see Buchlyvie as a resource for problem children and that other pre-five resources were available in Easterhouse.

8.5 2 Keele Assessments at each assessment point

The assessments of children's development on the Keele Pre-School Assessment Guide allow examination in two forms. First by looking at the achievement levels in each nursery at each assessment point the questions raised in the Introduction (8.1) as to the comparability between nurseries can be addressed. Secondly, by looking at the amount of change evidenced in children's development an indication to the degree of progress occurring during attendance at one or other of the nurseries can be obtained.

Tables 8.4 to 8-19 chart the percentage of children in each age group achieving each level of development on the Keele Guide. The results are reported for each nursery in turn.

For research purposes, the data must be interpreted with caution. Although efforts were made to help those carrying out the assessments to use the Keele in a standardised manner¹, no systematic reliability assessments were conducted by the research team. There is no way of knowing therefore whether the data are reliable. Absolute comparisons between nurseries therefore can only be tentative.

1. The research team is indebted to Mr. Malcolm Wilson, teacher at Buchlyvie Nursery School, who helped to train staff to use the Keele at 3-Towns Community Nursery.

3-TOWNS COMMUNITY NURSERY

Tables 8.4 - 8.7 show the distribution of children by level of achievement and age group for each aspect of development over the four assessment periods in 3-Towns Community Nursery.

Table 8.4 Keele Assessments in 3-Towns (both units combined) - % of children by age group at each achievement level for each aspect of development (Time 1)

		Achievement level					
		0	1	2	3	4	5
LANGUAGE							
	3-4 year olds	12.0	36.0	32.0	12.0	16.0	0
	4-5 year olds	0	21.4	35.7	0	21.4	21.4
COGNITION							
	3-4 year olds	12.0	32.0	44.0	8.0	4.0	0
	4-5 year olds	0	7.0	50.0	14.3	28.6	0
PHYSICAL							
	3-4 year olds	8	12.0	52.0	20.0	8.0	0
	4-5 year olds	0	7.0	21.4	28.6	7.0	35.8
SOCIALIZATION							
	3-4 year olds	12.0	20.0	32.0	16.0	16.0	4.0
	4-5 year olds	0	7.0	28.6	7.0	14.3	42.9

Table 8.5 Keele Assessments in 3-Towns (both units combined) - % of children by age group at each achievement level for each aspect of development (Time 2)

		Achievement level					
		0	1	2	3	4	5
LANGUAGE							
	3-4 year olds	12.9	29.0	32.2	9.6	16.1	0
	4-5 year olds	11.8	11.8	20.6	20.6	11.8	23.5
COGNITION							
	3-4 year olds	12.9	19.4	41.9	9.6	16.1	0
	4-5 year olds	51.8	5.8	17.6	23.5	41.2	5.8
PHYSICAL							
	3-4 year olds	0	35.5	29.0	16.1	9.7	9.7
	4-5 year olds	0	5.8	14.7	26.5	14.7	38.2
SOCIALIZATION							
	3-4 year olds	6.5	22.6	29.0	29.0	12.9	0
	4-5 year olds	0	11.8	42.0	14.7	29.4	20.6

Table 8.6 Keele Assessments in 3-Towns (both units combined) - % of children by age group at each achievement level for each aspect of development (Time 3)

		Achievement level					
		0	1	2	3	4	5
LANGUAGE							
	3-4 year olds	13.8	37.9	31.0	13.8	3.4	0
	4-5 year olds	7.9	15.8	28.9	18.4	26.3	2.6
COGNITION							
	3-4 year olds	10.3	37.9	41.4	10.3	0	0
	4-5 year olds	7.9	10.5	36.8	13.2	31.6	0
PHYSICAL							
	3-4 year olds	10.3	41.4	34.5	6.9	0	6.9
	4-5 year olds	7.9	7.9	21.1	36.8	5.3	21.1
SOCIALIZATION							
	3-4 year olds	6.9	41.4	34.5	13.8	3.5	0
	4-5 year olds	2.6	15.8	18.4	28.9	34.2	0

Table 8.7 Keele Assessments in 3-Towns (both units combined) - % of children by age group at each achievement level for each aspect of development (Time 4)

		Achievement level					
		0	1	2	3	4	5
LANGUAGE							
	3-4 year olds	0	40.0	40.0	0	20.0	0
	4-5 year olds	7.7	5.1	7.7	20.5	43.6	15.3
COGNITION							
	3-4 year olds	0	0	60.0	40.0	0	0
	4-5 year olds	5.1	0	15.4	23.1	43.6	12.8
PHYSICAL							
	3-4 year olds	0	0	60.0	20.0	0	20.0
	4-5 year olds	2.5	10.3	5.1	25.6	10.3	46.2
SOCIALIZATION							
	3-4 year olds	0	20.0	20.0	60.0	0	0
	4-5 year olds	2.5	2.5	10.3	15.4	56.4	12.8

SPRINGVALE NURSERY SCHOOL

Tables 8.8 to 8.11 show the distribution of children by level of achievement and age group for each aspect of development over the four assessment periods of development in Springvale Nursery School.

Table 8.8 Keele Assessments in Springvale Nursery School - % of children by age group at each achievement level for each aspect of development (Time 1)

		Achievement level					
		0	1	2	3	4	5
LANGUAGE							
	4-5 year olds	0	0	0	6.5	87.1	6.5
COGNITION							
	4-5 year olds	0	0	3.2	32.3	58.1	6.5
PHYSICAL							
	4-5 year olds	0	0	0	9.7	51.6	38.7
SOCIALIZATION							
	4-5 year olds	0	0	0	9.7	19.4	71.9

Table 8.9 Keele Assessments in Springvale Nursery School - % of children by age group at each achievement level for each aspect of development (Time 2)

		Achievement level					
		0	1	2	3	4	5
LANGUAGE							
	4-5 year olds	0	0	0	0	83.9	16.1
COGNITION							
	4-5 year olds	0	0	0	16.1	54.8	29.0
PHYSICAL							
	4-5 year olds	0	0	0	6.5	41.9	50.6
SOCIALIZATION							
	4-5 year olds	0	0	0	3.2	25.8	71.0

Table 8.10 Keele Assessments in Springvale Nursery School - % of children by age group at each achievement level for each aspect of development (Time 3)

		Achievement level					
		0	1	2	3	4	5
LANGUAGE							
	3-4 year olds	5.6	33.3	33.3	27.8	0	0
	4-5 year olds	7.1	7.1	28.6	57.1	0	0
COGNITION							
	3-4 year olds	0	44.4	50.0	5.6	0	0
	4-5 year olds	0	0	57.1	42.9	0	0
PHYSICAL							
	3-4 year olds	0	33.3	55.6	11.1	0	0
	4-5 year olds	0	7.1	42.9	50	0	0
SOCIALIZATION							
	3-4 year olds	5.6	61.1	11.1	11.1	11.1	0
	4-5 year olds	0	42.9	21.4	14.3	21.4	0

Table 8.11 Keele Assessments in Springvale Nursery School - % of children by age group at each achievement level for each aspect of development (Time 4)

		Achievement level					
		0	1	2	3	4	5
LANGUAGE							
	3-4 year olds	0	0	66.7	33.3	0	0
	4-5 year olds	0	0	13.8	27.6	58.6	0
COGNITION							
	3-4 year olds	0	0	100	0	0	0
	4-5 year olds	0	0	13.8	31.0	51.7	3.4
PHYSICAL							
	3-4 year olds	0	0	0	100	0	0
	4-5 year olds	0	0	0	51.7	48.3	0
SOCIALIZATION							
	3-4 year olds	0	0	33.3	66.7	0	0
	4-5 year olds	0	0	6.9	31.0	31.0	31.0

JIGSAW COMMUNITY NURSERY

Tables 8.12 - 8.15 show distribution of children by level of achievement and age group for each aspect of development over the four assessment periods in Jigsaw Community Nursery.

Table 8.12 Keele Assessments in Jigsaw Community Nursery - % of children by age group at each aspect of development (Time 1)

		Achievement level					
		0	1	2	3	4	5
LANGUAGE							
	3-4 year olds	13.3	33.3	40.0	6.7	6.7	0
	4-5 year olds	0	6.1	24.2	33.3	33.3	3
COGNITION							
	3-4 year olds	13.3	33.3	46.7	6.7	0	0
	4-5 year olds	0	12.2	45.5	21.2	21.2	0
PHYSICAL							
	3-4 year olds	0	40.0	53.0	6.7	0	0
	4-5 year olds	0	6.1	39.4	33.3	1.5	6.1
SOCIALIZATION							
	3-4 year olds	0	13.3	66.7	20.0	0	0
	4-5 year olds	0	0	6.1	57.6	36.4	0

Table 8.13 Keele Assessments in Jigsaw Community Nursery - % of children by age group at each aspect of development (Time 2)

		Achievement level					
		0	1	2	3	4	5
LANGUAGE							
	3-4 year olds	5.9	47.0	23.5	23.5	0	0
	4-5 year olds	0	6.7	15.6	22.2	35.6	20
COGNITION							
	3-4 year olds	17.6	47.0	11.8	23.5	0	0
	4-5 year olds	2.2	6.7	15.6	28.9	42.2	4.4
PHYSICAL							
	3-4 year olds	5.9	41.0	23.5	23.5	5.9	0
	4-5 year olds	0	4.4	8.9	17.8	24.4	44.4
SOCIALIZATION							
	3-4 year olds	0	35.5	41.1	17.6	5.9	0
	4-5 year olds	0	2.2	4.4	28.9	35.5	28.9

Table 8.14 Keele Assessments in Jigsaw Community Nursery - % of children by age group at each aspect of development (Time 3)

		Achievement level					
		0	1	2	3	4	5
LANGUAGE							
	3-4 year olds	8.0	28.0	16.0	16.0	28.0	4.0
	4-5 year olds	5.4	2.7	10.8	19.9	54.0	8.0
COGNITION							
	3-4 year olds	16.0	16.0	44.0	24.0	0	0
	4-5 year olds	0	10.8	13.5	37.9	29.8	8.0
PHYSICAL							
	3-4 year olds	8	20.0	28.0	40.0	4.0	0
	4-5 year olds	0	5.4	10.8	18.9	27.0	37.8
SOCIALIZATION							
	3-4 year olds	0	8.0	16.0	60.0	16.0	0
	4-5 year olds	0	0	5.4	56.7	18.9	18.9

Table 8.15 Keele Assessments in Jigsaw Community Nursery - % of children by age group at each aspect of development (Time 4)

		Achievement level					
		0	1	2	3	4	5
LANGUAGE							
	3-4 year olds	16.6	0	0	16.6	66.6	0
	4-5 year olds	0	0	0	0	93.3	6.6
COGNITION							
	3-4 year olds	0	16.6	16.6	16.6	50.0	0
	4-5 year olds	0	0	0	33.3	53.3	13.3
PHYSICAL							
	3-4 year olds	0	0	16.6	33.3	0	50.0
	4-5 year olds	0	6.7	6.7	0	13.3	73.3
SOCIALIZATION							
	3-4 year olds	0	16.6	0	33.3	0	50.0
	4-5 year olds	0	0	6.7	20.0	13.3	60.0

BUCHLYVIE NURSERY SCHOOL

Tables 8.16 - 8.19 show the distribution of children by level of achievement and age group for each aspect of development over the four assement periods in Buchlyvie Nursery School.

Table 8.16 Keele Assessments in Buchlyvie Nursery School - % of children by age group at each achievement level for each aspect of development (Time 1)

		Achievement level					
		0	1	2	3	4	5
LANGUAGE							
	3-4 year olds	25.5	30.0	40.0	5.0	4.4	0
	4-5 year olds	0	0	0	0	5.6	4.4
COGNITION							
	3-4 year olds	5.0	30.0	60.0	5.0	0	0
	4-5 year olds	0	0	11.1	22.2	66.7	0
PHYSICAL							
	3-4 year olds	5.0	25.0	40.0	30.0	0	0
	4-5 year olds	0	0	11.1	44.4	44.4	0
SOCIALIZATION							
	3-4 year olds	15.0	25.0	25.0	30.0	0	5.0
	4-5 year olds	0	0	0	22.2	77.7	0

Table 8.17 Keele Assessments in Buchlyvie Nursery School - % of children by age group at each achievement level for each aspect of development (Time 2)

		Achievement level					
		0	1	2	3	4	5
LANGUAGE							
	3-4 year olds	0	16.7	16.7	41.7	25.0	0
	4-5 year olds	0	0	23.5	11.8	58.8	5.9
COGNITION							
	3-4 year olds	0	8.3	50.0	25.0	16.7	0
	4-5 year olds	0	5.9	29.4	17.6	47.0	0
PHYSICAL							
	3-4 year olds	0	0	25.0	41.7	33.3	0
	4-5 year olds	0	0	0	17.6	64.7	17.6
SOCIALIZATION							
	3-4 year olds	0	0	25.0	66.7	0	8.3
	4-5 year olds	0	0	0	41.1	23.5	35.3

Table 8.18 Keele Assessments in Buchlyvie Nursery School - % of children by age group at each achievement level for each aspect of development (Time 3)

		Achievement level					
		0	1	2	3	4	5
LANGUAGE							
	3-4 year olds	33.3	33.3	16.7	11.1	5.5	0
	4-5 year olds	0	0	9.0	18.2	72.7	0
COGNITION							
	3-4 year olds	16.7	33.3	44.4	5.6	0	0
	4-5 year olds	0	0	27.3	27.3	36.4	9.1
PHYSICAL							
	3-4 year olds	0	16.7	38.9	38.9	0	5.6
	4-5 year olds	0	0	18.2	18.2	63.6	0
SOCIALIZATION							
	3-4 year olds	5.6	11.1	38.9	44.4	0	0
	4-5 year olds	0	0	0	63.6	0	36.6

Table 8.19 Keele Assessments in Buchlyvie Nursery School - % of children by age group at each achievement level for each aspect of development (Time 4)

		Achievement level					
		0	1	2	3	4	5
LANGUAGE							
	3-4 year olds	11.1	44.4	11.1	22.2	11.1	0
	4-5 year olds	0	11.1	10.6	11.1	38.9	22.2
COGNITION							
	3-4 year olds	11.1	11.1	55.6	0	22.2	0
	4-5 year olds	0	5.6	22.2	5.6	55.6	11.2
PHYSICAL							
	3-4 year olds	0	0	11.1	88.9	0	0
	4-5 year olds	0	0	16.7	11.1	55.6	16.7
SOCIALIZATION							
	3-4 year olds	0	11.1	0	33.3	33.3	22.2
	4-5 year olds	0	0	5.6	22.2	5.6	66.7

Comparability of children's achievement between nurseries on ENTRY to the nurseries.

Taking the data from the first assessment point (i.e Time 1) given in Tables 8.4, 8.12 and 8.16 the percentages (to the nearest whole number) of 3-4 year olds in each nursery with a score of 0 or 1 on the Keele in 3-Towns (both units together), Jigsaw and Buchlyvie respectively were:

Language:	48	47	56
Cognition:	44	47	35
Physical:	20	40	30
Socialisation:	32	13	40
	3-Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie

The data, albeit only a snapshot, show the percentage of children who were at the bottom end of the Keele and illustrate a close similarity in the achievement levels for 3-4 year olds in all three locations. Some small variations however were evident between nurseries. Jigsaw children were poorer on physical growth but significantly better on socialisation; 3-Towns children were well advanced physically. In all three nurseries children were generally poorer intellectually than they were physically or socially. No data was available from Springvale Nursery School as it didn't admit three year olds prior to 1991.

For 4-5 year olds, the corresponding data were:

Language:	21	0	6	0
Cognition:	7	0	12	0
Physical:	7	0	6	0
Socialisation:	7	0	0	0
	3-Towns	Springvale	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie

These data seemingly indicate that children in 3-Towns were achieving at a lower level than children in the other nurseries - particularly in language. However, the terms must be regarded as tentative due to an element of uncertainty about the reliability of the Keele assessments.

Comparability of children’s achievement between nurseries on LEAVING the nurseries

Taking data from the fourth assessment period (i.e Time 4) given in Tables 8.7, 8.11, 8.15 and 8.19, the percentages of 4-5 year olds with a score of 4 or 5 on the Keele (i.e. children whose development was well advanced) were:

Language:	59	59	100	61
Cognition:	56	55	67	67
Physical:	57	48	87	72
Socialisation:	69	62	73	72
	3-Towns	Springvale	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie

The data clearly illustrate that children in the two community nurseries left the nurseries to start primary school with achievement levels at or above achievement levels of their peers in the conventional nursery schools. Variation between nurseries were concentrated on Jigsaw where children seemed to have left the nursery with consistently higher achievement levels than children in the other nurseries. **There is no evidence therefore that children in the community nurseries were any worse off in terms of their development than children in conventional nursery schools.**

8.5 3 Keele Assessments: progress over time

In addition to the tabulation of achievement levels in each nursery at each assessment point, the data were arranged to examine the amount of change in developmental level between each assessment period. Each child’s level of development was categorised as being ‘high’ or ‘low’ in terms of the Keele Assessment Guide classification. These terms are descriptive of the position of children’s development as assessed by the Guide and are not intended to be pejorative, indeed it is to be expected that younger children will be in the ‘low’ category moving towards the ‘high’ over time as they approach school age. Children ascribed a Keele index of zero to three were classified as ‘low’ while those with an index of four or five were classified as ‘high’. The classification was carried out separately for each aspect of development and, therefore, it is possible for any one child to be classified as ‘high’ on one aspect of development and low on others. These classifications were pooled for each nursery. Tables 8.20 to 8.24 show the percentage of children in each location classified as at a ‘high’ or ‘low’ level of development on the Keele Guide for each time period.

3-Towns: 3-5 Unit

Table 8.20 demonstrates the changes which occurred in the level of development of the children at the 3-5 Unit for both cohorts (progress data for the third cohort was not available). Children’s abilities in the area of both language and cognition developed with similar patterns as would be anticipated with children during their immediate pre-school year i.e scores of four or five. The second cohort of children began with more children categorised as being at a low level than the first yet over three assessment periods reached the expected pre-school level. Socialisation development too proceeded as anticipated with all the first cohort of children being categorised as at a high level of development prior to school entry. Progress was less marked on the physical aspect of development with only 50-60% of children

reaching the high level by the final assessment period. Although developmental progress cannot be ascribed only to the influence of the nursery environment it should be noted that the 3-5 Unit had limited provision for physical play (gross motor activity) and children entering with a low level of physical activities were not experiencing an environment which offered ample opportunities for physical play.

3-Towns: 0-5 Unit

Perhaps the most striking feature of Table 8.21 (showing changes in the level of development at the 0-5 Unit) is the very large number of children entering the nursery with low levels of development. These children were not all 3 year olds and their level of development on the initial assessment is not a feature only of age. The results do demonstrate, however, slow progress towards higher levels on all aspects of development. The three cohorts recorded here made differential progress on all different aspects of development though the figures are distorted to some extent by older children who might be expected to progress to higher levels leaving the nursery before all the assessment periods were completed. Children in cohort 2 seemed to make little developmental progress on language and cognition. There was, however, evidence here of slow progress towards the anticipated pre-school levels of development, particularly on physical and social development. The rate of change was not as consistent as that found at the 3-5 Unit in particular which to some extent is a reflection of the instability in the staff group at that time.

Springvale Nursery School

Considerable differences between the patterns of developmental progress of the two cohorts is revealed in Table 8.22. The children in cohort 1 were assessed for the first time more than half-way through their year at Springvale and then again shortly before leaving. The second cohort were assessed early in their year at Springvale. The age distribution of the two cohorts is very similar with all children in their immediate pre-school year. For cohort 1, the majority of children were assessed at a high level of development as would be expected prior to school entry as all children in cohort 1 were 4-5 year olds. Indeed, with the exception of cognition, most children were being classified at a high level of development several months before the end of the pre-school year. Their level of cognitive development was lower than with other aspects of development but again the majority were at the anticipated level by the time they left Springvale Nursery School. The children entering in cohort 2 were initially assessed at a uniformly lower level than cohort 1 but this was almost entirely due to the time difference between the initial assessments of the two cohorts. (Children in cohort 1 were assessed in March whilst children in cohort 2 were assessed in November.) For children in cohort 2 substantial changes in their level of development took place during their time in the nursery. No definitive statements can be made on the basis of only two years of data but it is interesting to note that in general terms all children in Springvale Nursery School made significant advances in their development. Although substantial development took place they did not reach the levels achieved by the children in the second cohort at the 3-Towns 3-5 Unit. It is important to note that the latter children were at the nursery for approximately six months longer. This appears to point to the value of longer periods being spent in a nursery environment, particularly when initial levels of development are low.

Jigsaw

Due to circumstances in the nursery only the first cohort received more than two assessments. As has been noticed elsewhere the results reveal the differences between the cohorts in their level of development on entry (Table 8.23). The

children in cohort 2 appeared to have a generally lower level of development. With the exception of language that cohort appeared to make less progress than either of the other two. Again, caution must be exercised when generalising from limited time-span data. The children in the first cohort achieved levels of development that might be expected after a span of three assessment periods although the number at a high level on socialisation is not as great as might be expected. The children in the third cohort made substantial progress on all aspects of development. It is noticeable that considerable increases in the level of development recorded seemed to occur between the first and second assessment period for all the children. This is perhaps an indication of the nursery input capitalising on inherently developing abilities. The substantial improvements noticed in the third cohort were taking place after a period in which staff were engaged in concerted curriculum planning. Although this process had been initiated prior to the inspection by the Quality Assurance Unit, the inspection reinforced the need for such action.

Buchlyvie

In examining the data obtained from Buchlyvie (Table 8.24) the different age distribution of the two cohorts should be considered. The children in cohort 2 were generally younger than those in cohort 1. Their level of development paralleled this. Even when comparing progress only between the first and second assessments in both cohorts the younger age of the second cohort should be considered as they should be at a lower level of development. For those children who stay at the nursery for two years the level of development was as might be predicted by their final assessment shortly before school entry. After four assessments approximately the same proportion of children were performing as anticipated on leaving the nursery on language and cognition at Buchlyvie, 3-Towns 3-5 Unit and Springvale Nursery School. There is a greater variation in the proportions classified at a high level of development for the other aspects of development but a high number were achieving as expected at all three of these nurseries.

Table 8.20 Longitudinal Keele Assessments in 3-Towns Community Nursery (3-5 Unit) - % of children achieving high/low scores by cohort and assessment point for each aspect of development

		COHORT			
		1		2	
		High	Low	High	Low
LANGUAGE	T1	25.0	75.0	-	-
	T2	50.0	50.0	0	100
	T3	62.5	37.5	20.0	80.0
	T4	87.5	12.5	88.9	11.1
COGNITION	T1	25.0	75.0	-	-
	T2	56.3	43.7	0	100
	T3	62.5	37.5	20.0	80.0
	T4	87.5	12.5	88.9	11.1
PHYSICAL	T1	25.0	75.0	-	-
	T2	37.5	62.5	20.0	80.0
	T3	37.5	62.5	20.0	80.0
	T4	62.5	37.5	55.5	44.4
SOCIALIZATION	T1	18.8	81.2	-	-
	T2	31.3	68.7	20.0	80.0
	T3	37.5	62.5	40.0	60.0
	T4	100	0	77.8	22.2

Table 8.21 Longitudinal Keele Assessments in 3-Towns Community Nursery (0-5 Unit) -% of children achieving high/low scores by cohort and assessment point for each aspect of development.

		COHORT					
		1		2		3	
		High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
LANGUAGE							
	T1	17.4	82.6	-	-	-	-
	T2	23.5	76.5	25.0	75.0	-	-
	T3	27.3	72.7	20.0	80.0	0	100
	T4	66.7	33.3	22.2	77.8	23.1	76.9
COGNITION							
	T1	4.3	95.7	-	-	-	-
	T2	35.3	64.7	33.3	66.7	-	-
	T3	27.3	72.7	20.0	80.0	0	100
	T4	55.8	44.4	22.2	77.8	15.4	84.6
PHYSICAL							
	T1	21.7	78.2	-	-	-	-
	T2	41.2	58.8	58.3	41.7	-	-
	T3	27.3	72.7	30.0	70.0	2.6	93.5
	T4	77.8	22.2	66.7	33.3	15.4	84.6
SOCIALIZATION							
	T1	43.5	56.5	-	-	-	-
	T2	47.1	52.9	16.7	83.3	-	-
	T3	36.4	63.6	30.0	70.0	0	100
	T4	77.8	22.2	88.9	11.1	7.7	92.3

**Table 8.22 Longitudinal Keele Assessments in Springvale Nursery School -
% of children achieving high/low scores by cohort and assess-
ment point for each aspect of development.**

		COHORT			
		1		2	
		High	Low	High	Low
LANGUAGE	T1	93.5	6.5	--	--
	T2	100	0	--	--
	T3	--	--	0	100
	T4	--	--	53.1	46.9
COGNITION	T1	64.5	35.5	--	--
	T2	83.9	16.1	--	--
	T3	--	--	0	100
	T4	--	--	50.0	50.0
PHYSICAL	T1	90.3	9.7	--	--
	T2	93.5	6.4	--	--
	T3	--	--	0	100
	T4	--	--	40.7	59.3
SOCIALIZATION	T1	90.3	9.7	--	--
	T2	96.8	3.2	--	--
	T3	--	--	15.6	84.4
	T4	--	--	56.2	43.8

Table 8.23 Longitudinal Keele Assessments for children at Jigsaw Community Nursery - % of children achieving high/low scores by cohort and assessment point for each aspect of development.

		COHORT					
		1		2		3	
		High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
LANGUAGE							
	T1	27.0	73.0	-	-	-	-
	T2	56.8	43.2	0	100	-	-
	T3	71.4	20.6	53.0	47.0	38.7	61.3
	T4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	90.5	9.5
COGNITION							
	T1	14.6	85.4	-	-	-	-
	T2	47.7	52.3	0	100	-	-
	T3	71.4	28.6	23.5	76.5	25.8	74.2
	T4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	61.9	38.1
PHYSICAL							
	T1	14.5	85.4	-	-	-	-
	T2	72.7	27.3	0	100	-	-
	T3	78.6	21.4	29.4	70.6	25.8	74.2
	T4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	71.4	28.6
SOCIALIZATION							
	T1	25.0	75.0	-	-	-	-
	T2	65.9	34.1	5.5	94.4	-	-
	T3	50.0	50.0	11.7	88.2	19.4	80.6
	T4	N/A	N/A	N.A	N/A	66.7	33.3

**Table 8.24 Longitudinal Keele Assessments in Buchlyvie Nursery School -
% of children achieving high/low scores by cohort and assess-
ment point for each aspect of development.**

		COHORT			
		1		2	
		High	Low	High	Low
LANGUAGE					
	T1	13.8	86.2	-	-
	T2	48.3	51.7	-	-
	T3	72.7	27.3	5.5	94.4
	T4	90.0	10.0	17.7	82.3
COGNITION					
	T1	20.7	79.3	-	-
	T2	34.5	65.5	-	-
	T3	45.5	54.5	0	100
	T4	90.0	10.0	29.4	70.5
PHYSICAL					
	T1	13.8	86.2	-	-
	T2	62.1	37.9	-	-
	T3	63.7	36.4	5.5	94.4
	T4	80.0	20.0	29.4	70.6
SOCIALIZATION					
	T1	27.6	72.4	-	-
	T2	37.9	62.1	-	-
	T3	36.4	63.6	0	100
	T4	90.0	10.0	52.9	47.0

8.5 4 Assessment on the Renfrew Charts

At the two nurseries, i.e. Jigsaw and the 3-Towns 0-5 Unit the Renfrew Charts were considered to be the most appropriate form of assessment for children under three years of age and children with special educational needs. As the numbers of children assessed by the Renfrew Charts was low (never more than 11 in a cohort at any time period at the 0-5 Unit and as few as one in a cohort at one time period at Jigsaw) a more qualitative examination of the results was more appropriate than a quantitative one. However for the record, the data for the 0-5 Unit in 3-Towns Community Nursery are given in Table 8.25 and those for Jigsaw in Table 8.26.

At each nursery the majority of children assessed by the Renfrew Charts in Time 1 were considered to be at or above the developmental level appropriate for their age, on most aspects of development. At Time 2, for both community nurseries, while the majority of children were again achieving developmental levels near to those anticipated for their chronological age, a few children at each nursery had fallen behind their chronological age on a number of aspects. Again, at Time 3 and Time 4 a less clear cut picture emerged. While some children were achieving as anticipated other children were functioning below expected levels on three or more aspects of development.

It is difficult to draw conclusions from the data collected on the Renfrew Charts as only small numbers of children were involved, particularly at Jigsaw at Time 3 and Time 4 and considerable numbers of children were lost to the study or moved to the Keele after only one assessment. What is apparent, however, is that no clear picture emerged of continuing advance in line with chronological age at either nursery. Some children did function at the developmental level anticipated by the Renfrew Charts in one assessment period and continued to maintain that growth. Other children, however, may have been achieving at the expected level on a number of aspects when first assessed by achieving the expected level on fewer aspects of development on subsequent assessments. Yet other children do not achieve their expected level of development on any aspect of development on their first and subsequent assessments. This may be a function of the children's experience in the community nursery, their wider experience, the kind of children admitted at a young age to the nursery or the assessment tool being used.

However the data generated by this study raises the question about the slow developmental progress of very young children in the community nurseries. Experience of the Renfrew Charts suggests that, although the most appropriate scheme available at the time they are not a readily available form of assessment for research purposes and that achieving repeated assessment of young children is a more difficult task than that for older pre-school children. Two issues arise from this attempt to assess the developmental progress of 2-3 year olds in the community nurseries. The first is the need for the development of more appropriate assessment tools, particularly in a research and comparative context. There is a glaring need for a more effective assessment instrument for children under three. Secondly, the 2-3 year olds do not demonstrate the regular development progress observed in the older children. This study suggests a need for further examination of the development of the youngest children in nurseries.

Table 8.25 Renfrew Assessments in 3-Towns Community Nursery (0-5 Unit) - number of children at or above chronological expectations

	cohort 1			cohort 2			cohort 3		
	T1	T2	T3	T2	T3	T4	T3	T4	
Number of assessments at or above chronological expectations on the 9 dimensions									
0/9	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	
1/9	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	
2/9	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	
3/9	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
4/9	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	
5/9	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	
6/9	1	1	0	1	2	1	2	1	
7/9	0	0	0	2	1	1	2	2	
8/9	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	
9/9	2	1	0	3	2	3	0	2	

**Table 8.26 Renfrew Assessments in Jigsaw Community Nursery -
number of children at or above chronological expectations**

	cohort 1		cohort 2		
	T1	T2	T2	T3	T4
Number of assessments at or above chronological expectations on the 9 dimensions					
0/9	1	2	1	0	2
1/9	0	0	0	0	0
2/9	0	1	1	0	0
3/9	0	0	0	0	0
4/9	0	2	0	1	0
5/9	0	2	0	0	0
6/9	0	1	1	0	2
7/9	4	1	0	0	0
8/9	5	6	0	0	1
9/9	4	2	1	1	1

8.6 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN POINTS

- Whilst children aged 3-4 years were **admitted** to the nurseries at comparable stages in their development, 4-5 year olds were significantly weaker on entry to the community nurseries.
- On the whole, 3-4 year olds admitted to all the nurseries were weaker on intellectual development than on physical and social development.
- Children in the two community nurseries **left** the nurseries to go to primary school with achievement levels similar to those of children leaving conventional nursery schools; all children at Jigsaw reaching the top of the scale on language development.
- Children made significant developmental **progress** over a two year period in all the nurseries, the progress made by children in the community nurseries being commensurate with that of children attending conventional nursery schools. However, some children in one community nursery (i.e. 3-Towns) did not make as much progress as others.

- It was difficult to draw conclusions on the progress of very young children (i.e. under-three) or children with special educational needs. Progress was not as consistent as expected.
- The proportion of children with social and emotional behaviour problems admitted to the community nursery (i.e. 3-Towns) was very high, being more than three times that of other nurseries.
- The community nursery (i.e. 3-Towns) significantly reduced the number of children in the nursery showing social and emotional behaviour problems.

References

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CHAPTER 9

CASE STUDY FAMILIES

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The evaluation design included a longitudinal study of a sample of representative case study families for each nursery involved with the research. In order to understand more about the possible impact of the community nurseries on family life a number of families using each of the nurseries were invited to participate in the study by allowing access to aspects of their home circumstances. The aim was to monitor the impact of the nurseries on the dynamics of family life by interviewing the families involved at six monthly intervals over a two year period. The interview itself was fairly intensive and followed the ecological approach of Bronfenbrenner (see Chapter 2) by focusing on the immediate environment or 'microsystem' e.g. parenting techniques, the 'mesosystem' e.g. views on and relationships with the community nursery, the 'exosystem' which relates to the wider community e.g. policies which affect the services in the area, the employment situation, etc, and lastly the 'macrosystem' which looks at belief systems and how they affect parents' views on the purpose of nursery care.

In conjunction with the interview, each case study household was rated on a general standardised instrument to assess the home environment in terms of its potential for promoting the child's development. The instrument used was the Caldwell Home Inventory which provided quantifiable data on the home environment (Caldwell and Bradley, 1980).

9.2 THE FAMILIES

9.2.1 Selection of families

It was decided by the evaluators to select twelve case study families from each of 3-Towns Community Nursery, Jigsaw Community Nursery, Buchlyvie Nursery School and five from Springvale Nursery School which is part of the community nursery project in 3-Towns.¹

Using the information on admissions to the nurseries, the evaluators drew up a draft priority list and reserve list each consisting of twelve families with a child in the nursery. The variables used in the sampling process were admission category; number of parents in the household; gender and age of the child. As the families were to be studied for two years it was important to avoid choosing a child who would start school before the research was complete. Whilst this was possible at 3-Towns and Jigsaw it was not possible at Springvale Nursery School as all children in 1990/91 were 4-5 year olds. The other variables were considered in terms of the proportion of families in relation to the total number of admissions e.g. there is a large number of single parent households and so this had to be reflected in the data set. It was also considered necessary to include a representative sample from the APTs because one project (i.e. 3-Towns) was Urban Aid funded and as such was mainly to service the difficulties faced by such areas. It was also hoped that the information gleaned from the intimate and detailed ques-

1. Only five case study families were chosen from Springvale Nursery School partly because of resources in the research team and partly because the Nursery School was not the comparative case study.

tions would indicate whether the community nurseries were being effective. In conducting this part of the work the evaluators did not want to impinge on any work being done by the community nursery or any other agency. Consultation with the Head of the project took place, and with the staff group advice was forthcoming on the suitability of the families. At Springvale Nursery School this process of consultation did not take place as it was assumed (rightly or wrongly) at the time that the Acting Headteacher would not be familiar with the intimate details of children's family background. When any necessary amendments had been made, the Head sent out a general letter to selected families informing them that the research was taking place and that their help may be required.

9.2.2 Contact with the families

Immediately following, the evaluators sent a letter to those families on the priority list. The research assistant then made a personal contact with each family to gain their consent for the study to go ahead and arrange the interviews. In 3-Towns two of the families asked for their keyworker (from the Family Centre) to be present at the initial contact visit and this request was granted. The advantage of this was that the keyworker could facilitate access and act as a support for the mother. It was decided not to offer this service to the other families for two reasons: firstly the nursery units could not afford to lose the keyworkers for the time involved because of the inadequate staff complement; more importantly, the respect of confidentiality had been emphasised throughout all communication with the families, and inviting keyworkers to be present may have implied that the family's personal business was already being discussed with the evaluators. The involvement of the keyworkers with the two families mentioned was justified because the request had come from the families themselves. It was agreed between the evaluators and the nurseries that keyworkers could be used for basic information e.g. the hours the child attended nursery and the best time to find the family at home. This was a valuable resource because of the wide areas covered by the nurseries where most households did not possess a telephone.

At first contact, all families were willing to discuss the proposed study although more than half of them claimed not to have received one or both of the letters. The researcher gave an overview of what the research involved, stressing, the two year time span and the necessary commitment but also the value of the families participation. Examples of the type of questions to be asked were given; income, family relationships, views on the nursery, etc. and the families were assured that the information would not be passed on to any other agency or institution (even if they were already aware of the circumstances discussed). An illustration of this would be income source where many families are on Income Support, but may get 'backhanders' from casual labour or illegal means. Obviously this income could affect their quality of life but it is unlikely that they would want the Department of Social Security to have access to this information.

This raised an important issue which the Evaluation Advisory Groups at 3-Towns and Jigsaw addressed. What action should the evaluators take if they were given information requiring urgent attention e.g. a case of child abuse? This was a likely scenario where the interviewer would be discussing and probing intimate details of family life. It was decided that the evaluators would have to consider any 'secrets' disclosed on their own merit and if the interviewee could not be persuaded to seek professional help, then the evaluators would seek advice on any further action to be taken by them.

The format of the interview was outlined for the families - that it would take approximately two hours, the case study child would have to be present for at least part of the time and that the interviewer would be doing a lot of writing. It was

also emphasised to the families that they would not be under constant scrutiny and that the interviews would only take place twice a year. The families were made aware that they had not been singled out for the study and especially not because they were considered to be a 'problem family'. Finally it was discussed how the study on the families fitted in with the rest of the evaluation, what assessments were being undertaken in the nursery, etc.

By this stage 90% of families agreed to participate. Contact with families at all locations was conducted on a similar basis.

9.3 THE INSTRUMENTATION

9.3.1 The interview schedule

The first section examined the family background and immediate environment and included demographic questions such as the age and education of the parents and the weekly income. This was compatible with Bronfenbrenner's 'microsystem' and by looking at employment (past and present) a socio-economic indicator which may have had an effect on parent's views and expectations for childcare was obtained. In the long term it showed whether families had become upwardly mobile as a result of their child's attendance at the community nursery allowing them to gain employment or to improve their work arrangements. There were also questions which probed the happiness level of families living in APTs highlighting how appropriate the Scottish Office's policies are in comparison with people's needs in these areas (part of the 'exosystem').

Family relationships were examined by asking who carried out most of the housework, especially whether or not childcare tasks were shared and who took responsibility for disciplining the children. By asking what relatives and friends lived nearby we could find out what kind of support the families had e.g. whether or not they could get a babysitter to allow them a break from their children.

The second section mainly covered the family's use and views of the community nursery and comparison nurseries. The parents were asked why they had applied for a nursery place for their child as well as who referred them (if applicable) and what the reasons for admission were - this illustrated the extent to which the admissions policy was compatible with parents' perception of need.

The other information sought was the child's hours of attendance and the suitability of these hours, how he/she settled in, what the parents expect him/her to gain/learn etc. The 'mesosystem' dealt with the relationships between the family and the nursery, how the child's attendance at nursery changed things for the mother or the relationships within the family. Parents were asked whether they also felt the staff were competent and approachable and if they themselves would have liked a more active role in the nursery.

This tied in with the 'macrosystem' and the schedule attempted to probe further what the parent believed to be the 'normal' mode of childcare by asking what they thought the purpose of nurseries to be (care versus educational) and if they themselves had experienced formalised childcare before they were 5 years old.

Finally the interviewees were invited to make their own comments about the nursery and any suggestions as to what issues should be considered by future planners of community nurseries. A copy of the interview schedule is provided in Annex 9.1.

9.3 2 The Caldwell Home Inventory for Families of Infants and Toddlers

This observation schedule is divided into six subscales:

- emotional and verbal **responsibility** of parent
- **acceptance** of a child's behaviour
- **organisation** of physical and temporal environment
- provision of appropriate **play materials**
- parent **involvement** with child
- opportunities for **variety** in daily stimulation

A copy of the Schedule is provided in Annex 9.2.

The Caldwell Home Inventory was designed to assess the quality of the home environment as a place where a child's early development is promoted. As it was developed in America, it is based on a somewhat different cultural perspective on appropriate stimuli for child development. However its reliability and validity have been affirmed in many studies in America. In the absence of such a sophisticated instrument from Britain, the evaluators concluded it would give an adequate 'snapshot' of the home environment. The designers of the inventory tried to include items which offered stimulation but did not necessarily depend on the availability of money or education, but admitted themselves that:

Higher income and higher parental education tend to be associated with favourable development in children and we could not have designed an effective inventory that ignored such things.

The inventory for infants and toddlers includes 45 items over six scales which is expanded for pre-schoolers to 55 items over eight scales.

The 'pre-school' component of the inventory spans the age group 3-6 years. Given such a wide age range the scoring may be effected by what the parent believes to be the abilities of their child e.g. they may automatically help their six year old to read and count but not deem it appropriate to encourage their three year old in this area. The wording of the inventory may therefore seem judgmental and not pertinent to the child in some cases e.g. 'toys or games which help **teach** numbers' is the short form of this item which appears on the score sheet; whereas the actual wording in the handbook is 'toys or games facilitating learning numbers'. This could include puzzles with numbers, blocks, books, games and playing cards. Therefore, the observer can take the child's age into account when scoring this item. The scoring system is a simple yes/no based on the observations of the observer or the interviewees answer, with little scope for value judgement by the observer.

The items in the subscales are added together so that the total score, for each scale, gives a profile of the quality of the home environment - this is then allocated to a range according to earlier validation studies.

9.4 ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

9.4.1 The levels of analysis

The development of children is not an isolated process responsive to factors operating only in the immediate family. Acknowledging this psychologists such as Bronfenbrenner (1979) have influenced current perspectives, pointing out that too much attention has been paid to immediate experience and insufficient to the 'outer layers' of the child's experience. A number of external factors can effect parental responsiveness which inhibits optimum development in the child. For example:

a husband may be away from home

the local bus service may be poor and encourages a mother's confinement to home and the immediate area

there may be limited community resources for children and adults

nurseries may be few and far between and most children may not be offered places

When these matters are considered that the result of a number of interacting factors might lead to parental unresponsiveness to children. Bronfenbrenner conceptualises this 'ecological' environment as a number of layers. The first layer is the immediate environment - the **microsystem**. This is the home - the primary context of childcare. Current ideals of the family, male as breadwinner, female as caregiver, and two children are no longer realistic and many households now consist of single parents or have two parents who both work full-time. One might also argue that most children are the product of single parent households, where fathers, though present, contribute little to their care. Divorce is also common, disrupting the ideal view of the family. There is a growing realisation that childcare facilities can be a vital resource and support to families stressed by over or under employment, lack of partners and instability created by the breakdown of marriages (Swain and Swain, 1982).

The 'exosystem', refers to the impact of neighbours and neighbourhoods on family life. Neighbourhoods are locations where people share a defined grouping of homes and resources. They can be supportive and offer valuable child care resources in themselves. Neighbourhood attitudes might also affect the operation of childcare centres and their use. Generally neighbourhoods have been neglected and/or undermined by lack of appreciation and insensitive redevelopment. The availability of family networks can also influence family life. Studies have shown that relatives and friends are the first people turned to in emergencies and that families with young children feel most at ease with this type of help that formal support networks.

Finally, the **macrosystem** relates to beliefs and ideology about child care, cultural factors which directly or indirectly influence family life, childcare practices and the use made of childcare services.

The various layers of influences effecting family life and child development and the expectations and perceptions of the impact of the community and comparative nursery on the lives of selected case study families are examined in the next section. For the purpose of analysis, given the smallness of the sample, it was decided to collate the data from all the units in 3-Towns Community Nursery i.e. 0-5 Unit, 3-5 Unit and Springvale Nursery School.

The analysis specifically focused on the relationship between each nursery and the families in their locations. Any comparative analysis **between** nurseries must be treated as extremely tentative.

9.4 2 The Sample

By the end of the research period 35 out of 41 families remained involved in the case study exercise. Some dropped out in the early stages, others late on. The analysis is based only on those families where completed records were available. Table 9.1 shows the distribution of families across all three locations. There were 20 male children and 15 female children in the sample. Ages ranged from 28 months to 4 years, with the majority of children in the 37-48 month age group (Table 9.2). Admission categories to the nurseries showed different patterns across the three locations: the majority of children in Category 1 in the community nurseries as the sample was chosen as a proportional representation of the total number of children attending each provision at the time of selecting the families (Table 9.3). Mode of attendance, i.e either full- or part-time or extended day failed to reflect the expected role of community nurseries in providing longer hours of childcare. Only one case study child was a full-time attender and none were attending for extended hours at the time of the initial interview (Table 9.4).

In all but two instances, the respondent to the interview was the child’s natural mother. The two exceptions were one foster parent and one father. At the point of the first interview, children had attended the nursery schools or community nurseries for between 4.4 - 6.7 months (Table 9.5).

Table 9.1 Distribution of the Case Study Families by location

Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
15	9	11

Table 9.2 Distribution of children’s ages across nurseries at the time of the first interview

Age (in months)	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
12-24	0	0	0
25-36	1	2	2
37-48	9	7	8
49-60	5	0	1

Table 9.3 Admission Category of children in case-study families

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
Category			
1	7	5	0
2	3	4	4
3	5	0	6
4	0	0	1

Table 9.4 Mode of Attendance.

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
Part-time	14	9	11
Full-time	1	0	0
Extended day	0	0	0

Table 9.5 Length of time child had attended nursery at the point of the first interview

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
Average months attended	6.4	4.4	5.2

9.4 3 The Microsystem: Family composition and relationships

Families from the 3-Towns were the least stable of all three locations in terms of composition and history; only one family had two natural parents of the case study child living at home. Single and separated parents were the norm for this group. All other locations showed a majority of stable married couples with fewer instances of divorce separation or remarriage (Table 9.6). Where biological parents did not live together, contact between the child and absent parent (usually the father) varied, although the majority had no regular contact. Only two children overall had frequent contact with a separated parent (Table 9.7).

Case study families had roughly the same average family size - 3-Towns (2.3); Jigsaw (2.8) and Buchlyvie (2.3) (Table 9.8). Of all the case study children, only one was in care during the study period and living with foster parents. 3-Towns families had a greater number of children in the 0-3 age group and greater number of children attending pre-five services (See Annex 9.3).

Table 9.6 Family Composition of the case study families

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
Lone parent	3	1	2
Married	5	7	5
Divorced	0	0	0
Separated	5	0	1
With partner	2	1	3
Remarried	0	0	0
Second or subsequent partner	0	0	0

Table 9.7 Levels of contact between children and separated natural fathers

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
No contact	6	2	1
Frequent	2	0	1
Infrequent	1	0	0

Table 9.8 Total number of Children in the Family

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
1	3	1	4
2	7	3	2
3	3	3	3
4	2	1	2
5	0	1	0

3-Towns and Buchlyvie had the youngest mothers with the majority in the 20-30 age group. (Table 9.9)

Table 9.9 Respondents' age

Age (in years)	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
16-19	0	0	1
20-24	4	1	3
25-30	4	3	5
30+	2	5	2

The same pattern emerges in relation to respondent's school leaving age with the greater number of early leavers in the 3-Towns and Buchlyvie sample. Few of the 3-Towns and Buchlyvie samples had experienced any further education after leaving school. Jigsaw parents were the more 'educated' group, two held university degrees, four had attended further education colleges and one had professional training (Tables 9.10 and 9.11).

Table 9.10 Respondents' school leaving age

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
15-16	10	5	10
16-18	5	4	1

Table 9.11 Respondents' Further Education

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
None	11	3	10
University	2	0	0
FE College	0	4	1
Professional Training	0	1	0
Other (YTS)	2	1	0

In terms of employment, almost half of the Jigsaw sample worked. Only three of the 3-Towns sample and two of the Buchlyvie sample were in paid employment. Half of the work done by respondents was in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs and half in skilled or professional occupations. The majority of those who worked did so between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., with only three working shifts or unsocial hours (Table 9.12). Where information on partners was relevant, (in the 23 two parent families) the majority of partners were early school leavers and this was the case across all locations. None of the 3-Towns partners had any further education (except YTS programmes). The Buchlyvie partners had slightly more further

education (See Annex 9.3). Across all locations, 18 partners were employed at the time of the study (Table 9.13). Of the working partners, the nature of employment covered all categories from unskilled manual to professional (Table 9.14). Only five families across all three locations shared their homes with other relatives. These were grandparents and aunts or uncles. Only one respondent had a paying lodger. None supported a dependent adult who required the respondent's care.

Table 9.12 Hours worked by respondents

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
5 am - 9 am	0	0	0
9 am - 5 pm	3	1	1
5 pm - 12 am	0	0	1
12 am - 5 pm	0	0	0
Combination of hours	0	3	0
N/A	12	5	9

Table 9.13 Partners' employment status

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
Yes	7	5	6
No	0	3	3
N/A	8	1	2

Table 9.14 Partners' socio-economic status

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
Unskilled/ Semi-skilled	3	0	4
Skilled manual	1	2	1
Skilled non-manual	0	0	0
Managerial	2	3	0
Professional	1	0	1
N/A	8	4	5

Respondents were asked to provide information on their weekly income. Eight of the ten respondents in the 3-Towns sample were receiving State Benefit. Five of this group had incomes of less than 75 per week. The 3-Towns sample had the lowest income average of all locations with only one family earning more than

200 a week. Buchlyvie showed a similar pattern with seven out of eleven families receiving State Benefit and four with incomes of less than 75 a week. In contrast seven out of the nine families in the Jigsaw sample and four out of five in the Springvale sample had weekly incomes of 200+. Low income is reflected in amounts reported as spent on food. Patterns of spending on food reflect income and also family size. Single parents were worst off with one family spending only 20 a week on food for three. The same pattern is reflected in other expenditure e.g. outings, sweets, toys, luxury goods - parents on the lowest incomes were able to afford few of these items and many relied exclusively on second-hand clothes and toys. The cost of childcare beyond that offered by nursery school or community nursery was only an issue for working parents and all these reported having informal arrangements involving little or no expense.

Just under a third of all respondents reported that their income was sufficient to meet their needs. However, only two of the ten 3-Towns families felt their income was adequate (Tables 9.15 and 9.16).

Table 9.15 Weekly family income

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
Less than £50	0	0	2
£50 - 75	6	1	2
£75 - 100	1	1	2
£100- 200	3	0	2
£200+	5	7	3

Table 9.16 Amounts spent on food per week

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
£20	4	1	1
£20-30	2	0	5
£36-45	1	0	1
£46-55	3	2	3
£55+	5	6	1

Respondents were questioned on the suitability of their homes in meeting their families needs. Thirteen respondents found their homes too small. Eleven of these respondents were living in the 3-Towns and Buchlyvie catchment areas. They reported cramped living conditions with too few bedrooms. Only two of the Jig-

saw respondents found their accommodation cramped; one family had seven children and two children had to sleep on the living room floor. In terms of the conditions of their homes, seven respondents in all reported extreme dissatisfaction and again they lived in the 3-Towns and Buchlyvie areas. Eleven respondents felt conditions were fair, nine out of the eleven from 3-Towns and Buchlyvie. Greatest satisfaction overall was found in families from Jigsaw. Houses in the 3-Towns and Buchlyvie area which caused dissatisfaction were reported to be damp with leaking roofs, poor insulation and poorly fitting windows. In some instances, those who found themselves in poor and cramped conditions noted negative effects on their own and their children's physical and mental health. Adults and children developed bronchitis due to damp, experienced disturbed sleep from children sharing rooms and suffered general feelings of stress from living in a poor environment. Half the 3-Towns sample and slightly more of the Buchlyvie sample felt their living conditions caused them 'some' to 'considerable distress'. Of the Jigsaw sample only two of the families reported some distress arising from poor housing. For one family with five children, cramped conditions effected the oldest child's opportunity to study since the youngest children slept in all available rooms (see Annex 9.3).

Respondents were questioned on various aspects of their lifestyle and childcare routines in particular, their own social lives, responsibility for childcare and household tasks and methods of disciplining their children.

Ability to go out without children provides opportunities for relaxation and communication between partners. For single parents, getting out alone or with friends allows respite from loneliness and the stress of single-handed parenting. The opportunity to go out without children seemed partly related to income, though in some families it was clearly a matter of choice and/or habit whether or not they did go out. Roughly half of the sample enjoyed going out socially on a regular basis. It may be that the need to socialise reflected the need to escape from pressures arising from children, partners or the home environment. If the family life is stable, there may be less pressure to socialise elsewhere (See Annex 9.3). Patterns of socialising could also reflect the age of respondents.

Respondents were asked whether they tended to share household and childcare tasks. (This question applied in all 23 families where there were two partners.) The majority reported sharing household tasks but in childcare, respondents reported taking greater responsibility (Table 9.17). The situation might be described as reflecting more traditional male/female roles in the childcare context (though some partners did help with all aspects of child care and domestic routines) but showing the development of slightly more progressive views in allocation of domestic tasks.

Table 9.17 Who carries out most childcare tasks?

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
Respondent	12	6	11
Partner	0	0	0
Equally shared	3	3	0

Methods of disciplining children can reflect both parents' own childhood experiences and current wider influences on 'correct' methods of childcare. Respondents were asked which type of method they tended to use most often in disciplining children. Methods varied considerably; the 3-Towns sample used verbal rows most often followed by physical punishment. In Jigsaw the situation was reversed with physical punishment as a first choice and verbal rows second. The Buchlyvie sample was similar to the 3-Towns sample. Seclusion, deprivation of treats and reasoning were seldom used. Interestingly though, respondents in the 3-Towns and Buchlyvie samples reported using discipline (i.e. all methods) more frequently than the Jigsaw sample. This could be a reflection of their generally more difficult and stressful circumstances. (See Annex 9.3)

Summary of key points

- Patterns of attendance on part and full-time basis failed to reflect the expected role of community nurseries in providing longer hours of childcare than nursery schools (although they did provide care for a greater number of days in the year). Only one case study child was a full-time attender at the time of the first interview.
- Families from the 3-Towns nursery were the least 'stable' of all locations in terms of composition and history. Single and separated parents were the norm for this group.
- 3-Towns families had a greater number of children in the 0-3 age group and a higher number of children attending (available) pre-five services.
- Strong similarities emerged between the 3-Towns and Buchlyvie samples in terms of respondents' school leaving age and further education. Both showed a greater preponderance of early school leavers with less further education than either of the remaining groups. Likewise, they were similar in terms of employment; one of the 3-Towns sample and two of the Buchlyvie sample were in paid employment compared to more than half of the remaining samples.
- Partners were living at home in only 23 families. Their employment was fairly evenly distributed across all locations, though 3-Towns had the greatest number of one-parent households.
- Eight out of ten respondents in the 3-Towns sample was receiving State Benefit and this sample had the lowest average income across all samples. The Buchlyvie sample showed a similar pattern (and was only slightly better off than 3-Towns). In contrast, all of 9 families in the Jigsaw sample had weekly incomes of £200+.
- Thirteen of all respondents found their homes too small for their needs. Eleven of these were in the 3-Towns and Buchlyvie samples. In contrast only two out of nine of the Jigsaw sample found their living space inadequate.
- Again, rating the condition of their homes, those reporting extreme dissatisfaction and associated mental and physical stress were all in the 3-Towns and Buchlyvie sample.
- Patterns of socialising suggested age and income effects though the data also pointed to a link between the need to socialise and the need to escape pressures from partners, children and the home environment.

- In two parent households, domestic tasks were shared more often than childcare tasks, suggesting only a partial move away from traditional male/female roles.
- Respondents in the 3-Towns and Buchlyvie samples reported using all methods of discipline more frequently than in the other sample. This could be interpreted as reflecting their generally more difficult and stressful circumstances.

9.4 4 The Exosystem: Aspects of Families' Wider Environment

Respondents were asked a series of questions which related to each family's interaction with wider aspects of the environment - local amenities, access to supportive relationships (relatives, neighbours and friends) children's opportunities for friendship, play and stimulation outside the home.

Surprisingly perhaps, given the circumstances of family life and living environments described in the previous section, 23 of all respondents reported that they felt happy living in their neighbourhood. Predictably perhaps, greatest satisfaction was reported by the Jigsaw sample. Those who were unhappy cited social reasons (hostile neighbours and children being bullied), environmental reasons (area vandalised and poorly maintained) or a combination of both. Social reasons for unhappiness were cited three times more frequently than environmental reasons. (See Annex 9.3)

I find neighbours and children hostile and bullying. After years we are still considered newcomers. (Parent with a child at Jigsaw Community Nursery)

Socially I feel very isolated and unable to make friends. I have uncommunicative neighbours. (Parent with a child at 3-Towns Community Nursery)

There are fierce dogs and access to safe play areas is very difficult. Back gardens are unsafe and regularly vandalised. (Parent with a child at 3-Towns Community Nursery)

Few respondents across all the locations rated local amenities (shops, leisure facilities, libraries) as good or very good - eight respondents in all. Most were dissatisfied (Annex 9.3).

Shops here are fair but very expensive. There's little on offer. There's nothing for young children and very little for adults. (Parent with a child at Jigsaw Community Nursery)

I have to travel to Irvine for shops. With young children and not care that's very difficult. (Parent with a child at 3-Towns Community Nursery)

There's not much to do in the area. There are few local shops and they are very expensive. (Parent with a child at 3-Towns Community Nursery)

Only six of the respondents had access to safe play areas. The majority (27) felt safe play opportunities were extremely limited (Table 9.18). Access to relatives and friends varied across locations but, interestingly, the samples reporting greatest hardships had greatest access to relatives. Overall, only nine respondents had no relatives living nearby and the majority of these were in the Jigsaw sample - possibly a reflection of more recent housing development in this area (Table 9.19). Access to friends was more even across all the samples with roughly half reporting friends living nearby. The 3-Towns sample reported more local friends (Table 9.20). The presence of friends and family allowed children access to a wider circle of adults and the great majority were not socially isolated within the family. Only seven had no regular contact with adults outside the home. Children were looked after by adults other than parents for a number of reasons, principally to allow parents a break. Only five children were regularly looked after elsewhere to allow respondents to work (See Annex 9.3). Children's access to other children was generally more difficult and a number of factors contributed to this: the presence of children of a similar age living nearby; safe local play areas; the respondent's relationships with neighbours and friends. Arranging contact for children requires organisation and co-operation but a number of respondents felt socially isolated and it seems, a number would not have allowed children to play with other local children for fear of bullying. The majority of respondents found children's access to other children poor.

Respondents were asked to rate the availability of pre-five services in their areas in terms of their adequacy in meeting their own and wider local demand. Perceptions of adequacy and inadequacy were fairly evenly distributed across samples, although a significantly higher majority of the Buchlyvie sample felt local provision was adequate (Table 9.21).

Table 9.18 Rating of play opportunities and safe play areas

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
Poor	10	8	9
Fair	2	0	1
Good	2	1	1
Very Good	1	0	1

Table 9.19 Respondents having access to relatives

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
Yes	12	4	9
No	3	5	1

Table 9.20 Respondents having access to friends

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
Yes	11	5	5
No	4	4	6

Table 9.21 Child’s access to other children

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
Poor	8	6	4
Fair	2	0	4
Good	1	1	2
Very good	4	2	1

A Summary of key points

- The majority of respondents reported feeling happy living in their neighbourhood despite the problems described in the previous section. Greatest satisfaction was reported at Jigsaw.
- For those who were unhappy, social reasons were cited three times more frequently than environmental reasons i.e. hostile neighbours, bullying.
- Most respondents were dissatisfied with local amenities (shops, leisure facilities). Only eight across all locations rated these as good or very good.
- Only six of all respondents reported access to safe play areas. The majority felt safe play opportunities were extremely limited across all locations.
- Access to relatives and friends varied across locations but those reporting greatest hardships in Section 9.4 3 had greatest access to relatives. (i.e. 3-Towns and Buchlyvie samples).
- Few children were socially isolated within the family. Only seven had no regular contact with adults outside the home.
- Only five children were regularly looked after by adults outside the home to allow respondents to work.
- The majority of respondents reported that children’s access to other children was poor.

Examination of the micro and exosystem suggest that childcare facilities would have a number of functions in terms of child development and in enhancing parental well-being and responsiveness. For example, they might offer support for single parents, increased opportunities for employment, relief from overcrowded space and associated stress, increased opportunities for socialising for parents, safe play opportunities for children and opportunities for peer contact amongst children.

Before moving on to consider the expectations and perceptions of nursery care in the various locations, further information on the quality of the home environment in terms of its potential to enhance child development was gathered using a standard instrument - the Caldwell Home Inventory. Summaries of these measures in two locations and the average scores produced in all four locations across eight subscales are shown in the next section:

9.4 5 Summary of results from the Caldwell Home Inventory (Phase 1)

3-TOWNS COMMUNITY NURSERY

I Learning Stimulation (stimulation through toys and reading materials)

Less than a quarter of the children assessed had provision of a record player and children's records, or toys or games facilitating learning numbers. The reason given for this was often that the parents felt that their children were too young. This was reasonably valid where the children are around 3 1/2 years and all but one had some type of toy which allowed for free expression - which is traditionally seen as more appropriate for their stage of development.

Few homes had more than ten books (as specified in the Caldwell Inventory) nor did the children have more than ten of their own which reflected the level of education of the parents. However, 30% of the mothers were currently enrolled in short adult education courses and since becoming involved in the community nursery were either borrowing books for their children or thinking of buying them for Christmas.

Similarly with jigsaws, although two thirds of the children did not have any this was mainly because the parents thought they were too young, but were now thinking of providing them because they had seen them used in the nursery. Only one of the mothers had attended nursery herself and did not remember it as a rewarding experience.

II Language Stimulation

Two thirds of the families interviewed provided adequate language stimulation. Of the remaining third, the two common features were that no attempt had been made to introduce the child to letters of the alphabet e.g. talking and pointing out letters in books and magazines or given time and encouragement to relate their own experiences. But in two of the families the parents were, in my view, genuinely unaware that their children could be ready for this level of communication. It was one particular case which pulled the average down and this was in a one parent family where the mother herself had problems in communication. During the interview her school-aged son did most of the answering as she was slightly deaf. The child had already been referred to an educational psychologist and the mother had initially given up on her daughter progressing past babyhood "A is very slow, probably won't ever be ready for school".

III Physical Environment (safe, clean and conducive to development)

Half of the children were living in satisfactory conditions while 20% of the families were living in an unsafe building with a hazardous play environment. The state of the council property means that it is not uncommon for children to have both major and minor accidents. For example, two parents reported that their children had recently fallen out of a window. All the families were living in council houses and all had something wrong with their home - from draughts to unusable rooms. This would help to explain why it is often beyond the family's control to keep their homes clean and uncluttered.

IV Warmth and Acceptance (pride, affection and warmth)

All the parents took time to hold their child close each day. Only half encouraged the child to impress the interviewer but this is to be expected because 'showing off' is generally discouraged since most mothers praised the child's qualities themselves. A third of mothers took little time to converse with their own child or answer his questions during the interview but this could have been due to them respecting 'officialdom'. Perhaps they would be more relaxed in subsequent interviews.

V Academic Stimulation

A third of families did not actively try to teach their child the names of colours, the general opinion being that this was taught at school/nursery. The same applied to numbers. Again this could be related to the parent's perception of appropriate stimulation for their child's age as all but one family encouraged their child to learn nursery rhymes, songs, etc.

One family (already mentioned in Section II) did not score at all on this scale. The mother had considerable difficulties and her children depended on each other for stimulation.

VI Modelling and encouragement of social maturity

All but one family did not introduce the interviewer or remind the child of her name. However, the interviewer had met most of the children at least once,

Seven of the parents allowed their children to watch television whenever they wanted, the favourite programmes were 'soaps', although one child enjoyed the News despite his mother's disapproval (she did not want him to get "too clever").

50% of mothers could not cope with their child expressing negative feelings reporting that they often took reprisals when this behaviour occurred.

VII Variety of Stimulation

Only 20% of children had recently been on a long trip or to a museum. However this is a seaside area so all the children have gained something from living there through observation (fishing, ferries, etc.).

The children's experience may well be restricted by the limited income of their family (with only 4 of the families earning more than Income Support) e.g. this includes the children not being allowed any opinion on how the family budget is spent on food.

VIII Acceptance (physical punishment)

Eight of the parents smack their children and indeed 3 did so in the interviewer's presence with a further 2 reprimanding their child in some other way during the interview.

There were two families who did not admit to any physical punishment in the last week and it seemed to be that this was because they still saw their children as babies - both children had special needs. Other children in the family were punished in the traditional manner.

3-Towns Summary of Average Scores - Phase 1

Subscale	Score	Percentile Range of Average Score
I. Learning Stimulation	6	Middle half
II. Language Stimulation	5.5	Middle half
III. Physical Environment	6	Middle half
IV. Warmth and Affection	6	Upper quarter
V. Academic Stimulation	3	Middle half
VI. Modeling	3	Middle half
VII. Variety in Experience	4	Lower quarter
VIII. Acceptance	2	Lower quarter

JIGSAW COMMUNITY NURSERY

The items in the subscale were added together so that the total score, for each scale, gave a profile of the quality of the home environment - this was then allocated to a range according to earlier validation studies.

Caldwell Home Inventory - Average score for 9 case study families (Pre-schoolers)

Subscale	Score	Percentile Range of Average Score
I. Learning Stimulation	8	Middle half
II. Language Stimulation	5	Middle half
III. Physical Environment	6	Middle half
IV. Warmth and Affection	5	Middle half
V. Academic Stimulation	4	Middle half
VI. Modeling	3	Middle half
VII. Variety in Experience	6	Middle half
VIII. Acceptance	3	Middle half

I Learning Stimulation (stimulation through toys and reading materials)

Seven out of the nine families being assessed offered a wide range of the materials suggested by the Inventory. The family which pulled the average score down offered virtually nothing to stimulate their child other than papers and magazines, priority being given to physical toys. The other child might not have had a wealth of materials but he had changed homes from the city to virtual countryside which could potentially be a rich learning experience for him

II Language Stimulation

Two thirds of the families had made no attempt to introduce the child to letters of the alphabet e.g. through talking and pointing out letters in books and magazines. In half of these families there were other children in the early years of primary school, therefore, it is possible that the parents were aware that teachers discourage the alphabet being taught as the system used to teach reading is by word recognition.

III Physical Environment (safe, clean and conducive to development)

Fifty-five percent of the families had inadequate living space, however, it could be argued that this item is culturally defined as all but one family were satisfied with their living arrangements and often the case study child had his own room. The exceptional family had nine members living in a two bedroomed house, the two parents did not believe it affected their relationships although they thought it might be detrimental to the older children's studying - they have since been re-housed.

IV Warmth and Acceptance (pride, affection and warmth)

All the parents took time to hold their child close each day. Only a third encouraged their child to impress the interviewer but this is to be expected because 'showing off' is generally discouraged and most mothers praised their child's qualities. Half of the mothers did not show any affection towards their child during the interview but again this could be put down to what they believed to be appropriate behaviour in front of a stranger. Perhaps they would be more relaxed in subsequent interviews.

V Academic Stimulation

Half of the parents were not actively trying to teach their child to read but it could have been said that they did not perceive this as an appropriate stimulation for their child's stage of development. Most of the families offered some kind of materials whether it was through educational toys or taking time to sing with their child and teach them nursery rhymes etc.

VI Modelling and encouragement of social maturity

Half the families did not introduce the interviewer or remind the child of her name, however, the children had usually already met the interviewer very recently.

Most families used the television judiciously, even the family who consistently failed to score on other items.

VII Variety of Stimulation

Forty-five per cent of families had not recently been on a long trip or to a museum. However, many of these families would be offering their children variety in experience by taking them on a shopping trip to Glasgow. Likewise, the family mentioned in Section 1 were giving the child new experiences through his move from a city flat to a large sprawling homestead where the family pets included a goat.

VIII Acceptance (physical punishment)

Five of the parents reported that they smacked their children but only one did so in the interviewers presence with a further three reprimanding their child in some other way during the interview.

Of the eleven case study families six used smacking as the most effective form of punishment while the others had experimented with withholding favourite items, taking time to explain to children, sending to their room etc.

Caldwell Home Inventory - Average Scores for Buchlyvie Nursery School

Subscale	Score	Percentile Range of Average Score
I. Learning Stimulation	7.4	Middle half
II. Language Stimulation	6.6	Middle(+) half
III. Physical Environment	5.3	Lower quarter
IV. Warmth and Affection	6.4	Middle half
V. Academic Stimulation	3.5	Lower quarter
VI. Modeling	2.9	Lower quarter
VII. Variety in Experience	8.1	Middle half
VIII. Acceptance	3.5	Lower quarter

The Caldwell profiles indicate that most families provided an ‘average’ or better environment in terms of the areas measured in the Caldwell Inventory. The use of the averages conceals the ‘best’ and the ‘worst’ of scores and a small number of families had scores in the lower and upper percentiles.

9.4 6 The Mesosystem: The Family and the Nursery

Access to nursery places was either through an application made to the nursery by the parent, (usually a social worker or health visitor) supported application or direct agency referral. Roughly half of all applications to the community nurseries were made by agencies and half by parents. In contrast applications to Buchlyvie nursery school (with the exception of one) were all made by parents themselves (Table 9.22). Respondents were asked to consider their reasons for sending their child to nursery. Their first and second reasons (in order of priority) are shown in Table 9.23.

Table 9.22 Applications to nurseries

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
Self	9	5	10
Agency (supported or direct)	6	4	1

**Table 9.23 Most important reason for sending child to nursery?
(and 2nd most important reason)**

	Three Towns Reason - 1st 2nd		Jigsaw Reason - 1st 2nd		Buchlyvie Reason - 1st 2nd	
Prepares for school	3	2	1	0	6	4
Allows child to mix	5	5	5	2	2	6
Gives respondent a break	4	3	1	3	3	1
Allows respondent to work	0	3	0	1	0	0
Other	3	2	2	2	0	0
N/A	0	0	0	1	0	0

Other includes: Developmental delay; Child's speech; Child's hearing;
to prevent reception into care; and Behaviour problems

Table 9.24 Problems helped by the nurseries

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
Yes	9	7	3
No	6	2	8

The data suggest different conceptualisations of the purpose of community nurseries and the nursery school. Community nursery users cited 'allowing the child to mix' and 'giving respondent a break' as the most important reasons for the child's attendance. The nursery school sample cited 'preparing the child for school' most often as their first reason. Second choices confirmed the pattern though a number of respondents cited very specific reasons for having their children attend i.e. because of developmental delays, behaviour problems or to prevent reception into care. All 'other' reasons were given only by parents of children attending community nurseries (Table 9.23). The majority of children settled easily or after short-lived initial difficulty. Respondents were asked if children had any particular difficulties which they expected attending nursery would help. Nineteen out of the 35 children were described as having problems or difficulties and 15 of these were attending the community nurseries (Table 9.24). In the 3-Towns sample, six had 'social' difficulties (behavioural problems) and four had developmental or cognitive delays. In the Jigsaw sample, two had social and five cognitive/developmental delays. Respondents were asked what they expected their children would gain from nursery attendance. Almost all expected children would gain both educationally and socially with only two respondents having no clear ideas on particular gains (See Annex 9.3). When asked to identify

positive changes in the child since nursery attendance twenty-six identified social and behavioural changes and seventeen cognitive and developmental changes. Four respondents saw no positive changes in their children (Table 9.25). Negative changes were noted by twelve respondents, the marginal majority of those in the 3-Towns nursery (4). All negative changes noted were social or behavioural, usually children becoming more assertive, cheeky or disobedient at home. None of the respondents reported serious difficulties which they felt were directly related to nursery attendance.

Table 9.25 Positive changes in child since attendance began

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
Physical	1	0	3
Social/ behavioural	10	5	11
Cognitive developmental	9	4	4
No change	2	2	0

Respondents’ answered questions on the quality of the nursery environment and care offered by staff. All nurseries were seen as well equipped and well designed. This was unexpected in the 3-Towns context where both temporary and permanent accommodation had proved inadequate in terms of space and layout (see Chapter 6). Only three parents in all identified shortcomings in equipment and design and only one of these was a 3-Towns user. One respondent felt her child received inadequate supervision at Buchlyvie and then only at specific points in the session e.g. snack time (Table 9.26). Respondents’ views on quality were drawn from limited experience of childcare facilities. None of the sample had used other nursery facilities with the exception of one child in the 3-Towns who had attended a private nursery. Eight in all had attended playgroups.

Respondents were asked if the hours of care offered by the nurseries were suitable. Interestingly the majority of respondents using the traditional nursery were satisfied with their child’s hours of attendance, compared to just under half of the community nursery attenders. Community nursery users who were dissatisfied wanted longer or more flexible hours (6) or a full-time place (4). This may reflect different (and justifiable) expectations of community nurseries as services offering extended day provision or a greater need for support in child care (See Annex 9.3).

Overall, staff were seen as usually being approachable and helpful. Buchlyvie staff were rated most often approachable and helpful (Table 9.27).

Respondents were asked to describe how their child’s attendance at nursery changed things for them. Responses to this question are shown in Table 9.28.

Table 9.26 How well is the child looked after at nursery

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
Very well	11	4	9
Well	4	5	1
Not well enough	0	0	1

Table 9.27 Are staff approachable and helpful?

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
Yes	8	5	10
Sometimes	6	4	1
No	0	0	0
Don't know	1	0	0

Table 9.28 How does the child's attendance at nursery change things for respondent?

Responses	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
Relieves emotional stress	9	4	4
Allows extra leisure time	3	0	8
Makes domestic routine easier	9	4	5
Allows respondent to work	1	1	1
Makes caring for younger children easier	5	2	1
Hasn't changed things for respondent at all	1	2	2

As Table 9.28 indicates, changes were most often experienced in the domestic and emotional context. In 3-Towns in particular the child's attendance helped relieve emotional stress (9). An easier domestic routine was a positive change identified most often across all four samples. Only three respondents found attendance allowed them to take a job. Of these respondents, two were traditional nursery users and one a community nursery user. Five respondents noted no particular changes as a result of their child's attendance.

The child's attendance had some impact on family relationships in the Jigsaw and Buchlyvie samples. Of those three samples combined, four reported easier marital relationships, six an easier relationship between themselves and the case study child and seven, easier relations amongst the case study and other children and the respondent and all children. Perceived change in family relationships was greatest in the 3-Towns context where eight out of ten respondents identified change in more that one category. (Table 9.29)

Table 9.29 How does child's attendance change relationships within the family?

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Buchlyvie
Allows an easier marital relationship	2	1	3
Allows an easier relationship between respondent and child	7	1	4
Allows easier relations amongst children/ between respondent and all children	8	2	3
No change	4	7	7

All nurseries involved in the study encouraged parental involvement of various kinds. Respondents were asked if they had any role in the nursery. Of the thirty-five respondents, only ten reported some involvement. Involvement, though generally minimal, was greatest in 3-Towns and Buchlyvie.

Summary of key points:

- Roughly half of all applications made to the community nurseries was made by agencies (usually social workers). In contrast all but one of the applications made to the nursery school were by parents.
- Respondents first and second reasons for sending their children to nursery suggest different understandings of the purpose of nursery schools and community nurseries. Community nursery users saw the provision as 'allowing the child to mix' (first reason) and as 'allowing a break for the respondent' (second reason). 'Preparing child for school' was cited most often as the reason for sending children to traditional nursery schools.
- Nineteen out of the thirty-five children in the sample were described as having problems (social behavioural and developmental). Fifteen of these attended the community nurseries - the majority attending 3-Towns.
- When asked to identify positive changes in the child since nursery attendance began all but four respondents saw positive changes, - social/behavioural and developmental/cognitive. Twelve respondents also noted some negative changes, none serious.
- The quality of all nursery environments and standards of care were well rated across all four locations, but the sample had little experience of child care facilities other than the facility in question.
- There was significantly less satisfaction with hours of care offered by the community nurseries. Respondents wanted longer and/or more flexible hours - a justifiable expectation given the original aims of community nurseries to provide extended care. There was little demand for longer hours from traditional nursery users.
- Nursery attendance meant positive change for the majority of respondents in the domestic emotional and interpersonal (family relationships) context. 3-Towns respondents showed greatest emotional and interpersonal benefit.
- Only three respondents found nursery attendance allowed them to work. Two were traditional nursery users.
- Parental involvement in nurseries was minimal. Only ten of the 35 respondents had some involvement, the majority of these using 3-Towns and Buchlyvie.

9.4 7 The Macrosystem: Culture and Beliefs

Respondents were questioned on their own experience of childcare as children and on their attitudes to childcare including their views on what may have influenced their current beliefs.

Few respondents had experienced any form of childcare other than that provided by the immediate or extended family. Four of the 35 had attended nursery school, one a day nursery and four had experienced placement in children's homes. (See Annex 9.3) In general, nurseries were described most often as providing children with preparatory education for school. None described their main purpose as allowing mother's to work or to have extra leisure time. The respondents general views of the purpose of nurseries (i.e. schools and community nurseries) contrasts clearly with their own particular experience and demands. This contrast is most obvious in relation to community nurseries where users expected longer hours of

care and where their personal needs proved as relevant as the child's preparation for school. The great majority of respondents believed that women with young children should not work full-time. Part-time work was more acceptable. The child's need for direct care from the respondent was seen as the main reason for rejecting full-time work as an option. In terms of community nursery users, this confirms the demand for longer hours as a function of the respondent's need for respite rather than the desire to work full-time hours. Where partners were present, their views accorded with those of the respondents on the issue of women's working hours.

Most respondents both expected and received help in childcare from partners but there was general consistency between partners on the level of involvement expected from men in caring for children; this was not an equal responsibility and women expected help only in specific areas assuming the greater role in caring for children.

Respondents felt their own experience had the greatest impact on their views, either in the context of their own upbringing or through bringing up children themselves. Very few acknowledged the media or educational influences in determining either their lifestyle, childcare patterns or work patterns.

9.4 8 Changes over time

Subsequent interviews with respondents indicated that both the nursery school and the community nurseries generally met respondents' expectations in caring for children and providing positive experiences for both respondents and children.

Only one respondent had begun part-time work as a direct consequence of her child attending nursery. Changes in living conditions and 'partnerships' were minimal, although two families acquired better housing. There was little change in general lifestyle or in childcare patterns. In the Jigsaw group, however, all children were attending longer hours than before and this was greatly appreciated. Discipline patterns did show consistent change across all samples, with the majority of respondents having to exercise more discipline on a more regular basis. This was attributed to the child's general development as much as to the influence of nursery care.

Wider environmental influences also remained fairly consistent over time though a number of respondents noted further deterioration in safe play provision for children locally. Access to relatives and friends remained stable for the majority. However, children's access to other children showed a tendency to improve as a direct consequence of nursery attendance. Arrangements were made by parents for children to play together after nursery.

In the 'family and nursery' context; most respondents reported less overall involvement with supportive agencies - where this had been present at the beginning of the child's attendance. Respondents were very positive about the influence of all nurseries in helping children overcome specific problems or in encouraging their general development. Positive change was consistent with children continuing to show cognitive, social and behavioural gains. For some respondents these gains had become more obvious in the later stages of the evaluation with children displaying skills, knowledge and information which were obviously acquired at nursery.

The domestic emotional and interpersonal gains to the respondents identified in the early interviews remained but the greatest gains reported by respondents were in the children themselves, who were very frequently described as ‘having learned an awful lot’. Parental involvement in the nurseries fluctuated with users at Jigsaw reporting a slight tendency for greater involvement than at earlier stages.

The Caldwell Home Inventory was administered a second time, six months after the initial interview. Few changes emerged across the samples. The data, (as average total scores) are presented in Table 9.30 below.

**Table 9.30 The Caldwell Home Inventory total (averaged) scores
 - 1st and 2nd Phases**

	Jigsaw	3-Towns	Buchlyvie
1st Phase	40.0	35.5	41.4
2nd Phase	42.0	33.0	43.1

A summary of key points:

- Both community nurseries and nursery schools successfully met parents expectations in caring for children.
- The longer, more flexible hours provided to families at Jigsaw in response to family needs were more appreciated the longer the children attended the nursery.
- Many respondents felt children attending the community nurseries became more assertive and outgoing thus requiring firmer discipline in the home.
- Lifestyle, income and wider influences remained fairly stable across all four samples, though children’s access to other children showed a tendency to improve.
- Only one respondent began working as a consequence of care provided by the nursery.
- Community nursery respondents showed less involvement with supportive agencies the longer the child attended.
- Positive change in children remained consistent i.e. social/behavioural and cognitive development.
- Domestic emotional and interpersonal gains reported earlier remained unchanged at the end of the study.

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CHAPTER 10

INTER-AGENCY LIAISON

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Given the breadth of the aims of the new community nurseries and the specific aim of **working effectively with other social agencies to support children and families who for one reason or another require assistance**, co-operation with a variety of professional agencies was essential. The agencies involved were:

- Social Work
- Health Services
- Psychological Services
- Children's Panel
- Speech Therapy Services

Representatives of each of these agencies connected with each nursery (with the exception of speech therapy) were **interviewed** using the procedures described at the beginning of Chapter 6 in order to examine how these agencies had responded to the new nurseries. Heads of the nurseries were also interviewed to obtain their perspective on the inter-agency liaison.

In addition, an **analysis of the information** pertaining to a sample of children involved with professionals external to the nurseries was undertaken. This analysis identified those children 'at risk' and the involvement of the appropriate agencies. With such a high reported rate of child abuse in the catchment area of one of the community nurseries i.e. 3-Towns exactly how the nursery, in conjunction with the relevant agencies, responded was very critical not least in the its ability to prevent children being taken into residential care.

10.2 RESPONSE OF AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES

For each of the nurseries interviews were conducted with representatives of Social Work, Health, Psychological Services and Children's Panel Reporters. The themes covered in the interview were:

- involvement with the nursery
- assessment of placements
- mutual co-operation
- the process of 'referral' to the community nurseries (this is reported in Chapter 4)
- evaluation of the community nursery model
- liaison with nursery staff

JIGSAW COMMUNITY NURSERY

The research team interviewed the following representatives of professional agencies liaising with Jigsaw Community Nursery:

Senior Educational Psychologist

Senior Social Worker

Two Health Visitors

Assistant Reporter to the Children's Panel

Interviews were conducted early in 1992 and a full report is given in Annex 10.

Involvement with the nursery

Respondents had varying levels of involvement with pre-five children, health visitors estimated that between 80% and 90% of their respective case loads was pre-schoolers, the Educational Psychologist 5% and the Senior Social Worker 15%. The Reporter estimated that roughly 20% of all Children's Panel cases dealt with under-fives.

Two respondents had been involved in the early planning of the nursery, i.e. the Educational Psychologist and one of the health visitors initiated by the local Link-Up Group. All other respondents were aware of developments via information made available by that group. Establishment of active liaison after opening was described as a two way process, with the nursery providing detailed information to agencies already well prepared for a new resource via local publicity generated by the Link-Up group and (at later stages) by regional representatives.

Assessment of Placements

- Expectations of the community nursery in meeting children's needs

Respondents were asked to describe in broad terms what they expected the community nursery would offer in meeting children's needs. Expectations showed evidence of shared perspectives on the role of the community nursery.

Professional expectations of the community nursery were:

regular assessment and monitoring of children in the nursery

stimulation of children's development

provision of special input for children with special needs

support to parents who require help in caring for children

Respondents were asked to what extent they felt the community nursery was successful (or not) in meeting community needs. All respondents agreed the nursery was largely successful. However, the Senior Social Worker saw the community nursery as offering varying levels of paren-

tal support with the busing-in of children seen as actively preventing parent/staff contact. Despite this, all placements were seen as benefiting parents in terms of respite from child care.

- The community nursery as an alternative to residential care or fostering

Respondents were asked if the community nursery had proved a viable alternative to residential care or fostering. Two of the respondents had had no direct involvement in such cases (educational psychologist and a health visitor). For the remainder the community nursery had proved a viable and successful alternative to residential care.

Physical/sexual abuse and serious neglect

The Senior Social Worker estimated around 20 cases had involved physical abuse and neglect and health visitors identified approximately six such cases. The Educational Psychologist was unable to provide information on this type of case. Only three unsubstantiated cases of sexual abuse were identified across all (referring) respondents. In the wider context of pre-five cases dealt with by the Reporter, he estimated roughly 25% involved in abuse or neglect with 5% involving sexual abuse.

- Specialised care and treatment for children who have suffered abuse

Respondents were asked whether their respective agencies were able to offer appropriate (and specialised) care or treatment for abused children. None felt they were able to offer specialised input for those who had suffered sexual abuse and these cases were generally referred for medical and psychological treatment elsewhere. For children suffering other forms of abuse - the Senior Social Worker felt a community nursery placement with a joint professional approach ought to offer good care and involvement. In general though the community nursery which was not identified as a specialised resource for abused children.

- Community nursery's care of abused children

Respondents were asked to comment on how the community nursery handled abused children. Staff were seen as dealing with children sensitively and competently. Despite their lack of specialised training, none of the respondents identified problems in their handling of these cases.

Meeting other special needs.

None of the respondents felt there were children attending the community nursery whose special needs were left unidentified or unmet e.g. speech therapy, physiotherapy etc.

Comparing the community nursery with traditional resources.

Some questions were directed at comparing the type of service offered by traditional nursery schools and classes to that offered by the community nursery. (The questions related specifically to the handling of children who have suffered abuse and/or neglect and to provision for children with other special needs. Answers related to provision outside the area.) The majority of respondents felt that the community nursery offered better care than traditional resources for children who had suffered abuse. In the case of other forms of specialised input, only the Educational Psychologist felt adequately informed to make a comparison, finding traditional resources equally adept at providing specialised resources.

Ratings of the community nursery - organisation, staffing levels; accommodation and resources and suggestions for change and improvement.

Respondents were asked to rate the adequacy of the community nursery in terms of organisation, staffing levels, accommodation and resources. All respondents (except the Reporter who had insufficient information to comment) found the community nursery well organised with fair to good accommodation and good resources but lacking in sufficient staff to meet the original plans for the service. Suggestions for change or improvement involved expansion of existing provision in various areas; more staff, caring for 0-2 year olds, classes in parenting skills and private space for one-to-one work.

Mutual co-operation

- Frequency of Liaison with the community nursery.

Respondents were asked whether they felt liaison with the community nursery was adequate or not. All felt it was. There were no pressing demands for change or improvement. Some respondents would have liked more contact with the nursery but their workloads did not permit this and the issue was not seen as crucial. Respondents felt liaison had developed very well. Only one (a health visitor) identified problems in the early stages associated with sharing confidential information on clients but the problem had been resolved effectively.

- Difference in the nature and level of liaison between the community nursery and other resources.

Respondents were asked if there were differences between the community nursery and other pre-five resources in terms of their level and type of contact with staff. The Reporter found contact much the same across all pre-five resources. Comparing the community nursery with playgroups, health visitors had less contact with playgroups. The Senior Social Worker had no current contact with other pre-five resources and the Educational Psychologist found liaison with the community nursery a comparatively more positive and productive experience largely because he had been involved in the development of the nursery.

Evaluation of the community nursery model

- Success in meeting objectives

Respondents were asked to discuss the objectives of the community nursery and then to consider whether or not these had been met. Objectives described related in general to promoting good all round child development, helping to reduce family stress and to promote a partnership of voluntary and regional resources.

The majority of respondents felt the community nursery was successful in meeting objectives though some respondents had reservations associated with the limitation of the service i.e. in terms of its size and the range of places offered. The relationship with the voluntary sector was also seen as presenting some difficulties. However, all respondents felt the model was basically sound, its main advantage over traditional resources being its flexibility and relevance to the wider community.

- Adequacy of current provision and a choice between more traditional resources and more community nurseries.

None of the respondents felt provision for pre-fives was adequate in local communities. They were asked whether they thought those communities would benefit from more traditional resources or additional community nurseries. Two respondents felt a breadth of provision would best ensure local needs but the remainder opted for an expansion of the existing community nursery model either by opening more community nurseries or by developing satellites managed by Jigsaw. For those who preferred a breadth of provision, there was fear that the specific strengths of traditional resources might be lost in the community nursery context - i.e. preparation for school and a greater number of places - albeit on a half day basis.

- Response of nursery staff and voluntary sector representatives to inter-agency liaison

Respondents were asked to describe the contact they may have had with other agencies in terms of 'helpfulness' and 'effectiveness'. The voluntary sector representative and the after-school care worker had had no contact with other agencies in relation to children attending any of the resources. The Head of Centre and both pre-five workers had regular contact with other agencies, although liaison was mainly a role assigned to the deputy. Contact tended to be with the educational psychologist, social workers, peripatetic teachers and speech therapist. All found liaison adequate and helpful. In terms of improvement, the Head of Centre felt there could be better access to information held by outside agencies. One pre-five worker felt more time with outside agencies for discussions would be helpful whilst the other saw no real need for improvement.

THREE TOWNS COMMUNITY NURSERY

Those interviewed were:

Senior Educational Psychologist

Area Manager (Social Work Department)

Four Social Workers

Three Health Visitors

Assistant Area Reporter to the Children's Panel

Involvement with the nursery

Those interviewed had varying levels of involvement with pre-five children. Health visitors estimated that 80% of their caseloads were pre-schoolers, the Educational Psychologist - 60% and social workers between 40 and 60%. The Assistant Area Reporter estimated that roughly 12% of all Children's Panel cases dealt with pre-fives.

A number of interviewees had been involved in planning for the community nursery (Educational Psychologist, Area Manager Social Work and one health visitor). The others interviewed began liaising with the nursery when the admissions panel for the nursery was established in February 1990. In all cases, liaison was initiated by staff of the community nursery.

Assessment of placements

- Expectations of the community nursery in meeting children's needs

Respondents were asked to describe their expectations of the community nursery in meeting children's identified needs. Expectations showed evidence of shared perspectives amongst those interviewed. They included:

assessment and monitoring

stimulation and development (cognitive, social and emotional)

provision of extra input for children with special needs or difficulties

support to parents

All respondents agreed the community nursery was (to a greater or lesser extent) successful in meeting children's needs. The majority expressed reservations about the nursery's current ability to offer support to parents and the loss of the Family Centre was seen as dramatically altering the character of the service offered.

- Alternative to care and fostering

Some respondents never considered the nursery as a viable alternative to care or fostering, others only under certain circumstances. The loss of the Family Centre and the lack of long-term, full-time places reduced confidence in the nursery as an alternative to care. Some respondents identified the nursery's role as 'preventative' rather than as an alternative to care.

Physical abuse, neglect and sexual abuse

For social workers, children who had been physically abused or neglected made up 50% of all referrals; health visitors - roughly 10 %. Cases of sexual abuse were much less common - for social workers roughly 15% (both proved or suspected) of cases referred and for health visitors roughly 1%. The Assistant Area Reporter could not provide statistics but (impressionistically) felt that neglect and physical abuse were the most common grounds of referral for under-5s followed by emotional abuse. She found that substantiated cases of sexual abuse were

'uncommon'. The Educational Psychologist made no referrals in any of these categories - a reflection of his professional focus on cognitive and behavioural disorders.

A critical question to ask of the community nurseries is whether they were successful in both preventing children at risk being taken into care and rehabilitating children coming out of care. The Area Social Work Manager for North Ayrshire was asked to comment on this:

It is not possible to do a meaningful comparison of reception into care of pre-five children over different periods of time due to the other variables involved. In particular the Social Work Department generally has placed increasing emphasis on formulating community alternatives due to the awareness of the damage that is done to children when they are received into care. Within North Ayrshire the DASU system has been increasingly strictly applied and this inevitably will have had an effect on decisions concerning reception into care. Likewise shortly after the Pre-Five Project commenced I required that my agreement to reception into care be obtained. Previously such decisions were normally made at Social Worker level.

For some fifteen months the Social Work team within the 3-Towns has been operating a specialist approach to delivering services.

This has resulted in both greater consistency in the delivery of services across the 3-Towns area and in greater efforts being made to provide good quality services. This also has had an effect in reducing the reception into care of children.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, it is readily apparent that the presence of the Pre-Five Project within the Three Towns has had a dramatic effect both in reducing reception into care of pre-five children and in facilitating an early discharge into the community where reception into care nonetheless had to take place. I have had a discussion with staff directly involved concerning those children who might have been received into care had the Pre-Five provision not been there, however, as there is rarely a direct relationship between the two i.e., it is most unusual for on a particular day consideration to be given to alternatives of reception into care or emergency admission to the nursery, it is difficult to be precise about the figures. More usually concerns would result in a referral to the Pre-Five Project which may have avoided a reception into care some weeks after referral and therefore there is not a direct cause and effect visible.

None of the professionals interviewed felt they or their department were able to offer specialised treatment of children suffering sexual abuse. In other cases of abuse it was felt that a child's needs could be met, though not through specialised treatment. None of the respondents saw the community nursery as offering specialised input for abused children. Some found the presence of untrained staff in the nursery worrying. However, the majority found staff sensitive in handling these cases but nearly all respondents identified problems. Ironically though, these problems seemed to arise, at least in part, from poor liaison on the part of respondents.

Meeting special needs

None of the respondents felt there were children attending the community nursery whose needs for extra input (speech therapy, physiotherapy, home visiting teacher) were left unmet. Respondents (i.e health visitors and Educational Psychologist) felt the nursery school (but not classes) coped very well with children's special needs and that this was partly due to arrangements for supplementary care (not shared by the community nursery).

Ratings of the community nursery - organisation; staffing levels; accommodation and resources.

Respondents identified problems in all above areas. Organisation attracted least criticism. Staffing levels were seen as inadequate and a number commented on the instability of the staff group. None felt the accommodation was good; the layout was described as 'fragmented' and space as 'cramped and 'bitty'.

Suggestions for improving the community nursery

The greatest demand was for the return of the Family Centre. Other suggestions included more full-time places; a better transport system; a general expansion; a more flexible admissions policy; improvement in accommodation and change of location.

Liaison

- Levels of contact

Respondents varied in the amount of contact they had with the community nursery - from 'rarely' to once a month. Field workers (i.e. social workers and health visitors) had most contact (and this was usually with children's keyworkers) discussing cases and progress to date. Other respondents had most contact with the Head of Centre.

- Adequacy of liaison

In contrast to the views expressed by staff of the community nursery who felt that liaison was inadequate, respondents were generally satisfied with the current situation. The majority felt liaison was adequate but suggestions for improvement (basically increasing contact time) were seen as being curtailed by lack of time on the respondent's part. Some respondents were, however, critical of the nursery's demands for greater input on their part which were often perceived as excessive. The difficulties identified by some social workers were seen as arising from lack of shared perspectives and agenda and a clash of personalities.

- Differences in nature, and level of liaison between the community nursery and nursery schools and classes.

None of the social workers or the Reporter had any ongoing contact with any of the local nursery schools or classes. For health visitors and the Educational Psychologist, contact with these resources tended to be less frequent than with the community nursery and confined to discussion with Heads rather than staff who had more direct contact with children.

Evaluation of the Community Nursery Model

- Success in meeting objectives

Respondents were asked to evaluate the success of the community nursery in:

preventing reception of pre-five children into care/fostering. The majority felt the nursery was largely successful in this. For those who felt success was limited; the failure to provide long-term, full-time places was identified as the major obstacle to success.

the rehabilitation of children returning home from care. The majority again thought the nursery was largely successful. Some respondents felt the loss of the family centre might prevent achievement of this objective in future.

- Rating the community nursery model/appropriateness for the local community

Only three respondents were wholly appreciative and uncritical of the model as it operates at Three Towns. For others, the existing model had fallen short of expectations created by the original plans. The loss of the family centre; the lack of full-time places and places for very young children and the local characterisation of the nursery as a social work resource were seen as serious limitations. All respondents felt the community nursery offered (at least potentially) appropriate provision for local communities, given the high levels of poverty, deprivation, and single, unsupported parents.

- Adequacy of current provision and choice between more traditional resources or more community nurseries

None felt current provision was adequate. When asked to choose between additional community nurseries or additional traditional resources, responses were split between additional community nurseries (social workers, reporter and educational psychologist) and more of both (health visitors). Health visitors preference for more of both types of resource reflected their concern for the 'normal' child.

Response of the nursery staff to inter-agency liaison

From the beginning, all interviewees felt that links with other agencies could be improved. Head and Depute were particularly critical of Social Work back-up to children and families referred to the project. All respondents felt that project staff were left to take the initiative in making and maintaining links with other agencies.

In the early stages the Head of Centre's comments on the development of liaison with external agencies (Psychological Services, the Social Work Department and Health Visitors) indicated difficulties both in establishing and sustaining links. All cases of contact with other agencies had been initiated by project's staff. In general, follow up of children attending had been poor and support offered often less than staff felt was required. The Head of Centre had felt that there had been a persistent lack of understanding of the aims of the project. Despite repeated attempts on the part of project management to remedy this and to improve liaison, the situation remained largely unchanged with the exception of input from psychological services which had improved. At the time of interview, planning meetings with social work and health visitors had been arranged but the Head of Centre felt efforts were largely one-sided with little commitment from either of these agencies to developing effective liaison.

There are Prescat meetings with Psychological Services and regular reviews with shared objectives stated. Liaison and on-going support are good. in the case of social work, there's a continuing mismatch between our expectations and those of social work. We need a joint planning meeting to clarify objectives. There's very little ongoing contact with health visitors especially since the closure of the family centre.
(Head of Centre)

In the final round of interviews respondents were asked to comment on contact with other agencies, in particular whether or not they found them helpful and co-operative. One identified a lack of shared objectives and guidelines as a fundamental problem in the issue of liaison. Both found a high degree of variability across individuals in 'helpfulness' and maintaining contact with unit staff.

It's difficult to generalise since different individuals provide different levels of help and involvement. I feel outside agencies are not easily contacted and that contact has to be maintained by staff here. We lack shared guidelines and objectives.
(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

Both felt that more time needed to be allocated to liaison before an effective system could develop and that some clarification of shared objectives was essential to any joint work plans.

BUCHLYVIE NURSERY SCHOOL

Those interviewed were:

Senior Educational Psychologist

Social Worker

Health Visitor

Area Reporter to the Children's Panel

The interviews were conducted in the Winter of 1991/2 and a full account is given in Annex 10.

Involvement with the nursery

Interviewees had varying levels of involvement with pre-five children. The Health Visitor estimated that 80% of her caseload involved preschoolers, the Educational Psychologist 20% and the Social Worker, 25%. The Reporter estimated that largely 30% of all Children's Panel cases dealt with pre-fives.

Assessment of placements

Respondents were asked to describe in broad terms what they expected Buchlyvie nursery school would offer in meeting children's identified needs.

Expectations showed evidence of shared perspectives on the role of the nursery:

- Assessment and monitoring
- Stimulation of development
- Provision of extra input for children with special needs or difficulties
- Support to parents.

Interviewees were asked to what extent they felt Buchlyvie nursery was successful or not in meeting children's needs. Three agreed that the nursery was generally successful (Social Worker, Health Visitor and Educational Psychologist). The Reporter (who lacked sufficient knowledge of the nursery in question) answered in broader terms, finding nursery schools generally successful.

Asked specifically about benefits to parents of a nursery place, all respondents felt the nursery offered a range of benefits: e.g., respite from childcare; reduction in stress; direct support from staff and opportunities for social; recreational and educational pursuits with the nursery.

The admission system attempts to ensure that children with social, behavioural and developmental difficulties have priority. These children are also those most likely to be placed in care. Respondents were asked if placements in the nursery school were ever used as an alternative to residential or foster care. The health visitor felt such a placement could never be used as a direct alternative to care and saw the nursery's role as 'prevention' rather than 'intervention' for such children. In contrast, the social worker, who tended to have a higher involvement with families in crises, had used Buchlyvie successfully as an alternative to care but emphasised the need for supplementary measures to support the family.

The reporter insisted that only a full-time nursery placement would be considered an alternative option to care and that such a course of action would depend on the nature of the grounds of the referral and the degree of risk to the child in remaining at home.

The educational psychologist felt that nursery schools in general - given high standards of care and monitoring of children's needs - could be used successfully as alternative options to care.

Respondents were asked how many of the children they had referred to Buchlyvie Nursery in the previous year had suffered physical or sexual abuse or serious neglect. In all, only one had suffered severe neglect, none had been physically abused and only one had suffered sexual abuse.

Of the four referred by the nursery to psychological services only one child had suffered physical abuse. None had been sexually abused or severely neglected. The reporter estimated that roughly 10% of pre-fives brought to hearings had suffered physical abuse or neglect with roughly 5% experiencing sexual abuse.

The health visitor, social worker and educational psychologist were asked whether they or their departments were able to offer appropriate (specialised) care or treatment for children or families involved in physical or sexual abuse. The social worker felt that appropriate care and support was available through the social work department with external resources available if necessary - e.g. RSPCC for sexual abuse counselling. The health visitor felt that resources were available but not through her department. Despite specialised training for psychologists in psychological services and their access to other resources, the educational psychologist had found that social workers tended not to refer such children or families to her or other members of her team.

Respondents were asked if Buchlyvie nursery offered specialised help for abused children in their care. Although none of the respondents identified staff as having received specialised training, they all agreed that staff had experience in caring for abused children and had developed appropriate skills and sensitivity.

From a more general perspective the reporter felt nurseries benefited abused children in a number of ways, though not through specialist treatment offered by staff.

Those respondents who had direct knowledge of the nursery found staff handling of abused children more than satisfactory.

The social worker and health visitor were asked if referred children ever required other specialised input from the nursery. None identified other areas of specialised input despite the nursery's allocation of one or more places to children with special needs e.g. Down's Syndrome or other forms of mental handicap.

Respondents were asked to compare the nursery school with other local provision - the family centre and day nursery - in their handling of abused children and in provision for children with other special needs. The health visitor felt unable to make such a comparison given her low rate of success in placing children in provision other than nursery schools or classes.

The social worker and educational psychologist felt the resources were similar in offering a good standard of care, though in the psychologist's view, that depended partly on the attitude of individual staff members. The reporter felt that family centres were in a better position to tackle issues of abuse if the abuser was a family member:

On other forms of specialised input, only one respondent (the H.V.) felt she had sufficient knowledge of the range of special needs met by pre-five provision to comment. She found that all offered a similar service.

Respondents who were familiar with the day to day running of Buchlyvie (health visitor, social worker and educational psychologist) were asked whether they felt the nursery was well organised and adequately resourced and staffed. All three felt the nursery was very well organised but would benefit from more staff. Accommodation and resources were seen as being adequate.

Respondents were asked how Buchlyvie compared to other local pre-five resources in terms of resources, accommodation, staffing levels and professional expertise.

All but one of the respondents thought the various pre-five services were similar in the areas mentioned. The health visitor however felt that day nurseries and family centres had a more demanding remit than nursery schools placing staff and resources under greater pressure.

Mutual Co-operation

Respondents were asked how often and on what basis they visited Buchlyvie Nursery. Contact varied. The reporter had had no direct contact with staff in Buchlyvie but tended to visit pre-five resources in the Easterhouse area 2-3 times a year, usually to take statements of evidence from staff. The reporter commented on the fact that referrals to the Children's Hearings tended to originate from social workers and not from nursery schools. She felt the involvement of social workers imposed an additional "layer" of professional discretion on the Hearings system

which detracted from her own role in establishing legal proof. She stated that she would prefer nursery school staff to make more direct referrals to the Hearings system.

Where circumstances dictate, pre-five staff attend children's hearings, though this is not common. Occasionally they provide reports for hearings but generally these are produced by social workers who may supplement their reports with information drawn from staff in pre-five establishments.

Of the other respondents, the health visitor had the higher level of contact with Buchlyvie staff, visiting twice a month to discuss particular children or to fulfil other parts of her remit as Buchlyvie's health visitor.

The educational psychologist visited once every two months, though her remit was intended to include monthly visits for assessment and observation of referrals. The size of her case load prevented this.

The social worker had visited the nursery four times since she took up her post in Easterhouse nine months previously.

All respondents tended to liaise with the nursery head. Direct contact with the nursery staff was less frequent. Unlike the community nurseries, Buchlyvie did not have a formal internal review system. If routine assessment of children's cognitive and emotional development revealed serious difficulties, these children were referred to other agencies who would supplement the nursery placement with specialised input (e.g. speech therapy, homemaker) or secondary placements were arranged elsewhere (e.g., language units. Less serious problems were tackled directly by staff with parental involvement where necessary.

Regular consultation with other agencies already involved with the child provided an option to a formal review system. Other agencies operated formal review systems of their own, involving nursery staff if appropriate.

Respondents were asked if they found liaison between themselves and Buchlyvie adequate. All respondents felt it was (including the Reporter who answered the question in relation to all pre-five sources in the Easterhouse area.) There were no suggestions or demands for improvement. Liaison between respondents and other local pre-five resources was similar to that with Buchlyvie although the Social Worker tended to have more contact with keyworker staff in the local Family Centre than in Buchlyvie Nursery School.

Evaluation of the Community Nursery Model

Respondents were asked to consider the community nursery model and whether or not it might be appropriate for the Easterhouse area. None of the respondents had any direct experience of community nurseries but understood that Strathclyde Region was committed to developing this type of resource offering care to 0-5 year olds on a flexible extended day/year basis. All respondents felt the community nursery model had some advantages over traditional nursery schools but not enough to outweigh the disadvantages. The community nursery was seen as (potentially) allowing women to work, improving parenting skills and providing resources for younger children. Its disadvantages were described as lack of good structure for pre-schoolers and a general dilution of staff skills in caring for wider age ranges. None of the respondents felt the community nursery was an appropriate resource for Easterhouse given the wide range of pre-five resources already available.

All respondents agreed that although Easterhouse is comparatively well-resourced, additional pre-five resources are always needed. None of them favoured replacing existing resources with new community nurseries but felt the new model would be a useful addition to existing resources.

The reporter felt that full-time attendance at a community nursery might influence panel decisions allowing them further opportunities to avoid using residential care or foster parents, but she emphasised that this option would be subject to the same constraints and considerations as a full-time place in a traditional resource - i.e. its use would depend on the child's circumstances and the level of support offered to the family. She also felt that community nurseries, whilst not removing the child from home, could have a considerably negative impact on the quality of family life experiences for children.

Liaison with other Agencies

The nursery has regular direct contact with a number of other agencies:

The Health Visitor comes in informally as well as formally to see individual children. The psychologist and speech therapist give advice and help in coping with critical problems presented by the children. Social workers only make formal visits concerning children they have referred.
(Nursery Nurse)

There is also regular liaison with local primary schools:

We have informal chats about a few of our children when they go to school. the school's hold workshops for new children's parents and we provide creches for that. We also have in service days where we visit each other and swap ideas and information.
(Nursery Nurse)

Respondents were asked whether contact with other agencies was helpful and could be improved. Although all contact was seen as helpful, generally staff felt that more time spent in discussion with these agencies would improve liaison.

We don't have enough time to spend in discussion with them. We could do with more opportunities for that. (Nursery Nurse)

This was the case particularly with social workers where nursery staff felt full discussion could be critical to the social worker's handling of a case.

Contact, purely for information at Social Services could be improved - particularly outwith the need for immediate referral. They are far too quick in assessing a referral is being made, especially in abuse cases. (Head Teacher)

10.3 ANALYSIS OF REFERRED/SUPPORTED CASES

In order to understand more about the nature of the liaison between the nurseries and the other agencies, a brief analysis of files for children involved for one reason or another with these agencies was undertaken. Given the large number of children involved with other agencies particularly at 3-Towns, a 50% sample was selected on the basis of every alternative case.

The analysis focused on a number of key issues:

- identification of children deemed to be in need of professional support for one reason or another (e.g. 'at risk', abused, special needs etc.)
- agency involvement with the family
- nursery involvement with the agency
- outcome of the liaison

Three Towns Community Nursery

From data supplied by the nursery, Table 10.1 shows the total number of children and families involved with other agencies during the first two years of the nursery being open. Table 10.2 shows the breakdown of the reasons for social work involvement.

Table 10.1 No. of children/families involved with other agencies in 3-Towns Community Nursery to February 1992

	0-5 Unit	3-5 Unit	Family Centre
Admissions	87	64	12 (families)
Involvement with other agencies			
• social work	45	18	27
• health	3	7	1
• psychological services	8	2	0
• Reporters	15	8	21

Table 10.2 Reasons for Social Work Involvement (March 1990 - February 1992)

	0-5 Unit	3-5 Unit	Family Centre
Child Protection	11	4	26
Residential Care	20	5	21

From an analysis of children's files for these children involved for one reason or another with an external professional agency it was possible to discern a pattern of liaison. Files were classified by the nursery staff as either 'open' or 'closed' depending on whether the child was still attending the nursery. Table 10.3 shows the percentage of children involved with such agencies, the nature of the problem and the admission status to the nursery. Supervision Orders were covered by Section 44(1)(a) of the Social Work (Scotland) Act, 1968 (see Annex 10). As an over-

all percentage of the children admitted to the nursery over a two year period, approximately 88% of children lived in families where an external agency was involved.

Table 10.3 Children involved with other agencies in Three Towns Community Nursery (50% sample)

		N	% of children involved with agencies	% of ALL children in the nursery
(estimated)				
Identifying Agency	Social Work	28	64	56
	Health	5	11	10
	Social Work and Health	4	9	8
	Psychological Services	5	11	10
	Home Visiting Teacher	2	5	4
Nature of the problem	Child 'at risk' /abuse	19	43	38
	Domestic violence	2	5	4
	Parental depression/stress	11	25	22
	Child's developmental delay	8	18	16
	Lack of stimulation	2	5	4
	Other	2	5	4
Supervision Orders				
Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968				
44 (1)(a)		14	32	28
48 (2)		2	5	4
Admission to the Nursery	Admission category 1	41	93	82
	Admission category 2	3	7	6
	Part-time place	42	5	4
Full-time place				
Residential Care, Fostering or Adoption		4	9	8

Jigsaw Community Nursery

Table 10.4 shows the percent of children involved with other agencies to the end of December 1991. Table 10.5 shows the breakdown of agency involvement, the nature of the problem and the admission status to the nursery.

Table 10.4 Number of children involved with other agencies in Jigsaw Community Nursery to December 1991

Health	Speech Therapist	Social Work	Psychological Services	Reporters	Total admitted
18	2	5	5	0	27

Note: in several cases more than one agency was involved.

Table 10.5 Children involved with other agencies in Jigsaw Community Nursery (50% sample)

		N	% of children involved with agencies	% of all children in the nursery (estimate)
Identifying Agency	Social Work	6	15	12
	Health	19	48	38
	Social Work and Health	5	13	10
	Psychological Services	7	17	14
	Speech Therapist	2	5	4
Nature of the problem	Child 'at risk'/abuse	4	10	8
	Parental stress /depression	9	23	18
	Child's developmental delay	16	40	32
	Lack of stimulation	9	23	18
	Other	2	5	4
Supervision Orders	Section 44 (1)(a) of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968	5	13	10
Admission to the Nursery Unit	Admission Category 1	20	50	40
	Admission Category 2	19	48	38
	Admission Category 3	1	2	2
	Part-time place	39	98	78
	Full-time place	1	2	2
Residential Care, Fostering or Adoption		1	2	2

CHAPTER 11

THE FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Translating public policy into practical reality has always been hazardous - all the more so if the policy is radical and its implementation dependent on a chain of authority. Formulating the policy in the first instance can be difficult enough but should that policy challenge prevailing ideology and professional practice implementation will be turbulent. The case of community nurseries in Strathclyde is no exception. Although at a different level and in a different context, the early experience of the setting up comprehensive schools in the late 1960's has many parallels. It took ten years for a stable model of the comprehensive school to emerge and the fierce debate to abate. Many studies were carried out comparing the effects of comprehensive schools with grammar schools (in England and Wales) and senior secondary schools in (Scotland). The most recent of these studies (McPherson and Wilms, 1990) provided positive evidence in their favour.

As stated in Chapter 2, the Region's policy for the development of pre-five provision, was far reaching and controversial. The Region set itself the daunting task of initiating new kinds of nurseries - **flagships of the Region's pre-five policy** - in a climate characterised by economic cut-back and bureaucratic upheaval in the wake of the INLOGOV report. It has to be predicted therefore that, even with the appointment of experienced and committed staff, the pressures would be severe. What could not be predicted was that the pressures would involve a degree of frustration and despair for those involved well beyond what could be reasonably expected. The litany of events documented in Chapter 6 are testament to that frustration especially in the 3-Towns Community Nursery. However, despite the enormous difficulties much has been achieved in both 3-Towns and Jigsaw.

11.2 THE FINDINGS

As stated at the beginning of Chapter 2 the purposes of the evaluation were to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the pilot community nurseries and to seek out explanations for the findings. The following analysis will therefore address the themes identified in Chapter 2 in addition to others that emerged during the study:

- Extent of provision
- Targetting of provision
- Quality of provision
- Impact of the community nurseries on children and families
- Under-threes
- Staffing
- Accommodation
- Co-ordination of services
- Partnership with the Voluntary Sector
- Management
- Training
- Effects of evaluation

Extent of Provision

It is well known that in the United Kingdom demand for pre-five provision well outstrips the supply (see Chapter 2). Any expansion of provision is therefore to be welcomed. The opening of 3-Towns and Jigsaw community nurseries has ex-

panded provision in both areas in which the nurseries are located. Over the period of the study, both the 3-Towns and Jigsaw community nurseries have catered for an extra 100 children each. If the nurseries had not been set up it is unlikely that many of these children would have had the benefit of education and care before they started primary school. Clearly the demand is greater than the number of places available (3-Towns could only admit 25% of applications and Jigsaw 27%). Nevertheless the proportion of children receiving provision in both areas has risen significantly. In view of the benefits of good quality nursery care (see the review by Woodhead, 1989) this can only be of value to families with young children in the three towns of Ayrshire and the villages of East Dunbarton.

Targeting of provision

Chapter 4 outlined the processing of applications and admissions in the four nurseries involved in the study. It was clear from the findings, that the community nurseries were successful in both attracting applications and in providing places for children in greatest need as defined by the Region's admission policy. In 3-Towns the number of single parent families was nearly three times the national average, many families lived in acute poverty and several children were abused or deemed to be 'at risk' from abuse. All children admitted to the nursery were from families in such high priority categories with more than 50% of children involved with the local Social Work Department.

The evaluation not only showed the extent to which the community nurseries were able to cater for needy children but also showed the functioning of the admission panels to be consistent with Regional policy. The panels successfully involved a range of professionals concerned with pre-school children though in 3-Towns there was reluctance on the part of some health visitors to accept both the policy and the admissions procedure. At Jigsaw criticism of the admissions policy was more evident in non-eligible parents who were looking for nursery experience for their child in the year prior to the child starting primary school (see Annex 3.1 for an account of the effect of similar attitudes at Hozier Nursery School). Also at Jigsaw sensitive procedures were introduced for handling the admission of children from problem families which avoided unnecessary labelling.

However, with regard to admitting very young children, Jigsaw was handicapped from the start. Due to inadequacies in the planning of the necessary staffing to deal with the full age range and the inadequacy of the accommodation for babies, Jigsaw was unable to cater for children under the age of two. 3-Towns on the other hand, although far from ideal, was able to cater for such children. The findings from the household survey indicated that half of all families with children under three saw the need for local authority provision for such children. This was reflected in applications to the nursery, the majority coming from families with a child under three.

Implementation of the Region's admission policy proved more problematic with the conventional nursery schools. Replacing previous policies with those of Revised Circular 3A was a slow process. In Ayrshire, the policy of admitting as many children as possible in their immediate pre-school year (i.e. 4-5 year olds) was a legacy of central and local government concerns in the 1970's to maximise part-time provision for four year olds. This practice converged with parental expectations of nursery school in that nursery schooling was an ideal experience for preparing children for primary school (McGee, 1992). Comparison of the pattern of applications to the nursery school and the community nursery clearly shows that families with fewer social burdens were more likely to apply to the nursery school in the hope of obtaining a place for their four year old child. Not surprisingly therefore that there was some reluctance on the part of administrators and head-

teachers to participate in a process (i.e. an admissions panel) that would allocate places to younger children and children 'at risk', the latter being a potentially disturbing influence on other children in the nursery. However this reluctance was also bound up with what headteachers saw as a lack of resources to administer the panels. Clearly the admission policy was an attempt to change the nature of nursery provision away from what some people saw as a primary school preparatory experience, albeit child-centred and compensatory, to a provision more targeted at tackling the evils of poverty and isolation. In this respect the community nurseries were operating successfully.

However, whilst the admissions policy was effective in getting the community nurseries to target socially needy families, the admission policy fell short in promoting parents (particularly mothers) to become more economically active. If acute poverty is to be tackled, which was extremely acute in 3-Towns, the admissions policy failed to open opportunities for employment/education for women with young children.

Quality of Provision

In terms of the Harms and Clifford Scale the quality of provision in all the nurseries was of a high standard. Although the community nurseries were not quite as good as one of the nursery schools (i.e. Springvale), they compared favourably with the comparative nursery school (i.e. Buchlyvie). The argument that the quality of provision in community nurseries will necessarily be inferior to conventional nursery schools has little foundation. The study has very clearly shown that with adequate resources and careful professional planning, the new nurseries can provide children with a stimulating and caring experience comparable in standard to the best traditions of Scottish nursery education.

In many respects this is a remarkable achievement for such new types of provision in such a short time and reflects the commitment of staff to give of their best. However, if this quality level is to be maintained the community nurseries must continue to attract well-qualified and experienced staff from all types of professional background and be able to retain such staff. The study has shown that quality is vulnerable both to staff instability and low staff morale. (See Chapter 7) Only by concerted and consistent effort can vulnerability be minimised. The situation with the Family Centre at 3-Towns, however, was not so good. Due to staffing problems the Centre was unable to function for well over a year and had only just re-opened at the end of the study.

Impact of the Community Nurseries

The study has focused on the effects of new nurseries at two levels:

- children's development and behaviour
- family dynamics

One very clear finding of the study identified in Chapter 8 was the dramatic reduction of children displaying social and emotional behavioural problems in the 3-Towns Community Nursery. With a carefully formulated policy and concerted staff effort many children have been brought back from being at risk. The slide into patterns of behaviour which are the early danger signs of social deviance has been prevented for a very significant number of children.

Another very prominent finding of the study, despite some uncertainties in the reliability of the data, is the fact that children's abilities improved significantly during the time they spent in the nurseries. This was the case for all nurseries. Only in the 0-5 Unit of 3-Towns Community Nursery where the quality of provision was not as high as elsewhere did children in the community nurseries not benefit in development terms to the same extent as children in the nursery schools.

On leaving the nurseries to start primary school most children seemed to be achieving in cognitive, language, socialisation and physical growth to a level expected of children at five years of age. Despite the fact that the input of professional teacher expertise to the community nurseries was weak, children in the community nurseries did not seem to suffer unduly. In part this was due to the policy of curricular planning and development in both 3-Towns and Jigsaw. These findings give support to other studies (e.g. Osborn and Milbank, 1987) about the benefits of a nursery experience.

With regard to the impact on families, families' expectations of nursery provision were fully realised; parents appreciated the flexible provision; children were given greater opportunities for social contact with peers; family relationships were improved and at least one family had become more economically active as a direct consequence of the child attending one of the community nurseries. For those families in need of support from another professional agency (e.g. social work) there was evidence in the study to show that the longer the child stayed in the nursery the need for such external support declined. In other words the community nurseries were helping families to cope better with their situation. Furthermore, there was evidence to indicate that families were more stable over the period of the study i.e. no family out of the total of 35 underwent a major change, neither separation or re-constitution.

Under-Threes

Whilst Moss (1991) claims that the issue of whether or not children under three should be in day-care is no longer an issue for the day-care agenda, the experience of making provision available for such children in the community nurseries has highlighted a number of critical problems pertaining to the conditions under which the care is provided. The critical issues are appropriate accommodation which incorporates changing facilities and rest facilities as well as suitably trained and experienced staff with an appropriate adult/child ratio (see Melhuish, 1991). The present study has confirmed the general trend of results from recent research (NCB, 1988) that the quality and benefits of provision are conflicting and that most institutional childcare for children under three faces considerable difficulties in meeting the needs of very young children.

However the greatest controversy concerns the provision for children in their first year of life (McGurk, et al, 1993).

As the number of babies (i.e. under one year) in the present study was negligible no further light can be shed on the current controversy. However, providers of non-homebased daycare for under-threes would do well to refer to the recent publication on the quality of day care for the under-threes from the National Children's Bureau (1990).

Staffing

Stable staffing of the community nurseries with well qualified and experienced staff has proved difficult - the greatest difficulty being in 3-Towns Community Nursery where staff turnover was considerable. Three factors have contributed to these difficulties:

- the temporary nature and uncertain future of 3-Towns Community Nursery
- the Conditions of Service in community nurseries
- the lack of locally based professional expertise in innovatory pre-five provision

In hindsight, the funding of 3-Towns Community Nursery from Urban Aid created very serious problems which some may view as a mistake. For such an important development i.e. a 'flagship', greater security of tenure for staff (four years is the normal length of an Urban Aid project) would have attracted more applications for vacant posts. This is particularly evident in the case of the Family Centre which was non-operational for over a year due to the inability of the project to attract appropriate staff. In addition, nursery teachers did not see posts in the community nurseries as a step in their career and therefore did not apply in any great numbers. In reality only one qualified teacher was appointed to one of the four senior management posts i.e. Head and Depute of Centres in the two community nurseries and even she resigned in her second year. In the other community nursery a teacher was appointed as Curriculum Development Officer but at the time of appointment did not possess a formal nursery qualification. In order to rectify this she was seconded to a one-year part-time course at a College of Education.

Another difficulty in staffing was the lack of training opportunities for unqualified staff. The Region's Member/Officer Group report **Under Fives** (1985) had clearly stated that a small number of suitable local people with experience in working with young children but not possessing any formal qualification should be employed in the new nurseries. However, the unavailability of training to those unqualified staff appointed meant that other staff had to cope with any deficiencies. Nevertheless the staff were committed and enthusiastic, which to a large extent contributed to the successes of the community nurseries.

The new Conditions of Service for community nursery staff also proved problematic in attracting the best qualified and experienced applicants. The conditions of appointment to the community nurseries required staff to work longer hours per day and more days per year than in conventional nursery schools for little additional salary. Again this problem was more acute in 3-Towns partly due to the nursery school staff located on the same campus having school hours and school holidays. On the other hand, the new Conditions of Service have created opportunities for a wider range of professionals which has been reflected in the staff appointed to managerial posts in the community nurseries.

Thirdly, the pool of professional expertise in innovative pre-school provision in each area was lower than expected. Virtually no applicants had had any experience outwith conventional forms of provision prior to applying for a post in the new nurseries. Staff that were appointed therefore were in an intensive learning environment having to cope with new situations under scrutiny from the evaluators. It is to the credit of the staff teams that the standard of work achieved was high.

Even so, it soon became apparent that in the early stages any clear vision of the potential of the community nursery model was clouded with day-to-day survival. So much more could have been achieved if the burden of staffing problems had been lighter.

Accommodation

As with staffing, providing suitable accommodation for the community nurseries proved difficult. In fact, in 3-Towns the accommodation problem was nothing less than a nightmare and significantly distorted the vision and energy of the Head of Centre and several senior staff. Yet again it must be emphasised that the dedication and determination of the Heads of Centre to translate rhetoric into reality has been exemplary.

With the benefit of hindsight, the original plan of locating 3-Towns in a disused janitor's house and a dreary community centre created very serious problems. Ideally the nursery should have been purpose-built on a separate site. However the costs would have been very high at a time of economic restraint. A compromise (considered earlier by the Pre-Five Unit but rejected) would have been to convert Springvale Nursery School into a community nursery and expand it into the janitors' house say for very young children and to have used local authority housing in the Ardeer district of Stevenston.

Even so, the conversion of the janitor's house was slow process - not helped by the lack of urgency on the part of the Divisional Architects and Related Services Department and by the shortcomings in the chain of authority between the nursery and the Divisional Education Office. But also to have problems with the Caley Centre, Auchenhavie Secondary School and Glencairn Primary School was an unnecessary catalogue of compromise and disaster. When compared with accommodation at Buchlyvie Nursery School, 3-Towns was far from ideal.

Accommodation at Jigsaw although more suited to the community nursery ethos was not without its problems not least in its lack of facilities for very young children and inadequate toilet facilities. Nevertheless the nursery area, office accommodation, soft play area, SPPA Branch room, cafe and outdoor play area were all satisfactory.

Co-ordination of Services

Chapter 10 outlined the issues involved in inter-agency liaison. In general terms the community nurseries were successful in establishing contacts with other agencies - social work; psychological services, health and Reporters. However a number of features emerged from the liaison between the nurseries and other agencies:

- Staff in the community nurseries had little previous experience in direct dealings with other agencies particularly in 3-Towns, neither was their training in any way adequate to equip them for such liaison.
- Health visitors in 3-Towns were reluctant to participate in operating the admissions policy as intended i.e. through referred or supported applications to an admissions panel. The main reason for their reluctance was that of confidentiality. The health visitors were unwilling, for professional reasons, to divulge what they saw as confidential information on families to other members of the admissions panel.

- Although social workers in 3-Towns were referring children 'at risk' to the community nursery as anticipated, follow up of these cases was less than adequate. To a large extent this arose due to confusion between the nursery and the Social Work Department about the exact roles of social workers and nursery staff in dealing with families in difficulty. This was further compounded by the non-functioning of the Family Centre in 3-Towns. Because the number of families with severe problems in 3-Towns was much higher than any other location the need for effective inter-agency liaison was all the greater. However, despite the difficulties, it seemed very possible that the community nursery was successfully preventing a number of children from being taken into care.
- Inter-professional liaison at Jigsaw functioned well. With the relatively small number of professionals involved, effective working relationships were developed with little difficulty and were maintained for the duration of the study. Given the tensions that often exist between different agencies, this co-operation at Jigsaw was highly commendable.

On the basis of the present study this integration of responsibilities proved successful in one location (i.e. in Jigsaw Community Nursery) but not in the other (i.e. 3-Towns Community Nursery). With Jigsaw no local authority pre-five services had previously existed in the area so co-operation at this level was a relatively new phenomenon and clearly worked well. However, in 3-Towns nursery facilities had existed for some time and the Heads of these nursery facilities relied heavily on the knowledge of local health visitors. As has been seen in Chapter 10, social workers did not see the nursery schools and classes as a resource and tended not to refer. The setting up of the community nursery changed all this. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen local difficulties, follow-up liaison and support to families proved problematic. On the whole however the study is more favourable to integration. The study therefore provides conflicting evidence with regard to the predictions of the Association of Directors of Social Services as discussed in the House of Commons Report on Under Fives (1988). Both the Select Committee and the Association of Directors of Social Services were concerned that:

there is expertise built up in the various bodies and departments dealing with under-fives services which might be lost if there were a transfer of responsibilities to one body.
(House of Commons, 1988, p xlii)

The Select Committee also put forward the argument that transfer of responsibilities to the department would not contribute to the integration of the concepts of care and education. The Committee therefore recommended "good co-ordination" between departments. As indicated in Chapter 1, Strathclyde Region was the first local authority in Britain to transfer responsibility for pre-five services to one department i.e. the Education Department.

Partnership with the Voluntary Sector

From Chapters 5 and 6 it was evident that all was not well with the partnership arrangements particularly in Jigsaw. The critical features to emerge were:

- no effective outreach work at Jigsaw with associated voluntary provision in the area. The playgroups were only marginally involved in the community nursery (e.g. use of the soft play area and book-in creche). This was largely brought about because those concerned were unsure of exactly how the community nursery could act as a local resource to voluntary groups.

- conflict in the role of voluntary sector representatives in the management and policy development at Jigsaw. Clearly this was a critical issue from the outset. The nursery was set up as a partnership with the voluntary sector, in particular SPPA. However it soon became apparent that concepts of partnership, largely prevalent within the administration of Strathclyde Education Department, were very different from those perceived by the three voluntary sector representatives. This conflict had a destructive influence on how the community nursery developed by de-motivating those involved from negotiation and as a consequence goodwill and trust disintegrated.

‘Partnership’ is an extremely complex concept as it is open to many interpretations. At one extreme it can merely signal joint involvement in some defined activity whilst at the other end of the spectrum it can mean equality in terms of powers, roles, responsibilities, duties etc. between the participating partners. For partnership to function effectively it must involve understanding and agreement between participating partners. In Jigsaw Community Nursery there was both misunderstanding and disagreement. The Region’s Education Department took the view that as paymaster it had overall responsibility and hence control over the nursery and its day-to-day administration. There was no place for the voluntary sector representatives in making important and often critical decisions once the nursery had been established as these representatives were not regional employees and therefore unaccountable to the local authority.

On the other hand the voluntary sector representatives were under the impression that the arrangements for co-operation in planning the nursery would continue once the nursery was up and running. Power sharing was clearly in their minds with the proposal to establish the ‘nursery executive’. Not unreasonably their expectations were for a continuation of the partnership model as originally conceived.

Because of this misconception and disagreement relationships between the nursery management and the voluntary sector representatives deteriorated very markedly clearly showing the need for negotiation and discussion at all levels of decision-making.

Management

Both community nurseries have had considerable difficulties with day-to-day management and administration. The most acute difficulties experienced were:

- insufficient support from the appropriate Regional staff in the two Divisions (e.g. Advisers) in the early stages.
- staff turnover, particularly at Depute level
- the management role of the voluntary sector representatives at Jigsaw (already discussed in the previous section).
- liaison particularly at the outset with other professionals and the nursery school (3-Towns)
- lack of clerical assistance in the early stages of Jigsaw

Given the radical and innovative nature of the concept of a community nursery the Regional and Divisional staff in all the Region’s Departments concerned failed to support and guide the Heads of Centres sufficiently well in implementing the

recommendations of the Member/Officer Group report **Under Fives** (1985). For example, in the case of the Education Department, no Advisers were available to work with the Heads in formulating both day-to-day planning in the early stages and no encouragement was given to the Heads to visit other similar nurseries elsewhere in Britain to allow them to develop a vision of the potential of a community nursery. Similarly, lack of priority and unnecessary bureaucratic red-tape in the Architect's Department meant that energies of the Heads were diverted into matters outwith their remit. Although these problems were recognised by the Elected Members, they felt relatively powerless to make changes. This raises very critical questions about the relationship between the political and bureaucratic levels of decision-making in the Region.

The Deputies in both community nurseries resigned their posts at the end of the first year - one to take up headship of a family centre, the other to return to Australia. Replacements were extremely difficult to find placing extra burdens on the Heads of Centre.

The problem at Springvale Nursery School centred on the availability of the Headteacher to attend meetings as part of the management team of the community nursery. It was not until the end of the first year that an additional teacher was appointed to the school to facilitate the release of the Headteacher. Even so, there continued to exist two hierarchical management structures for nursery provision on the same campus. Inevitably there was little cross-fertilisation of ideas between the two staff groups and no motivation for co-operation (Lyle, 1992). This had the effect of helping to create very different perspectives in the local community of the functions of the two nursery establishments.

Having no clerical assistance meant that the Head of the nursery was severely handicapped in setting up the day-to-day administration of the nursery

Training

The study identified a number of inadequacies in the current training arrangements for pre-five staff both in initial training and in-service training. These inadequacies are:

- little training for all students (NNEB and BEd) in effective inter-agency liaison. Given that community nurseries admit so many children with difficulties (e.g. 'at risk') appropriate expertise in dealing with such cases is essential.
- little or no training for students on teacher-training courses dealing with children under three. Given that half of the children in community nurseries are very young appropriately trained staff is essential.
- little training of unqualified staff employed in the community nurseries.
- inadequate opportunities for staff employed in community nurseries to learn how best to plan and co-ordinate their work.

Effects of the evaluation

It is difficult to quantify the effects on the nurseries of participation in the study. What is clear however is that the evaluation demanded a great deal in time and ability from all staff. In no instances was this time thought to be in vain, despite the difficulties. However the impact was very different in the two community nurseries. Because of the operational difficulties at 3-Towns the Head of Centre became more introspective about the evaluation and focused attention on achieving some degree of success in meeting the aims and objectives of the nursery. This inevitably diverted some of her attention away from tackling other issues pertaining to the nursery. On the other hand the evaluation research team, in the process of conducting their work, often acted as a vital support in times of crisis.

At Jigsaw, because of the way the evaluation was conducted, it served to maintain critical and often painful matters on the 'public agenda' e.g. partnership with the voluntary sector. As a consequence, a number of people involved thought that the evaluation, whilst very valuable, exacerbated the conflict. In other respects the regular feedback of data on such matters as children's development and 'quality' profiles served to reinforce the efforts and commitment of the staff.

Most, if not all, of the staff in the nurseries benefited professionally from their involvement in the evaluation process. It is never easy, whatever the circumstances, to be forced to stand back and analyse one's own work in an objective and systematic manner. To do so knowing that a wider public scrutiny would follow was all the more demanding. However throughout the study no one refused to co-operate with the research team and subsequent to the completion of the study, several of the procedures used in the evaluation were continued by the staff.

11.3 MODELS OF NURSERY PROVISION

Types of Provision

As outlined in Chapter 2, Britain has a range of provision provided by local authorities for children under five. Scotland is no exception. The most common type of provision is the nursery school or nursery class administered by Education Departments of Regional Councils. The second type is the day nursery run by Social Work Departments (except in Strathclyde) followed by Family Centres and Children's Centres, also run by Social Work. In recent years, a small number of integrated/combined centres have begun to emerge (Ferri et al, 1987). In Strathclyde (and also in Fife) a small number of such centres have recently been opened, two of which formed the basis of the present study.

Traditionally nursery schools and classes have provided an overtly educational child-centred experience for 3 and 4 year-old children on a part-time basis. Although the experience is valued and valuable in its own right as a means of promoting children's learning and development it is organised in a 'schooling' framework i.e. a nursery school/class is open at times of the day not too dissimilar from a primary school; school terms and school holidays are observed; it is eligible for formal inspection by HMI; there is a headteacher in charge with an additional teacher in some instances and such provision is eligible for external support from educational advisers, psychologists etc. It is not surprising therefore that many parents regard the experience as being a preparatory experience for their child starting primary school and in consequence many nursery schools and classes have long waiting lists. Hartley's recent study (1993) of nursery schools makes a significant contribution to our understanding of such schools. Day nurseries on the other hand are regarded more as 'daycare' concentrating on children's emotional and behavioural problems and organised as such to support families with particular

problems (e.g. 'at risk'). Family Centres and Children's Centres are in many respects quite similar to day nurseries but with the former, there is a commitment to working with other members of the family and not just the child (Canaan, 1992).

Community nurseries were introduced in Strathclyde to get over the differentials in operation and status between nursery schools/classes and day nurseries/family centres. The intention was to bring together the best practice of nursery education and daycare into a single institution thus avoiding the worst effects of stigmatising/labelling children inherent in the day nursery model. However as no specific guidelines existed vis-a-vis the organisation of community nurseries, variation between such nurseries was inevitable, though in general terms the nurseries adhered to several of the criteria defined in the Strathclyde Regional Council report **Under Fives** (1985), specifically: hours open; conditions of service for staff; provision for under-threes and liaison with other agencies.

Despite the common features two different models emerged. Largely due to the different nature of the two locations (but also due to professional practices in the area), 3-Towns Community Nursery was virtually forced to adopt a 'social pathology' model of provision. The incidence of social problems such as poverty, child abuse, single parents (less so ethnic minorities and special needs children) was so high in the area that the nursery was besieged by applications from families in acute need. As can be seen from Table 4.5, 55% of admissions were inter-agency referrals. Coupled with the high incidence of social and emotional behavioural problems of the children (see Table 8.3) this had a very significant impact on both the ethos and practices of the nursery.

On the other hand Jigsaw Community Nursery was very different. The style of this nursery was more in line with community work ideals where the effects of labelling and stigmatisation were able to be kept to a minimum due in part to the low incidence of families in the area with acute social problems seeking access to the nursery for their children and the effective liaison between professional agencies (see Table 4.3 and 4.5). Also, as the nursery had a drop-in cafe, staff were able to liaise with parents on an informal basis and offer support where appropriate.

Access

It is clear from the findings reported in Chapters 4 that the background of children attending the two types of provision were quite different. In part this was explained in Chapter 9 i.e. that the community nursery fulfilled a somewhat different expectation from that of nursery schools. Neither parents nor other professionals (with the exception of health visitors in the case of Springvale Nursery School) saw the nursery schools as a place for helping with acute family problems. Whereas the community nurseries (particularly 3-Towns) attracted many applications from families in greatest need. This difference in function is almost entirely attributed to the perceptions of parents and social workers which in turn are influenced by the *modus operandi* of the nursery schools i.e. part day; part year. Thus, although the community nurseries and nursery schools function quite differently the differences can not be attributed entirely to the attitude or practice of the staff - some differences are structurally generated. Once children get access to the nursery experience, the impact of the experience and the value to parents is virtually the same in both types of provision though community nurseries play a greater role in relieving emotional stress in families. It was also clear from Chapter 4 that the procedure of admitting children via panels proved fair and effective.

Aims and Objectives

Chapter 5 both outlined the aims and objectives of each nursery involved in the study and charted staff perceptions of progress towards their achievement. In terms of a comparison between the **scope** of the aims and objectives of community nurseries and nursery schools it is clear that the aims and objectives of the community nurseries (see Figure 5.2, 5.3, 5.6 and 5.8) are broader than the aims and objectives of the nursery schools (see Figures 5.6 and 5.11). Given that community nurseries are essentially 'integrated' provision such a difference in scope is only to be expected.

The data reported in Chapter 8 clearly shows that on the whole children attending the community nurseries were learning as much as children in conventional nursery schools and were well prepared for coping with the demands of primary school. In addition, children entering the community nurseries with acute social and emotional behaviour problems were significantly helped to overcome such problems (see Table 8). However the distinguishing feature of community nurseries is their relationship to families whose children attended the nursery

The 3-Towns Community Nursery was specifically designed to help alleviate problems in families with acute social need, whereas a feature of the design of Jigsaw Community Nursery was to further partnership with the voluntary sector. Neither of these domains figured in the aims and objectives of the nursery schools.

In terms of staff perceptions of the achievement of the aims and objectives, there was considerable variation both between and within the community nurseries. However with the nursery schools, there was a mutual consensus that the schools were achieving their aims and objectives consistently to a high degree (see Figure 5.12). In 3-Towns Community Nursery, the most notable achievement was the effective control of children's social and emotional behaviour, though very considerable progress had been made towards the achievement of several of the basic aims as described in Figure 5.2 viz.

- the provision of fully integrated, flexible extended day provision for 0-5 year olds
- the promotion of greater self-esteem and an ability to cope better in families with acute social need
- the promotion of children's learning

Areas of limited success were: the involvement of parents; liaison with social workers especially when a child was taken into residential care (see Figures 5.4 and 5.5); provision of educational opportunities for parents and in enabling parents to secure employment. Although the overall aims were undoubtedly over ambitious much more could have been achieved if greater support had been given to the nursery. All told absence of support from Advisers in the early stages and tokenistic support from Community Education were particularly debilitating.

In Jigsaw Community Nursery considerable success was achieved with the nursery unit (see Figure 5.9) and with most of the support services (see Figure 5.10). However, limited successes were: effective partnership with the voluntary sector; the provision of full-time places and provision for under-tuos. The model of a community nursery seen at Jigsaw was therefore limited and did not fully reflect the ideals inherent in the concept of such nurseries as articulated by Strathclyde Region's Member/Officer Group report, **Under Fives** (1985).

Quality of Provision

In terms of the criteria of quality defined by the Harms and Clifford Scale, the nurseries in the present study were quite similar. On the whole, by the end of the study the quality was of a high standard in all the nurseries. Clearly all the community nurseries in the present study provided an environment comparable in quality to that found in good nursery schools and much higher than that reported in day nurseries (Stephen and Wilkinson, 1993). However in terms of the broader criteria offered by Balageur et al (1991) the nurseries were diverse in several respects not least in their relationship with parents.

Terminology

The term 'Community Nursery' was brought into use by Strathclyde Regional Council's Member/Officer Group Report **Under Fives** (1985). The essential function of such a term was to imply flexibility and diversity of provision to suit the needs of families in the area in which the nursery was located:

It is recognised that there is no set model or definition of what should comprise such centres, although their general purpose has been to extend the offering of either day care or nursery education to include additional services such as adapting opening hours and length of yearly provision to suit local needs, provision of 'latch-key' and drop-in facilities for parents, toy libraries, parents' rooms, facilities for mother/toddler groups and playgroups, as well as providing health screening services, information/advice services and generally acting as local pre-five and family resource centres.
(SRC, 1985, p 29)

However provision of such flexible and diverse nature had to be set against a region-wide admissions policy - a policy which had to be **selective** given the high demand for places (see Chapter 4). The admissions policy - rightly or wrongly - acted as a screening mechanism to target provision at those families in greatest need. As has been seen in Chapter 4, the new community nurseries were to a large extent successful in this aspect of their operation. However the term **community** nursery implies a set of values at odds with those of division and selection, whatever the criteria. The concept of **community** is complex and has at least 94 definitions (Hillery, 1955). However in the context of local services the concept implies notions of shared perspectives, common pursuits and commonality of understanding with regard to the social relations in a defined geographic area. Allocating pre-five places to some families and not to others on the basis of 'confined' even confidential information does not reinforce notions of commonality. On the other hand, the term **nursery school**, whilst in some respects it conveys the message that it is ostensibly available to all, also implies that it is a rigid 'take-or-leave-it' establishment lacking in flexibility and diversity.

Both terms therefore have their drawbacks. Other terminologies already in existence include: Family Centre, Children's Centre, Day Nursery and designated centres such as Penn Green (see Chapter 1). In view of the difficulties created by the term community nursery it would not seem unreasonable to find an alternative name such as (X) - Nursery Centre where X was either the name of the local area in which the centre was located (e.g. 3-Towns Nursery Centre) or an invented name (e.g. Jigsaw Nursery Centre).

Second Phase of the Community Nursery Programme

Strathclyde Region has embarked on its second phase of opening community nurseries. Recent examples are: Quarrybrae, Campbelltown, Faifley and Devonview. In most instances existing provision has been adapted to create new and more flexible facilities. The policy has been, and still is, to convert existing nursery school provision into a community nursery when a headteacher moves or retires. However in the case of the most recent nursery (i.e. Budhill in Glasgow) a purpose-built nursery was designed to incorporate adult and community education facilities. This seems an eminently sensible way to proceed and with the benefit of hindsight should have been the course of action taken in 1988.

11.4 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

After only two years and despite daunting difficulties, the achievement of the two pilot community nurseries, were in many respects quite remarkable. They made substantial progress toward the achievement of many of their aims and objectives. They delivered:

- a nursery environment **comparable in quality** to that in good nursery schools
- the successful **promotion of children's development**
- help to many children to overcome **anti-social behaviour**
- help to many children in **stressful family circumstances**
- help to many parents **to cope better with their children** particularly where relationships had broken down
- the successful **targeting of provision at the problems of deprivation**
- a significant contribution to **preventing children from being taken into care and helping with rehabilitation**

There is little justification for the vociferous criticism levelled at the concept of community nurseries when it was first launched in 1985.

However this does not mean that all is well with the community nurseries. So much more could have been achieved particularly if the difficulties with accommodation and staffing had been foreseen. At the end of the first two years the principle weaknesses in relation to the original aims and objectives were:

- inadequate provision for **under-threes**
- a less than satisfactory **partnership** with the voluntary sector
- in the early stages, insufficient professional **support/advice** to the Heads of Centre
- at one of the community nurseries an ineffective **support network** involving other agencies for families in difficulties
- inadequate flexibility in the functioning of the nurseries to allow **parents to take up opportunities to further their education and training and/or become more economically active**

- insufficient **training opportunities** for staff, particularly unqualified staff
- a lack of a **consistent** staff group
- insufficient **parental and community involvement** commensurate with the collective ideals inherent in the term community nursery as expressed in the aims
- a lack of **breadth** in the experience of children attending the community nurseries by insufficient harnessing of local community resources

To some extent these shortcomings were generated by events and situations out-with the control of the community nurseries. 1989 to 1991 was a period of major re-organisation within the Directorate and Advisory Service of the Region's Education Department following the implementation of aspect of the INLOGOV report. Extensive changes in personnel created uncertainties about roles and responsibilities although in one community nursery support structures were strengthened. On top of this, the period was characterised by severe financial constraint and political uncertainty. Even so the two pilot community nurseries made remarkable achievements that have had a profound impact on families and children using the provision. On this basis the policy of the Regional Council to expand its community nursery programme is endorsed by the findings of the research.

Although the study was unable to examine cost-effectiveness issues in the community nurseries, it was clear that community nurseries are an expensive resource. That there is a need for such a resource is without question. The issue is one of targeting relatively meagre resources available to the pre-five sector. This is a political issue as it is concerned with priorities for the distribution of resources. For any local authority, particularly Strathclyde, to make such substantial in-roads into the problems of deprivation will require many community nurseries. From the recent policy statement (SRC, 1992) in these issues, it is clear that Strathclyde Region intends to maintain its community nursery programme albeit more realistic than that articulated in the 1985 policy statement.

The authority will continue its policy of opening up community nurseries or, where possible, changing nursery schools into this form of establishment. However it is not the intention of the education authority to change all nursery schools due to the prohibitive cost of such change. Each division will identify certain nursery schools which could be readily converted into community nurseries which would then work along with the nursery schools in designated areas to form a cluster. Each would provide extended day/extended year services to children.
(SRC, 1992, p 45)

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CHAPTER 12

REVIEW OF THE FINDINGS

12.1 THE FINDINGS IN CONTEXT

The underlying concern of the study was the role of government, particularly local government, in the provision of appropriate childcare to meet the changing needs of families in the 1990's. This concern was addressed by identifying the strengths and shortcomings of new types of nursery provision established by one specific local authority. The findings of the study have major significance for the delivery of publicly funded childcare, the provision of which is embedded in a complex network of tradition, theory and function.

Given the complexity and extensiveness of the theoretical field, the design of the study was one of 'best-fit', being similar to a scart connection on electronic equipment with many delicate strands or pins each one with a unique function but integrated into a totality to provide a comprehensive picture of the service being provided. The principle features of the design and methodology of the study were ecological, democratic, longitudinal and eclectic. As such, the potential confrontation between any initial naiveté on the part of the researchers and the complexities of social and political reality were avoided from the outset (Sechrest and Figuerado, 1993). No one single discipline e.g. psychology, sociology, could possibly have provided a unique design if the study was to achieve its purpose i.e. to address social policy on childcare from the identification of the strengths and shortcomings of new provision for families with young children. Inevitably the design had to draw on a multiplicity of methods of investigation.

The design of the study was based on the ecology of child development put forward by Bronfenbrenner in 1979. The data sets were constructed to address the effects of the nurseries at each of the 'layers' - micro, meso, exo and macro - of this theory.

The '**micro**' level (i.e. the family environment).

The first research questions posed concerned the appropriateness of the new provision for the needs of families in the areas in which the nurseries were located. As such, the design included a survey of families in the respective areas. Clearly the survey identified an outstanding need for flexible childcare provision for all ages of pre-school children. Many of the families in two of the areas surveyed (3-Towns and Easterhouse) were in dire circumstances, financially and socially. Families in South Strathkelvin were generally more comfortable, though this finding has to be seen in terms of the less systematic sampling procedure used in the area. However, the data generated by the survey were consistent with other statistical data for South Strathkelvin generated both by the District Council and the family case-study reported in Chapter 9. Provision of appropriate childcare was therefore of major significance in all three areas. Clearly in 3-Towns the concept of a community nursery, as described in Chapter 2, was very appropriate for families in this area of

Ayrshire. The number of dysfunctional families was alarming. As a consequence, the nursery was very quickly swamped by children with acute social and emotional behaviour problems that required immediate attention not only by the nursery staff but by external professionals. A social pathology model of a community nursery therefore predominated in 3-Towns.

At Jigsaw the social circumstances of families were less acute. Nevertheless, as no other local authority provision existed in the area, there was a great demand for places at the nursery, though predominantly on a part-time basis. This meant that the nursery functioned more as an extended nursery school within a network of voluntary provision, though the nursery provided opportunities for mothers (and in some instance, fathers) to make contact with other mothers through use of the cafe.

Concerning matters in the families themselves, most families reported a high level of stress, to an extent stemming from the inadequacy of their housing and feeling the need to discipline their children. In two parent/partner households, only domestic tasks were shared, childcare tasks being regarded as the responsibility of the mother. Families in 3-Towns and Easterhouse were largely dependent on State Benefits in contrast to families in South Strathkelvin. Most respondents expressed the need to escape pressures, albeit on a temporary basis, from partners, children and the home environment.

With regard to the impact of the nurseries on family dynamics, the study adopted both ethnographic and psychological procedures, though in hindsight the data from the interviews might have been analysed further in more qualitative terms to convey the essence of family response to the nurseries. Most respondents to the interviews gave two reasons for using the new nurseries i.e. benefits to the child (socially and cognitively) and benefits to themselves in terms of creating more free time to pursue their own interests. Unfortunately these pursuits only marginally involved respondents becoming more economically or educationally active.

Most respondents reported positive changes in their child's behaviour as a consequence of attending the nursery. Similarly most respondents reported less involvement with other agencies - social work and health - for reasons that there was less of a need for such external professional support, possibly indicating a more stable family environment. Supporting evidence for this came from the few numbers of families reporting upheaval e.g. marital breakdown, during the period of the study. This was in stark contrast to the number of family break-ups in the area in the period before the nursery opened.

In terms of the data from the Caldwell Home Inventory, there was some tentative evidence that, although households were generally warm and affectionate to their children, the variety of experience provided by the families was poor, stimulation of their children being left to the nursery experience.

The meso level (i.e. the nursery)

The second set of research questions were concerned with whether the new provision could attract and admit children from those families whose need was

deemed to be greatest i.e. who suffered the worst effects of deprivation. The design therefore included a statistical analysis of applications and admissions focusing on the decision-making process with regard to the selection of children for the nurseries. The analysis clearly showed that the new provision effectively targeted those families for which the provision was designed. The community nurseries were able to attract applications and admit children from families in greatest need to an extent not previously achieved by nursery schools. This firmly vindicates the policy of the Regional Council in that resources such as pre-five provision should be targeted at the problems of deprivation, though whether this policy is sufficient is raised in the next section.

The third important issue concerned the achievement of the nurseries' aims and objectives. For this, a special procedure was devised involving all the staff and the researchers in each of the nurseries concerned. In hindsight, this procedure could have been more rigorous, in that specific performance indicators should have been specified for each objective so that more visible evidence would be available on which to make judgements about progress. Such a course of action was taken in a subsequent research endeavour (Wilkinson and Stephen, 1992). Nevertheless the process of reaching judgements about progress was based on negotiation between staff and researchers bringing a degree of objectivity to staff perceptions.

From Chapter 5, it is evident that the new nurseries were struggling to meet all their aims and objectives. Both nurseries were handicapped by staffing difficulties, but 3-Towns Community Nursery was further hampered by lack of suitable accommodation. Directing energies at the achievement of aims and objectives had, therefore, to be prioritised. However, by the end of the study period, there was very strong evidence to support staff perceptions that the nurseries were successful in promoting children's development and well-being. Certainly in 3-Towns, the number of children with social and behavioural problems plummeted dramatically. On the whole the nurseries were also successful in establishing contact with parents and other agencies though maintenance proved difficult in 3-Towns Community Nursery.

In order to understand more about the process of innovation as a source of explanation for the problems encountered and the decisions taken to overcome them, a more ethnographic technique was adopted as being relevant for this part of the investigation. Intensive interviews were conducted with a whole range of personnel from parents and professionals to administrators and politicians. This part of the study (Chapter 6) identified the conflicts and pressures associated with developing new kinds of institutions. A particular difficulty was encountered in maintaining an effective partnership with the voluntary sector at Jigsaw Community Nursery.

A visible feature of both community nurseries was the degree of conflict involved - in 3-Towns, a conflict between bureaucratic unresponsiveness, political expediency, and practical reality; in Jigsaw, between bureaucratic control and voluntarism. It is difficult to establish whether the two arenas for conflict had much in common other than cultural resistance to change. However, in 3-Towns there was evidence of what might be considered conspiratorial behaviour in Ayr

Division of the Region's Education Department. The nursery school lobby (headteachers and advisers) was very unhappy about the new nurseries, largely as they were seen as a means of demoting the status of the teaching profession, principally the headteacher. The new conditions of service in the community nurseries (APT and C) were less attractive than those of a teacher. The Adviser in Ayr Division had little visibility at a crucial time of the nursery's development and the Head of the nursery was not involved in in-service provision for existing nursery heads. But inter-departmental conflict was also a feature in 3-Towns. The District Architect's Department refused to prioritise the conversion of the designated accommodation. In hindsight, the conflict could have been avoided by a completely new building (as is the case with new Partnership Nurseries Ltd. in Glasgow). Conflict with the Social Work Department was partly caused by a clash of priorities for limited resources and partly by personality clashes.

Conflict at Jigsaw was more fundamental. The voluntary sector representatives were under the impression that power sharing which featured in the planning of the nursery would continue with shared decision-making on the running of the nursery. This clearly conflicted with the understanding of regional officials. Once the nursery was established, line management procedures had to predominate, ostensibly for accountability reasons, but more likely for status and resource reasons. The regional officials charged with the administration of Jigsaw would not permit power-sharing with the voluntary sector representatives. The tensions this created were considerable and inhibited the development of joint provision.

Examination of the quality of the nursery provision was essential if the new nurseries were to have any future. Quality is such a prominent, sensitive and controversial matter in all service provision in the 1990's that the evaluation would have been depleted if this matter had not been tackled. The essential features of the debate were dealt with in Chapter 2 and on pragmatic grounds it was decided to use an existing instrument that was both reliable and valid. Adopting the Harms and Clifford however, was not without its problems. Because of the theoretical basis on which the instrument was devised i.e. the psychology of child development and the cultural traditions of American nursery education, the instrument used a model of nursery provision not necessarily in total harmony with the values and traditions of what some may deem as 'good nursery practice' in Scotland. The position of Balageur et al (1992) on 'quality' is much more comprehensive and in the longer term more fruitful. However at the time of designing the present study, no readily available usable research instrument based on Balageur et al's ideas was available. Nevertheless, the study showed that despite the daunting difficulties facing the managers and staff of the new nurseries in Strathclyde, a quality environment was delivered by the end of the study period (Chapter 7), though the degree of staff turnover in the community nurseries gave rise for concern.

The sixth area of interest was the effects of the new nurseries on children themselves. There is little point in making provision available if the children who attend this provision do not benefit in development terms. The study employed well established techniques for assessing children's development and for screening the nurseries for children's emotional and social problems. As already mentioned in Chapter 8, the data gathered on children's progress might be lacking in reliability

given that no reliability procedures using external expertise were undertaken. However this does not mean to say that the data were unreliable. The checking procedures adopted by the nursery staff acted as a buffer against any excessive error. In terms of group trends, the data seemed to indicate that 3- and 4-year old children were making progress during their time in the nursery; that this progress was comparable between nurseries and in line with the progress made by children in conventional nursery schools. The picture with under threes was less clear, some children seeming to make progress, others no progress at all. However the numbers tested were quite small and therefore caution is required in the interpretation of the data. An interesting observation by several mothers was that their child seemed more boisterous as a consequence of attending the nursery and as such, required firmer discipline in the home.

The 'exo' level (i.e. neighbourhood networks)

A defining feature of the new community nurseries was the integration of education and care. Effective provision that integrates the traditions of nursery schools and day nurseries requires active working relationships with other agencies. Nurseries on their own are not able to tackle difficult social and family issues especially where dysfunction has occurred. They can ably assist however in prevention, identification and rehabilitation. Inter-agency liaison is a complex matter involving inter-departmental, inter-dependent relationships. The nursery is dependent on support from other agencies in terms of crisis and similarly other agencies (e.g. social work) are dependent on the nursery for flexible childcare. Through interviews with representative of a range of other agencies, the study was able to identify the features and limitations of a co-ordinated approach to childcare provision. Although the anxieties expressed by the Association of Directors of Social Work raised in Chapter 2 i.e. the prediction that integration would result in a diminution of effort from social workers, were to some extent dissipated by the experiences at one community nursery (i.e. Jigsaw), the situation at the other community nursery (i.e. 3-Towns) was less than satisfactory. Whilst the community nurseries were seen as an appropriate and valuable resource and were used by other agencies to an extent greater than nursery schools, day-to-day liaison proved difficult to maintain. However, at Jigsaw, effective working relationships were established with social workers, health visitors and educational psychologists, showing that integrated provision can indeed function effectively at this level.

In terms of informal neighbourhood social networks, those families in greatest economic hardship were more dependent on relatives living in the area. Relatives were more important in 3-Towns and Easterhouse, whilst friends were more important in South Strathkelvin. For some mothers, the nursery helped them to make contact and form friendships with other mothers. Neighbours, however, seemed to be a source of alienation, though the reasons for this were not explored by the research. A marked trend in the response of respondents was the wider social network for children who attended the nursery, arrangements being made by the parents for the children to play together after nursery.

The 'macro' level (i.e. values and beliefs)

Here the data were somewhat confusing. On the one hand most parents expressed a need for childcare whilst on the other hand, most mothers did not see a need for full-time care seeming to reject any possibility of full-time work, because they saw their primary role as one of caring directly for their child's needs. They expressed a need for respite rather than a desire to seek work, despite the fact that the family was suffering from economic hardship.

Very few of the mothers expected any help from their husband/partner in childcare tasks, again supporting the view that feminist values had had little impact in these areas. Conventional notions of motherhood strongly predominated in all areas. Therefore, at least in the short term, the nurseries seemed to have little impact on mothers' value systems.

12.2 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Ideological considerations

The study clearly showed that the policy of integrated provision is both an appropriate and effective means of targeting quality childcare at disadvantaged families. However, as far as access to pre-five provision is concerned, disadvantage and need were defined in terms of social/psychological criteria e.g. single parent; child abuse etc. and not so much in terms of economic hardship per se. The study did not identify to any great extent that families were becoming economically more active as a consequence of using the community nurseries or even attempting to enhance their employability through further education and training. The community nurseries were seen as providing temporary respite from childcare not as a means of opportunities to relieve poverty. But if poverty is to be tackled, parents have to be given opportunities either to work or to seek work, released from the demanding tasks of routine childcare. Persuading mothers to take up such opportunities is a long term problem and a challenge to adult education.

The current admissions policy for pre-five provision in Strathclyde Region reinforces the notion that publicly funded childcare is based on social pathology i.e. provision that attempts to ameliorate the private ills associated with child rearing within the family unit. However, if poverty in specific families is to be taken on board by public bodies such as local authorities, parents have to be given opportunities to increase the family income by securing paid work. Relief from constant childcare responsibilities (mostly involving women) is therefore paramount. Somehow an admissions policy has to reflect both the functionalist perspective embodied in social pathology and the structuralist perspective that locates family circumstances, such as poverty, in more global terms. The research reported in the study demonstrates the weaknesses in the current targeting policy as a means of tackling all the problems of disadvantage and deprivation.

It emerged from the family survey reported in Chapter 3 that the demand for provision for children under the age of three was approaching 50% of the parents surveyed. The demand for childcare for under-threes was further confirmed from the analysis of applications and admissions, where 51% of applications and 45% of admissions were for children under three. The data from the family survey seemed to indicate that values and notions of motherhood might be changing. The traditional concept of mothers as dedicated time serving 'childminders' for children under three could be fast diminishing. However, caution must be expressed. The reason for the extent of demand for childcare for under-threes has more to do with psychological pressures on the mothers rather than a more fundamental shift in their value system.

A further ideological dimension to childcare is the issue of child protection. A critical issue in the present study was the role of the nursery in both identifying specific danger signals (e.g. bruising) and in preventing children from being taken into care (e.g. child abuse cases). Although the study was not able to demonstrate conclusively that the community nurseries were fully effective on this front, the consensus of opinion from all those involved was that the new nurseries had indeed been successful in prevention and rehabilitation, certainly to a degree more so than other forms of pre-five provision. Ideally the study should have monitored the referrals and placement rates in the Social Work Districts in which all the nurseries were located and studied such referred families longitudinally. Unfortunately due to the inaccessibility of this data, the task proved too difficult.

Psychological considerations

The nurseries were successful in promoting children's development on a range of criteria: thinking skills; language skills; social skills and physical growth. Whilst the design of the study did not allow the attribution of this progress specifically to the nursery experience (there was no non-nursery control group) children left the community nurseries with a range of appropriate educational skills seemingly comparable to children who attended conventional nursery schools. This finding is consistent with other studies on childcare and socially disadvantaged children (Scarr and Eisenberg, 1993).

Analysis of the data in both Chapters 4 and 10 clearly show that many children were admitted to the community nurseries for reasons of family problems, from child abuse and family stress to developmental delay. It was not surprising therefore that the incidence of social and emotional problems in children in one community nursery (i.e. 3-Towns) was very high. The nursery had a critical role to play in off-setting these problems and in preventing a slide into social deviance for many children. The data reported in Chapter 8 clearly show that the new nurseries were successful in reducing the number of children with cause for concern in their social and emotional behaviour.

Data from both the family survey (Chapter 3) and the case study families (Chapter 9) clearly showed that the vast majority of mothers were heavily bound up with the mothering process and expressed child related criteria as reasons for using the nursery provision. The survey detected a significant difference in childcare

patterns between mothers who had different levels of education, mothers with the minimum amount of schooling displaying more traditional values of motherhood. However a significant minority (particularly those with family stress of one sort or another) appreciated the value of childcare in terms of its benefit to them as persons. It gave them time to be on their own and to socialise with others in the knowledge that their child was well cared for. As such, it is more than likely that sending their child to the community nursery helped to reduce the stress level in the family though the study did not generate any conclusive evidence to this effect. Of those mothers who either found it necessary to work outside the home and who specifically wanted to seek work, their job opportunities were, on the whole, mundane, i.e. part-time work of a physical nature.

Whether it was too soon to expect the nurseries to affect women's horizons of their potential (the 'sleeper' effect) or whether there were insufficient opportunities for work or further education was not resolved by the study. What was resolved however, was that the nursery provision available to them was fulfilling their main expectations, and as such enhancing the quality of their lives.

The family survey reported in Chapter 3 revealed an horrendous level of marital break-up amongst families with young children - up to three times the national average in one APT area of Ayrshire. Undoubtedly such upheaval was associated with the demands of childrearing. However, the study also showed (Chapter 9) that of those mothers who used the childcare provision in the community nurseries, the support offered was associated with a period of relative stability in their lives and of help with their own individual problems.

The study therefore provides some tentative evidence that use of childcare facilities can have a positive effect on a woman's self-esteem and social stability. Coupled with the fact from Chapter 8 that their children made significant developmental progress whilst in the nursery, the view that good quality childcare can have a positive effect both on mothers and children is supported. Such mutual benefit can have a positive snowball effect on the relations between mother and child.

Educational and welfare considerations

The community nurseries were established to ascertain the feasibility of integrating education and welfare. Could the different functions of childcare, hitherto provided by different institutions, be put together to ensure well-being and protection of young children and at the same time provide them with an environment that would both promote their learning and trigger a more supportive home environment? The study provided evidence that such provision was both feasible and effective, at least for a specific sector of society.

The new community nurseries were targeted at social deprivation. They were designed, notably for those areas suffering from economic and social hardship. Specific families within the area had priority of access. However use of the term 'community' nursery is in itself problematic as it carries notions of shared values and universality, not selectivity. Some parents, therefore, might be excused for thinking that access to community nurseries was open to all.

Such notions of universality are also part of the education system. Schooling (at least from the age of 5) is available to all. Several parents, particularly in South Strathkelvin, who were denied access to the nursery for their child, were somewhat resentful of the priority given to specific families, as to them, a community nursery meant a nursery for the community, irrespective of family circumstance. But education is wider than merely access. It has an important internal socialisation and selection function as well as a libertarian, individualistic function. It was apparent in both community nurseries that the potential conflict of these functions with the welfare function had been avoided. Children had indeed been helped to learn in a safe, secure and stimulating environment, thus indicating that integration of the different functions of education and welfare can operate within the same institution.

However, despite the conflict discussed earlier, the two nursery heads and their staff managed to secure the establishment of institutions that delivered a quality childcare environment. The concept is therefore considered to be viable but could have been considerably more effective in both 3-Towns and Jigsaw if there had been more time for careful planning and the allocation of suitable resources from the outset.

12.3 CHILDCARE POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The study of childcare policy is important for a number of groups: firstly for social scientists, secondly for policy-makers, and thirdly for families with young children. As far as social science is concerned, one aspect of the study was the predominance of childhood and its significance to society. The meaning of age and treatment of different ages are found to vary between societies, between social groups, and over time. Such meanings and practices may be argued to have only a limited connection with biological factors and much to do with the nature of society and the role of different groups within it. While it is true that the formal legal childcare machinery of the State only involves a minority of children, the role of the State in providing care for children as an alternative to parental care, in intervening between parent and child in various ways, and in providing worthwhile educational experiences - can tell us much about childhood in society and how children are perceived and treated. For example, in modern western societies children are not seen as being as fully responsible for themselves as adults are. They are seen as vulnerable and in need of some protection.

A second reason for an interest in child care policy in the social sciences concerns an understanding of what is meant by the family. The family is seen as a central social institution, carrying *inter alia* the function of reproducing the next generation and hence the society of the future. Study of the family has generated a great deal of recent interest. Two features of this interest have been, firstly, a focus on family *change*, in response to the many changes which are perceived to be occurring, and to be of significance, in western societies (such as a markedly increased incidence of divorce and its consequences); and secondly, a focus on *diversity*, not only of actual forms, but of norms and beliefs concerning the family.

The interest for social science is perhaps essentially that there seems to be no universal consensus either on what the family is, or on what it ought to be. Children are central to most notions of the family unit. Here again there is both change and diversity of family patterns and approaches. For example, the increased fragmentation and realignment of parent couples may affect children's experience and upbringing profoundly. Children's lives are also probably more heterogeneous than they were, and the conflicting beliefs about what is good for the family, and individuals in families, overlap with the question of what is good for children as a special group.

A third point concerns the role of the State and the inter-relationship between the State and its citizens. There is a common belief that the modern state should have legal powers to intervene coercively between parents and children where there has been clear maltreatment. Intervention may take the form of both prosecution of the offender and removal (or supervision) of the child. Yet popular concern about child welfare is balanced by a perhaps equally strong concern about the dangers of the State having excessive powers and making unwarranted intrusions into the privacy of domestic life. The family may be seen as some kind of 'bastion' against the power of the State.

But the role of the State, especially the local state, is wider than child protection. It is recognised, both by the State itself and the families within it, that provision of childcare, in both an educational and welfare sense, is important. Whilst the family unit undergoes radical change, external support by the State is essential. How this support is delivered however, is controversial. On the one hand, the ideology of the political 'Right' requires that the private sector should take a greater role especially for the middle classes, leaving local authorities to deal with the problems of social deprivation strapped for appropriate resources to carry out the task effectively. On the other hand, the ideology of the 'Left' requires both central and local government to take a more active part - central government providing resources, local government shaping the nature of the services at local level. Such is the position advocated by Canaan (1992).

Clearly the present study has shown that the local state could and should take a greater role in the provision of childcare but requires the necessary resources to do so. What therefore seems to be happening in contemporary Britain, vis-à-vis childcare, is an increasing diversity of provision according to social and economic status - private and employer led provision for the economically active middle class, local authority led provision for the working class, specifically those families within it who are in greatest need and a potential risk to the social stability of society.

In such an environment, education as a process of liberation has a vital role to play. Adult education has to become more effectively linked to childcare provision to encourage parents living in areas of deprivation to take full advantage of the services provided.

Attempts to 'educate' mothers in the past have mostly focused on reinforcing traditional values through courses on parenting and child development provided by

such institutions as the Open University. Whilst such courses are valuable in themselves, they do not challenge convention and might be seen by some as encouraging mothers to maintain their prime responsibility at the expense, in the longer term, to themselves and their children. A social policy for childcare has, therefore, to take on board provision of adult education and flexible childcare provision to allow mothers to take a more varied and active role in society.

To a large extent this position sits uneasily with the role of the voluntary sector, which depends almost entirely on the availability and good will of mothers in making their contribution to such provision as playgroups etc. Unfortunately, the present research was unable to identify a way forward for the voluntary sector as neither community nursery in Strathclyde was able to forge a radically new relationship with that sector.

12.4 CONCLUSIONS

The study set out to examine three fundamental interrelated issues concerning the social policy of childcare in Britain in the 1990's. It has shown, through an elaborate evaluation of new provision, that the concept of a community nursery is an appropriate and partially effective means of helping families in acute social need. However, the resolution of the worst effects of social deprivation requires an economic and educational strategy just as much as a childcare strategy. Families in socially deprived areas have to be given opportunities to escape the poverty trap through policies designed to give them time and motivation freed from the routine tasks of childcare. Providing these opportunities in the short term has proved difficult with the two pilot community nurseries in Strathclyde. The experience of the two nurseries has shown that, although the concept has viabilities, ineffectiveness in the management of innovative childcare provision can have a serious negative impact on the stability and morale of staff charged with the delivery of such high quality childcare. Establishing effective innovation requires priority and co-ordination across a whole range of local authority services. Such priority and co-ordination can only be achieved through stronger political lead and a bureaucratic structure sympathetic to and in harmony with that lead.

In relation to social theory, the study has demonstrated the complexity of the childcare field. Whilst the design of the study was based on the ecology of child development, it has little to say about the relative impact of each of Bronfenbrenner's layers other than to confirm the significance of environmental factors such as family and nursery. The study was not designed to challenge or test Bronfenbrenner's theory as such - the theory merely acted as a guide to the choice of research questions and methodology.

However, the study challenges contemporary social theory in childcare. The present system of childcare in Britain embodies a distinction between child liberation and individualism (as expressed in education) and child protection (as expressed in welfare and family support). The continued distinction between these two functions in most local authorities serves to maintain a social order in which children learn the fundamental features of social hegemony. Welfare provision,

albeit essential, legitimates inadequacy and low status. Schooling, on the other hand, is more complex. Whilst it legitimates initiative and betterment, it also serves as a selection agency for those who conform. Within an essentially social democratic ideology however, equality of opportunity must predominate. All citizens, all families, must have opportunities for progress and well-being, irrespective of temporary impediments, such as family dysfunction. Integrated provision can and should be the way in which such opportunities and resources can be more adequately shared in the promotion of a fairer society.

Good scientific research can inform public policy, but it can never determine public policy. Policy is made by a political process in which values usually play a larger role than information.

(Scarr and Eisenberg, 1993, p 638)

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COMMUNITY NURSERIES

IN

STRATHCLYDE REGION

1989 - 1992

J. Eric Wilkinson

**Thesis submitted in accordance with the regulations of
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

University of Glasgow, Faculty of Arts

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ANNEX 1

- 1.1 Forward to the SRC Member/Officer Group Report **Under Fives** (1985) by Cllr. R. Stewart, Leader of the Council.

FORWORD

By Councillor Stewart

The greatest future resource of Strathclyde is the young children of today, starting life with not prejudices and eager to enjoy the adventure of life. If they are to fulfil their potential it is vital that the Council and the staff charged with helping them on their journey are fully committed to working with and for them and their parents during the child's formative years.

A decade ago, children in the west of Scotland were blighted with the label "born to fail?". It remains true that many of our children today start life in families with too low an income, inappropriate housing and a poor physical and social environment but they also start with the love and affection of a family with all the warmth and generosity that means in Strathclyde. My experience as a grandfather and senior politician tells me that these qualities and go a long way towards redressing some of the inequalities perpetuated on our people. However, it requires all of us concerned with young children to support parents during the happy but difficult early years. This means parents, staff and volunteers working together for the common good of a child. These are easy works but difficult to translate into practice.

When the Council established a Member/Officer Group to look at the future direction of pre-five services in Strathclyde it entered a minefield of problems. I accepted the chairmanship of the group not only as an indication of the importance of pre-five services but also because of the difficult decisions that were required to be made. Pre-five services are under attack from three sides. The government regards the service as dispensable, which is why the most recent White Paper proposes a 20% cut in nursery education over the next three years. The Education and Social Work Departments treat pre-five services with less priority because it is a non-statutory service and some staff themselves attack the service by trying to keep it in separate compartments and competing with other providers.

My concern and that of my colleagues on the Member/Officer Group has been to protect the pre-five services from the ravages of government expenditure cuts and more than that, as the report shows we have allocated over £3m to develop services during the life of the group. Obviously this level of growth cannot be expected to continue as the Council faces the most trying financial circumstances in my lifetime in local government. What I would like to promise is to at least maintain the £18m of expenditure per annum on pre-five services, but with government expenditure cuts, nothing can be guaranteed. Whatever the scale of expenditure it will be just as important to make sure that the service is sensitively provided and properly targeted. The service must respond to the needs of parents and be provided in a more co-ordinated and unified way than has been the case up to now.

The recommendations of this report are far reaching and we would be the first local authority in Britain to integrate pre-five services in one department; although there are many who have urged such a change to fall in line with the best of European practice. This will be a major challenge for my colleagues on the Council, the managers of the service, and the staff. I acknowledge that some may find the changes difficult to accept and I would wish to emphasize that this is not a victory for one department at the expense of another. It is, hopefully, a victory for children and parents, who like myself, are at times confused by the complexity of the current service. It is my belief from long experience that parents would prefer a more straightforward service and that the term nursery should mean what the parent wants, not what one department has decreed. Only time will show whether our proposals have achieved the fundamental aim of giving the best possible start in life and only the staff, volunteers and parents can make it happen. We are creating the opportunity to work in a simpler and more co-operative style, the success which parents and children deserve is up to all staff to ensure.

Councillor Richard Stewart,
Chairman of Member/Officer Group on the Under Fives
and Leader of Strathclyde Regional Council.

ANNEX 2

2.1 Membership of the Academic Evaluation Advisory Group

2.2 Membership of the 3-Towns Evaluation Advisory Group

2.3 Membership of the Jigsaw Evaluation Advisory Group

2.4 Membership of the Buchlyvie Evaluation Advisory Group

2.1 Membership of the Academic Evaluation Advisory Group

Professor Kathy Sylva (Chair), Department of child Development and Primary Education, Institute of Education, University of London.

Helen Penn, former Head of Pre-Five Services, Strathclyde Regional Council.

Neil McKechnie, Inspector, Glasgow Division, SRC - Education Department.

Gill Scott, Lecturer in Sociology, Glasgow College.

Ronnie Hill, Regional Development Officer (Pre-Fives), SRC Education Department.

Dorothy Hill, Research Officer, SRC Social Work Department, Ayr.

Dr. Bronwen Cohen, Director, SCAFA.

Pamela Munn, Depute Director, SCRE.

Dr. Linda Marsh, Assistant Director of Education (Research), SRC - Education Department.

J. Eric Wilkinson, Research Director, Department of Education, University of Glasgow

Dr. Barbara Kelly, Research Fellow, Department of Education, University of Glasgow

Dr. Christine Stephen, Research Assistant, Department of Education, University of Glasgow.

2.2 Membership of the 3-Towns Evaluation Advisory Group (1992)

Dr. Tom Williams (Chair), Senior Psychologist, Psychological Services, Ayr Division, SRC - Education Department.

Johanna Brady, Head of Project, 3-Towns Community Nursery.

Daphne Purvis, Depute Head of Project, 3-Towns Community Nursery.

Irene Sloss, Head Teacher, Springvale Nursery School, Saltcoats.

Colin Hamilton, Area Manager, SRC - Social Work Department, Saltcoats District.

Anne Sutherland, Health Visitor, Ardrossan Health Clinic.

Lynne Fraser, Ardrossan/Saltcoats Link-Up Group.

Ronnie Hill, Regional Development Officer, (Pre-Fives), SRC - Education Department.

Mary Murphy, Pre-Five Officer, 3-Towns Community Nursery.

Sandra Moore, Pre-Five Officer, 3-Towns Community Nursery.

J. Eric Wilkinson, Research Director, Department of Education, University of Glasgow.

Dr. Barbara Kelly, Research Fellow, Department of Education, University of Glasgow.

2.3 Membership of the Jigsaw Evaluation Advisory Group (1992)

Eileen Dow (Chair), Regional Adviser - Scottish Pre-school Playgroup Association.
Lillian Goldie, Divisional Development Officer (Pre-Fives), SRC - Education Dept, Dunbarton.
Maureen Cran, Co-ordinator, Jigsaw Community Nursery.
Sheila Stuart, Link-Up Group representative, Stepps.
June Maycock, Dunbarton Division Co-ordinator, SPPA.
Catherine Russell, SPPA Fieldworker, Gartcosh.
Brian Lawler, Head Teacher, St. Barbara's Primary School, Muirhead.
Ronnie Hill, Regional Development Officer (Pre-Fives), SRC - Education Department.
David Elcock, Educational Psychologist, Psychological Services, Dunbarton Division,
SRC - Education Department.
Mary Milne, Health Visitor, Muirhead Clinic, Chryston.
Dorothy Murray, Senior Social Worker, SRC Social Work Department, Muirhead.
Sharon O'Rourke, Pre-Five Officer, Jigsaw Community Nursery.
Eileen McKenna, Regional Executive Officer, SPPA, Strathclyde Region.
Ellison Watt, Pre-School Community Organiser, Dunbarton Division,
SRC - Education Department.
J. Eric Wilkinson, Research Director, Department of Education, University of Glasgow.
Dr. Barbara Kelly, Research Fellow, Department of Education, University of Glasgow.

2.4 Buchlyvie Evaluation Advisory Group (1992)

Moira McLaren (Chair), Divisional Development Officer (Pre-Fives),
SRC - Education Department. Glasgow Division
Doris Gerard, Senior Educational Psychologist, Psychological Services, Glasgow Division,
SRC - Education Department,
Fiona Mackenzie, Health Visitor, Easterhouse Health Centre, Easterhouse.
Gerry Breslin, Area Manager, SRC Social Work Department, Easterhouse.
Harriet McFarlane, Health Visitor, Easterhouse Health Centre, Easterhouse.
Bernadette Owens, Acting Head Teacher, Buchlyvie Nursery School.
Linda Bell, Nursery Assistant, Buchlyvie Nursery School.
Pat Corrigan, parent, Easterhouse.
J. Eric Wilkinson, Research Director, Department of Education, University of Glasgow.
Dr. Barbara Kelly, Research Fellow, Department of Education, University of Glasgow.

ANNEX 3

- 3.1 An account of developments at Hozier Nursery School 1989-1990**
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ANNEX 3.1 An account of developments at Hozier Nursery School 1989-90

Background

The idea to establish a community nursery at Hozier Nursery School arose from Strathclyde Region's Pre-Five Unit in 1989 as one of the pilot community nurseries in Lanark Division. The plan was to convert an existing nursery into a community nursery along the lines as specified in the Member/Officer Group Report **Under Fives** (1985) by expanding the provision creating an extra 40 full-time equivalent places for children aged from birth to 5 years.

Hozier Nursery School is situated in the APT area of Viewpark - Fallside in Motherwell. The plan was therefore consistent with the Region's social strategy for targeting new developments in pre-five provision at areas of acute social need.

The nursery school was housed in part of a surplus primary school adjacent to a local primary school and occupied two floors - two playrooms on the ground floor, a creche room, staff room and mother/toddler group on the upper floor.

As with the other locations participating in the study, the research team made contact with the Headteacher of the nursery and proceeded to set up a local evaluation advisory group along the lines as for 3-Towns, Jigsaw and Buchlyvie nurseries.

However, it soon became apparent that insufficient funds were available from the Region to convert the additional accommodation required for the community nursery. No capital finding had been allocated in the annual budget thus delaying the project by several months.

During this time a number of concerns began to emerge about the desirability of the plan given the public high profile of the Region's pre-five policy. Parents whose children currently attended the nursery began to express anxiety that four-year olds living in the area would no longer have priority of access to the new nursery. Fuelled by the heated debate in the press about the Region's pre-five policy and by the resistance of many professionals to the new developments, particularly nursery teachers, this anxiety became stronger. So much so that a petition against the proposed community nursery was initiated by a group of local parents. The following has been extracted from the petition:

Hozier Nursery School as we know it would cease to be if these changes were allowed to go through. Our Nursery School, as it stands, is one of the best run. It also gives the highest quality of EDUCATION to our pre-school children which is vital to them in the year prior to school.

It is proposed to change the Nursery School into a Community Nursery which would bring the following changes into effect:

Forty extra places, Great you say, but do you realise that these extra places will have to accommodate the whole of the LANARKSHIRE AREA, with priority being given to special cases such as Social Work referrals. These could be 40 full-time or 80 part-time places. With the changes, a baby of say 2 months could be given a place until it reaches school age, therefore a 4 year old is deprived of a place for five consecutive years. Taking these points, and the wide area to be covered it cannot be seen to be of much benefit to this community.

110,000 for adapting the Nursery. This money has to be used for adapting surrounding rooms - not the Nursery as such. These rooms originally belonged to Burnhead Primary School and could be put to good use in educating over 5's.

More jobs. More staff. The minute the words change from Nursery School to Nursery Centre it does not have to be staffed by qualified teachers or Nursery Nurses. The emphasis would then be taken off Education and on to care. The Regional Authority say they hope to employ teachers, but as we understand the conditions of service are such that no qualified teacher or Nursery Nurse will want to be employed in this capacity. So we are then looking at a Social Worker being head of Department, employing Carers with just 6 weeks training. Pre-school education, as you know, prepares the child for school and we cannot afford to lose it for a glamorised child-minding service.

EXTENDED DAY, EXTENDED YEAR

It is suggested that the Nursery be open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m, 47 weeks per year. Again preferential treatment will be given to special cases from the whole of Lanarkshire. It is unlikely a mother with 2 or 3 children some of whom may be school age, will, during the school holiday send her pre-school child to to nursery while the others remain at home. In this case the Nursery would not run at full capacity. Therefore, would this large number of extra staff be required?

When these proposals first came to light through the local media in May 1989 with parents formally being consulted in September 1989, it looked and sounded so good for us all but with further insight it looks as if these changes will not benefit the community. We think it would be in all our interests to keep our Nursery intact and let the children of the future receive the attention and education the children of today and the past had been privileged to receive.

A Public Meeting

To discuss the above concerns a public meeting was called on behalf of the Region's Pre-Five Committee on 28.06.90, 33 parents attended the meeting, 32 of which had a child attending the nursery (14 of which also had another child on the waiting list). Representing the Region were the new Head of the Pre-Five Unit and the Education Officer with responsibility for pre-fives in Lanark Lanark Division of Strathclyde Regional Council. A member of the research team also attended and noted the following critical issues raised at the meeting:

- staffing
- provision for four year olds
- admissions policy
- quality of provision

Staffing

Parents asked if it was the case that teachers would not be on the staff of the new community nursery. The Education Officer replied that the Region could not guarantee any teachers on the staff or as Head but that salaries should be attractive to them but not necessarily the Conditions of Service. In the course of this reply the educational input to the new nursery was raised. The mothers were all concerned about the educational input - this was important for them and something they valued. Parents were assured that qualified staff would be employed and that they would (if teachers and nursery nurses) have educational training. However, the parents still seemed to favour teachers. Parents were also asked if the present staff would remain or have to re-apply for their posts. They were told that negotiations were currently underway.

Provision for 4-year olds

The point was made that the priority of the parents was for pre-school provision for all 4-year olds. They felt that although there might be some demand in the area for baby care giving as many 4-year olds a place as possible in a nursery school was what they wanted and that care for younger children was a lower priority. The change to a community nursery would provide 15 extra full-time equivalent places for 4-year olds and this wasn't considered to be worth the upheaval by many. The Head of the Pre-Five Unit pointed out that the community nursery fitted in with the Council's concerns with social as well as educational provision and that the extended day and all year opening was intended to allow some people to go to work if they needed to. Mention was made of the 10 baby places - justifying them on social grounds. Again the response seemed to be that 10 places didn't warrant the changes and in any case many of them would like to work. There was some feeling that young children should be with their mothers.

The admissions policy

Parents seemed reluctant to accept assurances that the admissions system would be the same as currently applied in the nursery school and there was a feeling that higher priority would be given to single parents. The feeling was expressed that those with husbands (who might be on their own all day with children) were being disadvantaged and that might be worse in a community nursery. Parents also seemed to suspect that there would be a tendency to offer more full-time places in a community nursery (to allow a parent to work) and this would limit the numbers getting any nursery experience.

Quality of provision

The issue of quality of provision at Hozier was raised several times. Parent obviously had a great trust in the quality of care currently available. The Education Officer's comment that that was a reason for choosing it for a community nursery did not reassure many.

The dominant feeling emerging from the parents present at the meeting was for the retention of Hozier Nursery School in its present form and a rejection of the community nursery proposal. When this notion was put to the meeting and a vote taken there was unanimous agreement.

A further development

Given the degree of antagonism to the community nursery proposals at Hozier, the impetus to generate the finance necessary to undertake the conversion was lost. However a number of local parents who had either been unable to gain access to the nursery school for their child or thought that it was not worthwhile making an application decided to lobby the appropriate Regional Councillors to pursue the original proposal for a community nursery. A further petition was submitted to the chair of the Pre-Five committee. However, despite a re-statement of the Region's intention to develop a community nursery at Hozier as soon as finance became available, Hozier Nursery School remained as it was in 1989. Clearly the well organised user-group coupled with support in the nursery was sufficient to thwart the implementation of Regional Council policy.

ANNEX 3.2 Background information on pre-school children in the area covered by the Three Towns Community Nursery in 1987.

The four Areas of Priority Treatment (APTs) with which the nursery is concerned are based within 2 electoral districts - Kilwinning/Stevenston and Saltcoats/Ardrossan. Statistics for these Districts are as follows:

Kilwinning/Stevenston					
Nos of pre-five children	-	Aged	0	429	
	-	"	1	388	
	-	"	2	402	
	-	"	3	404	
	-	"	4	432	
Total				2055	
Number of Single Parent Residences with Under-Fives					200
Single Parent Residences with Under-Fives as a % of Residences with Under-Fives in the District					14%
% of Females and Single Parents, 16-29 with Under Fives in the District					24%

Only 3% of the Under-Five population participate in local authority provision.

Saltcoats/Ardrossan				
No of pre-five children	-	Aged	0	292
	-	"	1	279
	-	"	2	267
	-	"	3	313
	-	"	4	349
Total				1500
Number of Single Parent Residences with Under-Fives				24%
Single Parent Residences with Under-Fives as a % of Residences with Under-Fives in the District				14%
% of Single Parents, 16-29 with Under-Fives in the District				26%

16% of the Under-Five population participate in local authority provision.

ANNEX 3.3 Membership of the 3-Towns Community Nursery Advisory Group (December 1992)

Cllr. Tom Colyer, Chair SRC Pre-Five Committee.

Cllr. Bridget McGeechan, Strathclyde Regional Council and Chair of Advisory Group.

Cllr. Archie Lambie, Strathclyde Regional Council.

Cllr. Jeanette Timmins, Strathclyde Regional Council.

Cllr. Theresa Beattie, Strathclyde Regional Council.

Mary Hogg, Pre-Five Divisional Development Officer, Ayr Division, SRC Education Dept.

Ronnie Hill, Regional Pre-Five Development Officer, SRC Education Department

Catherine Bain, PSCO, Ayr Division, SRC Education Department.

Colin Hamilton, Area Social Work Manager, Saltcoats, SRC Social Work Department.

Anne Sutherland, Health Visitor, Ardrossan.

Bill Brotherstone, Area Community Education Officer, Ayr Division, SRC Education Dept.

Dr. Tom Williams, Senior Educational Psychologist, Ayr Division, SRC Education Department.

Lynne Fraser, Ardrossan/Saltcoats Link-Up Group.

Jeanette Anderson, SPPA, Stevenston.

J. Eric Wilkinson, Department of Education, University of Glasgow.

Dr. Barbara Kelly, Department of Education, University of Glasgow.

David Neil, Assistant Head Teacher, Auchenhavie Academy, Stevenston.

Johanna Brady, Head of 3-Towns Community Nursery.

Daphne Purvis, Depute of 3-Towns Community Nursery.

Irene Sloss, Head Teacher, Springvale Nursery School.

Catriona Chapman, Pre-Five Worker, 0-5 Unit 3-Towns Community Nursery.

Sandra Moore, Pre-Five Worker, 3-5 Unit 3-Towns Community Nursery.

Mrs. Whyte, parent of child at the Nursery School.

ANNEX 3.4 Membership of Jigsaw Planning Group and Jigsaw Forum

Planning Group (1989)

Sheila Stuart, Link-Up representative, Stepps, Glasgow.

June Maycock, SPPA representative, Chryston.

Kate Duff, Primary Adviser, Dumbarton Division, SRC - Education Department.

Sheila Cronin, Regional Development Officer, Pre-Five Unit, SRC - Education Department.

Barbara Findlay, PSCO, St. Barbara's Primary School, Muirhead, Glasgow.

Jackie Henry, Pre-Five Development Officer, Dumbarton Division, SRC - Education Dept.

Councillor Gray, Strathclyde Regional Council.

Maureen Cran, Head of Jigsaw Community Nursery.

Cathy Russell, SPPA representative, Gartcosh.

J. Eric Wilkinson, Department of Education, University of Glasgow.

Jigsaw Forum (1992)

Sheila Cronin (Chair), Education Officer, Dunbarton Division, SRC - Education Department.

Sheila Stewart, Link-Up representative, Stepps, Glasgow.

Maureen Cran, Head of Jigsaw Community Nursery.

June Maycock, SPPA Co-ordinator, Dunbarton Division.

Cathy Russell, SPPA Fieldworker, Gartcosh.

Lilian Goldie, Pre-Fives Development Officer, Dunbarton Division, SRC - Education Dept.

Brian Lawler, Headteacher, St. Barbara's Primary School, Muirhead.

J. Eric Wilkinson, Department of Education, University of Glasgow.

Mary Milne, Health Visitor, Chryston Health Clinic.

Dorothy Murray, Senior Social Worker, SRC - Social Work Department.

Ellison Watt, Pre-School Community Organiser, Dunbarton Division,
SRC - Education Department

Annex 3.5 Interview schedule for the household survey

**UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW
THREE TOWNS QUESTIONNAIRE**

	Deck 1
1. Interviewer No.	Col. 1
2. Respondent No.	Col. 2 - 3
3. Area Code (APT (1) (2) (3)	Col. 4
4. Length of interview (in mins.)	Col. 5 6 7
5. Respondent's name _____	
6. Respondent's age (in years)	Col. 8 9
7. Could you tell me if you are solely responsible for caring for your children or if you have a husband or partner living with you. (Code only those living in the household)	Col. 10
Lone parent 1 Husband 2 Partner 3 Other relative 4 Specify _____	
(If lone parent go to 14)	
8. Husband/partner's name _____	Col. 11 12
9. Husband/partner's age (in years) (NA 00)	Col. 13
10. Is your husband/partner working at the moment? Yes (1) No (2) NA (0) (If no, go to 12)	

11. What exactly does he do?

Specify _____

- Unskilled (1)
- Semi-skilled (2)
- Skilled manual (3)
- Skilled non-manual (4)
- Intermediate (5)
- Professional (6)
- N.A. (0)

Col. 14

12. Why did he stop work?

- Sickness 1
- Made redundant 2
- Other 3
- N.A. 0

Col. 15

13. What exactly did he do before he stopped?

Specify _____

- Unskilled 1
- Semi skilled 2
- Skilled manual 3
- Skilled non-manual 4
- Intermediate 5
- Professional 6
- N.A. 0

Col. 16

14. How many children are there living at home at present? (List name and age in years and months from youngest to oldest up to six children)

Name	Age	
	Yrs.	Months
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Col. 17 18 19

Col. 20 21 22

Col. 23 24 25

Col. 26 27 28

Col. 29 30 31

Col. 32 33 34

15. Are there any other adults (other than your partner) living in your household? Col. 35
 Yes (1) No (2)
 (If no, go to 17)
16. If yes, how many Col. 36
 (Code No.) _____
17. Are you working at present? Col. 37
 Yes (1) No (2)
 (If no, go to 22)
18. Is the job full-time (1) Col. 38
 part-time (2) N.A. (0)?
19. What exactly do you do?
 Specify _____
 Unskilled (1)
 Semi-skilled (2)
 Skilled manual (3)
 Skilled non-manual (4)
 Intermediate (5)
 Professional (6)
 N.A. (0) Col. 39
20. How many hours do you work in a week? Col. 40 41
 (Code No. of hours)
21. In what periods of the day or night do Col. 42
 you usually work?
 A. 5 a.m. - 9 a.m. 1
 B. 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. 2
 C. 5 p.m. - 12 a.m. 3
 D. 12 a.m. - 5 p.m. 4
 E. Shifts during some combination of these periods (specify A, B, etc.) 5
 N.A. 0
22. Who is your employee? Col. 43

23. Is your place of work - Col. 44

Local (within the town of residence)	1
Within the Three Towns area	2
Outwith the Three Towns area	3
(Specify where _____)	
N.A.	0

24. (Non-working respondents only) (Rest go to 24)
What did you do before you stopped work?

Specify _____

Never worked	1
Unskilled	2
Semi-skilled	3
Skilled manual	4
Skilled non-manual	5
Intermediate	6
Professional	7
N.A.	0

Col. 45

25. Why did you stop work?

Marriage	1
Pregnancy	2
To care for children	3
Made redundant	4
Disliked job	5
Ill	6
Look after sick relatives	7
N.A.	0

Col. 46

(All respondents)

26. If your children could be satisfactorily looked after, what would you choose to do?

Stay at home	1
Work part-time	2
Work full-time	3
Do further education	4
Other _____	5

(Specify)
Multiple response 6
Specify _____

NK	7
NA	0

Col. 47

27. Is there anything preventing you from doing this?

No time	1
Lack of money	2
Prefer to stay at home with children	3
Lack of suitable child care	4
Lack of jobs	5
Lack of suitable courses	6
Lack of skills	7
Other (Specify) _____	8

Multiple response
Specify _____ 9

N.K. 0
N.A. 0

Col. 48

28. How old were you when you left full-time education? (in years)

Col. 49 50

29. Did you do any training or any more education after you left school? Yes (1) No (2)

Col. 51

30. (If yes) what was that?

University	1
FE College	2
Vocational training	3
Other	4
N.A.	0

Col. 52

31. Thinking only of your pre-school children, where does _____ spend most of his/her time when she/he's away from you. (Repeat for each pre-school child up to four children)

Cols. 53 - 57

(Can tick more than 1)	(Tick)	C1	C2	C3	C4
LA Nursery school/class	(1)	—	—	—	—
Playgroup	(2)	—	—	—	—
LA Day nursery	(3)	—	—	—	—
Private nursery	(4)	—	—	—	—
Creche	(5)	—	—	—	—
Childminder	(6)	—	—	—	—
Other individual (husband/relative)	(7)	—	—	—	—
N.A.	(0)	—	—	—	—

32. Do you have any relations
nearby who help in looking
after the children

Yes (1)
No (2)

Col. 58

Specify details _____

33. What about neighbours -
do they ever help in
looking after the
children at any time?

Yes (1)
No (2)

Specify details _____

Col. 59

34. Which days or half days does (name) _____
go to _____? (Repeat for each
where appropriate).

Code C1 C2 C3 C4 Col. 60 61 62 63

No. of
mornings _____

Col. 64 65 66 67

afternoons _____

Additional information? (Nature of arrangements) _____

35. How much do your child care arrangements cost
per week (for all children together)?

Nothing 1
Under 10 2
11 - 30 3
30 - 50 4
50+ 5
N.A. 0

Col. 68

36. How satisfied are you in general with your current child care arrangements?

Cols. 1 - 14

Ser.

Rat.

1 2 3 4 0

1. Nursery School/Class	___	___	___	___	___
2. Playgroup	___	___	___	___	___
3. Day Nurser	___	___	___	___	___
4. Private Nursery	___	___	___	___	___
5. Creche	___	___	___	___	___
6. Childminder	___	___	___	___	___
7. Other individual (including husband)	___	___	___	___	___

Respondents comments on reasons for choice _____

37. How satisfied are you that your child is making progress (gaining skills and experience) in your present arrangement

Cols. 15 -28

Ser.

Rat.

1 2 3 4 0

1. Nursery School/Class	___	___	___	___	___
2. Playgroup	___	___	___	___	___
3. Day Nursery	___	___	___	___	___
4. Private Nursery	___	___	___	___	___
5. Creche	___	___	___	___	___
6. Childminder	___	___	___	___	___
7. Other individual (including husband)	___	___	___	___	___

38. Why did you choose your current service or arrangement? (Can tick more than one)

Cols. 29 - 34

Child benefits from company of others	1
Child is prepared for school	2
Allows respondent to work	3
Allows respondent a break	4
Other	5
N.A.	0

39. Would you prefer a different service or arrangement to the one(s) you use? (Can tick more than one)

Cols 35 - 43

Nursery school	1
Playgroup	2
Day Nursery	3
Private Nursery	4
Creche	5
Mother and Toddler	6
Childminder	7
Other individual	8
N.K.	0

40.

Do you think services for pre-five children are adequate in your area?

Col. 44

Yes (1) No (2)

All respondents

There are to be some new developments in services for the under fives in the three towns of Stevenson, Ardrossan and Saltcoats. These will include some all day places in nurseries which will be open all year and some other facilities for pre-five children and parents. I would like to know if you've heard anything about this and if you think these services could be useful to you and your family.

41.

First, had you heard anything about these develop-ments?

Yes (1) No (2)

Col. 45

42.

If yes, how did you hear about them?

From a nursery playgroup or other1

From the press2

From a friend or neighbour3

From some other social service (social worker, health visitor, doctor, etc.)4

N.A.0

Col. 46

43.

Given the opportunity, would you wish your child to attend any of the following proposed services?

(A) A flexible full-time, all year day nursery for children under 3 yearsCol. 47

Yes (1) No (2) N.A. (0)

(B) A flexible full-time, all year day nursery for children 3-5 years.Col. 48

(C) Creche facilities to allow parents opportunities for education or leisure pursuits.Col. 49

Yes (1) No (2) N.A. (0)

44.

If you would **not** like your child to attend any of these services, why is that?

No present need1

Attends other services2

Not suitable/appropriate for child3

Other4

N.A.0

Col. 50

45. Can you tell me exactly what sort of service you feel would be ideal for your pre-school children?

Col. 51

(Write respondent's answer)

46. Would you say that enough is done for mothers of young children at present in your area or not?

- Enough

Not enough

OK
- 1

2

3
- Col. 52

47. Now just to finish off, what's the total income coming into this household every week?

- Under 40.00

41 - 60

61 - 80

81 - 100

101 - 140

141 - 160

161 - 200

Over 200
- 1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8
- Col. 53

I declare that I have carried out this interview and that the respondent was unknown to me.

Signature _____

Date _____

Comments on the interview (Interviewer)

ANNEX 3.6

HOUSEHOLD SURVEY IN THE APT DISTRICTS OF THREE TOWNS
COMMUNITY NURSERY BASED ON A SAMPLE OF 100 HOUSEHOLDS

SECTION A - FAMILY STRUCTURE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DATA

Location of Families

	Ardeer	Hayocks	Saltcoats South	Ardrossan Central
N	11	20	30	39

Respondents' Age (in years)

	23 or less	24 - 28	29 -33	34+
N	23	37	27	13

Respondents' Living Arrangements

	Lone parent	with husband	with partner	with other relative
N	35	59	5	1

Work for Husband/Partner

	Employed	Unemployed	Not Applicable
N	50	15	35

Husbands'/Partners' Socio-economic Status

	Professional	Managerial	Skilled (non-manual)	Skilled (manual)	Unskilled Semi-skilled
Working Husband/ Partner	11	2	4	26	7
Non-Working Husband/ Partner	1	0	3	4	5
Total	13	2	7	30	12
%	20	3	11	47	19

Work for Respondents

	Employed	Unemployed
N	29 (6 F/T; 23 P/T)	71

Respondents' Socio-economic Status

	Professional	Managerial	Skilled (non manual)	Skilled (manual)	Semi/ Unskilled	Never worked
Working	3	0	3	3	20	-
Not Working	2	0	6	11	46	6
Total	5	0	9	14	66	6

Working Respondents' Working Hours

	Early Mornings (5 am-9 am)	All Day (9 am-5 pm)	Evenings (5 pm - midnight)	Afternoon (Noon - 5 pm)	Shifts
N	0	12	4	0	13
%	0	41	14	0	45

Working Respondents' Work Location

	Local	Within 3-Towns	Outwith the area
N	12	5	12
%	41	18	41

Non-Working Respondents' reasons for stopping work

	Marriage	Pregnancy	Childcare	Redundancy	Other
N	2	45	3	10	11
%	3	64	4	14	15

Respondents' work Preference

	No work	P/T	F/T	Further Education	Other
N	17	34	25	3	21

Respondents' reasons for not working

	No time	Lack of money	Prefer to stay with child	Lack of suitable childcare	Lack of jobs	Other
N	1	2	22	29	3	14
%	1	3	31	41	4	20

Respondent's School Leaving Age (in years)

	15	16	17	18
N	26	60	8	6

Respondent's Education after leaving School

	None	Vocational Training	FE	University/ College	Other
N	58	8	19	1	14

Household Weekly Income ()

	Not available	Less than 60	61-100	101-140	141-160	160+
N	6	25	24	14	14	17

SECTION B CHILDCARE ARRANGEMENTS

Families’ participation in pre-school provision

	None	L.A Nursery or class	Play group	Private Nursery	Creche	Child minder	Other (e.g relative)
N	43	16	20	6	4	1	10

Respondents’ satisfaction with childcare (%)

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Not Very satisfied
L.A. Nursery school/ class	28	0	0
Playgroup	21	11	2
Private Nursery	11	0	0
Creche	7	2	0
Childminder	0	5	0
Other	0	4	0

Respondents’ reasons for childcare

	Social benefits for child	Child is prepared for school	Allows respondent to work	Allows respondent a break	Other
%	74	81	26	60	0

Respondents’ views on adequacy of services

	Adequate	Inadequate	No response
N	14	81	5

Relatives who help

	Yes	No
N	69	31

Neighbours who help

	Yes	No
N	20	80

Weekly Costs of Childcare ()

	Nil	Under 10	11 or over
N	69	24	7

SECTION C NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN STRATHCLYDE

Respondents' awareness of the developments

	Aware	Not aware
N	37	63

Respondents' preferences for flexible all year, all day provision

	Preferred	Not preferred	No view
Under 3's	41	27	32
3 - 5's	86	13	1

Respondents' preferences for creche facilities

	Desirable	Not desirable	no view
N	69	30	1

Respondents' views on availability of provision

	Enough	Not enough	OK at present
N	5	75	20

ANNEX 3.7

HOUSEHOLD SURVEY IN THE CHRYSTON AREA OF SOUTH STRATHKELVIN
BASED ON A SAMPLE OF 65 HOUSEHOLDS

SECTION A - FAMILY STRUCTURE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DATA

Location of Families

	0	1	2	3	4	5
N	9	15	12	1	23	5

Respondents' Age (in years)

	23 or less	24-28	29-33	34+
N	5	10	25	25

Respondents' Living Arrangements

	Lone parent	With husband	With partner
N	4	58	3

Work for Husband/Partner

	Employed	Unemployed	Not applicable
N	52	9	4

Husbands'/Partners' Socio-economic Status

	Professional	Managerial	Skilled (non-manual)	Skilled (manual)	Unskilled Semi-skilled
Working Husband/ Partner	4	4	8	17	19
Non-Working Husband/ Partner	0	0	0	2	7
Total	4	4	8	19	26
%	7	7	13	31	42

Work for Respondents

	Employed	Unemployed
N	26 (8 F/T; 18 P/T)	39

Respondents’ Socio-economic Status

	Professional	Managerial	Skilled (non manual)	Skilled (manual)	Semi/ Unskilled	Never worked
Working	2	2	6	3	13	0
Not Working	1	3	2	9	23	1
Total	3	5	8	12	36	1
%	5	8	12	18	55	2

Working Respondents’ Working Hours

	Early Mornings (5 am-9 am)	All Day (9 am-5 pm)	Evenings (5 pm - midnight)	Afternoon (Noon - 5 pm)	Shifts
N	0	11	2	0	13

Working Respondents’ Work Location

	Local	Outwith the area
N	7	19

Non-Working Respondents’ reasons for stopping work

	Marriage	Pregnancy	Childcare	Redundancy	Other
N	2	25	5	1	6
%	5	64	13	3	15

Respondents’ work Preference

	No work	P/T	F/T	Further Education	Other
N	9	17	5	4	12

Respondents’ reasons for not working

	No time	Lack of money	Prefer to stay with child	Lack of suitable childcare	Lack of jobs	Other
N	0	1	13	10	0	15
%	0	3	33	26	0	38

Respondents’ School Leaving Age (in years)

	15	16	17	18
N	10	37	11	7

Respondents’ Education after leaving School

	None	Vocational Training	FE	University/ College	Other
N	21	17	23	2	2

Household Weekly Income ()

	Not available	Less than 60	61-100	101-140	141-160	160+
N	4	5	8	7	8	37

SECTION B CHILDCARE ARRANGEMENTS

Families’ participation in pre-school provision

	None	L.A Nursery or class	Play group	Private Nursery	Creche	Child minder	Other (e.g relative)
N	19	8	19	5	1	3	10
%	29	12	29	8	2	5	15

Respondents’ satisfaction with childcare (%)

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Not Very satisfied
L.A. Nursery school/ class	17	2	0
Playgroup	13	24	7
Day Nursery	0	0	0
Private Nursery	9	4	0
Creche	2	0	0
Childminder	4	0	0
Other	24	2	4

Respondent’s reasons for childcare

	Social benefits for child	Child is prepared for school	Allows respondent to work	Allows respondent a break	Other
%	76	78	30	59	2

Respondents’ views on adequacy of services

	Adequate	Inadequate	No response
N	1	63	1

Relatives who help

	Yes	No
N	38	27

Neighbours who help

	Yes	No
N	25	40

Weekly Costs of Childcare ()

	Nil	Under 10	11 or over	N/A
N	12	24	10	19

SECTION C NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN STRATHCLYDE**Respondents' awareness of new developments**

	Aware	Not aware
N	55	10
%	85	15

Respondents' preferences for flexible all year, provision for 2-5 year olds

	Preferred	Not preferred	No view
Part-time	49	12	4
Full-time	25	38	2

Respondents' preferences for creche facilities

	Desirable	Not desirable	No view
N	43	21	1
%	66	32	2

Respondents' preference for after-school care

	Preferred	Not preferred	No view
	25	38	2

ANNEX 3.8

**HOUSEHOLD SURVEY IN THE EASTERHOUSE APT AREA OF BUCHLYVIE
NURSERY SCHOOL BASED ON A SAMPLE OF 74 HOUSEHOLDS**

SECTION A - FAMILY STRUCTURE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DATA

Respondents' Age (in years)

	23 or less	24-28	29-33	34+
N	24	27	18	5

Respondents' Living Arrangements

	Lone parent	With husband	With partner	Other Relative
N	32	34	4	4

Work for Husband/Partner

	Employed	Unemployed	Not applicable
N	20	18	36

Husbands'/Partners' Socio-economic Status

	Professional	Managerial	Skilled (non-manual)	Skilled (manual)	Unskilled Semi-skilled
Working Husband/ Partner	0	1	0	7	13
Non-Working Husband/ Partner	0	0	0	2	13
Total	0	1	0	9	26
%	0	3	0	25	72

Work for Respondents

	Employed	Unemployed
N	9 (2 F/T; 7 P/T)	65

Respondents' Socio-economic Status

	Professional	Managerial	Skilled (non manual)	Skilled (manual)	Semi/ Unskilled	Never worked
Working	1	0	0	0	8	-
Not Working	0	0	0	1	49	15
Total	1	0	0	1	57	15
%	1	0	0	1	78	20

Working Respondents' Working Hours

	Early Mornings (5 am-9 am)	All Day (9 am-5 pm)	Evenings (5 pm - midnight)	Afternoon (Noon - 5 pm)	Shifts
N	0	2	2	0	5

Working Respondents' Work Location

	Local	Outwith the area
N	2	7

Non-Working Respondents' reasons for stopping work

	Marriage	Pregnancy	Childcare	Redundancy	Other
N	2	23	8	13	4
%	4	46	16	26	8

Respondents' work Preference

	No work	P/T	F/T	Further Education	Other
N	2	37	16	5	9

Respondents’ reasons for not working

	No time	Lack of money	Prefer to stay with child	Lack of suitable childcare	Lack of jobs	Other
N	0	2	11	29	3	20
%	0	3	17	44	5	31

Respondents’ School Leaving Age (in years)

	15	16	17	18
N	17	47	7	3

Respondents’ Education after leaving School

	None	Vocational Training	FE	University/ College	Other
N	35	6	5	2	26

Household Weekly Income ()

	Not avail-able	Less than 60	61-100	101-140	141-160	160+
N	1	19	29	10	6	9

SECTION B CHILDCARE ARRANGEMENTS

Families’ participation in pre-school provision

	None	L.A Nursery or class	Day Nursery	Play group	Private Nursery	Creche	Child minder	Other (e.g relative)
N	36	23	1	6	0	3	0	5
%	49	31	1	8	0	4	0	7

Respondents’ satisfaction with childcare (%)

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Not Very satisfied
L.A. Nursery school/ class	58	8	3
Playgroup	16	0	0
Day Nursery	3	0	0
Private Nursery	0	0	0
Creche	5	0	0
Childminder	3	0	0
Other	13	3	0

Respondent’s reasons for childcare

	Social benefits for child	Child is prepared for school	Allows respondent to work	Allows respondent a break	Other
%	89	84	14	89	5

Respondents’ views on adequacy of services

	Adequate	Inadequate	No response
N	19	55	0

Relatives who help

	Yes	No
N	33	41

Neighbours who help

	Yes	No
N	15	59

Weekly Costs of Childcare ()

	Nil	Under 10	11 or over
N	43	31	0

SECTION C NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN STRATHCLYDE

Respondents’ preferences for flexible all year, all day provision

	Preferred	Not preferred	No view
Under 3’s	34	17	23
3 - 5’s	64	10	0

Respondents’ preferences for creche facilities

	Desirable	Not desirable	No view
N	60	12	2
%	81	16	3

Respondents’ views on availability of provision

	Enough	Not enough	OK at present
N	7	67	5

ANNEX 4

4.1 Revised Standard Circular 3A (Strathclyde Regional Council) on admission to nurseries in Strathclyde Region

INTERIM REVISION OF STANDARD CIRCULAR NO. 3A

To all Heads of Establishments

ENTRY TO NURSERY SCHOOLS AND CLASSES, DAY NURSERIES AND OTHER PRE-FIVE ESTABLISHMENTS

The purpose of this circular is to provide administrative guidelines which can be used by head of establishments. The admissions policy is still in the process of revision, but this letter represents an interim guideline.

All applications for admission to every establishment, irrespective of the length of the waiting list must be lodged initially with the head of establishment, on the form attached. Regular returns of numbers on the waiting lists will be required. Waiting lists should not be closed and all approaches for a placement should be recorded.

Transport is not usually provided by the Education department in respect of pre-fives, and the expectation is that where nursery provision exists, one would normally expect a child to be enrolled at the closest to his/her home.

Where there is a mixed locality, comprising APT (Area for Priority Treatment) and non-APT households, children from APT's should be admitted first all other things being equal. Bearing in mind the nature of the catchment, the number of children from APT's will need to be balanced against the demand for admission from children outwith APT's who fall within other priority one categories as listed below.

Further guidelines on catchment will be issued, once procedures for admissions panels have been resolved.

The following points should be noted:

1. Children admitted to nursery schools or classes should have attained the age of three years but not be older than 5 when accepted for entry. Children may if necessary be admitted to other establishments from an earlier age providing staff ratios and premises are adequate.
2. No establishment is denominational in character and children should be admitted without reference to religious belief.*
3. Priority should be given to the following categories of applicant.

* Calderwood Lodge in Glasgow division being the only known exception.

Category 1

- (i) child abuse referrals - automatic admission
- (ii) referrals from social work department and other social work agencies, children at risk from family breakdown where admission would prevent reception into care.
- (iv) GP/Health Visitor referrals

NB Consideration should be given to flexible use of places and such placements do not necessarily have to be full-time.

Category 2

- (i) single parent families
- (ii) first language not English
- (iii) family stress e.g. care of elderly dependents, medical or physical disability in family, 3 or more children under 5
- (iv) children who narrowly miss school intake

NB Full-time requests would usually be referred to an admissions panel.

Category 3

- (i) local children within catchment
- (ii) working parents who live outside catchment but working locally
- (iii) length of time on waiting list

NB As above (2).

Category 4

Children outwith the catchment.

Decision to admit or ratify admissions for category 1 and for full-time places is by admissions panel, where such panels currently exist. All other decisions may be made by Head of Establishment. The accompanying leaflet outlines procedures for any parent/guardian who wishes to appeal.

As noted above **all** applications for places must be recorded by the head of establishment, with priority category outlined. A waiting list must be prepared from these applications. In the case of nursery schools and classes who do not usually admit children until they are three, children's names should not usually be accepted until their second birthday, the child being admitted at any time of year after the third birthday whenever a vacancy occurs.

Further enquiries concerning this circular should be addressed to the divisional education office.

EDWARD MILLER
Director of Education

ANNEX 5

5.1 Aims and Objectives Review Sheet

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES REVIEW SHEET:

PROJECT NAME:

DATE:

DOMAIN:

AIM:

OBJECTIVE	PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING OBJECTIVE	COMMENTS ON PROGRESS	PLANS AND FUTURE ACTION

ANNEX 6

- 6.1 Establishing the 3-Towns Community Nursery - a report of interviews with key personnel**
- 6.2 Establishing Jigsaw Community Nursery - a report of interviews with key personnel**
- 6.3 Early Stages of 3-Towns Community Nursery - a report on staff interviews**
- 6.4 Early Stages in Jigsaw Community Nursery - a report on staff interviews**
- 6.5 3-Towns Community Nursery Two Year On - a report on staff interviews**
- 6.6 Jigsaw Community Nursery Two Year On - a report of staff interviews**
- 6.7 Jigsaw Community Nursery - a report on interviews with playgroup personnel**
- 6.8 Buchlyvie Nursery School - a report of staff interviews**

6.1 ESTABLISHING THE 3-TOWNS COMMUNITY NURSERY - A REPORT OF INTERVIEWS WITH KEY PERSONNEL

A number of key individuals involved in the setting up of the Three Towns Community Nursery project were interviewed in the autumn of 1989.

Those interviewed were:

Head of Springvale Nursery School

Regional Development Officer (Pre-Five), SRC

Divisional Development Officer (Pre-Five), Ayr Division, SRC

Regional Councillor and Depute Chair of Pre-Five Committee

Two parents

The following paper presents the views of some of the members of the Three Towns project consultative group on the history and development of the project. This group was formed in response to the final successful submission of the Urban Aid proposal to manage the development of the project. It included a member of the Pre-Five Unit, two councillors, a developmental officer, local parents who were also members of Link-up groups, representatives of the social work department, a psychologist and the Head Teacher of Springvale Nursery School. A number of these individuals responded to an interview schedule on the history and development of the project prior to autumn 1989. The interview covered the history of the project, the roles of those interviewed in their consultative capacity and the objectives and viability of the project.

1. Introduction

The term "Three Towns" refers to the towns of Saltcoats, Stevenston and Ardrossan located on the Ayrshire coast. Many traditional industries are in decline and unemployment in the area is high. Within the three towns area there are four Areas of Priority Treatment (APT's): Ardeer (Stevenston), Ardrossan Central, Hayocks (Stevenston) and Saltcoats South. Each of the towns has its own individual identity and whilst public transport within the towns is reasonably good, it does not link the towns very effectively.

In 1987 only 16% of the under-five population in Saltcoats and Ardrossan attended any local authority provision.⁽¹⁾ Within the three towns there was no all-day child care provision nor any provision which offered a "one door" service incorporating flexible facilities (full-time or part-time) with an educational and care component. The area had been identified as having a higher than average incidence of deviance, child abuse (all categories, including incest) and a significant number of identified behavioural and developmental difficulties. Yet no specialist services were available to offer intensive support to families with pre-five children. In 1987/88 a total of 36 children under the age of five were referred to the Social Work Department's District Admissions and Support Unit as requiring residential care.

The Project, hereafter referred to as the 3-Towns Community Nursery, was approved by the Urban Renewal Unit of the Scottish Office and was eligible for a grant for four years from the operational date of the Project, i.e. August 1989. The Scottish Office had previously rejected an application for a Family Centre in 1986/87 and requested that the application be reworked. Consequently the local Link-up Group worked with Education Department staff and submitted a revised application for the current Project in the financial year 1988/89. Approval was given in November 1988. It took almost five years to reach the stage of the Project becoming operational, and many of the children of interested local parents have moved on to Primary School by the time the community nursery was ready to admit children.

In line with the proposals detailed in the final report of the Member/Officer Group "Under-Fives", it had been planned that the community nursery would link into existing local pre-five provision, namely Springvale Nursery School in Saltcoats as the community nursery was to be located on the same campus as the nursery school. This 80 (full-time equivalent) place nursery school offers part-time places to children in the Saltcoats and Ardrossan areas.

Although there were initial negotiations to alter the nursery school to comply with the community nursery model, this was not viable and the nursery school continued to operate on a school-term basis with traditional part-time attendance patterns. Staff continue to have Nursery School conditions of service whilst staff in the community nursery are on the A.P and C conditions of service to allow the nursery to open 52 weeks per year from 8 a.m. till 6 p.m five days per week.

However, although the nursery school was not seen as an integral part of the community nursery the Head Teacher is part of the Senior Management Team of the Project with the Head and Depute of the Community Nursery.

2. History of the Project

Our respondents were asked when the project was first put forward as an idea; who was responsible for it and what were their roles in relation to its development.

The discussion of the history of the project begins with the Head of the Springvale Nursery.

I felt that the nursery's part-time only provision did not adequately reflect the needs of the community. The staff here were aware of the families needing extra support both through liaison with S.W.'s and through direct experience of parents whose children attended the school. I was aware that these families

needed another base. A flat became available on the campus. This was to be a resource for families with Social Work and teaching input and including outreach facilities. I formed a group to discuss this new facility; (a psychologist, Primary Head, S.W. Pre-school Community Organiser and Curriculum Adviser.) It was put forward as a proposal to Urban Aid through the existing Development Officer who took up post after the plans had been developed. The plans were immediately rejected on the basis that they were not innovative. (Head of Springvale Nursery School).

The rejection of the original proposal was partly influenced by new policy emerging from the Pre-Five Unit. The Regional Development Officer with responsibility for overseeing Urban Aid proposals was directed to help develop proposals which would reflect the new community nursery model. His remit included the Three Towns proposal but his involvement in the early stages was more intensive than anticipated given the lack of experience of the Divisional Development Officer in post at the time in preparing Urban Aid proposals.

The proposal to adapt Springvale Nursery to the new model involved the Regional Development Officer in lengthy debate and negotiation with the Scottish Office to promote the ideology and rationale of the community nursery model. When this was finally accepted, a proposal emerged - a product of discussion and negotiation within a group composed of the Regional Development Officer, Divisional Development Officer, Head of Springvale Nursery and others involved in submitting the proposal. It was agreed at this stage that Springvale Nursery would form the core of the new project with a family centre on the campus.

Although this new proposal was accepted, objections began to emerge when new conditions of service for staff were discussed. At this point the Divisional Development Officer left and the Regional Development Officer continued negotiations alone until a new development officer was appointed.

Objections emerged when the issue of staffing was looked at. Some staff here were to be on integrated conditions. The Divisional Education Officer went to talk to Springvale staff and to offer conditions to those who would be working within the new model. Not all staff would be involved but the staff group reaction was divided. Objections began to emerge from that point, both from within the nursery and from local link-up groups. It became obvious that the nursery couldn't be included in the new model. (Regional Development Officer).

Besides objections to new conditions of service for teachers and nursery nurses, local parent groups expressed fears that by changing the nursery its educational ethos would be destroyed, converting the existing service to a day nursery for very needy children, and that fewer part-time places would be on offer to children in the immediate locale. Local parents lobbied the Regional Council and their objections combined with those of the Head and staff of the nursery resulted in the exclusion of the nursery from the community nursery plans.

Clearly, this was a period of considerable tension in the history of the project. On the one hand, there was an effective, locally-mounted campaign to retain the essential nature of Springvale Nursery School; whilst on the other hand, there was pressure from the Pre-Five Unit to implement the policy of the Regional Council as described in the Member/Officer Group Report of 1985. In such a tense political situation, the role of the Regional Development Officer was crucial. When asked about his reactions to events at that time, and in particular about the support he received from the Pre-Five Unit, it became clear that the lack of clarity in his responsibilities strengthened the hand of the local campaign leaders.

**At times I felt I had the rug pulled from under my feet.....
there was a general lack of clarity about my role and level of
responsibility. (Regional Development Officer)**

The Divisional Development Officer, appointed after the final submission had been accepted, faced a situation which had become extremely complex and conflicting.

The Pre-Five Unit tried to link its integration policy into the existing situation but the nursery rejected the imposition of new conditions of service. In the face of protest from the nursery Head, the union and local parents, the Region backed off. When I came into post this was partly history. I was perplexed to find that the local Link-up group had taken on board a lot of reservations about the effect the project would have on the existing nursery school. I had to face unravelling all of this and looking at new proposals, costs and objectives to get the thing off the ground. (Divisional Development Officer)

Objections by parents and nursery school staff had a powerful impact on the direction finally taken by the new project. By refusing to accept conditions associated with the Pre-Five Unit's integration policy, the aim of the new project - to create a community nursery involving existing traditional services - was changed. The new project became an independent resource, providing a new style of care alongside existing traditional facilities. From a policy development viewpoint, the Three Towns project cannot be seen to demonstrate the viability of creating community nurseries from existing sources other than to highlight the difficulties of attempting to impose change on traditional institutions.

Parents and one of the councillors gave different accounts of the starting point of the Three Towns project. The councillor stated that the parents in the Stevenston Link-up group were responsible for initiating demand for more resources and made no mention of the role of the Nursery Head in this. Of the parents interviewed only one identified the Head of the nursery as the instigator of the original Urban Aid proposal, the other naming the Divisional Development Officer in post at the time of the original proposal.

3. Respondents' roles in the development of the Project

Our respondents were asked about their current role in the project's development. The nursery Head felt that her role as a member of the consultative group was "nominal", since the nursery had been excluded as a base for the new project. The Divisional Development Officer entered a situation which was already subject to conflicts and difficulties:

My own practice may actually be a problem here. For some people I suppose I lack credibility. I'd no experience of nursery education. I had to work on resolving certain issues. I felt I had satisfied the needs of the parents and the nursery school but they didn't think so. (Divisional Development Officer)

The answers given by parents on their role in the development of the project highlight a conflict of interests which developed between the Stevenston parent group and those from Saltcoats and Ardrossan. The parent from Stevenston was asked about her role in the project's development:

I organised a survey of local opinion on the pre-five services in Stevenston. But for a year afterwards there was no information on how the proposal was going, despite the positive response to it here. (Parent)

The Saltcoats parent's response, however, reflects the opposition to the project in that area; she saw her role as having become one of opposing detrimental change, not of fighting for more pre-five resources. Although she had originally supported the demand for more pre-five care in the area:

We were angry and felt the proposed changes would be bad for the school. We got a petition together. Different Link-up groups then became antagonistic to one another. Stevenston parents thought we were acting against their interests. But we wanted to protect what we had. (Parent)

Despite the oppositional and conflicting forces arising from different groups and individuals with an interest in the Three Towns project, all came together to form one consultative group. Respondents were asked about the functions of that group. First, who selected its members? There was no clear cut view of how the group was started. The councillor believed that Link-up parents had selected group members. The parents themselves, however, believed the group had been formed by the Divisional Development Officer and the Regional Development Officer, as did the Head of the nursery.

The Divisional Development Officer said:

In a sense the group members were self-selected. The Pre-Five representative and I sent out invitations to individuals who'd shown an interest at other stages of the proposal - all accepted. (Divisional Development Officer)

The Divisional Development Officer's comment on the purpose of that group seems optimistic given its membership:

To continue the notion of building the project from a corporate view, to allow a flow of information and to ensure that different organisations and interests had a chance to share in planning. (Divisional Development Officer)

All respondents agreed in principle with the development officer's notions of the purpose of the consultative group. But their comments on their own roles in that group and on aspects of its functioning indicate that conflicts which existed prior to its inception continued both overtly and covertly within that group.

I am really a mediator. I am there to show council commitment to the pre-fives. The Saltcoats and Ardrossan parent groups are really very articulate. They don't represent the majority of families. I am there to represent the majority. (Councillor)

I was providing information and carrying out a lot of the work put forward by that group. There's a big problem of contrasting ideologies in that group. Basically, some have an allegiance to Education. Not everyone is working towards the same ends. I don't mean they are acting consciously to undermine the project, but their commitment is conditional. The project represents a political upheaval which was and is a nightmare. (Divisional Development Officer)

In addition to the conflicting interests within the consultative group which centred on the nature of the new resource and its impact on traditional services, parents' comments highlighted yet another difficulty; this centred on authority within the group and the real impact which community members may have on government projects.

I do not feel the group listens and acts on the advice of parent representatives. My comments are not recognised. This could be to do with the fact that two men are in charge. I don't know if they understand the position of women and mothers very well at all. (Parent)

4. Objectives and difficulties

Respondents were asked to comment on the level of local pre-five provision and to consider the objectives of the new project in the light of their understanding of local needs. All respondents felt that Stevenston and Ardrossan had little to offer pre-five children but that Saltcoats was better off with a higher proportion of children attending nursery or playgroup. No all-day care existed though, which allowed mothers to work full-time. Focusing the project on children and

families with the greatest need seemed appropriate to all respondents but again criticism of objectives arose indirectly from the belief that existing services would be detrimentally effected by the existence of the project.

I can't fault the objectives but we do need to protect the existing nursery. We don't want that diluted or full of a lot of very uptight children . (Parent)

Respondents were asked to comment on admissions policy to the project. The policy (3A) already applies across Strathclyde and allocates places on a system of greatest need. Respondents felt the admissions policy would serve to highlight the lack of pre-five services generally in that it would leave the vast majority of Three Towns children without nursery experience - given that the new project would only provide a very limited number of places. As far as the contents of admissions policy were concerned, the issue of working mothers was raised by both a parent and the councillor.

I would like to change all of it. (Admissions policy). I believe that working mothers ought to have special priorities, not just women who might benefit if they had a job. (Parent)

I feel the whole admissions policy needs looked at again. Some families slip through. Its open to abuse and it is abused. Parental needs, particularly the needs of working mothers, have to be looked at again. A.P.T. areas don't always make much sense. We need to look again at demarcation lines in the Three Towns area. (Councillor)

All respondents felt that demand for places would quickly outstrip the new resource and some expected an angry response from the community over this.

When asked about difficulties experienced in getting the project underway, the practical problems of finance and accommodation were seen as causing the greatest problems. The location of the project outside the area of greatest need (Stevenston) was seen as a major problem by one parent. Only the councillor felt the political problems surrounding the project would create long term difficulties.

The political problems created by the EIS over conditions of service and related to that the management structure of the project, including as it does the Head of the original nursery, could make things fraught. I am aware we haven't made things easy for them. I feel main line educators haven't been helpful either. (Councillor)

5. Conclusion

Our respondents seemed optimistic that the project would prove both viable and beneficial for the limited number of families who would get a place for their child. Since the time of interviewing these respondents, accommodation, finance and the meeting of objectives have all proved problematic. Current accommodation is temporary and unsatisfactory and the hours of care originally proposed are not yet on offer to parents.

So far, the nursery school has remained uninvolved in the new project except for the contribution of the Head as a member of the project management group. Overall, the interests of both factions of the consultative group have been served; the project exists as an additional resource and the traditional nursery remains so far unchanged. At a local level, the political issues confronting the project have reached some kind of resolution. As an exercise in the application of innovative policy, however, the Three Towns Project represents a stalemate in negotiation for the community nursery model as a development of existing nursery provision.

Evaluators notes on the main issues emerging from the interview material:

1. It confirms the needs for flexible, specialised and (to some extent) compensatory care in the area.
2. It highlights deep-rooted resistance to change in traditional pre-five services.
3. It demonstrates the power of local individuals and groups (Nursery Head, parents, Link-Up Groups) to prevent or alter the implementation of new policy.
4. It highlights the management difficulties faced by regional officials in implementing Council policies.
5. It indirectly highlights the great need felt by all members of the community for pre-five services - given the defensive reactions of those who felt they might lose traditional nursery places altogether were the project implemented within Springvale.
6. It indicates the potential for resentment and conflict over the admission policy which - given the limitations of the resources provided - would fail to cater for mothers who were already working.

6.2 ESTABLISHING JIGSAW COMMUNITY NURSERY - A REPORT OF INTERVIEWS WITH KEY PERSONNEL

The Evaluation Advisory Group for Jigsaw Nursery nominated key individuals for interview about the establishment of the nursery from its inception to the admission of children in July 1990.

Those nominated were:

Community Development Worker

Pre-Five Development Officer, Dumbarton Division, SRC

Pre-Five Development Officer, Pre-Five Unit, SRC

Education Officer, Dumbarton Division, SRC

**Regional Councillor (and Leader of the ruling
Labour Group, SRC)**

Divisional Co-ordinator, Dumbarton SPPA

Link-Up representative

Link-Up representative

All the interviews with the members of the Jigsaw Planning Group were completed during May and June 1990. The interview with the former Education Officer was conducted during February 1991.

1. Decision to Develop a Community Nursery

In mid-1988 Dumbarton Division Education Department put forward a bid to the Region's "Adapting to Change" Fund for money to expand provision for pre-fives in the division. A number of nursery classes and a family centre were proposed. No action was taken on these proposals until April 1989 when the proposals were examined and the concept of community nurseries was discussed at a Pre-Five Unit and Divisional Development Officers seminar. As Strathclyde Region's policy on pre-five provision was based on the concept of community nurseries the Region's Pre-Five Unit was seeking funds to establish community nurseries. A list of proposed community nursery locations was drawn up and the site at St. Barbara's School, Muirend/Chryston (South Strathkelvin) appeared on this list. St. Barbara's had been brought to the notice of the Pre-Five Unit when a Toy Library was opened there. In addition the available space and existing community use were considered important factors.

The area around Chryston was identified as an area with no local authority pre-five provision. The only provision in the area was organised by the voluntary sector. SPPA ran 12 playgroups and 6 mother/toddler groups. Each of the 9 villages in the area had one playgroup and most children (3-5 years) who wanted a place in a playgroup could get one. However, all those interviewed recognised that the voluntary provision leaves a significant gap with regard to the needs of those who do not want to, or are unable to participate in playgroup duties, or who need provision over longer hours and more of the year than playgroups provide or who cannot afford the playgroup fees.

There was not a lot of regional provision at all - that was why the proposal was our highest priority.

(Education Officer, Dunbarton Division)

If the need is for part-time places these are met in some way by play groups. 'All-day care' needs are not met at all.

(Development Officer, Pre-Five Unit)

All the playgroups are full, very few children wanting playgroups don't get in. There is a lot of desire for extended day care. Before and after-school care needs are not being met but there is a lot of interest in this community.

(Divisional Co-ordinator, Dunbarton SPPA)

There is a whole section of the community that playgroups don't catch - those who cannot afford it or working parents - they have no provision.

(Link-Up Representative)

As the area of South Strathkelvin is not an Area of Priority Treatment there had to be a policy decision taken (approved at the Labour Group) to allow the development of a community nursery there. It is not without significance that the local Member of Strathclyde Regional Council is also the Leader of the Labour Group.

While the Pre-Five Unit was making plans for community nurseries during 1988/89 the Link-Up group covering the Chryston area carried out a survey looking at the childcare needs of parents in the area. They identified the pressing needs as being for before- and-after school care, the provision of a creche and nursery school provision. Following on this survey the Link-Up group submitted a proposal (in October 1988) for the establishment of a family centre at St. Barbara's. Their application was rejected in February 1989. By this time the Pre-Five Unit was anticipating that it would obtain funding for an alternative plan, a community nursery at St. Barbara's. This influenced the decision with regard to Link-Up's proposals although this was not communicated to the group. The voluntary sector later heard of the Pre-Five Unit's plans in an informal way when they learned of a budget entry relating to a nursery at St. Barbara's. At this point the Link-Up group felt that their idea had been 'taken over'.

Link-Up first put forward the idea and I was involved in supporting them, they applied for a family centre and a grant was refused. Just after that it was announced that a community nursery was coming into the building.(Community Development Worker)

We applied for a £20,000 grant for a family centre to add to what we already had at St. Barbara's. This was turned down with no explanation, it was funded subsequently but it was our idea as far as I'm concerned.

(Link-Up Representative)

2. The Planning Group

The first attempt at establishing a partnership between the voluntary sector and local authority staff was at a meeting in August 1989 when SRC Regional and Divisional representatives attended a Link-Up meeting to outline their plans for a 60 place community nursery, taking children from 0-5 years and offering extended day provision all year, at St. Barbara's. There was considerable ill-feeling expressed at this meeting with the voluntary sector representatives feeling that their plans had been usurped and that their existing use of St. Barbara's was threatened.

I went to meet the Link-Up group, they had heard of plans for a nursery in the building. The voluntary sector had a feeling of resentment and I was met with a barrage of questions.

(Development Officer, Pre-Five Unit)

It was a very stormy meeting, it appeared that the Region were steam-rolling the project through and paying lip-service to voluntary sector involvement.

(Divisional Co-ordinator, Dunbarton SPPA)

A joint initiative was decided on and a planning group emerged consisting of a regional development officer, a divisional development officer, 2 Link-Up representatives, and a SPPA representative. The regional councillor, an educational psychologist and the pre-school community organiser also joined the group.

The Planning Group was an integral part of the way the nursery was to be set up, giving an earlier involvement for the community than they might otherwise have had.

(Education Officer, Dunbarton Division)

The Divisional Architects and Related Services (DARS) in Dunbarton produced plans for the community nursery consisting of two nursery rooms, a playgroup room, child-minders room, SPPA branch room and a drop-in/cafe space. There was no initial capital budget allowance, only an allowance for staff costs. Even the amount allowed was insufficient for the numbers of staff necessary to maintain the appropriate ratios for sixty 0-5 year old children. As a consequence the Planning Group was forced to modify the plans to offer provision for forty 2-5 year olds. The arrangements for after-school care and running a creche have also had to be modified at present.

We are dealing with a £85,000 revenue budget We could not get equipment from the revenue so we had budgeting problems which needed lots of explaining

(Development Officer, Pre-Five Unit)

There is no reason not to take babies - other than financial constraints

(Community Development Worker)

The budget is laughable - there was only provision for staffing. There is no money for a baby room. (Development Officer, Dunbarton Division)

Funding for the alteration of the premises and the purchasing of equipment was only obtained after the voluntary sector lobbied the local regional councillor.

The voluntary sector did a lot of lobbying, in fact the project wouldn't be there if it hadn't been for them.

(Development Officer Pre-Five Unit)

When we discovered that there wasn't any money for equipment and building we spoke to Councillor. Gray and things began to happen (Link-Up Representative)

The revenue position was O.K. but there was no capital budget provision - this was a real problem (Regional Councillor)

Poor lines of communication and confusion over decision-making powers were a source of tension and confusion during the planning stage. The involvement of regional and divisional staff and services lead to confusion at times over policy-making and operational decision making.

The planning of the community nursery took place against a background of change for both the regional and divisional staff following on the decision to implement INLOGOV recommendations.

Personally I felt constrained as I didn't have control of the operational side. Division is the operator. (Development Officer, Pre-Five Unit)

The nursery was to be a Divisional Unit but the Pre-Five Unit were doing the co-ordinating The Pre-Five Unit were the policy-making body but also making decisions regarding the operation of the community nursery. There was no clear power person. (Development Officer, Dunbarton Division)

The voluntary sector felt that, while they were listened to and their contributions valued in the Planning Group, the conclusions reached by the group were not necessarily acted upon thereafter. The confusion over the ability of the Planning Group to make decisions and have them implemented gave rise to a great amount of ill-feeling amongst the voluntary sector representatives. Voluntary sector representatives felt a considerable degree of commitment to the community nursery proposals and to the existing services which they provided and they were very unhappy when plans were frustrated. The on-going debate about the conversion of the creche room, with agreement apparently being reached between the Division and the planning group but the builder's plans not reflecting this agreement, illustrates this problem.

There is mistrust there, we have minuted the Education Officer's agreement (i.e. to a creche room) and we are in the process of writing to ask what has gone wrong (Link-Up Representative)

Members of the Planning Group felt that the Education Officer didn't always pass on the changes from the planning group to the architects, therefore, the plans for the building work were not always what was expected. (Development Officer, Dunbarton Division)

The planning group thinks it has made a decision and then discovers it has been over-ruled. (Co-ordinator, Dunbarton SPPA)

It is difficult to work up an idea in an open way in a tight time-scale and feed back the ideas, it is difficult to communicate properly about translating ideas into reality. (Education Officer, Dunbarton Division)

Voluntary sector representatives felt frustrated by the bureaucracy of the region and division while at the same time recognising the constraints that individuals work under.

They listen and say they will act and then do what they want to do in 9 cases out of 10 but people we speak to have other bosses and have to report back to them. (Link-Up Representative)

The allocation of new rooms to the various groups already using the building and the positioning of the community nursery rooms previously used by the playgroup lead to insecurity among the voluntary sector users. They were unhappy about the possibility that the rooms allocated to them might be used for other community nursery activities when not being used by play-group etc. and they lacked confidence in the assurances which they received about the ownership of the new rooms. There is still some anxiety among voluntary sector representatives that the nursery is a discrete unit, between double doors, and that it will be isolated from the other groups and seen as having priority in the community nursery.

The SPPA were troubled over their branch room, they wanted rights over it and didn't trust assurances that they would be included or given space. (Community Development Worker)

The main one (difficulty) is the continued use of rooms and rights to them, what will happen if e.g. playgroup don't want to have other things on in their room when they are not there. (Divisional Co-ordinator, Dunbarton SPPA)

There will always need to be a head who respects the voluntary sector and makes it part of the project and wants to avoid second class provision for the playgroup (Link-Up Representative)

With the secondment of Maureen Cran and Jackie Henry the planning process for the nursery was smoothed out and communications improved. Both council and voluntary sector Planning Group members felt that they were being rushed into getting the nursery operational.

The difficulties are gross under-funding and trying to go too quickly. (Link-Up Representative)

There have been pressures to hurry things along, and a lot of pressure from Division/Region to get the project under way. (Community Development Worker)

The voluntary sector members took an active part in the selection of nursery staff and they all feel that their involvement in the selection process has been very valuable in ensuring the future success of the project, arguing for the selection of staff who would be respected by the local community and welcomed by those running the voluntary sector part of the nursery.

.... without the voluntary sector at the interviews they might have chosen a person who wasn't respected locally. (Link-Up Representative)

If the Region appointed themselves and appointed internally we would have someone who played their tune and the success and outcome would be different. (Link-Up Representative)

3. The current position of the Community Nursery

The Head of Centre and Depute Head of Centre were in post in mid-May and the majority of staff were in post at the beginning of June. The admission of the first group of children to the nursery was delayed due to building works but the first children attended from 2 July. Children continued to be admitted over the summer.

The provision being offered by the community nursery as it currently exists is not the same as that suggested in the original plan. Babies (0-2 years) are not to be admitted and the degree of before and after-school care is unclear at present. All members of the Planning Group interviewed expressed disappointment at the failure to offer provision over a wide range of childcare needs. The regional and divisional staff want the nursery to meet the needs of the community and feel that they are providing a valuable community resource.

There is a need for voluntary sector playgroups plus flexible day care. The Jigsaw nursery's aims are to meet community needs. (Development Officer, Dunbarton Division)

The most important aim for me is to combine traditional education and care in one establishment. (Development Officer, Dumbarton Division)

Its (i.e. Jigsaw Community Nursery) aim is to be a community resource for all sorts of information It should respond to community needs. (Community Development Worker)

I saw Jigsaw as a vanguard. It is the beginning of integrated provision and working to show how nurseries can operate in an integrated way.
(Development Officer, Pre-Five Unit)

It will have a direct benefit to parents. It creates opportunities for parents. There is a clear benefit to children as they are getting earlier access. The voluntary sector are getting access to a richer mix of groups by being part of a bigger grouping, they can capitalise on each other's resources and ideas. It is a very attractive provision. (Education Officer, Dunbarton Division)

There is a feeling among the voluntary sector representatives that the resources being offered do not have the mix of provision that the community wants. They are concerned principally with the lack of after-school care and creche provision.

We wanted higher priority for before and after-school care and creche provision. (Divisional Co-ordinator, Dunbarton SPPA)

..... without a creche the project falls short and room for after-school care is needed. (Link-Up Representative)

(Community reaction is) **Fairly positive, tinged with a feeling that it isn't exactly what was wanted in terms of the fine detail. In being part of the consultation exercise one of the facts you have to be reconciled to is that you have to make choices.** (Education Officer, Dunbarton Division)

The type of nursery facility being offered may also be a disappointment to the community. Some of these interviewed felt that local parents want traditional nursery classes and that they want their children to be 'taught'.

A lot of people want straight nursery classes at schools
(Link-Up Representative)

.... there are waiting lists of parents looking for additional nursery school provision They want their children taught.
(Community Development Worker)

On admission of children to the nursery, the region's admissions policy is being adhered to, administered by an admissions panel consisting of nursery staff and other professionals but without voluntary sector representation. Most of those interviewed felt that the admissions policy is in need of some 'fine-tuning' and a degree of flexibility which can make it appropriate to the circumstances of particular projects.

There are always exceptions. The policy must be kept open and not written on tablets of stone. (Regional Councillor)

I would like to see it (i.e. the admissions policy) refined and practical guidelines to staff on how to operate e.g. single parent families are not always worse off than two parent families. (Development Officer, Dunbarton Division)

I think the policy is too strict, too black and white.
(Divisional Co-ordinator, Dunbarton SPPA)

The policy aims to be consistent, it is as good as you are going to get but it is difficult to satisfy demand when demand is so high.
(Education Officer, Dunbarton Division.)

The voluntary sector members of the group feel that there is a danger of the nursery being labelled as a place where only those families with problems can get a place and that this might result in families not wishing their children to attend the nursery.

The project needs a percentage of average children in the nursery or it will be labelled as a place for deprived children and then people won't use it.
(Link-Up Representative)

.... if the nursery is seen as a dumping ground (that people don't care for children are in the categories for admission) people won't want places
(Divisional Co-ordinator, Dunbarton SPPA)

A further element in the community reaction to the admissions procedure has been the feeling that 'average', two-parent families are unlikely to benefit from the new nursery places and this has fuelled some resentment.

Ordinary people feel that they don't have a chance!
(Link-Up Representative)

There are mixed feelings among many that it (Jigsaw Nursery) should be there for all mums and they ask why they are penalised because they stay at home and feel that their children need nursery school too!
(Link-Up Representative)

Discussions are currently underway about the future nature of the voluntary sector's involvement in the running of the community nursery. There is agreement among all those interviewed that some continuation of the partnership is necessary, perhaps by setting up a user's group and an advisory group representing local interests.

.... we want structures to allow continued input at two levels - as a users group and as representatives (SPPA, Link-Up) on an advisory group about the nursery and pre-fives in general. (Development Officer, Dunbarton Division)

I hope the planning group will become advisory and it will tell of the needs of the community. (Community Development Officer)

I think it will end up users group but I'm not sure about it's remit.
(Link-Up Representative)

Everyone emphasised the importance of voluntary sector involvement and advice. It is acknowledged that they have the necessary local knowledge and that without their past involvement and their continuing involvement in the planning and development of the nursery it cannot reflect community interests. The good relationships which have built up between individuals have been very important for the development of the project and have had spin-offs into other areas e.g. the improved relationship between the Division and SPPA.

There is a greater trust between Pre-Five management, Division and SPPA.
(Development Officer, Dunbarton Division)

There have definitely been benefits with much frank exchange of ideas.
(Divisional Co-ordinator, Dunbarton SPPA)

We have had battles but on the whole it has been a good team.
(Link-Up Representative)

It is a view common to all the members interviewed that the combination of voluntary sector pressure and the political powers of the local councillor have been instrumental in getting the resources essential to make the project a reality.

If it hadn't been for Councillor Charles Gray the project wouldn't have got off the ground. (Link-Up Representative)

Councillor Charles Gray was a very great help to the voluntary sector side He has been instrumental in getting the project. (Divisional Co-ordinator, Dunbarton SPPA)

The voluntary sector has helped to get money released and lobbied local councillors. (Community Development Worker)

The voluntary sector has played a critical role. (Development Officer, Dunbarton Division)

The voluntary sector representatives consider that their contribution to the community nursery is their provision of a playgroup, mother/toddler group, toy library and stock shop. They are unsure as to the benefits that inclusion in the nursery can offer them while the divisional staff see inclusion as allowing access to the soft-play room, use of the mini-bus, use of video equipment, advice and help with training. It is generally agreed that the greatest contribution so far by all has been their time during the planning stage. This has taken a great deal of time, sometimes to the detriment of their other responsibilities.

There is a general feeling of optimism about the future of the project (with one dissenting voice).

It is really great, I'm very optimistic. It will be a great resource. (Development Officer, Pre-Five Unit)

I find this whole project very exciting. (Community Development Worker)

This optimism is qualified on the part of the voluntary sector representatives who feel that much depends on the particular staff involved with the nursery and on the degree to which creche and before- and after-school care can be provided in the future.

It will definitely be beneficial because it has a good staff and someone good at the top Jigsaw has a lot going for it in the staff running it. (Link-Up Representative)

I think the Head of Centre should be a committed person and know about the voluntary sector plus the issues over pre-five education. (Link-Up Representative)

One voluntary sector representative felt particularly disappointed that the numbers being catered for in the nursery unit were reduced from the initial 60 to 40 and that while resources had been won for the nursery unit they had not been so successful in providing creche facilities and before- and after-school care.

All the effort/time/resources are being pushed into the nursery and everything else in the project is being downgraded. The numbers it is catering for are reduced too. (Divisional Co-ordinator, Dunbarton SPPA)

Everyone feels that important lessons have been learned in this project that would be of use in any similar future venture. Setting up clear lines of communication and clarifying who has decision-making powers would avoid many frustrations as would making explicit the powers of the Planning Group. The appointment of a co-ordinator with responsibility solely for the project

is also advocated as good future practice. All were agreed that a slower pace of development and more generous and assured funding, particularly for capital expenditure are necessary for the satisfactory establishment of a community nursery.

One of the difficulties was getting information. Communication was very bad. We operated on 'hear-say' and 'back-door' information to start with.
(Divisional Co-ordinator, Dunbarton SPPA)

If I was doing it again I would go at a slower speed and would advocate having one person to make decisions ...
(Development Officer, Dunbarton Division)

The biggest obstacle was the lack of original planning and thinking through in detail and costing the budget. I can say this with hind-sight.
(Development Officer, Pre-Five Unit)

4. Critical issues arising from the interviews

. Conflict between the voluntary sector and Regional officials

A background of mistrust and ill-feeling developed when the Link-Up Group's proposal was rejected, without explanation, to be followed by the Region's proposal for a community nursery. The voluntary sector heard about the community nursery proposals by 'back door' information and felt that they were being ignored or usurped. This feeling of mistrust was fuelled again when there were future breakdowns in communications between the planning group and the Education Officer. The playgroup and SPPA branch room workers felt threatened by the need to change rooms and this coupled with the previous mistrust and ill-feeling towards the Division and Region lead to further defensive behaviour such as the debate over 'rights over rooms'. The amount of frustration and disappointment felt by the voluntary sector representatives should not be under-estimated. It is perhaps a tribute to their commitment that they remained in the Planning Group despite its problems.

. Conflict between the different levels of decision-making

Poor communications between the regional staff, divisional staff and planning group (including the voluntary sector) was a source of confusion, delay and ill-feeling. The regional staff were making proposals as to the nature of the community nursery but the divisional staff had to make the operational decisions. The role of the planning group (whether it was a decision-making body or had only an advisory role) was also unclear and the source of further confusion. The translation of ideas discussed at the planning group into concrete plans, such as an instruction to builders had to go through divisional pre-five staff and architectural staff leading to delay and sometimes to the final plans for action not being as the planning group envisaged.

It emerges in the course of the interviews that the role of the Planning Group was not clearly defined in advance. The Divisional perspective appears to be that this group was essentially consultative, and was a way of getting early community involvement. Those more actively involved in the group, particularly the voluntary sector, saw the group as an opportunity for them to make decisions (re an executive role) rather than merely influence them or comment on them.

The secondment of the Community Development Worker and the Divisional Development Officer to work on the community nursery project was very beneficial. The secondment of a number of the divisional staff from the initial stages would have avoided much of the confusion, delay and misunderstanding.

. Resources

The initial finance proposed for the community nursery was only for staffing costs and made no allowance for spending on necessary conversions and supplying of equipment. This was a source of much frustration to the planning group and it is the opinion of many that without intervention from the local regional councillor the project would have foundered due to lack of funds. Lack of finance has lead to curtailment of the initial plans for the project and this in turn has led to disappointment that the project as it now stands is not the comprehensive resource originally envisaged by the planning team in general, and the voluntary sector in particular.

6.3 EARLY STAGES IN 3-TOWNS COMMUNITY NURSERY - A REPORT ON STAFF INTERVIEWS

The following is drawn from interviews with staff working in the 3-Towns project in the Spring and summer of 1990. The interviews were conducted when the constituent parts of the project had been operational for approximately six months.

The 3-Towns project consists of 3 separate units, the 0-5 nursery unit (admitting children from 0-5 years), the 3-5 nursery unit (admitting children from 3-5 years), and the Family Centre. At that time all units were operating in temporary accommodation. The 0-5 unit and Family Centre were in adjacent buildings while the 3-5 unit was on a separate site.

A senior officer and a pre-five worker were interviewed from each unit. The comments of the staff in the two nursery units are discussed together below while a separate section covers the comments of the Family Centre staff.

The Nursery Units (0-5 unit and 3-5 unit)

Both the 0-5 years unit and the 3-5 years unit began to admit children in March 1990. The Family Centre had staff in place in February 1990 and began to receive referrals in March 1990.

Children attending the 3-5 Unit did so either full-time 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. (2 children) or part-time from 9 a.m. until 12 noon or 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. (12 children in the morning session and 12 in the afternoon). The 0-5 Unit also had a mixture of full and part-time. One child attended full-time (9 a.m. - 11.30 a.m.) while 23 attended the morning session (9 a.m. - 11.30 a.m.) and 8 attended from 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. At the 3-5 Unit some children while attending only the morning session stay for lunch too. The 0-5 Unit offers lunch to some children attending only the morning or the afternoon session.

In both units the pattern of the morning session is repeated in the afternoon following the lunch-break at approximately 12 - 1 p.m. Both units began their sessions with free-play followed by snack-time. The remainder of the session included group-time with keyworkers, time for physical play, singing/music or storytelling in varying order, depending on the unit. The 3-5 Unit had 2 rooms available for use. Free play took place with all the children in one room or the other with different types of toys available in each room. The 0-5 Unit also had 2 rooms available at some times of the year. When 2 rooms were available 0-3 year olds were cared for in one room and 3-5 year olds in another. Both units operate a key-worker system.

Aims and Objectives

The same set of aims and objectives applied to both units.

All staff interviewed were aware of the aim to provide a high quality curriculum. Both senior officers felt that there were short-comings in the curriculum offered by their unit.

re curriculum probably not yet at a high standard (we have accommodation difficulties and some children have behaviour problems.)

Senior Officer, Nursery Unit.

All staff, seniors and pre-five workers stressed the contents of group time activities when discussing the curriculum. The 3-5 Unit had established a pattern of themes and days allocated for curriculum areas while the 0-5 Unit had found mixed age keyworker groups difficult to handle

and were receiving help from the Curriculum Development officer to establish a system of ages and stages groups and key-worker groups. One pre-five worker commented that she did not really understand what the curriculum was.

Treating children as individuals, listening to them, having key-workers, key-workers visiting the homes before the child begins nursery and offering fun were all mentioned in the context of providing an environment which meets the social and emotional needs of the children. Parental involvement was welcomed by all the staff interviewed although the degree of involvement was minimal.

We are slipping down on this. There is nowhere for parents to go. We can ask them to pop in but there is nowhere for them to go.

Pre-Five Worker, Nursery Unit.

At the moment the Family Centre has some parents who attend the nursery regularly, perhaps working with their own child (sometimes with staff too).

Senior Officer, Nursery Unit.

The 3-5 Unit had established a unit group with parents representatives and the 0-5 Unit had some parents who attended the nursery as part of their contact with parents who attended the nursery as part of their contract with the Family Centre. The lack of contact with the parents of children who arrive by organised transport (the majority of the children) was mentioned as a problem.

Most children come on transport and we lose a lot of parent contact (just letters and a diary).

Senior Officer, Nursery Unit.

The 0-5 Unit staff felt that they had a closer relationship with the Family Centre than the 3-5 Unit. While they worked with the Family Centre with particular families contact with the 3-5 Unit was more usually in terms of organisational matters e.g. transport. The 3-5 Unit staff felt that they had had a little contact with the Family Centre but knew those working in the 0-5 Unit better.

The allocation of transport provision was made by the Deputy Head of Centre. The biggest problem with the provision of transport appears to be the amount of staff time that has to be spent acting as escort on the mini-bus. This puts a strain on staffing resources especially when there are other staff absences.

re transport This works well, but it is a hassle as it takes someone out of the unit from about 12.30 p.m - 2.30 p.m. This is particularly difficult if someone is off sick.

Pre-Five Worker, Nursery Unit.

Inter-agency links were more common with Social Work than any other agency although it was said that it was usually the nursery unit who initiated contact and had to 'chase up' social workers. The units had less contact with the Health Visitor Services than the Social Work agencies.

We are only starting to work more closely with professional services - mainly Social Work With Health Visitors our only contact is if staff here make contact.

Senior Officer, Nursery Unit.

We would like them (i.e. Health Visitors) to be more interested in the children ... Social Work is interested but difficult to contact.

Pre-Five Worker, Nursery Unit.

Regular staff meetings were given as a method by which each staff group could improve it's team work. Sharing ideas, information on the children and supporting each other were all suggested as evidence of team work.

Views on training and staff development were more positive at the 3-5 Unit than at the 0-5 Unit. A regular supervision schedule operated at the 3-5 Unit and staff had participated in in-service training and external courses. The Pre-Five Worker felt that the in-service training filled in the gaps in her experience.

In a few months here I've had more training than in all my previous experience.

Pre-Five Worker, Nursery Unit.

It had proved difficult to offer regular supervisions at the 0-5 Unit. While both 0-5 Unit staff welcomed training opportunities the Pre-Five Worker felt that the in-service training offered did not meet her needs.

I've been on some sessions at Auchenharvie ... I didn't find these beneficial ... I would like to know more about child abuse.

Pre-Five Worker, Nursery Unit.

Qualifications and Experience

All the staff interviewed felt that their qualifications and more particularly their experience left them with gaps in terms of the skills and knowledge needed in their new posts. The unqualified staff member felt that she needed more training, tailored to her needs before the children arrived. Lack of experience of Social Work referrals and reviews was mentioned by two members of staff while another felt confident in working with Social Work referrals but lacking in experience in setting a curriculum. One senior felt that she lacked the necessary management skills when she took up her post.

This is hard to answer, I've worked in creches before and was shocked at how widespread child abuse is, most of the children we have are problem children.

Pre-Five Worker, Nursery Unit.

My education background is OK for this job but I am lacking in Social Work experience.

Pre-Five Worker, Nursery Unit.

Accommodation/Resources

Both units had problems with their accommodation and felt that this significantly affected their provision. The major problem at the 0-5 Unit was that the nursery was in temporary accommodation which it did not have sole use of, resulting in the rooms having to be totally cleared of equipment at the end of some days. In the early months of the project the Baby Room was not available for some sessions each week and all children and staff had to use one room. Staff at the 3-5 Unit felt that their rooms were too small and the lack of an inter-connecting door hampered the use of the two rooms with children being all in one room or all in the other.

The 2 rooms are fine but we need an inter-connecting door, you cannot leave children when there are only 2 adults.

Senior Officer, Nursery Unit.

When the Mother/Toddler group have a meeting our children are in one room. It is very difficult to set the room out appropriately for 3-5's and little ones too.

Senior Officer, Nursery Unit.

We have to clear away the whole room on Thursdays There isn't enough space to store everything properly and it is physically demanding.

Pre-Five Worker, Nursery Unit.

Both units complained about inadequate toilet facilities with adult-sized toilets and sinks and no ready access from the play-rooms. At the 3-5 Unit the toilets were in an adjoining building. Independence training was, therefore, limited for children in both units.

The toilets are dreadful and access is difficult and the sinks and toilets are adult size. Pre-Five Worker, Nursery Unit.

Physical play opportunities were also limited in both units by lack of space for indoor equipment and poor or no provision for outside play.

Storage space was also mentioned by both units as being inadequate and limiting the range of equipment to which staff had easy access. Some equipment had to be placed in a central store awaiting new premises.

Staff in both units felt that they needed more equipment. Staff in the 0-5 Unit were particularly conscious of the need for more table top games and activities which those in the 3-5 Unit stressed the need for more books and for puzzles and games relating to theme work.

Staff

The 3-5 Unit had a staff of 4 and the 0-5 Unit had 5 pre-five workers, one pre-five officer and one senior pre-five officer.

While recognising that each member of staff had something to offer, the Senior at the 0-5 Unit felt that she was not satisfied with the work done by staff at that time. The Senior at the 3-5 Unit expressed qualified approval, in the light of the circumstances.

Low morale was identified by both Senior and Pre-five Worker at the 0-5 Unit as the reason for staff work not being as good as it could be. The extended wait to move to permanent premises, the upheaval and physical demands of clearing rooms and the demands of working with many children with behaviour problems were all cited as contributory factors.

re quality of work It could be better, it will get better With so much talk about moving everyone is fed up and our self-esteem/morale is falling. We are all ready for a new start when we move.

Pre-Five Worker, Nursery Unit.

The main factor limiting the quality of work done by staff at the 3-5 Unit was the lack of common experience amongst the staff, particularly with regard to curriculum planning.

It is going to take time for us all to get the same knowledge.

Senior Officer, Nursery Unit.

Staff relationships within each unit were considered to be good by those involved, with staff supporting each other and discussing problems. In terms of relationships with the Family Centre both units felt that as they began to work with the Family Centre the relationship improved. Staff in both units raised the issue of comparisons being made and felt between the two nursery units.

The staff get on well in our unit.

Pre-Five Worker, Nursery Unit.

re staff relations ...**Within the unit - fine. Between units - OK basically.**
There may be some competition.
Senior Officer, Nursery Unit.

There was some feeling that staff in the community nursery were being under-paid, particularly in comparison with staff working in other pre-five services. The 52 week opening was also mentioned by one pre-five worker as giving rise to difficulty in providing adequate staffing and continuity for the key-worker's children when the key-worker was on holiday while another felt that staff elsewhere were given more generous holidays.

Both Seniors felt that the demands placed on staff were considerable and that their past experience did not equip them to cope with the range of demands made e.g. those of providing extended day care, dealing with children with behaviour problems, involvement with families, writing reports for other agencies, involvement with the Evaluation Project.

Most of the staff are NNEB qualified and there is one member of staff un-qualified. Their qualifications and past experience has not given them the experience of working with parents and other professionals.
Senior Officer, Nursery Unit.

People have things to offer, but more training is necessary. No one has all the skills needed.
Senior Officer, Nursery Unit.

Children

The staff interviewed varied in their initial expectations as to the needs of the children but all agreed that the children's needs were emotional as well as social and educational. They felt that the children needed security, stability and attention from adults.

Emotional needs - every child is different but most need a feeling of security, stability (the comfort of routine) and need familiar faces. They also need added stimulation to move them on and encourage development.
Pre-Five Worker, Nursery Unit.

They need individual attention and the time of the key-worker, they need the security of one person.
Senior Officer, Nursery Unit.

Some need social development as well as nursery education.
Senior Officer, Nursery Unit.

All were unsure as to whether they were meeting the needs of the children adequately. It was felt that time was needed to know the children better and to be able to identify their needs and judge if they were being met. Staff were satisfied that children seemed happy to attend the units but felt that they would get better at assessing and meeting needs with more time running the units and more training.

I think we could meet needs better but we need training for this.
Pre-Five Worker, Nursery Unit.

It is good that most children are here for 2 years for we need that time to help them.
Pre-Five Worker, Nursery Unit.

The pressure to take in a large number of Category 1 children was felt to be a negative consequence of the admissions policy. Staff in both units felt that the children would benefit from children from a wider mix of social backgrounds being admitted.

I would like a better balance, children learn from each other.

Senior Officer, Nursery Unit.

If you are bringing in all Category 1 children with special needs how do you set an example for ages and stages, you can get lost as to what are the normal stages of development.

Senior Officer, Nursery Unit.

Parents

The amount of contact with parents is dependent on whether or not the parents regularly bring their child to nursery themselves or whether the children use the transport provided. For children in both units who use any of the transport provided contact with their parents is very limited. The 3-5 Unit send home a newsletter and let parents know about the monthly theme and parents of children with behaviour problems are seen regularly. A unit group had been started. The 0-5 Unit has some parents who attend as part of the Family Centre plan but there were no parents groups operating in the nursery and social/fund-raising events with parents were felt to be impractical in the building then occupied. Staff sent letters home about any problems if children used the transport provided.

re amount of contact Sometimes very little if the child comes on transport. A few parents come every day.

Pre-Five Worker, Nursery Unit.

We have to use written notes sometimes, perhaps about our work with the children e.g. themes or about behaviour e.g. making children do up their own clothes.

Pre-Five Worker, Nursery Unit.

Neither unit reported any problems between staff and parents with the odd exception of ill-feeling arising when children have been bitten or hurt by another.

Management

All staff interviewed commented negatively on the management style of the Head of Centre. While accepting that the Head was herself under pressure they felt her initial expectations of staff were too high and that she appeared to be critical of their work. Three of the staff mentioned ill-feeling aroused on one occasion when the Head of Centre openly rebuked the staff in general.

... we all got reprimanded but didn't know specifically what we were doing wrong. There were high expectations of things to begin with and it wasn't possible to meet these, but the Head had a lot of pressure on her.

Senior Officer, Nursery Unit.

... some think that the Head hasn't dealt with things well. They think her approach is wrong ...

Pre-Five Worker, Nursery Unit.

The pre-five workers were not aware of specific management policy. One Senior felt that she was not yet able to judge what was good management while the other felt that more time was needed to judge whether the management could operate the community nursery to meet it's

aims. The pre-five workers did not wish to see any specific changes in management. One Senior argued for more sensitivity as to staff feelings while the other suggested that more training in management skills should have been given initially.

Neither Senior had much contact with with divisional or regional staff. One felt that she was now adequately supported although she had not felt so at first.

I have very little contact with Region and Division.
Senior Officer, Nursery Unit.

I don't have much to do with the division and the region.
Senior Officer, Nursery Unit.

In all comments on staff relationships, personalities and roles were confounded with some staff relating better to one member of the management team than to others.

Inter-agency liaison

There have been contacts with a range of other agencies, mainly Health Visitors, Social Work, Psychological Services and Speech Therapy. After a child has been admitted to the nursery both units felt that it was very much left to them to make further contacts with other agencies, although the 0-5 Unit felt that they were developing a reciprocal relationship with the Social Work Department. The 3-5 Unit reported some contacts with Social Work as being particularly helpful.

Staff in both units felt that inter-agency links could be improved by increased opportunities for meetings (either informally or in formal interviews) with staff of other agencies so that staff would know each other, making future contacts easier and so that the service offered by the community nursery could be better known.

re improving links by making agencies welcome to come in whether they have children here or not. Some are unsure of what we are about and may not refer here.
Senior Officer, Nursery Unit.

re Social Work links it would be good to meet their staff in general, not with regard to any particular problems. It would make contacts in the future easier.
Pre-Five Worker, Nursery Unit.

Rating Success

While one staff member felt that the aims of the units were all being successfully met the others had reservations but felt that there was a degree of success which had to be viewed in the light of the existing circumstances.

As for overall aims, we are not achieving them all but I would defend this because of the circumstances.
Senior Officer, Nursery Unit.

As well as can be expected, under staffing levels, conditions etc.
Pre-Five Worker, Nursery Unit.

A move to permanent, more adequate accommodation featured in the recommendations for improvement as did increased staffing levels. Other recommendations related to the particular circumstances of the staff member e.g. one wanted more contact with parents while another wanted more regular supervisions.

In conclusion both Seniors mentioned that the Evaluation Project increased the work-load.

Family Centre

The staff in the Family Centre began work, in temporary premises, in February 1990 and have received referrals since March 1990. Eight families had been referred by August 1990, all being referred by Social Work. Two of the families are 2 parent families while the remainder are single parent families. Four families have children who attend either the 0-5 Nursery Unit or the 3-5 Nursery Unit. Of the families associated with the Centre, 8 children were in care in July 1990.

Aims and Objectives

The Family Centre aims to prevent reception into care and assist in rehabilitation when children return home. Involvement with the Family Centre was claimed by the Senior Officer as a factor in preventing the re-reception of one family into care and allowing other children on the 'At Risk' register to remain at home. One family has had children returned home as a result of involvement with the Centre while another is being assessed for rehabilitation after having been in care. The Pre-Five Worker in the Family Centre explained that the Centre worked towards preventing reception into care and assisting in rehabilitation by supporting both the mother and her children. Every family has a working agreement with the Centre about the issues surrounding that family and in which they will work together. The Family Centre workers aim to raise the mother's self-esteem, offer advice and arrange for children to spend time away from home in the nursery units if this is necessary.

re preventing reception into care by supporting the mother, relieving the mother helps her to cope ... we show her how important she is and that children have needs.

Pre-Five Worker, Family Centre.

Parents were involved in the Family Centre Unit group, some used the one Family Centre room as a drop-in facility while an other mother attended classes elsewhere in the building in which the Family Centre was situated. Any greater degree of parental involvement was inhibited by the existing premises and staffing arrangements.

We have plans to implement a group work programme when we have the premises and staff.

Senior Officer, Family Centre.

Working with parents to help them realise their potential is specifically covered in the working agreement and might be achieved by encouraging parents to attend adult education classes, supporting them as the main educators of their children (involving the nursery unit), encouraging feelings of ownership over their house and arranging counselling.

There is always something specific to parents in the initial working agreement and we review this.

Senior Officer, Family Centre.

Developing acceptable child-rearing practices is also covered by the initial working agreement. The Family Centre workers might suggest good practices, arrange for parents to spend time in the nursery, attempt to find solutions to practical problems and suggest activities that adults and parents can do together.

Here we are working between nursery and home, showing ways in the nursery. We suggest good practices too e.g. bedtime routines.

Pre-Five Worker, Family Centre.

Both the Senior Officer and the Pre-Five Worker questioned how 'effective' their link with the 0-5 Unit was despite the regular contact. Neither member of staff mentioned contact with the 3-5 Unit.

We are working with other units but I don't know if it is effective. I find it hard at times to accept the practice of other units.

Pre-Five Worker, Family Centre.

The Family Centre aims to refer families to appropriate community resources, both finding the provider of a service and linking the family concerned to that service e.g. arranging for a mother and child to attend a local Mother/Toddler group.

Transport was arranged for families as necessary through the Social Work Department although this did sometimes present problems.

Some formal structures had been developed for contact with other agencies and Family Centre staff attended joint review meetings. The Pre-Five Worker felt that relationships with other agencies were generally not a problem while the Senior felt that they had room for improvement.

Our Health Visitor is linked to the local team. Each of our other team members is linked to a Social Work team. But our relationships have some way to go.

Senior Officer, Family Centre.

The Senior suggested that inter-agency training would be useful as would developing less formal links, the latter being suggested by nursery unit staff too.

Effective team work was hampered in the initial period by bad relationships with one member of staff who subsequently left. Having got over that problem the team have begun to support each other and pool their skills.

Both the Senior and the Pre-Five worker felt that training needs of their staff had not been met although there were plans for future training which would be relevant. Family Centre staff wanted early training on physical/sexual abuse cases.

I felt that what I am expected to work at I haven't had the training for, the training is not specifically for Family Centre staff needs.

Pre-Five Worker, Family Centre.

My staff needs for training are not being met, it's on the agenda but there is no time as yet.

Senior Officer, Family Centre.

Qualifications and Experience

The Senior Officer felt that her past experience was very relevant for the work encountered in the Family Centre although she had no day-care experience and sometimes had to get involved in things in the nursery that she had no experience of. The Pre-Five Worker felt that her previous experience did not help her in her work in the Family Centre but was relevant to her contact with the nursery units.

re relevance of experience ...If I was in the nursery - yes. But in the Family Centre I need a lot of adjustment.
Pre-Five Worker, Family Centre.

Accommodation and Resources

Both staff interviewed felt that the accommodation was inadequate and restricted the service which the Family Centre could offer. The Family Centre did not have sole use of any room nor was there a room which can be used as a playroom for children or a drop-in space for parents. There was no interview room so space for confidential discussions was unavailable, or such discussions were interrupted.

We are on sufferance. The room is needed for other things ... We have no base for work with families.
Senior Officer, Family Centre.

Under pressure always that other people want the room. There is very little chance of confidentiality ... Clients cannot just drop-in ...
Pre-Five Worker, Family Centre.

The need for a properly equipped play-room, particularly for therapeutic work with children, was stressed by both interviewees. The Pre-Five Worker would also like to have facilities for group exercises e.g. in cookery and help with domestic needs e.g. laundry equipment. The Senior Officer also mentioned her wish to provide a well-resourced library for staff.

Staff

The Family Centre was staffed by one senior officer, 2 pre-five workers and a seconded Health Visitor. A further post was vacant at the time of the interviews. The Centre was staffed from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. although the Senior felt that they could develop the service offered further if there was a budget for unsocial hours. The difficulty of providing adequate cover during holidays and illness was also raised.

The Pre-Five Worker felt satisfied with the work done at that time by colleagues in the Family Centre although she was dissatisfied with the relationship then existing with a senior in another unit. The Senior Officer was satisfied that the staff tried hard but was frustrated that they needed so much 'training' from her. They were lacking in interview skills and had to be helped to maintain non-judgemental attitudes.

I feel like a trainer every day ... They (i.e. the staff) try hard and feel bad about needing help but it is very frustrating for me.
Senior Officer, Family Centre.

While the staff team had recovered from a disruptive period which was resolved by a staff member leaving, the Senior felt that the team were still having to strive towards common aims.

Clients

The needs of clients were expressed in terms of their need for intensive support, for help with parenting and to be helped to feel more confident. Limited resources and accommodation hamper the service offered it was argued. The Senior felt that the Centre staff were beginning to tackle these needs but had difficulty addressing them when they had no previous experience of such challenge.

How do I ask the staff team to address these problems when this is their first experience of such needs.

Senior Officer, Family Centre.

On the whole families were felt to be willing to co-operate with the Centre staff and they were ready to have their children attend the nursery. Initially all the families are under some pressure to attend the Centre.

About 60% of contact with families is in their own home. Contact can be as frequent as daily, depending upon the nature of the working agreement between the Centre and the family.

Neither member of staff interviewed was aware of any particular problems between staff and parents although there were tensions when children on the 'At Risk' register required medicals and times when parents could confront staff with hostility or distress.

Management

Both staff felt that the Head of the Project was personally approachable and supportive but expressed some doubts as to her management style.

Staff needs can be overlooked.

Senior Officer, Family Centre.

The Senior Officer was part of the project management team and felt that roles in that team were ill-defined and that it spent time discussing practice matters that might be better dealt with by the unit concerned and the Project Head. Neither staff felt supported by regional or divisional staff. They felt that their difficulties and the nature of their work was not appreciated. The Senior Officer felt, in particular, that the Education Department did not understand her job.

Inter-Agency Liaison

Family Centre staff have contact with Social Work, Health Visitors, children's homes and schools. The Senior Officer has also had contact with Women's Aid. The Pre-Five Worker found that it was she who initiated the contact initially although some schools were now beginning to contact her. One particular Children's Home was described as difficult to communicate with. The Senior Officer felt that her most helpful contact was with the Social Work Area Manager and that social work teams were increasingly contacting the Family Centre.

Social Work initiate contact, they are very supportive of our Centre. They recognise their lack of resources and skills in this area.

Senior Officer, Family Centre.

As to improving inter-agency links, more effective ways of contacting social work teams was suggested, as was more informal contact with Social Work and a forum for discussing inter-agency problems.

Success Rating

Considering their limitations in terms of facilities and the newness of staff to their roles both interviewees felt that they had had some success in terms of preventing children being taken into care and helping children to return to their families.

It is not perfect yet, there is still a lot of staff work to do. We need more training but we have prevented children going into care and helped to get children out of care.

Pre-Five Worker, Family Centre.

I find it very frustrating but when I think we've only been here 6 months and look at the facilities and other agencies I think we are making significant progress (in areas of preventing reception into care and assisting in rehabilitation).

Senior Officer, Family Centre.

A move to a new building and a full complement of staff were suggested as ways of improving the operating of the Family Centre. The Senior Officer was concerned at the time of the interview with the service offered to children by another part of the project and wanted to see changes in practice there which would allow her to concentrate on the Family Centre.

6.4 EARLY STAGES IN JIGSAW COMMUNITY NURSERY - A REPORT ON STAFF INTERVIEWS

Interviews with staff of the Community Nursery and members of the voluntary sector involved in the nursery were carried out during Spring 1991. All the voluntary sector representatives interviewed had been members of the Planning Group and were now members of the Community Nursery Executive Group. Interviewees were asked to reflect on their experience of the first six months of the operation of Jigsaw Community Nursery. Interviews covered all aspects of the community nursery, the nursery unit, voluntary sector activities, outreach work and after-school care.

Provision in the Early Stages

• The Nursery Unit

The nursery unit had staff in post early in June 1990 and took in children gradually over the summer. Forty full-time equivalent places were available. Six children had full-time places in the early stages with other children being offered either a morning or afternoon place for at least 2 days, and up to 5 days per week. The hours of attendance have changed over the early stages. Staff were in attendance from 8 a.m. but children usually arrived at around 9 a.m. Children with morning places leave at 11.30 a.m. unless they stay for lunch in which case they leave at about 12.30 p.m. Children with afternoon places arrive at 1 a.m. and originally left at 4 p.m. although this was later changed to 3.30 p.m. Full-time children could be offered places from 8 a.m. - 5.30 p.m. although the hours are more usually between 8 and 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. care is available until 5.30 p.m. when required.

The daily routine consisted of a period of free play until 10.30 a.m., followed by small group time and a period when all the children are involved together, often in music and movement, until 11.30 a.m. when preparations for lunch begin and children with morning places leave. After lunch those full-time children who need it have a rest and at 1 p.m. the afternoon children arrive and the morning pattern of free-play and small and large group activities is repeated.

• Outreach Work

Outreach work in the early stages had consisted of setting up and supporting the cafe at the community nursery, visiting other pre-school provision in the area and running 2 creches in community halls. During the early stages the outreach worker was also required to drive the minibus regularly as were the Head and Deputy Head, taking time from their managerial and supervisory roles. The outreach worker had also to offer assistance in the nursery unit e.g. during staff absences and assist in after-school care one evening per week (or more to cover staff absences). The outreach work included encouraging playgroups and mother and toddler groups to use the soft play area available in the community nursery and organising transport, where possible, for groups to get to the soft-play area. The group of volunteers who run the cafe was supported by the outreach worker.

• After-school care

After-school care began in September 1990 with 2 part-time workers. Although a ratio of 1:13 is possible, numbers have been restricted so far due to the room space available. Sixteen primary 1-7 children were attending.

• Voluntary Sector Services

A playgroup operates from the community nursery building. There are 14 places available for each of the 5 sessions with children attending for 2 or 3 sessions per week. The playgroup is run by its own committee and is part of SPPA.

Also part of SPPA and run by an independent committee is the Mother and Toddler group which operates for 3 sessions a week in the community nursery building.

The SPPA Branch Room is part of the community nursery and offers accommodation for the fieldworker, training sessions, branch meetings and the weekly SPPA Stock Shop and toy library. This room can be used for meetings by other parts of the community nursery when not being used by SPPA.

The local Link-Up group also meets in the community nursery.

A child-minder's drop-in group is housed in the community nursery. This is a small independent group.

Review of the aims and objectives: Staff Perspective

The Pre-Five Worker and Outreach Worker were asked to comment on the specific aims and objectives for their unit.

• The Nursery Unit

The nursery unit aims to provide for children's social, emotional, physical and intellectual development. Interaction with other children and relationships with staff were felt to contribute to their social and emotional development while daily opportunities are provided for physical play and group time is considered to cater for intellectual development.

Their social skills improve by being here and interacting with other children.

If they are upset they get comforted.

There is a high input of opportunities for physical development.

(Pre-Five Worker, Nursery Unit)

Communications between key-worker and parents and a settling in programme aimed to create a secure and caring environment. A parenting skills group had been established by the Deputy Head and pre-five workers advise individual parents in line with the specific aim to promote parenting skills.

Pre-five workers can give advice or pass on advice or information.

(Pre-Five Worker, Nursery Unit)

The aim of involving parents in the work of the nursery was mainly met in the early stages by parents joining in voluntary sector fund-raising rather than spending time in the nursery unit, although they were welcome to do so. Opportunities for adult social inter-action were provided by the cafe. During the early stages the only adult group available was a discussion group for parents.

The Head and Deputy Head were involved in case conferences with other agencies in liaison with the pre-five workers. The key-workers themselves were involved in the review sessions organised with the Deputy Head and parents. Maintaining links with other professionals involved with families was largely the remit of the management team although pre-five workers were kept informed.

Pre-five workers don't get involved in this but we are told by the Head and Deputy what is going on.
Pre-Five Worker, Nursery Unit.

- **Support Services: Outreach Work**

The first aim of the outreach work was to work with the voluntary sector. In the early stages this was pursued by visiting voluntary sector groups and encouraging them to use the soft-play area. There was also contact over playleaders staffing creches organised by the outreach worker. Informing the local community about the community nursery had so far been carried out by visiting playgroups and their committees rather than by using posters or news sheets, although a leaflet may be prepared to publicise future creches.

I have spoken to playgroup committees, letting them know about my role, the soft-play area and the cafe and possible use of the safe outdoor play area and mini-bus I'm more hesitant about using posters and news sheets, I haven't done anything yet about these.
(Outreach Worker)

Publicity for the cafe has been constrained by the need to avoid obvious competition with local businesses and this had also limited the aim of encouraging local people to use the cafe.

..... if we get too much publicity we might be seen as competing with local cafes. The long term aim of the cafe is to become a community business but a condition of funding is not to compete with local business.
(Outreach Worker)

The outreach worker aims by word of mouth to encourage groups to send representatives to the user's group meetings, to provide information about available resources and encourage the use of the premises by groups. The outreach worker gathered information about developments in the area from links with the SPPA Branch, the pre-school community organiser and the Development Officer for the Enterprise Trust (working under the auspices of the District Council).

A cafe committee (volunteers) had been formed and the cafe was staffed one day per week by volunteers. The cafe committee had also provided some outside catering. The outreach worker had suggested that the committee explore possibilities for expansion.

We hope to expand from Wednesday over the rest of the week.
(Outreach Worker)

It was hoped that the cafe, provided for informal social contact amongst parents and other adults and that in time this would lead to requests for particular groups or courses to be set up but as yet no courses are offered.

The cafe is a good meeting place and it will help over time to find common interests and lead to groups/courses starting.
(Outreach Worker)

Although aiming to provide creche facilities as required demand for evening creches e.g. at meetings has been small. Demand for day-time creches is considered to be greater and there are plans to set up creches in 2 of the areas covered by the community nursery, following the interest in the creches organised before Christmas.

.... as the demand is there I am planning more, organising staff etc.
(Outreach Worker)

The demand for home visiting schemes is as yet unclear but the outreach worker has begun to investigate the possibilities.

Home visiting has been discussed but there is no firm plans - it might be a befriending scheme. I'm not sure of the demand.
(Outreach Worker)

- **Support Services: After-School Care**

After-school care was being provided for children aged 5-12 years although the numbers attending do not yet as originally aimed for. The style of care was evolving to suit the needs of the children. No specific room was available for the service which was then accommodated in the quiet room.

Some children don't want to be in after-school care so we have to find ways of accommodating this between children and staff It has taken time to develop ... It has got to be more than baby sitting, more like a youth club. (Outreach Worker)

Review of the Aims and Objectives: Managment Perspective

The Head and Deputy were asked to comment more in general terms about their perspective on the structure and the content of parts of the community nursery.

- **The Nursery Unit**

Both the Head and the Deputy felt that the organisation of this service and it's content were still being refined.

In the daily organisation we try to be positive and it is coming together, learning by trial and error.
(Depute Head of Community Nursery)

- **Outreach Work**

The appropriate nature of the outreach service was still unclear and although there were opportunities for development both the Head and Deputy Head suggested that these had not yet been properly identified.

Difficult, it's a bit unknown what we should do. Because SPPA and the playgroups have a support network there isn't a slot for us to fit into. we are looking for other developments e.g. cafe, setting up creches.
(Head of Community Nursery)

It has taken time and is still taking time to define the role of the outreach worker and for it to be clearly understood. We are taking time to survey needs (Depute Head of Community Nursery)

- **After-School Care**

The after-school care service was not able to cover the hoped for numbers of children due to restrictions of space.

Space restricts our numbers, we could have a ratio of 1:13.
(Head of Community Nursery)

One member of the management team suggested that perhaps children and parents who most needed after-school care were not yet aware that this was available.

Voluntary Sector Services

These services were considered by the management team to be autonomous and to be continuing in their previous successful manner. Neither the Head nor the Deputy had much routine input into the services. The Deputy Head has been involved in playleader training.

Review of Provision and Facilities in the Early Stages: Staff Management and Voluntary Sector Comments

Accommodation and Resources

- **The nursery unit**

The amount of space available for the nursery unit was considered adequate by everyone interviewed but some expressed reservations about the way this space was organised into discrete rooms making supervision difficult.

The lay-out restricts the nursery there is no direct vision from room to room. (Depute Head of Community Nursery)

The building makes a good, spacious first impression. It is difficult to work in, to supervise all the rooms.
(Head of Community Nursery)

The nature of the toilet provision and the position of the toilets was considered to be a particular draw-back in the accommodation provided.

The toilets are a problem - they are too far away. children have to be taken there. (Pre-Five Worker)

.... the toilets are very inconvenient.
(Head of Community Nursery)

The toilet facilities are atrocious, it is nonsense that there should be only one room for children and adults.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

The out-door play space and the soft-play area were welcomed as good provision.

.... there is excellent out-door play.
(Depute Head of Community Nursery)

The multiple use of one room as quiet room, nap room, lunch preparation room, creche room and after-school care room drew negative comments from one interviewee. The lack of a separate interview room was also regretted by a number of the interviewees.

An interview room is needed. The office is restricted if a parent interview is going on in there.

(Outreach Worker)

There is no interview room either which is always a problem for the Head.

(Voluntary Sector Representative)

In the early stages the nursery unit looked well, even generously, equipped but there were gaps being identified by staff e.g. the range of books could be improved, more age-appropriate games provided, more wheeled toys needed and the outdoor physical equipment added to.

It is as well equipped as other nursery units ... perhaps it looked a lot as all came at once at the beginning.

(Voluntary Sector Representative)

We thought we had everything when we first arrived, we are now trying to find money to order things we don't have e.g. wheeled toys....

(Head of Community Nursery)

..... some of the games we have aren't appropriate for our age range. We are going to the library for more story books now.

(Pre-Five Worker)

• Outreach and After-School Care

The size of the room available limits the capacity of the after-school care provision and their room has to be shared with pre-five services.

The premises are very limited, they are temporarily in the Quiet Room.

What was to be the baby room is now a quiet room and doubles for the dinner lady/creche/after-school care but it is not suitable for any of these uses. Things have to be cleared away each time.

(Voluntary Sector Representative)

To increase after-school care an extra room is needed.

(Voluntary Sector Representative)

Children using the after-school care also have access to the soft play-area, the outdoor play area and the gym. The provision of crech facilities can be interrupted by having to move out of the quiet room, when it is needed for other purposes, into other rooms.

.... when creches are on, then we have to move children from room to room to find space where a room is empty - the quiet room is used for so many purposes. (Voluntary Sector Representative)

Creche facilities are being restricted and this is a big problem It is difficult to have a book in creche

(Voluntary Sector Representative)

Creches would be much better if we had our own room.
(Outreach Worker)

Several interviewees mentioned how the conversion of the one room which remains in its original condition would provide a creche/after-school care room and release the quiet room for other uses.

We want to have the 'creche room' converted for creches and after-school.
(Head of Community Nursery)

N.B. 'Creche Room' refers to the planned designation of the currently unconverted room.

If one room which is not used at present could be operational it would make a considerable difference ...

After-school care would have been empty most days. It would be available for interviewing and meetings.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

The equipment available for after-school care was linked and inappropriate for the age range initially. Attempts were then made to provide items such as a table-tennis table and a billiard table. More sophisticated games, craft equipment and a computer were mentioned as being necessary.

regarding equipment for after-school care - **Very limited equipment; it was bought through pre-five catalogues so we are lacking things for older children.** (Head of the Community Nursery)

We could do with improved after-school care equipment. We cover the needs of 5-12 year olds which is a big range of needs.
(Outreach Worker)

The Planning Group didn't cater really for them, especially with the age span.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

• Voluntary Sector Services

The playgroup now has only one room available which can constrain the way in which they set out their activities or programme activities.

The playgroup could do with slightly more space, they are restricted now to one room. (Voluntary Sector Representative)

The playgroup used to have 2 rooms now they have one, it is more difficult for them - they used to have a quiet or messy room and big equipment spread out in the other room. (Voluntary Sector Representative)

The child-minders group and mother and toddler group were used to sharing one room. The SPPA Branch have the first option on the use of the room designed as the Branch Room and although there are some reservations as to how this booking system will operate as demand for space increases the joint use of the room seems satisfactory in the early stages. There was a feeling that although the accommodation available to the voluntary sector services is now more comfortable they have had a reduction in the space available to them.

The Branch Room is fine for meetings and storage for the toy library is good ... but now it has to be carried out if we want to display it ... It is a more comfortable room now and warm. We have lost out over space and could do with more room. (Voluntary Sector Representative)

I would be happier if there was a separate branch room but so far joint use is not a problem but is getting busier. (Voluntary Sector Representative)

The community nursery equipment most used by the playgroups is the soft-play area. The mini-bus can also be made available.

They use the mini-bus and soft-play area. (Head of the Community Nursery)

A soft-play area is available for any voluntary sector group. The community nursery has a mini-bus which may be available to take groups to the soft-play area or other activities. There is nothing else we need from the community nursery. (Voluntary Sector Representative)

Any equipment necessary for SPPA training sessions or creches can be borrowed within the building e.g. video equipment.

If we are putting on creches we borrow chairs/equipment. We can borrow anything we don't have here for training. (Voluntary Sector Representative)

Staff and Staff Relations

• The Nursery Unit

The Pre-Five Worker described the work done by the staff in the nursery unit as good now after having had good and bad spells in the post. The impression of the voluntary sector representatives was also that under the circumstances (staff levels, staff turn-over, amount of illness etc.) the quality of work was good. The Head commented on the willingness of the staff to try different approaches. The management team were aware of some very good work done by the staff but also of some poorer quality work.

The management team felt that the quality of work had met their expectations for a new team from varied backgrounds. The voluntary sector representatives felt too that staff had lived up to their expectations before being involved in staff appointments.

When appointing staff who come from varying backgrounds (with differing or no experience) it takes time for a staff group to 'gel', to identify each other's strengths and weaknesses. (Depute Head of Community Nursery)

Most of them meet expectations - are good quality. (Voluntary Sector Representatives)

The Pre-Five Worker felt that both her qualification and past experience equipped her well for work in the community nursery.

Both management staff felt that there was room for improvement in the work of staff individual members, perhaps arising from their individual past experience or the under staffing of the nursery.

Staff were being encouraged to go on training courses, although opportunities are limited. The close of the afternoon session of the nursery unit was brought forward to allow more planning time for staff and for case study supervisions. The pattern of staff meetings had also been amended to allow more time for discussing the nursery programme and issues arising in the nursery.

The nursery unit staff are reported as getting on well together socially and in terms of working together. The staff however, have little contact with the voluntary sector services except when they meet socially.

We work as a team, sharing ideas. We have no contact professionally with the voluntary sector staff but we are friendly with them and we use the stock shop and toy library. (Pre-Five Worker)

• Outreach Work

The work done by the outreach worker gave rise to some problems - not least because the role of the outreach worker was poorly defined.

The job has not developed as I expected it would.
(Head of Community Nursery)

describing outreach work - ... **fairly ordinary - perhaps because of the confusion over the role.** (Depute Head of Community Nursery)

I don't think outreach is achieving it's aims. It does do some increasing community awareness but how effective is it?
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

There is a feeling amongst the voluntary sector representatives that the post of outreach worker is not necessary in an area where there is a strong SPPA network and an active SPPA Fieldworker.

As it is now, outreach seems to repeat the voluntary sector's work.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

The Outreach Worker was also aware of a possible feeling of overlap.

I've sometimes had a bit of difficulty, (the Fieldworker's) job and mine can be viewed as too similar.
(Outreach worker)

The management team too had reservations about the quality of the work done by the outreach worker perhaps due to the worker's limited experience of outreach work or limited knowledge of the neighbourhood.

This is not as good as it could be due to limited experience due to lack of knowing what outreach is about and lack of knowledge of local needs but this will come with time spent in the area.
(Depute Head of Community Nursery)

There is a lot of work to be done in letting the community know we are here.
(Head of the Community Nursery)

The Head and Outreach Worker have set aside daily supervision time for planning the outreach work going on and they also now have meetings to discuss specific issues e.g. the cafe, creches. Attempts were being made to identify areas where the Outreach Worker can make a useful contribution.

- **After-School Care**

All those who felt able to comment on the quality of the work done by the After-School Care staff were happy with the work being done. The staff had had difficulties initially and had worked together to overcome these.

They provide a good balance and are a good team ... There were more problems to start with. The children were testing the boundaries and trying to play staff off against each other.
(Outreach Worker)

Its improving. It is in it's early stages The age group and time of day make the job more difficult than we thought it was. Lack of experience also presented difficulties.
(Depute Head of Community Nursery)

Again the the difficult conditions under which the staff work and their lack of past experience of such work were mentioned but it was felt that the staff had worked hard to overcome these disadvantages.

They have been working hard on their relationship with each other and with the children. (Outreach Worker)

Brief daily meetings with the Head and regular longer meetings of the after-school care workers and the Head are thought to be contributing to staff development and an improvement in the quality of the work done.

- **Voluntary Sector Services**

The playgroup committees and playleaders were as described by the voluntary sector representatives as working well and hard.

... they work hard. They have worked hard physically and work hard at creating a team spirit.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

The management team were conscious of the high standards set in playgroups and the determination of voluntary sector representatives to be involved in the community nursery. The Head and voluntary sector representatives on the Executive met, informally, to share information on a regular basis during the early stages. The relationship between the Head and the voluntary sector draws on long-standing relationships and with a different mix of individuals the relationship would probably have to be more clearly defined.

.... it is difficult because we have all known each other. We will have to formalise things for when we are not here.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

The voluntary sector and nursery unit staff have little contact.

Between the voluntary sector and the nursery unit staff there isn't much contact, they are mainly in the unit, but we get on well when we do meet.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

Children and Families

• The Nursery Unit

There was broad agreement that the children admitted under the admissions panel procedure were those who would benefit from the nursery unit provision.

It is a good way of making decisions on the whole. We are getting children who would benefit most although there are children outside who would benefit. (Head of Community Nursery)

Yes - they will all benefit from the nursery.
(Pre-Five Worker)

However, several interviewees qualified this by mentioning factors which admissions procedure did not take into account and which led it to be less satisfactory than they would wish. There was a feeling among voluntary sector representatives that 'ordinary' 2-parent families were discriminated against.

The 2-parent families (both working) are missed out, the admissions doesn't cater for them. (Voluntary Sector Representative)

The voluntary sector didn't want the admissions policy to be used anyhow - they wanted a better balance. The nursery unit is not open for all really.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

It was suggested that economic need was not sufficiently taken into account similarly neither were the educational or emotional needs of the children irrespective of their family circumstances.

There are children whose parents don't have skills and the children are under-stimulated but the policy doesn't bring them in over any others, particularly if they have 2 parents.
(Depute Head of Community Nursery)

The Head also raised the problem of making consistent admissions decisions over time.

At one time we may be able to give a place then later for same circumstances we cannot offer a place.
(Head of Community Nursery)

Given the nature of the admissions policy some children come to the nursery unit with emotional needs, the need for care and attention. Some children come for traditional nursery care while the needs of others are predominantly educational with children either being under-stimulated at home or needing the challenge of new educational opportunities. Some need to learn social skills from being with other children.

... we have a number with considerable emotional needs, they are under-stimulated. Other children at the other end of the scale are well stimulated and need more of a challenge.
(Depute Head of Community Nursery)

... for children at risk, social work or health visitor referrals you can see that they need more stimulation, love, care and more attention.
(Pre-Five Worker)

The lack of demand for extended hours provision surprised one staff member.

.... there are only about 12 out of 80 who need full day care .. The nursery is really only offering extended hours if parents are working or studying ...
(Depute Head of Community Nursery)

There was a feeling amongst the voluntary sector representatives that a greater demand for places in the nursery unit might have been expected.

We thought more people would apply at first but they were not applying then or now due to the misconception that it is only for special needs, children who are abused or for single parents.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

Staff felt that, within the constraints they worked under, they were trying hard to meet the children's needs although the desire of the families for more sessions for their children could not always be met.

The girls work hard to meet them and can meet care needs - that is easier than the educational needs.
(Depute Head of Community Nursery)

... we have a large number of shared places and families would prefer the children to have more sessions.
(Head of Community Nursery)

• Outreach

The demand for outreach services was a matter of some debate amongst interviewees. Voluntary sector representatives tended to feel that the existing network of SPPA satisfied the demand in the area and were unclear as to what demands for outreach services had been identified.

.... I've never seen a great need for an outreach worker, possibly because the area has a strong branch network. I don't know what I expected of outreach.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

Members of the management team also felt that the demand for outreach services might have been greater e.g. for the cafe to extend it's operations, for groups for parents. It was suggested that the needs of individual families, rather than the needs of groups, for outreach services had not been fully explored and that just what the needs of the community were was now being explored.

Outreach seems to have been going in a way which will facilitate groups rather than individual families. I don't know if families know about the outreach services - we are now looking at the needs of the community.
(Head of Community Nursery)

• After-School Care

The needs of the children in after-school care are primarily seen as the opportunity for appropriate play activities, a change of pace from the school day and the opportunity to be quiet if they wish. After a difficult settling in period it was felt that the needs of children in after-school care were now being more appropriately met and that the limited numbers being admitted made this much easier.

... it has been difficult with the range of ages. Now children are separated into appropriate groups and doing things more suited to smaller groups. This is working well...

(Depute Head of Community Nursery)

The ratio of 2 adults to 16 children ... has made meeting their needs a lot easier than it would have been with all the places (26) filled, especially over the range of ages. (Outreach Worker)

It was widely expected that the demand for places for after-school care would have been much greater. The lack of publicity for after-school care, the operation of the admissions policy, the current limit on numbers and the difficulty of transporting children from the whole area to the community nursery were all given as factors limiting demand.

regarding demand for after-school care - This is not as I expected, I had expected more but they don't advertise widely as they can only offer limited provision.

(Voluntary Sector Representative)

I'm surprised how slow the demand for places has been, that we haven't been inundated. I expected more before-school care demand too.

(Outreach Worker)

• **Voluntary Sector Services**

Voluntary sector playgroups and toddler groups were still in demand during the early stages despite anxieties that the nursery unit might be a threat to them. A few families had moved from a playgroup to the nursery unit and although one playgroup had closed down in the period it was suggested that this was not solely the effect of Jigsaw opening.

It was thought that there would be more of a threat to the voluntary sector from the nursery but it is not seen that way now.

(Voluntary Sector Representative)

I don't know if they are offering what people want but they are offering a service which is being taken up. They have waiting lists.

(Head of Community Nursery)

• **Parental Contact and Feedback**

For some children in the nursery unit there was daily contact with their parents while for others who use the transport provided there was little contact. Regular review meetings of parents and nursery staff were set up to overcome this lack of contact. The Deputy Head tried to be aware of particular problems that parents experienced with their children and tackled these in the parenting group. A nursery unit parent's group had been established. The Head was conscious that there was still room for improving parental contact.

Those on transport have very little contact. We try for regular (6 weekly) reviews but with 76 children it is difficult to fit this in Parents that come in build up a relationship with the staff There is room for improvement in parental contact. (Head of Community Nursery)

The after-school care staff have regular friendly contact with parents collecting their children. The outreach worker meets parents in the community when visiting playgroups and toddler groups and talking to their committees. Only one incident was mentioned where staff in the

nursery unit has to work through a period of tension with a parent. In the after-school care provision one child's behaviour had caused concern and needed to be jointly treated by staff and parents.

Those interviewed felt that feedback from parents who used the nursery unit service was positive as was the feedback on after-school care.

regarding nursery unit - **There is a lot of positive feedback and parents are happy, children enjoy coming.**
(Depute Head of Community Nursery)

regarding nursery unit - **The ones who have children there think it is wonderful and would like longer hours.**
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

regarding after-school care - **Everyone seems to be really pleased and grateful for service provided.**
(Head of Community Nursery)

regarding after-school care - **I have heard that it is very good, that the staff are good and that they are working well with the children and not just 'minding' them.** (Voluntary Sector Representative)

Interviewees had little or no feedback on the outreach services with the exception of one comment that the mini-bus facility was welcomed by groups outside Jigsaw. A number of interviewees mentioned an awareness of there being a stigma attached to admission into the nursery unit, that those admitted must be children or families with problems.

People think that there has to be something wrong for a child to get a place there (Jigsaw). (Voluntary Sector Representative)

Parents in the community have the feeling that this is a place for poor children with problems - a disadvantaged place. They are convinced their children won't get in and won't even apply.
(Depute Head of Community Nursery)

The location of the community nursery has also evoked negative comments from those who did not use the services.

It is difficult to get there (Jigsaw) from Moodiesburn and Millerston and people don't feel that it has anything to do with them in the outlying areas.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

Our location is difficult. The only thing we get is negative comments on is that Moodiesburn people would like the service there.
(Head of Community Nursery)

Management

• Management and Staff relationships

Both the Pre-Five Worker interviewed and the Outreach Worker reported a happy relationship between the Head and the Deputy Head and the remaining staff, describing them as supportive and as encouraging open communication.

The management team felt that relationships with regard to the nursery unit were variable but generally good with a willingness to listen and change on both sides.

regarding relationships between management and nursery unit staff - **Generally they are good and becoming more open ... with give and take from the management side too.**

(Depute Head of Community Nursery)

The after-school care staff and the Head had a good relationship which had been improved by regular daily meetings. The relationship between the management team and the outreach worker was more troubled perhaps due to a lack of clarity over the work which the outreach worker was expected to do. Regular meetings between the Head and the outreach worker had improved the position at the time of interviewing.

The relationship between the management and SPPA representatives was felt to be good but demanding while there was little contact with playleaders, playgroup committee etc. The head felt that there was still a reluctance on the part of the voluntary sector to use the office and she was attempting to break down any barriers.

The Head and Depute Head both expressed satisfaction at their relationship with each other and commented on their complementary expertise, the Head relying on the Depute's nursery experience and the Depute learning from the Head's community experience. The Head and Depute have somewhat differing perspectives on and expectations from the voluntary sector partnership at Jigsaw.

Although there were grievances amongst staff over salary levels this was not felt to effect the work done. Problems over operating the shift system were resolved by mutual discussion. The after-school care workers are sometimes asked to work extra hours to cover absences in the nursery unit which could make their jobs more like full-time than part-time.

Both the Head and Depute Head felt that they lacked adequate opportunities for supportive supervision from Divisional or Regional staff. The Depute felt that she was offered no professional supervision. When problems arose they felt unable to turn to Divisional and Regional staff but this was on an occasional basis.

• **Management Policy**

Both members of the management team referred to management policy as evolving through experience. The Pre-Five Worker too talked of policies being discussed not rules laid down.

A lot is trial and error. A lot of management is evolving as practice.

(Depute Head of Community Nursery)

We discuss things if we disagree with decisions. For example, we have worked out a discipline policy together.

(Pre-Five Worker)

During the early stages there was no definitive written down management policy for the whole community nursery.

Because we were rushed into getting operational we have evolved policy and have nothing written down as yet. We will write a policy statement.

(Head of Community Nursery)

The voluntary sector representatives too were conscious that there was no written statement of management policy for the whole nursery.

regarding policy for whole community nursery **It is still in the trial and error stage.** (Voluntary Sector Representative)

They felt that the management of the nursery unit was a separate issue and the responsibility largely of the Depute.

I'm more concerned with overall policy and tend to leave the nursery unit to (the Depute)
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

regarding nursery unit policy - **I don't poke into that it is a bit separate in how it is organised.**
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

The role and functioning of the community nursery Executive Group was recognised by all as uncertain and unspecified at the time of interviewing.

We (the Executive) are trying to write a constitution but we haven't sorted out what we can do, who does it and when.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

regarding the Executive - **I don't know what role is seen for it.**
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

regarding the Executive - **There is a draft remit and we are looking at a constitution - they (the Executive) want to look at the functions.**
(Head of Community Nursery)

Whether the Executive Group has management powers was a matter still to be decided. Some voluntary sector representatives wanted to ensure a management role for the Executive Group.

A more formal remit for the Executive has to come ... somewhere the management has to be formalised and written down. I don't want the voluntary sector to be swallowed up.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

regarding the role of voluntary sector on the Executive ... **we are involved but it is not cut and dried how we are involved.**
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

The Head was also unsure of her role on the Executive and the Depute wanted clarification on it's remit. The changing size of the Executive was also thought to inhibit it's functioning.

regarding the Executive - **I'm worried that it could become too large, though I see the need for all groups in the building and outside to be represented.**
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

Voluntary sector representatives were aware that much of their current involvement in the community nursery rested on personal relationships rather than formalised roles and that while this currently worked well it may have to change in the future.

I don't know how much of our influence is to do with the relationship between the Head and the voluntary sector. It possibly has more to do with who the people are than their position.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

The voluntary sector representatives had contact with Divisional and Regional services in the early stages at Executive Group meetings at Jigsaw, and at Evaluation Research Advisory meetings. There were established links with SPPA and the link-Up Group. The voluntary sector felt free to contact Divisional or Regional staff in writing on specific issues.

- **Inter-agency Links**

The community nursery had contact during the early stages with Health Visitors, Social Workers and an Educational Psychologist. All are represented on the Executive and Admissions panels as well as having links with individual children in the nursery unit. While the Head felt that initiating contacts was done by both the nursery staff and the outside agencies, the Deputy felt that in her experience the nursery staff had to initiate contact and that after referral the other agencies did not adequately support the placement.

The pre-five workers were not directly involved with other agencies as these contacts were handled by the management team. Psychological Services, Social Workers and Health Visitors were described as helpful and supportive. The Health Visitors have a wealth of knowledge of the local community. Relationships with these agencies had improved over time.

In the beginning we had to gain some credibility in their eyes before they would work closely.
(Depute Head of Community Nursery)

There was a feeling that the links with Social Work would be further improved now that they were aware of the service Jigsaw could offer.

The Outreach Worker had had contact with SPPA, the District Council, Community Education and Social Work. More regular representation of the agencies with Link-Up was recommended as a way of improving contacts for outreach.

Success

- **The nursery unit**

The consensus of opinion was that, given the attendant difficulties, the unit was being successful in the early stages although there was still felt to be room for improvement.

.... although they had ideas of quality care and education ... the quality is not as good as they want because of circumstances
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

It could have been better initially but it is constantly developing.
(Pre-Five Worker)

It has been pretty successful, I keep reminding myself about the newness of the project. (Depute Head of Community Nursery)

As to improvements for the future the desire was principally for more staff which would allow other improvements to take place.

- **Outreach**

The interviewees seemed to agree that although some work had been begun on outreach this was not meeting its aim in the early stages and needed further development and clarification. The establishment of the cafe and some creches was welcomed but there was a feeling that more could have been done.

The creches which were organised were successful but there is much more which could be done.

(Voluntary Sector Representative)

regarding outreach work - **It could have moved on in the time available but part of the time was given over to getting the building organised.**

(Head of Community Nursery)

There was an agreement that plans for more creches in the future would improve the service and that it should continue to attempt to achieve its stated aims and objectives.

- **After-school Care**

This Service was felt to be successful, after a difficult beginning, in so far as it meets the needs of the children attending but it does not offer the number of places originally aimed at. Improvements were only thought to be possible with greater resources and more space.

regarding after-school care improvements - **(We) want a new room.**

(Head of Community Nursery)

regarding after-school service - **This cannot improve due to lack of space and resources. They haven't filled their ratio but there is no space for more.**

(Voluntary Sector Representative)

- **Voluntary Sector Services**

Having overcome the initial problems associated with the refurbishment of the building the voluntary sector services continued during the Early Stages to work towards their independent aims.

The voluntary sector are now no more or less successful in meeting their aims.

(Voluntary Sector Representative)

They plan continuing training programmes to help achieve their aim of good quality pre-five provision. Playgroups outside Jigsaw have begun to use the facilities there, mainly the soft-play area, during the early stages. The goal of continuing as a partnership (voluntary sector and regional provision) within the building is being actively pursued.

The voluntary sector always sees it as an equal partnership within the building, both 'sides' have worked at this and it is being achieved.

(Voluntary Sector Representative)

regarding the future with voluntary sector services - **To progress with the partnership.**

(Head of Community Nursery)

6.5 3-TOWNS COMMUNITY NURSERY TWO YEARS ON - A REPORT ON STAFF INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted with:

Head of Centre

A Former Senior Pre-Five Officer

2 Qualified Pre-Five Workers

2 Unqualified Pre-Five Workers

Interviews were conducted between February 1992 and April 1992.

Introduction

The following summary is drawn from interviews with the Management (Head of Centre) and staff (the senior, one qualified pre-five worker from the 3-5 unit and one qualified worker and one unqualified worker from the 0-5 unit).

At the outset, the project consisted of 3 separate units; the 0-5 nursery (admitting children from 0-5 years), the 3-5 unit (admitting children from 3-5 years) and the Family Centre. All operating from temporary accommodation. At the time of the final stages interviews, the Family Centre had effectively closed due in the main to the loss of its Senior. The Head of Centre, who had been dissatisfied with the development of this service, took the opportunity to reconsider its remit and reduced the service to one half day drop-in facilities, deploying remaining staff within the project. Of the remaining nursery units, the 3-5 unit was still in temporary accommodation with little hope of a permanent base. The offer of accommodation in a local primary school has been withdrawn. The 0-5 unit was operating from permanent accommodation in the Springvale Campus.

Staff turnover meant that consistency was lost to some extent across both interview phases; the deputy had left over a year before the final round and wasn't followed up for interview. One unqualified pre-five worker from the 0-5 unit and one qualified worker from the 3-5 unit who had given earlier interviews were interviewed again in the final stages. The remaining pre-five workers were selected for interview on the basis of length of service. The senior of the 3-5 unit had left to take up another post but, since the move was recent, she was followed up for interview. The 0-5 unit had no senior at the time of interview.

The paper is divided into 3 parts, part 1 gives the perspective of the Head of Centre (the management perspective) and parts 2 and 3 look at the views of staff in the 3-5 and 0-5 units. The interviews were broadly similar and looked at the following areas: levels of satisfaction with the structure and content of each part of the project; accommodation and resources, quality of work and staff relations; children and families; contact with parents; management policy and 'style'; interagency liaison; and perceptions of success.

SECTION 1

The management perspective

1. The structure and content of services offered

The Head of Centre was asked if she was generally satisfied with the structure and content of each service offered.

0-5 unit

Given the level of dissatisfaction reported by the Head of Centre in the early stages interviews (social care and curriculum were described as poor), staff seemed to have made progress and this despite the loss of a senior.

I'm not yet satisfied but this has definitely improved and staff are doing a better job. There's no senior though and I'm having to run the nursery. However, we've got a well established team without a leader.
(Head of Centre)

3-5 unit

Different problems had effected this unit in the early stages. The Head of Centre saw this unit as offering a better standard in care and curriculum but staff had lacked appropriate experience in dealing with behavioural problems - a significant feature of children attending in the early months. The Head felt staff had progressed well but that the unit (and staff development) had suffered when the original senior left.

Staff there made a lot of progress under the original senior. When she left things slipped back again. Again, leadership instability (amongst other things) hasn't allowed staff to develop to their full potential.
(Head of Centre)

The Family Centre

In the early stages, the Head of Centre identified the family centre as the unit which deviated most from original objectives and this was largely as a consequence of lack of appropriate accommodation. In permanent accommodation, the service had begun to develop more in line with original aims (ie. for group work). The loss of the senior, however, highlighted the failure of the service to meet management expectations for a broader based remit and less intensive casework. Remaining staff were unable to cope with client demands (basically for one-to-one support and counselling) and the service was radically reduced. Long term plans involved changing (and clarifying) the centre's remit.

The service is greatly reduced with only one day a week drop-in facilities offered. There's no senior and the centre as it stands doesn't offer intensive support to families.
(Head of Centre)

Outreach

Similarly, the development of outreach work came to a halt in July 1991 when the Depute, who had responsibility for that part of the service left. Further development was planned when a new Depute was in post.

We haven't been able to provide creche facilities as planned although accommodation has been found to extend the existing service to Haycocks and Ardeer. A new creche worker training course was completed as planned. We haven't been able to offer any support to playgroups or mother and toddler groups.

(Head of Centre)

2. Accommodation and Resources

The nature of accommodation had caused serious problems for practice since the project began. At the time of interview only the 0-5 unit and the family centre had moved to permanent accommodation, but even here inadequacies continued to have a negative impact on quality and organisation of the service, limiting the number of extended day places and opportunities for parental involvement.

0-5 unit

Accommodation isn't adequate here and as a consequence the number of extended day places has been limited. Space is very limited; there's no quiet room, no storage space, no parent's room and toilet facilities.

(Head of Centre)

3-5 unit

The situation was similar in this unit, still in temporary accommodation and likely to remain so for the duration of the project. Plans to move the unit to permanent accommodation in a local primary school had fallen through and no other suitable accommodation could be found.

The situation is similar here with no hope of a move to more suitable permanent accommodation.

(Head of Centre)

Family Centre

Permanent accommodation for the Family Centre had proved adequate but at the time of interview was underused. Fire safety regulations prevented use of the extra space by nursery units.

Outreach

The search for accommodation for outreach work had proved difficult and most of the available buildings had proved unsuitable.

The development of outreach work has been hindered by the poor state of repair of the buildings on offer and the firemaster's imposition of regulations governing accommodation used by pre-fives.

(Head of Centre)

SECTION 2

Quality of Work and Staff Relations

0-5 unit

In the early stages the Head was very critical of this unit. She was disappointed by the quality of the work and although improvements had begun, she remained dissatisfied, finding work far below her own standards and expectations. At the time of the final interview, she still found standards of work below her expectations but acknowledged the difficulties facing the staff in trying to improve their standards - not least of which was the lack of a unit senior.

Although the quality of work has much improved it still doesn't meet expectations. The high number of category children makes things difficult. Staff have had to try to balance social and emotional needs against the need to provide a decent curriculum. In many instances striking this balance is impossible - the children's social and emotional needs are overwhelming.
(Head of Centre)

3-5 unit

Staff skills in this unit also remained below the Head's expectations, although this unit held the edge in practice terms for some time, at the time of interview the head felt both nursery units were roughly equal.

Again, this is much improved but it still doesn't meet my expectations. I feel the quality of the work was better than in the 0-5 unit but now both units work on a par.
(Head of Centre)

The Family Centre

Since there was no definable work going on in the family centre the Head of Centre was unable to comment on standards of work.

Outreach

Quality didn't yet meet expectations and the Head hoped that the new deputy and new curriculum development officer (both posts had recently been filled) would bring new ideas and new development to this area of work.

The project had experienced a very high degree of instability at all levels. Appointment of new staff was a slow process and a number of posts (in particular the senior in the 0-5 unit) were left unfilled for months. Undoubtedly this had a detrimental effect in a number of areas and contributed to the difficulties in resolving problems identified in the early stages. Staff turnover may also have been symptomatic of these problems, creating a vicious circle which proved difficult to break. The Head of Centre identified a number of factors which she believed contributed to the high rate of staff turnover including accommodation problems and her own management style.

Some staff never intended to stay with the project long term. Others reacted to accommodation difficulties, lack of job security and my particular style of management. Some were wrongly appointed.
(Head of Centre)

SECTION 3

Staff and Staff Management

Staff instability was reflected in staff/staff and staff/management relations.

0-5 unit

Here the Head felt staff had been reluctant to accept her authority and style of management, a problem identified in the early stages which had been exacerbated for some time by her having taken over the senior's role. She also found that delegation of responsibility was difficult to achieve and in some instances seemed to be actively undermined by uncooperative staff.

Its been a very difficult two years because of changes in senior staff and my higher profile there. I think they accept now that I know what I'm talking about but its been a long process to achieve that. The process of delegation doesn't work effectively yet but I think we're making some progress.
(Head of Centre)

3-5 unit

This unit, which had managed to resolve staff problems to a significant degree, had undergone a change of senior some months prior to the interview. Staff relations had suffered as a consequence, and the Head felt that relations with the new senior were not good.

Although the original Depute was their line manager, some staff still come to me identifying me as the boss and using that to their advantage. I don't think relations with the new senior are particularly good. There have been difficulties because of changes in staff. I think staff were very disappointed when the original senior left.
(Head of Centre)

Family Centre

There was no staff group in the family centre at the time of interview.

Outreach

Staff relations seemed good in this area both amongst staff and between the former deputy and staff. The appointment of the new deputy would mean building new (and hopefully) equally effective relationships.

Relations were good before the original Depute left. The new Depute has yet to build up relationships. Some of the staff seem to work together on a regular basis, others never seem to meet but they seem to get on and they've developed an informal network for distributing work amongst themselves. They are a resourceful group but I'm not sure whether they see themselves as part of the project.
(Head of Centre)

The Head of Centre was asked to describe her relationship with the recently appointed Depute. she found that the lengthy wait for the appointment of the new Depute had effected her way of working, making it difficult to readjust to delegating part of her decision-making role. She also felt that the new depute was less effective than the former, but acknowledged the difficulties inherent in that role.

'I found it hard to change my ways. The Depute's role is very difficult so I suppose its hard for both of us to adjust.
(Head of Centre)

However by April 1992 the new Depute had recruited 14 potential creche workers and arranged training for them. She was also actively involved with other outreach workers from both Social Work and Education and had identified premises to establish two new creches.

She was also asked to comment on her relationship with the Head of Springvale nursery. In the early stages the relationship between the project and the existing Springvale nursery school had been difficult and the joint management systems slow to develop. The Head felt relations had become generally more positive though this may have been a function of fewer opportunities for conflict.

Since the loss of the Depute and the head of the family centre in summer 1991, the joint management system disappeared and the project management team with it. There have been fewer demands on the head of Springvale and fewer opportunities for conflict. I think though that she has become more positive.
(Head of Centre)

SECTION 4

Children and Families

3-5 unit

In this unit, where behavioural problems had been a major issue for staff in the early stages, the Head felt children presented the same general needs though showed somewhat lower levels of behavioural disorder.

Children's need have changed in that behavioural difficulties are far less of an issue.

It's now at a level that I would have expected to see in the early stages.
(Head of Centre)

0-5 unit

This unit shared the trend towards fewer behavioural problems but current children seem to exhibit signs of even more poverty and neglect than earlier groups.

Again, children are showing the same general patterns in terms of presenting needs but they aren't showing the same high levels of behaviour problems. There does seem to be more evidence of extreme poverty and neglect.
(Head of Centre)

Family Centre

Here the pattern of needs seemed to fluctuate with families going through good and bad periods and requiring different levels and kinds of support.

Some families have moved on, some have improved and some are going through difficulties. Many of the families have had crises periods resulting in children being placed in care. One mother freed her child for adoption.
(Head of Centre)

The Head was asked whether or not she believed the needs of children and families were being adequately met in the context of each part of the service. Her comments echoed those made in the early stages, though improvements in staff skills imply that better all round service had developed.

0-5 unit

She felt that children's needs were still only partly met in this unit. Those who presented fewer problems and who required more challenging experiences tended to lose out while staff concentrated their energies on dealing with those who presented greatest demands.

Staff have come a long way in terms of developing their skill and experience. They are more aware of children's needs and how to plan for them. Some definitely get a very good service but others don't - particularly those who don't present very obvious problems. They are not being stretched. Also full-time children lose out at the end of the day in terms of staff attention - staffing levels are low then and staff need to clear up and prepare for the following day. (Head of Centre)

3-5 unit

The Head seemed more convinced of this unit's ability to meet the full range of children's needs.

I think staff deal very well with behavioural problems and most children's needs are met. (Head of Centre)

The Family Centre

Given the curtailment of the family centre's service, the needs of families were obviously not being met. The decision to restrict the service had been essential given the lack of appropriate staff and the lack of involvement and co-operation on the part of social workers. Although the service was much needed, the Head was clear that its future development in particular required a different remit and clearer basis for joint work.

Children and family's needs are not being met here at the moment. I did take the decision to restrict the service but I wasn't happy with that decision. Social workers weren't doing their share of contract based work. Next time we have to establish that on a much clearer basis. We've had no luck in appointing new staff so far. (Head of Centre)

Outreach

Outreach work had also been curtailed by the loss of the deputy, and by budget and accommodation difficulties. Identified local needs for creche and other services had gone (at least partly) unmet. Despite the appointment of a new deputy the service remained curtailed because of difficulties in finding appropriate accommodation.

The Head was asked to comment on the effectiveness of current admissions procedure. Before the opening of the project local pre-five provision had failed to adopt Strathclyde Region's category system for allocation of nursery places. The project's strict adherence to the category system and the establishment of a joint admissions panel for all local regional pre-five resources had gone some way to improving the effectiveness of procedure in ensuring that most needy

children had priority in allocated places. The Head still found that there were discrepancies between admission procedure for the project and those for other provision which tended to undermine the effectiveness of the category system.

One of the major changes has been that all nursery schools must now take 3 year olds and admissions are taken all year round rather than just once in August. The system is still not the same for the community and nursery schools; the admissions panel bands all community nursery applications but the Head of nursery schools band all their applications except bands one and two. Things are better but still not completely satisfactory. We need more support from Division in implementing policy.
(Head of Centre)

SECTION 5

Parental Contact and Involvement

The Head was asked whether parental involvement in the nursery and parent/staff contact was adequate. She found the situation regarding parent contact still unsatisfactory and largely unchanged since the early stages. It continued to reflect problems of no appropriate accommodation for parent groups, the distancing effects of the child transport system and lack of parental motivation towards involvement. Only the review system and the required presence of parents during children's settling in periods allowed contact between staff and parents. Her comments apply to both nursery units.

We have the review system and parents are in the nursery for settling in periods but otherwise the situation is unsatisfactory. There's no parent's room and little ... can be offered directly to those in difficulty.
(Head of Centre)

SECTION 6

Management

The Head was asked how effective her own management of the project had been, Her responsibilities had been effected by the loss of the deputy and this post was left unfilled for almost a year. The 3-5 unit (prior to the loss of its senior) had begun to function well and management was generally effective given the senior's increased skill in her management role. The 0-5 unit presented more of a problem. When a senior was in post, she handled the delegation process badly including relations between the staff and the Head. Later the absence of a senior had meant a more direct management role in the unit for the Head. This has presented problems with increased responsibility for the staff group.

The delegation process didn't work well in this unit mainly because of the senior's poor handling of her role. The lack of a senior later on meant staff have had to cope with more responsibility. Delegation works a lot better now.
(Head of Centre)

Management support structures had proved only minimally effective, showing little change since the early stages of the project.

The development officer's post was vacant for a year. An education officer has taken over this role in relation to the project but contact is minimal. People have dropped out of the Advisory Group and generally, although that group is sympathetic to the project, except for councillors, it has no real clout.
(Head of Centre)

Asked whether she felt adequately supported by Division and Regional staff in her management role, she felt that generally this wasn't the case.

I'd say in general, 'no' but at particular points of the project's development I have been offered support.
(Head of Centre)

SECTION 7

Interagency Links

In the early stages the Head of Centre's comments on the development of liaison with external agencies (Psychological Services, the Social Work Department and Health Visitors) indicated difficulties both in establishing and sustaining links. All cases of contact with other agencies had been initiated by project's staff. In general, follow up of children attending had been poor and support offered often less than staff felt was required. The Head of Centre had felt that there had been a persistent lack of understanding of the aims of the project. Despite repeated attempts on the part of project management to remedy this and to improve liaison, the situation remained largely unchanged with the exception of input from psychological services which had improved. At the time of interview, planning meetings with social work and health visitors had been arranged but the Head of Centre felt efforts were largely one sided with little commitment from either of these agencies to developing effective liaison.

There are Prescat meetings with Psychological Services and regular reviews with shared objectives stated. Liaison and ongoing support are good. In the case of social work, there's a continuing mismatch between our expectations and those of social work. We need a joint planning meeting to clarify objectives. There's very little ongoing contact with health visitors especially since the closure of the family centre.
(Head of Centre)

SECTION 8

Success

The Head of Centre was asked how successful she considered the project to be, bearing in mind its aims and objectives. Despite her continuing dissatisfaction with the quality of work, she felt both nursery units had become 'quite successful' and would become more so given time.

We are running at full capacity and aiming to meet all needs. Staff's confidence and competence have increased. I feel both units are already quite successful and potentially very successful. (Head of Centre)

The family centre she saw as successfully meeting needs and it's closure as unfortunate, but providing opportunity for change.

It was meeting needs and was successful. Its closure was extremely unfortunate but it was certainly time to take stock and make some changes.
(Head of Centre)

Outreach work she also considered successful in so far as it offered training and employment to local people. To meet its original aims though this service would have to expand providing more creches and more staff to run them. It would also have to offer more involvement to local voluntary groups.

Future plans for each part of the service had been drawn up. In the 0-5 nursery, the eventual appointment of a senior and the input of the new curriculum development officer was expected to raise standards. The 3-5 unit was to convert to offering only sessional places (as in traditional nursery schools) which the Head felt would allow further improvements in the standards of care and curriculum offered. The service offered by the family centre had been reviewed and a clearer remit drawn up but difficulties in trying to appoint a senior had prevented any further developments. In the outreach context, plans for expansion existed and given the appointment of the new deputy and curriculum development officer, these should be realised over the next year.

In summing up the development of the 3-Towns Project, the head highlighted what she described as the project's inherent problems arising in the main from an over-ambitious remit and poor planning and funding. Although the project had been successful in some areas, she felt the price for that success had been very high.

I feel the project was over ambitious and inadequately planned and funded. As a result, everyone employed has suffered either professionally or personally. The project is stigmatised in the area and this is largely due to the negative attitude of health visitors. Staff have worked very hard and those who've remained have learned a lot. Unqualified staff have gained in confidence. I've given them scope for development in the keyworker system and through delegation of responsibilities which they wouldn't have got in a more traditional set-up. In some ways we've been very successful but that's in spite of big problems. (Head of Centre)

PART 2

0-5 UNIT

SECTION 1

Structure and Content of the Service

Staff were asked whether they felt the structure and content of daily organisation in the 0-5 unit was satisfactory. Neither were satisfied and identified the lack of a senior and unrealistic staffing levels as the main reason for difficulties in the day to day running and development of the service.

It's not particularly satisfactory but a lot of that has to do with the fact that we don't have a senior. I think there could be improvements in every area but accommodation is very bad and has a negative effect in most things.
(Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

No, the staffing levels are far too low and everything else is effected by that, particularly the children with special needs. We have nine of these children at the moment and their individual needs are not being met.
(Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

They were asked whether they had found their qualifications and previous experience adequate to work in a community nursery. Both identified gaps in their skills, finding liaison work with other agencies presenting most difficulties. The unqualified worker felt that promises to provide training had been left unfulfilled.

I really feel the project has let me down in that area by failing to provide me with appropriate training. I've only had two supervision sessions so far. I was particularly unprepared for social work aspects of the job - report writing and liaising with social workers.

(Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

I was well enough prepared for the nursery work but definitely not for the social work aspects of the job i.e. pertaining to the keyworker role, writing reports and liaising with social workers.

(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

SECTION 2

Accommodation and Resources

Respondents were asked whether they found their present (permanent) accommodation adequate to meet the needs of the unit. Both found it highly unsatisfactory and (ironically) presenting similar difficulties and restrictions to the service as previous temporary accommodation i.e. inadequate space for the numbers of children attending, no storage space, no parent's room and no safe outside play area.

Basically space is far too limited. There are no quiet areas, no sitting room for children on extended days and no separate dining areas.

(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

Its too small for the number of children we have. There's no parent's room, no storage space for equipment. Its all very cramped and that effects the quality of care. (Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

SECTION 3

Staff

Respondents were asked if the 0-5 unit was adequately staffed. (The unit had one full-time member short at the time of interview). Both felt staffing was inadequate, one felt the unit needed one more part-time member, the other pointed out that staffing levels did not reflect the needs of children attending, with no additional provision (such as that given in nursery schools) for the high proportion for children presenting special needs.

I think the staff level would be adequate if all our children were 'normal' but a large proportion are behaviourally and emotionally disordered and demand a lot of attention. Unfortunately we do not get extra staff to help us deal with these children as the nursery schools do.

(Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

Respondents agreed in general on the quality of work done by staff in the unit. One found the standard very good (given the constraints of poor accommodation and lack of a senior). The other described work as acceptable but 'repetitious' and 'unimaginative'. Both felt the curriculum could be better.

Its acceptable I suppose but activities are too ordered and repetitious showing lack of imagination on the part of staff.

(Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

Its very good under the circumstances. Every establishment has its own standards and here standards reflect a lack of knowledge of good curriculum. The situation isn't helped by the lack of a senior and long periods without the input of a curriculum development officer.

(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

Neither felt the negative factors effecting quality of work were open to immediate change. In-service training (whilst raising staff awareness of how to improve quality of work) could do little to remove practical constraints such as the lack of a senior or good accommodation. Supervision sessions had been too infrequent to effect standards. One respondent did feel that offering training in music and reorganising children into same age (as opposed to keyworker) groups might offer more opportunities for stimulation of children and better organisation of the curriculum.

We need more training, in music for example, no one can play a musical instrument. Also the variety of ages in our room makes group time difficult to organise. Putting the children into age appropriate groups rather than keyworker groups might help too.

(Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

Respondents were asked to describe staff relations in their unit. Both felt relationships were somewhat strained attributing this once again to the lack of a senior and the general instability of the group. One identified and unhelpful attitude on the part of 'baby room' staff as a source of resentment and strained relationships.

I think relations are strained sometimes and again this is partly due to the lack of a senior. There's also some added resentment from 'back-room' staff, their attendance levels are high but staff from the baby room (where attendance levels tend to be lower) never help out.

(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

When asked about staff reaction to conditions of service, both felt conditions were generally acceptable. One stated that she found the extended service more than justified given families needs for support.

I feel the salary is low but the hours acceptable. Obviously nursery schools have much larger holidays but I feel children and families do need the holiday support offered by the community nursery.

(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

SECTION 4

Children and Parents

Respondents were asked if they found that the admissions procedure was selecting the kind of children who would benefit most from the nursery. Both agreed that the nursery took the most needy children but had reservations about the fairness of the admissions system given the fact that it was open to abuse.

We are taking the most needy but that's not necessarily fair. All children deserve a place but that will never be resolved because of the lack of resources. (Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

We select the right ones but some parents lie to get children in - especially by pretending they are single parents. (Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

They were asked if the needs of children had changed since the early stages of the project. Both found new children presented the same needs and required the same level of support as those who attended at the beginning. All children were seen as showing improvement over time.

There have been dramatic changes for the better in most children. They became generally easier to handle. New children tend to present similar problems to children who came in in the early stages. (Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

Respondents were asked whether they felt children's needs were adequately met in their unit. Although both felt needs were met in most areas, they identified a number of areas where improvement was needed; encouragement of independence, organised outings, stimulation for the rising-five group.

I think their needs are generally met but things are disappointing - the lack of organised outings (most nurseries provide these on a regular basis) and a lack of encouragement towards independence on a day -to day basis. (Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

I feel more could be done to stretch the rising-five group. (Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

Contact between staff and parents was seen by both respondents to be inadequate, and this they felt was largely a by-product of the transport system. Lack of parental motivation to become involved, the loss of the family centre and the inability of staff to sustain parent groups were seen also contributory factors poor staff/parent contact.

Contact isn't adequate and I think that's mainly due to the need to transport children. To provide more for parents, staff would have to work overtime but even then, I don't think parents are motivated to get involved. (Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

There isn't much contact and it isn't adequate. Basically this is because of the transport system and the general lack of parental motivation. The loss of the family centre has meant even less opportunity for contact and the parent groups have stopped because of staff problems. (Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

Neither were aware if any problems which had arisen between staff and parents.

SECTION 5

Management

Respondents were asked to describe current relations between staff and the Head of the project. Both were critical of the Head's style of management, finding her attitude towards staff poor, her expectations of staff unrealistic and support of staff minimal. They attributed staff instability in part to the Head's management style.

Staff/Head relations are not particularly good and I think a lot of staff have left because of their dislike of the Head's attitude to them. She is very direct. I didn't mind that but others resented it. She tends not to listen to staff, is very stubborn and knows she is always right.

(Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

The Head's manner is bad, very brusque. Staff are afraid to contact her. She never praises staff. I feel her expectations are far too high. A lot of staff have left because they dislike the Head of Centre.

(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

Although respondents described the Head's management of staff and staff relations as poor, they found her management of other aspects of the project successful.

I think the Head has done a good job at some aspects of management. She's had so many terrible problems of practical nature but her handling of staff is not effective. (Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

Management of people is bad but other things are done well. The Head knows her job but is far too autocratic.

(Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

Both respondents wanted to see some change in the Head's management of staff which they felt undermined staff's confidence and motivation. Both thought more support and some positive feedback for work done well would enhance relations and boost motivation.

A gentle approach with praise, support and careful handling would be more effective with staff. At the moment staff find the Head's criticism petty and not very constructive. They are reluctant to use their initiative since they fear criticism. (Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

SECTION 6

Interagency Liaison

Respondents were asked to comment on contact with other agencies, in particular whether or not they found them helpful and co-operative. One identified a lack of shared objectives and guidelines as a fundamental problem in the issue of liaison. Both found a high degree of variability across individuals in 'helpfulness' and in maintaining contact with unit staff.

It's difficult to generalise since different individuals provide different levels of help and involvement. I feel outside agencies are not easily contacted and that contact has to be maintained by staff here. We lack shared guidelines and objectives. (Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

Both felt that more time needed to be allocated to liaison before an effective system could develop and that some clarification of shared objectives was essential to any joint work plans.

SECTION 7

Success

Both respondents felt the service offered by their unit was basically good and that resources including staff quality and quantity fell significantly short of the projects ambitious remit. One respondent felt staff required special training to prepare them for work with children and families experiencing social and/or emotional difficulties and for liaison with the Social Work Department and other agencies.

I feel that structure should have been a lot more carefully matched to resources at the planning stages. I also feel that staff need special training to work in community nurseries - training that would acquaint them with the needs of category one children and prepare them for report writing and liaising with social workers. Staff have got to be a lot more flexible here than in nursery schools and classes.

(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

I think we provide a good flexible service but I would like to see more space, a gym and soft play areas. After all we are open 52 weeks a year and these children deserve the best.

(Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

3-5 unit

In the final stages of evaluation the 3-5 unit planned to convert to part-time sessional places only, offering a service largely indistinguishable from a traditional nursery school. Poor temporary accommodation had meant that the unit was unable to provide the 30 part-time equivalent places intended and at the time of interview offered only 20 places. The failure to find suitable permanent accommodation prompted reconsideration of the long term remit and the decision to offer sessional part-time care for fewer children.

SECTION 1

Structure and content of daily organisation in nursery

Staff were asked whether they thought the structure and content of daily organisation in the 3-5 unit was satisfactory. Only one respondent found it satisfactory others found different aspects of the service unsatisfactory; lack of provision for parents; lack of rest and sleep facilities for all-day attenders and erratic planning of curriculum. Problems were seen to be related to staff instability (particularly changes in the senior posts) and poor accommodation.

No its not satisfactory at the moment and I think that's mainly due to the instability of the staff group - particularly changes in the senior posts. Planning is very erratic at the moment and this is effecting curriculum in particular.

(Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

We had made plans to cover the academic side but other areas hadn't got going very well. Basically what we offered to children was good but we couldn't do much for parents. The limitations of the service are basically due to poor accommodation and no sleep facilities for full-time children.

(Former senior)

None of the respondents felt their previous training and experience had prepared them fully for work in their nursery unit. They shared the views of staff in the 0-5 unit, finding liaison work with the Social Work Department difficult. Other areas of work were better known - direct work with children and (to some extent) curriculum development. In-service training had proved helpful.

For the curriculum side and work with parents I was prepared for that but I'd no experience in working with other agencies e.g. social work, this has definitely presented difficulties.
(Former senior)

Perhaps not in the early stages but now I feel up to the job. I've had a lot of responsibility as acting senior and in the keyworker role which involves liaising with outside agencies. I've also been very fortunate in attending in-service training and classes.
(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

SECTION 2

Accommodation and Resources

Accommodation (still temporary rooms allocated to the unit in the early stages) continued to present severe difficulties restricting the service both in terms of quality and in number of places offered.

The worst aspect is the toilet facilities. Their position means children have to be accompanied which prevents developing independence and is very demanding on staff time. The rooms are also far too small which limits activities for children. Also we have nowhere to see parents or for parents to meet informally. (Former senior)

The offer and subsequent withdrawal of extra accommodation within the school and the loss of promised permanent accommodation had lowered staff moral considerably, making restrictions imposed by poor accommodation more difficult to tolerate.

It's definitely inadequate and we've now lost both the option of permanent accommodation and extra space at Auchenharvie. This has certainly lowered staff morale. Space is far too limited for children.
(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

SECTION 3

Staff

Only one respondent thought the unit was inadequately staffed. The former senior felt the unit was actually overstaffed; given that fewer children are using the service than originally planned (i.e. 20 as opposed to 30).

The standard of work was described as good by all 3 respondents with some variation in quality across the staff group. Despite the lack of training, they found the initial gap between qualified and unqualified staff had narrowed over time. All respondents felt progress in staff development had been hindered by difficulties and constraints imposed by poor accommodation and staff instability.'

Given the constraints imposed by poor accommodation, lack of staff and changes in leadership - the standard of work is excellent. At first, I think there were big differences between the work done by qualified and unqualified staff but the gap has narrowed considerably.
(Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

The quality of work is good, though I feel unqualified staff have found it hard to develop without formal training. Their work is by no means unsatisfactory though. (Former senior)

The former senior felt that although regular supervision and appropriate in-service training had been provided, this had been insufficient to meet the needs of unqualified staff. Both pre-five workers felt that the overall quality of work had been reduced by frequent changes in staff, particularly the senior staff post.

The standard of work has been better but we've had so many changes, the quality of work has suffered. We've had an unstable staff group and a change of senior. The new senior has taken some time to appreciate staff's involvement as keyworkers and to allow them to continue to develop in this way.
(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

Staff instability (which was as much a function of reallocation of staff to 'acting' posts or posts in other parts of the project as staff leaving) had a negative impact on staff relations. Respondents reported an erosion of the good team relations and morale which had developed in the early stages. They also identified the new senior management style as problematic in terms of providing good team relations.

Relations are quite good. We used to have a wonderful team but it's not like that now. The new senior did rubbish everything in the early stages but its better now. The mix of personalities is not so good though.
(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

Staff are moved around so much that its difficult for them to form bonds' In periods of relative stability though they did get on very well. Gossip did tend to be a bit of a problem.
(Former senior)

Staff relations are not as good as before and I think this is mainly due to staff instability. Staff aren't happy with the new senior's planning methods which are somewhat erratic. Relations with the deputy are distant, she doesn't have the same level of contact with staff and children as the former deputy.
(Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

None of the respondents found the conditions of service in the community nursery objectionable. The former senior felt this might be due to the similarity of their former working conditions in day nurseries and family centres. In unqualified staff there was no real basis for comparison.

I don't think anyone came directly from traditional nursery schools where conditions are quite different. They were already working under similar conditions in day nurseries and family centres so I don't think conditions of service are an issue. (Former senior)

SECTION 4

Children and Parents

Staff were asked if they found that children's presenting needs had changed since the project's early stages. All agreed that the child group had changed in that they tended to show less extreme behavioural disorder. This they attributed both to changes in children and to greater staff skill in handling behavioural problems.

I think the child group is quite different now. Some of the very difficult children have left and staff find difficult behaviour easier to manage now. So on the whole they are a more easily managed group.
(Former senior)

Children don't show many great behavioural difficulties now. Some children have moved on and new children have their behaviour modified quickly. Staff have developed their skills and there's less of a concentration of really difficult children.
(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

Their backgrounds are the same but they don't show the same level of behavioural difficulty - but then I feel we handle difficult behaviour a lot better now than in the early stages.
(Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

Respondents were asked whether or not the admissions procedure effectively selected those children who would benefit most from nursery places. All felt the procedure was selecting the most needy (as intended) but that this created an imbalance in the child group. Both pre-five workers thought the system was open to abuse, with some parents providing false information to secure a place. All respondents felt the system actively discriminated against ordinary parents and their children.

It doesn't meet the needs of working mothers but (more or less) does provide for the most needy children in the community - if the parents aren't lying about their circumstances. (Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

Ideally we could do with a better balance of children though its better than it was before. We do have to accept children with the highest priority but two parent families under pressure also need a place. Some people know how to work the system and how to get places.
(Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

All felt fairly confident that, with the nursery context, children's needs were being met. Earlier concerns that able children were left unchallenged by the experiences offered had faded given the development of greater staff skill in meeting all levels of demands, particularly the need to gain early control of difficult behaviour.

I feel we are able to stretch them more than before. Overall, their individual needs are being met.
(Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

Certain staff are well able to stretch able children with less able staff learning from the able ones. (Former senior)

Staff did note, however, that provision for children was inhibited by constraints imposed by accommodation and staff problems.

Our plans have always been intercepted though for one reason or another, usually related to staff problems.
(Former senior)

Their needs are being met but a lot depends on the quality of the work done by the keyworker - some have more to give than others. Tension in the staff group also limits the ability to meet needs adequately.
(Qualified worker)

None of the respondents felt contact between staff and parents was adequate. Lack of space to accommodate parents and the reduced opportunity for daily casual contact imposed by the transport system were given as the main reasons. The parent's group (which had consisted of a small number of interested parents) had disbanded in response to staff difficulties in helping to maintain it. All respondents felt the situation was unsatisfactory.

Contact with parents is definitely inadequate. There's nowhere for parents to go here or to meet with staff. Staff on transport duty are the only ones to come into contact with parents. Unit groups have stopped since the new senior was appointed. More contact would allow parents to see what staff are doing and offer opportunities to discuss problems informally with staff.
(Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

I don't feel contact is adequate. The transport system alienates parents and staff aren't able to take time out to see parents.
(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

On the whole relations problems between staff and parents (such as they were) had been good and had been minimal; some parents had failed to collect children and others had objected to full-time attenders being allowed to nap during the day.

SECTION 5

Management

Staff were asked to describe current relations between staff and the Head of Centre. All described relations as 'difficult' in the early stages but easier now (3-5 unit staff had very little direct contact with the Head at the time of interview).

Relations were difficult at first though people did become less frightened of her. They never forgot her harsh criticism of their work in the early stages and resentment over that is still there. Staff felt she was very hard.
(Former senior)

Levels of satisfaction with the effectiveness of the project's current management policy seemed fair but all respondents identified areas where they felt change was needed: i.e. levels of support offered to staff, the practice of movement of staff from one unit to another and the general style of management i.e. of both Head and Deputy. In general, staff felt that greater support and involvement on the part of management was necessary.

I'd like to see less frequent changes of staff imposed on the unit. We could also do with more input from the CDO.
(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

The overall management is fine but the new deputy is not as good as the former one. She doesn't offer the same level of staff support and doesn't take an interest in individual children. (Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

SECTION 6

Inter-Agency Liaison

Respondents were asked to describe the state of contact between the unit and other agencies in particular whether or not other agencies were helpful. All agreed that contact had been initiated in all instances by unit staff and that input from other agencies was variable, depending to a large extent on the individuals involved. In general, the situation seemed less than satisfactory (with the exception of liaison with Psychological Services).

All agreed that liaison could be greatly improved but that all strategies (i.e. initiated by the project) aimed at bringing about change seemed ineffective. So far, outside agencies had shown little interest in improving liaison, proving generally unhelpful in developing a co-ordinated approach.

We have to initiate and sustain most of the contact with other agencies. I feel when children are placed here, other agencies think their input is over. Health visitors never visit, even though we have a lot of their cases. I feel the contact we do have is generally more helpful than it is to us.
(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

Some agencies are helpful and some are not. We have to initiate most contact and sustain it. I'm sure liaison could be improved but we don't know how to bring that about. We've tried inviting them to drop in and to attend social events but nothing works.
(Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

I don't think outside agencies know what the nursery was about or what type of work they could do. They didn't know how to develop a co-ordinated approach and didn't want to develop one.
(Former senior)

SECTION 7

Success

Staff were asked to rate the success of their unit, bearing in mind its original aims. All felt the unit was basically successful in caring for and stimulating children but that a number of factors notably poor accommodation and lack of good in-service training and to some extent mismanagement of staff continued to block progress.

I think we've met a fair amount of aims. Its a worthwhile unit held back by lack of staff training, poor accommodation and continual shuffling of staff.
(Former senior)

I think we are successful for children. Planning could be better though.
(Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

I feel we've been very successful and the difference in children is amazing. Parents have appreciated the service. Not having suitable permanent accommodation has been the biggest obstacle to overcome.
(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)

Both pre-five workers felt the success of the unit would be greatly enhanced by providing suitable permanent accommodation, preferably custom built.

A purpose built building - I think that would more or less solve all our problems. (Unqualified Pre-Five Worker)

**I'd like to see a new custom built building for the nursery with outside professionals coming in to help with staff development.
(Qualified Pre-Five Worker)**

6.6 JIGSAW COMMUNITY NURSERY TWO YEARS ON - A REPORT ON STAFF INTERVIEWS

Those interviewed were:

The Head of Centre

The Voluntary Sector Representative (SPPA)

Two Pre-Five Workers

The After School Care Worker

The final round of interviews was conducted at Jigsaw community nursery over the period March - April 1992. A high turnover in staff during the interim period between 'early' and 'final' stages interviews meant that continuity was lost to some extent; the deputy and outreach worker had left to take up new posts and, amongst the nursery staff only two pre-five workers (though not those who had given interviews earlier) had remained in post since the nursery opened. These pre-five workers were selected for 'final' interview on the basis of their length of service. The material reported here was drawn from interviews with the following individuals; the Head of Centre, one qualified and one unqualified nursery pre-five worker, one after school care worker and one representative of the voluntary sector.

At the time of the interviews the community nursery offered the following range of services: the nursery unit (for children 2-5 years), an aftercare service, an outreach service (though outreach worker's post was vacant and the development work in the area apart from provision of community creches had all but ceased) and a range of voluntary services - Chryston playgroup, a mother and toddler group (at that point named Jigsaw Mother and Toddler group), a childminders group, the SPPA 'Branch', toy library and stock shop and cafe.

Although the interview schedules for all respondents cover the same basic themes respondents held different perspectives in line with their particular roles in the community nursery and had access to different types of information. These differences were reflected in the questions put to different respondents. For example, the Head of Centre and the Voluntary Sector Representative were able to answer questions on the nature and effectiveness of the overall management Jigsaw, whereas pre-five workers, with limited access to the decision making processes of management groups gave their views on the effectiveness of management as it applied in the nursery context. The interviews examined (a) the structure, content and day-to-day organisation of the various aspects of the community nursery; (b) accommodation and resources; (c) the effectiveness of admissions procedures in allocating places to children most likely to benefit; (d) meeting the needs of service users; (e) effectiveness of management policy and practice; (f) co-operative work with other agencies; and finally (g) evaluation of success in meeting aims.

SECTION 1

The Structure, Content and day to day Organisation

The Head of Centre was asked to give an overview of provision describing the service currently offered and commenting on any deviation from the original aims for each service.

- **The nursery unit**

The Head of Centre reported that this part of the service was functionally as had originally been intended providing flexible extended day care for 2-5 year olds and offering 40 equivalent full-time places.

- **Outreach work**

This part of the service had proved difficult to develop - so much so that the Head had decided not to fill the vacant outreach worker's post as before but to reallocate resources elsewhere. The original aims for outreach work had proved too vague to allow an effective operational base and the service had met with a number of obstacles: e.g. difficulties in determining local need for a home visiting scheme and overlap in the role of the outreach worker and that of the SPPA.

- **After school care**

This service had met its original aim to provide after school care for a maximum of 26 children.

- **Voluntary sector**

Jigsaw's aim was not only to provide voluntary and non-voluntary pre-five services identified overall as the community nursery, but also to develop a co-operative and productive relationship between the two types of service with shared overall management. The Head of Centre reported that, although sharing of accommodation and (to some extent) resources had been successful at a purely practical level, the development of common interest and identity and an effective management partnership had proved very difficult.

This is largely due to SPPA representatives having a different perspective of the community nursery from myself which causes conflict and at times very strained relations between myself and the voluntary sector representatives. Hopefully this will improve through time.
(Head of Centre)

SECTION 2

Structure and Content of Day to Day Organisation

- **The nursery unit**

The Head of Centre, pre-five and after school workers¹ were asked to consider whether or not the structure and content of organisation in the nursery unit (e.g. the nature of curriculum, planning, care and management of children etc.) was satisfactory. All respondents found the structure and content of nursery organisation basically satisfactory with some minor difficulties, as yet unresolved. They acknowledged the need for ongoing development and improvement. The loss of the deputy head created some difficulties particularly in maintaining effective communication with the Head of Centre but staff felt able to maintain a satisfactory service until a new deputy was appointed.

Yes I'm satisfied. We've had to start from scratch and that's presented difficulties, but I believe we are providing a good service. It's development is ongoing, obviously.
(Head of Centre)

The curriculum is fine but daily planning is currently a bit haywire and needs to be revised. It's difficult to fit planning time into the working day given the limited number of staff available for nursery work.

1. The voluntary sector representative had insufficient knowledge to answer this question.

(Pre-Five Worker)

It's improved over time. We give more time now to children's individual programmes and to group plans. I think we are able to maintain what we set-up with the Deputy.

(Pre-Five Worker)

- **Outreach Work**

Only the Head of Centre was in a position to comment on the current structure and content of outreach work given the lack of a worker for that area at the time of interview and her perception of the need to reorganise resources allocating funds from outreach to other areas. Generally she was dissatisfied with the previous content of outreach work and unable to give a precise description of aims for this area of work in the future.

It's definitely not satisfactory. When we had a worker little was done to develop the service. Now without a worker forward planning and development is even more difficult.

(Head of Centre)

- **After school care**

The Head of Centre and After School Care Worker commented on the structure and content of the after school care service. both found the service well structured with good organisation and content.

I feel it's definitely well structured and organised now. We started making monthly plans which has helped us to provide a better service. I realise there's always room for improvement but there's nothing specific at the moment which I feel is unsatisfactory.

(Head of Centre)

I think after school care is very good and staff provide a wide range of excellent activities for children. (Head of Centre)

- **Voluntary Sector Services**

Again, respondents (in this case the Head of Centre and the Voluntary Sector Representative) found the structure, content and day to day organisation of provision was of a good overall standard.

The playgroups and other groups are very well run and creche workers provide a good service

(Head of Centre)

The playgroups and mother and toddler groups are very well run. I also feel the SPPA area organiser does a very good job.

(Voluntary Sector Representative)

SECTION 3

Accommodation and Resources

All respondents were asked to comment on the adequacy of current accommodation and resources in each aspect of the service.

- **The nursery unit**

All found nursery accommodation basically adequate with some identifying the generous amount of space available as a problem contributing to some extent to difficulties in managing children. Further problems were identified in relation to layout, staff accommodation and toilet facilities.

We have a lot of space and there are some problems in managing in such a lot of space.

(Pre-Five Worker)

Resources are adequate but aspects of accommodation and layout could be better. The staff room is definitely inadequate and children's toilets are very inadequate - there are too few of them and they are badly positioned. Children have to be accompanied to the toilet which is quite disruptive and limits their developing independence. Its a very good environment providing lots of space but the toilets create a lot of problems.

(After School Care Worker)

As far as we understand nursery accommodation provision continues to create problems. (Voluntary Sector Representative)

Despite problems in accommodation, all respondents felt the nursery was well resourced at least in terms of materials. (Staffing levels are considered in a later section.)

- **After school care**

Respondents identified a problem in relation to accommodation for the after school care service i.e. too little space originally allocated and difficulty in supervising children when arrangements were made for wider use of existing space.

The one room proved a bit small and using more space has meant that children have to be trusted without staff supervision some of the time but this seems to work quite well and parents didn't object.

(Head of Centre)

The voluntary sector representative expressed reservations over the wider use of accommodation by children, questioning their lack of supervision. In contrast to the view of the Head of Centre she found that some parents shared her concerns over lack of supervision.

After school care seem to have the run of all the rooms. We've received mixed comments about the situation from parents. Some parents feel it's not right to allow children to use rooms unsupervised.

(Voluntary Sector Representative)

The after school care worker reported little difficulty with the current arrangement. She felt that children were quite safe playing alone in small mixed age groups since their activities were clearly structured and adequately monitored.

I feel current arrangements are satisfactory. I organise groups so that older and younger children can play together for short periods of time. This means they are not confined to one small room. They have the use of the pitch outside and the gym. The after school care room is very good and we have use of a changing room. Resources are very good on the whole.
(After School Care Worker)

- **Voluntary Sector**

The Head of Centre and voluntary sector representative were asked to comment on accommodation and resources allocated to the voluntary sector. The Head of Centre felt their accommodation was adequate. The voluntary sector representative felt that the playgroup had lost both indoor accommodation and access to outdoor play. This was balanced by shared use of the new soft play area. She also felt the new branch room, though more comfortable than previous accommodation, offered the SPPA far less control over access and activities, given that the rooms were also used by the Head of Centre for a variety of purposes.

Accommodation for the playgroup is O.K. but they could do with extra space. When Jigsaw opened, the room was given over to the nursery unit and there's no space for physical play in the existing room. The soft play area goes the same way to make up for this. The playgroup has also lost access to the external courtyard because using it would mean disruption to the nursery.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

Although voluntary sector funding is quite separate to that of the nursery unit since sharing of resources did take place. The nursery unit made use of the voluntary sector's toy library and the SPPA Branch had access to nursery phones, office and other equipment.

SECTION 4

Standard and Quality of work done by Staff

The Head of Centre and the voluntary sector representative were asked to comment on the standard and quality of the work done in each area of the project. (Nursery staff and the after school care worker commented in the nursery unit and the after school care worker on the After School Care service).

- **The nursery unit**

In the context of the nursery unit the Head of Centre felt staff's work had attained a satisfactory standard.

I find their work satisfactory and given that conditions have never been straightforward it's really very good.
(Head of Centre)

The voluntary sector representative (although she held a positive view of nursery staff) felt her current knowledge of the quality of work done in the nursery was somewhat limited and this reflected wider difficulties in communication between the voluntary sector and the Head of Centre. Considerable turnover had taken place in the staff group since the opening of Jigsaw and although the voluntary sector had been involved in the appointment and induction of the original staff group, they had had no such involvement with staff appointed subsequently.

Nursery staff and the after school care worker² commented on the quality of work done in the

2. The After School Care Worker had experience of working in the nursery.

nursery unit. All found standards high but acknowledged the need for continued development and improvement of the service.

As far as we know the work they do is fine but there's been a good deal of staff instability and a breakdown in communication between the Voluntary Sector and the Head of Centre. We have not been involved in appointing or contributing to the induction of new staff. As a result there's been a lack of continuity from our point of view and we are less aware of the qualities and experiences of new staff.

(Voluntary Sector Representative)

- **Outreach**

The lack of a current outreach worker precluded comment on the quality of work done in that context.

- **After school care**

The Head of Centre was satisfied that after school care staff had made good progress (again despite staff turnover) and that they currently provided good quality care. She did, however have some concerns over their ability to handle some difficult children without appropriate training.

They have progressed but they still have some problems with children and how to handle them. Staff lack appropriate training to cope with difficult training. (Head of Centre)

Again the voluntary sector representative felt she had insufficient knowledge of the day to day working of the After School care service to allow her to comment fully on the quality of work done. She did, however hold a largely positive view of the service but felt that it may be undermined by the very high staff/child ratio.

I've no first hand knowledge of exactly what is done but I do feel the staff/child ratio is unrealistic and must create difficulties which effect the standard of care and supervision.

(Voluntary Sector Representative)

I think their work is excellent they couldn't do better.

(After School Care Worker)

Work is of a very good standard and you can see this reflected in children's development. (Pre-Five Worker)

It's very good. There's always room for improvement but we are a very good team.' (Pre-Five Worker)

- **Voluntary Sector**

Both felt that work done by the voluntary sector, in particular, playleaders and creche workers was of a good standard.

SECTION 5

Staff Relations

- **Nursery and after school care**

All respondents were asked to comment on the nature of staff relations (i.e. staff/staff, staff/management, staff/management/voluntary sector) both across and within the various services offered. Nursery staff and the after school care worker reported good and effective team relations within the nursery and After school care service though in the latter staff turnover had proved problematic in forming good relations.

It's a very good team in the nursery. Individuals are open and supportive of one another.

(Pre-Five Worker)

The staff team gets on very well indeed.

(Pre-Five Worker)

Relations are fairly good though I've found a succession of different workers very difficult to get used to.

(After School Care Worker)

These respondents also reported good relations between staff groups and management i.e. the Head of Centre and the former deputy.

Relations are fine. The Heads very approachable and supportive and knows how to listen.

(Pre-Five Worker)

- **Nursery, after school care, voluntary sector**

Nursery and after school care staff were asked about their relations with voluntary sector personnel. Contact between these two groups was fairly limited and only one of the pre-five workers felt able to comment and only on working with creche workers. the after school care worker felt there had been some difficulty in relations between nursery management and the SPPA members of Jigsaw's planning/advisory committee but that this had been overcome.

We only have contact with the creche consortium workers and so far relations are quite good. They cover the nursery for us occasionally but they do things differently. We are trying to encourage them to do things the way we do.

(Pre-Five Worker)

I think there may have been problems between the voluntary sector and the nursery over responsibility for setting up the project and how things are run. But that could possibly be water under the bridge - I'm not sure.

(After School Care Worker)

- **Management perspectives on staff relations**

The Head of Centre's positive comments on staff relations and on her own relationship with staff reflected those of the staff group. However, she felt her level of contact with staff and deteriorated since the deputy left.

On the whole relations are good and its a fairly harmonious staff. The Depute was the link between myself and staff and communication is a bit more difficult since she left. I've taken on more discussion time with staff though this is difficult. I think though my relationship with the staff group is good.
(Head of Centre)

She was also generally satisfied with her relations with the voluntary sector creche worker playleaders etc. but reported difficulty in developing an effective joint management relationship with SPPA Branch members.

I think I have good relationships with playleaders and creche workers. There are areas of difficulty and conflict with SPPA Branch members.
(Head of Centre)

The voluntary sector representative shared the views of the Head of Centre, finding relationships generally good between the voluntary sector services and Head of Centre but difficulty in developing effective joint management.

We feel the Head of Centre has generally good relations with the playgroup and the mother/toddler group. But the relationship between the SPPA Branch and the Head of Centre has proved to be somewhat volatile. We find that there's a distinct lack of communication on her part and we feel somewhat uncomfortable with the relationship as it stands.
(Voluntary Sector representative)

SECTION 6

Management Style and Effectiveness

More of the nature of the difficulties experienced by the voluntary sector (SPPA Branch) and the Head of Centre emerged more clearly when respondents were asked to comment on the effectiveness of Jigsaw's immediate management - that of the Head of Centre and the deputy - and on that of the joint management between the voluntary sector and nursery management staff.

The Head of Centre felt that her own management (and that of her deputy) of the nursery was effective.

I think the management is effective. If it weren't things wouldn't have worked out. The Inspectorate complimented us on our open management style. (Head of Centre)

From a staff perspective, management did seem very effective. with only minor problems reported associated with the absence of a deputy at the time of interviews and some lack of clarity in communication with the former deputy while she was in post.

It's generally effective but at the moment communication is a bit more difficult given that we don't have a deputy.
(Pre-Five Worker)

It's generally effective. Sometimes I felt the Depute was unclear in communicating with staff. In certain cases, she could have stated problems more clearly rather than indirectly.
(Pre-Five Worker)

I feel management is very effective.
(After School Care Worker)

The voluntary sector representative shared the view of staff in finding the immediate management of the nursery effective.

It appears to work effectively and is organised on a team basis.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

Only the Head of Centre and the voluntary sector representative were asked to comment on committee level management and this produced less general satisfaction. Problems had developed between SPPA, nursery management and regional representatives (development officers) after the opening of Jigsaw which related to changes in the nature and extent of the voluntary sector's management role.

In the beginning SPPA had a vary large role. We appeared to have a say in the Jigsaw planning group. We were involved in architectural plans, ordering of equipment and in the appointment of staff. After Jigsaw opened, the planning group became the steering group and it is it's own role in this group which has caused problems. We've never been told we cannot have a role - its just been quietly eroded. We always assumed that the Region had a remit for us in Jigsaw's running and development. This hasn't proved to be the case
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

Long term plans for the original joint planning group had involved the transition of an interim steering group to an executive management group, but there had been debate over the executive group's final remit. Voluntary sector members had been informed by the Regional Development Officer that their role could only involve sharing facilities not decision making or 'challenging regional policy'. The voluntary sector refused to accept the limitation of their management role and debate was ongoing at the time of interview. The difficulty in developing an acceptable management partnership had eroded communication between the voluntary sector and the Head of Centre.

In the beginning we definitely felt that we were involved in decision in planning the community nursery - but not now. Consultation by the Head of Centre is very ad hoc - that is if it happens at all
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

The Head of Centre described the success of this 'transitional' management group as limited, agreeing that it had suffered from protracted debate over the relative powers of the voluntary sector and nursery management staff.

This group has only had limited success as a management body. Its fallen victim to many conflicts. Support from Development Officers has been limited but that reflects the limitations of their role.
(Head of Centre)

Overall, Voluntary Sector Representatives felt that they were no longer effective in contributing to the running of Jigsaw. The group which had begun as a partnership in the planning stages of the provision had failed to develop a joint management perspective or clear plans for the practical management of joint provision.

We are not effective in contributing to the running of Jigsaw other than perhaps in fund-raising with the user's group.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

In purely functional terms, the placing of a wide variety of resources under one roof does seem successful with little conflict of interest between voluntary and non-voluntary aspects. Although resources are shared, the evidence suggests that there may be no real continuing basis for collaboration between the two sectors. The voluntary sector views centre quite clearly on feelings

of having outlived their usefulness and in the absence of a creative and supportive approach from Regional representatives in developing such 'innovative' and 'experimental' partnerships, the impact of such feelings on morale seems unnecessarily wasteful to all concerned.

The atmosphere between nursery management and the voluntary sector is not good and this is partly due to lack of communication and consultation. Our role is unclear and we are not sure what the new partnership means.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

SECTION 6

Children and Families

• Effectiveness of Admissions Procedure and Banding System

All respondents were asked whether they felt the admission procedure had proved effective in allocating nursery places to children and families who would benefit most. Views were mixed on the general effectiveness of the category banding system, with respondents highlighting its limitations and negative community reaction. The Head of Centre felt the system was definitely unpopular in the community, giving rise to resentment and gossip. Which tended to reflect the nursery's limitations as a resource for 'ordinary' working parents.

Obviously we can only allocate places to those who apply. I think parents find it very different to accept the admissions priority and there's a lot of gossip locally about who does and doesn't get a place. For the more needy children, the system probably does work, but we can offer little to ordinary working parents. (Head of Centre)

Both pre-five workers agreed with the Head of Centre in finding the admissions procedure effective in allocating place to needy children. They disagreed, however, on the effects of this system in terms of the social mix of children attending; the pre-five worker felt the nursery had a good mix of children (in terms of admission categories), while with the other was aware of a lack of balance in the child group. with the system discriminating against the ordinary child and family.

I feel we have a good mixture - even given the priority system.
(Pre-Five Worker)

I think the system is effective in selecting those who will benefit but I do feel the nursery should be open to more ordinary people i.e. two parent families. Given the lack of places though, that's unlikely.
(Pre-Five Worker)

In contrast the after school worker was dissatisfied with the admissions procedure's effectiveness, in selecting the most needy children - both for the nursery and for the after school care.

As far as after care is concerned I feel that there are more needy children in the community who haven't got a place. It seems to me I've got children and a better type of family than I should. The same applies to the nursery in my opinion. In terms of priority I don't feel the system is working. My own view, however, is that the nursery should be for everyone.
(After School Care Worker)

The voluntary sector representative felt unable to comment on this aspect of Jigsaw. (The voluntary sector had chosen not to be involved in the admissions since they felt this fell beyond their remit). She was, however, asked to comment on a local response to the community nursery

in terms of demand for places and use of resources. She found demand for nursery places and playgroup places constant but felt response to other resources was variable and generally limited to parents of children attending services rather than other members of local communities.

There's a continuing demand for places both in the nursery and in the playgroup and in the mother/toddler group. We've had a lot of enquiries about soft play and the buses are used a lot by voluntary sector groups. there's been a fairly limited response to other resources in the sense that they are used mainly by parents - people don't drop in as a rule - they have to give a reason to be here.

(Voluntary Sector Representative)

- **Effectiveness of Jigsaw in meeting children's and parent's needs**

Respondents were asked to consider whether or not the needs of children (and parents) were being adequately met in each part of the community nursery. The Head of Centre felt needs were being met in the nursery, after school care and in voluntary services, but not in outreach work. In general, her views were reflected by pre-five workers and the after school care worker, though they identified a lack of home visiting for some nursery attenders and slow identification and intervention in language difficulties as areas where improvement was needed.

In general, yes, their needs are being adequately met. I feel though there may be one or two who should be seen by a speech therapist, for example. There's too long a delay in picking up some of these problems in children's development.(Pre-Five Worker)

Yes overall, Home visits could perhaps be improved and there's no staff member for outreach work but otherwise children's needs are being met.
(Pre-Five Worker)

Yes, I think their needs are being met. They seem very happy and willing to attend after school care.
(After School Care Worker)

In general, the voluntary sector representatives views reflected those of other respondents in finding the needs of those attending adequately met in the nursery and in playgroups. She felt though that After school care offered inadequate supervision of children, little before school care and an inadequate pick-up system. Outreach work also presented problems, since the demand for this type of input still needs clarification.

The demand for the type of input needs to be clarified in outreach work. The post is vacant now but it was never clearly defined.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

- **Contact and Involvement with Parents**

The Head of Centre, nursery and after school care workers were asked if they felt that contact between staff and parents was adequate. Despite the tendency for bussing-in children to prevent contact with parents, all respondents found parent/staff contact generally adequate. At a one-to-one level, the review system ensured some contact with other less formal contact provided by fund-raising, a regular newsletter and open evenings.

I feel its adequate though there's a bit of a parental motivation problem. There's fairly good involvement in open evenings and fund-raising and we have a regular newsletter. At an individual level we have regular reviews where parents and staff can discuss children's progress. (Pre-Five Worker)

There's a lot of contact with parents and it's certainly adequate. Parents are always welcome in the nursery and they use other facilities such as the cafe or the open university courses. A number are involved in the user's group and in events such as fund-raising.

The nursery has reviews which allows discussion between staff and parents about children's progress. (Pre-Five Worker)

We have a successful keyworker system - parents know their own child's keyworker. The transport system limits contact to some extent. There are parents groups and a number attend Open University courses here. (Pre-Five Worker)

None of these respondents reported any significant problems between staff and parents either in the nursery or in after school care.

SECTION 7

Interagency Liaison

Respondents were asked to describe the contact they may have had with other agencies in terms of 'helpfulness' and 'effectiveness'. The voluntary sector representative and the after school care worker had had no contact with other agencies in relation to children attending any of the resources. The Head of Centre and both pre-five workers had regular contact with other agencies although liaison was mainly a role assigned to the deputy. Contact tended to be with the educational psychologist, social workers, peripatetic teachers and speech therapist. All found liaison adequate and helpful. In terms of improvement, the Head of Centre felt there could be better access to information held by some agencies. One pre-five worker felt more time with outside agencies for discussions would be helpful whilst the other saw no real need for improvement.

All staff have some contact with other agencies. I find them very informative and generally very helpful. I don't really see the need for improvement so far. (Pre-Five Worker)

The Depute tended to have most contact with outside agencies. Of those I have met I find them helpful. I would like more time with child psychologists for general discussion and advice on specific children. (Pre-Five Worker)

Other agencies have tended to be very helpful. There's less general contact now than in the early stages but we've developed a good basis for communication. I suppose liaison could be improved. We had some difficulty in getting all the different agencies to give us all the relevant information in certain cases. (Head of Centre)

SECTION 8

Success

The Head of Centre and the Voluntary Sector Representative were asked how successful they considered each part of Jigsaw to be - bearing in mind the project's original aims.

- **The nursery unit**

Both respondents felt the nursery was successful but the Voluntary Sector Representative would like to have seen more provision for 0-2 yearolds and for children with special needs.

We assume they are successful but would like to have seen more places for 0-2 year olds and more provision for children with special needs. obviously they'd need more staff for this.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

I feel the nursery is very successful both from the community's point of view and our own - people want to come to work here.
(Head of Centre)

- **Outreach**

Although outreach work had faced a number of problems the Head of Centre still felt it had some very successful areas - in particular the development of creches, the cafe and good relationships with playgroups. The voluntary sector representative felt that to be successful the remit for this area had to be clarified.

The job is vacant and that's basically due to a poor remit in the early stages. The demand itself for outreach work needs clarification before it can be successful. (Voluntary Sector Representative)

- **After school care**

The Voluntary Sector Representative felt after school care still had a number of inadequacies.

It doesn't provide enough places, the pick up system isn't really adequate and more before school care should be offered.
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

The Head of Centre, however, thought this service was successful as it stood.

It's successful. The children want to be there.
(Head of Centre)

- **Voluntary sector service**

Both considered the voluntary sector services to be successful.

There are clearly successful measured by the amount of people who attend.
(Head of Centre)

The pre-five workers and after school care worker commented on the success of the nursery unit and after care service. They considered the nursery to be very successful but that improvement and development were ongoing.

We've come on by leaps and bounds. We are still moving on but I feel we are successfully meeting our aims now. More staff training on different aspects of curriculum e.g. music and movement and ideally a very stable staff group.
(Pre-Five Worker)

I feel the nursery unit is very successful. We could do with more rooms though - particularly an interview room for discussion with outside agencies. We could do with better toilets and a full time bus driver and escort. At the moment staff handle transport and it's not very successful.
(Pre-Five Worker)

On aftercare, the worker there felt they had achieved a good deal of success but that further success would depend on the provision of more staff.

It has become very successful but it's taken a lot of work to build. Another full-time staff member would allow us to do a lot more.
(Pre-Five Worker)

6.8 JIGSAW COMMUNITY NURSERY - A REPORT ON INTERVIEWS WITH PLAYGROUP STAFF

Those interviewed were -

Chryston Playgroup:

Two Playleaders and two Committee Members/Helpers

Mount Ellen Playgroup:

Two Playleaders and one Committee Member/Helper

Interviews were conducted during March/April 1991

Background

The Jigsaw Community Nursery is unique so far in the development of the community nursery model in that it represents a joint venture between the area's voluntary pre-five services and the regional council. Jigsaw Community Nursery aims to provide not only nursery provision but to include voluntary services in the same location; playgroups, creche facilities, toy library cafeteria, etc. The Chryston playgroup had previously operated from the accommodation which is now adapted and re-furnished and houses the community nursery. The playgroup forms part of the services identified as the community nursery. Given (a) the involvement of the voluntary sector in helping to promote the community nursery, (b) the previous absence of any regional pre-five resource in the local community and (c) the prior dependence of the local community on well-developed voluntary pre-five resources, (i.e. largely playgroups) it seemed appropriate to include the views of playgroup users and organisers in the evaluation of the Jigsaw project.

Interviews were conducted with 4 playleaders and 2 helpers (mothers who were members of playgroup committees and took 'turns' of duty at the playgroup) in two locations: - at Chryston playgroup and at Mount Ellen playgroup which operates from Mount Ellen hall. (Mount Ellen is approximately 2 miles away from the community nursery.) The content of the interviews reflects some themes emerging in interviews already conducted within the community nursery; questions explore the ideology, organisation and practice of the playgroups and in the case of Chryston playgroup, the nature of the relationship between the playgroup and the nursery in the community nursery context. Interviews also included some general comparison of the ideology and practice of playgroups and traditional nurseries; views on possible behavioural and social differences between children attending the playgroups and the community nursery; the nature of local pre-five services; liaison with other agencies and some other general issues relating to playgroups and to the community nursery.

1. Playleader Training and Playgroup liaison with external agencies

Playleaders all attend courses designed and run by the SPPA (Scottish Pre-school Playgroup Association). An initial course lasts 6 weeks, with an optional advanced course lasting 5 weeks. Training itself might occasionally involve input from child care professionals, but playgroups themselves have no formal regular contact with other agencies, except for Health Visitors who may offer advice on health issues.

2. Organisation of the Playgroups

The overall organisation of playgroups is the responsibility of the SPPA. The playgroups are organised and run locally by a committee of parents whose children are currently attending the groups and include a chairperson, secretary and treasurer. Playleaders are appointed and employed by the committee but do not become members of the committee themselves. The playgroups are run for children between 3-5 years old and depend on fees paid by attenders and help provided on a rota basis from parents whose children attend.

At the time of the interviews, Chryston playgroup had approximately 40 children attending and ran 5 morning sessions a week with duties split between 2 playleaders. Twelve attended 4 of the 5 sessions with 8 children attending one session (12 is the maximum number of children who may attend when only one playleader is present).

Mount Ellen playgroup was organised differently; 2 playleaders ran 3 morning sessions allowing a maximum of 20 children to attend each session.

At both groups children attended for 2 hours per session - 9.30 till 11-30 a.m. with playleaders and 2 helpers arriving at 9 a.m. to set up equipment and leaving at 12 noon after clearing the rooms.

Both playgroups were full and had waiting lists. One place was retained at both groups for a child with special needs who might be formally referred by a Health Visitor or Social Worker. Otherwise children's names were placed on a waiting list by parents some time before the child's third birthday. Interviewees felt the playgroups ran well but given their voluntary nature and frequent (annual) changes in committee members, both the style and consistency in organisation were subject to change. Both groups experienced some difficulties in motivating parents to join the committee or help fundraising.

It basically runs very well although there always seems to be some problem; it's difficult to get mothers to participate in organisation.
(Playleader, Chryston)

The playgroup demands 3 committed members of the committee for it to run well. We are one member short at the moment and it makes things very difficult. (Helper and Committee Member, Mount Ellen)

3. Roles, Structure and Content of the Service

Playgroups differ from nurseries in that they rely upon help from parents, not only to organise the running of groups but to attend sessions on a rota basis where they help the playleader in providing and supervising activities. The groups differed in the extent to which parents themselves carried out the duty or arranged for someone else to stand in for them. In the Mount Ellen group only one (working) mother regularly arranged for someone else to take her turn. In the Chryston group (operating in a more affluent area) the situation reflected fairly recent changes in woman's employment:

There have been a lot of changes over the past five years. Fewer women do their turn of duty than before. Some pay 5 to have their session covered by someone else. Others get help from friends and relatives. A lot more women are working than before.
(Playleader, Chryston)

Fathers were rare on the duty rota at Chryston, although two turned up regularly at Mount Ellen. Again this may reflect employment trends, (Mount Ellen is a less affluent area with high unemployment) as much as traditional attitudes to childcare as women's domain.

The organisation and content of sessions at both groups was similar both providing unstructured 'free-play' time along with more structured activities.

The first half hour is free-play followed by snack time. Then we have a story, music or a game lasting 15 minutes followed by a theme - for example, something special for them to make. That takes 1/2 an hour, then there's a group game or soft play followed by singing or a story at the end.

(Playleader, Mount Ellen.)

At 9.30 a.m. there's free play - any activity. Throughout the morning I take small groups of 4 children for particular activities. This is their choice. At 10.30 a.m. we have snack, 10.50 a.m. is the whole group singing and dancing time. At 11.30 a.m. I read a story or we sing songs till the children are picked up. (Playleader, Mount Ellen)

Playleader and helpers were asked to describe their roles in the playgroup. All interviewees described the playleader's role as organising the structure and content of each session with helpers providing support in setting up and cleaning away equipment and in helping (or supervising) children with activities. Helpers were expected to interpret their own role from their experience of the situation. There were no explicit rules about what they should do and helpers offered various levels of involvement - largely a reflection of their individual attitudes to children, the voluntary nature of the job and the group as a social situation.

I organise how each session is structured and which activities the children do. The mothers help me out.

(Playleader, Chryston)

Leaders set up activities and situations to stimulate the children while they are playing. Helpers do the physical setting up and clearing away. They are supposed to go in and help in activities but that depends on the mother. Some contribute very little, others a lot.

(Playleader, Chryston.)

Every mother tackles the job differently, some do very little, some do a lot, I sit and help children play and do activities and I generally float about doing what's required. The Leader organises activities for the day.

(Helper, Mount Ellen)

4. Playgroup Philosophy

Respondents were asked to describe the general philosophy of playgroups as they understood it. In particular, they were asked what they were trying to achieve for both children and parents.

Overall, respondents saw the playgroups as having 3 basic aims; to provide a stimulating and safe environment where children could experience play in large groups (socialisation); to provide activities to encourage development and learning through play (intellectual development); and to provide free-time and social contact for parents/mothers (parental benefits).

The broad aims identified by respondents were in line with those associated with both traditional and community nurseries. However, respondents identified the main point of departure between the two as a different approach to educating children. Playleaders did not see their role as 'teaching' children but identified this as the main object of nursery schools. They described themselves as facilitating learning through play and through certain activities in a group context.

Basically, playgroups are about learning through play. They allow the child to socialise and prepare the child for school through this and various activities: drawing, painting, music, physical play.
(Playleader, Chryston)

The playgroup offers social contact for mothers and children. For children who are rising five, we help prepare them for school by offering the types of activities appropriate for pre-schoolers. We help to build the child's confidence and to separate from Mum.
(Playleader, Mount Ellen)

All playleaders spontaneously mentioned the issue of discipline in the playgroup context. Given the voluntary nature of the groups and the presence of parents at sessions, discipline and control of children were identified as potential areas of difficulty for the playleader in particular:

There are no written rules or guidelines. We are not really in a position to impose much discipline since mothers usually resent it. Things can get of hand in the playgroup especially if there are a number of difficult children.
(Playleader, Chryston)

Discipline is very difficult as often the mothers are there. The playleader's role is unclear in that area.
(Playleader, Chryston)

The Mount Ellen playleaders, whilst recognising the potential of control and discipline issues to be problematic did not hesitate to impose their own standards and they rarely encountered resentment of this. A number of factors might come into play in shaping the attitude of parents to discipline imposed in the playgroup context, for example the familiarity and of playleaders, status in the local community, the personality of the playleaders themselves and the scarcity of places for children in what has been till now the exclusive pre-five resource. Certainly, the playleader role is developed very much along personal lines and is a product of attitudes and social interaction in the playgroup context. The style of management adopted is a matter of personal discretion and experience.

5. Children's Social Backgrounds and Behavioural Problems

By raising the issue of discipline as difficult or potentially problematic, respondents indirectly highlighted the general difficulties of a voluntary child care service which lacks clear cut authority on child development and may be unable to offer internal professional input should children and parents experience difficulties. These difficulties might effect the dynamics of the child group or place excessive demands on the playleader. The playgroup system incorporates no demand for background information on children and there is no admissions procedure (save the waiting list) which might exclude difficult children. Whilst playgroups are generally seen as a middle class phenomenon, self selecting from financially and socially privileged groups, the playgroups here represent both ends of the social spectrum. Respondents described Mount Ellen as being:

Classed as a deprived area with high unemployment and poor local facilities.
(Playleader, Chryston)

And Chryston and the surrounding area as being:

.... basically a middle class area with very few deprived areas.
(Helper, Chryston)

Some level of behavioural emotional and social problems seemed inevitable. Some questions explored the playgroups access to background information on children and families, the importance of this kind of knowledge, incidence of behavioural, developmental or emotional problems in children and any existing mechanisms for handling these.

The playgroups seemed to differ on the amount of information they received on children's backgrounds but all of it was communicated informally. Mount Ellen seemed to have more access to this type of information and some respondents felt this was a reflection of the size of the local community.

Mothers do tell me if there are any background problems. They seem to have the confidence to approach me and discuss these things.
(Playleader, Mount Ellen)

We are aware of people's circumstances largely because this is such a small community. (Helper, Mount Ellen)

I'm not aware of children's circumstances at all.
(Helper, Chryston)

Opinions varied on the value of such information.

It would probably help but since it's a voluntary organisation I don't feel it's appropriate. I don't believe the parents would provide that information to a playgroup anyway.
(Playleader, Chryston)

I don't think a playleader really needs this information but it does help to understand changes in children's behaviour.
(Playleader, Mount Ellen)

I think it may be important for a playleader to have that kind of information but not for helpers.
(Helper, Mount Ellen)

The leader perhaps should be aware of difficult family circumstances, but this would only happen if the mother volunteered the information. No one would look for information and there's nothing written down about families.
(Helper, Chryston)

Respondents were asked if they were aware of children attending who showed developmental, social or emotional problems. They were unanimous in finding very little evidence of maladjustment.

No, I don't think any of the children show these kinds of problems. It's not common. (Playleader, Mount Ellen)

I've never seen any sign of what I would consider to be gross maladjustment of any sort. (Playleader, Chryston)

Only one child in my experience seemed very immature. She now attends the nursery. Most children show a normal level of development etc.
(Playleader, Mount Ellen)

Not really. The children I know seem quite OK.
(Helper, Chryston)

Given the scarcity of local pre-five resources the level of perceived maladjustment seems low. Perhaps children are subject to a self-selection process, with some mothers reluctant to attend or place a difficult child in a group setting which would lead to unwanted contact with other mothers. All respondents felt that if difficulties did arise with children, the playleader should either approach the mother informally or refer the problem to the committee and local SPPA branch. No one could describe the process from their own experience since the problem had never arisen.

I would approach the parent informally rather than go to the committee.
(Helper, Mount Ellen)

It's never happened. If it did I would approach the committee. Bigger problems would be referred to the Branch.
(Playleader, Mount Ellen)

I would just use one to one talk and play with the child. If the problem needed more attention, I'd have to consult the committee.
(Playleader, Mount Ellen)

The mother would probably approach me if her child were showing obvious problems. If I were aware of gross problems I would report the situation to the Area Branch Organiser.
(Playleader, Chryston)

If I had a lot of difficulty with a child I would approach the nursery staff. This might help the child get a nursery place.
(Playleader, Chryston)

6. Playgroups and Nurseries

Respondents were asked to consider how playgroups differ from traditional nursery schools³. All respondents emphasised the comparatively structured nature of traditional nursery provision and it's emphasis on learning as opposed to play:

In playgroups children do largely as they please. Nurseries are for more structured and insist the child does more than 'sit-down' pre-school activities. Also nurseries offer children more activities.
(Helper, Mount Ellen)

There's been a basic idea in playgroups that children are not ready for compulsory activities. Nurseries impose activities in group time. they have more staff and are trained to do this. A playleader isn't.
(Playleader, Chryston)

Few respondents had experience of nursery school and so their answers reflect their assumptions.

I don't know what a nursery schools actually do but I assume there's more learning and more discipline. Nurseries have better equipment and trained staff but playgroups allow a higher parental involvement.
(Playleader, Mount Ellen)

3. Few respondents had experience of nursery school and so their answers reflect their assumptions.

As a measure of the perceived success of the playgroups compared to other pre-five services, respondents were asked: Given the choice would you prefer your own children to attend a playgroup or some other pre-five service? Interestingly, the overall preference was for a traditional nursery school and based largely on the belief that they offered superior educational input and pre-school preparation. The choice was conditional though based on the child's reaction, the 'style' of the particular nursery school or the age of the child i.e. 4 rather than 3 years old.

I would choose playgroups for the involvement they offer me but for children I prefer nursery schools. They are more structured and offer the child more educationally. (Helper, Mount Ellen)

I would prefer nursery since I think it prepares children better for school. But my own child's reaction would dictate where he went - if he didn't seem happy, I would take him out. (Helper, Chryston)

I'd go for a nursery any time. The playgroups don;t go far enough in what they offer and the staff are untrained. Nurseries offer more in resources all round. (Playleader, Chryston)

I would prefer my child to attend a traditional nursery. But for younger children, playgroups are more familiar and friendly. As children reach 4 years, they may need more structure than a playgroup can offer. (Playleader, Chryston)

Although I feel the nurseries and playgroups are similar, I would always choose a playgroup. They offer more free play which I feel is appropriate for young children and they are better for mothers who want a higher level of social contact than nurseries offer. (Playleader, Mount Ellen)

7. Local Pre-Five Services and the Community Nursery

It seems that though the voluntary sector pre-five services have flourished locally, this has been due to a lack of alternative and preferred traditional resources. All respondents felt that more resources were needed in spite the provision of the new community nursery places. The community nursery was generally identified as a special resource for children with extraordinary needs and family circumstances, inaccessible to the majority of children who currently attend voluntary services.

When they did the original survey people wanted an ordinary nursery. They didn't anticipate the strict admissions for the nursery and it does cover a very wide geographical area. Children from normal circumstances didn't get a place and most working mothers still have to send their children to private nursery. I see playgroups as a thing of the past. Mothers want to work nowadays. (Playleader, Chryston)

Extending both the nursery and the playgroup might provide more places but there are still a lot of children requiring some sort of pre-five experience.

Respondents were asked if they thought the Community nursery model was a good one. Respondents felt the model was good; flexibility in hours offered was the nursery's main advantage but they emphasised again that it was a very limited resource having little impact on local communities:

There are more places needed for both 'ordinary' children and children with special needs. A day nursery with a less strict admission's policy and more places would be helpful. I don't think people necessarily want full-time places but they certainly want flexible, free places.
(Playleader, Chryston)

It is good for people who get places. It allows women to work by offering longer hours.
(Helper, Mount Ellen)

Comparing the Community Nursery model to traditional pre-five services, the flexibility in hours offered by the new model gave it an obvious advantage over traditional half-time provision. Ironically though, the new model limited as it in this context fails to fulfil the expectation that working mothers would be the main users:

Flexibility is what's important if traditional services could offer more leeway to parents in the hours of care/ I think they would be more appropriate and appreciated than they are at present.
(Helper, Chryston)

8. Contact between Playgroups and the Community Nursery

Chryston playgroup is arguably part of the Jigsaw Community Nursery given the history of the nursery's development as a joint voluntary/regional project and it's physical location in the same accommodation as the nursery. It has, however, retained it's original name - Chryston Playgroup - and is still identified by users and organisers as a separate entity. The nursery's original aims and objectives included liaison with local playgroups but this has been slow to develop. Both Chryston and Mount Ellen respondents were asked about contact with the community nursery and about advantages or disadvantages to the Chryston group in particular of sharing the same location. For both groups contact involved use of the nursery's soft play room but little contact had developed otherwise. One Mount Ellen respondent remembered being invited to meetings:

Although we've been invited to attend meetings there we haven't managed so far. We use their soft playroom once a month but have no real contact.
(Helper, Mount Ellen)

Chryston seemed to be involved in joint meetings once a month:

The organisation of the two hasn't come together yet and the nursery is quite separate. There are joint meetings once a month but apart from sharing the soft play area there's little contact or communication.
(Helper, Chryston)

None of the respondents identified any disadvantage to Chryston Playgroup in it's association with the community nursery and emphasised the practical advantages:

the advantages are obviously the use of facilities - the Branch Room, soft play area and the cafe. The Nursery Head is a good source of general information and the situation is better for mothers in offering wider social contacts.

It is difficult to define how 'contact' might develop especially as the playgroup has a separate identity as part of the voluntary services. One respondent did have ideas on developing the relationship between the two.

Although Jigsaw is a Community Nursery there's no real contact or rapport amongst different groups. We still operate as before. I would like to find out more about the nursery - maybe go in and see how it operates. It would be nice to have more exchange of ideas. I've never been through the doors of the nursery. (Helper, Chryston)

9. Summary of main points

Playgroups represent the main pre-five resource in Jigsaw Community Nursery's catchment area. Both of those represented here are well attended and have waiting lists. They report little formal liaison with other agencies either during playleader training or in their day to day functioning.

The structure and content of both groups is similar though the number of weekly sessions differed.

Respondents identified 3 broad aims for playgroups which reflected those of traditional nursery schools. However, playgroups had a different approach to educating children. They saw themselves as facilitating learning through play whilst nurseries were seen as educating children directly.

Discipline within the groups was identified as actually or potentially problematic. Some respondents felt that playleaders lacked authority and were hampered by the presence of parents in imposing their own standards of control.

Respondents felt that social, emotional or developmental problems were very rare in children attending the groups. None had experience of such children and could only speculate on an appropriate course of action should a child present serious problems.

Considering differences between playgroups and nursery schools, all respondents emphasised the comparatively structured nature of nursery provision and its emphasis on learning as opposed to play. However, given the choice, the majority of respondents would choose to send their children to nursery rather than playgroup. The choice reflected a belief in the superior educational input and pre-school preparation of nurseries.

All respondents felt that more pre-five resources were needed locally. The community nursery, though described as good, was seen as a special resource for children with extraordinary needs offering little to ordinary children or to working mothers.

Contact between Chryston Playgroup and Jigsaw was limited. The playgroup maintained a separate identity and did not feel part of the Jigsaw Community Nursery.

6.8 BUCHLYVIE NURSERY SCHOOL - A REPORT ON STAFF INTERVIEWS

Those interviewed were:

Acting Head Teacher

Assistant Teacher

First Assistant Nursery Nurse

Nursery Nurse

Parent

Interviews were conducted during February and March 1991

Background

Buchlyvie Nursery has been chosen to represent the traditional nursery school model in our comparative evaluation of innovative nursery provision - the community nurseries operating at Saltcoats (3-Towns) and Chryston (Jigsaw). Buchlyvie is being studied alongside these innovative models to allow some comparison of the two systems.

As part of the evaluation, interviews are being conducted with key individuals at various phases during the implementation of the community nursery policy. The following paper looks at interview material provided by staff at Buchlyvie. It focusses on the following broad areas: the history and background of the nursery, the kind of community it serves, its ethos, purpose and relationship to child, parent and community; admissions procedure management and organisation; design, content and purpose of assessment and curriculum; liaison with other agencies and opinions on the future direction of nursery provision.

All interviews were conducted in private at the nursery. Interviews took on average one and a half hours to complete. All staff interviewed seemed comfortable in the interview situation and were open and comprehensive in their answers. Complete interviews were returned to interviewees for comment on their factual accuracy and fairness in representing views and opinions. Two interviewees chose to make additional comments and some minor changes at this stage. Some of the commentary on the interview material may be partly substantiated by the evaluator's observations of the day to day functioning of the nursery and informal discussion with staff.

1. History/Background and Admissions Procedure

The Service

Buchlyvie Nursery School is a purpose built, single tier nursery near the centre of Easterhouse, a post-war housing scheme with a population similar to Perth (i.e. approx. 45,000). Buchlyvie nursery has served the Easterhouse community for 20 years. It currently provides for 120 children, 100 on a part-time basis and 20 full-time. Staffing consists of the nursery head teacher, an assistant teacher and 5 nursery nurses. Demand for places fluctuates with factors affecting the local population (e.g. available housing, number of pre-school children). When demand for places is high, a place sharing scheme allows more children to attend on a part-time/part-week basis. At the moment demand for places is relatively low and children from outside the immediate area have been offered places. A number of children attending have special needs, such as general developmental delays or more specific problems e.g. Downs's Syndrome.

Admissions

Most children attending Buchlyvie do so as a result of direct requests by parents. Some are referred by outside agencies - social work, health and psychological services but these are a minority. Full-time places are allocated to children in particularly difficult circumstances. An admission panel decides on priority cases and the Head Teacher may offer full-time places on an emergency basis. The nursery is required to operate the current admissions policy (3A) which allocates nursery places on a basis of greatest need. Interviewees felt that the admissions policy was a fair one but that, when demand for places was high, children from less needy backgrounds lost the opportunity of a place. They also felt the system was open to abuse.

Since people are aware of the priorities, they know how to increase their chances of getting places - unfairly, by supplying false information.
(Head Teacher)

Clearly, the admission policy creates some tension in the community, given that parents are prepared to give false information to gain a place for their child.

Since people are aware of the priorities, they know how to increase their chances of getting places.
(Head Teacher)

The parent interviewed felt that the priority system was somewhat unfair, favouring some families who had self-inflicted problems:

For people who have genuine problems, the system is fair. But I resent it that an alcoholic could get a place before me. That's a self-inflicted problem and yet they are given more freedom and consideration. People use the system for their advantage. (Parent)

This interviewee also felt that offering places to children outside the immediate areas was wrong, though the availability of places might reflect lethargy or a lack of information on the part of local parents.

There's some talk of families from outside the area getting places. I don't know why. Maybe people in the area didn't put their names on the list soon enough, but it does seem unfair. There must be more priority cases around here. I feel people from outside the area shouldn't be sending their kids here. (Parent)

Abuse of the admissions system highlights the importance of the nursery as a community resource and even in an area which is relatively well supplied with pre-five provision, competition for places still encourages subterfuge on the part of some parents.

Changes over Time

Since the nursery first opened there have been some radical changes in the organisation and practice associated in particular with changes in leadership. The longest serving staff member interviewed (8 years) identified greatest change with a change in Head Teacher approximately seven years ago. This Head moved the nursery towards more tightly structured organisation and developed the teamwork approach which underlies the organisation of the nursery today.

Nursery organisation and ways of working have changed radically. It was - who began these changes. Before everything was much more loosely organised. For example, although we had authority over themes for the children, it was entirely up to you how you organised it. There was far less discussion on work and less staff development.

(First Assistant Nursery Nurse)

This respondent appreciated the changes and viewed them positively -

Now we know what we are aiming for and things are much more tightly planned. (First Assistant Nursery Nurse)

Other interviewees who had worked for shorter periods of time in the nursery highlighted greater parental involvement as the major change in the nursery's organisation and practice over the years. The nursery has a Parent's Room which was added to the nursery in 1984 as part of an Urban Aid project. The project was "mainlined" in 1989 and has enhanced the attempt to foster greater parental involvement generally in the work of the nursery.

Buchlyvie's recent history suggests enthusiastic leadership with a tendency to encourage change and innovation, backed by a staff group who seem willing to support progressive change.

Staffing ratios and the nursery environment

Buchlyvie operates with 1 head teacher, 1 assistant teacher, 5 nursery nurses, 1 part-time cleaner, 1 dining attendant and a janitor. All respondents felt that the staff/child ratio (i.e. of staff who had direct contact with children) was too low. There were a number of reasons given for needing more staff; the level of problematic behaviour presented by children, the particular demands made by children with special needs and the need for staff time with parent groups. There was also a general feeling that all children would benefit from more staff time and attention, particularly on a one to one basis!

No, staffing isn't really adequate to meet the needs of the nursery - especially if you want to work with parents. If children aren't to lose out when that's going on, we could really do with more staff cover. Also, I think it might be nice to have the opportunity to work with children in very small groups.

(Nursery Nurse)

All respondents felt that the nursery is currently well resourced but that this could be in part attributed to good management of funds. There were, however, general complaints about the suitability of the building in providing a pleasant and healthy environment for children and staff. Although the nursery had been custom built all respondents felt its size and layout imposed limitation on certain activities, particularly those requiring quiet and minimal distraction.

The nursery is open plan and although this works well, we could do with more quiet areas for work with individual children.

(First Assistant Nursery Nurse)

We could do with more quiet areas for staff to plan activities and for some one-to-one work with children. (Nursery Nurse)

The design of the building was seen as restricting daylight and all respondents complained about the poor level of natural light in all rooms. They also found the temperature extremely difficult to control (either too hot or too cold). The outside play area was considered generally too small and restricting for large groups of children.

Although staff were critical of the building it seems in fairly good order. Good equipment and children's art work contribute to a pleasing environment and a layout which seems largely sympathetic to most activities and the general needs of young children.

2. Ethos and Purpose of the Nursery

Respondents were asked to describe the main purpose of the nursery both in terms of the child and the parents/community. In terms of the child, answers showed a high degree of consistency across respondents, reflecting common elements in the training of nursery nurses and teachers. All interviewees felt that the purpose of the nursery was to provide stimulation for children (via structured activities and free play) which would encourage their optimum development physically, intellectually, socially and emotionally. All respondents also mentioned the importance of the child's happiness and security in a learning environment.

The nursery aims to provide the child with stimulating activities so that they grow intellectually, socially and emotionally. It also aims to provide an environment where each child feels secure and happy.
(Nursery Nurse)

Our purpose is to provide a stimulating and caring environment to foster the child's development of physical social, cognitive and language skills and to provide an atmosphere that will contribute to their emotional well-being.
(Teacher)

The parent interviewee's ideas on the purpose of the nursery, though perhaps not representative of parents at large, emphasised the educational role of the nursery:

It's there to provide kids with discipline and education. It prepares them for school, broadening their horizons and giving them the experiences they might not get at home. (Parent)

In terms of parents and community respondents felt the nursery could have a very broad influence and aimed to offer parents more than a short break from child care.

It provides an opportunity for parents and other adults to develop new skills and to meet socially. (Head Teacher)

It provides some limited opportunity for parents to find employment; the parent's room offers opportunities for education, recreation and socialising.
(Teacher)

The parent interviewee felt Buchlyvie was quite different (and superior) to other local nurseries in the level and style of resources it provided for parents.

As nurseries go Buchlyvie is terrific for parents. They don't just shut you off in a room with a mother/toddler group. They provide outings for mothers and the nursery staff keep the children. It also provides educational opportunities, Open University classes, sewing classes etc. (Parent)

The nursery is situated in an APT (Area of Priority Treatment) area where poverty and social problems are prevalent. In this kind of situation, the nursery might be expected to adopt a compensatory role, attempting to provide experiences for both children and parents which might lessen the impact of material and social deprivation. Although staff agreed that Easterhouse was an area of high unemployment, with a large proportion of single parent families and a high incidence of alcohol and drug related social problems, most felt that to describe their role as 'compensatory' was misleading - at both an ethical and practical level.

I feel you can't afford to adopt a missionary attitude here. We will never succeed in compensating for what we feel is lacking for the children and parents. We try to focus on existing strengths and skills in families and adopt a more complementary, as opposed to compensatory role.
(Head Teacher)

Staff were keen that their role in the community shouldn't be perceived as 'patronising' or attempting to impose 'preferred' roles on parents and children. But the role of the nursery is nevertheless to some extent compensatory especially in the case of children who present developmental, social and emotional problems. Interviewees felt that between 15% and 30% of all children showed marked difficulties associated with some or all of the areas mentioned. Also assessment procedures in the nursery are designed to allow a process of individually tailored teaching and care to emerge for children who demonstrate a need for extra input. High parental involvement allows staff to act on information provided by parents on their circumstances which in turn allows more appropriate handling of individual children and better support for parents. Information from case study families suggests that the attitude adopted by the nursery is not seen as patronising or imposing but as helpful and caring, particularly where a child demonstrates clear problems or where a parent is experiencing personal difficulties. Staff value parental input at all levels and all interviewees reported that staff/parent involvement was generally a positive experience for both.

3. Organisation and Roles

Interviewees were asked to describe their roles and to comment on the organisation of the nursery. Comments on roles highlighted differences in areas of practical responsibility but emphasised their role as part of a team. The overall organisation of the nursery was described by all respondents as following a teamwork rather than a hierarchical approach.

Organisation reflects a teamwork approach. Each individual makes a valuable contribution. Their suggestions are taken on board. What happens in terms of curriculum is the result of group planning and discussion.
(Head Teacher)

Although all respondents felt that a teamwork approach characterised the organisation of the nursery the teacher pointed out that although 'teamwork' might describe the overall approach it might also reflect variations in degree depending on the individual in charge and the roles of the other staff involved - in particular whether they are teachers or nursery nurses.

I've worked here under two acting heads. They managed things slightly differently. I'd say at the moment management is more 'top down' than before. On the face of it a teamwork approach predominates and in general this is the case. But I'm given a pre-planned schedule. I'd like more opportunity to try out my own way of working. (Teacher)

Respondents were asked why they thought the nursery was organised along these lines. The teamwork approach wasn't thought to be typical of nurseries but was viewed positively by staff.

I feel if we didn't follow this approach it would cause friction and resentment.
(Nursery Nurse)

Feeling valued as staff members makes for better working relationships and higher morale. (Head Teacher)

Commenting on differences in roles and perspectives between teachers and nursery nurses, respondents emphasised complementary rather than conflicting aspects of training and practice.

Nursery nurse training emphasises the caring aspects although we accept the value of activities. Teachers are a lot more educationally oriented but everyone brings unique skills and experiences to the team. In some places teachers are resented but that's not the case here. In general, I feel it would be better if nursery nurse training would allow them the opportunity to be head of a nursery - but there are opportunities for that in day nurseries.

(First Assistant Nursery Nurse)

Both nursery nurses felt that the training they had experienced could be greatly improved allowing them perhaps an equal professional status to teachers in the nursery school context. It seems though that in Buchlyvie little conflict exists between staff with different roles. Neither nursery nurse felt teachers imposed their views and both felt that they had sufficient and appropriate influence over how the nursery operated. There was some frustration over poor training and career opportunities in the nursery school context but as one respondent pointed out greater opportunities exist for nursery nurses in other contexts.

4. Curriculum and Assessment

The organisation of the nursery was reflected in the development of the curriculum. All staff contributed to this at various levels with the Head providing an outline and staff - through regular discussion - developing and composing it and altering content and emphasis depending on how it functioned in the nursery.

The curriculum operates on the basis of a written plan. It provides for one and a half hours free play to half an hour of group time and a whole group singing time. Five different activity areas operate at free play time. Staff work on a five weekly rota basis in each area. For group time, (1:10) one staff member takes responsibility for a series of 'lessons' e.g. early writing skills. The content and structure of all aspects of the curriculum are negotiated within the staff group. Curriculum content is influenced by external and internal factors, the needs and interests of the child, staff development, in service training and relations with outside agencies including educational advisors, psychologists and primary school teachers.

Assessments and curriculum development are major issues in Buchlyvie and the current Acting Head and psychologist from the local child guidance clinic have worked specifically on linking processes so that assessment is meaningful in the light of the experience given via the curriculum. The current NALGO embargo on nursery nurses carrying out written assessments and record keeping has curtailed the development of assessment procedures to some extent but the staff have devised their own assessment schedule. The schedule is derived from 'the Sheridan' but incorporates staff's own experience. The schedule is designed to be completed by all key staff members (responsible for groups of 20 children). The teacher assesses language separately if children appear to have special needs. Staff agreed that the purpose of assessment was mainly to detect weaknesses or developmental delays in children who would then be given extra help. However, assessment also helped highlight weaknesses in the curriculum which could be adjusted to fit children's needs more accurately in the light of assessment results.

The assessment process involved discussion with parents. The parent interviewed appreciated both the information provided via assessment and the way in which that information was given to parents:

They do a really brilliant assessment of each child. I was invited to the nursery and given tea while the Head Teacher and I discussed Johnny's progress - especially how he'd come on in talking to adults.

(Parent)

5. Liaison with other Agencies

The nursery has regular direct contact with a number of other agencies:

The Health Visitor comes in informally as well as formally to see individual children. The psychologist and speech therapist give advice and help in coping with carton problems presented by the children. Social workers only make formal visits concerning children they have referred.
(First Assistant Nursery Nurse)

There is also regular liaison with local primary schools:

We have informal chats about a few of our children when they go to school. the school's hold workshops for new children's parents and we provide creches for that. We also have in service days where we visit each other and swap ideas and information. (First Assistant Nursery Nurse)

Respondents were asked whether contact with other agencies was helpful and could be improved. Although all contact was seen as helpful, generally staff felt that more time spent in discussion with these agencies would improve liaison.

We don't have enough time to spend in discussion with them. We could do with more opportunities for that. (First Assistant Nursery Nurse)

This was the case particularly with social workers where nursery staff felt full discussion could be critical to the social worker's handling of a case.

Contact, purely for information at Social Services could be improved - particularly outwith the need for immediate referral. They are far too quick in assessing a referral is being made, especially in abuse cases.
(Head Teacher)

6. Future Direction of Nursery Provision

All respondents were familiar with Strathclyde Region's policy in developing the community nursery model. They were asked to give their reactions to proposed changes and to say whether they generally, agreed or disagreed.

Most respondents agreed at a theoretical level with the idea of the community nursery model but saw practical difficulties in setting it up.

I believe the public wants the community nursery model. I feel very positive toward the idea in theory. I feel though these projects should be started as separate pilot ventures rather than attempting to attach them to existing services. (Head Teacher)

I agree with the general idea if it could be certain that that adequate resources could be provided - staff, money and space. To change policy without changing resources could be ludicrous. (Teacher)

Respondents were asked how they might react if Buchlyvie were to become a community nursery. Again, although the model is acceptable to some extent in theory, the notion of Buchlyvie becoming a community nursery highlighted the negative feelings which all staff have about change in this direction, regardless of their current role - teacher or nursery nurse.

I'd disagree with a proposal which might detrimentally effect nursery schools and my teaching role and I feel that might be bound to happen. Giving priority to 3-5s is my concern. The two types of service should co-exist I'd resist the erosion of the nursery school ethos. (Teacher)

I'm not sure if I would react favourably. I think staff would have to be offered much better conditions in terms of money and career prospects than they have at present. (Nursery Nurse)

The biggest majority wouldn't want it. Although we are carers, we also provide education. Caring for very young children would definitely shift emphasis of our work and most staff here prefer working with the 3-5 year age group. (First Assistant Nursery Nurse)

Buchlyvie's staff comments reflect wider reaction to the Community Nursery model echoing general resistance to changing the nature of current provision. Proposed changes are viewed as potentially detrimental to a successful if limited pre-school system. The comments of the parent interviewee displayed a somewhat cynical attitude towards parents who might welcome the community nursery:

Oh yes, they would love that here. Somewhere to dump kids all day. I feel the service would be used for all the wrong reasons. (Parent)

Although this respondent felt the community nursery might benefit a few very needy parents, particularly in allowing them to work, she felt that the children involved would not benefit.

I don't think any baby would benefit from extended care in a nursery. I would never use it unless I was in dire straits. I was in a day nursery myself as a child and I don't have good memories of it. (Parent)

Describing her ideal nursery service she favoured flexibility within the existing service provided:

I feel the Head should be able to use her personal discretion about longer hours or different hours for different children. I've no personal complaints about how the nursery operates. It suits me and my child very well. (Parent)

7. Conclusion

Buchlyvie nursery represents the traditional nursery model in our comparative evaluation. The nursery has been open for 20 years and in that time has undergone radical changes in organisation associated with changes in leadership. Change has been in the direction of a teamwork approach amongst staff and away from a more hierarchical arrangement. The teamwork approach is reflected in curriculum development and the development and application of assessment procedures. Both are well developed but assessment is currently curtailed by the NALGO directive preventing nursery nurses from completing written reviews on children. Staff report that as a consequence of the teamwork approach, morale is high and staff/staff relations good. Although nursery nurses feel that their training and career prospects are limited (compared to teachers) in the nursery school context, they did not feel that this situation caused conflict between themselves and teaching staff in Buchlyvie.

In general, the nursery displayed an open attitude to change and innovation within the existing structure - for example, in developing a high level of parental involvement and providing additional resources for adults in the community. Attitudes towards current proposed changes in

Pre-five policy were more defensive. Although respondents accepted the idea of the community nursery model at a theoretical level, they felt the benefits both to community and staff of the existing service would be eroded under the new system particularly if current services were adapted to suit the new model rather than providing new resources.

The parent interviewee felt the need for extended hours in nursery provision was confined to very few families. Household survey data should reveal whether or not this is the case. In a sense though, the Easterhouse area already has resources which reflect the community nursery model, albeit not under one roof - i.e. day nurseries, a number of 3-5 nurseries and a family centre. Data from other sources (i.e. case study families) gives a generally favourable reaction to Buchlyvie with few demands or suggestions for change.

ANNEX 7

7.1 Report on the Evaluation Using Harms and Clifford Early Environment Childhood Rating Scale at Jigsaw Community Nursery: September 1991

Jacque Fee and Christine Stephen visited Jigsaw Nursery on 12 September 1991. Observations were made during a morning session and over lunch-time. On the basis of these observations and discussions with the Depute Head the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale was completed for the nursery and a profile of these ratings is enclosed. The profile for September is also drawn alongside that for January 1991. The notes enclosed expand on the profile for September and draw some comparisons between the profiles obtained from the two observation visits.

On all but one dimension the profile for the September ratings is well above that which would be obtained from a mid-point score on each item. On five dimensions the ratings were noticeably higher in September than they were in January 1991.

The ratings obtained reflect practice in the nursery on the day of observation although the observers recognise that this may change over time and with varying levels of staff and numbers of children attending. The profiles are intended to be illustrative, not judgmental. It is recognised that not all staff present on the day of observation were permanent members of the staff team. The number of children attending on the day of observation was lower than the capacity set.

CIRCLE THE TOTAL SCORE FOR EACH AREA.
CONNECT THE CIRCLED NUMBERS WITH STRAIGHT LINES.

TIGSAW NURSERY

Name of Facility

All

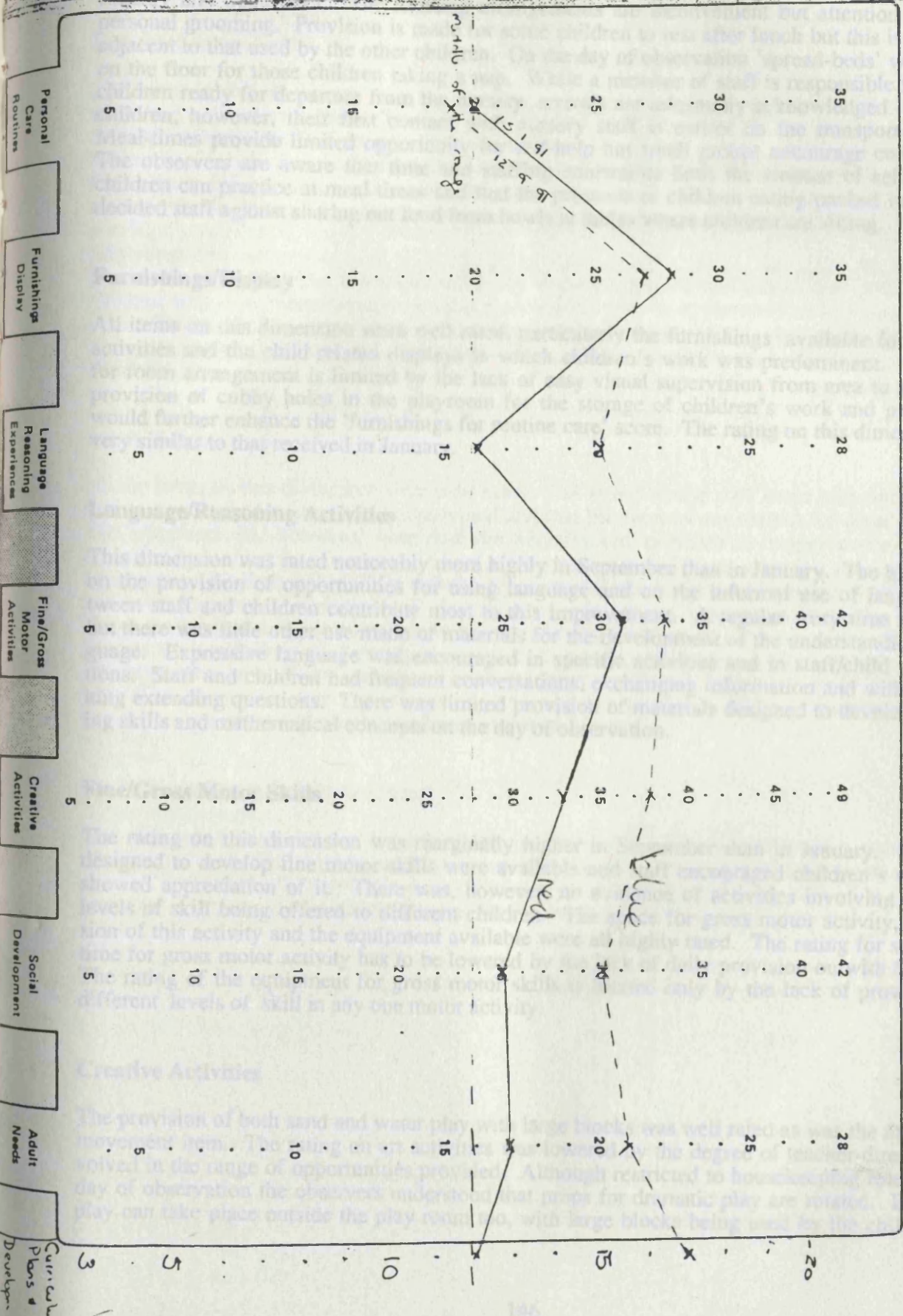
Room

1st 15. 1 91

Dates of Rating

2nd 12. 9 91

3rd



Personal Care Routines

This dimension received the lowest rating of all on the scale and does not differ between January and September. The toileting arrangements are inconvenient but attention is paid to personal grooming. Provision is made for some children to rest after lunch but this is in an area adjacent to that used by the other children. On the day of observation 'spread-beds' were placed on the floor for those children taking a nap. While a member of staff is responsible for getting children ready for departure from the nursery, arrivals are informally acknowledged. For many children, however, their first contact with nursery staff is earlier on the transport provided. Meal-times provide limited opportunity for self-help but small groups encourage conversation. The observers are aware that time and staffing constraints limit the amount of self-help that children can practice at meal times and that the presence of children eating packed lunches has decided staff against sharing out food from bowls at tables where children are sitting.

Furnishings/Display

All items on this dimension were well rated, particularly the furnishings available for learning activities and the child related displays in which children's work was predominant. The score for room arrangement is limited by the lack of easy visual supervision from area to area. The provision of cubby holes in the playroom for the storage of children's work and possessions would further enhance the 'furnishings for routine care' score. The rating on this dimension was very similar to that received in January.

Language/Reasoning Activities

This dimension was rated noticeably more highly in September than in January. The high scores on the provision of opportunities for using language and on the informal use of language between staff and children contribute most to this improvement. A regular story time is offered but there was little other use made of materials for the development of the understanding of language. Expressive language was encouraged in specific activities and in staff/child conversations. Staff and children had frequent conversations, exchanging information and with staff asking extending questions. There was limited provision of materials designed to develop reasoning skills and mathematical concepts on the day of observation.

Fine/Gross Motor Skills

The rating on this dimension was marginally higher in September than in January. Materials designed to develop fine motor skills were available and staff encouraged children's work and showed appreciation of it. There was, however, no evidence of activities involving different levels of skill being offered to different children. The space for gross motor activity, supervision of this activity and the equipment available were all highly rated. The rating for scheduled time for gross motor activity has to be lowered by the lack of daily provision outwith free play. The rating of the equipment for gross motor skills is limited only by the lack of provision for different levels of skill in any one motor activity.

Creative Activities

The provision of both sand and water play with large blocks was well rated as was the music and movement item. The rating on art activities was lowered by the degree of teacher-direction involved in the range of opportunities provided. Although restricted to housekeeping roles on the day of observation the observers understood that props for dramatic play are rotated. Dramatic play can take place outside the play room too, with large blocks being used by the children for

dramatic play in the outside area. The schedule for each session provides variety in the type of activity periods. The supervision of creative activities was rated as good. The September rating on this dimension is marginally higher than that for January.

Social Development

The items in this dimension which were most poorly rated were those looking at space to be alone and cultural awareness. There is no designated 'space to be alone' on the day of observation but children can find space within the arrangement of furnishings. While there was some evidence of ethnic and racial variety in materials used this could not be described as 'liberal'. Free play is offered with a wide range of materials and equipment and regular supervision. Not all supervision during free play makes the most of the educational opportunities. Group time was highly rated with small and whole group activities being offered and there being some opportunities for one-to-one work with particular children. Changes in the score on this 'group time' item contributed to the improved rating in September on this dimension. Provision for children with exceptional needs was also rated more highly in September than in January. The item referring to the general impression of the quality of the interaction was again highly rated. The atmosphere is relaxed but busy and adults show warmth in their interactions with the children.

Adult Needs

All the items on this dimension were well rated. The rating for the staff room takes into account that lockers and adult furniture are provided and that the room is not needed for other purposes. The observers do, however, note that the actual room provided is inappropriate although preferred by staff to the alternative. Good adult meeting facilities are provided although the use of these must be time-tabled to fit with the needs of other users. There are regular staff meetings and arrangements to promote staff development. In-service training is regularly available. There are limited resource materials within the nursery but there is access to a resource centre. Parents are kept informed of events in the nursery, there is a notice board and a system of review meetings between staff and parents. Parents are represented on the advisory board for the nursery. The observer's note that a revised handbook for parents is under consideration. This dimension was rated more highly in September than January.

Curriculum Plans and Development

This dimension was also rated more highly in September. The operation of a planned curriculum was well rated on this occasion as was the extent of curricular ideas throughout the session. A programme for the whole nursery is set after consultation with all staff. The curricular programme is designed for all children not for the needs of individual children.

ANNEX 8

8.1 Longitudinal Keele Assessments in 3-Towns Community Nursery (3-5) Unit

8.2 Longitudinal Keele Assessments in 3-Towns Community Nursery (0-5) Unit

8.3 Longitudinal Keele Assessments in Springvale Nursery School

8.4 Longitudinal Keele Assessments in Jigsaw Community Nursery

8.5 Longitudinal Keele Assessments in Buchlyvie Nursery School

Annex 8.1

Longitudinal Keele Assessments in 3-Towns Community Nursery (3-5 Unit) -
% of all children achieving high/low scores for each aspect of development

DEVELOPMENT ASPECT

		High	Low
LANGUAGE	T1	15.4	84.6
	T2	38.5	61.5
	T3	76.5	23.5
	T4	87.5	12.5
COGNITION	T1	15.4	84.6
	T2	42.3	57.7
	T3	76.5	23.5
	T4	87.5	12.5
PHYSICAL	T1	23.1	76.9
	T2	30.8	69.2
	T3	47.0	53.0
	T4	62.5	37.5
SOCIALIZATION	T1	19.2	80.8
	T2	34.6	65.4
	T3	58.9	41.2
	T4	100	0

Annex 8.2

Longitudinal Keele Assessments in 3-Towns Community Nursery (0-5 Unit) -
% of all children achieving high/low scores for each aspect of development

DEVELOPMENT ASPECT

		High	Low
LANGUAGE	T1	13.7	86.3
	T2	22.5	77.5
	T3	25.0	75.0
	T4	66.7	33.3
COGNITION	T1	9.8	90.2
	T2	25.0	75.0
	T3	25.0	75.0
	T4	55.6	44.4
PHYSICAL	T1	25.5	74.5
	T2	30.0	70.0
	T3	45.0	55.0
	T4	77.8	22.2
SOCIALIZATION	T1	23.5	76.5
	T2	30.0	70.0
	T3	60.0	70.0
	T4	77.8	22.2

Annex 8.3 Longitudinal Keele Assessments in Springvale Nursery School - % of all children achieving high/low scores for each aspect of development

DEVELOPMENT ASPECT		High	Low
LANGUAGE	T1	46.0	54.0
	T2	76.2	23.8
COGNITION	T1	31.7	68.2
	T2	66.7	33.3
PHYSICAL	T1	44.4	55.6
	T2	66.7	33.3
SOCIALIZATION	T1	50.8	49.2
	T2	76.2	23.8

Annex 8.4 Longitudinal Keele Assessments in Jigsaw Community Nursery - % of all children achieving high/low scores for each aspect of development

DEVELOPMENT ASPECT		High	Low
LANGUAGE	T1	25.8	74.2
	T2	64.6	35.4
	T3	71.4	28.6
COGNITION	T1	15.5	84.5
	T2	46.3	53.6
	T3	71.4	28.6
PHYSICAL	T1	15.5	84.5
	T2	63.4	36.6
	T3	78.6	21.4
SOCIALIZATION	T1	19.6	80.4
	T2	54.9	45.1
	T3	50.0	50.0

Annex 8.5 Longitudinal Keele Assessments in Buchlyvie Nursery School - % of all children achieving high/low scores for each aspect of development

DEVELOPMENT ASPECT

		High	Low
LANGUAGE	T1	10.6	89.3
	T2	37.0	63.0
	T3	72.7	27.3
	T4	90.0	10.0
COGNITION	T1	12.8	87.2
	T2	32.6	67.3
	T3	45.5	54.5
	T4	90.0	10.0
PHYSICAL	T1	10.6	89.4
	T2	50.0	50.0
	T3	63.7	36.4
	T4	80.0	20.0
SOCIALIZATION	T1	17.0	83.0
	T2	43.5	56.5
	T3	36.4	63.6
	T4	90.0	10.0

ANNEX 9

9.1 Interview schedule for families

9.2 The Caldwell Home Inventory for families with infants and toddlers

9.3 Data from the interviews

ANNEX 9.1

CASE STUDY FAMILIES

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

CASE STUDY FAMILY SCHEDULE (Nursery attenders)

SECTION 1

1. Interviewer Date of interview
2. Service attended by child
3. Change in mode of attendance - part-time/full-time/extended day (Describe):
.....
4. Forename of child Reference No.
5. Area of Residence
6. Key Staff member for this child
7. Age of child Date of Birth
8. Sex of child: M F
9. Date of Admission
10. Length of time the child has attended so far:
Months Weeks
11. Nature of contact with other agencies (Social Work, Health Visitor, family) if applicable. (Describe):
.....
.....
.....
12. Change in admission category Yes No
If yes: New category please tick.

1
2
3
4

13. Any additional information relating to admissions criteria.

.....

.....

.....

.....

14. Has there been any change in respondents's employment status or conditions since the last interview?

Yes No

14b. If yes, describe in full (nature of new work, reasons for stopping work, change in shifts/hours etc.).

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

15. Any changes in child care arrangements since the last interview? (i.e for the case study child) -

(a) Nursery only

(b) Nursery and other person etc.

Describe in full if other than (a)

.....

.....

.....

16. Any change in marital status?
- Lone parent
- Married
- Separated
- Divorced
- With partner
17. Any changes in husband/partner's employment status and conditions since the last interview?
- Yes No
- 17b. If yes, describe in full (nature of new work, reasons for stopping work, change in shifts/ hours etc.)
-
-
-
-
-
-
18. Any changes in the number of adults living in the home?
- Yes No.....
19. If 'yes', how many? Relationship to family:
-
-
-

20. Any change in the number of children in the family?

NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	AGE
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

21. Any change in the number of children now attending pre-five services?

NAME	SERVICE
.....
.....
.....
.....

22. Any change in weekly family income since the last interview?
(include wages, F.I.S., casual earnings, etc.)

.....

.....

.....

.....

23a. Would you, please a give a rough indication of how the weekly family income is now spent?

Food

Rent

Bills

Work Expenses

Luxury Items

Children

Other (specify)

23b. If respondent reported change in income - Can you give a rough indication of how the proportion spent on your children is now spent?

- Clothes
- Childcare
- Sweets/toys
- Outings
- Other (specify)

24. Any change in how respondent rates her home in terms of suitability for her family's needs?

Yes No

(A) Size?
(Probe: number of bedrooms, does child have to share)

.....
.....

(B) Condition (Probe: dampness, poor insulation etc.)

.....
.....
.....

(C) Social/emotional (e.g. are the families daily activities restricted because they are not living in their own home - affecting atmosphere, etc.?)

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

25a. Any change in the division of household tasks between partner and respondent?

Yes No

25b. If yes, describe how things have changed and give reasons for the change.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

26a. Any change between partners in carrying out childcare tasks?

Yes No

27. Any changes in disciplining ? How often do you smack/shout at him/her and for what reasons. (Probe: who carries out the punishment, has frequency, etc. changed as a result of child's attendance at nursery?)

.....

.....

.....

.....

28a. What does the respondent currently feel about the neighbourhood in general? Has she changed her opinion?

Yes No

28b If yes, give reasons:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

29a. Any changes in the number of relatives living nearby?

Yes No

29b. If yes, describe

30a. Any changes in the number of friends living nearby?

Yes No

30b. If yes, describe

.....

.....

.....

31a. How has the respondent changed her opinion of local amenities - shops, leisure facilities - are they:

Yes No

31b. If yes, how does she rate them?

Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
.....

31c. Comments: (give reasons)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

32a. Any change in frequency of respondent and partner getting out socially without children?

Yes No

32b. If yes, how often now?

Never Rarely Often

32c. Comments (give reasons/effects)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

33a. Has the respondent changed her opinion of local opportunities for pre-five children: safe play areas, play facilities etc.

Yes No

33b. How does she rate them now?

Poor Fair Good Very good

.....

33c. Comments (give reasons)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

34a. Has your child’s access to other children changed?

Yes No

34b. If yes, how is it now rated?

Poor Fair Good Very good

.....

34c. Comments (give reasons)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

35a. Any changes in respondent’s rating of the pre-five services (such as playgroups, child-minders) adequacy in this area?

Yes No

35b. If yes, describe:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

SECTION II

36. What hours does you child attend ?

.....

.....

37. Do these hours suit you?

Yes No.....

38. If 'no', how are they unsuitable?

.....

.....

39. Do you think the nursery unit has had any impact on your child? (e.g. change in behaviour)

Yes No

If yes, describe:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Is this what you expected?

.....
.....

40. Does have any particular problems which have been helped by attending?

Describe:

.....
.....
.....

41. How has your child's attendance at changed things for you? (Probe: change in work arrangements, income, leisure, further education, emotional factors, domestic routine.)

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

42a. Any changes in your child’s time spent with other adults? (Grandparents, neighbour, friend, child-minder)

Yes No

42b. If yes, describe.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

43. How does react now to being away from you, being in a large group?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

44. Have you any contact with nursery staff? (Describe)

.....
.....
.....
.....

45. Are the staff approachable and helpful? (Describe)

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

46. What sorts of things do you think has learned in nursery?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

47. Do you have any involvement in the nursery?
(Probe: courses, classes, helping etc.)

Yes No

Describe: (if 'no' give reasons)

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

48. Do you feel the staff at
look after your child well or not? (Probe: 'What's given you that impression?' - ask for
anecdotes.)

.....
.....
.....

49. Can you describe how has changed since he/she started to attend
.....?

.....
.....
.....
.....

50. Have there been any changes in your family relationships as a result of your child’s attendance at the nursery?
[Probe: family rows; time spent together as a family; time spent talking with your child, partner (if appropriate)]

Yes No

Give details:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

51. Do you have any general comments you would like to make about the nursery or staff or’s reactions to attending?

.....
.....
.....
.....

SECTION 3

Attitudes to Work and Childrearing
(Respondents should be encouraged to give as full answers as possible.)

I’d like to ask your views on some issues to do with bringing up a family. These questions are not about your own circumstances but about your general attitude to broader issues. First -

52. Do you think that women with young (pre-five) children should go out to work **full-time**?

Yes No

53. Why/why not? (probe: does it depend for example on the child’s age, type of work , relative emotional/financial benefits to parent/child/family/)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

54. Do you think women with young children should go out to work **part-time**?

Yes No

55. Why/why not/ (probe (again) does it depend for example on child’s age, type of work, relative emotional/financial benefits to parent/child,family?)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

56. What do you think has influenced your views on women with young children going out to work? (Probe partner, friends, family, media, experience?)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

57. (If appropriate), does your husband/partner think women with young children should go out to work full-time?

Yes No

58. Why/why not?
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

59. What are his views on part-time work?
Yes No

60. Why/why not?
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

61. What do you think has influenced his views on women working? (Probe: respondent, family, friends, media, experience.)
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

62. Do/did your own parents think women with young children should work full-time?
Yes No OK

63. Why/why not?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

64. What about part-time work?

Yes No OK

65. Why/why not?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

66. (If appropriate), do you think husbands/partners should share responsibility in caring for young children?

Yes No

67. Why/why not?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

68. If yes, ideally how much responsibility should the husband/partner take? (probe - e.g. same as respondent, only in specific tasks etc.?)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

69. What has influenced your views on sharing responsibility for looking after your children? (Probe: partner, family, friends, media, experience.)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

70. (If appropriate.) How much responsibility does your husband/partner think he should have in caring for children? (Probe: same as respondent, very little, only in specific things.)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

71. (If appropriate) What do you think has influenced his views on sharing responsibility for looking after the children? (Probe: partner, family, friends, media, experience.)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

72. What about your own parents, to what extent did they share responsibility for looking after you?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

73. Do you have any other comments on any aspect of childrearing, family life or child care facilities?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

ANNEX 9.2

HOME INVENTORY FOR FAMILIES WITH INFANTS AND TODDLERS

(Caldwell and Bradley)

Home Inventory for Families of Infants and Toddlers
Bettye M. Caldwell and Robert H. Bradley

Family Name..... Date..... Visitor

Child's Name Birthdate Age Sex.....

Caregiver for visitRelationship to Child

Family Composition
(persons living in household, including sex and age of children)

Is Mother Type of Work Is Father Type of work
Employed when employed..... Employed? when employed.....

Address Phone

Current child care arrangements

Summarise past
year's arrangements

Caregiver for visit Other persons present

Comments

.....

SUMMARY				
Subscale	Score	Lowest Middle	Middle Half	Upper Fourth
I Emotional and Verbal RESPONSIVITY of Parent		0-6	7-9	10-11
II ACCEPTANCE of Child's behaviour		0-4	5-6	7-8
III ORGANISATION of Physical and Temporal Environment		0-3	4-5	6
IV Provision of Appropriate PLAY MATERIALS		0-4	5-7	8-9
V Parent INVOLVEMENT with Child		0-2	3-4	5-6
VI Opportunities for VARIETY in Daily Stimulation		0-1	2-3	4-5
TOTAL SCORE		0-25	26-36	37-45

For rapid profiling of a family, place an X in the box that corresponds to the raw score on each subscale and the total score.

HOME INVENTORY

Place a plus (+) or minus (-) in the box alongside each item if the behaviour is observed during the visit or if the parent reports that the conditions or events are characteristic of the home environment. Enter the subtotal and the total on the front side of the Record.

I Emotional and Verbal RESPONSIVITY

- | | | |
|-----|--|-------|
| 1. | Parent spontaneously vocalised to child twice | ..... |
| 2. | Parent responds verbally to child's verbalisations | ..... |
| 3. | Parents tells child name of object or person during visit | ..... |
| 4. | Parent's speech is distinct and audible | ..... |
| 5. | Parent initiates verbal exchanges | ..... |
| 6. | Parent converses freely and easily | ..... |
| 7. | Parent permits child to engage in 'messy' play | ..... |
| 8. | Parent spontaneously praised the child at least twice | ..... |
| 9. | Parent's voice conveys positive feelings towards the child | ..... |
| 10. | Parent caresses or kisses child at least once | ..... |
| 11. | Parent responds positively to praise of child offered by visitor | ..... |
| | Sub-total | ..... |

II ACCEPTANCE of Child's Behaviour

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------|
| 12. | Parent does not shout at child | ..... |
| 13. | Parent does not express annoyance with or hostility to child | ..... |
| 14. | Parent neither slaps nor spansks child during visit | ..... |
| 15. | No more than one instance of physical punishment during past week | ..... |
| 16. | Parent does not scold or criticise child during visit | ..... |
| 17. | Parent does not interfere or restrict child more than 3 times | ..... |
| 18. | At least ten books are present and visible | ..... |
| 19. | Family has pet | ..... |
| | Sub-total | ..... |

III ORGANISATION of Environment

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------|
| 20. | Substitute care is provided by one of three regular substitutes | ..... |
| 21. | Child is taken to grocery store at least once a week | ..... |
| 22. | Child gets out of house at least four times/week | ..... |
| 23. | Child taken regularly to doctor's office or clinic | ..... |
| 24. | Child has a special place for toys and treasures | ..... |
| 25. | Child's play environment is safe | ..... |
| | Sub-total | ..... |

IV Provision of PLAY MATERIALS

26.	Muscle activity toys or equipment	.....
27.	Push or pull toy	.....
28.	Stroller or walker, kiddie car, scooter, or tricycle	.....
29.	Parent provides toys for child during visit	.....
30.	Learning equipment appropriate to age - cuddly toys or role-playing toys	.....
31.	Learning facilitators - mobile, table and chairs, high chair, play pen	.....
32.	Simple eye-hand co-ordination toys	.....
33.	Complex eye-hand co-ordination toys (those permitting combination)	.....
34.	Toys for literature	.....
Sub-total		.....

V Parental INVOLVEMENT with Child

35.	Parent keeps child in visual range, looks at often	.....
36.	Parent talks to child while doing the housework	.....
37.	Parent consciously encourages developmental advance	.....
38.	Parent invests maturing toys with value via personal attention	.....
39.	Parent structures child's play periods	.....
40.	Parent provides toys that challenge child to develop new skills	.....
Sub-total		.....

VI Opportunities for VARIETY

41.	Father provides some care daily	.....
42.	Parent reads stories to child at least 3 times weekly	.....
43.	Child eats at least one meal a day with mother and father	.....
44.	Family visits relatives or receives visits once a month or so	.....
45.	Child has 3 or more books of his/her own	.....
Sub-total		.....

TOTAL SCORE

ANNEX 9.3 Data from the Case Study Families

A. THE MICROSYSTEM - Family composition and home environment

Number of children over 5

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
0	8	3	2	5
1	1	2	2	3
2	0	2	1	1
3	1	0	0	2
4	0	0	0	0
5+	0	2	0	0

Number of 3-5 year olds

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
0	1	3	0	0
1	7	5	5	9
2	2	1	0	2
3	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	0
5+	0	0	0	0

Number of 0-3 year olds

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
0	2	6	2	10
1	8	1	3	1
2	0	2	0	0
3	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0

Number of children attending pre-five services

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
1	5	7	5	10
2	5	2	0	1
3	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0

In Three Towns a higher number of families have more than one CHILD attending, reflects higher number of families with 0-3 year old children.

Respondent's employment

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
Yes	1	4	2	2
No	9	5	3	9
	10	9	5	11

Almost half Jigsaw group worked, again similar to Springvale. Only one of the Three Towns group were employed and 2 of the Buchlyvie group. Looking for change in these groups since this was one of the aims of the Community Nursery - to allow women to work.

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
(1) Unskilled	0	2	0	1
(2) Semi-skilled	1	0	0	0
(3) Skilled non-manual	0	2	0	1
Professional			1	0
Intermediate			1	0
N/A	9	5	3	9

Biographical details of respondents' partners

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
15 - 16	2	5	3	7
17 - 18	1	3	1	1
N/A	7	1	1	3

Partners further education

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
None	2	2	0	4
University	0	0	0	0
FE	0	2	2	1
Professional	0	4	0	1
Other (YTS)	1	0	2	3
N/A	7	1	1	2

Number of other adults living in the home

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
Yes	2	2	0	1
No	8	7	5	10

Few families shared their homes with other relatives. Where they did they were grandparents and other relatives (aunts, uncles). Only one had a paying lodger and none had dependent relatives receiving care from respondent.

Suitability of the home for family needs**(a) Size**

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
Too small	5	2	0	6
Adequate	5	7	5	5

Condition of respondents' homes

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
Poor	4	1	0	3
Fair	5	2	0	4
Good	1	6	5	4

Social and emotional impact of environment/living conditions

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
(1) Causes no distress	5	7	5	4
(2) Causes a lot of distress	2	0	0	2
(3) Causes some distress	3	2	0	5

Is respondent receiving State Benefit?

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
Yes	8	4	1	7
No	2	5	4	4

Is respondent's income sufficient for needs?

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
Yes	2	4	4	5
No	8	5	1	6

Getting out socially without children

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
Rarely	4	3	2	3
Sometimes	0	0	0	2
Often	4	4	0	5
Never	2	2	3	1

Household tasks and childcare - are they shared?

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
(1) Yes	1	6	3	7
(2) No	2	2	1	1
(3) N/A - no partner	7	1	1	3

What does the partner help with most?

	Three Towns (diff. N)	Jigsaw (diff. N)	Springvale (diff. N)	Buchlyvie (diff. N)
(1) Cooking	1	2	2	3
(2) Cleaning	1	1	2	5
(3) DNY	1	2	2	4
(4) Other	1	4	0	4
(0) N/A	9	7	2	3

What does helping partner do?

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
Bathing	2	5	2	3
Feeding	1	4	1	2
Baby-sitting	2	6	3	8
Other	1	3	3	4
N/A	8	3	1	3

Type of discipline used - first choice

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
Physical	2	5	0	1
Seclusion	1	2	1	2
Deprivation	0	1	1	1
Verbal rows	6	1	2	5
Reasoning	1	0	1	3

Type of discipline as a second choice

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
Physical	7	2	2	5
Seclusion	1	0	1	0
Deprivation	0	0	0	0
Verbal rows	2	3	2	3
Reasoning	0	1	0	3
Other	0	3	0	0

Frequency of discipline - type most used

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
Rarely - once a week or less	0	0	0	1
Sometimes - once a week or less	3	6	4	4
Often - more than once a week	7	3	1	6

B. THE EXOSYSTEM - Aspects of the wider environment

Is the respondent happy living in her neighbourhood?

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
Yes	6	7	5	5
No	4	2	0	6

If not, why not?

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
Social reasons: neighbours hostile, children bullied	3	2	0	4
Environmental: poor housing, poorly maintained, vandalised	1	0	0	2
Other	0	0	0	0
N/A	6	7	5	5

Rating of local amenities - shops, leisure facilities, libraries etc.

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
Poor	5	5	3	3
Fair	4	3	0	4
Good	0	1	2	4
Very Good	1	0	0	0

Does the child spend time with other adults outside the family home?

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
Yes	8	8	5	7
No	2	1	0	4

If yes, why?

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
Allows respondent a break	6	3	2	7
Allows respondent to work	1	2	2	0
Other (access visits)	1	3	1	0
N/A	2	1	0	4

Children under the 'other' category are all on access visits to parents.

How much time does child spend with other adults?

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
(1) Less than 2 hours	1	2	0	3
(2) 2-6 hrs	3	3	3	1
(3) 6-10 hrs	4	3	0	1
(4) 11-20 hrs	0	0	1	3
(5) 20+	0	0	1	0
(0) N/A	2	1	0	3

Rating of local pre-five services (i.e. availability of) includes all voluntary and non-voluntary

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
Adequate	4	3	0	7
Inadequate	3	6	3	4
Don't know	3	0	2	0

C. MESOSYSTEM - Nursery environment and its impact on the child

Child was referred, what was the reason?

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
(1) Child abuse	1	0	0	0
(2) Stressful circumstances	4	3	0	0
(3) Single parent	1	1	0	2
(4) Other*	0	1	0	0
N/A	4	4	5	9

* Special needs

How did child settle at nursery?

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
(1) Easily	8	6	3	5
(2) After initial diff. 2 wks-1 mth	2	2	2	3
(3) Very diff. to settle +1 month	0	1	0	3
(4) Never really settled well	0	0	0	0

If yes, what type of problem?

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
(1) Physical	0	1	0	1
(2) Social	6	2	0	1
(3) Cognitive/ developmental	4	5	1	1
(0) N/A	2	2	4	8

Respondent’s expectations of gains from attendance

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
Educational	8	5	5	11
Social/ behavioural	10	8	5	11
Neither	1	1	0	0

Negative changes in child

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
(1) Physical	2	0	0	0
(2) Social/ behavioural	4	2	1	3
(3) Cognitive/ developmental	0	0	0	0
(4) No negative change	6	7	4	8

Is the nursery well equipped and designed?

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
Yes	9	9	4	10
No	1	0	1	1

Is nursery different from childcare used in the past/

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
(1) Yes	2	2	4	1
(2) No	8	7	1	10
(3) N/A				

What was used in the past?

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
Childminder	0	0	0	0
Day nursery	0	0	0	0
Private nursery	0	0	1	0
Relative	0	0	0	0
Other (playgroup)	2	2	3	1
N/A	8	7	1	10

D. MESOSYSTEM - Family and the nursery

Are the hours of attendance suitable?

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
Yes	5	4	4	10
No	5	5	1	1

If 'no', how are they unsuitable?

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
Respondents would prefer:				
(1)a full-time place	3	1	0	0
(2)longer/more flexible hrs	2	4	1	1
(3)different part-time hrs	0	0	0	0
(4) Other	0	0	0	0
(5) N/A	5	4	4	10

Respondent's role in the nursery

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
(1) None	4	8	5	8
(2) Occasionally helps	1	1	0	0
(3) Attends classes/events	1	0	0	3
(4) 2 and 3	4	0	0	0

E. MACROSYSTEM - Beliefs and Attitudes

Respondent's perception of the main purpose of the nursery?

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
(1) Prepare child 'educa- tionally for school	9	8	5	10
(2) Prepare child socially for school	10	6	5	6
(3) to care for child whilst away from respondent	5	7	3	2
(4) To allow respondent's leisure/work time	0	0	0	0
(5) None of these	0	0	0	0

Respondent's own experience of childcare as a child

	Three Towns	Jigsaw	Springvale	Buchlyvie
(1) Parents cared exclusively for respondent	3	8	4	3
(2) Extended family cared for respondent	3	1	0	3
(3) Respondent attended nursery school	1	0	1	2
(4) Respondent attended day nursery	0	0	0	1
(5) Other (Children's Home)	2	0	0	2
(6) Respondent doesn't remember	1	0	0	10

ANNEX 10

- 10.1 Report of inter-professional liaison with 3-Towns Community Nursery**
- 10.2 Report of inter-professional liaison with Jigsaw Community Nursery**
- 10.3 Report of inter-professional liaison with Buchlyvie Nursery School**
- 10.4 Interview on professional liaison with the Headteacher of Springvale Nursery School**
- 10.5 Social Work (Scotland) Act (44(i)a)**

ANNEX 10.1

Report of inter-professional liaison

with

3-Towns Community Nursery

Interviews were conducted with:

Assistant Area Reporter

Senior Educational Psychologist

Area Manager - Social Work Department

4 Social Workers

3 Health Visitors

Interviews were conducted between November 1991 and February 1992

INTRODUCTION

One of the fundamental aims of the Three Towns Community Nursery is to work effectively with other social agencies to support children and families who for one reason or another require assistance.

The following paper summarises interviews with a number of individuals who were key personnel of such agencies liaising with the community nursery and other (pre-existing) local pre-five provision. The agencies involved were:

- Psychological Services
- Children's Hearings
- Social Work
- Health.

The interview covered the following areas: process of referral and admission to pre-five services; assessment of children's placements; nature and quality of liaison with pre-five services; an evaluation of the community nursery model.

SECTION 1: PROCESS OF REFERRAL TO THE COMMUNITY NURSERY

Of those interviewed, the educational psychologist, social workers and health visitors were in a position to make direct referrals to the community nursery and other provision via the joint Admissions Panel. The reporter's role (as legal adviser to the Children's Hearings system) did not involve direct referral of children to those services but attendance at a nursery might be a condition of a supervision order placed on a child by the Children's Panel. In such circumstances, the order becomes the responsibility of the Social Work Department.

The Admissions Panel considers all applications for access to the community nursery and allocates places as they become available. Access to other pre-five provision in the area prior to December 1991 was through application to the Heads of the particular nurseries concerned. From December 1991 the role of the Three Towns Community Nursery Admissions Panel was extended to cover admission of category one and two cases to all the nursery facilities in the area.

The Admissions Panel includes representatives of all agencies involved in referral. Consideration of applications is subject to a system of categorisation (revised to a banding in November 1991) with children in greatest need (category one) given priority access to nursery places. Cases of abuse and severe neglect are automatically assigned to this category and always involve social work input. Referrals from the educational psychologist for children with special educational needs are often assigned to this category though the child's presenting problems may be of a different nature. Assignment of applications to other categories reflects situations of varying degrees of difficulty for the child or family, the lower categories indicating least priority. The scarcity of pre-five resources in the area has resulted in a high proportion of children described as category one or two cases being admitted to the community nursery.

Interviewees had varying levels of involvement with pre-five children; health visitors estimated that 80% of their caseloads has preschoolers, the educational psychologist - 60% and social workers between 40% and 60%. The reporter estimated that roughly 12% of all hearings cases dealt with pre-fives.

A number of interviewees had been involved in planning the development of the community nursery (educational psychologist, area manager social work and one health visitor). The others, (remaining health visitors, assistant area reporter and all field social workers) began liaising with the new nursery when the admissions panel was established. In all cases liaison was initiated by the nursery itself.

Interviewees were asked about current processes of making referrals both to the community nursery and to other pre-five provision in the area and whether the process of referral to pre-existing provision had changed since the opening of the community nursery. None of the social workers interviewed had ever referred a child to a nursery provision prior to the establishment of the community nursery and were unable to comment on the changes in procedure from first hand experience. In the case of referrals to the community nursery itself, these were made by filling in an application form (an inter-agency referral) and passing this on to the social work representative on the admissions panel. Likewise, health visitors completed the same form for consideration at the admissions panel but could also make an 'inter-agency referral' via the social work department (if the case required social work intervention) or provide a 'supported' application which would be considered alongside an application made by a parent. The educational psychologist also made 'inter-agency referrals' using the standard form. Referers who were also members of the admissions panel considered this to be an advantage in that they had an opportunity to talk to their particular cases.

I sit on the admissions panel so I have some advantage in that I can talk to my referral.

Referral to the community nursery is largely a formal process, though some referers did find it necessary to have some informal discussion with the Head of Centre before making a formal application.

I always have informal discussion with the Head of Centre. If they agree that the child should be referred, I make an inter-agency referral.
(Educational psychologist)

Although none of the social workers interviewed had ever made referrals to other local pre-five provision, both health visitors and the educational psychologists had done so regularly before the opening of the community nursery and continued to do so, though the process had changed with the advent of the admissions panel.

The process is the same now, but I suspect that before the joint admissions panel started, it may have been a very informal arrangement - perhaps by 'phone followed by something in writing afterwards. (Social worker)

Before the community nursery opened, processes of referral to the nursery school were verbal and quite informal. Now the process has become more formal i.e. some referrals, (category one and two) are considered at joint admission panel along with referrals to the community nursery. (Health visitor)

The Area Manager, Social Work explained the lack of social work referrals to nursery schools and classes as a result of the Department's lack of awareness of the category system which gave priority to children deemed to be 'At Risk' in social work terms.

I think there may have been some difficulty in the past in getting children in. We were unaware we could question admission procedures. It's something of a missed opportunity though I think they are more limited in resources than the community nursery. (Area manager, Social Work Department)

Prior to the opening of the community nursery, nursery schools and classes in the area did not adopt the regional admissions policy, a situation which was encouraged by a lack of demand from social workers in particular. A local system had developed which favoured a quota allocation of places to cases presented by Health Visitors and the educational psychologist with the remaining places allocated on a once yearly basis to parents who came along on a specified day to make applications. This 'local' system actively screened out some of the most needy children.

The joint admissions panel changed processes of referral and admission for nursery schools. I only know the Heads of these establishments from attending the admissions panel. I think they resented the new system at first and were afraid of losing their autonomy. They now take a wider range of children in terms of age and background i.e. younger and more needy.
(Social worker)

Local nursery heads (of schools and classes) have been reluctant to accept a centralised admissions process. They do not want their autonomy or authority eroded. An 'old boys' network existed before and I was part of that. But I see advantages in the new system in that it addresses issues of priority, raises awareness about reasons for referral and allows the objectives of placements to be more clearly stated. (Educational Psychologist)

Interviewees were asked how many children they had referred to the community nursery since it opened in March 1990. Health visitors reported the greatest number of referrals (either inter-agency referrals or supported applications) - on average 20 each. Social workers had a much lower rate of referral - between 3 and 8 across those interviewed¹. The Educational psychologist had made 8 referrals. Referrals from social workers and from the educational psychologists had all been successful.

Health visitors found their inter-agency referrals more likely to be placed and had fairly limited success with their supported applications. Looking at the type of child referred from each source, social workers tended only to refer those cases which represented greatest need i.e. those cases where there was abuse or neglect of the child and severe family stress.

The system dictates that where instances of abuse or severe neglect are detected Health Visitors (or other agencies) must refer the case to the Social Work Department. Given that this type of case is referred on, health visitor's referrals were largely children assessed as showing some significant developmental delay or experiencing lesser degrees of family stress. Likewise the educational psychologist was most likely to refer children with cognitive and behavioural difficulties though these cases, unlike cases referred by health visitors, were given automatic priority status.

Interviewees were asked if there were differences in the type of child they might refer to local nursery schools and classes and the community nursery and whether they considered resources to be interchangeable.

It is clear from their failure to refer to nursery schools and classes that social workers did not consider the available resources to be interchangeable. They viewed the community nursery as an appropriate social work resource and rarely if ever considered using other provision for similar cases.

Here (the Community Nursery) I can get instant access if there's an emergency. I see the community nursery as a social work resource where serious family difficulties are familiar to staff. (Social worker)

I've never seen them as interchangeable. Certainly for children who are category one or two, the community nursery seems the most appropriate resource since I know they will provide the kind of care and support these children need. I'm not sure about what nursery schools and classes can offer these children. (Social worker)

1. Social workers were selected for interview on the basis of their rate of referral to the community nursery i.e. high, medium and low referrals.

Health Visitors (who continued to refer to nursery schools and classes as well as to the community nursery) shared the identification of the community nursery as a resource for children (and families) with more severe social and developmental problems. The existence of a family centre as part of the community nursery distinguished its remit very clearly in the minds of referers, providing as it did (at least at the outset) additional support for parents.

Obviously, the age factor influences choice - the community nursery takes younger children. Besides that, if I feel the child needs a general pre-school experience, I refer to Springvale nursery school. If I think the mother needs more involvement, I refer to the community nursery. I felt the family centre was the community nursery's extra factor. (Health Visitor)

The Assistant Reporter characterised the resources in a similar way:

I feel the local community sees the community nursery child as having less able parents and coming from difficult and deprived circumstances. It is not identified as a middle class option whereas other pre-five resources are.

I don't see the existing resources as interchangeable at all. From our point of view, no line of communication exists with nursery schools. The community nursery Head has worked hard at creating a line of communication with us. (Assistant Area Reporter)

For the educational psychologist decisions on which children to refer to which resource were influenced by factors effecting the care of children with very significant levels of impairment.

The main difference (between children referred to the community nursery and to Springvale nursery school) is in the level of difficulty presented by the child. The community nursery has no extra staff provision for children with very significant problems (e.g. autism, cerebral palsy etc.) but Springvale does. Hence the tendency to refer these children to the nursery. (Educational psychologist)

Some respondents saw the interchangeability of the community nursery and pre-existing resources as something which had begun to evolve largely as result of the joint admissions panel and the application of the category system across the board.

I think they are becoming interchangeable now. The Pre-Five project has forced some dramatic changes in the system of allocating places. The Head Teachers felt they were losing control of their nurseries and we have lost control to some extent as well. (Health visitor)

I think they may be leaning in that direction, the nursery school and classes share admissions with the community nursery now. Before, they seemed to be disregarding categories for admission and actively screening out the more deprived or disruptive from the system. (Social worker)

For some interviewees the idea of interchangeability had positive implications, in particular for those who felt the characterisation of the community nursery as a social work resource led to stigma for children and families attending.

We had hoped the project wouldn't just be a resource for very needy families and that all children would be eligible. But that's what it is and because of that it's stigmatised in the local community. (Health visitor)

For others, the 'ideologies' of the community nursery and that of traditional nursery schools were quite distinct and ideally should retain that distinction.

Springvale may move closer to the community nursery model. It's already taking 3-4 year olds which is a significant change. I do have a traditional attitude towards educational issues. Springvale offers a more traditional tightly structured programme whereas the community nursery tends to be less structured - more ethereal in this respect. I would prefer to not see the more traditional approach disappearing. (Educational psychologist)

Interviewees were asked if they thought that the admissions policy was appropriate and fair. All those interviewed (with the exception of health visitors) thought that the system was appropriate and - given the limited number of places available - fair.

Given the limited facilities available the system is fair. There has to be some means of categorising need since there aren't sufficient places to go round. (Social worker)

I feel that if more places were available a broader mix of children would be more sensible. Since there isn't, some system of categorising need is essential. (Assistant Area Reporter)

Health visitors were generally critical of the admissions policy, finding it neither fair nor appropriate. Although they recognised the need for prioritising in the face of limited places, they did not find the current system effective in achieving that aim.

It's neither appropriate nor fair. I work with many pre-five children and their families and I know the system isn't fair. For example single parents are often well supported by partners but since they are unmarried they are eligible. The system doesn't really take individual circumstances into account. (Health visitor)

The admissions policy needs to be more flexible to meet a wider range of community needs. The selection process causes stigma for the family and the resource but I know we really need a lot more places to avoid this. (Health visitor)

The Health Visitor's perspective on the admissions policy undoubtedly reflects the nature and extent of their work with pre-schoolers and their families. The Health Visitor has the highest level of involvement with pre-schoolers of those referring to pre-five resources. They are responsible for monitoring the development of all children in their caseload from birth to 5 years and for providing support to mothers in difficulty as well as diagnostic evidence of developmental delays or other problems. Given their level of contact with families in the community, they are likely to experience greatest pressure to provide pre-school care or education for both normal and disadvantaged children. The breadth of their remit and the necessity of referring on to social work those cases where a child is seriously at risk, means that health visitors are left with the responsibility of attempting to find places for children who represent lower priority in terms of the admissions policy. They define their role as largely preventative but find they are rarely successful in achieving this since the category system responds to current crisis not the prognosis of crisis.

Given the level of contact and access to information health visitors have regarding families they have surprisingly little clout compared to social workers. I would like to see some clarification of what should constitute an inter-agency referral from a health visitor. We should be able to make priority referrals from our particular perspective. (Health visitor)

I can fill in inter-agency referral forms or in cases of child abuse, pass the case on to social work. I try to prevent these cases arising but are more likely to be knocked back than social work referrals. I'd like my supported applications to be accepted before things get to that stage. It's very frustrating to know that the Health Visitor's preventative role doesn't seem to be acknowledged.
(Health visitor)

Compared to social workers and the educational psychologist (all of whose cases had been successfully placed) health visitors have a high rate of referral and relatively low success rate in placing children in the community nursery. However, they report that almost all of their supported applications for nursery schools and classes are successful. This may change as the system of joint admissions develops and local schools and classes begin to take greater proportions of priority cases - i.e. children referred by social workers.

I think social work will probably begin to make more use of local nursery schools and classes. Staff are becoming more aware that they (the schools and classes) are required to operate the category system and of course the joint admissions panel should make more of these places available to category one and two referrals. (Area Manager, Social Work Department)

All interviewees felt that there were insufficient places to meet demand across the community although social workers and the educational psychologist felt there were probably sufficient places available for their high priority cases. For those children unsuccessfully placed, there were few if any realistic alternatives.

There are no other resources except perhaps playgroups or mother and toddler groups if a child's name is added to nursery waiting lists, the parent can think they will get a place soon, I discourage that, the wait is usually too long.
(Health Visitor)

SECTION 2: ASSESSMENT OF PLACEMENTS

Respondents were asked to describe in broad terms what they expected the community nursery would offer in meeting children's identified needs.

Expectations showed evidence of shared perspectives on the role of the community nursery in the following areas:

- (a) assessment and monitoring
- (b) stimulation of development
(e.g. cognitive, social and emotional)
- (c) provision of special input for children
with extra needs or difficulties
- (d) Support to parents who require help in
caring for the child.

Respondents were asked to what extent they felt the community nursery was successful or not in meeting these needs. All respondents agreed that the community nursery was to a greater or lesser extent successful.

I have noticed positive developments in most of the children I've referred here so far. (Social worker)

I've found the community nursery a very positive resource. (Social worker)

They are successful in working towards their aims and objectives - they keep appropriate records and engage appropriate professional advice.
(Educational psychologist)

However, the majority expressed some reservations about the the community nursery's current ability to offer support to parents. Since a large number of referrals to the community nursery reflected some sort of family crisis, this was seen as a major drawback and the loss of the nursery's family centre in June 1991 was seen as dramatically altering the character of the service offered.

I usually receive very positive reports on children but the information on families is now much more superficial than that provided by the family centre so its harder to gauge family progress. (Assistant Area Reporter)

I was very unhappy when the family centre went. It was a very important part of the original submission - even although there was a general lack of clarity about its aims. (Area Manager, Social Work)

I feel the nursery is successful in meeting needs for stimulation and education but I'm not sure about involving parents. Some parents are involved in the nursery a bit at the moment but there's no family centre and as far as I know, staff aren't offering help to families or offering encouragement with children. (Health Visitor)

The community nursery is supposed to have an educational role in teaching parents to relate to their children but this is not as good as before when the family centre was operational. (Social worker)

One of the aims of the community nursery is to prevent the reception of children into (residential or foster) care. Respondents were asked if the nursery had proved to be a viable alternative to such care or fostering.

Views tended to differ quite widely on this issue - for some, (the educational psychologist and some health visitors) the need to consider an alternative to residential care had never arisen. Some respondents never considered using the nursery as alternative to care and others did so only under certain circumstances. The loss of the family centre and the small number of families with a child in a full-time place in the nursery reduced confidence in the nursery as an alternative to care.

No, I wouldn't see it as a viable option. If I thought a child needed to be away from home I might consider using the community nursery as a complement to foster care. (Social worker)

It may be an alternative but there have to be others involved e.g. social worker and the family centre. In a serious crisis there may be no safe alternative but to remove a child from home. (Assistant Area Reporter)

There are really part-time places available. Full-time places are on an emergency basis and short term so it doesn't work well as a long terms option to care. (Social Work)

Some respondents saw the community nursery's role as preventative of placement into care rather than as an alternative.

The nursery can be used as a major resource in preventing this. Where there's good liaison the child can be monitored on a daily basis and parents supported in child care problems. I do feel though that the family centre is crucial in a lot of these cases. (Social worker)

Respondents were asked how many children they had referred to the community nursery suffered physical or sexual abuse or neglect. For social workers, (with their tendency to refer only more serious cases) - children who had been physically abused or seriously neglected made up roughly 50% of referrals. For Health Visitors, the figure was approximately 10%. Cases of sexual abuse were less common. Of the total number of children referred by social workers roughly 15% were either proved or suspected. For Health Visitors, sexual abuse cases represented 1% of referrals. The Area Reporter estimated that of all cases involving pre-five children dealt with by the Children's Panel, physical abuse and neglect were most common grounds of referral followed by emotional abuse. Sexual abuse cases (i.e. substantiated) were 'quite uncommon'. The educational psychologist made no referrals in either category, a reflection of his professional focus.

The lack of these cases may reflect my own lack of interest in those areas. If I expressed an interest cases would be referred to me. My professional focus is cognitive and developmental problems. (Educational psychologist)

Respondents were asked whether or not they felt their departments were able to offer appropriate (specialised) care or treatment for children and families involved in physical or sexual abuse. None of the respondents felt that their departments could offer specialised input for sexual abuse. Physical abuse, though not identified as causing the same emotional trauma was (likewise) unlikely to lead to specialised treatment - though respondents felt that in these cases it was more likely that the child's needs could be met. Referring cases on to other resources (usually distant from the local communities) was the only answer. Once again, the loss of the family centre was seen as critical in providing support to families.

We just refer these cases on. We are not able to offer any specialised input. (Health Visitor)

Resources aren't adequate in this area. In conjunction with the family centre we were able to offer some expertise but not now. Our department couldn't do this type of work without help. (Social worker)

As far as sexual abuse is concerned there are few who would claim to know the way forward in terms of best care and treatment. No specialised treatment is available locally. In other cases (physical abuse and neglect) children may receive adequate care, but its not particularly specialised. (Assistant Area Reporter)

Given the community nursery's remit to prevent reception into care and to rehabilitate children returning from care, respondent's might be justified in expecting specialised input on these cases from the nursery itself. They were asked if they found the nursery able to offer specialised help. None identified the nursery as providing such an input, with a number highlighting the lack of trained staff working there a cause for concern.

Staff are able to monitor children but they don't offer specialised treatment or back-up to parents. (Health Visitor)

I feel there ought to be staff with specialised experience available but the number of completely unqualified staff working there worries me. (Health Visitor)

I think they lack the necessary resources to offer something extra to these children. They don't offer full-time places and most staff lack training or experience in dealing with these children. (Social worker)

No, I don't think that kind of input is available anywhere. Staff don't have the training or the time to give specialised care or treatment. They can observe children but there's no actual work done. The family centre had a bit more to offer these families. Now certain situations can be badly handled and parents became antagonistic. (Social worker)

Respondents were asked to comment on how the community nursery handled children who had been abused. Whilst the majority felt staff were sensitive and caring (making use of a good background knowledge of the child's circumstances despite their lack of specialised training), all but two identified some problematic areas. Ironically, though these problems seemed to arise (at least partly) from poor support/liaison by referring agencies.

I feel they could improve a lot here. I feel these cases can be badly handled at the moment. (Health Visitor)

It depends very much on the staff members involved. Our staff haven't helped in developing good liaison over monitoring children and have confused staff by providing mixed messages. (Social worker)

I feel they handle these cases sensitively but are unsupported by referring agencies. I think social workers would be keen to offload this kind of work. (Assistant Area Reporter)

I have some criticism of their handling. I find they tend to over-react and that they act autonomously in contacting parents if they think a child's been hit at home. I'd rather they left contacting parents to me. (Social worker)

Respondents were asked if children referred needed any other kinds of specialised input from the nursery. None of the social workers identified the need for other input. Two Health Visitors had referred children who were receiving speech and physiotherapy in the nursery. The educational psychologist described the involvement of other agencies in providing specialised input at the nursery.

Staff follow programmes devised by other professionals such as speech therapists and home visiting teachers. These professionals visit the nursery to work with children and staff. (Educational psychologist)

None of the respondents felt that there were children attending the nursery whose needs for these types of input were left unmet.

A number of questions were aimed at comparing the type of service offered by traditional nursery schools and classes and the community nursery. The questions related specifically to handling of children who had suffered abuse and the provision of other specialised input such as that described by the Educational Psychologist.

Only Health Visitors and the psychologist were in a position to answer these questions, and then only partially.²

2. Neither group could comment fully on cases of sexual abuse. the psychologist could only comment on the handling of children with special needs. Social workers had not referred children to resources other than the community nursery.

On cases of abuse:

I don't think nursery school staff necessarily know of these factors in a child's background. All of them are treated as normal. If these factors are known, then staff handle the children well and are able to monitor and provide information on progress. (Health Visitor)

I find this difficult to answer. Communication is better with the community nursery but I'm not sure how they compare on handling children. (Health Visitor)

On other forms of specialised input:

The nursery school copes very well in offering specialised care but this is partly due to arrangements for supplementary staff. The other nursery classes have proved less flexible and able in this respect, to the extent that I no longer make referrals to them. As far as the community nursery is concerned they have no extra staff cover and I feel they are potentially dependent on the quality of leadership. Staff themselves won't develop skill and flexibility in this area. (Educational psychologist)

Answers reflect both the general lack of involvement of traditional pre-five resources in accepting children with difficult social circumstances - 'social work cases' but their willingness to cater for children with some degree of handicap or impairment or those presenting less obvious emotional or social difficulty i.e. those most likely to be referred by health visitors and psychological services.

Respondents were asked to rate the adequacy of the community nursery in terms of its organisation, staffing levels, accommodation and resources. Respondents identified problems in all these areas. Organisation attracted least criticism.

The nursery seems well organised but the family centre wasn't - it just became a chat shop. (Health Visitor)

I'm not sure that staffing levels are adequate but it seems fairly well organised. (Area Reporter)

A number of respondents felt that staffing levels were inadequate and some commented on the instability of the staff group.

I feel in practice its not adequately staffed and the lack of stability in the staff group is quite disconcerting. Overall, management is excellent though. (Educational psychologist)

None of the respondents felt that the accommodation was ideal. It was generally seen to be cramped and fragmented within each nursery. The distance between the 0-5 and 3-5 centres was also seen as problematic.

The 0-5 nursery is very cramped and the space left by the family centre is just wasted. (Social worker)

Accommodation seems 'bitty' with a poor layout which makes communication difficult between the different parts. (Area reporter)

Accommodation is very cramped at the 0-5 unit and the 3-5 unit is definitely unsatisfactory. (Health Visitor)

Respondents were asked how the community nursery compared to pre-existing resources overall - i.e. considering accommodation, staffing levels and professional expertise. Only one respondent made an unqualified comparison of the resources available.

The work done in the community nursery is very good but it carries a lot of stigma. More places would allow a better social mix of children. I don't feel the community nursery is better than traditional resources but it does compare quite well. (Health Visitor)

Of the remainder, none felt in a position to make the comparison either because they had no experience of traditional resources (social workers) or because they felt the resources were too different to allow meaningful comparison.

Broadly speaking the community nursery compares well with other resources here but they aren't really alike. If I compare the community nursery to say Drumchapel Day Nursery I would say Drumchapel built a bridge to parents far better than the community nursery here. They have restricted contact with parents, but they also show a lack of sensitivity in dealing with parents and children who have difficulty. (Area Manager, Social Work)

It's not really possible for me to make an informed comparison. Children attending the community nursery may require a more intense level of input and there are more links with parents and social work. Traditional nurseries provide good group experience for a child but here the work has to be more individualised. (Social worker)

Respondents were asked for suggestions on improving or changing the community nursery. The greatest demand was for the return of the family centre.

The family centre has to return or else the nursery is no different to other nurseries. (Social worker)

I'd like to see a return of the family centre full-time and a high level of co-ordination between the nursery and the family centre. (Social worker)

I'd like to see the family centre reinstated and improved offering more facilities for teaching parenting skills. Health visitors could help out a lot here offering clinics and health education. (Health Visitor)

Others suggested more full-time places, better transport systems for children, a general expansion of resources, clarification of shared objectives, a more flexible admissions policy, improvement in accommodation and change of location.

SECTION 3: MUTUAL CO-OPERATION

Respondents were asked how often and on what basis they visited the community nursery. Contact varied; one health visitor reported visiting 'very rarely' others once a month. Social workers reported the same pattern with one visiting 'rarely' and others roughly once a month. The educational psychologist visited regularly; the Reporter 'rarely' since much of her contact was by telephone. The area manager (Social Work) only attended the nursery for evaluation advisory group meetings every 2/3 months. Contact by health visitors and social workers was usually to discuss children's progress or problems. The majority of this type of liaison was with keyworkers in the nursery. The reporter and psychologist tended to liaise with the Head of Centre or occasionally with other members of staff if specific information on children was required.

The community nursery operates an internal review system but these are confined to children presenting extreme problems or very difficult family circumstances. Referring agents are expected to attend these reviews but four respondents were unaware of this system which seems indicative of less than satisfactory liaison.

They were supposed to hold reviews I think but I'm not sure how often or for what reason. Actually, I'm not sure if they have these.
(Social Work)

Staff from the nursery regularly attended social work child care and child abuse reviews where their contribution was considered generally helpful.

Yes, they attend and their contribution is very helpful since they have a high level of contact with the child. (Social worker)

Respondents were asked whether or not they felt liaison with the community nursery was adequate or not. In contrast to the views expressed by staff of the community nursery who felt that the liaison was inadequate, respondents were generally satisfied with the current situation but felt that there could be some improvements on both sides.

I would have to alter my remit to improve liaison but I don't really make the effort to do that. I feel I've done my job in referring the case to another professional competent to meet the child's needs. (Health Visitor)

I feel the project doesn't appreciate the extent of our caseloads. They can be quite demanding asking for completed forms etc. at very short notice. I'd like a more realistic attitude on their part. (Health Visitor)

I'd like to do more joint work with staff here but I don't have enough time.
(Social Work)

Discussion to clarify our mutual aims including those of health visitors would be very helpful. (Social worker)

Some social workers find the community nursery very demanding and have complained about this. I think some sort of joint meeting might help clarify our mutual operations. (Social worker)

Improvements in liaison were seen as being curtailed by lack of time on the part of respondents. Some were critical of the nursery's demands for greater input but the majority felt more liaison would be ideal but difficult if not impossible to achieve. The Area Manager, Social Work Department described difficulties in liaison as arising from -

... different perspectives and agendas and personality problems. I think we have probably taken the general issue of liaison as far as we can at the moment given the personality problems. (Area Manager, Social Work Department)

Respondents were asked if there were differences between the community nursery and nursery schools and classes in terms of their level and type of contact with staff. None of the social workers nor the reporter had any ongoing contact with schools or classes. For health visitors and the educational psychologist contact with these other resources tended to be less frequent and confined to discussion with Heads rather than staff who have more direct contact with children.

At Springvale all of my contact is with the Head Teacher. Unlike the project, staff at Springvale are not encouraged to approach me directly. (Educational psychologist)

I have much more contact with staff at the community nursery. My more vulnerable children are here and staff do initiate a lot of contact which I appreciate. (Health Visitor)

SECTION 4: EVALUATION OF THE COMMUNITY NURSERY MODEL

Respondents were asked to reflect on the success of the community nursery in meeting two of its objectives; first, preventing reception of pre-five children into care.

The majority felt the community nursery was largely successful in meeting this objective. For those who felt success was more limited, the failure to provide long term full-time places was identified as a major obstacle. One health visitor felt the nursery definitely failed to meet this objective by responding only when a family had reached a crisis situation.

From our perspective it's not really successful as a preventative measure. We can often spot situations which are likely to develop into crises at a later stage but other recommendations are often overlooked. (Health Visitor)

There's some difficulty here since most children are only offered half-day places. In a crisis situation that much would be insufficient. (Social worker)

There's been limited success here. Children only get full-time places on an emergency basis. In a crisis part-time places are not sufficient. (Social worker)

On rehabilitation of children returning home from care, the majority felt the nursery was successful, but one respondent felt the loss of the family centre might prevent achievement of this objective in the future.

The family centre played a critical part in this but it's gone. I don't think the remaining resources are as effective in achieving this. (Social worker)

Respondents were asked if they felt the community nursery model was a good one and whether or not it was particularly appropriate for the Three Towns communities. In answer to the first question opinion was split with only three respondents wholly appreciative and uncritical of the model as it operates at Three Towns.

Yes, it's very good. Everyone benefits - child and parent - it is very flexible. (Social worker)

For others though, the existing model had fallen short of expectations created by the original plans; the loss of the family centre, the lack of full-time places and places for very young children and the local characterisation of the nursery as a social work resource were seen as serious limitations.

It's not the model I expected and I feel seriously disappointed. It's emphasis on older children is wrong and it has done little to improve parenting skills or parental involvement. (Health Visitor)

I think the original model was very good but it has not been even realised here. What we have is essentially a half-time resource which isn't really adequate either for the area or the needs of individual children. (Social worker)

As it is here, I don't feel it's a particularly good model. It's a stigmatised resource identified locally as somewhere for children with problems. It doesn't offer adequate support for families and it's too small, preventing a good social mix. (Health Visitor)

The educational psychologist felt the community nursery model was potentially over-ambitious, with a remit so wide that the quality of care and curriculum might fail to reach acceptable standards.

It has a very wide spread of potential provision and has a more outreaching ideology i.e. it assumes a community role which includes child care in the home. I think that's good here with high levels of poverty and deprivation. It has a potential weakness though in that trying to be all things to all people, it ends up falling short on a number of it's objectives. This doesn't happen in traditional nurseries which are more contained and have more discreet objectives. However, they lack the flexibility to provide for a greater range of children, families and situations. (Educational psychologist)

Despite the concerns expressed over some aspects of the existing model, all respondents felt the community nursery (potentially) offered appropriate provision for local communities given the high levels of poverty, deprivation and single, unsupported parents.

I think it is particularly appropriate for the area given the high level of need an low level of existing resources. (Social worker)

The are a number of APTs, low employment and poverty and families experience high levels of stress in consequence. A nursery which allows emergency referrals and offers the child longer periods away from home is essential here. (Social worker)

None of the respondents felt that provision for the underfives was currently adequate in the Three Towns area. They were asked whether they thought communities would benefit more from more traditional resources (nursery schools and classes) or additional community nurseries. Responses were split between additional community nurseries (Social workers, Area Reporter and Educational psychologist) and those who saw both types of resources were equally important(Health Visitors).

Although I feel every child should have an opportunity to experience pre-five resources, if the resources are to be limited then I think more community nurseries would be appropriate for the local communities. (Social worker)

If I had to choose, I would say that areas like Three Towns need community nurseries. But there's a strong traditionalist streak in me which appreciates the tighter structure and more sharply focused remit of traditional nursery schools. I wouldn't like to see this model disappearing in favour of the other. (Educational psychologist)

Health Visitors preference for more of both types of resource reflects their concern for the 'normal' child, a concern which distinguishes them (at least in this context) from the other respondents.

We need more of both so that all sections of the community are able to find appropriate pre-five provision.

ANNEX 10.2

A REPORT OF INTER-PROFESSIONAL LIAISON

with the

JIGSAW COMMUNITY NURSERY

Interviews conducted with:

Assistant Area Reporter

Senior Educational Psychologist

Senior Social Worker

Two Health Visitors

Interviews were conducted during the Autumn of 1991.

INTRODUCTION

One of the fundamental aims of Jigsaw Community Nursery is to work effectively with other social agencies to support children and families who, for one reason or another require assistance. The following paper summarises interviews with a number of individuals who are key personnel of such agencies liaising with the community nursery. The agencies involved were Psychological Services; Children's Hearings; Social Work; and Health. The interview covered the following areas; processes of referral and admission; assessment of children's individual placements; nature and quality of liaison; an evaluation of the community nursery model.

SECTION 1

Processes of referral to the Jigsaw Community Nursery

Of those interviewed, the educational psychologist, social worker and health visitors were in a position to make direct referrals to the community nursery. Social workers and health visitors could also make referrals to other pre-five provision outside the area via a referral to psychological services. No other regional pre-five provision was available locally except playgroups run by the voluntary sector. These groups accepted referrals, keeping two places open every year for children referred by agencies.

The reporter's role (as legal adviser to the Children's Hearings system) did not involve direct referral of children but attendance at a nursery might be a condition of a supervision order placed on a child by the Children's Panel. In such circumstances the order becomes the responsibility of the Social Work Department.

Jigsaw Nursery operates an Admissions Panel which considers all applications for placement in the nursery. Application for placement from outside the area involves referral in the first instance to Psychological Services, the only option available before the opening of the community nursery. Consideration of applications is in line with the Region's policy on admission to nurseries. Each application is subject to a system of categorisation (revised to a banding system in 1992) with children in greatest need (category/band one) given priority access to nursery places. Cases of abuse and severe neglect are automatically assigned to this category and always involve Social Work input. Referrals from the Educational psychologist (for children with special needs) are also automatically assigned to this category though the child's presenting problems may be of a different nature. Assignment of applications to other categories reflects situations of varying degrees of difficulty for the child and family, the lower categories indicating least priority. Referrals to the community nursery are taken from a wide area and are not confined to the immediate community. The lack of local authority pre-five provision in the area has resulted in a high representation of children described as category one and two being admitted to Jigsaw.

Respondents had varying levels of involvement with pre-five children; health visitors estimated that 90% and 80% of their respective caseloads was pre-schoolers. The educational psychologist 5% and the senior social worker 15%. The reporter estimated that roughly 20% of all hearing cases dealt with pre-fives.

Two interviewees had been involved in planning the community nursery, a process begun by the local Link-Up group (the educational psychologist and one health visitor). Others heard about the project via information made available by that group. The reporter was informed of the new resource by the local social work department six months prior to its opening. Establishment of liaison after opening was a two way process with the nursery providing detailed information to agencies already well prepared for a new resource by local publicity generated by the Link-Up group and (at later stages) by regional representatives.

I was involved in gathering information with a view to trying to set-up a facility like the community nursery. When plans emerged to provide Jigsaw I was involved in the movement to get it going.

(Educational Psychologist.)

My predecessor was part of the local Link-Up group. When I took up post I also attended and found out about the project through discussion at open meetings arranged by that group.

(Health Visitor)

Interviewees were asked about current processes of making referrals to the community nursery and to other pre-five provision. The Educational psychologist and social worker both made direct referrals using a standard 'inter-agency form'. However, the social worker preferred (where possible) to avoid the stigma and formality of this type of referral by advising parents to apply independently for places and then supporting their applications.

We prefer to keep referral to the nursery as informal as possible. I have only referred one child where attendance at the nursery is a condition of a suspension order. Otherwise, I feel its better if the parent goes to the nursery and applies for a place and I support their application afterwards by providing an inter-agency form.

(Social Worker)

When she did make an inter-agency referral she prefaced this with an informal discussion with the Head of the nursery. Health visitors always made use of supported applications, emphasising the benefits of parental involvement and a desire not to be identified locally as a direct means of acquiring nursery places - thus inviting pressure from parents. (Category one cases identified by health visitors are automatically referred to the Social Work Department.)

I suggest that the parent applies for a place and then the head sends me an inter-agency form and the application is formally supported. We chose this method since we didn't want people thinking that health visitors could obtain places directly for parents.

(Health Visitor)

Overall the process of referral to the community nursery is a formal one but attempts are made by social work and health visitors to encourage parents to take the initiative in applying for places. All applications are considered by the admissions panel which meets once a month and a number of respondents were also representatives of that group (senior social worker, one health visitor and the educational psychologist). Referral to other pre-five provision involved either seeking a place in a local playgroup or in provision outside the area.

The playgroup is the only local resource. Although one place is retained for a child with special circumstances I've never referred to a playgroup. Parent motivation has to be high and in difficult circumstances it tends not to be.

(Health Visitor)

Both these options present difficulties either in terms of parental motivation or in practical terms - having to provide transport for children placed in nurseries outwith the area. The latter option involves formal referral to psychological services who then assess the case in terms of need before applying for a nursery place. Placement in playgroups requires a letter to the Playgroup Committee backing a parent's application i.e. given that the parent was unable to acquire a place independently.

Interviewees were asked how many children they had referred to the community nursery since it opened. Health visitors made the greatest numbers of 'indirect' referrals (i.e. supported applications) but were unable to give accurate figures on the total number so far. The social worker had only made one inter-agency referral though had supported a large (though unspecified) num-

ber of applications. The educational psychologist had made one referral to the community nursery. Though the information is impressionistic, health visitors believed they had been largely successful in placing children, though that success had begun to diminish as the nursery became full.

All my referrals were successful at first but its now becoming more difficult.
(Health Visitor)

Initially, all those I sent along got a place now it's only about 70% and this will drop slightly over time as the nursery fills up.
(Health Visitor)

The social worker had successfully placed all direct (inter-agency) referrals and supported applications.

Respondents were asked to describe the type of child they tended to refer to the community nursery. Health visitors felt children typically fell into two groups; those who showed some developmental delay or significant immaturity which might effect early schooling and those where family circumstances were stressful. A small proportion of each health visitor's cases were referred to the social work department prior to placement in the community nursery since they involved abuse or serious neglect of the child.

Roughly seven so far have been on the 'At Risk' register. The rest tend to share some development lag (usually because the parents are of low I.Q. and don't know how to stimulate the child or because the child is immature and not ready for school). Other cases relate to parental illness or other family stress.
(Health Visitor)

Social worker referrals included both children considered to be at risk and those either showing behaviour problems or suffering from parental mismanagement.

I refer pre-fives on the child abuse register where an inter-disciplinary approach is essential. I also refer where behavioural problems either in the child's or the parent's past. Some parents have peculiar expectations of their children and are unable to provide the kind of emotional or physical care they require. (Senior Social Worker)

The educational psychologist tended to refer children with behavioural or learning difficulties. From a more detached perspective, the area reporter described children attending the community nursery as a condition of a supervision order as:

Children who have special social or developmental needs and/or whose family circumstances may be problematic. (Area Reporter)

Referral to provision outside the area had almost ceased since the opening of Jigsaw. Only the educational psychologist still referred elsewhere and then only those children whose extra special needs couldn't be met in the community nursery context:

Outside referrals have stopped completely except for children with profound handicaps such as severe hearing loss. (Educational Psychologist)

The psychologist considered the community nursery to be a suitable resource for children with handicaps which did not require a high degree of specialist training on the part of staff e.g. children with only partial hearing loss, or Down's Syndrome.

Respondents were asked if there were differences in the type of child they might refer to the community nursery and those they would attempt to place in nurseries outside the area or in local playgroups. Generally, playgroups were identified as resources for younger children perhaps from families where there were no particular difficulties except social isolation. Previously referrals outside the area had been confined to cases involving serious problems:

I'd only refer through psychological services if the problem were severe. As far as playgroups are concerned, I feel they are more appropriate for younger children. Mothers have more contact and they are less structured than the community nursery. (Health Visitor)

I refer more to the community nursery than I did through psychological services. They had resources only for very serious situations. As far as playgroups are concerned, I'd never refer a serious case because of the need for parental motivation and close monitoring. (Health Visitor)

The senior social worker had never referred children to resources outside the community nor had she ever made referrals to playgroups:

The only local resource is a playgroup. I don't tend to refer to playgroups because such a child might be stigmatised. (Senior Social Worker)

None of the respondents felt that playgroups and the community nursery could be seen as interchangeable resources. Nursery places outside the area were seen as offering a very similar service to the community nurseries.

They are not really interchangeable - for example, playgroups are not for children who just miss school. The nursery offers a better educational input and is more structured. The nursery is also more appropriate for the backward child who shows developmental delays. (Health Visitor)

The educational psychologist and area reporter had more extensive experience of pre-five resources outwith the area than other respondents. In comparing these resources with the community nursery they felt that Jigsaw was a unique resource offering more to children and families experiencing problems than any traditional resource.

They may be interchangeable to some extent but the community nursery offers extra support to families and extra hours and is generally more flexible in it's approach. (Educational Psychologist)

I would say the skills they offer are much the same but on a practical level, they are not really interchangeable. The community nursery is a much wider flexible resource - open all year and for longer hours than the traditional nursery. (Area Reporter)

Interviewees were asked if they found the admissions policy appropriate and fair. All thought the system was appropriate and - given the limited number of places available - fair. Ideally though, all wanted to change the system but change was seen as largely dependent upon the provision of more places. A number of respondents felt the category system had very negative implications for children, families, community relations and the image of the community nursery.

I think its very sad that the limitation of resources results in stigma for the children attending. We try to avoid stigma by not making direct referrals but we can't change the admission's categories. (Social Worker)

Providing more places is the only answer. At the moment parents feel very resentful at having to justify their need for a place.
(Health Visitor)

It's certainly seen as unfair by local people but in the absence of sufficient places some means of categorising children in terms of need is appropriate and fair. The category system does change the character of the nursery, preventing an even distribution of children with different levels of need.
(Educational Psychologist)

All respondents felt there were insufficient places to meet demand in local communities. The reporter, social worker and educational psychologist felt there were probably enough community nursery places available to meet the demand for (high priority) cases arising from their caseloads. However, more general local demand could never be satisfactorily met by the nursery. Health visitors, with their higher rates of referral; their tendency to refer (or support applications for) families in less serious circumstances and closer links with families of pre-schoolers were clear about the dearth of places available and its consequences.

There aren't enough places and a lot of parents aren't even trying to get a place since they assume none are available.
(Health Visitor)

The severe limitation of places causes ill feeling and resentment in the community. Parents resent the category system of allocating places especially when some families who do get a place are not obviously stressed or disadvantaged to outsiders. (Health Visitor)

Likewise playgroups were described as 'overstretched'. All had waiting lists. So for some children no pre-school resource was available locally. For children whose circumstances are sufficiently serious to warrant priority placement but who (in the future) may not be placed automatically at Jigsaw, placement in nurseries outside the area may present problems. Currently applications have to be made a year in advance - a system which is clearly unsuitable for dealing with crisis situations and raises questions about the fate of families 'in crisis' before the opening of Jigsaw. In some instances, care was undoubtedly the only viable option and this is confirmed by later comments on the role of the nursery.

SECTION 2

Assessment of Placements

Respondents were asked to describe in broad terms what they expected the community nursery would offer in meeting children's needs:

Expectations showed evidence of shared perspectives on the role of the community nursery:

- (a) assessment and monitoring
- (b) stimulation of development
- (c) provision of special input
for children with special needs
- (d) support to parents who require
help in caring for children

Respondents were asked to what extent they felt Jigsaw was successful (or not) in meeting these needs. All respondents agreed the nursery was largely successful.

I feel the level of care and stimulation they offer each child is excellent.
(Educational Psychologist)

It seems successful in recognising and working on children's behavioural and emotional needs.
(Senior Social Worker)

It's very successful.
(Health Visitor)

They are certainly successful in monitoring children's progress but I'm not in a position to comment how successful they are in other areas. Social Work gives very positive feedback though in other areas.
(Area Reporter)

Respondents saw the nursery as offering varying levels of parental support with the bussing-in of children seen as actively preventing staff/parent contact. However, all placements were seen as benefiting parents, especially in terms of respite from child care.

I think staff would like more contact with parents. I know they've run successful parent groups in the past. Parents certainly benefit from respite from child care but the fact that a lot of children are bused in from a fair distance away does make staff contact with parents quite difficult to establish.
(Educational Psychologist)

I feel it helps increase the parent's knowledge of the child and children in general. It also allows access visits in a relaxed atmosphere. All parents benefit in some way, even through getting support from each other.
(Senior Social Worker)

Only one respondent, a health visitor, felt that involvement in the nursery might carry negative connotations for parents:

They all find the placement beneficial to them since they get respite from child care. On the negative side, a placement might carry some social stigma and the parent find the nursery intimidating.
(Health Visitor)

One of the aims of the community nursery is to prevent the reception of children into residential care. Respondents were asked if the nursery had proved to be a viable alternative to care or fostering. Two of the respondents had no direct involvement in such cases (i.e. the educational psychologist and one health visitor). For the remainder, the nursery had proved to be a viable and successful alternative to care:

It has proved both viable and successful. Parents understand that the nursery has a monitoring function in these cases - that is always made clear but it seems to work out quite well.
(Area Reporter)

It has proved a viable alternative in six cases where it arose. I also feel it's been preventative of reception into care.
(Health Visitor)

In certain circumstances, it has proved to be a viable alternative to care. the children's panel has accepted the nursery as a viable alternative.
(Senior Social Worker)

Respondents were asked how many children they had referred to the community nursery had suffered physical or sexual abuse or serious neglect. The senior social worker estimated that around 10 referrals had involved physical abuse or serious neglect. Health visitors had referred 6 such cases to the Social Work Department between them and these children had subsequently been placed in the community nursery. The educational psychologist was unable to provide figures on the number of children in his caseload presenting these problems.

In the absence of exact figures for rates of referral to the nursery it is impossible to establish what percentage of these cases involve abused and neglected children. Impressionistically, it seems that the figure is proportionally low. Even lower is the number of children referred to the nursery who have suffered sexual abuse - in total only 3 unsubstantiated cases were identified by the respondents.

In the wider context of cases referred to the Reporter's Department, roughly 25 - 30% had involved abuse or neglect with around 5% involving sexual abuse.

Respondents were asked whether their respective agencies were able to offer appropriate (specialised) care or treatment for these children. None felt they were able to offer specialised input for children who had been sexually abused - and these cases were generally referred for medical and psychological treatment elsewhere.

We do have a set of guidelines for dealing with cases of abuse. However, these children do tend to require long term involvement which we can't offer. I usually try to refer these children on to other specialised resources - for example, Notre Dame Child Guidance for play therapy.
(Educational Psychologist)

Health visitors felt that with the support of a community nursery placement (offering monitoring of the child and family circumstance) abuse could be prevented. The senior social worker, emphasising the lack of available specialised treatment described a joint professional approach which included a community nursery placement and social work input as appropriate care and treatment for abused children.

I think we would be able to offer adequate support to parents to prevent an abusive situation arising. (Health Visitor)

I feel 'appropriate' is a better word than specialised. Specialised treatment isn't really on offer anywhere. I feel we can offer appropriate care through the nursery placement where the child receives support from a number of agencies. Prior to opening, I wouldn't have said this.
(Senior Social Worker)

In general though the community nursery wasn't identified as a specialised resource for abused children.

They offer love and support but not specialised treatment aimed to alleviate the problems of being abused. (Health Visitor)

(Specialised input) can be part of the package for children attending Jigsaw but it wouldn't be right to ask staff to undertake disclosure work for example.
(Educational Psychologist)

Respondents were asked to comment on how the community nursery handled abused children. Staff were seen as dealing with children (and parents) sensitively and competently. Despite staff's lack of specialised training, none of the respondents identified problems in their handling of these cases.

Staff seem very competent. They take most things in their stride. They've created a regime which is supportive and relaxing and this is bound to help children who've been abused. (Educational Psychologist)

They handle these cases very sensitively and appear to be very non-judgemental. (Senior Social Worker)

They handle these cases well, trying to involve parents and approaching children's behavioural problems very positively. (Health Visitor)

One would expect that staff training must include some input in that area. Certainly the nursery offers a stable base for the child in a turbulent world and I'm sure they give extra support to those children who need it. I'm sure staff would be capable of more specialised counselling - people underestimate their abilities in this field. (Area Reporter)

Respondents were asked if referred children presented the need for other kinds of specialised input from the nursery. A number of children were receiving such treatment - e.g. speech therapy and specialised teaching for one partially deaf child. None felt there were children whose special needs were left unidentified or unmet except the need for specialised counselling for sexual abuse.

Some questions were directed at comparing the type of service offered by traditional nursery schools and classes to the community nursery. The questions related specifically to handling children who had suffered abuse and the provision of other specialised input (e.g. speech therapy, teacher for the deaf). (Answers related to provision outside the area and for those who lacked recent experience of liaising with this type of provision, (one health visitor and the senior social worker) the responses may be impressionistic and to some extent based on an assumption.) The majority of respondents felt the community nursery offered better care than traditional resources for children who had suffered abuse.

I think Jigsaw probably has the edge on nursery schools as far as these children are concerned. Staff are more aware of social issues, have a more flexible approach to what they consider to be their remit and a higher level of involvement with social work. (Educational Psychologist)

I think there can be a problem in the way traditional nurseries view these children - i.e. they see them as social work cases whose problems go beyond the scope of their traditional remit. The community nursery has a greater acceptance of the fact that the child's family and social problems are part of their remit. They take a more flexible and wide-ranging approach. (Assistant Area Reporter)

Playgroups weren't identified as suitable resources for abused children. I think playgroups tend to stigmatise such children and their parents. (Health Visitor)

In the case of other forms of specialised input, only the educational psychologist felt able to make the comparison finding the traditional resources equally adept at providing specialised resources.

I'm sure they are equally adept. Nurseries all tend to be different and have different conceptions of their role and different strengths and weaknesses. A lot depends on individual staff members.
(Educational Psychologist)

Respondents were asked to rate the adequacy of the community nursery in terms of its organisation, staffing levels, administration and resources.

All respondents felt able to comment on these aspects of the nursery except the reporter whose contact with staff was by telephone or letter. All found the nursery well organised with fair to good accommodation and good resources but lacking sufficient staff to meet the original plans for the service.

It seems very well organised but full use of the nursery is hampered by insufficient staff. (Educational Psychologist)

It's well organised but they need more staff. (Health Visitor)

It's well organised and adequate resourced but not adequately staffed. Because of that there are only 32 full-time places on offer instead of 40 as planned or 60 as in the original objectives. (Health Visitor)

It's well organised and resourced (except perhaps for transport) but it's not adequately staffed to fulfil the original objectives - especially the care of babies. (Senior Social Worker)

Suggestions for change or improvement involved expansion of the existing service in a number of directions:

I'd like to see it fulfil it's original objectives and take 0-2 year old children. I'd also like to see expansion of the After-school care.
(Senior Social Worker)

I'd like more staff and more places.
(Health Visitor)

I'd like to see classes and groups for mothers which demonstrate parent skills and provide confidence building and social contact.
(Health Visitor)

It could do with more staff and private space for one-to-one work with children. (Educational Psychologist)

Asked to compare the community nursery (in terms of organisation, resources and staff skills) with other (non-voluntary) provision only one of the respondents felt able to do so and only at a very general level. Two compared the nursery to local playgroups since these were the only other local pre-five resources.

I think they are very different. The traditional nursery has a largely educational remit and set hours - the community nursery has a much wider remit and offers more hours of care over a longer period. For the type of child I see, the community nursery is usually a better resource.
(Assistant Area Reporter)

It's an impossible comparison to make. Each nursery is different and besides practical issues like staffing levels and resources, they tend to reflect the strengths and weaknesses of the people who operate them.
(Health Visitor)

There are no local nursery schools and classes. Comparing the community nursery to playgroups, I'd say they are very different. The playgroups offer opportunity for play and socialisation but depend very much on parental involvement and motivation. The nursery carries more responsibility for the child and his/her development and also offers parents respite and support.
(Health Visitor)

SECTION 3

Mutual Co-operation

Respondents were asked how often and on what basis they visited the community nursery. All interviewees had a fairly high level of personal contact except the reporter who tended to communicate by letter or telephone. Both health visitors and the senior social worker visited roughly once a week and the educational psychologist once a fortnight. Contact was usually to discuss children's problems or progress and was mostly with the Head or deputy of the nursery, though keyworker staff were involved in some discussions. Other reasons for contact were in attendance at admissions meetings, reviews or evaluation business. (All cases are reviewed by the nursery every six months or sooner if difficulties emerge which require joint discussion with professionals.)

Respondents were asked whether or not they felt liaison with the community nursery was adequate or not. All felt it was. There were no pressing demands for change or improvement. Some respondents would have liked more contact with the nursery, but this wasn't seen as crucial.

Sometimes I feel guilty that I'm not able to offer more time for liaison. the nursery is very good at passing on information to me. I feel liaison is adequate but I'd like to offer more. (Health Visitor)

I feel liaison is adequate and although it's not essential I feel a formal annual meeting to review liaison might be helpful. (Assistant Area Reporter)

I think we meet often enough. Liaison is very much case oriented and staff feel free to telephone me if necessary. I feel perhaps I might take more time to find out what goes on in class. I've discussed curriculum for special needs children but not in general. (Educational Psychologist)

Overall, respondents felt liaison had developed well. Only one respondent - a health visitor - identified problems in the early stages of liaison associated with sharing confidential information on clients but the problem had been resolved.

Liaison has developed well. At first we were reluctant to provide information on families in case we would breach confidentiality or provide too much impressionistic evidence. We seem to have got round that now through verbal discussion. (Health Visitor)

Respondents were asked if there were differences between the community nursery and other pre-five resources in terms of the level and type of contact with staff. The reporter found contact much the same in all pre-five resources. Comparing the community nursery with playgroups health visitors had less general contact with playgroups.

I have a low level of contact with playgroups compared with the nursery unless particular problems arise and that doesn't happen very often.
(Health Visitor)

The senior social worker had no current contact with other pre-five resources. The educational psychologist (who perhaps had the widest experience of different types of pre-five resource) found liaison with the community nursery a comparatively more positive process.

I've no current contact with other nursery schools except for one hearing impaired child. In the past I've had regular contact with other nurseries. In general, I find Jigsaw staff more approachable for discussion. I certainly feel more at home here and perhaps come here more often than I would to other nurseries. I also feel staff at Jigsaw are more likely to implement my advice. They are generally more co-operative than in other nurseries.
(Educational Psychologist)

SECTION 4

Evaluation of the Community Nursery Model

Respondents were asked to describe the objectives of the community nursery and then to consider whether or not these have been achieved. Objectives described related in general to promoting good all round child development, helping to reduce family stress by offering support and respite and promoting a partnership of voluntary and regional resources.

To offer a service to local communities - providing children with experiences which will help develop their linguistic, cognitive and social functioning and offering support to families. (Educational Psychologist)

To meet the children's social emotional and educational needs, to offer parents and children respite from stressful family situations and to offer integrated voluntary sector and nursery provision. (Health Visitor)

To provide nursery provision for the specified age groups and to develop a good working partnership with the voluntary sector.
(Senior Social Worker)

The majority felt the community nursery was largely successful in meeting objectives though some respondents had reservations associated with the limitations of the service in terms of its size and the range of places offered. The relationship with the voluntary sector was also seen as presenting some difficulties.

I think it's very likely they are meeting these objective for the most needy sections of the community involved. The less needy child is no better off than before. (Educational Psychologist)

The community nursery is a greatly reduced resource given the original objectives of a 60 place nursery. Also in terms of integration with voluntary sector resources this still has a long way to go and I'm not sure it is necessary. Given these constraints though it is meeting its objectives quite well.
(Health Visitor)

The nursery meets most of its objectives very well except provision for younger children. The partnership with the voluntary sector is slower to develop. The voluntary sector is reluctant to accept limitations imposed by the region on their input to decision-making about the community nursery.
(Senior Social Worker)

Despite concerns expressed over some aspects of the existing model, all respondents felt that the model was basically sound, it's main advantage over traditional resources being it's flexibility and relevance to the wider community.

Yes, it's a good model. We are not an APT and will never have sufficient resources. It's developing well and offers a lot to parents and to the community in general. As well as to children. (Health Visitor)

It isn't the model that local people wanted, but the level of need across the communities it serves, it's flexibility and wider remit to support families make it very appropriate to local communities. It also offers a multi-dimensional resource - giving more than a traditional nursery to local people. (Educational Psychologist)

None of the respondents felt that provision for the under fives was currently adequate in the local communities. They were asked whether they thought those communities would benefit more from traditional resources (nursery schools and classes) or additional community nurseries.

Two respondents felt a breadth of provision would best serve the needs of local communities but the remainder opted for an expansion of the existing model - either by opening more community nurseries or by developing 'satellites' managed by Jigsaw.

I'd like to see 'off-shoots' from the community nursery which could be managed from Jigsaw as a base which could help to cover more children in the very wide catchment area already served. (Senior Social Worker)

I think an expansion of the existing nursery would suit the area very well. The nursery could have satellites in Moodiesburn and Stepps under the same management and using the same aims and objectives. (Health Visitor)

For those who preferred a breadth of provision, there was a fear that the specific strength of traditional resources might be lost in a community nursery context i.e. preparation for school and a greater number of places albeit on a half-day basis.

We don't want to lose what traditional nursery schools have to offer by widening the remit as the community nursery model does. We need the flexibility of the new model whilst ensuring that children get the best experiences to encourage their development. Ideally we need sufficient places to allow every child to attend. At present the community nursery model is quite limited in that it provides for the more needy children. (Senior Educational Psychologist)

ANNEX 10.3

A REPORT OF THE INTER-PROFESSIONAL LIAISON

with

BUCHLYVIE NURSERY SCHOOL

Interviews were conducted with:

Area Reporter

Educational Psychologist

Social Worker

Health Visitor

Interviews were conducted during February and March 1991.

INTRODUCTION

One of the stated objectives of Buchlyvie Nursery School is to work effectively with other social agencies to support children and families who, for one reason or another, require assistance. The following paper summarises interviews with a number of individuals who were key personnel of such agencies liaising with the nursery and other local pre-five provision. The agencies involved were:

Psychological services
Children's Hearings
Social Work
Health

The interview covered the following areas: processes of referral and admission to pre-five services; assessment of children's placements, nature and quality of liaison with pre-five services; an evaluation of the community nursery model.

SECTION I

Processes of referral

Of those interviewed only the social worker made direct referrals to the nursery and other local resources. Health visitors made use of the system of supported applications, referring more serious cases (e.g. where a child is being abused or neglected) directly to the social work department. The educational psychologist accepted referrals from the nursery and had no role in directing cases for placement there. The reporter's role (as legal adviser to the children's hearing system) did not involve direct referral of children to any pre-five resource but attendance at these might be a condition of a supervision order placed on a child by the Children's Panel. In such circumstances the order becomes the responsibility of the social work department.

Any applications for part-time nursery places are considered by the Head of the nursery. The same applies in other pre-five resources. Applications for full-time places are considered by an Admissions Panel which meets on a monthly basis. Panel members are Heads of all local establishments providing for under-fives - (one family centre, one day nursery, 3 nursery schools and one nursery class). Applications for full-time places are pooled and distributed across the available resources. Consideration of applications for full and part-time places is subject to the admissions policy of Strathclyde Regional Council i.e. a system of categorisation (revised to a banding system in 1992) with children in greatest need (category one) given priority access to nursery places. Cases of abuse and severe neglect are automatically assigned to this category and always involve social work input. Children with special educational needs are also automatically assigned to this category, though the child's presenting problems may be of a different nature. Assignment of applications to other categories reflect situations of varying degrees of difficulty for the child or family, the lower categories indicating least priority.

Interviewees had varying levels of involvement with pre-five children. The health visitor estimated that 80% of her caseload involved preschoolers, the educational psychologist 20% and the social worker, 25%. The reporter estimated that largely 30% of all hearings cases dealt with pre-fives.

At the time of interview, processes of referral to Buchlyvie were largely informal, except in cases allocated via the Admissions Panel.¹ Parents were required to complete application forms supplied by the nursery school, but for social workers and health visitors no system of formally

1. The system is to be "formalised" and referring a child to nursery school or other resources will require completion of "interagency forms by both Health Visitors and social workers".

recording a referral was in operation.

I phone the Head Teacher and describe the child and family circumstances. I then take the parent and child along to the nursery to fill in an application. I don't use any forms myself and, as far as I know, I'm not required to do so.

(Social Worker)

The parent is required to fill in an application form and I support their application with a letter. I don't usually state whether or not I want a full-time place. This is usually determined by staff in the nursery. There's a new inter-agency form I'll have to complete in the future. (Health Visitor)

Referrals from the nursery to psychological services was a more formal process supplemented by less formal liaison:

The Head Teacher completed a form asking for the child to be assessed. I usually discuss each case with the Head beforehand on an informal basis in order to establish whether or not the referral is appropriate. I may decide to refer the child on to special education if that's appropriate or to a number of other specialist resources (child and family psychiatry or special language units). (Educational Psychologist)

In addition to Buchlyvie, Easterhouse has a wide range of pre-five resources: creches, playgroups, the family centre, a day nursery and other nursery schools. The social worker and health visitor had different patterns and rates of referral to these resources which reflected their characterisation of each resource:

In the last year, I've only made one referral to the day nursery and none to the family centre. I've made a suggestion to perhaps half a dozen others that they attend a playgroup. I've referred perhaps 12 to Lochview Nursery and 4 to Westerhouse Nursery. I tend to see the family centre and the day nursery as social work resources. They tend to take children from more problematic backgrounds. I'm not as likely to get children in.

(Health Visitor)

I've referred around six children to the family centre and day nursery. There are playgroups but I haven't referred to any of these so far. I've referred 3 to Buchlyvie. (Social Worker)

All of the health visitor's six referrals to Buchlyvie and the social worker's three referrals had been successfully placed. The selection of appropriate resources depended on factors presented by the child and family concerned.

Usually the children I refer to Buchlyvie aren't really very serious cases - those I refer to Social Work. They usually have some degree of developmental delay or there is some type of family stress.

(Health Visitor)

I refer a fairly wide range of children to Buchlyvie. These may be on the at risk register or the parent may require some support as well as the children or they may show developmental delays or other problems. Generally though, I feel the nursery is most appropriate for 3/4 year olds showing developmental problems. The family centre is more appropriate where work with parents and after-school care are essential. The day nursery I would use as an option for younger children and babies.

Both these respondents felt that all of the regional resources were interchangeable in terms of the care and stimulation offered to the child. The level of support offered to families and the flexibility or number of hours of care offered to the child were factors which determined the selection process, with cases presenting higher levels of domestic difficulty seen as best matched to family centres and day nurseries which could offer more support, flexibility and longer hours.

Once a child is placed, what he or she receives is virtually interchangeable. The difference is in the selection process. (Health Visitor)

Apart from the different age ranges they cater for, the resources can be interchangeable if you are just looking for care and stimulation for the child. (Social Worker)

Other non-referring respondents shared these perspectives on the nature of various resources.

From my knowledge of family centres in general, I would say children attending these tend to be more at risk - they are more emotionally disturbed and show greater developmental problems than children attending nursery schools. I have no knowledge of day nurseries so can't offer any meaningful comparison. (Educational Psychologist)

Obviously there's a common thread across resources but I see the family centres more as social work resources for the needy children and nursery schools and day nurseries for the children from less needy backgrounds. (Reporter)

Respondents were asked whether there were sufficient places available for children on their caseloads. Both the health visitor and social worker felt that there were sufficient places for 3-5 year olds in nursery schools but a shortage of day nursery and family centre places. The reporter felt there were enough places in all resources to meet demand arising from children's panel cases but was unsure about more general demand. The educational psychologist (with no direct role in referring children) felt that more places were probably needed across all pre-five resources.

Respondents were asked whether all local pre-five resources operated the Strathclyde Region's admissions policy and if they did, whether or not they felt the system was fair and appropriate. All respondents confirmed that all resources used the admissions system and all felt that it was both fair and appropriate if there were insufficient places to meet demand. All agreed though that ideally every pre-five child should have access to a nursery place.

From a social work perspective it is a fair system, given the limitation of local resources. Vulnerable children have to be protected. From a user's point of view, I suppose its not a fair system since some children won't have access to nursery places. (Social Worker)

Given the lack of resources, there has to be some prioritising of children who are at risk. Ideally there should be equal opportunities for all, and a greater number of specialised resources to meet a wider range of needs. (Educational Psychologist)

SECTION 2

Assessment of placements

Respondents were asked to describe in broad terms what they expected Buchlyvie nursery school would offer in meeting children's identified needs.

Expectations showed evidence of shared perspectives on the role of the nursery:

Assessment and monitoring
Stimulation of development
Provision of extra input for children
with special needs or difficulties
Support to parents.

Interviewees were asked to what extent they felt Buchlyvie nursery was successful or not in meeting children's needs. Three agreed that the nursery was generally successful (Social Worker, Health Visitor and Educational Psychologist). The reporter (who lacked sufficient knowledge of the nursery in question) answered in broader terms, finding nursery schools generally successful.

It seems successful in meeting both children's and parents needs.
(Social Worker)

I think in general they are successful. It's possible to detect differences in children who have had some nursery experience. We see evidence of development in children attending hearings, though that may partly be due to maturation - it's difficult to assess the relative impact of external and developmental factors. (Reporter)

I feel Buchlyvie is very successful. They provide a very effective global approach geared to the needs of the family, not just the child.
(Health Visitor)

I think Buchlyvie is an example of a very good nursery. I would say the nursery meets my expectations. (Educational Psychologist)

Asked specifically about benefits to parents of a nursery place, all respondents felt the nursery offered a range of benefits: e.g., respite from childcare; reduction in stress; direct support from staff and opportunities for social; recreational and educational pursuits with the nursery.

I feel parents do benefit a lot. Placements offer respite from childcare, some alleviation of stress and support from staff if parents require it. Staff can help build a parent's confidence.
(Social Worker)

Placements for children mean respite for parents. Staff value parents and there are a lot of things on offer for parents if they want to get involved.
(Health Visitor)

I think parents probably do benefit from the children's placements. Apart from respite from childcare, the nursery can bring them into contact with other agencies. (Educational Psychologist)

The admission system attempts to ensure that children with social, behavioural and developmental difficulties have priority. These children are also those most likely to be placed in care. Respondents were asked if placements in the nursery school were ever used as an alternative to residential or foster care. The health visitor felt such a placement could never be used as a

direct alternative to care and saw the nursery's role as 'prevention' rather than 'intervention' for such children. In contrast, the social worker, who tended to have a higher involvement with families in crises, had used Buchlyvie successfully as an alternative to care but emphasised the need for supplementary measures to support the family.

It is definitely a viable alternative to care in certain situations but we have to provide other resources besides the nursery placements - for example, providing a homemaker and respite at the weekends.

(Social Worker)

The reporter insisted that only a full-time nursery placement would be considered an option to care and that such a course of action would depend on the nature of the grounds of the referral and the degree of risk to the child in remaining at home.

It would have to be the case that daily respite would be adequate to meet the presenting problems and ensure the child's safety. (Area Reporter)

The educational psychologist felt that nursery schools in general - given high standards of care and monitoring of children's needs - could be used successfully as options to care.

Respondents were asked how many of the children they had referred to Buchlyvie Nursery in the previous year had suffered physical or sexual abuse or serious neglect. In all, only one had suffered severe neglect, none had been physically abused and only one had suffered sexual abuse.

Of the four referred by the nursery to psychological services only one child had suffered physical abuse. None had been sexually abused or severely neglected. The reporter estimated that roughly 10% of pre-fives brought to hearings had suffered physical abuse or neglect with roughly 5% experiencing sexual abuse.

The health visitor, social worker and educational psychologist were asked whether they or their departments were able to offer appropriate (specialised) care or treatment for children or families involved in physical or sexual abuse. The social worker felt that appropriate care and support was available through the social work department with external resources available if necessary - e.g. RSPCC for sexual abuse counselling. The health visitor felt that resources were available but not through her department. Despite specialised training for psychologists in psychological services and their access to other resources, the educational psychologist had found that social workers tended not to refer such children or families to her or other members of her team.

We do offer this but we are not often asked. We have had inservice training in that area (child abuse) but I've never had anyone from social work refer to me. I find that worrying, given the expertise on offer at the centre. We are also in a position to refer children and families on for more specialised help.

(Educational Psychologist)

Respondents were asked if Buchlyvie nursery offered specialised help for abused children in their care. Although none of the respondents identified staff as having received specialised training, they all agreed that staff had experience in caring for abused children and had developed appropriate skills and sensitivity.

Staff are well able to observe and provide information on children and offer the right kind of care and support. (Social Worker)

I'm not sure staff need to be able to offer specialised care on treatment for these children. Staff at Buchlyvie are very good at identifying and responding to children's needs. I'd be very confident in placing that type of child there. (Health Visitor)

In terms of manpower they are not able to offer specialised input but I think they are skilled enough to tackle that kind of work. More resources are needed and more training for that to be a realistic expectation. (Educational Psychologist)

From a more general perspective the reporter felt nurseries benefited abused children in a number of ways, though not through specialist treatment offered by staff.

I can't see staff being able to offer these children specialised input if the abuser is in the home - they offer space away from the abuser and they can educate children in self protection. (Reporter)

Those respondents who had direct knowledge of the nursery found staff handling of abused children more than satisfactory.

I would say they handle these children well. (Educational Psychologist)

Their handling is excellent and very sensitive. I know if they feel they are out of their depth, they refer on. (Health Visitor)

I think they handle these cases very sensitively. (Social Worker)

The social worker and health visitor were asked if referred children ever required other specialised input from the nursery. None identified other areas of specialised input despite the nursery's allocation of one or more places to children with special needs e.g. Down's Syndrome or other forms of mental handicap.

Respondents were asked to compare the nursery school with other local provision - the family centre and day nursery - in their handling of abused children and in provision for children with other special needs. The health visitor felt unable to make such a comparison given her low rate of success in placing children in provision other than nursery schools or classes.

I don't feel I have enough information on these other resources. I don't have the same level of contact with them. (Health Visitor)

The social worker and educational psychologist felt the resources were similar in offering a good standard of care, though in the psychologist's view, that depended partly on the attitude of individual staff members. The reporter felt that family centres were in a better position to tackle issues of abuse if the abuser was a family member:

If the abuser lives in the family then the family centre definitely has the edge in being able to offer help, not only to the children concerned but to parents. (Educational Psychologist)

On other forms of specialised input, only one respondent (the H.V.) felt she had sufficient knowledge of the range of special needs met by pre-five provision to comment. She found that all offered a similar service.

Respondents who were familiar with the day to day running of Buchlyvie (health visitor, social worker and educational psychologist) were asked whether they felt the nursery was well organised and adequately resourced and staffed. All three felt the nursery was very well organised but would benefit from more staff. Accommodation and resources were seen as being adequate.

I feel its very well organised but could definitely do with extra staff. They have a large number of children and extra staff would improve the quality of the resource. (Educational Psycholgist)

They are very well organised but ideally they could do with more staff. Accommodation and resources are reasonable but they could probably do with more of both. (Health Visitor)

Respondents were asked how Buchlyvie compared to other local pre-five resources in terms of resources, accommodation, staffing levels and professional expertise.

All but one of the respondents thought the various pre-five services were similar in the areas mentioned. The health visitor however felt that day nurseries and family centres had a more demanding remit than nursery schools placing staff and resources under greater pressure.

The family centres and day nurseries have more staffing problems than nursery schools because they are open all year and for longer hours. They also seem a bit strained for resources and I think its harder to cater for a wider age range as they do. The nursery schools here are excellent but they do have fewer problems to deal with. (Health Visitor)

SECTION 3

Mutual Cooperation

Respondents were asked how often and on what basis they visited Buchlyvie Nursery. Contact varied. The reporter had had no direct contact with staff in Buchlyvie but tended to visit pre-five resources in the Easterhouse area 2-3 times a year, usually to take statements of evidence from staff. The reporter commented on the fact that referrals to the Children's Hearings tended to originate from social workers and not from nursery schools. She felt the involvement of social workers imposed an additional "layer" of professional discretion on the Hearings system which detracted from her own role in establishing legal proof. She stated that she would prefer nursery school staff to make more direct referrals to the Hearings system.

Social workers tend to approach nursery school staff for information to add to social background reports. Nursery staff rarely make an appearance at hearings. (Reporter)

Where circumstances dictate, pre-five staff attend children's hearings, though this is not common. Occasionally they provide reports for hearings but generally these are produced by social workers who may supplement their reports with information drawn from staff in pre-five establishments.

Of the other respondents, the health visitor had the higher level of contact with Buchlyvie staff, visiting twice a month to discuss particular children or to fulfil other parts of her remit as Buchlyvie's Health Visitor.

I'm the Health Visitor for Buchlyvie so I have an interest in both the health of the children in general and in individual children with specific problems. I usually visit a couple of times a month either to check on individual children or just to see how things are. (Health Visitor)

The educational psychologist visited once every two months, though her remit was intended to include monthly visits for assessment and observation of referrals. The size of her case load prevented this.

I'm supposed to attend each establishment in my case load once a month but because of pressure of work, I only manage once every two months. I visit to assess children referred or to discuss referrals.

(Educational Psychologist)

The social worker had visited the nursery four times since she took up her post in Easterhouse nine months previously.

I visit usually to discuss referrals and in one instance to discuss child abuse with a parent who felt more comfortable in a nursery than in the social work department. (Social Worker)

All respondents tended to liaise with the nursery head. Direct contact with the nursery staff was less frequent. Unlike the community nurseries, Buchlyvie did not have a formal internal review system. If routine assessment of children's cognitive and emotional development revealed serious difficulties, these children were referred to other agencies who would supplement the nursery placement with specialised input (e.g. speech therapy, homemaker) or secondary placements were arranged elsewhere (e.g., language units. Less serious problems were tackled directly by staff with parental involvement where necessary.

They keep developmental records on children, if specific problems arise, they either handle the situation themselves.

Regular consultation with other agencies already involved with the child provided an option to a formal review system. Other agencies operated formal review systems of their own, involving nursery staff if appropriate.

Reviews may be requested by social workers or by parents or children at any time. Otherwise each case has got to be reviewed after 11 months. (Reporter)

I come in and see referred children once a month but I may come in more often if there's a difficulty. (Educational Psychologist)

Nursery staff do attend care and child abuse reviews and their contribution is usually very helpful. Parents tend to identify nursery staff as on their side, especially if they feel the social worker is against them. Staff also know children very well and can provide valuable information on their behaviour and development. (Social Worker)

Respondents were asked if they found liaison between themselves and Buchlyvie adequate. All respondents felt it was (including the reporter who answered the question in relation to all pre-five sources in the Easterhouse area.) There were no suggestions or demands for improvement. Liaison between respondents and other local pre-five resources was similar to that with Buchlyvie although the social worker tended to have more contact with keyworker staff in the family centre than in Buchlyvie.

Liaison is much the same across all types of resource.
(Educational Psychologist)

I've dealt with keyworkers in the family centre in the preparation of reports. I don't have that kind of contact with staff in Buchlyvie or the day nursery. Contact seems to be with heads there.
(Social Worker)

SECTION 4.

Evaluation of the Community Nursery Model

Respondents were asked to consider the community nursery model and whether or not it might be appropriate for the Easterhouse area. None of the respondents had any direct experience of community nurseries but understood that Strathclyde Region was committed to developing this type of resource offering care to 0-5 year olds on a flexible extended day/year basis. All respondents felt the community nursery model had some advantages over traditional nursery schools but not enough to outweigh the disadvantages. The community nursery was seen as (potentially) allowing women to work, improving parenting skills and providing resources for younger children. Its disadvantages were described as lack of good structure for preschoolers and a general dilution of staff skills in caring for wider age ranges. None of the respondents felt the community nursery was an appropriate resource for Easterhouse given the wide range of pre-five resources already available.

I'm not sure if its a good model or not. I'd like to see it as an addition not a replacement for traditional nursery schools. I think they provide a very good structure for pre-school children. I don't think the community nursery could offer that. The community nursery sounds more like a family centre. We do need some places for 0-3 year olds but, apart from that, I don't think the model is particularly appropriate here.
(Social Worker)

I think it's a very good idea particularly if it allows women to work. Also, it may compensate in some cases for poor parenting skills. I don't think it's particularly appropriate for Easterhouse. It seems we're quite well resourced. (Area Reporter).

Its quite a good model but much of it's services would depend on size. A large establishment is unlikely to be successful and is very intimidating. Caring for younger children and babies would also present difficulties. The smaller the unit and the lower the staff/child ratio, the better it would be. (Educational Psychologist)

All respondents agreed that although Easterhouse is comparatively well-resourced, additional pre-five resources are always needed. None of them favoured replacing existing resources with new community nurseries but felt the new model would be a useful addition to existing resources.

I wouldn't want to see community nurseries replace traditional nurseries but they would be a welcome addition - given adequate staff and the right conditions for children. (Educational Psychologist)

I think the area would benefit from additional pre-five resources of all types.
(Social Worker)

The reporter felt that full-time attendance at a community nursery might influence panel decisions allowing them further opportunities to avoid using residential care or foster parents, but she emphasised that this option would be subject to the same constraints and considerations as a full-time place in a traditional resource - i.e. its use would depend on the child's circumstances and the level of support offered to the family. She also felt that community nurseries, whilst not removing the child from home, could have a considerably negative impact on the quality of family life experiences for children.

I think perhaps the community nursery model is best if it maintains a certain flexibility in kinds of care offered - there should be no element of compulsion in attending all the time. Family life is important too and a full-time, all year place might tip the balance of a child's experience too far outside the family. But on the whole, I think it's a good model.
(Area Reporter).

ANNEX 10.4

Inter-professional Liaison Interview

Head of

Springvale Nursery School

August 1992

1. Which outside agencies currently liaise with Springvale nursery?

1. Psychological Services (Psychologist, Home Visiting Teacher, Nursery Nurse)
2. Speech Therapist and Nursery Nurse Assistant
3. Occupational Therapist
4. Physiotherapist
5. Health Visitors
6. Community Education
7. Craigie College
8. Kilmarnock College
9. Local Secondary School (work experience pupils)
10. Local Primary Schools
11. Community Medicine

2. Can you describe processes of referral to the nursery before the opening of the community nursery? (Were these processes different across different referring agencies?)

Psychological Services - Prescat meetings held February/March to discuss nursery placements for 'Special Needs' children during the following year. Occasionally requests are made during the year to place a child who would benefit from Nursery Education. Health Visitors forwarded the names of children who would benefit from nursery education and came to the school to discuss the circumstances (Feb/Mar) before enrolment in March/April for the following school year. Throughout the year, Health Visitors alerted the school to 'vulnerable' children who would benefit from nursery school. Social Work Department would contact school to place children throughout the year usually in a crisis situation. All applications prioritised to criteria of Standard Circular 3A.

3. How and why have these process changed since the opening of the community nursery?

The process has changed but not necessarily since the opening of the community nursery. Strathclyde Regional Policy now asks referrers to complete Inter-Agency Referral forms or supported application forms for children they wish to refer. Also, Regional Policy is now to have an Admissions Panel in each area through which priority admissions (Bands I and II) will be discussed and placed in appropriate pre-five provision. These changes in Regional Policy and the opening of the Community Nursery coincided and as both were given a high profile referrers tend to send all Inter-Agency Referral forms to the Community Nursery.

4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the joint admissions panel?

Advantages - all high priority children (Bands I and II) being brought to the attention of multi-disciplinary team and placed in Community Nursery, Nursery School or classes quickly if places are available once priority banding is agreed by the panel. If there are no places in these establishments available or if needs of families could be met in other ways e.g. child-minder, playgroup etc. solutions can be sought by the presence of a multi-disciplinary panel.

Disadvantages - Inter-Agency Referral forms are not being filled in correctly thus causing delays in 'banding', forms very often have to be returned to referrer. This highlights a need for training sessions for referrers. Confusion arises often between Inter-Agency referral and the supported application form.

5. Have you noticed any changes in the number and type of children referred by agencies since the community nursery opened? (Why has this occurred?)

Not really with regard to 3-5 year olds. I have become aware of the high number of referrals in the under 3 years age group and the limited number of places the Community Nursery has to offer this age group. A need for more places for this age group is very apparent both part-time and full-time.

6. How often and on What basis do Social Workers currently visit the nursery? (Has this changed - why?)

There have been no visits made by Social Workers to the Nursery School for about 2 years approximately although the Nursery School has had a fair number of children from families with Social Work involvement and has been asked to attend review meetings during this time. This had changed considerably and I can only think the following may be the reasons why:

(a) changes in Social Work personnel (b) the opening of the Community Nursery (c) changes in Regional pre-five policy (d) information and publicity about (c) being misinterpreted by (a) as being pertinent to (b) only as all inter-agency referrals made by Social Work are sent to the Community Nursery.

7. How often and on what basis do Health Visitors visit? (Has this changed - why?)

No change on the whole. Health Visitors visit the fairly regularly throughout the session and respond extremely well to concerns raised about children by Nursery School staff. Main reasons for visits or telephone calls - interest in progress of referred children; information about changes in circumstances etc. of families which are relevant to the child's well-being; informing Head Teacher about children who may benefit from Nursery School.

8. How often and on what basis do other (name) agencies visit? (Has this changed, why?)

Psychological Services - no change. Psychologist and Head Teacher arrange meetings in the Nursery School at the beginning of the new session with all professionals involved with each 'Special Needs' child. Professionals pass information to staff members and regular visits are arranged. Psychologist visits once per month on a regular basis and responds well to the need for extra meetings to discuss children. Home Visiting Teacher meets with staff member weekly, Physiotherapist and Occupational Therapist visit according to needs of child (fortnightly, monthly, weekly).

All other agencies mentioned in Question 1 - no change.

Liaison continues to be purposeful and encompasses student training, school/community links, Nursery/Primary links, etc.

9. Do outside agencies ever liaise with the nursery teacher or other nursery staff?

Yes - it is vital that staff working with children or students or parents etc. liaise with representatives of the outside agencies concerned. This is actively encouraged at all times.

10. Has the nursery any contact with the Reporter's Department? (Has this changed over time?)

There has been no direct visit from the Reporter to the school recently although the school has been asked to submit reports about certain children to the Reporter's Department during this time. All communications are written ones - occasionally there is telephone communication. In the past there has been occasional direct contact with the Reporter.

11. What's the role of Prescat in relation to the nursery?

High profile. The School is involved in all meetings held to discuss 'Special Needs' children before entry to Nursery School and meeting to discuss transition to appropriate schools when moving on from Nursery School. During the year, review meetings held with parents and all professionals concerned to monitor progress of each 'Special Needs' child. All staff concerned are involved in these meetings as they are held in the school.

12. Do nursery staff ever attend childcare or child abuse reviews?

Staff attend meetings held in the school and on occasion have been involved in childcare reviews held in Social Work Department. On the whole, the Head Teacher is the school representative at such meetings as staffing is such that it is not possible for more than 1 person to be out of the building at one time. Decisions often are made at these meetings which necessitate the attendance of the Head Teacher. Staff are fully aware of the content of the meeting (staff concerned with the child) and would fully welcome more informal liaison throughout the school year from Social Work personnel and joint work towards meeting aims and objectives.

13. Would you describe liaison between yourself and other agencies as adequate or not? (Specify agencies?)

Liaison with all agencies mentioned is adequate except that with the Social Work Department.

14. Are there ways in which you feel liaison could be improved?

Liaison can always be improved upon with all outside agencies and this comes about through good and relevant communication and responding together as needs arise. As regards the Social Work Department - I feel that there is no liaison even although the school is constantly approaching this agency with concerns about children and inviting personnel to visit re children and families.

15. What about liaison between the nursery school and the community nursery is that adequate? (How could it be improved?)

Liaison could be improved upon - it has been difficult for the community nursery to maintain and build upon links mainly through the high turn-over of staff particularly promoted staff. We share in-service courses and have forged informal links with staff but I do feel that there is room for more flexible style of meetings between the centres. Meetings tend to be too formalised.

16. To what extent do you feel that the nursery school and the community nursery are interchangeable resources?

We do look at ways of helping parents by being sensitive to their particular needs by offering suitable nursery places. One child was transferred to community nursery last year to enable the mother to continue to work full-time. We will continue this practice.

17. In recent interviews social workers believed the nursery school did not operate regional admissions policy. Why do you think they held this view?

This has been answered by Question 6. The answer I feel lies in the fact that Social Work personnel has changed considerably recently as in the past the Department was well aware of priority categories and referred children knowing the family situation merited priority.

18. The same social workers had never made referrals to the nursery school. Why is this, in your opinion?

Again, this has been answered by Question 6. Misinformation and misinterpretation of Regional Guidelines coinciding with the opening of the Community Nursery has led Social Workers to think that priority categories should only be referred to the Community Nursery. Also the opportunities for flexible, all year and full-time provision promised by the Community Nursery may have proved to be a more attractive, relevant option for their clients.

19. What do you expect the community nursery should offer in meeting children's needs?

Flexible provision - part-time, part-week, full-time operating on a 50 week basis for children 0-5 years. The Family Centre should be seen as a focal point in the community offering support when needed whether on a drop-in basis or more regular contact and not necessarily as a resource within the project only.

20. To what extent do you feel the community nursery is successful in meeting these identified needs?

Unfortunately, many factors have prevented the Community Nursery from meeting their aims and objectives fully - accommodation, staffing ratios etc. These have affected the numbers of children who could be admitted on a full-time basis, under 3 years of age and children with special needs to some extent. Also staff changes (promoted staff) have affected the development of the Family Centre or more particularly the length of time taken to appoint new staff. Although the wider range of provision anticipated has not been fulfilled, more places have become available to children in the area and the joint admission panel is ensuring that places go to those most needy.

21. Has Springvale nursery ever been used as an alternative to residential or foster care?

The Nursery School has provided support to 'families at risk' over many years. Children have been admitted in the hope that the support would relieve family pressure and therefore prevent family break-up.

22. Do you think the 3-Towns community nursery model is a good one?

I don't have sufficient knowledge about the different types of community nurseries to comment. But I would think that a purpose-built nursery planned on the specific needs of the community it serves would be the ideal. Sufficient staffing to satisfy these needs would be essential. So many factors external to the development of the 3-Towns Community Nursery (accommodation, staffing, budgets etc.) have posed great difficulties which have had to be worked around.

23. How would you describe current relations between yourself and the Head of the community nursery?
(Have relations changed over time?)

Reasonably good. These have progressed steadily as the community nursery has developed and should continue to be good as we move towards achieving common goals. I would say that difficulties experienced in the past were not of a personal nature but arose from confusion on both sides about identified roles within the new concept of a community nursery.

24. Is it appropriate for local communities?

N/A

25. How would you like to see pre-five provision developing locally?

Sufficient places for all who needed them - full-time, part-time, extended hours - 0-5 years. Full co-operation from all agencies working together to ensure that needs that are identified are met within the locale ensuring a high standard of provision at all times.

ANNEX 10.5

SECTION 44 OF THE SOCIAL WORK (SCOTLAND) ACT 1968

44. (1) Subject to the provisions of this Part of this Act a children's hearing, where, after consideration of his case, they decide that a child is in need of compulsory measures of care, may make a requirement, in this Act referred to as a supervision requirement, requiring him -

(a) to submit to supervision in accordance with such conditions as they may impose; or

(b) to reside in a residential establishment named in the requirement and be subject to such conditions as they may impose;

and a condition imposed by virtue of head (a) of this subsection may be a condition as to the place where the child is to reside, being a place other than a residential establishment, and the place may be a place in England or Wales where arrangements have been made in that behalf.

- (2) In making a supervision requirement requiring a child to reside in a residential establishment a children's hearing shall have regard to the religious persuasion of the child.
- (3) Without prejudice to the provisions of this Part of this Act relating to the review of supervision requirements, a children's hearing may, where they are satisfied that such a course is proper, postpone the operation of a supervision requirement, but otherwise a supervision requirement shall have effect as from the date it is made.
- (4) Where it appears to a children's hearing that the functions of the education authority under section 63 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1962 (ascertainment of children suffering from disability) may require to be exercised, they shall, in addition to any other course which they may take under this section, send a report to the effect to the education authority concerned.
- (5) It shall be the duty of the local authority to give effect to a supervision requirement made by a children's hearing for their area, and a child who is subject to such a supervision requirement shall, for the purposes of sections 16 to 18, 20, 24, to 26, 28 and 29 of this Act, be in their care:

Provided that where the performance of a function under any of the said sections in relation to the child requires, or would be facilitated by, the variation or discharge of the supervision requirement, the local authority shall recommend a review of the requirement under this Part of the Act.

- (6) In any case of urgent necessity in the interests of the child, or of other children in a place, a director of social work may direct that that a child who is required to reside in that place under this section be transferred to another place.
- (7) Any child transferred under the foregoing subsection shall have his case reviewed by a children's hearing within seven days of his transfer, in accordance with the following provisions of this Act.
- (8) A supervision requirement shall be in such form as the Secretary of State may prescribe.